

Nisi-Ruggiero Duo

Rise, Zenith, Oblivion of Ennio Porrino

Epic of a Musician in the Time of Fascism



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What happens when a composer—acclaimed in his lifetime and then forgotten—begins to speak to our time again through music of extraordinary beauty and depth?

This is the case of **Ennio Porrino (1910–1959)**, a favoured pupil of **Ottorino Respighi**, who throughout his life pursued a personal and recognisable language—a **modernity rooted in the Italian tradition**.

Described by the musicologist **Felix Karlinger** as “**the greatest musician in Italy after Puccini**”, he was among the most original protagonists of the musical scene between the two World Wars and in the immediate post-war years.

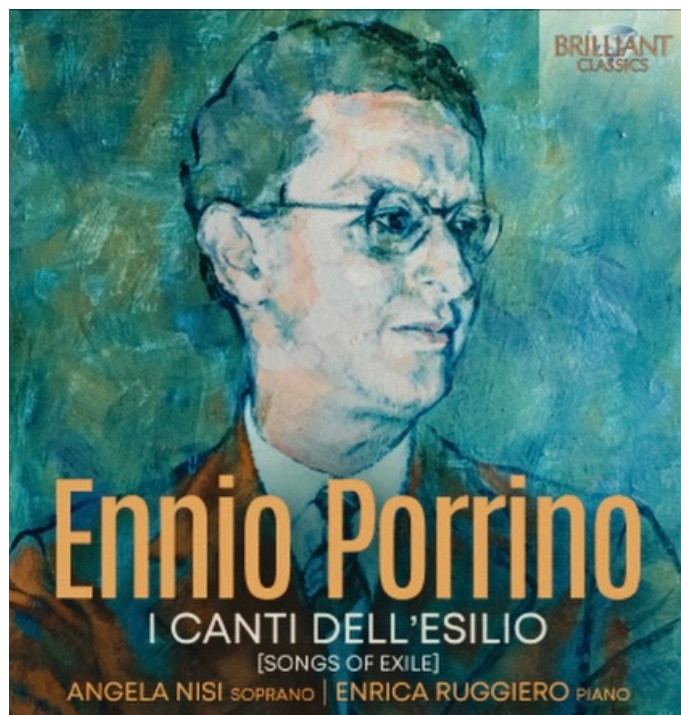
Long removed from concert and recording programmes, **Porrino deserves to be heard and reconsidered today**: for the expressive power of his music, for the complexity of his artistic path, and for the role he played in shaping—and questioning—the cultural identity of twentieth-century Italy.

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The Project

The project *Rise, Zenith, Oblivion of Ennio Porrino*, conceived by **soprano Angela Nisi** and **pianist Enrica Ruggiero**, was born to **restore visibility and critical dignity** to an unjustly neglected musical output.



It is structured in four complementary areas:

- A **recording** titled Ennio Porrino. I canti dell'esilio, dedicated to the two principal collections for voice and piano (*I canti di stagione* and *I canti dell'esilio*), released by **Brilliant Classics** in **July 2025**;
- A **concert programme** aimed at disseminating unpublished works, with historical-critical introductions by Angela Nisi, developed in several formats:
 - **Recital** pairing Porrino with contemporaries or predecessors (above all the *Generazione dell'Ottanta*);
 - **Music-theatre performance** with original dramaturgy by **Stefania Porrino**;
- A **pathway of research and outreach**, in dialogue with the Porrino family and with contributions from scholars of Italian twentieth-century music, to enhance the manuscript heritage and place it in historical context, also in collaboration with leading radio broadcasters;
- A **documentary** by **Baltazar Zuniga**, narrating the human, artistic and production journey underlying the entire project.

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A Heritage to Rediscover

Active between the 1930s and 1950s, **Ennio Porrino** traversed with his work the contradictions of an era marked by profound political, ideological and aesthetic upheavals.

His talent emerged early: supported by influential institutions and leading performers, he achieved wide circulation in Italy and abroad. But after his premature death in 1959, also due to his adherence to the Fascist regime and to a stylistic orientation not aligned with the dominant post-war avant-gardes, his music was progressively removed from the stage, ultimately falling into oblivion.

A prolific and multifaceted composer, he worked across genres: opera, symphonic, chamber, sacred music, and radio/film scores.

Yet it is in the **vocal chamber production** that the Nisi-Ruggiero Duo has identified the deepest key to rediscover his language: a workshop of lyricism, formal research and emotional truth.

The two collections at the heart of the recording document opposite seasons of Porrino's life:

- **I canti di stagione (1933)** – “Songs of the Seasons”: four songs inspired by the seasons of the year, on texts by major Italian poets, including Carducci. Composed during a bright, forward-striving phase, they reveal a refined Porrino, attentive to timbral colour and poetic depiction, in dialogue with the Vivaldi revival and Respighi's aesthetic.
- **I canti dell'esilio (1945)** – “Songs of Exile”: fifteen songs divided into five poetic cycles that map a journey through Italian literary memory—from Greek poetry to the troubadours, from the Stilnovo to eighteenth-century production, and to original texts by the composer himself. Written between Venice and Rome at a time of profound isolation, these pieces witness a personal and cultural crisis, transformed into music as an act of resistance and spiritual renewal.

Both collections, unpublished until today, are performed and recorded here **for the first time in their entirety**.

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A Complete Cultural Project



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Rise, Zenith, Oblivion of Ennio Porrino is a project of valorisation and rediscovery that unites **philological rigour, historical reflection and artistic impact.**

Through concerts, recordings, critical narratives, editorial and outreach content, it restores to Porrino not only a voice but also his context.

During public performances, Angela Nisi—musicologist as well as performer—guides listeners with introductions that relate the music to the era's aesthetic, literary and civic tensions, offering an experience that is both profound and accessible.

Conclusion

Breathing new life into Ennio Porrino's music means putting back into circulation a powerful, complex, and non-conformist voice.

It also means questioning the value of cultural memory, the relationship between music and ideology, and how much the twentieth century still has to say to us.

With *Rise, Zenith, Oblivion of Ennio Porrino*, we carry out an act of listening, rediscovery, and restitution.

A work of cultural justice, before it is a musical one.

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Who We Are

ANGELA NISI *soprano*

Having completed advanced studies at the Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia in Rome and with Manuela Custer and Cristina Melis, Angela Nisi made her debut in 2010 in *Carmen* (Micaëla) and—after winning First Prize at the Zilno Competition (2012)—has performed in international opera houses and concert halls, including the Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia (Rome), Oper Köln, Opera Budapest, Teatro Massimo (Palermo), Teatro Carlo Felice (Genoa), Teatro di San Carlo (Naples), Maggio Musicale Fiorentino, Teatro Regio (Turin), Teatro Petruzzelli (Bari), Aalto-Theater (Essen). She has worked with conductors such as Pappano, Oren, Gelmetti, Renzetti, Palumbo, Callegari, Lanzillotta, Orozco-Estrada and with stage directors Brockhaus, Livermore, Micheli, Muscato, Pizzi, Poda.

Her broad repertoire—operatic, symphonic and chamber music—includes works by Puccini (*La bohème*, *Manon Lescaut*, *Turandot*, *La rondine*, *Suor Angelica*), Verdi (*Otello*, *Requiem*, *Falstaff*, *La traviata*, *Simon Boccanegra*), Leoncavallo (*Pagliacci*), Strauss (*Vier letzte Lieder*), Rossini (*Petite Messe Solennelle*, *Stabat Mater*), Tutino (*Le braci*, world premiere), Poulenc (*La voix humaine*), Mozart, Britten, Respighi, Schumann, and many others, with numerous recordings for Naxos, Tactus, Dynamic.

A graduate in Musicology (Università di Roma Tor Vergata), she is also very active on social media as a music communicator.

ENRICA RUGGIERO *piano*

Enrica Ruggiero trained under Michele Campanella, with whom she earned the Diploma of Advanced Studies with distinction at the Accademia Musicale Chigiana in Siena, completing a four-year summer programme. She also attended Campanella's advanced courses at the Ravello Piano School.

Alongside her solo career she has pursued an intense chamber-music activity, training at the Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia (with F. Ayo), and studying with the Trio di Trieste at the Accademia Chigiana (Diploma of Merit) and at the International School of Duino.

For many years she has combined solo and chamber activities with extensive operatic experience. Since 2004 she has worked at the Teatro dell'Opera di Roma as rehearsal pianist and coach, and was a guest Korrepetitorin at the Vienna State Opera in the 2011/2012 season. She has worked with conductors including Riccardo Muti, James Conlon, Alain Lombard, Gianluigi Gelmetti, Jesús López-Cobos, Roberto Abbado, Yves Abel, Marco Armiliato, Donato Renzetti, Bruno Campanella, Daniele Gatti, and many others.

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Where to Find Us



The album **Ennio Porrino: I canti dell'esilio** was released on 1 July 2025 and is available on **Brilliant Classics** and on all digital platforms.

[Brilliant Classics](#)

[Spotify](#)

[YouTube](#)

The trailer of the documentary by Baltazar Zuniga is at this link:

[Ennio Porrino CD with Angela Nisi & Enrica Ruggiero](#)

The **full documentary** is at this link:

[ENNIO PORRINO II documentario](#)

Our **websites** and **social** channels:

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