

Biographie

Frédéric FRANCOIS

Biography

Frédéric François

Francesco Barracato, better known under the name of Frédéric François, was born in Lercara Friddi, Sicily, on 30 June 1950. His family left Sicily two years later and moved to Liège in Belgium. His father, a miner, would sing the great Italian classics to the family on Sundays. In so doing, he passed his passion for music to Frédéric very early on.

Frédéric joined his first group, called “Les Eperviers” [The Sparrow Hawks] at the age of 13. In 1965, he enrolled at the Liège conservatoire, where he studied violin, voice, musical notation, declamation and phonetics.

In 1966, he won the “Microsillon d’argent” [Silver Microgroove Record] award (in a singing competition at the Festival of Châtelet, Belgium) accompanied by his second group, “Les Tigres Sauvages” [The Wild Tigers].

In 1969 he recorded his first disc under the name of Frédéric François.

In 1970, he released his first record in France thanks to Lucien Morisse (Europe 1).

With other singers of his generation, such as Dave, C. Jérôme and Mike Brant, Frédéric François is part of the “teenage heartthrobs.” They were greeted by young girls with exuberant rejoicing and hysteria whenever they performed.

Every year is synonymous with a hit:

1971 – “Je n'ai jamais aimé comme je t'aime” [I have never loved the way I love you], was number 1 on the charts for 13 weeks.

1972 – “Je voudrais dormir près de toi” [I would like to sleep near you] – Revelation of the year.

1973 – “Quand vient le soir on se retrouve” [When evening comes, we get together]

1974 – “Il est déjà trop tard” [It is already too late]

1975 – “Chicago”

1976 – “Fanny Fanny”

1977 – “On comprend toujours quand c’est trop tard” [We always understand when it’s too late]

1978 – “Au dancing de mon coeur” [The dancehall of my heart]

1979 – “Via Italia”

The 1980s were a turning point for Frédéric François, with a new record company (which also had Hervé Vilard, Sardou and Enrico Macias under contract), and the Olympia as a stable venue as of 1984.

This decade would witness songs that were made popular in France thanks in particular to the TOP 50:

1984 – “Mon coeur te dit je t’aime” [My heart tells you that I love you]

1985 – “Je t’aime à l’italienne” [I love you, Italian style]

1987 – “Une nuit ne suffit pas” [One night is not enough]

1989 – “Qui de nous deux” [Who of the two of us?]

1990 – “Est ce que tu es seule ce soir?” [Are you lonesome tonight?]

The collaboration with Trema came to an end in the 1990s. Frédéric François henceforth had his own record company and label, MBM Records, launched with the album Tzigane [Gipsy]

in 1993 and a concert at the Olympia in 1994, followed by a tour in America, Switzerland, Belgium, and the French Overseas Departments and Territories.

In 1995, Frédéric François recorded “the most beautiful Neapolitan songs” (O sole mio, Santa Lucia, Mamma, Funiculi Funicula,...), and went on to sell more than 250,000 albums.

In 1996 he sang before the Pope, representing France during the gala evening at the Vatican.

In 1998, a renewed triumph at the Olympia, followed by a tour until December, which attracted more than 300,000 spectators.

In 1999, a record entitled “the greatest Italian melodies” was released (Come prima, Ciao ciao Bambina, Volare,...).

The recorded videos of his last 3 shows at the Olympia were a phenomenal success (platinum video: “Olympia 94”, “96”, “98”).

Frédéric François kicked off the 21st century with a mega show entitled “2000 ans d’amour” [2000 years of love], in which he reprised his greatest hits and paid a moving homage to his father by singing a family song in the Sicilian dialect, “La porta abanidduzza” [The door ajar]. At regular intervals throughout his career, Frédéric François wanted to pay homage to a singer that had been an influence in his life by covering one or more of his songs.

Olympia 1994 – Cover of Jacques Brel’s “La chanson des vieux amants” [Song of the Old Lovers].

Olympia 1996 – Performance of the greatest Neapolitan standards performed or written by in particular Luciano Pavarotti, Mario Lanza, Claudio Villa: O Sole mio, Funiculi Funicula, Passionne, Torna a Surriento...

Olympia 2000 – Cover of Michel Polnareff’s “Tous les bateaux, tous les oiseaux” [All the ships, all the birds].

Olympia 2002 – Cover of Elvis Presley’s “Love me Tender.”

2003 – Release of the album “Les romances de toujours” [Romance forever], which covers a dozen songs by Tino Rossi.

Olympia 2005 – Cover of Mike Brant’s “Qui saura.”

Olympia 2008 – Cover of Frank and Nancy Sinatra’s “Something stupid”, in a duet with his daughter Victoria Barracato.

The 2000s were marked in particular by the arrival of a new lyricist, Fred Zeitoun, with whom Frédéric François wrote the melodies of all his latest albums:

2001 – Un slow pour s’aimer [A slow for love]

2005 – Et si l’on parlait d’amour [And if we spoke of love]

2008 – Merci la vie [Thank you, life]

2010 – Chanteur d’amour [Singer of love]

2013 – Amor Latino [Latin love]

In October 2005, "Autobiographie d'un sicilien" [Autobiography of a Sicilian] was published.

In this moving book we discover for the first time a warm and gifted man, proud of his ideals, who fights each and every day to defend values that make life more generous.

Frédéric François looks back on a career spanning 35 years, and pays homage to his mother and father to whom he owes everything: love, support, the Olympia, and his wife, of course, who inspired his most beautiful songs.

In February 2006, he was awarded a Diamond DVD for having sung at the Olympia throughout his entire career and for having sold more than 250,000 copies of his live albums.

On 30 October 2008, “Merci la vie” [Thank you, Life], the book, was published by the Editions du Rocher, running to 140 pages with more than 300 photos of the singer.

In 2009, he embarked on a theatre tour in France, Belgium and Switzerland, as well as in La Réunion, Mauritius and Egypt (60 shows).

Another tour of Egypt followed in 2010, with two shows at the Alexandria Opera and Cairo Opera.

In January 2011, an “object book” was published entitled “Une vie d’amour” [A Life of Love], featuring more than 100 previously unreleased photos and rare and intimate items, detachable reproductions, etc. --- objects and testimonials that embellished a life of love. In cooperation with Gilbert and Fabien Lecoivre.

In 2012, two exceptional concerts at the Olympia in Paris, with guest stars Liane Foly and Roberto Alagna.

In 2013, at the Mons International Festival of Love Films, the Belgian Prime Minister, Elio di Rupo, awarded Frédéric François a “Crystal heart,” in recognition of his work where the key word has always been love.

A new album entitled “Amor Latino” went gold immediately after being released on 21 October 2013.

This latter album is synonymous with a musical voyage, with a highly coloured musical palette, where Frédéric creates new sounds by blending Pop, Oriental, Electro, Bacciatà, R’n B, or a suggested tango. It also afforded him an opportunity to work together with Luca Bignardi, an arranger of some of the biggest names in show business such as Lara Fabian, Andrea Bocelli, Laura Pausini and Eros Ramazzotti.

In 2014, Frédéric François was back at the Olympia for an exceptional “Anniversary Show,” where he wanted to celebrate 30 years of concerts in the legendary Parisian venue more than ever before. Designed like an American show worthy of Broadway, the concert featured 10 musicians and choristers on stage, as many technicians, 5 giant screens, etc. Thanks to LED technology, his daughter Victoria and Roberto Alagna could appear on stage, as could the novelist Marc Levy to look back on 4 decades of hits.

In December 2014, a compilation of Christmas songs and other universal titles was released entitled “La Magie du Noël” [The Magic of Christmas], which included the previously unreleased track "Avant Noël" [Before Christmas].

For Saint Valentine’s in 2015, a “best of” compilation of staple and more topical love songs was released.

The live DVD of Olympia 2014 released at the end of 2015.

Olympia 2014 live DVD released at the end of 2015

“Les Femmes sont la lumière du monde” [Women are the Light of the World], Frédéric François’s new album, slated for release on 8 April 2016, reaffirms his place in the firmament of stars, with contemporary sounds, magnificent melodies and splendid lyrics.

All his favourite themes are broached: love, passion and above all, WOMEN.

In parallel, a biography entitled “C’est mon histoire” [This is My Story], will also be published in April 2016.

A tour in Belgium, France, Switzerland and the rest of the world is planned for 2016 and 2017.

In 2017, Frédéric François will be back at the Olympia for two exceptional evenings (on 8 and 9 April 2017), and he will also perform at the Forest National (Belgium) on Saturday, 29 April 2017.

www.fredericfrancois.com
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contact :

Moïse Benitah
+33 1 53 53 95
moise.benitah@wanadoo.fr
12-14 Rond Point des Champs Elysées
75008 Paris
France