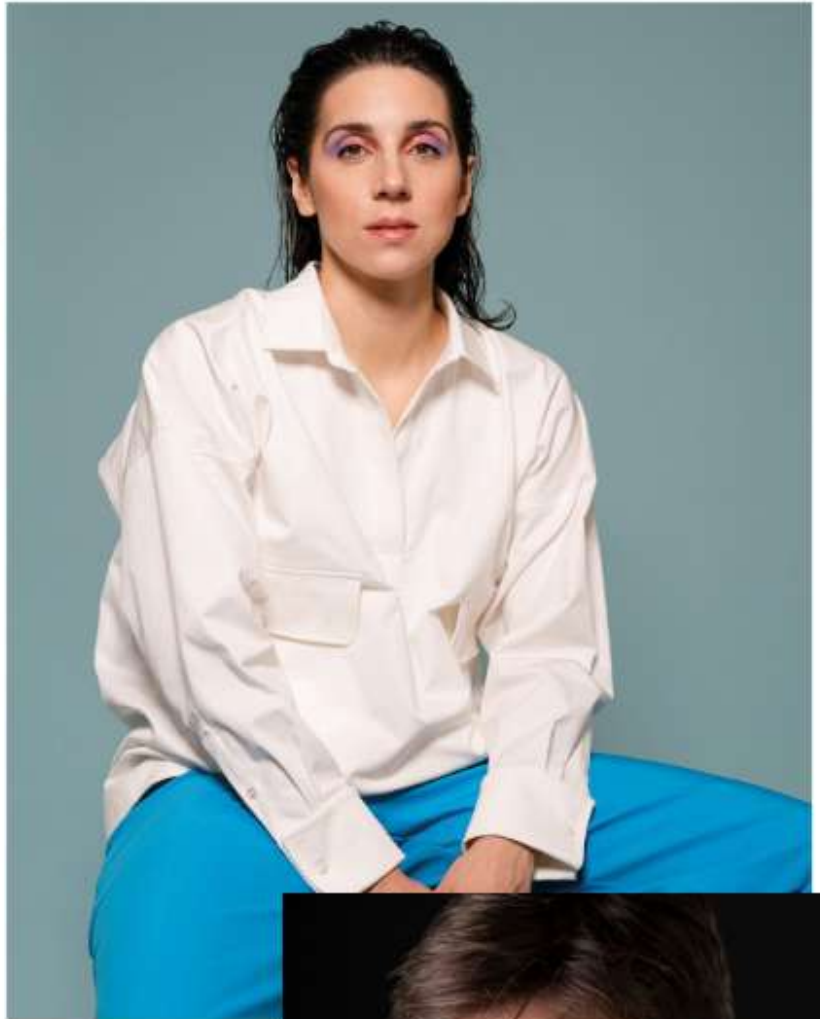


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Today's climate for musicians is full of opportunities, but also challenges. It is certainly the case for composers of classical music, who have the freedom of "wandering" into new territories, making use of and integrating various elements into their music, from experimenting with new composing techniques to using new timbres, rendered by electronic means, or by new instruments, everything in expressing one's own aesthetic mark. We talked to composer and professor SALVATORE FREGA about this, about the challenges a composer faces today in developing their career, as well as the relationship between being a composer and a professor, all in this interview.

Salvatore Frega was born to Arbëreshë parents from Firmo, a small village in the province of Cosenza, and, thanks to the intuition of his parents, he approached the piano at the tender age of four. He participates in various national and European competitions, collecting 7 first places. He was the guest of honor, in 2004, at just 15 years old, at Palazzo Galeotta in Taranto with a concert entirely based on the romantic repertoire. He attended master's and specialization courses with M<sup>o</sup> Aldo Ciccolini and M<sup>o</sup> Cristiano Burato. He graduated in Piano at the "Stanislao Giacomantonio" Conservatory in Cosenza under the guidance of M<sup>o</sup> Grazia Amato. He studied composition at the same Conservatory under the guidance of M<sup>o</sup> Pasquale De Rosa, then moved to the Fiesole School of Music. During his years of study in composition, he was appointed assistant of the DMC - Contemporary Music Department of the Fiesole School of Music. He graduated in Composition at the Fiesole School of Music under the guidance of Maestro Andrea Portera as well as obtaining the High Specialization Diploma at the Accademia Nazionale Santa Cecilia in Rome under the guidance of Maestro Ivan Fedele. He also studied and perfected his composition skills with Salvatore Sciarrino and Giacomo Manzoni.



# SALVATORE

A man with a beard, wearing a white button-down shirt and light-colored trousers, is sitting outdoors. He is looking down at a large document or blueprint he is holding in his hands. The background is a blurred green, suggesting foliage. The lighting is bright, creating a high-contrast scene. A thin white line is visible, framing the man's head and shoulders.

# RE FREGA

interview by  
Alex Suci

## EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

**Dear Mr. Frega, it is nice meeting you. First of all, how do you find composing in today's music industry climate? What challenges does a composer face, especially at the beginning of their career?**

My pleasure. The composition industry has changed a lot today compared to 20 years ago. I talk about evolution and an integrative character towards the listener. The composer is much more attentive to the emotion he arouses in the listener and the direction given is not only personal research, which must never be missing, but also research into listening and interest towards the listener. At the beginning of his career, the composer must first find his own dimension and research, he must not be the same as others, a copy of other colleagues from the past, but create his own musical identity. For every start of a career, it is difficult to stand out, but you only do it if you have the right personality, creating a good networking with personalities close to yours.

**What do you think the most important differences are between how a composer used to work in the past versus how one works today?**

First of all, the help of technology does not always bring the composer the desired result. Technology, in actual writing on paper, brings a great limitation, that of not imagining the sound, which is important for the composer. In the recent past (70s/90s) the composer was focused on his musical research and little on the final result. Today the listener's ear has changed, it is much faster and the composer must return to excite and get excited, not neglecting personal research but nourishing it with strong perceptive stimuli.

**You have many accolades; many of your works have received international attention in different contexts, such as the Global Music Awards in Los Angeles, the Third International Biennial of Contemporary Music in Koper, or the Akademia Music Awards in Los Angeles. What influence do you think it has on your creative impetus?**

I take inspiration from the moment I live and try to bring it into music, without distorting any sound. My music moves a lot on colours. I love creating colourful scenarios with the orchestra, creating a sound mirror for the listener. This perhaps brought me recognition in various countries around the world.

**Concerning your composing style, what process does a composer go through while finding his aesthetic mark?**

I start with the project of each song. I don't let myself be guided only by instinct, but I try to create a mind-heart relationship.

Having imagined the project, and put it on paper, I began to imagine the sound amalgam that can derive from it, creating small drawings on paper with respect to the movement of the orchestra or of the single instrument or of the voice, until arriving at the first musical draft. Every time I return to the composition, I don't change the process done previously, on the contrary, I move forward and let my heart guide me. The end result is the search for emotion, if this happens, then I'm on the right path, otherwise, I have to review something.

**How does this aesthetic mark evolve over time, and what direction would you like to give to your works in the future?**

I can't tell you, I can only imagine how I will want to create more and more compositions that characterize my being, my person, and my soul. However, it is right to think that my aesthetics will move on to a research that I have been carrying out lately, which is psychoacoustics. Understanding the public's perception of that context and making it very accessible.

**What do you think the general direction is that contemporary opera and contemporary classical music in general will take?**


Contemporary opera and contemporary classical music will increasingly come to be of interest to the era in which we live. For a limited period of time, this was lost, but everything returns. Today the composer has realized what surrounds him and how everything then serves for the compositional and perceptive experience. In my opinion, we are going in the right direction, also considering the widest possible audience.

**You also teach at the Conservatory in Cosenza. Do you feel like teaching and composing complement each other? Do they influence each other?**

Yes, teaching and composing are complementary. You learn a lot from the student's experience, and you grow musically, as there is an exchange of energy and thoughts that is good not only for the student himself but also for the teacher. Our task is to understand the student, support him, and guide him, and his growth will also be the growth of the teacher.

**You clearly have a propensity towards modeling the current and the next generation of music makers or composers. You are a founder and the artistic director of the Accademia Musicale della Versilia. What were the factors that made you take this step?**

In addition to the interest in what revolves around music and



performance, it is also of interest to me to bring the passion and adrenaline of the stage and of writing to younger people and enthusiasts, thus the Accademia Musicale della Versilia was born, which looks at music teaching as a business that is not only economic, but also brings together teachers with great professionalism who help the company grow. Yes, because the Academy is legally a company and acts as such in its musical production.

**What are your future projects, both in the near future and those that are more distant?**

There are many, but I'm trying to organize them. First of all, I am writing for an orchestra commission that I received from the MiTo 2024 Festival, and another commission for an American Festival also for 2024 that I cannot reveal yet. Then keep writing and writing some more. I plan to increase the locations of my Academy, opening in other parts of the world. In Italy there are already two, one in Viareggio and the other in Sesto Fiorentino. There are many other projects and I am honored that your Magazine is interested. I will keep you updated.

**Thank you very much, Mr. Frega!**