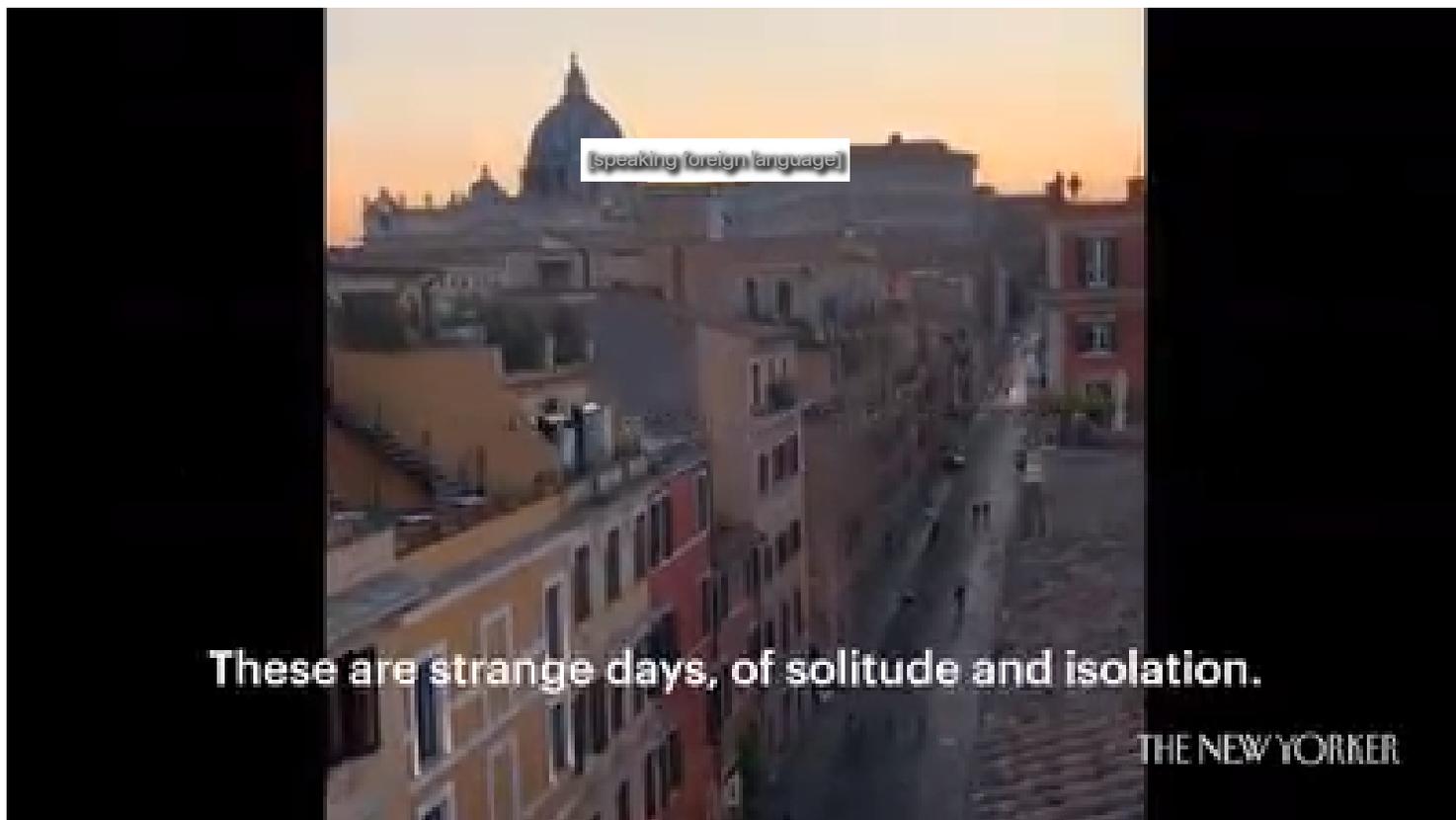


VIDEO DEPT.

MEET THE ITALIANS MAKING MUSIC TOGETHER UNDER CORONAVIRUS QUARANTINE

By **Stephania Taladrid**

March 19, 2020



“The language of music is common to all generations and nations,” Gioachino Rossini, the virtuosic opera composer, once said. “It is understood by everybody, since it is understood with the heart.” In recent weeks, Italians have embraced the language of music as a means to communicate with their neighbors and endure the ravages of COVID-19 as a collective. At a time when the most important music halls in the country, from La Scala to La Fenice, have closed their doors to the public, citizens of all ages have used their own instruments, and their voices, to fill the silence of seclusion. Music has provided unity in times of division throughout history; now Italians are showing the world that, if only for a moment, it can also help them transcend the anxiety brought by a pandemic.

The New Yorker's coronavirus news coverage and analysis are free for all readers.

Italy is reporting thousands of new coronavirus cases daily. With more than forty thousand positive tests, the country's death toll, at more than three thousand, is the highest in the world, surpassing even China's. Although it's hard to say exactly when the amateur concerts

began, they have coincided with the country's lockdown, which first took effect in northern Italy, where the virus was detected in late February. Italians have now been at home for nine days, and, from Bologna to Rome, they have invited their neighbors to engage in what they call a "Flash Mob *Sonoro*," or a sound flash mob. Musical competency is not a requirement, and neither is possessing a traditional instrument. A pot or a wooden spoon can suffice, if only because their sounds will join those of many other people who, from their balconies and windows, are hoping to create a bond through music.

A GUIDE TO THE CORONAVIRUS

- How to practice social distancing, from responding to a sick housemate to the pros and cons of ordering food.
- How people cope and create new customs amid a pandemic.
- What it means to contain and mitigate the coronavirus outbreak.
- How much of the world is likely to be quarantined?
- Donald Trump in the time of coronavirus.
- The coronavirus is likely to spread for more than a year before a vaccine could be widely available.
- We are all irrational panic shoppers.
- The strange terror of watching the coronavirus take Rome.
- How pandemics change history.

*Stephania Taladrid is a member of *The New Yorker's* editorial staff.*

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