

Ducale Dischi, a global market family business

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53 years of experience, paying a particular attention to the musicians and to the music connoisseurs. Going from Mina to the Platters, from Keith Jarrett to Arvo Part and from great American composers (Copland, Cage, Nancarrow, Diamond, Ives) to Supraphon with East Europe repertoires. Born in Brebbia in 1959, Ducale Dischi is now ready to celebrate its birthday. Not only does it have to celebrate its birthday but three others: the 25th birthday for the Naxos label foundation released by Ducale for more than 20 years exclusively in Italy (just like Harmonia Mundi and Ecm) and, last but not least, Marco Matalon's 22nd birthday as the director of the company. Ducale confirms its small entrepreneurial existence by being able to become Naxos Global Logistics reference. It is renowned as the distribution group with a "high quality music at a low cost". Monaco based, it counts 95 labels and more than 35 thousand titles. Marco, a computer science expert, not much older than 40, declares that during the past years, he was able to overcome the crisis thanks to a simple word: "Change".

No suffering?

"Ducale has been able to keep its turnover at its best by reducing the purchases by 30%. The policy following the market economic difficulties, presented a new type of orders called micro-orders: no more excessive stocks but supplies "just in Time". Today, Ducale can be considered an experienced company, it counts 11 employees and three partners: my sister Flavia, my mother Tarcisia and myself. My colleagues are very busy on all the market fields. We grew up together and we have the same thirst in discovering things.

A simple company reorganization?

"It might seem difficult, for those who don't work in the field, to try to put together the passion and ardor of the music market with plans and organizations that are accurately taken care of assuring efficiency. Nevertheless that's the way it is: we have inaugurated a program that manages the purchases with a greater flexibility and accuracy, it intercrosses the data in order to calculate immediately what has been ordered, what's available or what's missing. It checks the timetables, the wrong statistics, the phase shifts. The dashboards have been updated as well: the computerized system allows us to optimize the resources, to dedicate more energy on alternative projects to study the market better. As well as from the marketing point of view. We haven't discovered anything new, we are aware of that, but we have upgraded our customer's care by running a traditional company as if it were born during the web 2.0 era".

How do you manage downloads on the net?

"The record market changed over time, but it has been sending signals for some years, and they only had to be taken in the right way. The cake is getting smaller and smaller, some slices are difficult to digest, there's a natural selection of the distributors. It is often the crisis itself that does the selection, not the company. As far as we are concerned, we've decided to change and to adapt to what was happening around us. Always keeping an eye on the

products themselves”.

The major labels have run to the shelters as well. What about you?

“People don’t download as much Classical and Jazz music as they do for Rock or Pop music. The reason I can find is that they are of particular interest and they just aren’t made for the “take away” consumerism. The connoisseur who grew up with vinyl, is interested in the net but will never give up quality. That’s one of the main reason why the niche record market still resists. The integral version of the Clavicembalo ben Temperato by Johann Sebastian Bach and performed by Andras will come out in autumn following the examples of the titles that shape the market and that have high expectations. The fans must be waiting for it with anxiety”.

How did the big change happen?

“Increasing the offer of the number of titles, we have more than 20 thousand titles today, and modifying the stocks. A few years ago, the order for an important record amounted to 2000 copies to gradually lower down to 25 copies which is the right amount in stock to be able to satisfy the unexpected demand. Today is a different story, we order 500 copies. Nevertheless, we’re able to satisfy one of our more demanding customer. Amazon”.

We’re talking about distribution but we can also talk about production with the record label Ducale. What does Riccardo Muti have to do with all this?

“Last year, during the Ravenna Festival, Maestro Muti directed the première of the “I due Figaro” by Saverio Mercadante. He’s always recorded his works with multinationals, but now...”.

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