

Faster, higher, stronger: composer Andrea Farri on Orchestrating Harmony for the Olympic Games Milano Cortina 2026



Andrea Farri at Abbey Road Studios

The Italian classical music and film composer [Andrea Farri](#), has been announced as the Musical Director for the [Opening Ceremony](#) of the [Winter Olympic Games Milano Cortina](#). In this guest posting, we talk to Andrea Farri and find out a little bit more.

Andrea Farri, born in 1982 in Rome, has established himself as one of Italy's most versatile and original composers. Known for a distinctive compositional style that fuses classical orchestration with electronic textures, Farri often employs vintage analogue synthesisers to create a sound that is both rooted in tradition and strikingly contemporary. Over a career spanning cinema, television, and theatre, he has earned acclaim for his emotive, atmospheric scores, including the

2015 Globo d'Oro for Best Film Score and the 2023 Soundtrack Stars Award at the Venice Film Festival for his work on Matteo Garrone's *Io Capitano*. Growing up immersed in Italy's cinematic and theatrical world – his mother is the celebrated actress Lucia Poli, his father the director Pier Farri, and his uncle the legendary actor Paolo Poli – Farri developed an early understanding of storytelling through performance and music.

Now, Andrea Farri takes his storytelling expertise to a global stage as the Music Director of the Winter Olympic Games Milano Cortina 2026 Opening Ceremony. Scheduled for February 6th at Milan's iconic San Siro Stadium, the ceremony, titled *Armonia* ("Harmony"), will combine live performances, cinematic staging, and immersive music to celebrate the Olympic spirit. Farri oversees the entire musical direction, creating original compositions that unify the show's narrative, highlight Italy's cultural heritage, and connect millions of spectators worldwide. In this exclusive interview, Farri discusses his artistic journey, the translation of cinematic sensibilities to an Olympic spectacle, and the universal language of music that will connect millions of spectators worldwide.

Your career has spanned cinema, television, and theatre. Which moments or turning points do you feel most directly led you to becoming Music Director for the Olympic Games Milano Cortina 2026 Opening Ceremony?

Andrea Farri: I imagine there were two in particular: the soundtrack of "Io Capitano" by Matteo Garrone (Silver Lion and Soundtrack Stars Award at the 2023 Venice Film Festival and Oscar and Golden Globe nominated) and the collaboration with Roland Emmerich on the action series "Those About to Die" (starring Anthony Hopkins and Iwan Reon), one of the most-watched TV shows in the world in 2024. Two memorable experiences with two great directors, on two completely different projects!

Looking back, was there a project early in your career that helped you understand the emotional power of music on a large scale – something that prepared you for composing for an event as monumental as the Olympic Games?

At 25, I made my first soundtrack. I was completely unprepared! It was a film directed by Matteo Rovere, which unfortunately didn't even do well at the box office. But a few months after its release, my soundtrack (it was 2008, when CDs still existed!) became the best-selling in Italy. My taste matched with a large audience. It didn't matter if it wasn't recorded or orchestrated super well, the music reached people, and that was the important thing. The beauty of music is that it is enough in itself. Charlie Parker said, "Music is your own experience, your thoughts, your wisdom."

How different is the responsibility of composing for a global ceremony from scoring a film? What skills from your film-scoring work proved most essential for this new challenge?

I could say so many things, but there are two fundamental aspects, and they're not at all artistic! Only the audience will decide if the music is good or bad. Two skills, however, have proven to be fundamental: Versatility: as much as I want to create a "homogeneous" ceremony from a narrative standpoint, I like to play and mix various genres together, and I believe this is essential to entertaining a worldwide public. And knowing how to relate to so many people and so many different personalities and tastes. When you make a film, you work with one director. At a ceremony, there's the CIO, the creative directors, the choreographers... and more than 1,500 artists on stage!

The theme of the Opening Ceremony is "Armonia". What does "harmony" mean to you personally and musically, and how do you translate that concept into sound for

such a massive, multi-city event?

For Leonardo da Vinci, harmony was a universal principle that united art, science, and nature through the balance of mathematical proportions. In oriental philosophy, Yin and Yang are not in conflict, they complement each other and cannot exist without each other. I tried to apply this concept – the balancing between two forces – in music. So chaos and order, dissonance and melody, and also past and future, tradition and innovation, in a final search for harmony.

When composing the sonic world of the Opening Ceremony, what emotional journey do you hope to guide audiences through? What are the core feelings or messages you want the music to communicate?

My musical idea is to treat the Ceremony as a single story, like you do with films, with recurring themes. I will try to unite three hours of show in a single storytelling. I hope this ceremony will be powerful, youthful, and moving. The Olympic Spirit is a set of ideals of fair play, respect, brotherhood and loyalty. There is an ancient Greek tradition of suspending conflicts to allow the Games to take place, a symbol of the peace that sport can promote and inspire. It may seem obvious, but it isn't, especially in times like today.

The ceremony will span multiple locations in northern Italy. How did the landscapes, cultures, and atmospheres of Milan, Cortina, and the Alpine region influence your creative process?

I was born in Rome, but my parents are from northern Italy. I adore northern skies! Italian musical culture didn't begin with opera lirica; its roots are much older. Giovanni da Palestrina inspired Bach. The Camerata de' Bardi in 1500 theorised the recitative on music, practically the grandfather of rap. And also in ancient folk roots Italy has an amazing tradition: I think of the songs of the rice weavers or the peasants who passed down Dante's verses by heart.

Your music will be heard by a global audience – many of whom may not be familiar with Italian musical traditions. How do you balance cultural specificity with universal accessibility in your compositions?

My idea is to hold a ceremony that, aside from a few references to classical or pop tradition, will be entirely focused on the future. The music I write has a very Italian feel because it's always based on a melody, a catchy theme, that in ancient times we called "aria". My approach to music is sometimes naive and completely free. My generation grew up studying classical music in the morning, playing rock in the afternoon, and dancing techno in the evening. I was born in the '80s; I grew up in a historical moment in which all styles coexisted together, there were no prejudices: it was the ideal era for someone like me who has always listened to all musical genres.

What techniques do you use to ensure your music resonates emotionally across different cultures, languages, and musical backgrounds?

Hans Zimmer once said: "It's not difficult to buy a computer or learn to orchestrate. The really difficult thing is creating a story with music." Feelings that music can convey when it tells a story, those are universal. I think it's the emotion that ties everything together. An old Jimmy Durante song says: "Love is the answer."

Sports – especially the Olympic Games – are full of tension, triumph, and storytelling. How do you see the relationship between athletics and music? In your view, what makes music such a powerful partner to sport?

I think that music, like all the arts, is a source of inspiration for the soul. From sports to

revolutions. There's an ancient tale that Roberto Benigni told me, that perfectly sums up the power of music: Three men were carrying a log in the woods, and they were struggling. Then one of them climbed onto the log and started whistling, but the two men below were no longer struggling; in fact, they were moving faster.

Athletes often describe a sense of rhythm, flow, or inner music in their performance. Does this idea influence your approach to composing for the Games? And if so, how do you sonically represent movement or physical achievement?

I like music, even if based on a recognisable melody, to always have a beating heart, an underlying rhythm that gives us movement, dynamism, speed. As De Coubertin said: faster, higher, stronger!