



# La Rondine

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ITALIAN CLUB OF ST. LOUIS

March 2004

## An Evening with Seven Tenors presented by Susan Wohl

### Next Meeting

Wednesday

March 17th

Cocktails— 6:30p.m.

Dinner— 7:00p.m.

RSVP—Dan Viele

(636) 537-5960

or

ItalianClubSTL@aol.com

The oldest surviving opera, Jacopo Peri's Euridice, was first performed in Florence's Pitti Palace on October 6, 1600 and from that moment on much of operatic music has been associated with Italian performers and composers. In recognition of this magnificent Italian gift to the beauty, joy and pleasure of the entire world, the Italian Club annually presents a program dedicated to a specific aspect of the gigantic field of opera. So, our March program, An Evening With Seven Tenors, will consider the tenor voice in detail. A tenor is tech-

nically defined as the highest of the adult male voices with a normal range of about two octaves - from one octave above middle C to one octave below. But what does that really mean and how does one tenor differ from another? Our presenter, Susan Wohl, will guide you towards answering those very basic questions for yourself by comparing and contrasting seven of the greatest tenors that the operatic world has ever heard with respect to vocal style, range, ability, and the relationship of role to voice quality. On

March 17, Susan will bring to us Caruso, Gigli, Richard Tucker, Corelli, Jussi Bjoerling, Pavorotti, and Irish tenor John McCormack (after all, the presentation will be on St. Patrick's Day!) - all of them as they sounded in their prime performing their greatest arias. Susan Wohl is a facilitator of courses on Opera for Washington University's Life Long Learning Program and for OASIS. Her previous Italian Club presentations were "Viva Verdi" and "Duets in Opera".  
*by Gene Mariani*

## Italian Heritage Challenge

At our February meeting, the members and guests of the Italian Club enjoyed an evening of entertainment and enrichment. Members Barbara Klein, Jerry Galleano, Gene Mariani and Peter Puleo organized facts about our beloved and beautiful Italy and her many contributions to the culture, pleasure and enjoyment of the world. The committee organized 10 questions each in six categories for our challenge. The categories were: Cinema, Geography, History, Sports, Food and Wine, and Art, Literature and Architecture. Each table became a team challenged to answer the questions we were presented.

The first category, Cinema, was a compilation of slides depicting scenes from each of 10 movies. All of the movies have been shown through the Italian Club Film and Opera Series either at the St. Louis Art Museum or the Italian-American Bocce Club. They were: *il Giardino dei Finzi-Contini, Una Giornata Particolare, Otto e Mezzo, Roma, Città Aperta, Il Gattopardo, La Strada, Nuovo Cinema Paradiso, L'Abero degli Zoccoli, Ladri di Biciclette and Morte a Venezia.*

In the Geography section, did you know that the Greek name of for

Naples is Neapolis and the English translation is New City? The Verazano Bridge is between Brooklyn and Staten Island, New York. The most active volcano in Europe is in Stromboli, Italy. The Jewel of the Mediterranean is Sicily.

Sports Trivia generated a lot of discussion about Italian-Americans, even a few who were born and raised in St. Louis. Did you know that the 2006 Olympic Winter Games will be held in Turin? The National Italian American Sports Hall of Fame is in Chicago. The first heavy weight boxer to retire undefeated was Rocky Marciano. The local team that both Yogi Berra and Joe Garagiola played with was the Stags. The 78-pound weakling who became known as Charles Atlas was Angelo Siciliano.

What creates more discussion among Italians than the specialty dishes and wines from each region? The stewed shank of veal from Milan is ossobucco. A specialty of Rome, a pasta dish that has a sauce of bacon, cream, pepper, parmigiano and eggs is Carbonara. Balsamic vinegar is associated with the city of Modena. The famous desert wine named after a city in Sicily is Marsala.

Did you pay attention to the history you learned long ago? Who was the George Washington of Italy? Yes, it was Garibaldi! What was the name of the Pope during World War II? Pacelli became Pope Pius XII. Abraham Lincoln offered Garibaldi a commission in the U.S. Army. Lombardia is named after a German Barbarian tribe.

If you're a frequent traveler of Italy or reader of Italian literature, the section of Italian Art, Architecture and Literature would have brought back many memories of these beautiful places and pieces. Leonardo da Vinci's "Last Supper" adorns the refectory wall of a church in Milan. The Birth of Venus, contained in the Uffizi Gallery, is by the Renaissance painter Botticelli. Virgil's epic poem that links the founding of Rome with the fall of Troy is the *Aeneid*. The Nobel prize-winning Sicilian playwright is Pirandello. (*please note that we will have a presentation about Pirandello in May of this year*)

Who were the winners for the evening? Anna and Richard Amelung, Joann Arpiani, Marie Morrison, Jean Moore and Mickey Belosi. Each member of the winning table chose a bottle of wine as their First Place Prize. The second place winners were presented

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## L'Angolo Del Presidente by James Tognoni

### My Fellow Members:

Well we have certainly been blessed with very nice weather. Let's hope this string of luck continues. As the weather starts to warm up so does the activity within our marvelous organization. We have some really great programs planned between now and the end of the year. We will have presentations on tenors, gladiators

and a host of other marvelous topics. We have had some rather lengthy Board meetings in the past few months. There are many topics being covered and exciting ideas being considered. As always, if you have ideas or suggestions, please contact one of the Officers or Directors.

I ask you to call friends and fellow members that have not been at a

meeting in a while and invite them to come and join us. I look forward to seeing you all at the next meeting on March 17th. In the meantime, stay well, pray for our members that are ill or dealing with difficulties in their lives. Thank you for reading. YOU are the reason this Club exists and flourishes.

Ciao, Jim jtognoni@earthlink.net

### Italian Heritage Challenge, cont'd

pins with both Italian and American flags on them. The organizers of this event have been received many positive comments about this entertaining and enriching evening. We hope to have another Italian Heritage Challenge at the beginning of 2005. *Start studying now!* by **Marie Cuccia-Brand**

### Italian Tenor Concert

Tenor Alberto Fraschina of Cuggiono, Italy, will perform a concert of operatic, religious and popular songs, including *Quanto e' bella, quanto e' cara* from L'Elisir D'Amore by Donizetti, *Ave Maria* by Schubert, and *O Sole Mio* by Di Capua on Sunday, May 16<sup>th</sup>, 2004, at 2 p.m. at St. Ambrose Church. The concert, which will honor St. Louis' Italian-American community, will be free and open to the public.

Alberto studied at the prestigious Accademia Chigiana di Siena and won the 50<sup>th</sup> edition of the Concorso giovani cantanti lirici della Comunita' Europea di Spoleto. He has sung all over the world, including New York, Berlin, Tokyo, Buenos Aires, and appeared in the 2003 production of *La Boheme* at Milan's La Scala.

In order to cover costs related to the concert, including piano rental, accompanist, airfare, and reception afterward, Carolyn Stelzer, Joann Arpiani, and Barbara Klein have asked for donations to be made to the Italian Club of St. Louis through which the concert is being organized. In the event that donations exceed expenses, the monies will be used for the 2004 Hill Nativity Walk. As the Italian Club of St. Louis is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization, your contributions may be tax-deductible. If you have any questions, or would like to donate, please contact Carolyn Stelzer at 314-772-3355 or Barbara Klein at 618-233-7261. Please mark your calendars and tell all your friends about this exciting event!

### March 8<sup>th</sup>, FESTA DELLA DONNA

In Italy, as the rest of Europe, March 8 is Woman's Day, or *Festa della donna*. The origins of the holiday go back to 1908 when the female workers of a New York textile factory went on strike, protesting the deplorable working conditions. The strike continued for several days when, on March 8, the owner blocked the doors with the workers inside. A fire broke out and 129 women died. Afterwards, the date was selected to commemorate women's workplace and social struggles. Most Italian women celebrate the day by dining out with friends and receiving mimosa flowers, which have become the symbol of the holiday. For further information, see <http://www.italiadonna.it/societa/soc12.htm>

### BRAVO ALDO DELLA CROCE! St. Dominic's Gets a Statue

On February 21, 2004 at the Church of St. Dominic Savio in Affton, Coadjutor Archbishop-Elect Joseph Naumann blessed a new statue of the saint for whom the parish is named. The five foot high likeness of the teenage saint was created by Italian Club member, artist Aldo Della Croce, and donated by Aldo and his family to the Church. The statue of St. Dominic is depicted wearing a suit with a cross in his right hand and a book in his left. It now stands at the corner of Pebble Hill and Savio Drives. Plans include adding a grotto area. **by Gene Mariani**

### Hill Nativity Walk Article in NIAF Magazine

An article entitled *An Italian Tradition Displayed in St. Louis* appeared in the National Italian-American Federation's magazine. "This year, visitors to the "Hill" in St. Louis' Italian neighborhood, were reminded of that beautiful tradition as they viewed 19 presepi displayed in storefront windows in the first annual Hill Nativity Walk. The idea for the Walk came from Barbara Klein, who while working in Italy for two years, visited several organized presepi displays in Milan, Rome and Naples. She returned to St. Louis and brought the Nativity Walk idea to her fellow members of the Italian Club of St. Louis, which backed the event." The Hill Nativity Walk was co-sponsored by the Italian Club of St. Louis and the Hill Business Association. Thank you, Barbara, for this marvelous idea and all of your hard work on this event.

### St. Joseph's Altar

St. Ambrose School Cafeteria  
5110 Wilson Avenue at Marconi  
Sunday, March 14  
Noon—4p.m.

The Mass will be celebrated in Italian at 3p.m.

### March 19<sup>th</sup>, FESTA DEL PAPA'

March 19<sup>th</sup> is the feast of San Giuseppe, or St. Joseph. The Italians felt what better day to celebrate their "babbi" (typical Tuscan expression for father) than the feast of father per excellence-San Giuseppe! Thus, Italians celebrate Father's Day on March 19 rather than in June as in most English-speaking countries.

**by Barbara Klein**

# TERZA PAGINA

## I capolavori della poesia italiana

a cura di Barbara Klein

**Leonardo Sinisgalli** (Montemurro, Basilicata 1908 - Roma 1981) era il brillante studente che Enrico Fermi avrebbe voluto con sé con i ragazzi di via Panisperna. Era un intellettuale eclettico, essendo poeta, ingegnere, documentarista, artista, e inventore. In occasione della festa del papà, il 19 marzo in Italia, presento una sua poesia dal libro *Autobiografia*

*A mio padre*

di Leonardo Sinisgalli

L'uomo che torna solo  
a tarda sera dalla vigna  
scuote le rape nella vasca  
sbuca dal viottolo con la paglia  
macchiata di verderame<sup>1</sup>  
L'uomo che porta così fresco  
terriccio sulle scarpe, odore  
di fresca sera nei vestiti  
si ferma a una fonte, parola  
con l'ortolano che sradica i finocchi.  
È un uomo, un piccolo uomo  
ch'io guardo di lontano.  
È un punto vivo all'orizzonte.  
Forse la sua pupilla  
si accende questa sera  
accanto alla peschiera  
dove si asciuga la fronte.

<sup>1</sup> solfato di rame usato per combattere le malattie della vite

## In giro per l'Italia

a cura di Barbara Klein

*Matera "città dei Sassi"*



Matera è famosa per il suo eccezionale centro storico, in particolare per i suoi rioni più caratteristici, il Sasso "Caveoso" ed il Sasso "Barisano", che assieme al rione "Civita" formano un complesso nucleo urbano, oggi indicato come i Sassi di Matera, dal 1993 incluso dall' UNESCO nella lista del Patrimonio Mondiale dell'Umanità.

Per "Sasso" si intende quartiere scavato nella roccia, ed i Sassi di Matera sono letteralmente intagliati a ridosso di un profondo burrone, la Gravina. La roccia è costituita in preva-

lenza di calcarenite, localmente denominata "tufo", una roccia sedimentaria, che, risulta tenera e facilmente modellabile.

Questa ha permesso la formazione di numerose grotte, ha facilitato lo scavo e il reperimento di materiale da costruzione, ed ha consentito l'escavazione di canali e cisterne. Parte del materiale di risulta veniva utilizzato anche per chiudere l'entrata della grotta, tamponandola. Oltre che con lo scavo la grotta veniva ingrandita anche con un tipo di costruzione, chiamato "lamione", che in pratica si prolunga verso l'esterno della grotta.

Per le zone più a valle lo scavo avveniva quasi in piano, ma per tutte le altre lo scavo è avvenuto in discesa, con più piani, seguendo un' inclinazione tale per cui gli alti raggi solari estivi non superassero l'entrata della grotta. In inverno invece l'inclinazione era tale da permettere ai bassi raggi di giungere sino al fondo della grotta, portando luce e calore.

A partire dalla fine del Settecento la maggiore densità urbana e la crisi della pastorizia portarono ad un continuo peggioramento della qualità di vita degli abitanti. La situazione peggiorò fino agli anni quaranta, quando i sassi furono visitati da Carlo Levi, che li descrisse nel *Cristo si è fermato ad Eboli*. Il clamore del libro di Levi spinse numerosi uomini di cultura e politici a visitare i Sassi.

Nel 1950 fu avviato il progetto di sfollamento dei Sassi. In quel tempo vi abitavano circa 15.000 persone, 2/3 dell'intera popolazione di Matera, in 2997 abitazioni, di cui 1641 scavate nella roccia di tufo.

Concluso il totale svuotamento negli anni '60, per i Sassi cominciarono decenni di abbandono. Ma oggi una parte dei Sassi sta trasformandosi in sistema museale con il circuito delle chiese rupestri; una seconda parte ha natura commerciale, con ristoranti e alberghi; una terza parte è di natura residenziale. I Sassi stanno tornando ad essere quindi una parte viva della città. Il paesaggio e l'architettura particolare hanno attratto l'interesse del mondo del cinema. Sono stati girati diversi film a Matera come *Il vangelo secondo Matteo* (Pier Paolo Pasolini 1964), *Allonsanfan* (Paolo e Vittorio Taviani 1974); *Cristo si è fermato a Eboli* e *Tre Fratelli* (Francesco Rosi 1979 e 1981); e ultimamente *The Passion of The Christ* (Mel Gibson 2002).



The Passion of The Christ

Per ulteriori informazioni vedi [www.sassiweb.it](http://www.sassiweb.it)

**Buon viaggio in Italia!!!**

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LA RONDINE**

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## **Prossime Manifestazioni**

### **FUTURE ITALIAN CLUB MEETINGS**

- March 17-** **Tenors in Opera**  
*by Susan Wohl*
- April 21-** **Roman Gladiators**  
*by Anna Amelung*  
**Washington University  
Awards Night**
- May 19-** **Luigi Pirandello**  
*by Tony Perrone*
- June 16-** **Report of the Vice-Consul**  
*by Joseph Colagiovanni, J.D.*

***The Italian Club meets the  
third Wednesday  
of each month for dinner at  
da Baldo's Restaurant  
Cocktails 6:30p.m.  
Dinner 7:00p.m.***

### **THE SPRING FILM AND OPERA SERIES**

***PRESENTED BY THE ITALIAN CLUB OF ST. LOUIS AT THE BOCCE CLUB***

**Friday, March 19—BITTER RICE (RISO AMARO), 1949;** in this ingenious melodrama by Giuseppe De Santis a thief on the run, Vittorio Gassman, meets a beautiful girl, Silvana Mangano. She joins the small army of "mondine" (rice weeders) who work to earn extra money during the rice season in the fields near Vercelli (Piedmont). One of Italy's most successful films, "Bitter Rice" is a masterpiece of cinema untarnished by time.

**Friday, April 2-** Two one-act operas by GIACOMO PUCCINI; **"IL TABARRO"** "Torn-from-the-headlines" saga of infidelity, circa 1900, that still retains its raw emotional charge. **"GIANNI SCHICCHI"** - A comedic masterpiece, dramatically immortalizes a passage from Dante's "Inferno." Greedy family members are tricked out of their inheritance by the cunning Schicchi, who uses his new wealth to help two young lovers wed.

**Friday, April 16 -THREE BROTHERS (TRE FRATELLI), 1980;** In this moving and interesting film the director Francesco Rosi portrays three brothers of modern Italy. The brothers, who have been separated by work and life and live in different towns (Rome, Turin and Naples) return home to their small village following the death of their mother. Main actors are Philippe Noiret, Vittorio Mezzogiorno, Michele Placido and Charles Vanel.

**Friday, May 7- "ATTILA" by GIUSEPPE VERDI :** La Scala presents a rare revival of this early Verdi masterpiece. Conducted by the renowned Riccardo Muti, this production comes to life through the thrilling voices of the infamous bass Samuel Ramey and soprano Cheryl Studer. Set in the time of Empire, "Attila" tells a story of murder and barbaric mayhem.