



La Rondine

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ITALIAN CLUB OF ST. LOUIS

October 2003

"Le Canzoni degli Alpini"

Next Meeting

Wednesday

October 15th

Cocktails— 6:30p.m.

Dinner— 7:00p.m.

RSVP—Marie Wehrle

(314) 544-8899 or

MCWehrle@juno.com

" 1943 was a traumatic year for Italy- a year of war and destruction and yet a year of hope."

Soldiers of all nations have their various military songs, but the Italian Army, perhaps as a result of the Italy's superb musical tradition, has the best-known history of military choral singing. These touchingly beautiful and moving songs, wonderfully expressive of patriotism, loneliness, sentimental longing for a sweetheart, and of the dangers of life at the front have become an especially beloved part of the story of Italian popular music. Although many Italian military units share in this tradition of choral singing, arguably the most famous are the

Alpine soldiers, the troops of the famous Corpo degli Alpini; and their songs, collectively described as "le Canzone degli Alpini", have become known throughout the world. In 1926, Il Coro della SAT (Chorus of the Società Alpinisti Tridentini), was formed to promote and popularize this tradition of military singing and the preservation of the old mountain songs. In the 74 years since its founding, the SAT, which now consists of many amateur choral clubs, has performed hundreds of concerts - bringing these wonderful songs of the mountains and of the

soldier's life - to people in every part of the world. At the October 15 meeting of the Italian Club, we will have our own mini-version of the SAT. A group of Italian Club members, all also members of the Choir of St. Ambrose Church, will present, with musical accompaniment, a selection of six of the most beloved of the famous Canzone degli Alpini. Don't miss this unique opportunity to hear the songs of the Alpini and to learn a bit of the history of this famous unit.

" Italy - 1943" presenter Cav. Valerio Bianco

The year 1943 is truly historic for Italy. It was the beginning of true Italian freedom, stated our speaker, member Cav. Valerio Bianco, at the September meeting. Valerio proceeded to examine chronologically the relevant events in Italy beginning in 1940.

1940 - In June, Italy enters World War II and declares war on France. Subsequently, France succumbs to Germany and then signs an armistice with Italy.

1941- The first groups of Italian soldiers depart for the Russian front.

1942- There is a major battle in North Africa where the Italian and German forces retake Benghazi. By June of 1942, Mussolini is confident of an imminent victory in North Africa and goes to Derna to prepare himself to enter Alexandria riding a white horse. After 21 days of battle, he becomes disillusioned and returns to Rome. By July of 1942, there was the formation of the ARMIR (armata italiana in Russia). An additional 167,000 soldiers are sent to Russia to form the ARMIR- now totaling

227,000 men.

1943- The economic situation in Italy is deteriorating. Food sources are dwindling barely allowing 150 grams of bread per day. The bombing in the cities is getting heavier and many people are fleeing to the country.

On January 14, there is a massive offensive by the Russians on the German, Hungarian and Italian lines on the river Don. The Hungarian Army retreated in disarray and then the German forces also retreated. The Italians were left to defend until January 17 when they received orders to retreat. By the end of January, the 6th German Army was destroyed at Stalingrad.

By March, the economy and the war effort had deteriorated. There was a strike in the northern industrial cities of Italy. This was the first strike in 20 years. The war in North Africa was not going well and Rommel returned to Germany. By April, the ARMIR returns home having lost over half of their men. By May 12, Mussolini finally allows the surrendering of the

Italian Army in North Africa.

On July 9, the Allied forces landed in Sicily followed by a second landing in August. Within 25 days the occupation was completed. The Gran Consiglio del fascismo was reunited and at 3:00a.m. on July 25, they voted to give the control of the Army back to the King. By 5:00p.m. Mussolini was informed by King Vittorio Emanuel III of the decision. Mussolini was arrested, placed in an ambulance and taken to a hotel in the Gran Sasso mountains. The Italian people were informed at the 10:45p.m. newscast and celebrations began all over Italy. The bells of all of the churches began ringing. General Badoglio was named Prime Minister and ordered the dissolution of the Fascist Party. Badoglio declares Italy will continue the war on the side of Germany against the Allies. By September 8, Italy unconditionally surrendered to the Allied forces in Cassibile, Sicily.

At the time of the surrender, the Royal Family received an order to report to Pescara without any expla-

L'Angolo Del Presidente *by James Tognoni*

My dear fellow members:

The smell of fall is in the air. There is crispness in the air, which awakens your senses and revives you from the heat of the summer. Every so often you can catch the whiff of logs burning in a fireplace. I must say, this is my favorite time of year. Make time to get outside and enjoy the beauty of these autumn days. It's good for the spirit and the soul.

So what is happening with the Italian Club of St. Louis? At last month's meeting we were treated to an in-depth presentation on "Italy 1943" by Cav. Valerio Bianco. In addition, we were joined by Gianluigi Garavaglia from the Museum in Cuggiono,

Italy. Mr. Garavaglia spoke of the July 19th meeting in Cuggiono and generously gave the Italian Club a book from the Museum.

At the October meeting, we are in for another treat and an evening of fun. We will learn about the Alpini and hear some of their music.

The Board of Directors has formed the following committees to help facilitate the running of our Club and our special events: Publicity/Public Relations, Hospitality, Membership and Special Events. You may be asked to serve or chair one of these important committees. Either the chairperson of the committee or I may be in contact with you. If you would like to volunteer to

assist in one of these areas, please let me know of your interest. Thank you in advance for your participation.

A specific call for volunteers. The ICSL will be participating in this year's Columbus Day activities. We need your help and support to work at this event. Please see the article by Gloria Etling asking for your assistance.

See you all at the next meeting on Wednesday, October 15th. Stay well!

Ciao,

Jim

jtognoni@earthlink.net



Cav. Valerio Bianco and Peter Puleo, member of the Program Committee

"Italy - 1943" cont'd

nation. Princess Maria Jose' learned of the armistice from the 10:45p.m. newscast. It was suggested that the Princess escape Italy and go to Switzerland. Princess Mafalda had left Rome to go to her brother-in-law's funeral in Bulgaria. On the morning of September 9 she was informed of Italy's surrender and told that the Royal Family was in Chieti. She arrived in Chieti on September 12 only to find German soldiers. She was able to return to Rome at that time since her children were in the care of Montini at the Vatican. On the morning of September 23, she received a phone call from the German High Command informing her of an important communication from her husband. They sent a car for her. When she arrived at the German command, she was arrested and sent to Bruchelwald concentration camp where she later died.

On September 9, the King and the Badoglio government escaped to Brindisi without leaving any orders for the army. The army disbanded and over 600,000 Italian soldiers were rounded up by the Germans and sent to concentration camps. The Allied Command suggested to the King that he should declare war on Germany and abdicate in favor of his grandson, Vittorio Emanuele. The King refused. On September 23, the fascist Republican Sociabile Italiana was born. Over the next few

months small groups of soldiers engaged the Germans but in most cases were overpowered and sent to concentration camps. By the end of 1943 the Allied Armies liberated Naples and reached the Gustav line at Monte Cassino. 1943 was a traumatic year for Italy- a year of war and destruction and yet a year of hope. It was a year that set the foundation for the future of a free and democratic Italy. *by Marie Cuccia-Brand*

Columbus Day Festa- Sunday, October 12th

The Italian Club will participate in the Columbus Day Festa on October 12 at Berra Park. We are having an antipasto booth, selling plates of salami, cheese, olives and bread. We need volunteers to work in our booth.

We are asking that you work for a two-hour shift during the hours of 11a.m.—5p.m. We also need workers to assist in the Columbus Day Corporation's Booth. Please call Gloria DiMartino Etling at (314) 965-6972 to sign up. We look forward to your participation!

Calling All Presepi

The Italian Club is interested in a program regarding Italian nativity sets or "presepi". If anyone has an Italian presepio and would like to be involved, please call Barbara Klein at (314) 422-3102 or Marie Cuccia-Brand at (314) 993-2252.

Meramac Community College is looking for a teacher for the spring semester class "Italian for the Traveler", preferably someone who is a native Italian speaker. Contact Janet Turnbough at (314) 984-7352.

TERZA PAGINA

I capolavori della poesia italiana

a cura di Barbara Klein

Alfonso Gatto (Salerno 1909 - Orbetello, Grosseto 1976) fu giornalista, critico d'arte, e poeta nel solco dell'ermetismo. Fra le sue opere: *Isole*, *La storia delle vittime*, *La forza degli occhi*, *Desinenze*.

Ai monti di Trento di Alfonso Gatto

Bei monti della sera
azzurra è già l'Italia...

*Penso a mia madre sola con la luna
nella notte d'ottobre, ancora estiva
la brezza muove i suoi capelli, imbruna
sulle case d'intorno...*

Così la chiara sfera¹
dei monti a lungo ammalia
nei pascoli la sera.

Odora già l'Italia
di polvere e di rose.

*Era la luna ancora effusa² al giorno,
mia madre a lungo sul mio capo pose
le mani e disse: "vedi, a noi d'intorno
il tempo s'è fermato..."*

Bei monti della sera
azzurro è il passato.

¹sfera
²sparsa sul

In giro per l'Italia

a cura di Barbara Klein

Trento: Castello del Buonconsiglio

Il Castello del Buonconsiglio fu la residenza di principi vescovi di Trento dalla seconda metà del XIII secolo fino alla secolarizzazione del principato nel 1803.

Il nucleo più antico, Castelvecchio, sorto sulla cima di un dosso roccioso intorno al mastio cilindrico, detto Torre d'Augusto, che risale alla prima metà del Duecento. Fu ampiamente rimaneggiata alla fine del '300 dal vescovo Giorgio di Liechtenstein, che ne mutò il primitivo severo aspetto in quello di una residenza. Egli collegò al castello la Torre dell'Aquila al cui interno fece affrescare il celebre Ciclo del Mesi, capolavoro del gotico internazionale.

I bellissimi affreschi, che vennero eseguiti tra il 1391 e il 1407, sono suddivisi in riquadri da sottili colonnine che tuttavia non interrompono la scena, come nel corteo che prosegue fra i mesi di aprile e maggio. Questi affreschi costituiscono un documento prezioso della situazione economica e sociale del Trentino tra la fine del '300 e l'inizio del secolo successivo, raffigurando sia gli svaghi delle classi nobili (come una battaglia familiare a palle di neve), sia il lavoro dei contadini, impegnati nei campi secondo l'alternarsi delle stagioni. La cura per i particolari ritorna nella descrizione delle vesti: ricche e multicolori per i nobili, il cui abbigliamento permette di riconoscere i tratti tipici della moda del tempo, semplici e dimesse per contadini e artigiani. Le diverse attività sono raffigurate con grande realismo: l'aratura, la vendemmia, la semina e la raccolta della legna così come i giochi all'aperto, i tornei, le passeggiate e la caccia.



Torre d'Augusto

L'edificio subì parecchie importanti modifiche durante gli anni: ai primi del '500 si affiancò all'antico edificio il Magno Palazzo, una maestosa residenza ispirata ai canoni rinascimentali; e nel tardo Seicento venne costruita una nuova ala, la Giunta Albertina con la quale vennero congiunti i due corpi di fabbrica del Magno Palazzo e di Castelvecchio. Dopo la fine del potere temporale dei vescovi, il castello era utilizzato nel XIX secolo come caserma austriaca, poiché Trento era ancora sotto il dominio austriaco.

Durante la Prima Guerra Mondiale, Cesare Battisti, Fabio Filzi e Damiano Chiesa, ritenuti in seguito eroi dell'irredentismo trentino, scelsero di combattere contro l'Austria, preferendo essere perseguiti come disertori, piuttosto che rinunciare ad un ideale ed al proprio credo politico. Battisti, come Filzi e Chiesa, fu catturato dai soldati austriaci mentre combatteva nelle file dell'esercito "nemico" e nel 1916 fu portato a Trento per essere giudicato. Dopo il processo, che si svolse nella Sala del Tribunale, furono condannati a morte. Le esecuzioni ebbero luogo nel cortile del Castello del Buonconsiglio nel luglio 1916. Morirono da eroi gridando "Viva l'Italia".

Al termine della prima guerra mondiale il Castello divenne proprietà dello Stato italiano e nel 1924 sede del Museo Nazionale. Il Castello di Buonconsiglio è da vedere! Per ulteriori informazioni vedi www.buonconsiglio.it Buon viaggio in Italia!!!



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c/o Marie Cuccia-Brand
2115 North Ballas Road
St. Louis, MO 63131

Fax: 314-993-8096
e-mail: mcucciasbj@aol.com

***Celebrating over
80 years of
Italian Culture
and Heritage***

**WE'RE ON THE WEB!
WWW.ITALYSTL.COM/
ITALIANCLUB**

Prossime Manifestazioni

FUTURE ITALIAN CLUB MEETINGS

October 15- *"Canzone degli Alpini"*
Gene Mariani and Chorus

November 19- *"Doge Dandolo of Venice"*
Prof. Tomm Madden
Award to St. Louis University student(s)

December 17- *Christmas celebration
and "Italian Folk Tales"*
dramatized by the
Panettone Players

*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.*

On-Line Italian Lessons

Seventy-two interactive Italian language lessons are offered on the RAI website at <http://www.italica.rai.it/> Click on "Dentro l'italiano" and happy learning!

ITALIAN CLUB'S FALL FILM & OPERA SERIES

Il postino (1995)

Friday, October 17

This Academy Award-nominated story follows Mario, played by Massimo Troisi, a shy and simple minded postman on a remote Mediterranean island, who forms a friendship with exiled "poet of love" Pablo Neruda. Mario enlists Pablo's help in winning the heart of a beautiful woman. (115 minutes)

Turandot

Friday, November 7

Hear Placido Domingo sing "Nessun Dorma" in Giacomo Puccini's glorious and last opera. Zeffirelli directs this monumental Met. Opera production. If the royal suitors of the cold Chinese princess Turandot do not solve her riddles, they are executed. But against her will, "love wins out in the end." (134 minutes).

Films will be introduced by Dr. Carla Bossola, and operas by Dorotea Rossomanno-Phillips. All programs are in Italian with English sub-titles and begin promptly at 7:30 p.m. Admission is free. Sponsored by the Italian Club of St. Louis and the St. Louis Bocce Club. The St. Louis Bocce Club is located at 2210 Marconi Avenue, on the "hill," St. Louis, Mo. 63110. For further information contact Dorotea Rossomanno-Phillips at 535-9748 or e-mail: dorotearp@aol.com.

Metamorphoses

based on the Myths of Ovid

written and directed by Mary Zimmerman

September 10—October 10, 2003

The Repertory Theatre of St. Louis

Metamorphoses is Mary Zimmerman's Tony Award-winning adaptation of Ovid's stories of love and loss, triumph and transformation.