

MAURIZIO GIAMMARCO

Profile of a career

Maurizio Giammarco, saxophonist, composer, arranger, teacher, was born in 1952 in Pavia, where his father is temporarily working, but he then grows up and lives in Rome where the family, after several moves, establishes itself definitively. Not even a teenager, he memorizes every note of a Duke Ellington record and of Gershwin's Rhapsody In Blue, records being in the house (the other types of music leave him completely indifferent). Thus began to cultivate, thanks to the gradual purchase of records and listening to live concerts (his first will be Duke again, in 1966 at the roman theatre Sistina), a growing and then overwhelming passion for Jazz (starting from traditional jazz and by Armstrong) who then took him, fourteen, to devote himself to the saxophone.

At the end of the '60s, in Montesacro, he began to practice with a nucleus of musicians in the neighborhood. This nucleus will then merge into the **Blue Morning**, among the first Italian progressive rock groups oriented towards jazz (rock has been meanwhile approached for obvious generational reasons). Among the group musicians there are the pianist Billy Ward (already with the Folkstudio Singers and probably the first one to use Fender Rhodes in Italy), the percussionist Alfredo Minotti, and in the last period Roberto Ciotti, who later will become the most acclimated Italian bluesman. The last two play in the only homonym debut album of '72. This is the moment in which he definitively decides to take up the profession of musician, also because the assiduous frequentings of the Folkstudio (in that time the only meeting point of the Roman underground) quickly introduce him into the Roman free jazz environment, captained by Mario Schiano, and then take him to attend the experimental Jazz course held by Giorgio Gaslini at the roman conservatory of S.Cecilia ('73) along with other "young lions" of the Roman jazz scene (among them the late Massimo Urbani and Danilo Terenzi). These are years of great excitement and artistic militancy where, thanks to the first small but historic self-organized festivals, the first jazz performances and recordings (see discography) take place, but also harmony studies with the composer Gino Marinuzzi, and the first experiences of original music with **Suonosfera** (1974 with Tony Ackerman, Eugenio Colombo, Michele Iannaccone, Nicola Raffone, Alvisè Sacchi) an experimental group of great interest, really precursor of transversality, unfortunately not documented.

After these first experiences, Maurizio felt the urgent need to deepen the subject (at that time there was no type of jazz school), and in 1975 he went to the USA (second of several trips to that country: he had already visited '72 to follow an exceptional Newport Jazz Festival for the first time in New York) where he studied at the **Creative Music Studio** of Karl Berger at Woodstock, and perfected with the legendary saxophone teacher **Joe Allard** in New York, a city where he did not spend the evening without listening the best of the jazz scene. Back home he is among the founders of the Music School of Testaccio, and he performs in the first major festivals (Sanremo, Pescara in '76) as the leader of many of his future groups: a **Quartet** without piano with Tommaso Vittorini on sax, Enzo Pietropaoli and Roberto Gatto; group later expanded to **Quintet** with the addition of Giancarlo Maurino on alto sax and a very young Danilo Rea on piano ('77-'78).

The late seventies are very important because they are full of important and transversal meetings. While, as a sideman, he participates in important experiments of "progressive folk" first with the **Canzoniere Del Lazio** and Pasquale Minieri's **Carnascialia** (a collaboration that goes on from '76 to '79), Maurizio plays at the same time with many important jazz musicians such as **Chet Baker**, **Enrico Pieranunzi**, Tommaso Vittorini's **Grande Elenco Musicisti**, and **Lester Bowie**. The latter, during another New York full immersion, invited him to play in his **Sho-Nuff 60 Pieces**

Orchestra in two memorable concerts held at Harlem's Symphony Space on February 17, 1979. The only European on the spot, he plays alongside the cream of the AACM: Art Ensemble of Chicago in full force, Philip Wilson, David Murray, Jack De Johnette, Anthony Braxton, Olu Dara, Julius Hemphill to name just a few .

The eighties begin very well thanks to the collaboration with Chet, with whom he performs a European tour, and thanks to the formation of one of his **Trio** (first of many that will come to follow) with Furio Di Castri and Roberto Gatto. At the same time he collaborates with Giovanni Tommaso (also sporadically frequented since the seventies) entering his **New Perigeo**, and begins a more professional parallel activity that sees him involved in some pop tours and television broadcasts.

From '83 onwards, however, Maurizio focuses fundamentally on his projects, starting a period of great productivity, thanks to the strong artistic exchange that binds the nucleus of excellent musicians and friends, inseparable companions of many adventures to come, with which he is working. In that year he recorded the first record on his name (Precisione della notte) with a **Quartet** composed again by Di Castri, Gatto and Danilo Rea. From this seminal work will come the central experience of the whole decade: the quintet **Lingomania**, active from 1984 to 1989 with different changes of staff (in various periods the trumpeter Flavio Boltro, the guitarist Umberto Fiorentino, the bassists Di Castri and Pietropaoli, the pianists Sabatini and Rea, and the drummers Gatto and D'Anna) who in the course of a luster was voted the best Italian group in the Musica Jazz referendum of '84, '85, '87 and of Guitar Club in 1988 e'89. Very important in these years it's also a work with the **Orchestra of the Opera di Cagliari** ('86) for which Maurizio arranges in a symphonic key some Enrico Rava's compositions. One of these two concerts is also attended by saxophonist Dave Liebman, already a reference figure for Maurizio, who has the opportunity to know in depth later invite in future concerts. Furthermore, in 1988 Maurizio makes an important record with Peter Erskine, Marc Johnson and Danilo Rea on piano (Hornitology).

The dissolution of Lingomania opens the difficult decade of the nineties (also for personal reasons). However, many experiences, both as a leader and freelance, alternate during this period. Needs to be remembered the Trio with Paolino Dalla Porta and Manu Roche ('89, '90), then become Day After Band with the addition of guitarist Dario Lapenna ('91, '92, listenable on the important CD **Saurian Lexicon**); the Heart Quartet with Mauro Grossi, Piero Leveratto and Andrea Melani, who from 1993 to 1997 represented the most important and continuous work of the decade; another Trio with Dario Deidda and Amedeo Ariano; a particular project in quintet with Paolo Fresu and a string section dedicated to Neapolitan music: **Naples in Jazz**.

Finally, in 1999, another great **Quartet** was born together with the great american pianist **Phil Markowitz** (the others are Piero Leveratto and Fabrizio Sferra) responsible for a very important recording ("7 plus 8") that expresses a contemporary jazz definitely cultured and refined, due to the two leaders' compositions.

The subsequent projects bring Maurizio more and more to the heart of his artistic identity, towards a more conscious elaboration of his musical experience. Thus, at the beginning of 2000, the **Megatonnes** quintet was born (where the leader concentrates the sum of all his compositional aspirations moving towards sound horizons of transversal originality), and the **Tricycles** trio (with Daro Deidda and John Arnold), modern, where electronics and loops support the fundamentally extemporaneous planning of concerts. At the beginning of the decade there is also a short but very satisfying association with the bass virtuoso **Miroslav Vitous**. Continue also for years, even if sporadically, the adventurous multimedia performances with the friend "sound" sculptor Claudio Palmieri (**Hardware-**

Saxsculture), as well the performances of Solo Sax, performed in spaces such as the Municipal Gallery of Modern Art and Palazzo Delle Esposizioni in Rome.

In 2005 Maurizio was invited by the Fondazione Musica Per Roma to direct the **Parco Della Musica Jazz Orchestra** (PMJO), an orchestra that will reside at the Auditorium of Rome in the next five years, playing inside and outside the venue, and also abroad (Spain, France, Germany, Argentina). The PMJO has a considerable number of orchestral projects in place (see details in the other part of the site), with dozens of ad hoc arrangements, and dozens of international collaborations with the likes of Martial Solal, Kenny Wheeler, Uri Caine, Maria Schneider, Bill Holman, Karl Berger, Mike Stern, David Fiuczynski, Nuen Lee, Bob Brookmeyer, Mike Gibbs, George Lewis, Riccardo Del Fra and others. The PMJO, among the various recordings, has also produced the important double CD **Open On Sunday**.

Since 2011 Maurizio has intensified his teaching activity collaborating with some conservatories but above all with the Siena Jazz Foundation (and its summer seminars) and the Saint Louis Music School of Rome. In the same year he recorded **Light and Shades**, a beautiful record with Vic Juris, Jay Anderson and Adam Nussbaum.

The current projects see Giammarco involved in a reunion of **Lingomania** (the Lingosphere album was released in 2017) and at the head of the **Syncotribe** trio, with Luca Mannutza and Enrico Morello, who listens to the new cd: So To Speak.

Among the many musicians with whom Giammarco has played and / or recorded we remember the trumpet players: Chet Baker, Lester Bowie, Kenny Wheeler, Jon Faddis, Count Candoli, Franco Ambrosetti, Enrico Rava, Paolo Fresu, Fabrizio Bosso, Tom Harrell, Alex Sipiagin. Drummers: Aldo Romano, Manhu Roche, Marvin Smith, Ron Vincent, Peter Erskine, Billy Cobham, Daniel Humair, Joe La Barbera, Danny Gottlieb, Sangoma Everett, Kim Plainfield, Adam Nussbaum, Bill Stewart, Gene Jackson. Bassists: Marc Dresser, Harvie Swartz, Marc Johnson, Dean Johnson, Peter Washington, Riccardo Del Fra, Lincoln Goines, Jay Anderson, Paolino Dalla Porta, Miroslav Vitous. The pianists: Phil Markowitz, Phil De Greg, George Gruntz, Mike Melillo, Art Lande. Guitarists: Joe Diorio, Mike Stern, David Fiuczynski, Nuen Lee, Vic Juris. And again Dave Liebman, Phil Woods, Toots Thielemans, Joe Bowie and practically almost all the most important Italian musicians.

Maurizio Giammarco has performed in many major international festivals in Italy and in foreign countries as well (Umbria Jazz, Paris, Montpellier, Le Mans, Maastricht, North Carolina, Malta), and has made tours in Germany, Belgium, France, Africa, India, Turkey and United States. He has participated as a soloist in records, television programs and pop music tours (Fiorella Mannoia from '99 to 2004, Mina, Cocciante, Nada, Avanzi Sound Machine). He has carried out various teaching activities and has worked on record and concert productions. He composed music for theater (Daniele Formica, Renato Carpentieri, Massimo Lanzetta), dance (Roberta Garrison), films (Nudo di Donna, Giocare D'azzardo, Fuori Dal Giorno) and CD ROMS (the RAI production L'Alba della Repubblica has won the British BIM'99 prize for best educational CD ROM). He was one of the promoters of the AMJ, the National Association of Jazz Musicians, holding the position of vice president in '93 and president in '94; and was artistic director of the summer review Termoli Jazz Podium for six editions. His name appears in the **Biographical Encyclopedia Of Jazz** by Leonard Feather and Ira Gitler.

He is also the author of a book on Sonny Rollins, published in 1997 and written in tribute to one of his greatest and perennial sources of inspiration; and a book of his compositions and transcriptions published by Carish.

