

# RAPHAEL GUALAZZI



## New album “Happy Mistake”

*“I’m a music lover,* answers the singer/pianist (also a producer/arranger) when asked about his style which mixes jazz, soul, pop, classical and Italian pop music. I don’t feel like giving up any genre I’ve loved since I started music. This album is mixture and I’m like the sum of my passions. “Happy Mistake” won’t surprise whoever discovered the transalpine musician over the past few years. These new songs are a follow-up to the ones that created a buzz when “Reality And Fantasy” was released (the album sold more than 100 000 copies worldwide).

Raphael Gualazzi’s natural inclination for eclectics and melody can be found in these immediately catchy tunes.

But this time, everything is that little more perfect. Fueled by tours and concerts, Raphael Gualazzi’s songwriting is more refined. It’s actually quite difficult to choose one top song from his new album. As opposed to a musical environment that lacks substance, the young artist in his early thirties seems to write catchy tunes, infused with his piano playing and his slightly raspy voice, without any effort. If *“Happy Mistake”* impresses with its immediacy, it’s because it’s been conceived mostly on the spot. While rehearsing or during a sound check, the musician often plays around with a few notes and melodies before writing them down later.

During the recording of the album, Raphael Gualazzi shared the microphone with the French chanteuse Camille on "*L'amie d'un italien*" (An Italian's friend), a cabaret-like track subtly arranged by Vince Mendoza. On the album, a brass section sticks to Raphael Gualazzi's percussive rhythms, inspired by his love for swing and groove. Trumpet player Fabrizio Bosso guests on many tracks. Among them is the very New-Orleans "Un Mare In Luce" and the very Latin American "Mambo Soul". He describes it as being "*piano driven music coloured with brass and percussion, designed to make people dance*".

On the album, Raphael Gualazzi also celebrates Verdi's opera music by developing "Questa O Quella Per Me Pari Sono," from "Rigoletto," putting his own unique spin on this famous Aria and renaming it to "Questa O Quella Per Me Pari Non Sono". But what links these musical snapshots together? The freshness and enthusiasm of Raphael Gualazzi which give character to such jewels as the irresistible "Don't Call My Name", the passionate "I'm Tired", the sophisticated "Baby What's Wrong" and the groovy "Seventy Days Of Love". All these songs are stamped with his soulful voice, in English and Italian. "*Most of my choices are driven by tempo, he adds. I think I could sing these songs in other languages and it wouldn't spoil their musicality.*"

The last two years have been a whirlwind for Raphael Gualazzi but the musician still knows what is real. He learns from every experience. He came to the festival of Sanremo (an Italian institution) in 2011 and won four prizes including the TV Press Award, the newcomer artists section and the Critics' "Mia Martini" Award. He'll be back there in 2013, eager to pay tribute to an Italian tradition for popular songs, with two tracks from "Happy Mistake". While participating in the great Eurovision Song Contest 2011 (he represented Italy and came second), his goal was to play a different kind of music. About Eurovision Raphael Gualazzi said: "*I've given interviews where I mentioned my influences, Otis Spann, Muddy Waters and Art Tatum. Maybe some people will check them out on YouTube*".

Born in Urbino, Raphael Gualazzi has grown up in a sumptuous area. He says about his birthplace, "*it's a place drenched with history, a UNESCO Word Heritage site and homeland of many great creators as the painter Raphael. It's a remote place but very inspiring. Even though I'm living in London now, I love to come back here*" says the musician. This is where he started learning the piano at the age of nine. He entered the Music School of Pesaro five years later, and played the piano. He studied the classical composers for eight years. In 1995, Raphael Gualazzi discovered jazz thanks to a friend of his father (himself a drummer in a pop band) and a whole new world opened to his ears. He dived into ragtime and 1900's stride, and started exploring the music of Scott Joplin, Jelly Roll Morton, Fats Waller, Art Tatum and Mary Lou Williams.

Later, he discovered Duke Ellington, Django Reinhardt and Ray Charles. Despite singing in a choir, Raphael Gualazzi decided to focus on playing keyboards. *"I love old jazz, he says. It was popular and people danced to it. By today's standards, it's become a bit intellectual, but through my feelings, I'm drawn to this more communicative form of expression."* At the beginning of this new century, Raphael Gualazzi appeared in many festivals.

In 2005, he recorded his first album, "Love Outside The Window", and featured alongside Jamie Callum and Diane Krall on the compilation "Piano Jazz" (for which he recorded "Georgia On My Mind"), two years later. Following this, Raphael Gualazzi was invited to come to Vermont and New Hampshire to be part of the project "The History & Mystery Of Jazz" with American jazzmen Michael Ray and Steve Ferraris.

In 2009, he signed with Sugar Music (through Caterina Caselli). He then played at the Blue Note Club in Milan and started to write new material. He finally gained worldwide exposure when Gilles Peterson remixed the track

"Reality And Fantasy". The album (named after the song) followed quickly and since then Raphael Gualazzi has been exposed to massive worldwide audiences. People have fallen in love with his way of making music;

without computers but with real melodies played by real people. With "Happy Mistake", the very much talented and quite unique Raphael Gualazzi is about to write a new chapter of his own book. Be ready to read.

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