

ROME

Raffaella Malaguti looks beyond Rome's ubiquitous historical sites and checks out its musical offerings

The city of the Colosseum is much more than just a tourist magnet. A lively underground scene, a culture-friendly local government and the opening of the Auditorium Parco della Musica arts complex in 2002 have spurred a musical and artistic renaissance that shows no signs of slowing down. The ancient Italian capital has shed a reputation for being like one big open-air museum to embrace a cosmopolitan drive that has firmly placed it on the world music map and has attracted an increasing number of international artists. The music scene is at its liveliest during the city's long summer (the season of open-air, star-lit concerts runs from early May to mid-September), when a myriad of festivals held in enticing locations such as ancient amphitheatres or landscaped gardens see top musicians like Caetano Veloso rub shoulders with niche acts such as Kočani Orkestar.

Although Italy's best-known folk music originates

elsewhere, the so-called 'Eternal City' has recently rediscovered its own traditions, following the nationwide lead of several 90s bands who gave Apulia's trance-like *pizzica* and *taranta* music a contemporary spin. Over the past few years, Roman artists have revived the city's popular roots music by rearranging traditional songs with rock, jazz and electronica. The almost-forgotten *stornelli romani* – rhyming love and satirical songs once played by street bards – are experiencing a resurgence. Pioneers of this genre are the group Ardecore, featuring folk-blues singer Giampaolo Felici and jazzcore band Zu. They dish up 300-year-old stornelli which sound so contemporary, they could have been written by a modern-day rebel songwriter. But Rome's oldest upkeeper of popular tradition has to be 30-year-old Banda Testaccio, comprising students and teachers from the music school of the Testaccio neighbourhood, one of the last remaining bastions of working class Rome. The *banda* have now found a

match in the Auditorium Parco della Musica's own resident band – Orchestra Popolare Italiana – a varied ensemble of musicians from all over Italy, guided by folk master Ambrogio Sparagna.

Another fundamental contribution to the city's world music production has come from its rising immigrant population, which has given birth to one of Rome's most interesting exports and best-loved bands: the Orchestra di Piazza Vittorio. The orchestra was founded in 2002 after a young film director made a documentary about his quest to find musicians in Rome's often marginalised immigrant population. The film and the orchestra were a major success and now the 16-strong ensemble travels the world with its energetic world music mix.

Immigration has also led to a strong Roma presence: Gypsy bands playing on the metro or on the bus are not an unusual sight.



The picturesque view of Rome from the Tiber river

GOING TRAVELLING?

Songlines has now profiled the world music scene in 40+ cities. Check the archive on www.songlines.co.uk

CLUBS AND VENUES

Auditorium Parco della Musica

This buzzing complex is Italy's largest multi-arts centre, attracting two million visitors a year. It has three concert halls (the biggest of which seats 2,700 people), a theatre and an outside amphitheatre which converts into an ice rink in the winter. It hosts festivals, concerts and events all year round.

Viale Pietro de Coubertin 30, +39 06 80 82 058, www.auditorium.com

Teatro Palladium

One of the venues hosting the cutting-edge arts and music Romaeuropa Festival, it is located in a charming and popular neighbourhood.

Piazza Bartolomeo Romano 8, +39 06 57 33 27 68, www.teatro-palladium.it

Locanda Atlantide

A warm club, catering for an alternative

crowd. It offers a wide range of events ranging from theatre to concerts, with live world music acts dished up mostly during weekdays.

Via dei Lucani 22B, +39 06 44 70 45 40, www.locandatlantide.it

Beba do Samba

A friendly little live club offering folk, world, Latin and jazz music. It also houses a music school with an emphasis on percussion.

Via dei Messapi 8, +39 33 98 78 52 14, www.bebadosamba.it

Big Mama

Rome's historical blues bar also hosts live world music gigs.

Vicolo San Francesco a Ripa 18, +39 06 58 12 551, www.bigmama.it

Piccolo Apollo

The home of the Orchestra di Piazza

Vittorio – where the band was first created and rehearses – keeps up its offbeat, multicultural reputation through small, live gigs and an eclectic cinema. It is located in the disused part of a school.

Via Conte Verde, 51, +39 06 70 03 901, www.apolloundici.it

La Palma

This eclectic jazz club is now closed for restoration work but is due to reopen in the autumn.

Via Giuseppe Mirri 35, +39 06 43 59 90 29, www.lapalmaclub.it

Museo Nazionale degli Strumenti Musicali

The National Museum of Musical Instruments has a collection of 800 instruments from all over the world. It also occasionally hosts concerts.

Piazza Santa Croce in Gerusalemme, 9/a, +39 06 70 14 796, www.museostrumentimusicali.it

FESTIVALS

Festival at Villa Adriana

This theatre, dance and music festival organised by the Auditorium takes place in the well-preserved ruins of the stunning ancient villa of Roman emperor Hadrian in Tivoli, 30km from Rome. This year, the Orchestra Popolare Italiana held one of its first concerts here. One of the world's most unique and beautiful festival backdrops. June-July.

Villa Adriana, Tivoli, +39 06 80 24 12 81,
www.auditorium.com/villaadriana

Luglio Suona Bene

For the whole of July, the Auditorium's amphitheatre hosts a concert every night, featuring the likes of Youssou N'Dour and Paul Simon, alongside Italian acts.

Auditorium, Viale de Coubertin, +39 06 80 24 12 81,
www.auditorium.com/lugliosuonabene

Roma Incontra Il Mondo

One of Rome's oldest and best-known summer festivals. Its lakeside stage showcases musicians from all over the world. Some of world music's top artists made their first Roman appearances here. End of June to end of July.

Villa Ada, Via di Ponte Salaro, +39 06 41 73 46 48,
www.villaada.org

Romaeuropa Festival

The first to have faith in the Orchestra di Piazza Vittorio, financing them during the band's difficult early months, this festival features cutting-edge artists and experimental projects, ranging from dance to music. September until November.

Various venues, +39 06 42 29 61, www.romaeuropa.net

Hosoo & TransMongolia performing at the Intermundia Festival in 2006. Below: a poster for this year's Romaeuropa event



Intermundia

This three-day festival dedicated to interculturalism has been going strong for over ten years. It's organised by world music record label Finisterre. Lots of global food stalls also available. End of May.

Giardini Nicola Calipari, Piazza Vittorio,
+39 06 67 10 70 200, www.finisterre.it

Villa Celimontana Jazz Festival

The park of a 16th century villa forms the backdrop of this mainly jazz festival that also hosts international world music acts. June to August.

Villa Celimontana, Via della Navicella, +39 06 77 20 84 23,
www.villacelimontanajazz.com



Rome's multicultural Orchestra Piazza Vittorio



The ultra-modernist world music hub Auditorium Parco della Musica

RECORD STORES

Rinascita

A book and record store that stocks a good collection of world music.

Via delle Botteghe Oscure 1/3,
+39 06 699 22 436, www.rinascitalibri.it

Disfunzioni Musicali

Sells lots of vinyl focusing on underground and alternative artists.

Via Degli Etruschi 4-14,
+39 06 446 19 84, www.disfu.com

Ricordi Media Store

A big chainstore selling CDs, music videos and music books.

Via del Corso 506, +39 06 36 12 370

Feltrinelli

This book publisher has shops all around Rome selling CDs, videos and books.

Largo Di Torre Argentina 5/A, +39 06 86 63 001,
www.lafeltrinelli.it

LISTINGS

For upcoming events, see weekly listings magazine *Trovaroma* (www.trovaromaonline.it, Thursday supplement of daily *La Repubblica*) and *Roma C'è*. Check out www.musicaroma.it or the website of record label Finisterre (www.finisterre.it). The website www.ilgiornaledellamusica.it also has useful tips.

Competition

We have five copies of the latest *Time Out Rome* guidebook to give away. To enter, simply answer the following question:

What is the name of the Auditorium Parco della Musica's resident band?

See p5 for *Songlines* competition rules and address. Closing date October 31 2008

