



Mondo - Thailand: interview with Maestro Carlo Zundo, a well-rounded musician who reinterprets the Italian tradition by presenting it in a modernized key to Thai and international audiences

Dal nostro corrispondente a Bangkok - 24 mag 2022 (Prima Notizia 24) Having moved from Venice to town named as "the Venice of the East" -Bangkok- Maestro Carlo Zundo, reinterprets and curates with truly unique and innovative arrangements, a wide repertoire of scores of Traditional Italian Music, delivering to the cosmopolitan audiences of Bangkok and the whole of Thailand a new version of Italian Classics of all time.

Maestro Carlo Zundo has blue eyes, an open and sincere smile, a prepared and cultured musician, he has crossed musical genres of all kinds, landing today, to the reinterpretation of Classics of Italian Music now famous all over the World, playing them in an innovative way but always with great respect for the cultural roots of belonging. In his professional configuration, it is worth noting the achievement of a Master's degree in Classical Guitar, a title through which he now teaches a subject and an instrument that require great theoretical and practical competence. By what routes and paths did you come to Bangkok, starting from your native Veneto region? In 2002 I had a store, recording studio and music school in Mestre, where I was teaching courses for sound engineers and guitar/bass/mandolin, both collective and individual, and I was also actively working in music production and recording for independents and majors such as Sony, ECM, Rai Trade, Fox Tv, Sugar and many other Record Companies. One of my partners invited me to go to Bangkok for a couple of weeks to a friend of his who worked for a large hotel company. During a company party, I met my future and current wife who worked in the purchasing department. We got married here with Thai/Chinese rite and-after a short time-moved to Italy, where we stayed for about 10 years. When Leonardo and Elisa, our children, turned 5 years old and 2 years old respectively, we decided to move to Bangkok, the school placement would otherwise have been very difficult for them at a later stage, given the total diversity of both methods and content of the educational system of schools in Bangkok. Traveling, moving, comparing yourself to Thailand, what differences have you noticed from your previous way of life in Italy? What has particularly impressed you from this point of view? I think that here in Bangkok life is very different depending on whether you live in the center, in an international context, where you breathe a globalized Thailand, speak English and in some respects is extremely organized and evolved, or whether instead you stay in a Thai village, where by necessity you find yourself more quickly coming up against a totally different view of reality, sometimes for many foreigners incomprehensible. I think the most obvious differences are

found in the rules-or rather rituals-that govern even simple personal relationships and in the speed and patience with which one must immerse oneself in everyday life. The thing that impressed me most is surely the realization that -for many things- it was my approach that was totally wrong, hasty and sometimes, without malice, a bit disrespectful to others. I am from the Veneto region and it comes naturally to me to run and dwell little on the so to speak futile things and form. Here I have learned to appreciate their pace and to take and enjoy my own space. I am definitely more relaxed than when I lived in Italy, although life as a musician is not always without worries and risks, quite the contrary. What kind of stimuli and suggestions have Thai cultural and musical realities offered you so far? Bangkok is a cauldron of musical genres and contaminations of all kinds and from all over the world. For musicians who make their living from performing, playing here is certainly rewarding in terms of excitement and possibilities. In Italy, the life of the concert performer is hampered by an obtuse bureaucratic management of things artistic that has been leading it down the barrel scraping for years. I remember an argument I had during a concert with a zealous ENPALS inspector because while unloading my car (an acoustic guitar weighing 2 kg) I was not wearing safety shoes. This is not to say, of course, that everything is perfect, but at least it appears less ridiculous and grotesque. Upon my arrival in Thailand I knew no one, and after a few months I met some musicians at a club not far from my home. When they heard that I was a guitarist they dragged me on stage. From there the connections, especially with Thai musicians, gave me tremendous personal satisfaction and helped me get my name out there allowing me to continue doing what I always dreamed of and gave my life for. As a musician one of the most challenging things was undoubtedly being able to change repertoire, band practically every night. Every day I played in different places with good and trained Thai musicians especially Standard Jazz and Pop. Coming from the classical world, although in my working life I have always ranged a lot in the musical world, not having things planned and clear gave me quite a few headaches. Now it's almost ten years that I've been living here, privately teaching guitar and playing both solo and in groups in different venues and for public and private events, guitar and mandolin, with international and traditional Italian repertoire. I follow the artistic education of my children who work in the world of fashion and entertainment and have participated in several films and commercials nationally and throughout Southeast Asia. For the immediate future I am working around the project of opening a music school that can bind the Italian musical and cultural tradition and make it affordable for everyone. There are dozens of young young Italian/Thai children who would find an environment and method of study different from the standard offered in International or private Thai schools. What advice do you feel you can give to those who -like you- decide one day to move to live or work in Thailand? I honestly recommend Thailand only to those who have already found a job from Italy or are planning to get married to a Thai citizen. Unfortunately-if you are talking about visas-Thailand is not very flexible and I have seen many people return home either because of health problems (hospitals are private and if you don't have very good insurance you can hardly afford the costs of hospitalization or special care), or because of breakups with your partner where children or not, property or not, you are sent home with so much goodbye. Thailand is a phenomenal place that I love and feel like home but it is not for everyone. Respect for their traditions and

customs is key to being able to feel part of it. If you are not willing to open up and change your habits you will hardly live happily here but if you are eager to see and experience a new perspective of life here you will remain curious children forever.

di Francesco Tortora Martedì 24 Maggio 2022