

# Michael Occhipinti & The Sicilian Project, Featuring ILARIA *PILAR* PATASSINI



"Rarely have I seen performers – and particularly singers – who immersed themselves in the music as much as Italian vocalist Pilar."

*Alayne McGregor,*

*Ottawajazzscene.ca*

"Sicilian tempers run legendarily high, but inhabitants of the Italian island—and their descendants—have a matching appetite for fun. Even a downpour couldn't have dampened this sextet's raucous energy."

*Alex Varty, Georgia*

*Straight (Vancouver Jazz Festival review)*

"Michael Occhipinti's miraculous sounding guitar, Don Byron's warm and woody clarinet, and the magnificent voices of the ineffable Dominic Mancuso and the divine Pilar. No pomp; no circumstance; just wonderfully and magically made music."

*Raul da Gama, JazzdaGama*

Michael Occhipinti's JUNO Nominated Sicilian Jazz Project has been called "a masterpiece of cultural fusion," mixing rare Old World folk material with the New World sounds of electric guitars, chamber music, funk and reggae grooves, and modern jazz. Using music sung by Sicilian fishermen, sulphur miners, and folk musicians as a starting point, The Sicilian Project's music is like a trip on the Mediterranean that somehow manages to detour to Mali, Jamaica, and Toronto. The group presents a repertoire that is like nothing else, performed by some of Toronto's most versatile musicians, as well as featured guests such as Italian singer Pilar, The Gryphon Trio, and clarinetist Don Byron.

Thanks to their work with the Sicilian Jazz Project, Michael and his co-producer brother Roberto Occhipinti received the prestigious 2009 Ragusani nel Mondo Award in Ragusa, Sicily. In 2010 Michael Occhipinti received a Chalmers Fellowship to live in Sicily and explore the folk culture further. The fruits of that trip form the basis of the album *Muorica* and its stunning 40 page book that documents Michael Occhipinti's experience in Sicily.

The Sicilian Jazz Project has performed at festivals across Canada, Italy, the USA, and Mexico, including the Festival Cultural de Zacatecas, Mexico, The Rochester International Jazz Festival, and the Ottawa Chamber Music Festival. Mixing a unique repertoire, great story-telling and stellar musicianship, the band is not to be missed live.