

SOLELUNA NY LAB. To be continued...

Marina Melchionda (August 11, 2009)



A final overlook on Jovanotti's Soleluna NY Lab. His concerts and public appearances enjoyed huge media coverage, and boosted his popularity among the American public. Jovanotti's adventure in the Big Apple seems to be just at the beginning!

As most of our readers know, the Italian singer Lorenzo Cherubini has been playing in small clubs in Manhattan for the last three months. The aim of the "Soleluna NY Lab" was to introduce his music to the American public, as well as to meet and collaborate with American singers and musicians of both national and international fame.

During the first performance held in Brooklyn at the [Zebulon Club](#) [2], on June 15, he introduced before a mostly Italian audience his "adventure pals." Some of them were already well known to



most of us, having played with Jovanotti for years and years by now. Among the others, Bassist [Saturnino](#) [3] and guitarist Riccardo Onori played with the Brazilian drummer [Gil Oliveira](#) [4], pianist Charles Blanding and percussionists Media Noite and Gilmar Gomez.

On that night he started his performance by saying: "This tour means a lot to me. When I was just a kid I used to listen to American music of all kinds, without understanding most of the lyrics. Now I am taking a sort of revenge, since many of you don't know Italian. By the way, I named this tour "SoleLuna NY Lab" because it represents a sort of experiment to me: when I first imagined this project I asked myself if a foreign public could enjoy my music, also if people didn't know Italian." And they did. As time passed by, we could see the number of English-speaking people in the audience increase. The "passaparola" was quick, and many found themselves jumping and dancing at the rhythm of "**Tanto**", "**Mezzogiorno**" or "**L'Ombelico del Mondo**", the pieces we felt the Americans appreciated the most, maybe for their overwhelming rhythms.

The three performances we attended at [Nublu](#) [5], [Joe's Pub](#) [6], and Zebulon were completely different one from the other. And not only for the outline. The feeling with his musicians was tangible: together they could adapt his songs and music to the atmosphere and the environment of the venue, spacing from funky to jazzy or pop arrangements. Although the concerts were scheduled to last an hour and a half or so, Lorenzo never stopped playing until late at night. He was generous with old and new fans, trying to please most of their requests.

Thus, he never left the stage without having sung his historic successes, from "**Ragazzo Fortunato**", to "**Penso Positivo**", and "**Serenata Rap**". Needless to say, all of his 20 or so concerts were sold out well ahead, and many people kept coming back for a further share of fun.

Jovanotti's popularity increased during these three months also thanks to the consistent media coverage he enjoyed. American newspapers, magazines and TV and Radio shows have talked about him, and his music. The legendary New York magazine "[The Village Voice](#)" [7] perfectly described the atmosphere felt during his performances: "Wreathed in tobacco fumes, the crowd speaks a subdued Babel of languages: Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, English, and even a smidgen of Japanese. The men, especially the younger ones, are trees in a boho forest of stingy-brim fedoras and pork-pie hats, sidling up to curvy blonde and brunette ladies done up in elegant cocktail-party drag. Once inside, revelers squeezed into the standing-room-only section do tiny dances in the tiny aisles".

During the National Public Radio's show "[All things considered](#)" [8], Guy Raz introduced Jovanotti as "the Italian Bruce Springsteen," quoting the magazine [Time Out](#) [9]. The interview with Ruy gave Lorenzo the occasion to reach a wide English-speaking public and to talk about his New York experience and his love for this city: "NY Soleluna Lab was a big thing to me. I discovered music, and maybe I discovered also to be a human being here. When I was a small boy I used to listen to the music coming from this city, to bands like Afrika Bambaataa, the Zulu Nation...".

During these three months, he was among the protagonists of several important events taking place here in the city, including the presentation of the documentary dedicated to the Italian songwriter Fabio De Andrè "Effedià" during the Italian Film Festival "Open Roads" (June 7, Lincoln Center) and "Cinema Jam-Live Music over Italian Films" (July 25).

Jovanotti also caught the attention of the Italian-American public, which attended his concerts with participation and much curiosity for someone who is considered in Italy the most influential pop star the country has produced in years.

Recently [Joseph Sciorra](#) [10], Associate Director of Academic and Cultural Programs at the Calandra Italian American Institute/Queens College, interviewed him for i-Italy and [Italics](#) [11], the Calandra Institute's TV Magazine broadcasted on CUNY TV.

"I feel like a farmer who is planting good seeds hoping to have a good harvest soon. Certainly I

don't think I will find my success in the US with this short 'laboratory'. I consider this as an opportunity to meet other musicians from around the world, and America of course. Singing in New York can also give me an idea of what this public likes, and what it doesn't. This is essential in view



of a possible future more lasting experience here", Jovanotti said during his meeting with Mr. Sciorra.

They also spoke about his concerts, and how much he enjoyed playing in such little venues: "When I think of 'music' I imagine a small group of people playing and singing together, maybe near a fireplace. Intimacy: this is what I wanted to have here in New York. I could have much more contact with my public; build a strong bond in minutes. This is something you can easily lose in big stadiums", Lorenzo also added during a long conversation that lasted more than an hour. The interview will be aired in October during a special episode of *Italics* entirely dedicated to Italian music and artists; the episode will also feature [Carmen Consoli](#) [12] and [Vinicio Capossela](#). [13]

While media attention increased during these months, an American production house got interested in this original Italian songwriter who has been known in Italy for more than 27 years. They proposed him to release a new album featuring recordings from this NY Soleluna Lab.

While this project is still just an idea, Jovanotti is already working on songs and lyrics for a new album expected to come out early next year. In the meantime, he promised us that he will come back to New York soon. After all, this city is his ombelico del mondo (bellybutton of the world)...

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