Sergio Gerasi: the creative hand behind "Dylan Dog"

By Ilaria Verunelli

"Dylan Dog" lives in London and he has a Volkswagen Maggiolone, a convertible—old and wrecked—and an assistant, Groucho. He falls in love almost always but never marries. He lives amidst the nightmares of other people, of the world in general. He is the emblem of the antihero—beautiful and melancholic." Sergio Gerasi draws comic strips as a profession. He is the stroke behind one of the most well-known Italian comics, "Dylan Dog". "From him, I borrow my sketches—he is not a character of mine. He was created in the first half of the Eighties by Tiziano Sclavi."

La Voce Italiana had the opportunity to interview this young and renowned Italian comic strip illustrator, born in 1978, but who already has 20 years of professional activity since his debut.

Who is Sergio Gerasi in few words?

Sergio Gerasi was a child who grew up in the last century, in the early Eighties. He was shy and introverted—but as is evident today—determined since childhood, dreaming of becoming a comic strip artist. This dream became a reality. Gerasi transformed his dream into his profession, and this year (2020), he is celebrating 20 years of his career. Yes, 20 years have passed since my very first comic was published. It was "Lazarus Ledd" n.81, and since then I have never stopped drawing, every day—almost all day long, except for the evenings.

You've told me before that you started talking late as a child, but drawing when you were extremely young.

How funny I didn't remember I had told you this story, but it is extremely true. My mother says that I started talking when I was three years old. On the contrary, ever since the day I remember I have been drawing. Over the years, I have had many passions: soccer, music and programming with the first computers. All these passions came to an end, or they didn't find a ground as fertile as drawing.

Tell us something more about "Dylan Dog", this famous character. How can you put yourself in his shoes? You draw—the script is the work of somebody else. Then, what happens?

The first number, now legendary, was published in September 1986. I stumbled onto this comic strip as a reader some years later since in 1986 I was just eight, too young to read a comic strip like this one. "Dylan Dog" is an investigator—maybe the only one—of nightmares. His face was inspired by a very young Rupert Everett who then interpreted Francesco Dellamorte in "Dellamorte Dellamore", a cult classic horror movie in Italy based on Sclavi's novel, which inspired the character of "Dylan Dog". For me to start working for this team of artists and for such a prestigious publication, it was both a huge honor and a dream that became reality. As a reader, "Dylan Dog" was exactly the comic strip that hit me like a lightning bolt. I am probably able to draw him because I have been reading this strip for 30 years. He is almost a brother to me, let's say a cousin. Yes, when it comes to the script, it is written by a very heterogeneous team of scriptwriters, since his creator, Sclavi, does not produce many stories now; actually, he had almost stopped writing some years ago. Luckily, it seems he has changed his mind.
What does Sergio Gerasi do in front of a blank page? What are the techniques used today?

The possibilities to draw are actually very ample, thanks to digital. I started on paper, when it was yet unimaginable to draw on electronic paper, as it is today on the iPad Pro. I am not an extremist who supports this approach over the paper. I accept all the instruments that allow me to design traits and sketches on paper or digitally. I still use paper and brushes, but I also use the so-called digital tables. All is accepted. In front of a blank page I’ve never had creative roadblocks; on the contrary, the energy that a blank paper gives me is enormous. There is a space for drawing—to see something take form from the absolute nothingness of a white page.

"Something strange happens when you imagine a story—you draw your inspiration from what you have around you, you mix it with fantasy, you build it and you model it looking at where you want it to go, and then magically, a story is born."

When the Salento area was not yet a sought-after destination. As I was traveling back to Milan at the end of August, I closed the car windows and under my nose I could smell a nice, fresh, clean scent—the smell of the sea, of the figs, of the red land. As I re-opened the windows in the suburbs of Milan the air smelled bad, somewhat repulsive, but this did not bother me—I was home and I was happy to be back.

Aida...

My daughter, Aida, but also the title of my new book that will be on the shelves very shortly—the two are unrelated. Something strange happens when you imagine a story—you draw your inspiration from what you have around you, you mix it with fantasy, you build it and you model it looking at where you want it to go, and then magically, a story is born. With this in mind, I think that fully autobiographical stories do not exist. However, all of them may have to some extent something autobiographical.

How and when did the story of Italian comic strips start?

About 120 years ago, if I am not mistaken, we were at the beginning of the 20th century, when the very first character sees the light: it is "Bibbolbul", which nowadays is the name of an event dedicated to comic strips in Bologna. During these 120 years many things have changed. The language of comic strips changed and became amplified for all modern media. I personally believe that the language of comic strips still has a hidden potential.

American comic strip art and Italian comic strip art.

The comic strip was born in the United States. It is believed, almost unanimously, that Yellow Kid was the very first experiment of a comic strip published. In Italy we started some years later, but both markets are vivid and important. Around the world, comic strips are produced in very few places; you can count them with your fingers: United States, France, Italy, Japan, and Argentina, to be more specific. These are all different "schools" that are still studied today as different approaches tailored to different markets.

What are your next engagements?

Bao Publishing will publish my graphic novel in about a month. With the editor Sergio Bonelli, I have always been working with him on "Dylan Dog", and during this school year other comic books will be published as well. I recently received news that I will probably also start working on projects abroad, but I am superstitious, I don’t want to share more than this. Nothing is completely certain up until it happens.

Who is a character on your drawing board? What will his/her mission be on Earth?

On my drawing board—now a file with a few megabytes on the cloud—I have many ideas that I write down regularly. This is good, it means that my brain works. The character, or better, the most modern story I have ever done is “L’Aida”, which will be out in a month. The characters of this story projects all of us in a new world, dirty and very real; but at the same time virtual, digital and, if you will, impersonal. But all of this happens in a very critical perspective with respect to the world where we now live.
new iccc members

Benvenuti! The ICCC wishes to welcome the following new members and invites them to stay fully engaged with all of the wonderful programs and events that the ICCC has to offer. For more information about becoming a member and joining the ICCC family, click here or contact Alessandra Pistone, Business Director, at 713-524-4222 ext. 6 or at accounting@iccchouston.com.

Mr. Gheorge Baican
Mrs. Jacqueline Kenneally
Mr. Christopher Massanova
Mr. and Mrs. Jorge Micolich
Ms. Christina Pesoli
Mrs. Michelle Spisak

All’ICCC (At the ICCC)

Dear ICCC Members,

I hope you and your family are safe and healthy.

Our beautiful Milford House is slowly on its way back to normalcy and we recently had some in-person, live events. The movies brought crowds who very much enjoyed the vision of these new Italian comedies. It is extremely important that we continue trying to spark these interests by offering engaging, educational, and entertaining evenings.

The real gem was the lecture of Dr. Francesca Behr from University of Houston. The house was full (in accordance with the number allowed) with listeners eager to learn more about “Women Writers of the Renaissance”. Dr. Behr took us through an amazing journey between Latin and Italian, showing the hidden secrets of the female renaissance Venetian productions.

Thanks to the consistent effort and the tireless enthusiasm of our incredible instructors, our Italian online school is experiencing extraordinary enrollment; constantly offering year-round classes for adults, for teens, and for children.

Taking a closer look at the upcoming calendar, we have an Italian for Beginners Class (A1S1) starting on November 9th, and we are showing one more movie in our Contemporary Italian Film Series on November 18th, “Genitori quasi perfetti” (Parents in Progress).

We have more to look forward to in 2021 thanks to the energy of our Board, of our ICCC Team, and our fantastic Executive Director Erika Myers. We hope we will be able to offer many more with sophisticated and unique projects.

It has been a difficult year for everybody, but despite these challenges I have been honored to serve you this year and have much for which I am thankful. We have done many wonderful things and have achieved so much: staying focused in keeping the Milford House alive! We hosted our fabulous Fashion Show before we had to shut down for a few months, but the outcome of this first-time and unique event has helped establish strong connections and relationships.

Now more than ever our community needs to stay close and connected, and we hope the ICCC can truly become the center of this rebuilding and rebirth. As 2020 closes, I am so thankful and honored that I could serve you as President of the Board this year.

I wish you a better and blessed new year!

Grazie mille,
Monica Ercolani

All’ICCC (At the ICCC)

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A Thanksgiving special: a sincere ‘Thank You’ to the ICCC family

By ICCC Team

The ICCC could not continue its mission “to advance, celebrate and preserve Italian culture and heritage” if it wasn’t for all the continued support of the great ICCC family.

As we take a look back into this year, even though we couldn’t share with you face-to-face most of the classes and events we hosted in these past months, we’re immensely thankful for the success we saw through our online classes and the support we continue to receive. We hope that you will continue to support the ICCC as the destination for all things Italian for all Houstonians well into 2021.

We wish you Happy Holidays and a Happy New Year!

Sincerely,
The ICCC Board and Staff

Funding has been provided to the ICCC from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) as part of the 2020 Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act of 2020.
Joseph F. Messina (1930 - 2020) - Rest in Peace
By Ray Miller

Joseph Frank Messina of Houston, Texas passed away on Tuesday, September 8, 2020, at the age of 89. Joe was born in Hearne, Texas on December 26, 1930 and grew up in Houston. He attended St. Joseph Catholic School and was a proud graduate of St. Thomas High School where he was a football star.

In 1952, he married the love of his life Marianna Alfano. After their honeymoon, he served in the Army as a medic and was stationed in Austria. At the end of the Korean War, he returned to Houston where he studied at the University of Houston. He established Controlled Air in 1958, an air conditioning business that is now owned and operated by his son Ronnie Messina.

He and Marianna had four children, to whom he devoted his life. Joe is predeceased by his loving wife, Marianna Messina and his parents Frank and Callie Messina. He is survived by his children Frank (Trish), Greg (Diane), Ronnie (Sheila), and Mary Kay Cimo (Philip); and eight grandchildren Abby, Katie, Meagan, Annie, Joey, Sam, Sofia, and Cecilia; and younger brother Leon (Rosalie) Messina of Alabama.

Joe had many passions during his lifetime, first and foremost, his loving family. Joe also had a passion for antique cars. The family enjoyed touring Texas in their 1927 Packard he restored with his father-in-law. He was president of the Antique Automobile Car Association in 1967. Joe's favorite place was sitting on the porch at his bay house in Omega Bay. He would never pass up an opportunity to go fishing. Up until his death, he was still fishing in Galveston Bay with his family.

Joe expressed his love of Italian heritage and culture throughout his lifetime. He was an active member of the Sacred Heart Society for over 50 years. He was a member of the first Board of Directors of the Italian Cultural & Community Center since its founding in 1980, and remained active until his death. You could find Joe as the head pasta chef at the monthly mass, and he and his family staffed the gate at the annual Italian festival for over 30 years. Joe was the recipient of the "Christopher Columbus Award" in 2004, and he was the face of the Christopher Columbus statue that was in Bell Park in the Museum District until recently.

I was one of the many lucky people who got to know Joe and his family through the Italian Cultural & Community Center. My first festival was in 2012 and I learned firsthand the hard work and love that Joe, Marianna and their four children had developed for Italian heritage and culture, and especially the Italian Cultural & Community Center. Joe's hard work and commitment to the cultural center were evident in his helping to get the ICCC going in those difficult early days of the Milford House and the "Houston Italian Festival". We will never forget what you and your family have done to help solidify our mission to advance, celebrate and preserve Italian culture and heritage. Joe's love for life, family, faith, and devotion will never be forgotten. He was one of a kind and will live forever in our hearts.
42 for 42 Houston Italian Festival Campaign - Thank you to our donors
By the ICCC Team

The Houston Italian Festival's 42 for 42 Fundraising Campaign kicked off in March with a letter to all members and friends of the Italian Cultural & Community Center. After cancelling the festival, the members of our community listed below decided to let the Center keep their donations. We thank all of you for your support. The ICCC wouldn’t be what it is today without you.

Stephen Aiosi
Kathy Albert
Dee and Jim Avioli
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Julie and John Mastroianni
Anna Caflisch
Vincent and Susan Marino
John and Sharay Sporar
Margaret Norton
James and Cynthia Duca

Houston Italian Festival sponsors become donors - We thank you!
By the ICCC Team

We would also like to thank our initial festival sponsors as they decided to turn their sponsorships into donations to help our Center during these challenging times. We thank you for your generosity.

Brenda and Michael Benigno - Umbria Regional Flag
Livia Bornigia and Carl Scott - Marche Regional Flag
Nancy and Bill Brown - Artichoke Booth
Controlled Air Service - Lombardia Regional Flag
The Coselli Family - Toscana Regional Flag
Cusimano Architect - Main Wine Booth
Joseph D'Addesio, MD - First Aid Station
Daughters of Italian Heritage - Meatball Sandwich Booth
Dettling Funeral Home - Molise Regional Flag
David and Rosemarie De Vido - Trentino-Alto Adige Regional Flag
DiPuma Printing and Promotional Products Co. - Bocce Ball Tournament
Wayne Duddlesten Foundation in Honor of Margie DiPuma - Lazio Regional Flag
Louis Ditta Family in Memory of Carl Ditta - Emilia Romagna Regional Flag
Greg and Terri Ebel - Piemonte Regional Flag
Greg and Terri Ebel - Tarantella Dancers
The Furlan and Echeverria Families - Veneto Regional Flag
The Greco Family - Green Bean Booth
Hughes Watters, Askanaee LLP - East Ticket Booth
ICCC Board and Executive Director - Volunteer Check In
ICCC Board and Executive Director - Grounds
Italy in America - General Banner
The Miller Family in memory of Josephine Colangelo - Abruzzo Regional Flag
Pelletizer Knives Inc - La Piccola Cucina
The Parrish Family - Sardega Regional Flag
Clint and Joanna Porche - Sicilia Regional Flag
The Sims Family - Friuli Venezia Giulia Regional Flag
Troianni Law Firm - Puglia Regional Flag
Unite Club - Sausage Booth
Thann Dauterive and Urs Rathgeb - Valle D'Aosta Regional Flag
Giorgio Caflisch, Texas Wine School - Wine Tasting Events
Frost Bank - Arts & Crafts Children Information Booth
Joseph D'Addesio, MD - Campania Regional Flag
Carolyne Panebianco - Sound and Lights
Blink by bambilynn - Calabria Regional Flag
Raymond Marino - Basilicata Regional Flag
Jack Varcados - Liguria Regional Flag
Sandra Celli Harris - Italian Cultural & Travel Movies
D'Amico Italian Market Café - Pasta Eating Contest
HEB - Gold Sponsor
Support the ICCC for FREE with your favorite Loyalty cards

The Italian Cultural & Community Center relies on all of you, our community, to continue to thrive and bring the quality programs you have come to expect. Please consider helping us by participating in one of the four easy donation programs listed below.

Become an active donor today and help your home away from home!

Your enrollment and support of the Kroger Community Rewards program will help the ICCC earn dollars to better achieve its mission to advance, celebrate and preserve Italian culture and heritage. The ICCC non-profit number is 80408. Both new and current participants must enroll in the program every year, as required by the program. All supporters must have a registered Kroger Plus card account online to be able to link their card to the ICCC. Do you use your phone number at the register? Call 1-800-576-4377 and select option 3 to get your Kroger Plus card number. If you do not have a Kroger Plus card, they are available at the customer service desk at any Kroger. Register online at: www.KrogerCommunityRewards.com. Every time an enrolled ICCC participant shops at Kroger using his or her Kroger Plus card, the ICCC will begin accumulating rewards. In addition, once a household member enrolls his or her card, all linked Kroger Plus cards within that household will begin earning funds for the ICCC.

Please don’t forget to enroll in some of the other programs that also help the ICCC earn extra dollars.

AmazonSmile is a simple and automatic way for you to support your favorite charitable organization, the ICCC, every time you shop, at no cost to you. When you shop at smile.amazon.com, Amazon will donate 0.5% of your eligible purchases to your favorite charitable organization. Whether you currently have an Amazon account or are opening a new account, visit AmazonSmile, follow the directions, and please make sure to select Italian Cultural & Community Center of Houston as your designated charity.

Randall’s Good Neighbor is a simple and automatic way for you to support your favorite charitable organization (ICCC) every time you shop, at no cost to you. Every time an enrolled ICCC participant shops at Randall’s using his/her Remarkable card, the ICCC will begin accumulating rewards. Visit today the Randall’s customer service desk and ask to have your Remarkable card set up with the ICCC Charity code #3114, or call 1-877-723-3929 and give them the Charity code to add to existing cards.

Gift matching programs double the value of your donation. Please don’t wait to take advantage of your company’s gift matching program. If you work for many of the oil and gas companies and literally hundreds of other companies, don’t miss out on this terrific opportunity to have your donation count twice as much. This works for membership payments also. Please check with your employer if they offer a matching program, it only takes mere moments to sign up for these programs. Please don’t wait.

Everyone at the ICCC thanks you for your continued support of our organization.

See you soon!
Italian Festival Flag Sponsors

Friuli Venezia Giulia
Sponsored by The Sims Family
“Beautiful Trieste is always in my heart. Its sophistication, variety, big city "buzz" and beauty calls us back every year, and when we can, we go back twice a year to enjoy all that it has to offer.”

Veneto
Sponsored by The Furlan and Echeverria Families
In honor of their father's Italian heritage, James Erminio Furlan. “He was born in Volpago del Montello, located north of Venice. We are fortunate to have many relatives in the area that we have visited over the years and still keep in touch with.”

Trentino-Alto Adige
Sponsored by The DeVido Family
David and Rosemarie DeVido chose to sponsor the Trentino-Alto Adige flag in honor of David's parents' roots, who were both born in this region.

Lombardia
Sponsored by Controlled Air Service
Controlled Air Service has sponsored the Lombardia flag each year at Festa Italiana since 2009, and has supported our beloved Center for many years.

Piemonte
Sponsored by The Ebel Family
Greg and Terri Ebel chose to sponsor the Piemonte flag one year and have kept doing the same year after year as a tradition.
Italian Festival Flag Sponsors

Valle D'Aosta

Sponsored by Thann Dauterive and Urs Rathgeb

“While neither Thann or I are Italian citizens, we are about as close as one can get to being Italian, enjoying travel in Italy, its wines, of course the food and not least the company of all of our Italian friends. Since I am Swiss, the Valle d’Aosta was a logical choice for our sponsorship. While we haven’t visited the region yet, I am certain we will at some point, and enjoy those peaks from the Italian perspective.”

Emilia-Romagna

Sponsored by The Louis Ditta Family

“While it is the Italian culture and the connection to it that motivates us to return to Italy, it really is the spirit of the country and people that has touched our hearts. Thank you to the ICCC of Houston for keeping the love of all things Italian alive and well!”

Liguria

Sponsored by The Jack Varcados Family

“I have traveled to Italy extensively with my wife Maria. We are both Greek and Italy is very special to us. We have driven our own Giro d’italia. Most importantly Italy is very special to us as Greeks: our island of Leros was restored and rebuilt by Italians after WWII. All of our grandparents spoke Italian. Italy is a blessed country with all its beauty and glory. Italy and Greece reside in my heart.”

Marche

Sponsored by Livia Bornigia and Carl Scott

In honor of Livia’s grandparents.

“Le Marche is my paternal grandparents’ region of origin, Iride Giacomini and Nazareno Bornigia.”

Toscana

Sponsored by The Coselli Family

In honor of Paul Coselli’s father who was from this region.

“My mom was from Sicily and my dad from Tuscany. My dad was from a small town outside of Lucca. We sponsor this flag every year in their memory, but mainly to donate to the ICC so they can keep promoting the Italian culture.”
Italian Festival Flag Sponsors

**Umbria**

**Sponsored by The Benigno Family**

“On our pilgrimage to Italy in 2018, we visited and celebrated Holy Mass at the beautiful Basilica of St. Francis in Assisi, where we had the honor of receiving special blessings in front of the tomb of St. Francis in celebration of our 41st wedding anniversary. Touring through the humble and quiet city of Assisi, learning about the lives of St. Francis and St. Clare and the love they had for God, brought a sense of peace to our hearts and blessed us with a special connection to Umbria.”

**Abruzzo**

**Sponsored by Ray and Maureen Miller**

In memory of Josephine Colangelo.

“Abruzzo is important to us because it represents the region where my mother’s family (Colangelo-Lariccia) was born and raised. After many generations in Abruzzo, they came to America in 1895 and settled in Youngstown, Ohio. We are proud of our heritage and are so glad that the ICCC has given us an opportunity to pay tribute to our region in Italy and our family that worked so hard to make lives for themselves and us in America.”

**Lazio**

**Sponsored by The Wayne Duddlesten Foundation**

They chose to sponsor the Lazio flag in honor of Margie DiPuma.

**Molise**

**Sponsored by Dettling Funeral Home**

We would like to thank Dettling Funeral Home for their generous donation!

**Puglia**

**Sponsored by Troiani Law Firm**

Anthony Troiani chose to sponsor the Puglia flag to honor his “nonno”, his grandfather, who was from this region. Troiani Law Firm has sponsored the Puglia flag for 10 years.
Italian Festival Flag Sponsors

Campania
**Sponsored by Dr. Joseph D'Addesio**
We would like to thank Dr. Joseph D'Addesio for his generous donation!

Sardegna
**Sponsored by The Parrish Family**
“The reason we chose the region of Sardegna was because not only did we like the emblem on their flag, but while we have never visited the island, we find it to be a very beautiful place.”

Basilicata
**Sponsored by Raymond Marino**
Raymond chose to sponsor the Basilicata flag to honor his southern Italian roots.
“While my parents were from Calabria and Sicilia, I picked Basilicata to honor my parents’ southern Italian origins.”

Calabria
**Sponsored by Blinc by Bambilynn**
In honor of Bambi Lynn Reina-Ramsey’s southern Italian roots. “While my heart is always in Sicilia, the home of my grandparents, I wanted to honor their southern Italian roots. Calabria’s location and connection to Sicily made it an easy choice to pick. My love for the beauty of Italia and the longing of my heart to return again soon gives me great honor to sponsor the flag. The ICCC has played an important part in my family’s life and we always want to support the center when possible. This donation is in memory of my grandmother Maria Concetta Ditta Reina and my grandfather Anthony Lee Reina.”

Sicilia
**Sponsored by Clint and Joanna Porche**
“Sicily is my ancestral home. When I visited there several years ago and walked the roads my grandparents would have walked, I simply fell in love with the place.”
ICCC clubs and organizations

Italy in America Association (IIAA)
By Betty Donellan | Len Trombetta, president

Although Festa Italiana was not held this year, we donated our $500 to the ICCC, which is so good to all of us. We really appreciate the staff who are always there to make our experience at the ICCC a special, warm welcoming home.

Since there was no Festa this year, we held a Zoom meeting, very well attended by almost half or more of our members. On October 8th, Frank Posa gave us a bit of history about Calabria, his home region. Thank you, Frank, for a very informative session!

We will be planning something for November, but as of this writing, you will have to wait for our next La Voce article to find out what fun we had.

We are still hoping to have a Christmas dinner in December. More to come later, but in the meantime, everyone stay safe and wear your mask. In Mexico, people are getting fined 9,000 pesos or 36 hours in jail, and it is working well.

We miss seeing everyone, but the Zoom calls are better than not connecting at all. It works well for all of my groups. Ciao!

Please click HERE to visit the ICCC website to find more information about IIAA and join us!

Amiketos
By Minnette Carrabba | Angie Adams, president

The members of Amiketos club are happy to be Americans and working to overcome the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic with prayers and volunteering to help others. During this time members have donated and worked for Masks of Hope. This turned out exceptionally well and is continuing to provide face masks to the medical and business communities free of charge. Members are also reaching out through fellowship and friendships to stay in touch with each other.

After a long quarantine period since March, we celebrated a meeting in September. It was held at Tony’s and was hosted by Patsy Hannah and Tommie Lee Sedita. It was so wonderful to see everyone and learn how they have managed to persist in this difficult time. Donna Vallone was a wonderful hostess and saw that both the ambience and food was outstanding. Members enjoyed a choice of a fish or chicken entree and for dessert we had Italian ices accompanied by wonderful biscotti cookies.

Cynthia Marks discussed the annual Christmas party which is scheduled to be held at Damian’s Cucina Italiana in early December. The October meeting was held at El Patio Mexican Restaurant. Cynthia Marks and Bernardine Falco hosted the meeting and surprised the members with a Hallowe’en theme that was enjoyed by all.

The table was decorated with beautifully decorated pumpkins and bright fall leaves, and each member’s place setting included a specially decorated goody bag. The pumpkin centerpieces were given away as door prizes. Members were saddened by the unexpected death of Tony Vallone. Over the last 25 years he was a major benefactor of the Amiketos Club, and often opened up both his home and restaurants to the club for meetings and various parties. Prayers are requested for the Vallone family during this sad time. Prayers are also requested for Bonita Doss, Joanna Montalbano, Bernadine Orlando, and our entire country that this pandemic will end soon.

Daughters of Italian Heritage
By Deborah Graustein | Jeannie Trapolino, president

Saluti! DOIH held our first Zoom election for our new officers, holding their positions for a 2-year term (2021 through 2022). Serving as our officers will be Deborah Graustein, president; Donna Patterson, president-elect; Margaret Bannon, recording secretary; Susan Marino, corresponding secretary; and Anna Messer, treasurer. Congratulations to all!

The Governing Board will have a strategic planning meeting in November. All budgets and services will be evaluated to ensure a great 2021! DOIH annual community outreach donation in the amount of $1,300 was sent to the San Jose Clinic. This donation enables us to continue a tradition that is important to both the clinic and DOIH.

As we close out the year in anticipation of 2021, here are some thoughts from the Daughters (both funny and serious):

* Oh shucks, I forgot my mask in the car again
* Waiting for the day we can go to church without social distancing
* Hoping peace finds a way into everyone’s hearts
* The awesome feeling of being able to visit in person
* The freedom to move about and go anywhere in the world
* Returning to the ICCC social & volunteer activities
* Ready for Wedding, Baptisms and Funerals to return to normal
* Attending Italian Mass on 2nd Sunday at ICCC with pasta lunch
* Can’t wait to get rid of this mask!
* Missing fun parties with our members and others without social distancing
* Incredibly thankful for frontline healthcare & essential employees
* Make the most of this challenging situation; make lemonade out of lemons!
* Happy to see 2020 end!
* To keep everyone and their families safe and well through this pandemic

Wishing everyone a very Happy Thanksgiving, Buon Natale and Felice Anno Nuovo!

During the pandemic, meetings are held online via Zoom. We welcome newcomers. You can join us on Zoom or call-in from any phone. Contact Anna Messner (info below) to receive an invite. We meet on the second Wednesday of each month at 7:00 pm. When we can meet face to face again, meetings will resume at the Italian Cultural & Community Center at 1101 Milford Street (in the museum district), and we guarantee dinner and an opportunity to make some wonderful new friendships. Thank you, and stay safe.

Contact Anna Messner: anna4ever29@att.net or visit our website www.ciao-diva.org.
Italian Language Classes - Full Schedule

ONLINE CLASS | A1S1 - Italian for Beginners

Whether you want to learn Italian to go on vacation, for work or study, or simply to learn a new language, this Italian for beginners class will help you discover one of the world's most beautiful languages.

Mondays - November 9 to December 21, 2020
4:00 to 6:00 p.m. | Click HERE to register
$202.50 ICCC members - $225 non-members

ONLINE CLASS | Private Italian lessons

Online private (one student - teacher) and semi private (two students - teacher) tutoring classes are available, and are scheduled according to the needs and the schedule of the students. At the start of the course the teacher and the student discuss and agree on the program and the number of hours needed to reach the student's target.

Call 713-524-4222 ext. 2 or email school@iccchouston.com for more information on private lessons.
NOVEMBER 2020

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The health and safety of our members, visitors, and staff are our top priority. We will continue to monitor the situation closely and follow the guidelines issued by CDC, the Houston Health Department, as well as local, state and federal authorities. Note that the movie listed below might be canceled if an executive order issued by the City of Houston prohibits gatherings. If the event proceeds, we will make sure to welcome you safely. Click HERE to see the precautions our Center is taking to avoid the spread of the virus.

Italian for Beginners - A1S1 (online class)
Whether you want to learn Italian to go on vacation, work or study, or simply to learn a new language, this Italian for beginners class will help you discover one of the world’s most beautiful languages.

Time: every Monday from November 9 to December 21 - 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.  | Price: $202.50 for Members and $225 for Non-Members  | Place: Online

2020 Contemporary Italian Film Series
Join us for the Contemporary Italian Film Series’ last screening of the year, recent releases from Italy screened in Italian with English subtitles. We will be screening “Genitori quasi perfetti” (Parents in Progress). Tickets are on sale online and at the door (cash will not be accepted). Doors open at 6:45 p.m.

Plot: Simona is a single mom with a son, Filippo, who has reached his eighth birthday. A party must be organized and Simona dedicates body and soul to the task of hosting a handful of rowdy kids together with their respective parents.

Time: November 18th - 7:00 p.m.  | Price: $10 for Members and $15 for Non-Members  | Place: ICCC Houston  | Masks are required for in-house events.
### DECEMBER 2020

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*The Milford House will be closed for the holidays from December 23, 2020 - January 4, 2021.*
Why do Italians watch movies in Italian only?
By Valeria Ferraretto | Italics Magazine

The first time I realized that Italians love watching movies in Italian only, I was abroad, in particular in Belgium. A friend of mine told me that some movie theaters in Brussels offered movies in English, with French or Dutch subtitles. I was deeply impressed, as I would have never imagined going to the cinema to watch movies in their original language, even if it now sounds so obvious. I was trying to improve my French and watched some movies on my laptop in French, to then switch to TV series in English (much easier to find), but everything was limited to my bedroom, my little safe corner in a foreign city.

In Italy, only a few theaters in big cities offer movies in their original language. I am pretty sure that a high percentage of the Italian population has never watched a movie in a language other than Italian — I doubt data on this issue are available, but this is the feeling anecdotally — or even knows movie titles in their original language. For the Italian public, Eternal sunshine of the spotless mind, a famous movie from 2004 with Jim Carrey and Kate Winslet, is Se mi lasci ti cancello (If you leave me, I will erase you), while Hitchcock’s Vertigo became La donna che visse due volte (The woman who lived twice). Are we sure we are even watching the same movies? To understand the reasons behind this cultural phenomenon, we have to go back to the 1930s.

Bringing foreign movies to the Italian public
The first attempt to dub an American movie, at least the most popular ones, happened in 1929, when the Italian-American actor Augusto Galli was asked to record an audio track in Italian for a scene of the movie Married in Hollywood. The result was disappointing as the audio track overlapped instead of replacing the original one, but it paved the way for the development of the dubbing technique. In that period, Italian emigrants in the United States were recruited by American studios to dub American movies, to then send them to the Italian public.

Dubbing was necessary to make foreign movies available in Italy: subtitles, the easiest technique to translate movies, could not be read by illiterate people. Despite the enthusiasm aroused by this first rough dubbing technique, the fascist regime then banned foreign movie showings from Italian movie theaters, even if dubbed. The aim of this law was to preserve the “purity” of the Italian language from the approximate language of the dubbers based in the United States, who, despite the Italian origins of most of them, not always had a perfect diction, but also to censor more easily the dialogues and, according to some interpretations, to boost the Italian economy as well.

The rise of the Italian dubbing industry
This ban gave actually impetus to the Italian dubbing industry, which flourished in the following years. In the 1930s, several dubbing studios started their activity in Rome and considerably improved the dubbing quality by adopting advanced equipment.

"Dubbing was necessary to make foreign movies available in Italy: subtitles, the easiest technique to translate movies, could not be read by illiterate people."

and recruiting renowned actors of the time (Anna Magnani, Mario Ferrarri, Romolo Costa). Dubbing started to be recognized as an art in and of itself and during the 1930s, the Italian dubbing studios became recognized for their excellence at the international level.

After the Second World War, the Italian studios developed even further and enacted actual training for their professional dubbers — who were not necessarily actors: Giuseppe Rinaldi (who gave his voice to Paul Newman), Pino Locchi (Sean Connery, Terence Hill), Flamina Jandolo (Brigitte Bardot). Just as an actor’s voice is often an iconic part of how viewers perceive them; dubbers will be assigned the same actor so that, for example, Sean Connery’s voice in Italian is consistent across movies and recognizable as ‘his’.

Dubbing: a cultural tradition or a political strategy?
From then on, dubbing in Italy became systematic. The phenomenon is not only culturally significant: the Marshall Plan actually provided funds for the distribution of American movies in Italy, therefore further feeding the dubbing studios. In the aftermath of the Second World War, the newly established Italian democratic government soon worried about the rising influence of the Italian Communist Party, the biggest one in Europe, and did its utmost to ensure that Italy did not align with the Soviet Union. Movies were at the heart of the media industry, as well as one of the most powerful instruments to build popular culture of the post-war era.

Dubbing a movie — a drama, a documentary, or a cartoon — is anything but neutral. It implies giving new voices to actors and actresses, conveying idioms and dialects, irony and drama. While this technique is likely to twist — even if only slightly — the original movie, subtitles, on the other hand, divert the attention away from the images. An additional problem in dubbing (and subtitling) movies arises when different dialects or accents distinguish one character from the other in the original version: in some cases dialects are completely avoided in the dubbed version, in others they are kept and translated with regional dialects in Italian.

The use of regional dialects
A prime example of the former is in the HBO series Games of Thrones, where actors and actresses, mainly coming from all over the United Kingdom, alter their accents to better fit the region of Westeros where their characters grew up (e.g. the Northerners such as the Starks and the Wildlings speak with a Northern English accent).

...to continue reading this article, click here.
In cucina con gli italiani

Gnocchi di zucca con burro e salvia (Pumpkin gnocchi with sage and butter)

Recipe by Paola Bacchia

Ingredients

4 servings as a first course
400g (14 oz) roasted pumpkin (seeds and skin discarded; mashed with a ricer or by hand and strained through a tea-towel to remove excess moisture)
1/2 small egg, lightly beaten (discard the other half)
120g (4.2 oz) all-purpose flour
80g (2.8 oz) parmigiano cheese, finely grated
extra flour for dusting and rolling
pinch of nutmeg, salt and pepper
100g (3.5 oz) unsalted butter
25 sage leaves (approx.)

Gnocchi di zucca con burro e salvia
(Pumpkin gnocchi with sage and butter)

Recipe by Paola Bacchia

Two distinct Italian white wine grape varieties are commonly referred to as Falanghina (“fah-lang-ghee-nah”), or Falanghina Greco—Falanghina Flegrea and Falanghina Beneventana. The two are often blended together, as well as with other indigenous Italian grape varieties, and the Italian vine census does not distinguish one sub-variety of Falanghina from the other. Both grapes are primarily cultivated in the Campania region of Southern Italy, though there is some production in neighboring regions such as Puglia and Abruzzo.

Falanghina Flegrea is the better-known sub-variety, and is a signature white grape of the Campania region. Its yellow-skinned, waxy berries thrive in this terroir, typified by a Mediterranean climate and volcanic soils. Falanghina Flegrea is grown in Campi Flegrei and is perhaps at its best in the Denominazione di Origine Controllata (DOC) wines of Falanghina del Massico and Falanghina del Sannio. Wines made from Falanghina are light, generally unoaked and highly fragrant. Many show a distinctively leafy note on the nose, along with citrus fruit aromas. On the palate, common descriptors include apple, pear and stony minerality.

Preparation

If there is excess water in the pumpkin puree, squeeze it through a clean tea towel until it is quite dry. Place the puree in a mixing bowl and fold through the half an egg with a spoon. Add the nutmeg, salt and pepper and then fold through the parmigiano cheese, and lastly the flour. Reserve a bit of flour to the side and only add it if the mixture is still sticking to the mixing spoon. Lightly flour a work surface and place the dough on it, which should have formed a ball. Knead it lightly so that you get an even shape. If despite your best effort the gnocchi are too wet and the dough is sticking to your hands at this stage, have a little bit of potato mash on the side – made from roasted potatoes – and add a tablespoon to the dough and fold that through, and resist the urge of adding a lot more flour into the dough. Cut sections of your dough and roll them into thin logs, dusting the logs with extra flour if needed. Cut sections at about 1.5 cm (1/2 inch) and roll them on the curved inner side of a fork using your thumb to make a little concavity (which is to catch the sauce in). Repeat with the rest of the dough. Scatter some flour on the prepared gnocchi. If you are not making them immediately, cover them in a clean tea towel or freeze on a tray (and when frozen pop them in a zip lock bag for easier storage). Boil a large pot of salted water. Add the gnocchi a couple at a time until half are in the water and cook a couple of minutes until they rise to the surface. Remove them with a slotted spoon and place on warmed plates. Melt the butter in a small fry pan, then add the sage leaves and cook until they start to become crisp and the butter starts turning brown. Drizzle the butter on the gnocchi. Scatter on lots of parmigiano cheese, some crispy sage leaves and serve.

Pair it with: light and fruity Falanghina

By www.winemag.com
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