



# La Rondine

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ITALIAN CLUB OF ST. LOUIS

December 2004

## Panettone Players present sketches from "The Adventures of Pinocchio"

### Next Meeting

Wednesday

December 15

Cocktails— 6:30p.m.

Dinner— 7:00p.m.

Please send in the enclosed flyer for your reservation. Prepaid Reservations are Required

ItalianClubSTL@aol.com

*"And yet it was in Machiavelli's best known comedy La Mandragola (The Mandrake - probably written in 1518 and published in 1521), that images emerged of Machiavelli, both as writer and thinker, that are indeed quite different from the picture of the shrewd student of political science that we perceived in The Prince."*

The Panettone Players will present sketches (in Italian with English written translations for all present) from Carlo Collodi's imaginative children's classic, "The Adventures of Pinocchio." An immediate success, when published in book form in Italy in 1883, "Pinocchio" was first published in 1881 as a series of installments for a children's magazine in Rome. It is one of the most influential works of modern Italian literature, and has been translated into numerous languages, including Latin. The author, Carlo Collodi, was born Carlo Lorenzini in Collodi, near Flor-

ence, in 1826. He served on the editorial staff of the Florentine newspaper, *Il "Fanfulla"*, and was later involved in the important children's magazine *"Il Giornale dei Bambini."* In his "Adventures of Pinocchio" Geppetto, an old wood-carver, wishes to make a wonderful puppet that can dance and do somersaults. But from the unusual piece of wood he uses, he produces an exuberant puppet that can also talk and misbehave like any child. Pinocchio, in order to avoid responsibilities, goes from one predicament to the next. But he eventually also develops an under-

standing of love and commitment, and through bravery and hardship earns his heart's desire of becoming a real boy. The story of Pinocchio highlights the tug between childhood freedom and creativity on the one hand, and maturity and social responsibility on the other. Since its inception it has enchanted generations of young - and older - readers with its blend of wild, imaginative adventures and cautionary advice to mischievous children.

*by Dorotea Rossomanno-Phillips*

## Humanitas and Religion in Machiavelli's "La Mandragola" by Simone Bregni, Ph.D.

In the introduction to his intellectually sophisticated and challenging presentation, SLU Professor Simone Bregni reminded us that although Niccolò Macchiavelli (1469-1527) is very well known for his sharp and frankly cynical views on politics in his masterpiece, *The Prince* (written in 1513 for Lorenzo de Medici, published in 1532), his comedies have received comparatively limited critical attention. And yet it was in Machiavelli's best known comedy, *La Mandragola* (*The Mandrake* - probably written in 1518 and published in 1521), that images emerged of Machiavelli, both as writer and thinker, that are indeed quite different from the picture of the shrewd student of political science that we perceived in *The Prince*. In *La Mandragola*, we find emphasis on character; with individuals portraying, in interesting and peculiar ways, certain aspects of the author's contemporary society while also revealing insights into Machiavelli's own complex beliefs, character and personality. In literature, a comedy is a work that uses humor in the development and expression of theme and character and that has a happy ending. And *La Mandragola*, at least on the surface, certainly seems to meet these criteria. The play tells the tale of a young man, Callimaco, who is very taken with Lucrezia, a beautiful woman

who is, alas, married to Nicia, an elderly and gullible man. Callimaco seeks the assistance of the sly and pedantic Ligurio and of the friar Timoteo to help him seduce Lucrezia. Together, they plan to scam both old Nicia and young Lucrezia by tricking Nicia into letting Callimaco sleep with Lucrezia, and, what's more to do it even with his blessing. The scam hinges on the fact that Nicia is desperate for an heir but is too old to father a child; and involves convincing Nicia that his wife can have a child with a complete stranger, who will, without any doubt procreate, thanks to a mandrake potion they will have him drink. But then that this stranger will also die soon after, *post coitum*, because of the magical powers of the potion. As a result, there will not be any scandal, as the stranger will never be able to "kiss and tell". As the plot unfolds we learn the "stranger" will be Callimaco, and that he will not die at all, but rather simply fulfill his own attraction to Lucrezia. And ergo, we have the required happy ending. At this point one may reasonably ask, what does all of this tell us of the author's view of his contemporary society or provide any glimpse of the Macchiavellian personality? Bregni addressed this question by focusing, like Macchiavelli, on character. But not on any of the major characters in the story - but

rather on the behavior of a very minor and almost forgotten character, a man of the cloth, the monk Fra Timoteo. Thus Timoteo emerges as anti-hero, the *summa* of all that is negative and is portrayed as a totally corrupted man, lacking honor and dignity and of no spiritual depth. In his lecture, Bregni pointed-out how we are consequently led by Macchiavelli to consider the state of religion in his times as exemplified by Timoteo; while at the same time, the main female character, Lucrezia, is portrayed as perfect example of "tragic hero"; ready to accept her destiny with high moral dignity, although one might also argue that her behavior did not appear to meet the morale criteria of the established church. Thanks to Machiavelli's skills as writer, characters in the *Mandragola* are complex, psychologically elaborate, and never "flattened" into standard roles. The theatrical dynamics of *La Mandragola* provide rhetorical tools which Machiavelli skillfully used to portray and denounce the moral corruption and the manipulative use of official power as he saw it in his own times. Could it be that Macchiavelli, in *La Mandragola*, was forecasting the coming Protestant Reformation and the Age of the Enlightenment?

*by Gene Mariani*

## L'Angolo Del Presidente by James Tognoni

### My Fellow Members:

Well here we are again at the beginning of a new holiday season. By the time you read this Thanksgiving will be just a memory and perhaps a little lingering indigestion. The upcoming Christmas party should be a great deal of fun. We are planning a feast and the classic tale "Pinocchio" will be performed by our own Panetonne Players.

I am going to ask each of you a favor. As we move into 2005, the Board wants to make your Club even better than it has been and more

accessible to all of our members. I am asking for your feedback regarding what you enjoy and what can be improved in our Club. I want your honest opinions regarding the meeting format, presentations, meals, and any other issues you would like to discuss. Here is the favor. Please let me know about the things that you feel need improvement as well as those that you enjoy.

This is OUR club. We can structure it in any way that best serves the whole group. My email address and phone number are included in this message. I want to hear from you. I

just want our organization to be the best it can be for the good of all the members.

Please tell all of your family and friends about our Club. We welcome new members and guests at each of our events.

I hope you will mail in your reservation for the Christmas party as soon as you get this publication. It wouldn't be a party without YOU!

*Ciao, Jim*

jtognoni@earthlink.net  
314-865-1005

### 2nd Annual Hill Nativity Walk

The second annual Hill Nativity Walk, a cultural display of Italian and Italian-style presepi (nativity scenes), will take place from Wednesday, December 1, 2004 to Sunday, January 2, 2005, in the storefronts of Hill merchants. This year the display will feature several nativity scenes handcrafted in Italy, including one from Naples, one in terracotta from Palermo, Sicily, and a papier-mâché nativity scene from Lecce, Puglia. You can take a self-guided tour by picking up a brochure at one of the participating merchants. There will also be guided tours given on Saturdays, December 4, 11 and 18 at 10a.m. and 2p.m. The guided tours will begin at the Immigrant Statue in front of St. Ambrose Church. The Hill Nativity Walk is co-sponsored by the Italian Club of St. Louis and the Hill Business Association. *Please call Barbara Klein (314)422-3102 for more information.*

### Christmas on the Hill

On Saturday, December 4th, the Hill Business Association and Hill 2000 will co-sponsor "Christmas on the Hill". The businesses will be open until 10p.m., and shuttles will be running from 3-11p.m.. There will be Christmas lights, carolers and carriage rides. This will be a great opportunity to visit the Hill and see the beautifully displayed presepi on the Hill Nativity Walk.

### Congratulations Dorotea Rossomanno-Phillips

Italian Club Secretary, Dorotea Rossomanno-Phillips, recently gave a dramatized reading of the evocative, intensely passionate and beautiful lyric poems of the great ancient Greek poetress, Sappho, preceeded by an introduction at the Classical Club of St. Louis.

We would also like to congratulate Dorotea on her hard work in coordinating the newly formed St. Ambrose Church Library (Biblioteca Sant'Ambrogio) which opened on Sunday, November 21st.

Long-time Italian Club member, **Leo Donati**, died on Tuesday, November 9 after a long illness. Our sincerest condolences to his brother, Italian Club member, Dr. Robert Donati, and his other family members and friends.

### Mariani Award presented to SLU Students

Congratulations to Mary Devine and Danielle Ridolfi, winners of the Italian Club's 2004 Eugene Mariani Award, which was presented at the November meeting by President James Tognoni. The award is made annually to Saint Louis University students who have distinguished themselves in the study of Italian language and literature at the University. Winners are selected by the faculty of SLU's Program of Italian Studies in the Department of Romance Languages. The award consists of \$500 from the Italian Club which is matched by the Mariani family and the Southwest Bank. The funds are used to assist outstanding students in traveling and studying in Italy and to sponsor SLU's annual Italian Club/Mariani/Southwest Bank invited lecture. The 2004 lecturer was Dr. Ruth Iyob who spoke on the influence of Italian culture in her native land of Eritrea.



Ed Berra, Danielle Ridolfi, Gene Mariani, Simone Bregni, Mary Devine and Jim Tognoni

### Congratulations Professor Alberto Isidori

Congratulations to Italian Club member Dr. Alberto Isidori on the honor of being named the Edwin H. Murty Professor of Engineering in the Washington University School of Engineering and Applied Science. Alberto, who makes his permanent address in Rome, is a distinguished member of the Engineering faculties of both Washington University and of the University of Rome. He has the enviable job of teaching at WU during the autumn semester, at La Sapienza during the spring and sailing il Mare Tirreno during summers

# TERZA PAGINA

## I capolavori della poesia italiana

a cura di Barbara Klein

Nel dicembre 1959, **Salvatore Quasimodo** (Modica 1901- Napoli 1968) ricevette il premio Nobel per la letteratura. In occasione della seconda "passeggiata dei presepi" sulla "Hill" di St. Louis, co-sponsorizzata dall'Italian Club of St. Louis e dalla Hill Business Association, dal 1 dicembre al 2 gennaio nelle vetrine di vari negozi in via Marconi, via Daggett, e via Shaw, vorrei proporre ai lettori la seguente poesia.

### Il Presepe

di Salvatore Quasimodo

Natale. Guardo il presepe scolpito  
dove sono i pastori appena giunti  
alla povera stalla di Betlemme.

Anche i Re Magi nelle lunghe vesti  
salutano il potente Re del mondo.

Pace nella finzione e nel silenzio  
delle figure in legno ed ecco i vecchi  
del villaggio e la stalla che risplende  
e l'asinello di colore azzurro.

## In giro per l'Italia

a cura di Barbara Klein

### Il presepe siciliano



Presepe in terracotta e stoffa di  
A. Tripi di Palermo

In Sicilia l'arte presepiale pur risentendo degli influssi della scuola napoletana, specialmente per quanto riguarda l'ambientazione (riproduzione di scene di vita quotidiana in paesi e con personaggi isolani) e talvolta la tecnica (manichini in legno e fil di ferro con vesti di stoffa) presenta tuttavia diversi caratteri originali variabili a seconda delle provenienze geografiche. Quattro sono le aree dove in particolare si sviluppa un artigianato presepiale fortemente caratterizzato: i territori di Palermo, Siracusa, Trapani e Caltagirone.

A Palermo e nel siracusano, dove l'apicoltura è molto diffusa, fin dal '600 si usa la cera per plasmare statuine di Gesù Bambino e poi interi presepi. In quest'arte si distinguono i cosiddetti "Bambinai" che operavano a Palermo nella zona della chiesa di San Domenico tra il '600 e il '700; tra loro un caposcuola fu Giulio Gaetano Zumbo del quale si può ammirare un presepe al Victoria and Albert Museum di Londra. I Bambinelli sono di fattura raffinata, impreziositi da accessori d'oro e d'argento,

ieratici nell'espressione e rappresentati con una croce in mano. Nel '800 sono rinomati i "cerari" siracusani che producono presepi interi o Bambinelli dall'espressione gioiosa o dormienti, recanti nelle mani un agnellino, un fiore o un frutto e immersi in un tripudio di fiori di carta e lustrini colorati dentro teche di vetro (scarabattole). Tra loro eccellono Fra' Ignazio Macca, del quale si conservano alcuni presepi nell'eremo di San Corrado a Noto e nel Museo Bellomo di. Notevole anche il presepe conservato nel palazzo Vescovile di Noto, che rappresenta uno spaccato di vita contadina, composto da 38 figure inserite nel paesaggio dei monti iblei.



Presepe in corallo al  
Museo Pepoli

A Trapani per la fattura dei presepi si utilizzano materiali nobili e soprattutto il corallo, da solo, come in epoca rinascimentale, o insieme all'avorio, alla madreperla, all'osso, all'alabastro e alle conchiglie, nel periodo barocco e rococò, quando alla composizione centrale della Natività fanno corona architetture in stile d'epoca dove si rappresentano scene fantasiose e simboliche. Splendidi esemplari sono quelli esposti ai musei Pepoli di Trapani e Cordici

di Erice. A Caltagirone, città produttrice di ceramiche fin dal '500, i presepi sono realizzati in terracotta e rappresentano come cornice alla Natività, scene di vita contadina e pastorale animate da personaggi tipici di quella civiltà come il pastore che dorme, lo zampognaro, il venditore di ricotta o il cacciatore. La migliore produzione qualitativa di presepi in terracotta policroma si ebbe tra la fine del '700 e la prima metà dell'800 con la bottega dei

fratelli Bongiovanni, Giuseppe e Giacomo e con il nipote Giuseppe Vaccaro eccellente artista. Tuttavia già agli inizi del '700 operavano artigiani rinomati come i "santari" Branciforti e Margioglio che contribuirono ad imporre Caltagirone anche come "Città del presepe". Più in genere nell'intero territorio isolano ebbe grande diffusione a partire dal '600, il presepe costruito con la tecnica usata nella produzione di statue d'altare: statuine in legno rivestite di stoffe immerse in un bagno di colla per renderle rigide e dai colori brillanti.

Per ulteriori informazioni vedi [www.presepio.it](http://www.presepio.it). Buon viaggio in Italia!!

Un grazie va a Licia Arista e Giuseppe Lo Magno per il loro aiuto riguardo i presepi siciliani nella mostra.

**Auguri di Buon Natale  
e Felice Anno Nuovo a tutti!**



Presepe in ceramica di F.  
Scarlatella di Caltagirone

**THE NEWSLETTER OF THE  
ITALIAN CLUB OF ST. LOUIS  
LA RONDINE**

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## **Prossime Manifestazioni**

### **FUTURE ITALIAN CLUB MEETINGS & EVENTS**

**December 1-January 2 -**  
Hill Nativity Walk

**December 15 -**  
Christmas Celebration with gourmet  
dinner and sketches from "Pinocchio"  
by Carlo Collodi, performed by the  
Panettone Players. The cost of the  
dinner for our Christmas Celebration  
will be \$50/person.

**January 19 - "Annales"**

***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.**

### **Italian Film Series at the St. Louis Art Museum**

#### **Passion and Defiance: Silent Divas of Italian Cinema**

**Friday, December 3rd St. Louis Art Museum Auditorium**  
**\$5 for the general public**  
**(\$3 for members of the St. Louis Art Museum or Italian Club)**

***Join us for a rare glimpse at the deadly, daring, and divine Divas of silent Italian cinema. The New Music Circle provides thrilling live accompaniment for these timeless masterpieces tracing the early history of female stardom in the arts and in popular culture. This film series is presented in collaboration with the St. Louis Art Museum, New Music Circle and the Italian Club of St. Louis.***

**1:30 pm- *Cenere* (1917; 38 minutes)**

Set in Sardinia, *Cenere* is the tale of Rosalie (the legendary stage actress Eleonora Duse in her only screen performance), a poor unwed mother who entrusts her son to the natural father and his wife. Following years of misery, Rosalie's son returns home to find her and invite her to his wedding.

**4:00 pm- *Rapsodia Satanica* (1917; 40 minutes)**

*Rapsodia Satanica* was the last film directed by Nino Oxilia and undoubtedly one of the finest achievements of early Italian cinema. Lyda Borelli lights up the screen as the aging aristocrat Alba D'Oltrevita who makes a pact with the devil: she will be forever young but will never fall in love again.

**7:00 pm- *Assunta Spina* (1915; 62 minutes)**

Italian silent screen goddess Francesca Bertini appears in her most famous role as a beautiful young laundress engaged to a jealous lover who cannot control his passion or hers. An operatic tale of love and sacrifice, *Assunta Spina* captures precious glimpses of life on the streets of Naples presaging the rise of Italian Neorealist directors from DeSica to Fellini.

*Italian Club of St. Louis  
December 15th Christmas Celebration  
at da Baldo's Restaurant*

<i>Antipasti - Freddi:</i>	<i>Prosciutto con melone</i>
<i>Antipasti - Caldi:</i>	<i>Crostini di polenta al gorgonzola</i>
<i>Primo:</i>	<i>Testarole al pesto</i>
<i>Intermezzo:</i>	<i>Sorbetto al mango</i>
<i>Secondo - Carne:</i>	<i>Medaglioni di vitello Gruviera</i>
<i>o</i>	
<i>Secondo - Pesce:</i>	<i>Sogliola aurora</i>
<i>Contorni:</i>	<i>Verdura di stagione</i>
<i>Insalata:</i>	<i>Insalata tricolore</i>
<i>Dolce:</i>	<i>Tartufo da Baldo</i>
<i>Vini:</i>	<i>Bianco e rosso della casa alla caraffa</i>
	<i>\$50 per person</i>

*Seating will be strictly limited to 72 people. Reservations, specifying choice of meat or fish entree, must be received with payment included no later than Thursday, December 9. Please make reservations as soon as possible. We will be unable to accommodate late registrations or "walk-ins".*

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*Please mail your reservation to:  
Dan Viele, 1931 Schoettler Valley, Chesterfield, MO 63017*

*Make checks payable to: Baldo's Restaurant*

*I am enclosing a check for \_\_\_\_\_ person(s) in the amount of \_\_\_\_\_ (\$50/person)  
Please indicate your choice of entree(s): # of veal \_\_\_\_\_ # of fish \_\_\_\_\_*

*Name(s) of the attendee(s): \_\_\_\_\_*