

Biographical Note

Marina Rossell first performed professionally in 1974 as an opener for Lluís Llach, Ovidi Montllor, Maria del Mar Bonet and others. In 1976, she released her debut album “Si volíeu escoltar”, which was produced by Llach and drew together a number of traditional Catalan songs brought up to date. These she would perform in her early concerts and soon music critics began to call her “the exquisite voice”.

She has recorded over 20 albums in total, including “Penyora” (1979), winner of the Fotogramas de Plata award. “Penyora”, which includes the song *La Gavina*, made her highly popular.

Other successes include her “Bruixes i Maduixes”, Best Catalan Album of 1980; “Rosa de foc”, winner of the Radio 4 people’s choice award; “Cos meu recorda”; “Barca del temps”; “Disc d’Or”; “Cinema Blau”; “Marina” and “Ha llovido”, her first Spanish-language album, which was a major hit throughout Spain and Latin America.

Other releases include “Entre línies” (1997), “Y rodará el mundo” (2000), “Cap al cel” (2002), “Marítim” (2003), “Clàssics de Nadal” (2005), “Vistas al mar” (colonial habaneras), “Clàssics catalans” (2007) and “Marina Rossell al Liceu”, album and DVD in 2008. In 2011, she released her first album singing the songs of her friend Georges Moustaki, the beginning of a trilogy dedicated to the French singer-songwriter from Alexandria that would bring her widespread acclaim. The CD, entitled “Marina Rossell canta Moustaki, vol. 1” (2011), was the bestselling album in Catalan, topping 30,000 copies sold. On the second album in the trilogy, Rossell fulfilled Moustaki’s wish, singing his favourite songs, which he had selected for her. The last album in the trilogy, “Marina Rossell tribut a Moustaki”, was recorded in the summer of 2014 at the Grec Festival of Barcelona. On the album, Rossell is joined by Pia Moustaki (the singer’s daughter), the French singer Nilda Fernández, David Carabén (Mishima), Cesk Freixas, and others. In the summer of 2015, Marina Rossell collaborated with the choreographer Ramon Oller to give a course on dance and voice at the Menéndez Pelayo International University (UIMP) in Santander.

In 2015, Marina Rossell released “Cançons de la Resistència”, translated into Catalan by Josep Tero. In this album, she brings together and adapts songs of resistance from the Second World War and the struggle against Nazism. They are songs that form part of a landscape at a key moment, a historic time. Included are *Oh Bella Ciao* (a song of the Italian partisans, performed in collaboration with Grup Manel), *Lili Marlene*, *Grândola Sun-kissed Town* (with Enric Montefusco), *The Hymn of the Deportees*, “*If you want to write me*”, *Song of the French Partisans* (with Paco Ibáñez) and *So Much War*, written by the singer herself. These are songs to build resilience and never forget the calamity and misfortune of war. The album’s cover image and calligraphy are the work of internationally renowned sculptor Jaume Plensa.

Marina Rossell has made numerous tours of Europe, Latin America and North Africa. High points of her international career include concerts at the Theatre de la Ville of Paris, the Tenco Festival in San Remo and the Autumn Music Festival in Como, as well as her performances in Armenia and Bogotá, the International Festival of Cuba, the Pro-Indígenas Bolivia concert, the Barcelona-Sarajevo Festival, the Guaraní Cultural Centre of Paraguay, the National Theatre of Cuba, the Theatre l’Encien Bergic (Belgium –

Benelux) and the foyer and stage of the Teatro N.D. Ateneo in Buenos Aires. Other major events include her participation at Midem in Cannes (2000) and her many concerts in Barcelona's Palau de la Música. She has sung in the city of La Plata (Buenos Aires, Argentina), Greece, Rome, France, Switzerland, Frankfurt, Santiago de Chile, Guatemala, Algeria, Baghdad, Israel, Palestine, Ciudad Juárez (Mexico), New York and more.

She has collaborated and recorded with many songwriters and performers, most notably Moustaki, Montserrat Caballé, Lila Downs, Miguel Poveda, Angelo Branduardi, Tete Montoliu, L. E. Aute, Carlos Cano, M. Parrot, Santiago Auserón, Paco Ibáñez, Manzanita, Maria del Mar Bonet, Toti Soler, Pedro Guerra, Roger Mas, the multi-instrumentalist Argentine Pedro Aznar, Kepa Junkera, Sergio Godinho, Mishima and Maria Dolores Pradera.

For her civic and social engagement, Marina Rossell has received several prizes, many in recognition of work that extends beyond her art, such as the Cross of Sant Jordi, bestowed on her by the government of Catalonia (1988). She has been named "Distinguished Guest" by the city of La Plata (Argentina, 2007) and she has received the Olof Palme Prize for her support for peace (2007), the Protagonistas Award (2010), the prize of the Spanish Academy of Music for the "Best Traditional Music Album" in 2009, the Enderrock Award for the best production of 2012 for her album "Marina Rossell canta Moustaki" and the Altaveu Award 2013 for lifetime achievement.

Marina Rossell: Brief Story of an Exquisite Voice

Childhood in the countryside

Marina Rossell was a little girl with dirty knees in Gornal, the small village of Catalonia where she was born. Gornal is in the region of the Penedès, which lies between the sea and the mountains. This was a happy accident for the future singer, who used to run from the threshing floor to the vineyard and from the vineyard to the house, where she would stop in silence and listen to the songs her mother sang while washing the clothes in the basin. Her father was a farmer.

Songs were everywhere

In her childhood as in the childhood of so many others, the local people joined in the festivities of the small church in the village, taking part in processional songs, Catechism classes, Holy Week wearing a mantilla on the head, Christmas carols, and other more light-hearted events like the Caramelles sung at Easter, the Pastorets enacted at Christmas and the dances put on at the annual village fête. There were also more pagan events like the noisy displays of fireworks and firecrackers on summer nights. All of these things played a role in her early musical development.

Teenager with a guitar in Barcelona

Marina, the third of five siblings, decided to leave Gornal when she was only sixteen years old. It was her first act of personal courage with an eye to her future. What she

Joel Graham 17/11/15 12:00

Comment: Perla, al text català hi ha una errada: cants de *professions*.

Pel que fa a les coses ben catalanes, p.e. les caramelles i els pastorets, he afegit una mica de text per explicar-les.

brought with her was a guitar, a small bag and a destination: Barcelona. As soon as she arrived in the big city, there was also the bewilderment and appeal that this new world produced in her. Until she succeeded in getting a nursing position in a hospital, on the night shift, she worked in a variety of places, but it was her job as a nurse that allowed her to continue the classes in music theory that she had started in Vendrell while still living in Gornal. As Marina grew in Barcelona, the importance of music grew inside her. She did not yet know that she already carried her most valuable instrument with her: her voice.

The exquisite voice

Marina Rossell's voice, which grows weightier as the years pass, is her easily identifiable personal hallmark. Warm and vivid like few others, it acquires nuances and grows richer with new experiences and perspectives. In 1974, she began to sing, performing as an opening act for Lluís Llach and Ovidi Montllor. Marina was the voice of the country's democratic transition, the voice of a generation in which there was no other singer of her range and depth. From 1976 to the present, she has recorded over twenty albums, a number of them distributed internationally in the US, France, Germany, the UK, Portugal, Brussels, and even Japan and South America.

Commitment and solidarity with the world

As a singer, she has made trips to show her solidarity, visiting Armenia, Bosnia, Colombia, Palestine, Israel, Ciudad Juárez in Mexico, Cuba, and even Baghdad only days before the outbreak of the war in Iraq. This has been a privilege that has allowed her to reaffirm even more energetically, if possible, her commitment to peace and to civil and individual liberties, making her a worthy recipient of accolades of great importance and substance, such as the Olof Palme Prize for peace.

On the main stage of Barcelona's Liceu opera house, 11 September 2008

In the Liceu, Marina Rossell performed timeless songs selected from the major cultural movements of Catalonia's modern history, spanning the Renaixença, Modernisme and Noucentisme down to the present day. The songs covered a century and a half, offering a bold look at our cultural heritage. Marina took us back to afternoon snacks of bread and chocolate and her childhood running from the vineyards to the house or through Gornal, and she evoked her mother as well. The performance conjured up a world of beloved people and things that are no longer here. And so we continue to follow her and the flight of her diaphanous voice. Thank you for joining us on the journey!