



“The Italian Connection”

By **Sergio Vilar**

How is the history of Fonderia?

Emanuele Bultrini (guitars): The band was born in December 1994 as a trio (drums/keyboards/guitar). At that time we were working with other groups and different musical styles ranging from crossover/funk-rock to classic progressive rock, and we started playing together just to experiment some new mixtures by means of radical improvisation. So at the beginning it was a sort of a laboratory where we tried to push our musical boundaries as far as possible. Since that we produced several demos with this approach and composed soundtracks for short films and old silent movies; we also started interacting with poetry and videos.

But it was only in 2000, as **Fonderia** became our main activity and we founded a recording studio in Rome, that we decided to produce our first album. For two years we worked hard on it, recording a lot of improvised music but also trying to compose some structures and themes. In the meantime **Luca** joined the band, bringing his jazz background into our music. There was a big effort to create a synthesis of our many attitudes, balancing the experimental side with a fresh and melodic sound, both in the recording and mixing steps.

The CD was released in December 2002 and after that we started playing more and more concerts around Italy. The record gained many enthusiastic reviews on Italian magazines and radios, and last year we got the Darwin award for the best record of 2003. We also had the chance to play at important festivals such as “Arezzo Wave 2004”. Furthermore, bass player **Claudio Mosconi** joined the band for most of the concerts. In parallel we continued to write music for silent movies and we got the first prize at the international festival “Strade Del Cinema 2003” with the soundtrack for “**My wife's relations**” by **Buster Keaton**. We also started some new collaborations: we played several concerts with Rodolfo Maltese (guitar player from **Banco del Mutuo Soccorso**), as in the case of the recent Tribute to the 70's band **Biglietto per l'Inferno**, and we worked with **Biglietto's** keyboard player **Baffo Banfi** on some soundtracks.

In September 2004 our CD was distributed worldwide by **BTF** and since that we are getting more and more feedback from far countries such as Argentina!

Musically, how would you define your proposal?

Emanuele: It's very hard for us to give a definition of our music. Our name, **Fonderia**, means “foundry” and it gives the idea of our approach, which is expressing our emotional sides and cultural views with improvisation, mixing many different musical styles and languages. Of course we are influenced by the many kinds of music we listen to, but in the end we always try to make something original, to give voice to our inspiration. When they ask us to label our music, we usually say psycho-electro-ethnic-jazz-funk-rock, but this definition still misses a lot!

Which would you say that they have been your fundamental influences as a band?

Federico Nespola (drums): In the project **Fonderia** we synthesised some of the influences that constitute the background of each of us.

The major ones are electric jazz post “**Bitches Brew**” by **Miles Davis**, progressive rock by **King Crimson**, **Genesis** and **ELP**, but also that particular crossover you can find in **Material**, **Bill Laswell**, **Cinematic Orchestra**, **Nils Petter Molvaer**, **Tortoise**, just to make a few names. As these artists, we spontaneously mixed funk, jazz, electronics and world music, especially from Mediterranean and Afro-Asian areas. Finally, we filtered all this by a psychedelic approach that comes from our way of composing, based on improvisation.

What did you want to express in “Fonderia”, your debut CD? Which was the general idea of the work?

Federico: We wanted to express a synthesis of our influences, drawing a wide picture of what we produced in the first years of existence of the band.

We think we succeeded in that and we’re very satisfied. This album describes well our musical path and our composing attitude.

Emanuele: I’d say that the basic “concept” of the album is the composing attitude itself. As already said, we’re deeply fascinated by the process of mixing sounds, styles, languages. You can see it also from the booklet, based on the work of painting improvisation of **Kadmoon**. We were inspired by all those borderline situations where different worlds meet; from the clash new things evolve.

Why did you decide to record a completely instrumental album?

Stefano Vicarelli (keyboards): Since we joined together, we always played improvised music, without any singer. We haven’t made an instrumental album by choice, it is our own way to make music.



Could you give me a profile of each one of the songs?

Federico: We can say in a schematic way:

“**Tevere**” is a funk track, with a sunny and happy attitude, almost as a street festival.

“**Dubbio II**” starts with funk-rock, explodes in the middle with a sort of psychedelic hard funk, and ends in an epic, emotional way. This version was recorded live in our studio.

“**Deep Blue**” is a sunny ballad, with sounds and atmosphere from the 70s; it’s the perfect soundtrack for someone wandering on a raft in the quiet summer sea!

“**Piazza Vittorio**” is a strongly structured track.

“**Dubarcord**” is a sort of psychedelic dub between **Massive Attack** and **Pink Floyd** and recalls the soundtracks of movies by great director **Federico Fellini**.

“**Afa II**” was recorded live as a radical improvisation in a pseudo-jazz style that becomes free in the end. Some particular effects are used, so that guitar sounds like a bass, and the piano solo seems an electric guitar.

“**Ora Legale**” is another improvised track based on an electronic loop and ethereal jazzy atmospheres.

“**Dante, at Last**” reveals the electronic side of our production. There’s a lot of loops, samples and live electronics. It was born in a performance of improvised electronic music that we proposed in the “Half Die Festival” some years ago.

“**Aniene**” is a sort of shiny post-rock.

“**Statico**”, a very dark piece, has a psychedelic emotional start and finally explodes in a tribal hard rock, as a liberation from negativity... After the final synth magma, the listener’s purified mind can only start again from the beginning of the CD!

Emanuele: I would also say that several tracks were inspired by our city, Rome. “**Tevere**” and “**Aniene**” are the two main rivers, and “**Piazza Vittorio**” is a square in the immigrants’ neighborhood, a meltin’ pot of cultures and a symbol of the changes of the city. We also shot a videoclip for this track, realised by the team **Officine 29** and directed by **Antonello Schioppa**.

What situations or things do inspire them when composing?

Luca Pietropaoli (trumpet): Every one of us has his own preferences and sources of influence. But playing together and composing is like an unconscious process, in which each external and internal occurrence can suggest ideas and moods. Personally, I try to establish a link, as direct as possible, between my musical dreams and the bell of my trumpet. I could say that playing with **Fonderia** gives me the chance to float in the sea of music without swimming.

How would you describe the current Italian progressive scene as for shows, bands, etc?

Stefano: I think Italian new progressive bands are so close to the seventies classic prog bands. And I wonder why **Fonderia** is claimed a prog band, because this term reminds me groups like **Genesis, Yes...** We take only some aspects of that kind of music, while many new Italian prog bands seem to carry on that way.

What are you listening today in day? Do you usually listen to new artists?

Emanuele: Each one of us listens to many different kinds of music, both old and new things, and we usually try to follow musical evolution.

Talking about my taste, what I listen to depends on the period. Now I don't listen very much to rock music as I used to do in the past, while I'm very interested in the new avantgarde and electronic jazz scene from Northern Europe (**Nils Petter Molvaer, Supersilent, Bugge Wesseltoft**). I'm a fan of African young artists as **Rokia Traorè, Keziah Jones, Dhafer Youssef**. Today I'm listening to American folksinger **Ani DiFranco**; last week I went to see **Steve Reich** and 18 Musicians in concert, and it was a deep emotional experience. But I often listen to old masterpieces by **Miles Davis** or **John Coltrane**. These are just a few examples, as in different moments and moods I need to listen to different things.

What current bands do you find interesting? Some new one that you can recommend us to listen?

Stefano: I may suggest the American trio **Martin Medeski Wood**, a special mixture of jazz-funk-improvisation-groove, modern style with classic sounds, and a new Italian electronic-pop band called **Slowmotion** (www.slowmotion.it)

Thank you friends, do you have something that you would like to tell to our readers?

Luca: Experience music. Live music. Listening to a concert can change your points of view, can give you new ideas and keep you in touch with what is going on out there. Live performances can sound completely different from a recording. Nowadays we have many ways of listening to recorded music, but a live concert will be always something different. Let us not live the music only in a comfortable room. Let us come back in clubs and squares.

Let us share emotions with artists and other audience.



www.fonderia.biz

Nucleus interview: 12/04/05