

Mina's Italian Song Book

Roberta Michelino (March 26, 2014)



Five magisterial CDs by a supremely talented artist who, despite having re-nounced the public spotlight, continues to give us music with real feeling

It was way back in the 1960s when the enduring icon of Italian music first appeared on TV. Anna Maria Mazzini, known to everyone as “Mina the Tigress of Cremona,” immediately captivated audiences with her stunning voice and stage presence.

[Renzo Arbore](#) [2], enamored of her inimitable vocal skills, called [Mina](#) [3] “the greatest white pipes in the world.” The 1970s saw the rise of her eclectic act. Accompanied by Mario Bellani on piano, she turned classic Neapolitan songs into intense, refined jazz tunes; redefined Brazilian boss nova rhythms in “*Agua de Março*,” which does justice to Elis Regina’s version; and sang duets with such famous musicians as [Fabrizio De Andrè](#) [4], [Giorgio Gaber](#) [5], and [Adriano Celentano](#) [6].

After her last TV appearance and a memorable concert in Bussola (recorded for the album *Live '78*), Mina decided to put a halt to her public performances and limited her artistic output to the annual record and infrequent radio events. No one knows the real motive behind her retreat from show business.

Some say the singer was tired of being judged by society, which back then was steeped in rigid



formalism. Her choreographer Don Lurio claimed that Mina was often afraid to face audiences. And yet her unexpected, mysterious departure from the scene helped make the Tigress of Cremona an almost legendary musical icon.

Nietzsche's theory of eternal return doesn't apply to Mina; she will forever belong to a certain, unrepeatable moment in Italy. The singer was really never so much of a presence as when she withdrew from the scene. For years she has released, on average, an album a year, sung with various artists, including emerging Italian musicians, has been a popular critic and commentator, and directed shows for radio.

The Italian Songbook, one of her last catalog albums, is composed of five CDs containing twelve famous American songs, covers of classic Neapolitan music, songs by [Pino Daniele](#) [7], and duets with Celentano—five magisterial CDs by a talented artist who, despite having renounced the public spotlight, continues to give us music with real feeling.

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