



**mariocrispi**

# *soffi*

**Electroacoustic solo  
for archaic wind instruments and laptop**

**Form: info - bio – reviews - photos**



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## Concept

**Mario Crispi**, composer, player of wind instruments and founder of **Agricantus** band (the most important Italian world fusion band), carries out an intense activity as a soloist, realizing concert and performances in which he colleague archaic wind instruments to computers and microprocessors.

From this kind of experience, he realized the project "Soffi" (breath, blows). This project is an "investigation" of multiples and indefinited worlds of sounds through musical instruments (naturals, archaics and digitals) that transform the air, wind and breath in a variety of sounds and timbres.

On this basis, **Mario Crispi** expand its research in a meaningful way by looking through the sounds suggested by the instruments used to describe "uncharted" territories but, at the same time, also possible. In this musical concept, Crispi gives the same importance to ancestral computers and flutes: the role of the "instrument" is subject to the creativity and at the symbolism, without any exaltation of the modern technology. The idea is a performance by "one man band" but where the listener is accompanied in a sound exploration, to a "continuous becoming" of horizons and continually crossed boundaries, like the winds that blow in all directions.

## The performance

The performance is a concert where the archaic wind instruments are played and mixed through a dsp, looper, echoes and delays of a laptop. These audio digital tools are dedicated to recording samples in real time (normally called looper), harmonization (which is achieved by creating entries and fragmented melody performed in intervals scalar) and running the sound (produced by compressors, filters, echo and reverb). Although these dsp modify the nature of sound of the archaic instruments, they, adding to the particular tone of the musical instruments, producing spatial depth and different from the original, realizing an very evocative ambience and oniric soundscape. Furthermore, some archaic wind instruments, are played with circular breathing: a particular breathing technique when the player to perform tunes *ad libitum*, without interrupting the sound where to catch your breath.

## The instrumentation

The instrumentation used in the concert is:

- Archaic wind instruments:

whirlies (harmonic pipes whirlies), ney (Persian, Turkish and Arabic oblique flute), Roumanian caval (guttural flute with back insufflator), sami selijefløyte (natural harmonics flute), Indian bansuri (bamboo flute), the Armenian duduk (oboe popular), Indian morcheng (brass Jews harp), Australian didgeridoo (harmonic horn and voice modifier), Sardinian launeddas, Egyptian arghoul (popular polycalamus clarinets), Maui Xaphoon (bamboo clarinet), Hu Lu Si (Chinese globular flute), Bummulu, flute-keys with head modified;

- Electronic and virtual instruments:

Laptop with: sampler in real time (looper), digital signal processors (digital editing of sound), sampling (digital sound recorder and player), harmonize (multiplier harmonic note), synthesizer (various technique synthesis).

The performance is accompanied by video images and processed in real time by **Cynthia Garofalo**, which he directed visual also using a system of video cameras mounted next to the musician to bring out the details. The images and video, interacting with the sounds, exalting and helping to build evocative atmospheres, are taken from reports made with **Mario Crispi** in the **Middle East** and **Asia Minor**.

## Repertory

Original composition & esecution: **Mario Crispi**

### **tubi** (2004)

whirlies, flute,  
digital signal processor, looper, virtual synth

### **mari niuru** (1999)

indian *morcheng*, flute with modified mouthpiece, armenian *duduk*, indian *bansuri*,  
digital signal processor, looper, virtual synth, harmonizer

### **zammar** (1998)

egyptian *arghoul*, arabic *ney*  
digital signal processor, looper, sequencer

### **andatura** (2000)

armenian *duduk*, arabic *ney*, dsp, campionatore in tempo reale,  
digital signal processor, looper, virtual synth, harmonizer

### **solo ney** (1998)

persian *ney*,  
digital signal processor, looper,

### **gasbha** (2000)

arabic *gasbha*, aboriginal *didjeridoo*  
digital signal processor, looper, virtual synth, harmonizer

### **limes** (1994)

modified sradinian launeddas,  
digital signal processor, looper

### **pa-wu & hu-lu-si** (2008)

chinese *pawu*, chinese *hu-lu-si*,  
digital signal processor, looper

### **cannitu** (2004)

hawaian *maui xaphoon*,  
digital signal processor, looper, virtual synth, harmonizer

## Bio

### Mario Crispi

vocal, archaic wind instruments, laptop, music composition.

Born in Palermo (Sicily), his first real involvement in music began in 1976, showing from the very start an interest in archaic wind instruments from all over the world. Historic founder in 1979, composer and versatile flautist of the band **Agricantus**, he has completed research into ethnomusicology, both with the **Sicilian Ethnophonic Archive**, the **Folkstudio of Palermo**, the **Institute for Folk Traditions of the University of Palermo**, and the **Museum of Folk Traditions of Nuoro**. In order to deepen his musical research he has visited many regions of the world, **Africa, Middle East, Asia Minor** and **Brasil** meeting many musicians, history and atmospheres, making important musical experiences and elaborating musical concepts and compositions.

In addition to Agricantus productions (10 albums, 4 soundtracks, dozens of compilations, including the most important **Buddha Bar IV, Nirvana Lounge Vol I, Siddhartha**), he composes music for dance shows, (Roberta Escamilla Garrison), for theater, for sound design for environment (the exhibition "Form: the city and its past" by Massimiliano Fuksas at the Coliseum in Rome), for movie soundtracks ("Jung", by A. Vendemmiati and F. Lazzaretti, presented at the 57th Venice Film Festival 2000 and winner of the IDFA in Amsterdam, "Afghanistan - Side Effects" by A. Vendemmiati and F. Lazzaretti). In 2010 he has produced the soundtrack for the documentary film "Left by The Ship" by A. Vendemmiati and E. Rossi Landi. He has participated, either as coauthor and interpreter in music productions and soundtracks, in the fields of traditional, world and trance music working with various artists such as **Luis Bacalov, Pivio and Aldo De Scalzi, Tracendental, Andrea Guerra, Enzo Avitabile, Brothers, Giovanni Lo Cascio**.

His research activities continued over the years with the participation in **ON Nomadic Observatory of Rome** with which he made territorial artistic events and multimedia installations in Sicily and the Mediterranean. Since April 2007 he is the owner of the workshop of construction and practice of wind instruments made from recycled materials for the **Juakali Drummers Project** conceived by **Giovanni Lo Cascio** within the **AMREF** rehabilitation program "**Children in need**" in **Nairobi, Kenya**. **Juakali Drummers is a Dulcimer Fondation pour la Musique** and **AMREF** permanent project to rescue children from the streets through music education.

He is sound designer of logos and local music projects. Since 2004 he is author and Artistic Director of the **Festival Paesaggi di Suoni** of Tuscania ([www.paesaggidisuoni.it](http://www.paesaggidisuoni.it)). In 2008 he started in Palermo the art collective of improvised creation called **FolkaLab** ([www.folkalab.com](http://www.folkalab.com)) a permanent musical and multidisciplinary workshop which has linked **200 artists** which he directed for the 2008-2009-2010 editions. He performed as soloist in various Italian and international Festivals as **MedFest 2003** (Italy), **Premio Grinzane Cavour 2004** (Italy), **Theatron Musikommer 2004** (Munche-Germany), **Kals'Art 2005** (Italy), **Musica sulle Bocche 2005** (Italy), **La Notte della Taranta 2006** (Italy), **September Concert 2006 e 2007** (Italy), **Sete Soys y Sete Luas 2006** (Italy), **Paesaggi di Suoni 2006 e 2009** (Italy), **Auditorium Parco della Musica Rome, 2008 and 2010**, **Cornerstone Festival 2008** (England), **Festival Letteratura Macugnaga 2009** (Italy). In **2006** he has been invited in **Pakistan**, in quality of representative for **Italy**, to the **World Performing Arts Festival of Lahore**.

With **Agricantus** he has realized tours in **Europe, Brasil, Israel, Syria, Hong Kong**, participating to **International Festivals** like "**Le Printemps de Bourges**", "**Arezzo Wave**", "**Le nuit Europennes**" at Strasbourg, "**Womad**" in Sicily, "**International Festival of Medina**" in Tunis. and won the prestigious **Targa Tenco 1996** (for the **Best World Music Album**), **PIM – Italian Music Award 1997** (for the best frontier music album), the **Augusto Daolio Prize** (for the social engagement).

## Discography 1

### Mario Crispi:

Soffi – (2000) CNI Italy,  
Arenaria – (2009) Suono Records Italy  
Left By The Ship – O.S.T. (2010) Formedonda – Italy

### Mario Crispi & Enzo Favata

Insulae – (2011), Isola dei Suoni Records - Italy

### FolkaLab:

Vol. 1 – (2008) Formedonda - Italy

### Agricantus:

CD

*Gnanzù!* (1993) TonStudio Carinthia/Tabbali/CNI, Austria/Italy  
*Tuareg* (1996), CNI Italy  
*Kaleidos* (1998), CNI Italy  
*Faidi* (1998), CNI talia  
*The Best of Agricantus* (1999), World Class U.S.A.  
*Placido Rizzotto O.S.T.* (2000), CNI Italy  
*Ethnosphere* (2001), CNI Italy, EDEL Francia  
*Calura* (2002), CNI Italy  
*Habibi* (2005), CNI Italy  
*Luna khina* (2007), RaiTrade Italy  
*Turnari* (2014), CNI, Italy

EP

*Viaggiari* (1995), CNI Italy  
*Hale-Bopp Souvenir* (1997), CNI Italy  
*Jamila* (2002), Il Manifesto, Italy  
*Omini* (2013), CNI, Italy

Compilations

*Nirvana Lounge Vol I* (2000) Chall'O Music Francia  
*Buddha Bar vol IV* (2002) George V Francia  
*Siddharta: Spirit Of Buddha* (2003) Wagram Francia

### Trancendental/Agricantus:

*Il Bagno Turco* O.S.T. (1997), CNI Italy  
*I Giardini dell'Eden* O.S.T. (1998), CNI Italy  
*Amatevi/Armatevi* - EP (1998), CNI Italy

### Trancendental/Pivio & Aldo De Scalzi:

*Cold Ground* (1996), CNI Italy  
*Rinascimento* (1997), CNI Italy  
*Elvjs & Marilijn* O.S.T. (1998), CNI Italy  
*La persona De Leo* O.S.T. (2006), I dischi dell'Espleta, Italy  
*7 Km da Gerusalemme* O.S.T. (2006), CNI, Italy  
*Il Mercante di Pietre* O.S.T. (2007) O.S.T. CAM Italy  
*Barbarossa* O.S.T. (2009), Creuza, Italy

## Discography 2.

### Luis Bacalov

*Il Consiglio d'Egitto* O.S.T. (2006), CAM Italy

### Enzo Avitabile

*Aizete* (1996) CNI Italy

### Ensemble Elyma & Gabriel Garrido

*"Il Secolo d'Oro nel Nuovo Mondo Villancicos e  
Orationes del '600 latino-americano"* (1992) Symphonia Italy

### Giovanni Lo Cascio

*Boom Boom Language* (2000), CNI Italy

### Brothers (Paolo Modugno & Marco Rosano)

*Atlante* (1997), CNI Italy

## Video:

### Agricantus

*Carizzi r'amuri* (Umberto Spinazzola) 1996

*Habibi* (2004)

*Uommene* (2013)

*Nsunnai* (2014)

*Turnari* (2014)

### Mario Crispi

*Cannitu* (2009)



## Reviews 1.

"...Mario Crispi, the Italyn flute maestro spell bound the audience with his haunting melodies".  
*Staff Report Daily Times (Lahore)* 11 Novembre 2006

"Mario Crispi, from Italy, who mixes different traditional wind instruments with techno beats he samples, raised numerous astonished reactions, within the 1000 person crowd. The sound he produces varies from traditional Scottish atmosphere to an extremely progressive rhythm-led mood...this music is really interesting, and experimental".  
*Staff Report DAWN Lahore* 12 Novembre 2006

"a well known Italyn musician Mario Crispi, who has won numerous awards, gave his performance on the flute and the music captivated the audience. Crispi's flute playing echoed around the hall and took people into the realm of imagination."  
*Staff Report The Post (Lahore)* 22 Novembre 2006

"...who would like to participate with another great artist at the festival – Mario Crispi will perform once more. He will create sound from a bottle and invites the whole audience to join in by playing on their own bottles – an experiment we have not heard and seen before at this festival".  
*Jakob Steiner DAWN Lahore* 15 Novembre 2006

"Mario Crispi, the famous Italyn musician's one-man show attracted the attention of the audience on the first night of the festival. He blended his folk tunes on the flute with drum. He said that this work is based on his passion to bridge the cultural gap of the world... Mario said that it is a historical movement for him to perform here".  
*Omer Khan The Sun (Lahore)* 13 Novembre 2006

### **Mario Crispi: un viaggio attraverso i venti (a travel through the winds)**

Among the wind instruments (also self made) is strictly digital technology the journey through the winds of Mario Crispi is began: songs that are part of the CD, each of which is associated with a wind. The mental journey started around 22.45 and has been gradually sliding with a calmness rarely have the pleasure of tasting. A journey with my eyes closed of course, of those who genuinely take you a bit 'here a little' there for a walk in your perfect dimension: the one you would like to cut out during the day but you can not even draw. The samples in real time have made a master for most of the concert and the audience was there, astonished, to hear the thousand tones sound produced by the "breath" by Mario Crispi. The machine and man. Awareness. The search for the sounds. Here's what emerged from the concert. And the audience was still there, careful. The music of Mario Crispi has been for more than an hour and a half among the people, advancing to the far corners of the environment. And when all is full of creativity, peace has returned to reign. Almost a mystical experience rather than a concert. "  
*Fabio Ricotta Repubblica – Palermo* 12 gennaio 2002

### **Musica Sulle Bocche - Santa Teresa Gallura (OT) - 26-30.08.2005**

"Puffs of Mario Crispi, or tangles of wires, microphones, samplers, processors, harmonizer, sequencer played with a myriad of archaic wind instruments, with the slow breathing of the waves, with the bizarre invasion of the wind. It's a great game of interlocking, overlapping, repetition, with rhythmic elements that appear gradually and as gradually disperse into the air and the melody that flows uninterrupted through circular breathing used wisely by the Sicilian musician. "  
*Vincenzo Roggero allaboutjazz.com*

## Reviews 2.

### **Mario Crispi e i suoi "fiati": soffi che sembrano uscire dall'anima antica del mondo**

The performer, Mario Crispi, is a researcher and musician with a large number of traditional instruments, from the Romanian nai to launeddas, from the flute to the Khen, all breathless. The originality of the proposal is to join in the dialogue sounds so archaic with electronic processors, multitrack recorders, PVC pipes, in a series of sound effects. What Crispi obtained is a merger compact and intriguing: these are cells that are repeated and mixed, voices of the market (the typical "abbanniate") taking a strong rhythmic value, offering modulations insinuating melodies. And what makes them interesting is that the sounds are beyond the pure re-proposal of an ethnological character. "

*Antonio Guida* **Giornale di Sicilia**

### **I Flauti Magici di Mario Crispi**

"In the varied program of the VI Festival of the Orcia Valley, among other musical events, one in particular has caught our attention: Soffi (Puffs) - journey through the sound winds. Mario Crispi was creator and performer, member of the souls of the ethno-fusion group Agricantus, which for years has been dedicated to exploring and discovering the possibilities of wind instruments. ... And Mario Crispi handle and plays instruments at a level that no one imagined. Even if some of them invented, creating new and unexpected from plastic pipes (which are used to seeing every day as a wash or as discharges into gas or water!) Or adding to existing instruments, implants and infusing it with life " breath "primitive.

The author explained, between a song and another, the source of some instruments and its approach in the composition and execution: the breath, the wind, is the origin of everything, even his voice, then, is Mario Crispi considered as part of the universe of wind instruments and the use of "primitive" and evocative that makes it transports us to a world of sounds very impressive and unexpected. Crispi does it alone: a sampler records the rhythmic base consists of "puffs" in a variety of instruments, from flutes, pan flutes to change with the addition of special reeds, long ethnic instruments from Australia, the didgeridoo, a tube PVC, combining rhythms and harmonies in an original way, this ritual after the applicant starts to communicate with the public through the timbres of launeddas, the bombardas, Iranian flutes, with enchanting melodies, virtuosic and smooth, rough, violent and languid, which are frequented by a sound heritage of the Mediterranean, the East, but also in South America, merged with another common, jazz and minimalism, to create something completely original and never heard. The influences of Arabia, Africa, Iran that are found in the song of Sicilian carter permeate every song of the concert, one of a kind, offered an interesting festival. ... And the feeling of being mesmerized by the Pied Piper of the story made us feel like children who are enthusiastic in front of the discovery of a different world.

Leonardo Monteverdi **Gli Amici della Musica.net - Nuove Musiche** settembre 2001



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Theatron Musikommer 2004 – Munchen (Germany)



Auditorium Parco della Musica- Roma  
(Italy) – 2008



World Performing & Art festival – Lahore  
(Pakistan) 2006



La Notte della Taranta - Apulia  
(Italy) – 2006



Orestiadi di Gibellina Baglio Di Stefano  
Gibellina (Trapani – Italy) 2004  
Sculpture of Mimmo Paladino

All photos by Cinzia Garofalo

PRODUCTION



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