



23<sup>rd</sup> August 1973 is the date of the first concert of the first edition of Umbria Jazz. It was a great success, despite the fairly superficial promotion. Umbria Jazz initially was "itinerant", moving from one city to another, with free concerts (Piazza del Popolo in Todi, Piazza IV Novembre in Perugia, Villalago in Terni, Teatro Romano in Gubbio, the fortress of Albornoz in Spoleto, Piazza San Francesco in Umbertide).

For jazz, club music or, at best, theatre music, all performed in small spaces, this was a shock and festivals of this kind have been arising throughout Italy ever since. During Umbria Jazz, towns and squares of Umbria are crowded with people. In some cases, the musicians have had difficulty in reaching the venues where they are scheduled to play. Even Count Basie's orchestra remained stuck in a jam, caused by spectators. After a brief pause, the show was revived in 1982 with many changes until 1985, when the non-profit *Associazione Umbria jazz* (Umbria Jazz Association) was created, managing the trademark of "Umbria Jazz", owned by the Region, who have since been handling every aspect of the festival (formula, artistic choices, organization, logistics, sponsorship). The festival takes place almost entirely in Perugia, with a few concerts held in Terni, Narni, Orvieto, Foligno, Gubbio, Città di Castello and Assisi.

Since 2003, the concerts are held at the arena of Santa Giuliana, with names such as Ornette Coleman, Van Morrison, Bobby McFerrin, Earth, Wind & Fire, James Brown and Manhattan Transfer. Other concerts are held at the 18<sup>th</sup> century Teatro del Pavone (Sarah Vaughan, 1984), at the Teatro Comunale Morlacchi (Caetano Veloso), at the 13<sup>th</sup>

century Church of San Francesco al Prato (Gil Evans, Carmen McRae, the Liberation music orchestra), at the Filipino oratory of Santa Cecilia, in the Sala Podiani of the National Gallery of Umbria, in the Cathedral of Perugia (the Gospel choirs), in the Basilica of San Pietro (Jan Garbarek & Hilliard Ensemble for the Officium project) and at the Renato Curi Football Stadium (Miles Davis in 1984 and Sting in 1987).

The free concerts are held in Piazza IV Novembre and in the Carducci gardens. In the twenty years following the 1982 edition there have been some departures from jazz into the territories of rock, blues and Brazilian song, with greater focus on Italian jazz. The artistic choices are divided into two currents: on the one hand, there is Orthodox jazz and black music (blues, gospel, soul, zydeco, marching band, rhythm 'n' blues) with various overlaps into pop-rock, for the general public.

Performances by artists such as Elton John, Carlos Santana, James Brown, Donna Summer, Eric Clapton, Earth, Wind & Fire and Simply Red may be seen in this perspective.