

When Valceresio came to the Olympics

Pubblicato: Giovedì 3 Luglio 2014



There are not many who know that the moving piece of music played at the Winter Paralympics in Sochi was from Varese, or rather, Valceresio. The piece was written by a composer from Cuasso al Monte, Cuasso al Piano to be precise, who has always made his living from music, without too much fuss, despite his creativity and stream of successes. He is **Gregorio Cosentino**.

“I’ve known **Daniele Finzi Pasca**, the great Swiss director and playwright, for about thirty years. Last year, he asked me if I had any musical material to accompany some ideas he had for the Paralympics, which he had been asked to direct. I gave him some material I’d produced for a particularly gifted pupil of mine, that exploited her vocal style. Daniele particularly liked one of these songs, *If you need a friend*, and decided to take it to the committee, presenting it as the central theme of the performance. The song was too short, so we worked on it, and padded it out to eight minutes.”

Eventually, the song was recorded by the paraplegic, Julia **Samoilova**, who won the Russian X Factor. “For the Paralympics, my English lyrics were adapted into Russian, but the essence was preserved. The performance during the inauguration ceremony was deeply moving, because of the singer and because of the stadium.”

Gregorio Cosentino has always made his living from music. He was born in Cuasso in 1953, and has almost always lived there, in the house where he was born. He studied at the Conservatory in Milan, then, “the job takes you around; I perfected my trade in the theatres. And one of the first people I worked with was the great Rosalina Neri, in 1975.”

An expert in soundtracks, Gregorio has written for documentaries for over twenty years. “The life of a documentary is different from that of a film, and there’s a different process behind the music. In particular, it has to fit cuts and adjustments; at the same time, there’s a lot of freedom.”

Gregorio is currently working on a documentary on drones. “I was asked by Gino Oliviero, the son of Nino Oliviero, who received an Oscar nomination, in 1963, for *More*, the soundtrack of the film *Mondo Cane*. He makes documentaries, particularly on tourism and archaeology. He’s now starting a documentary on drones, and wants me for the soundtrack.”

Gregorio’s life “is a rollercoaster of opportunities and proposals. I’ve always found it easy to compose, and I haven’t lost that. It’s a characteristic I like a lot. And I remember everything about my past, with great precision, but I’m not bound to any particular situations. For example, when I was composing a film soundtrack that won me a prize, it made me think I had become a film composer; but that wasn’t the case.”

Gregorio then spoke about the new digital era of music. “I was one of the pioneers of the then, digital system. For example, I was one of the first to use sampling systems, and I was the first to welcome in technology, especially if it is used wisely. The Internet has undoubtedly made the preparation of groups and singers easier, and is a great help to them. But now, there’s the illusion that everyone can play music, and, unfortunately, that isn’t true. Anyone can become famous on YouTube, but quality is something else.”

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