

michéal CASTALDO

FAQ About Aceto

Q- What was the reason for choosing your album title Aceto, which is Italian for vinegar?

A- Vinegar has incredible powers, just like the music, to heal and help us grieve. Just like life, vinegar has both a sour but also a wonderful sweet taste. (Think a great Balsamic). I recently read a book titled *The Healing Powers of Vinegar* by Cal Orey, then it all made sense to go with it. Lastly, it's a great conversation starter.

Q- How is the Aceto CD different from your previous albums in musical detail, artistic concept?

A- There are many reasons why this new album is a world apart from the last two Italian CD's. First, *Aceto* is a concept album, its songs were chosen for their powerful themes of healing, hope and grace.

Going back a bit. Before I embraced my Italian roots, I released two English-language CD's (*Only Human* and *Gioia2*) of original songs with my band "Lives of a Cell". The success of these CD's got me noticed and led me to write songs and produce other artists such as Grammy winner Jose Feliciano. Now at this stage in my career recording classic Italian songs, I wanted to include at least two original songs on my Italian CDs. With *Aceto*, which builds on the strengths and success of my past two Italian CDs (*Villa* and *La Dolce Vita 'N America*), one of the original songs ("Io Credo") has already received major industry recognition. I passed on 6 major artists who wanted to record this song (call me crazy, but there's a long story to this, and once you hear it, you'll understand the method to my madness).

The songs in *Villa* were recorded over ten years, never for an official release, but as personal and promotional gifts. The songs on *La Dolce Vita 'N America* celebrate immigration and Italian community, and the glamour of Italy of the 50s and to recreate an era through music. *Aceto* is my gift to others of healing, grace, hope, and therapy. Listeners have responded to its songs with "this song gives me goosebumps" or "this song brings a tear to my eye". My goal is that *Aceto* be a spiritual and orgasmic experience for anyone who listens to it.

Q- At what stage in your career do you currently find yourself?

A- I'm at an exciting turning point, kind of like the elbow in the hockey stick, headed up. The feedback from "Io Credo" plus support and enthusiasm from friends and colleagues in the music community have been encouraging like never before I see the new album as a "game changer" which helps me take my art to the next level. I know there's no magic bullet, but "Io Credo" has given me the confidence and energy to seize new opportunities.

Like Andrea Bocelli's "Con Te Partiro" or Josh Groban's "You raise me up," "Io Credo" will be MY song to finally break into the international scene in a big way. As a songwriter and a song interpreter, I've got even more creative control over the final expression of my music. If I get it right with *Aceto* and connect with my listeners on a spiritual and emotional level, I'll be doing this for a very long time.

Q- How does Aceto connect with listeners on an emotional level?

A- It's a natural for us to want to create life again when we're grieving the loss of a loved one. At one point in our life, we will have lost a loved one. These classic songs, which have stood the test of time, touch our need for continuity, remembrance, and joy in the face of loss. They seem to touch listeners at all ages, too. My mix engineer Ric Schnupp, is 23 and can't even listen to the English versions of these songs, because my Italian versions speak to him more profoundly.

Q- Are there any other artists who have influenced you?

A- Of course. To name a few, Gino Vannelli, Mino Reitano, Mario Merola, Lucio Dalla and Claudio Villa have influenced my career. I'm standing on the shoulders of these incredible artists and others like Herb Alpert and Quincy Jones.

Q- You've been very active marketing and promoting your music using all the tools of social networking. How many fans can you call your own as followers and customers?

A- Approx 5,000—that counts folks who've gone to and used my sites for my Italian vacation property, and my database of customers of my family olive oil, including those from Myspace, Facebook and LinkedIn. There has been a paradigm shift in the past ten years, and social media is increasingly important for getting the word out there.

Q- How does your extensive web presence works with your albums?

A- My audience still likes to buy hard copy CDs and most sales happen at my performances. Thanks to my web presence, I now have clients who've stayed at my Italian villa, bought my olive oil, hired me to perform at their private concerts and then bought my CD in multiple copies to give away as gifts for friends and family. In a real sense, they've bought into the Castaldo Italian experience and become friends as well.

Q- Who makes up your core audience?

A- My core listeners are typically affluent, well-traveled, multi-lingual women and men, usually age 40 and older. When "Io Credo" gets out there, I'm confident I will also connect with lots of 20+ year olds looking for new twists on old songs.

Q- You seem to be performing almost all the time. Any new, special, extended partners in place or planned, with groups, mobs, outlets, organizations?

A- I perform at 60-80 events a year at festivals, private parties, and concerts. I belong to several Italian organizations and networking groups. I've partnered with one of the premier dance promoters in the US, Harry Frank Towers, who will be remixing 1-2 songs from *Aceto*. Sales of L'Arcobaleno –Che Meraviglia il Mondo (the first remix) of these digital downloads will benefit three organizations: University Hospice in Staten Island, the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society and La Dolce Vita foundation. The dance remixes will be released sometime in May. Also, with the virtual launch I have 20+ partners (more than 100,000 names) who will be promoting the launch of *Aceto*. With my music and other enterprises, I'll continue to help organizations to raise money as I did in 2009—more than \$40,000.

All of my experience, good and bad have assisted me in becoming the musician and person I am today. I've embraced my roots. At my performances, audience members come to love my Italian

experience, the villa for rent, the olive oil, and, of course, the music. Fans have become close family friends. And all my projects create fans for my music.

Q- What's new about your commitment to, and vision for, Aceto?

A- I exec produced the CD so my commitment speaks for itself. My vision is realized in these songs, and my productions are pure and direct expressions of voices and feelings. After 20 years of music-making, I'm confronting, like many other artists, a dramatically changed and challenging marketplace. We work the music download angle more than ever before. We are promoting the CD *before* the release rather than after. As both an artist and entrepreneur, I'm able to count on other ventures, other passions, and not just album sales, to keep me making music.

Q- You mentioned award winning collaborations. Who else is featured on the CD?

A- Jim Papoulis, who co-wrote one of the original songs with me, is one of the biggest selling choral composers. Bassist Jeffrey Carney has performed with Sting and is also the lead bassist for the NY Pops Orchestra. Alex Alexander, the drummer, is on a world tour. Joe Mowatt another drummer on the project plays on various Broadway shows. Some of the finest string players in NYC (Sami Merdinian, Krystof Witek, Orlando Wells, and Danny Miller) were conducted by Jim Papoulis. Solo violinist Chris Tedesco has worked with top recording artists. Isaac Raz, one of the programmers, a keyboard player and background vocalist, is an Emmy Award-winner. My co-writer and co-producer Stein B. Svendsen has received many awards for his music and film compositions in his native Norway. Working in the acclaimed Soundtrack NY studio, our vocal and mix engineer Ric Schnupp, only 23, is poised to become an in-demand engineer.

Q- When and where will the Aceto CD be available?

A- Aceto will be available on June 15th at iTunes and on over 250 digital stores world-wide. For physical CD copies you can find it at Amazon.com as well as many other online e-tail stores and E. Rossi & Co., mom & pop shops at various little Italy's in the USA & Canada.

Have more questions? To schedule an interview with Micheal CASTALDO contact Dana Humphrey at Whitegate PR - Cell: 619-414-9307 dana@whitegatepr.com

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