



Fiamma Fumana

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Profile

Fiamma Fumana began as a studio project in 1999 -- a tribute to the female vocal tradition of Northern Italy (like the choirs of *mondine*, the rice gatherers who were all young girls) revitalized by a new generation and electronic dance music culture. The result is an intriguing blend of old Italian dance tunes played to new Italian dance grooves, traditional ballads and state-of-the art electronica. To these young urbanite Europeans, electronic beats make a natural bedrock for re-interpreting the songs of previous generations. Female vocals connect past to future with unforgettable pathos. One other key ingredient, a rare regional bagpipe called the *piva Emiliana*, adds an unexpected Celtic-sounding flavor to the mix. The result is clearly Italian yet broadly international in its appeal.

The band members themselves are an interesting mix. **Alberto Cottica**, veteran of the acclaimed Modena City Ramblers, hails from Emilia Romagna and plays accordion, guitar and piano. Tuscan **Jessica Lombardi** is a Celtic music devotee who plays flutes and whistles as well as the bagpipes. Lead vocalist **Roberta Carrieri**, from Bari in the South, brings a Mediterranean scent to the group's singing. **Medhin Paolos** is the group's DJ, an Eritrean-Italian who keeps the loops and samples flowing. These dynamic contrasts are well-expressed in the band's name which translates as flame and fog, opposing elements of fiery emotion and ageless cool.

History

Fiamma Fumana were formed in 1999 by three people who shared a love for the musical tradition of Northern Italy in general and their native Emilia Romagna in particular, but had otherwise very diverse backgrounds. **Alberto Cottica**, accordionist guitarist and pianist, has been active in the Italian folk-rock music scene, for over ten years as co-founder of the highly successful (well over 350,000 albums sold) Modena City Ramblers; **Marco Bertoni**, an electronic musician and record producer who cooperates regularly with top-rank Italian DJs such as Santos; **Silvia Orlandi** (a.k.a. Fiamma) at 22, was then an absolute beginner who had been brought up musically in the Emilian countryside, by her mother and grandmother.

FF's first album, **1.0**, was released in 1999 in Italy by Mescal and soon travelled beyond national borders. Universal Music Japan engineered a Japanese release in 2000, and Omnium Recordings an North American one in early 2001, to a wide acclaim. In the meantime, the core group had built up a young, predominantly female live band to play this material. The band were invited to **WOMAD** 2001 in Palermo; to the **CMJ** Music Marathon in New York in the same year (the event cancelled because of the Twin Towers tragedy); to the **Detroit Festival of the Arts** in 2002 and to many festivals and gigs in Italy and abroad.

In September 2003 FF signed to American label Omnium and released their second album, **Home**; more focused on northern Italian roots than 1.0, and more extreme in sound, with a harder, more "live" approach to electronica. The album was accompanied by a relationship with booking agent SRO Artists in the USA, and an American tour, which saw FF perform at many key American world music festivals and clubs (Chicago, Detroit, Bloomington, Minneapolis, St. Louis...). Since 2004 Home is in distribution in Sweden (by CDA) and in Italy (by Mescal). Since 2005 is distributed in the Netherlands (by Xangò).

Fiamma Fumana spent Summer 2004 touring Canada, achieving a big success in the circuits of the Canadian World Music festivals, and the panel of Penguin Eggs magazine (the most important Canadian magazine

exploring the world music scene) has voted the band as "Best New Act of 2004". After this tour, the prestigious London Magazine FRoots published a feature article on Fiamma Fumana in late 2004, while in Italy both **World Music Magazine** (2005) and **Traditional Arranged** (2004) celebrated Fiamma Fumana with a cover.

2005 brought a strong touring schedule for FF: Midwest US in April, a performance at the **Amsterdam Roots Festival** in June, and a seven week North American summer tour which saw the band increase its profile, playing the **Kennedy Center** in Washington DC, more Canadian festivals, and finishing with a national radio appearance on the Mountain Stage program (heard on more than 250 radio stations across the U.S.)

Following this tour, Silvia Orlandi left the band to pursue a solo career; her replacement (after extensive scouting and auditions) is **Roberta Carrieri**. The new lineup was selected for an official showcase at **WOMEX**, the pre-eminent World Music conference which took place in Newcastle (U.K.) in October 2005. The new album, **Onda (If you can't ride the wave then you're gonna go unda!)**, steered by producer Peter Walsh (Peter Gabriel, Simple Minds, Pulp, Robert Plant, AfroCelt Sound System) and featuring some of the brightest stars in the "urban roots" international scene, such as **Transglobal Underground**, McNavigator of **Asian Dub Foundation** and Italian super-top-globalista rapper **Jovanotti**, was released in summer 2006 in Italy and North America. The album itself is dedicated to the late Scottish piper and DJ Martyn Bennett, clearly a strong source of inspiration for the band.

Fiamma Fumana are:

Lady Jessica Lombardi	bagpipes, flutes, bass, vocals
Alberto Cottica	accordions, acoustic guitar, piano, vocals
Lisa Kant	lead vocals
Medhin Paolos	live electronics, loops, vocals

Album releases:

1.0 (1999)
Home (2003)
Onda (*If you can't ride the wave then you're gonna go unda!*) (2006)

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