BIOGRAPHY - UK

History

The band, before turning into a trio and eventually a duo, was born as a polyphonic quartet, with two male and two female voices. In the original line-up, three out of four members came from Genoa. The original members were: Franco Gatti (Genoa, October 4, 1942), Angela Brambati (Genoa, October 20, 1947), Marina Occhiena (Genoa, March 19, 1950) and Angelo Sotgiu (Trinità d'Agultu, February 22, 1946), who was born in Sardinia and had moved to Genoa when he was sixteen months old. The quartet stood out for its peculiar vocal style, based on the weave of four different voices: a bass, a tenor, a contralto and a soprano. Their formula was a mix of Italian melodic pop music with harmonisations inspired by the USA bands of the time.

From the Jets to Ricchi e Poveri

In 1963 **Angelo e Franco** joined the Jets, a Genoese music band which aimed to sing a less commercial repertoire than the other local bands. One night they met Angela, who was the singer of the beat band I Preistorici, and they are fascinated with her charisma, dubbing her "the Genoese Rita Pavone".

Both groups disbanded after a few years, so the idea was born of forming a new band composed by Angela, Angelo, Franco and Marina, a friend of Angela, met in a singing school. The quartet took up the name Fama Medium and started performing in some clubs of the Genoese seafront. They were so successful they decided to devote completely to music.

After rehearsing for some months, Italian singer-songwriter Fabrizio De André, the first to believe in the band, set up an audition for them at a record label in Milan. The audition wasn't successful, but De André assured them: «These people don't understand anything about music, but you will make it!».

At the end of 1967 they came back to Milan for a new audition at a record label whose artistic director was Franco Califano. His enthusiasm was such he decided to become the band's producer and, after creating a new look with a male haircut for Angela and bleached hair for Angelo and Marina, he told them: «You're rich in ideas and poor in money». From this sentence their name was born: Ricchi e Poveri.

The beginnings

The story of Ricchi e Poveri began in Genoa in 1967, in the years of beat music, of the Mamas & Papas and the California Dream.

Angela Brambati, Angelo Sotgiu, Franco Gatti and Marina Occhiena made their debut at the 1968 Cantagiro with the song *"L'ultimo amore"* (a cover version of Love Affair's *"Everlasting Love"*, with Italian lyrics written by Mogol), winning the Perugia leg.

They started playing in many famous Italian night-clubs such as La Mela in Naples, Il Pomo in Ischia, the Gallery in Milan and the Piper in Rome. Ricchi e Poveri featured in the backing vocals of Marisa Sannia's *"Casa bianca"*, while their song *"La mia libertà"*, a cover of the Bee Gees' *"Close Another Door"*, became a hit in the radio show Bandiera Gialla.

Sanremo and the Seventies

1970 was the year Ricchi e Poveri took part to the Festival di Sanremo for the first time, singing together with Nicola Di Bari the song *"La prima cosa bella"* and finishing in second place. It would be the first of twelve participations to the Festival dedicated to Italian music. In 1971 they would reach the second place again with *"Che sarà"*, an evergreen of Italian music, sung together with José Feliciano. In 1972 and 1973 they sung respectively *"Un diadema di ciliegie"* and *"Dolce frutto"* (which gained the fourth place). They would be back in Sanremo in 1976 with the song *"Due storie di musicanti"*, composed by Sergio Bardotti and Luiz Enriquez Bacalov.

In 1970 they took *"Primo sole, primo fiore"* to the International Exhibition of Pop Music in Venice and *"In questa città"* at the Cantagiro, winning the legs of Recoaro and Benevento. The same song came in fourth at the Festivalbar, even though it didn't figure among the favourites. They took part to the International Exhibition in Venice in 1971 with the song *"Amici miei"* and in 1974 they reach the third place with the songs *"Amore sbagliato"* and *"Torno da te"*. 1972 saw the success of *"Pomeriggio d'estate"* at the show Un disco per l'estate, to which they would take part the following year with *"Piccolo amore mio"* as well. In 1973 they reached the second place of Canzonissima with *"Penso, sorrido e canto"* and in 1980 they would take part to a traveling tour organised by Radio Montecarlo.
Meanwhile, Ricchi e Poveri record the themes of many TV shows, such as *"Fumo nero"* (All'ultimo minuto) and *"Dammi mille baci"* (Tanto per cambiare), *"Una musica"* (Rischiatutto) and two closing themes for the show Tante Scuse with Sandra Mondaini and Raimondo Vianello: *"Non pensarci più"* and *"Coriandoli su di noi"*. The song *"L'amore è una cosa meravigliosa"*, which they had recorded a couple years earlier, became the theme of the radio show *"Più di così"*.
During the Seventies, Ricchi e Poveri started enjoying success also abroad: in 1973 they won the critics' prize at the Bulgarian festival Golden Orpheus, while in 1977 they were the hosts of a show on Swiss television. In 1978 they took part to the Eurovision Festival with a song by Dario Farina, *"Questo amore"*, which was also taken to the Festivalbar. The following year Ricchi e Poveri were invited by the Shah of Persia to the Royal Palace, to play for the birthday of the Shah's sister.

The Seventies, music and more…

During the Seventies, Ricchi e Poveri experimented other artistic areas: from television to theatre, to advertising with the Fiesta Snack ad of 1972 and the Recoaro ad of 1977. In 1971 they acted in the Rai music comedy by Garinei and Giovannini *"Mai il sabato, signora Lisistrata"*, with an exceptional cast featuring Gino Bramieri, Milva, Bice Valori, Paolo Panelli, Carlo Giuffré and Gabriella Farinon. They received the Maschera d'Argento prize as the best theatrical debutants.
In 1974 they took part to *"Teatro Music Hall"*, a traveling show by Pippo Baudo, who chose "*Penso, sorrido e canto"*. That year they also took part to a TV *operetta*, *"No, no, Nanette"*, directed by Garinei and Giovannini and featuring choreographies by Don Lurio. They also started collaborating with Walter Chiari in the show *"Chiari di luna"* (1974) and the theatrical tour *"Chi vuol esser lieto sia"* which won the Biglietto d'Oro prize for the number of encores in 1976.

The Eighties, from success to success…

In 1981 Marina Occhiena left the band to focus on a solo career. Despite the defection, Ricchi e Poveri remained together and took part to the 31st edition of the Festival di Sanremo with *"Sarà perché ti amo"*, which would remain on top of the Italian hit parade for 8 months, even though it only reached fifth place in the Festival. The song would be an international best-seller, dominating the charts in Belgium, France, Austria, Germany and Spain. It would be the best-selling single of the year, selling 7 million copies.
The success would continue with the album *"Mamma Maria"*, among the best-selling records in Europe in 1982. The single *"Come vorrei"* remained in the top ten for five months, becoming the theme of the TV show Portobello, hosted by Enzo Tortora. 1982 was also the year of the hit *"Made in Italy"*, while in 1983 saw *"Voulez vous danser"* reaching number one in the charts and winning the prize as the Italian best-selling song in Europe.
Ricchi e Poveri also took part to the 1981 Festivalbar with *"M'innamoro di te"*, won two editions of the show Premiatissima (1982 and 1985) and won the prize as best band of the year 1984 for the show Vota la

voce. In 1987 they were third at Un disco per l'estate, performing the songs *"Coccobello Africa"*, *"C'è che luna, c'è che mare"* and *"Lascia libero il cielo"*.
1985 was the year of the definitive Sanremo consecration: Ricchi e Poveri won the Festival with the song *"Se m'innamoro"*, also winning the silver Telegatto and a Platinum Disc. They would take part to the festival again in 1987 with *"Canzone d'amore"* (written by Toto Cutugno), in 1988 with the Umberto Balsamo song *"Nascerà Gesù"* and in 1989 with *Chi voglio sei tu"*.
Their popularity increased exponentially on the international scene: at the beginning of the Eighties the band reached the Soviet market, publishing some flexi-discs which would be sold at newsagents' stores. In 1983 they would be invited at the International Song Festival of Viña del Mar (Chile) and in 1984 at the Atlantic Festival in Spain, where they performed the song *"Sei la sola che amo"*. An Australian tour would follow, along with a highly successful Soviet tour: 44 sold-out dates gathering 780 thousand spectators. In May 1988 the band would play in front of a sold-out crowd at the Royal Albert Hall in London.

From 1990's on…
In 1990 Ricchi e Poveri took part to the Festival di Sanremo with the song *"Buona giornata"*, performing with the Brazilian artist Jorge Ben Jor, while in 1992 they took a song written by Toto Cutugno, *"Così lontani"*, to the Festival for the second time. *"Buona giornata"* would become the theme of the *Domenica In* season hosted by the band. In 1992 they also performed *"Dicitincello vuje"*, a theme for the TV series *"Renzo e Lucia"*, while the following year they hosted the show *"Domenica a casa vostra"* and took part with Davide Mengacci, Sandra Milo, Andrea Roncato and Orietta Berti to *"La vera storia della donna del mistero"*, a musical parody of a popular soap opera of the time.
Between 1994 and 1998 they went through successful Italian and international tours and television appearances in France, Germany, Belgium, Moldova, Georgia, Lithuania, Australia, Spain, Albania, Russia, Slovenia, Hungary, Canada and the US.
2002 saw Ricchi e Poveri come back with a new album, *"Parla col cuore"*, featuring six unreleased tracks. Two years later they took part to the first edition of Music Farm, the first Italian reality show dedicated to music, reaching the third place. In 2012 they released *"Perdutamente amore"*, featuring some of the band's classics along with four unreleased tracks. In 2013 they were awarded with the career prize "Città di Sanremo".
In 2016 Franco Gatti left the band to spend more time with his family, while Angelo and Angela decided to keep their musical career: «We stay on stage, because this is our life!»
In March 2017, Angela and Angelo make a comeback with "Marikita," the captivating single with a Latin flavor, sung in the Spanish language. The song was chosen by Fausto Brizzi for the soundtrack of the Christmas film "Poveri ma Ricchi" and was released on iTunes and distributed by Sony Music.
In 2018, following the success of their international summer tour, they return to television as judges on "Sanremo Young," Rai 1's teen talent show, broadcast live from the Ariston Theatre in Sanremo. The show aired in prime time for five episodes.
In April 2018, they celebrate half a century of success, with over 20 million records sold worldwide and an intergenerational repertoire in the show "50 ANNI DI... RICCHI E POVERI." The show was produced by DM Produzioni and debuted at the Teatro Colosseo in Turin on April 21.
From January to March 2019, they participate as judges and coaches for Michele Pecora on the Saturday night program "Ora o mai più" on Rai 1.
In addition, 2019 sees them embarking on an intense international tour.
In January 2020, the REUNION project kicks off.
In February 2020, they participate as special guests (in their original lineup) at the 70th edition of the Sanremo Song Festival. They receive a career achievement award and announce the release of the double

album "REUNION" along with the launch of the single "*L'Ultimo Amore* (*Everlasting Love*)." The official music video for the song features them as cartoon characters.

Immediately after the festival, the COVID-19 pandemic causes a halt in all activities, and the album release originally scheduled for March 27 is inevitably canceled and postponed to a later date.

After a year, in January 2021, they return to TV as contestants on the primetime program "*Il Cantante Mascherato*" on Rai 1. They participate in the show disguised as the *Baby Alien*. Unfortunately, due to the practical difficulties of performing as a group of four inside the costume, they voluntarily decide to withdraw from the program.

On February 23rd, Rai 1 dedicates a special celebratory evening to Ricchi e Poveri titled "*Che sarà sarà*". The event is hosted and artistically directed by *Carlo Conti* in collaboration with *Ballandi* and produced by *DM produzioni*. It is a journey through the history of a group that has made an indelible mark with timeless successes.

After the wonderful moment of the ReuniOn artistic project, which was unfortunately disrupted by the pandemic, Angelo and Angela are eager to reconnect with the audience and bring the joy that Ricchi e Poveri's music conveys. They embark on a tour in Italy and abroad.

On 18th October 2022, Franco Gatti, friend, brother and long-standing member of the group, passed away: *"[...] With Franco's passing, a piece of our lives is gone!"*

The countdown to New Year's Event on Rai 1 in Perugia brings good luck, and in 2023, they serve as coaches for the 3rd edition of "The Voice Senior" and the 1st edition of "The Voice Kids", both broadcast in prime time on Rai 1.

Meanwhile, their tour in Italy and abroad continues. In March, they return to Australia after 30 years with a tour that includes stops at the Palais Theatre in Melbourne, The Enmore Theatre in Sydney, and Thebaton Theatre in Adelaide.

In February 2024, Ricchi e Poveri participate for the 13th time as competitors on the Ariston stage of Sanremo Music Festival with "*Ma non tutta la vita*". The song immediately becomes a hit: Gold Disc, Top 10 in the Hot List Italia chart on Spotify, 2nd most listened to song on Tik Tok, Top 10 most watched videos on YouTube in the music section. With a peak of over 8 million monthly listeners, they are the most streamed artists of the Sanremo Music Festival.

On April 15th, the single "*Ma non tutta la vita*" was PLATINUM certified.

It is no coincidence that the most famous Italian group in the world, active for almost 60 years, has sold 22 million records and released 30 albums.

Following the *Ma non tutta la vita* success, the new single "*Aria*" on May 27th.

On 5th July, during their participation in Madrid Gay Pride (MADO24 – Madrid Orgullo) as Special Guests, they will preview "*Pero no toda la vida*", the Spanish version of the "*Ma non tutta la vita*" hit. It will be previewed on TikTok and released everywhere else on July 12th.

On November 29th will be released *Il Natale degli Angeli*, a Christmas song wishing for love, solidarity, a return to dialogue in everyday life, leaving no one alone and, above all, peace in such a particular period, so that the magic of Christmas reaches everyone in the world. The song, produced by *DM Produzioni* under *Carosello Records* licensing, is accompanied by a cartoon-style animated videoclip in which Angelo and Angela are angels, children, a cat and a dog.

2024 brings more resounding successes: on December 2nd, the single "*Ma non tutta la vita*" is DOUBLE PLATINUM certified and the video clip reaches 3rd place among the most viewed in 2024 on VEVO Italia, while "*Sarà perché ti amo*" enjoys a *second youth*, achieving DOUBLE PLATINUM in Germany and QUADRUPLE PLATINUM in Switzerland and actually with over 400 million streaming.

2024 is a year that sees them starring in the Italian and *International Summer Tour*, which was sold out in almost all locations. They are highly sought-after special guests at important events, festivals and television show, continuing their live performances in Italy and abroad.
2025. After selling out their international tour in Australia in May (Sydney – The State Theatre, Melbourne – Palais Theatre, Adelaide – Her Majesty's Theatre), they will kick off their *25/26 TOUR* on June 19th with an extraordinary event at the AUDITORIUM PARCO DELLA MUSICA in ROME. The show will retrace almost 60 years of the group's career, up to their most recent albums "*Ma non tutta la vita*" (Double Platinum) and "*Aria*". A thrilling and colourful show in which history intertwines with contemporary life through a repertoire of great hits, including: *La prima cosa bella*, *Che sarà*, *Mamma Maria*, *Voulez vous danser*, *Se m'innamoro* and *Sarà perché ti amo…* (to name but a few).

They wrap up the year as special guests at Dubai's "THE GRAND NEW YEAR Gala Night."

2026 kicks off immediately with an international live tour that is sold-out in various countries right from the start!!!

Prizes and Awards

- 1968 One leg of the Cantagiro winners with *"L'ultimo amore"*
- 1970 Second place at the Festival di Sanremo with *"La prima cosa bella"*
- 1970 "Cristoforo Colombo" award by Liguria Region as "Best Music Band"
- 1970 Two time winners of the Cantagiro with *"In questa città"*
- 1971 Second place at the Festival di Sanremo with *"Che sarà"*
- 1971 Two time winners of the Cantagiro with *"Addio mamma, addio papà", "Limpido fiume del sud"* and *"Amici miei"*
- 1971 Silver Mask for the theatre show *"Mai di sabato, signora Lisistrata"*
- 1973 Second place at Canzonissima with *"Penso, sorrido e canto"*
- 1973 Critics' Award in Bulgaria
- 1976 Golden Ticket for the theatre show *"Chi vuol esser lieto sia"* by Walter Chiari
- 1981 Third place at the Festivalbar with *"M'innamoro di te"*
- 1982 First place at Premiatissima
- 1983 First place at the Viña del Mar Mediterranean Festival
- 1984 Prize as Best Band at Vota la Voce
- 1985 First place at Premiatissima
- 1985 First place at the Festival di Sanremo with *"Se m'innamoro"*
- 1987 Third place at Saint Vincent
- 1988 Career Award - Festival di Sanremo
- 2020 Career Award – Super Guests at Festival di Sanremo 70th edition
- 2021 International Career Award