

MADE IN ITALY



Moreno Il Biondo project: a celebration of Italy's musical heritage, Liscio and Taranta, with David Rhodes and many more ...

The Made in Italy project by Moreno Il Biondo with E-Wired Empathy is a celebration of Italy's rich musical heritage, particularly focusing on the traditional dance music of Liscio from the Romagna region and Taranta from Salento. The project highlights the essence of Italian craftsmanship in music, blending historical sounds with a modern sensibility, though keeping the focus on the authenticity of Italy's cultural roots.

Moreno Il Biondo, a leading figure in popular music, brings his deep expertise in folk traditions, particularly the accordion-led melodies and rhythms that define Romagna's traditional sound. The project's "Made in Italy" theme reflects a deep respect for the craftsmanship, history, and artistry of Italian music. Rather than relying heavily on electronic innovation, the collaboration with David Rhodes and E-Wired Empathy focuses on enhancing the timeless beauty of traditional instruments and live performances. The result is a contemporary reinterpretation that remains anchored in tradition, appealing to both long-time fans of Liscio and new audiences who appreciate the richness of Italy's musical past.

This project showcases Italian artistry at its best, from the melodies rooted in local traditions to the performances that exude warmth and authenticity, representing the enduring appeal of Italian music across generations.



The "Made in Italy" project by Moreno Il Biondo features a talented lineup of musicians, each bringing their unique expertise to create a rich, dynamic sound:

- **Luca Nobis** is a skilled guitarist known for his versatility, adding a layer of complexity and modern flair to the traditional melodies.

- **Stefania Morciano**, a lead vocalist in “La Notte della Taranta”, contributes her powerful and distinctive voice, blending her deep connection to traditional Italian music with a contemporary edge, offering emotional depth to the performances.
- **Valerio Combass** is a well-regarded bassist usually with Raf and La Notte della Taranata whose vibrant, rhythmic grooves enhance the overall sound, anchoring the music with both precision and creativity.
- **Giovanni Amighetti**, a world music producer and keyboardist, is key in weaving together the diverse elements of the project, blending tradition with innovation while maintaining the integrity of Italian musical heritage.
- **Roberto Gualdi**, an experienced drummer, provides the rhythmic backbone of the ensemble, ensuring the lively, danceable energy that defines this music.

The project also features notable guest musicians:

- **David Rhodes**, a world-renowned guitarist, known for his work with artists like Peter Gabriel and Kate Bush, brings a sophisticated, international dimension to the sound.
- **Giulio Bianco**, from Canzoniere Grecanico Salentino, adds a unique touch with his mastery of traditional Southern Italian instruments like the zampogna (bagpipes) and winds.
- **Gasandji**, exceptional singer from Congo.



History

Liscio music originated in Romagna in the late 19th century and became particularly popular in the early 20th century. The name "Liscio" means "smooth" in Italian, referring to the fluid and elegant style of dance that accompanies the music. Liscio is traditionally played by small orchestras with instruments such as the accordion, violin, clarinet, and double bass, with a waltz-like rhythm or mazurka and polka beats.

The genre's development is closely associated with Carlo Brighi, also known as Zaclén, a violinist from Romagna who is credited with popularizing this style of music in ballrooms across Italy. Liscio was a formalized version of local folk music, designed to suit the dance halls where couples would glide smoothly across the floor. As Italy modernized, Liscio became a symbol of regional pride, maintaining its popularity at festivals, weddings, and communal gatherings, particularly in the Emilia-Romagna region.

Moreno Il Biondo, one of today's most famous Liscio musicians, has played a key role in keeping this genre alive. His blend of traditional Liscio with contemporary elements has helped it appeal to younger generations while staying true to its roots.

In contrast to the elegance of Liscio, the Taranta tradition from Southern Italy—particularly the region of Puglia—is much more primal and intense. The term "Taranta" refers to the ancient belief in a spider bite's (the tarantula) ability to cause a frenzied state that could only be cured by a wild, hypnotic dance. The fast-paced, energetic dance that developed from this tradition is called the Pizzica.

Pizzica is characterized by rapid rhythms played on traditional instruments like the tamburello (a type of tambourine), mandolin, accordion, and violin. The genre has deep connections to local rituals, especially the Tarantismo phenomenon, where people would dance in ecstatic states to the rhythm of the music to "heal" the affliction caused by the mythical spider bite.

One of the key revivals of Taranta music occurred in the late 20th century with the rise of groups like Officina Zoé and Canzoniere Grecanico Salentino, who modernized and internationalized the sound of Pizzica. The festival La Notte della Taranta, held annually in Melpignano, is now the largest festival dedicated to this musical tradition and has helped bring Taranta and Pizzica to international audiences.



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