

Interview Transcript – Benedetta

Interviewer: Christian Ferlaino

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English Translation

CF: Let's start with what kind of music you like to listen to. What kind of music do you like?

B: I had my first approach to music in middle school, so I started studying transverse flute there in middle school, and then also in musical high school. Transverse flute, piano, so I was always attached to classical music. I always liked it, I also played in orchestras, even in the choir, so I was very fascinated by it. In fact I was a bit sceptical about this workshop, because it's just getting out of the comfort zone a bit, I didn't know what to expect. New objects that I had never seen before. As for folk music, I know very little about it. Yes I like it, but listening to it every day, not so much. So let's try it, let's see how... an enrichment of the cultural baggage. Because everything in the musical sphere has always fascinated me anyway. I have to say that, contrary to what I thought, I'm enjoying it. True, yes. It's also helping me personally, precisely because I was too fixated on the scores, I was always following a pattern. I wasn't doing so well in improvisation. Maybe because of my character too, which is a bit introverted. I found it hard to... go out. Instead, I'm seeing that in this workshop I feel freer to express myself. So a lot more tranquillity too.

CF: That's great! What kind of music do you usually listen to, classical music you say?

B: Yes, classical music mainly, but also pop music, hip hop.

CF: What are your favourites?

B: As far as classical music or in general?

CF: In general.

B: As far as piano is concerned, I like Chopin a lot. But also Beethoven. As for pop music, I'm a bit more for the old classics, for example Baglioni, De André, I like Giovanotti a lot. I mean I like more... trap, absolutely not! I like more sung music, the poetry within the lyrics more.

CF: And in these different genres, in these quite different musics... do you see a common thread between, say, Baglioni, De André and Chopin and Beethoven, or do you look for different things in each?

B: Let's say I hear them not so far apart, because by ear anyway, you can hum and sing them both maybe, can't you? Let's say that everything that gets you into the piece or into the song, gets you in touch with yourself as well. I don't know how to explain it, because maybe I prefer Chopin's accompaniment on one side and maybe De André's lyrics on the other.

CF: Is this contact with yourself an emotional involvement or an intellectual involvement? How would you describe it?

B: More emotional because maybe you are told about situations that you have experienced, that you have seen even from the outside. You see yourself in what he says maybe.

- CF: OK, this with singer-songwriters and with instrumental music instead?
- B: With instrumental music it's more spiritual in my opinion. It puts you in touch with the spirit.
When you get goosebumps for example, when you maybe play or listen.
- CF: So you would say there is also a bodily response.
- B: Yes, yes.
- CF: You were saying, you studied music and you started in middle school with the flute.
Immediately? I mean, you didn't do music before?
- B: No, not in middle school, when I was 11.
- CF: Can you tell me a little bit about what it was like? What was the teacher like? What was making music in middle school like?
- B: So... the teacher let's say wasn't exactly the best.
- CF: In what way?
- B: She demanded a bit too much. Not on a technical level. How to say... I don't know how best to express it. But she was a bit... She was very well prepared, yes, but she was a bit tactless in her contact with the students.
- CF: Tact from a personal point of view, or in understanding the students' musical needs?
- B: No, really from a personal point of view. In fact, for a while I hesitated whether to continue or not because... how should I put it... it wasn't that I didn't want to do it, but the environment she created was a bit heavy. However, my passion prevailed and I continued undeterred. Because then I had other teachers within the school to whom I spoke about this issue. They just knew her because that was how she was, that was her personality. So they also supported me a bit. But these experiences also serve to fortify. I looked at it a little bit this way, let's say. And then in high school I found teachers who were much more qualified, much more student-friendly, both for transverse flute and piano, and I got on very well there. They made me even more passionate about this world.
- CF: So you say this teacher you had middle school didn't really encourage you to play the flute.
You found some difficulties, but you solved them. How did you solve these difficulties?
- B: I solved them by leaning being supported by another teacher.
- CF: What was the difference between the two teachers? What did this teacher have that helped you?
- B: He was a bit more understanding. He was a bit calmer also. Let's say... how should I put it...?
From the other teacher I felt sidelined, maybe to make the other pupils prevail.
- CF: Because the others were more proficient? How come this?
- B: No, because... I'll give you an example, precisely because... With the flute ensemble she used to put me third, fourth flute. Whereas in the orchestra, still at secondary school, I was first flute. She didn't like that either.
- CF: But why do you think that was?
- B: ...

CF: You don't know?

B: I don't know. Maybe she was also in conflict with the professor who was in charge of the orchestra, also this thing here.

CF: So you say, there was a personal problem between you the teacher.

B: Yes, I perceived that.

CF: And the other teacher, on the other hand, you saw him much more... more supportive?

B: Yes, yes, much more, yes, yes, yes.

CF: What is your earliest memory where there's music? Whether it is the first time you heard music, or a memory of you as a child or even younger? The very first memory that contains music or has to do with music.

B: So, the first, first, maybe, it is even trivial. I was four or five years old. My mother listens to Vasco Rossi. All the time... his concerts, all the CDs.... and I remember when I was little she listened to Vasco Rossi and I had a little plastic electric guitar, so I strummed, played, you know...These things here. Or even the bongo, the little bongo, and I used to stand and bang there.

CF: Always the same age?

B: Yes, yes, yes, yes. 4-5 years old, always about that age. Yes, those are the first memories I have.

CF: Is it a good memory?

B: Yes, yes, yes, yes. I liked it, I liked it. Then I also remember Grandpa playing a blade of grass. I don't know how to explain it. Like he used to make us a whistle, and us grandchildren... I mean, there were a couple of us... he used to make us all play together, like that.

CF: Are they good memories?

B: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

CF: Are there any non-musical sounds that you particularly like? A sound that you like to hear or that catches your attention when you hear it?

B: For example in nature?

CF: In nature, man-made sounds, by machines, sounds...

B: I like the sound of the sea, like the waves, or the wind. Sounds that are very natural, just related to nature, put me in a quiet, calm place... kind of like a background to relax, to get away from the world... from the chaos, more like the chaos of the city. You disconnect, you go to a forest, for example, or to the beach, and you're there contemplating yourself, without talking.

CF: So they evoke calm moods in you?

B: Yes, they convey calmness to me, you immerse yourself in your thoughts, or even, maybe you don't think about anything and just concentrate on the sound, on how you feel. As we were saying before at the workshop, contact with yourself also, contact with the ground, feeling your body, these things here. They've always fascinated me a bit, to say the truth.

CF: You've partly answered...This is the last question. What do you think of the workshop? You've already said something though...

B: Yes, it is indeed an experience that surprised me. A lot. In a positive way of course. I didn't expect it to make me feel so... precisely... free, if you like. From every convention, from every scheme, how can I put it? Then also relating to new objects. Maybe one thinks of toys, maybe one doesn't give them all that much importance. But there is a world behind that...one is wrong to underestimate, that is. Maybe I also underestimated this aspect, but no, instead you have fun... because I had fun... and you also feel yourself. You also listen to others, because maybe you are more focused on following a score and instead there, in the improvisation, you have to listen to others, to be able to move with them and in synergy, in harmony.

CF: And the music we make, I guess is quite far from what you normally listen to.

B: Yes, yes, yes.

CF: What did you think of it?

B: I liked it. I liked it a lot. Just because of the improvisation. Because it evokes... when I closed my eyes for example... it evoked an imaginary, like a forest with the sound of the frog... I can't remember the instrument, what it's called. As if each instrument had a voice connected to nature. So when you close your eyes...I, for example, closed my eyes and imagined an artistic landscape... artistic landscape with so many layers of voices inside, which evoked the frog, the cicada, the wind itself, or for example the flute, the bird perhaps. It's as if you went in this sort of bubble. So do others. And you really feel part of that design.