Le Orme – Florian (1979)

01. Florian - 6:47 [play](#) *02. Jaffa - 3:06 03. Il mago - 3:05 04. Pietro il pescatore - 3:24 05. Calipso - 3:46 06. Fine di un viaggio - 4:49 07. El gran senser - 7:01*
- Antonio (Tony) Pagliuca – piano, harpsichord, harmonium - Aldo Tagliapietra – lead vocals, cello, classical guitar - Michi Dei Rossi – vibraphone, percussion, glockenspiel, marimba - Germano Serafin - violin, acoustic guitar, bouzouki, mandolin All titles written by Aldo Tagliapietra and Antonio Pagliuca.

By 1979, the progressive rock movement was pretty much dead and the bands that were still hanging on had gone through severe and often ill-fated transformations, alienating their fan base without managing to reach wider audiences. Le Orme didn't go down that road. Instead, after releasing two albums in 1977, the band took a breather in 1978 and came back in 1979 with an all-acoustic record, Florian. Granted, it is a weaker effort, and most listeners will find it lacks ambition and grandeur. And yet, what a splendid endeavor for a band that was once known as an organ-led powerhouse trio. Picking up on the increased presence of acoustic guitars (and increased importance of the Italian songwriting tradition) on 1977's Storia o Leggenda, Florian offers a blend of neo-classical compositions and pastoral songs. All four members of the band go out of their way to expand their palette of acoustic instruments: singer/bassist Aldo Tagliapietra plays some cello; keyboardist Antonio Pagliuca adds harpsichord and harmonium to his grand piano; drummer Michi Dei Rossi spends a lot of time on mallet percussion; finally, guitarist Germano Serafin (who joined the band for Verità Nascoste in early 1977) whips out a violin, in addition to playing bouzouki and lots of mandolin. As a result, the opening of "Florian" sounds almost like a string quartet -- it is by far the most neo-classical-sounding piece on this short album. "Il Mago" and "Fine di un Viaggio" are two gorgeous songs that would have fitted in with the material on Storia o Leggenda, and Tagliapietra delivers sensible vocal performances. "El Gran Senser," the closing track, steps outside the box for a freer piece with improvisation and experimental sonorities from the harpsichord and violin. Low-key and understated, Florian makes a strong case toward proving that Le Orme were always willing to reinvent their approach. And Pagliuca and Tagliapietra had the composing chops to pull off such a bold project. The album is beautiful, both in terms of writing and execution. And though it is not what you would expect from Le Orme, it

unmistakably sounds like late-‘70s Le Orme -- much more so than Smogmagica, for instance.
--- François Couture, allmusic.com

Florian could seems a Le Orme’s unplugged album, but it represents all the efforts of the band toward new musical directions. Florian is the famous and ancient coffee-bar in St. Mark Square, Venice. For those who came there (nearby my home), as tourists, it’ll easy to remember, in that unique square and in front of the Basilica and the Bell Tower (fallen down in 1900, then rapidly re-built), an ancient coffee-bar with always classical music played live by a trio or quartet band. So did Le Orme with their 1979 album. It’s a homage to that ancient tradition of their town: cello, classic guitar, piano, harpsichord, armonium, vibraphone, marimba, glockenspiel, violin, buzuki, acoustic guitar, mandola and percussions are the ingredients for a more relaxed and intimistic release from one of the most important Italian bands. And so we can hear to such a delicate and delightful soft classical music rich of poetry because of the good lyrics inspired part by New Testament (Peter The Fisherman) part by myth (Calipso and Il Mago with references with Homerus’ Odissey). Le Orme’s trade mark is definitively gone. Prog was then in great decline…which was the better way to make music for the mind? Le Orme answered with this interesting piece of art.

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