

# Berkeley Street Theatre comes alive in green, white and red

## Show celebrate Italy's 150<sup>th</sup> unification anniversary

In honour of the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Unification of Italy, Canadian Stage and the Italian Cultural Institute are proud to present the "Spotlight Italy" dance and theatre festival that opened March 15 at Berkeley Street Theatre and will end March 26.

The Berkeley Street theatre complex has been transformed into a huge stage to accommodate the innovative Italian theatre companies. The public will also be able to enjoy Italian artistic and gastronomic events: between shows, guests will be able to listen to live music, sample a glass of wine, or taste Italian specialties.

Artist Bruno Billio will exhibit his luminous installations, and Italian fashion will also be

featured, with evening wear by designers Carlucci and Versace.

"Spotlight Italy" "was created to reflect Toronto's artistic and cultural diversity," declares Matthew Jocelyn, artistic director of Canadian Stage. "We're honoured to have these artists and these innovative theatre companies at Berkeley for two exceptional weeks."

During the first week from March 15 to 19, two shows were staged: "La Natura delle Cose" and "Nunzio". During the second week, from March 22 to 26, "Basso Ostinato" and "La Festa" will be presented. All Italian shows will have English subtitles.

Renowned choreographer Virgilio Sieni presented "La Natura delle Cose", a fascinating dance



Above and right: highlights from "Nunzio."

spectacle inspired by the philosophical poem by Lucrezio De Rerum Natura. During the same evening, "Nunzio," directed by

the Compagnia Scimone/Frameli (theatre company), staged the dialogue between a man incapable/unwilling to fight his illness, and

a criminal who is constantly on the run – both alone in the world and companions in misfortune.

Caterina Sagna, choreographer for "Basso Ostinato", examines the attempt to hide the death and the battle of contemporary man to mask decadence, through (the use of) words and gestures between three men at dinner. The final show will be "La Festa" by Compagnia Scimone/Frameli, which brilliantly explores the family microcosm.

"Spotlight Italy" also presents the best of Italian food, wine, and music that Canada has to offer, including Juno winner Dominic Mancuso, jazz guitarist David Occhipinti, jazz trio Antonio Cicacca of New York, Vesuvius Ensemble (traditional folk), multi-

award-winning musician Roberto Occhipinti and guitarist Michael Occhipinti with The Sicilian Jazz Project, and finally musician Marco Calliari who is originally from Montreal. Public attending the festival will be able to enjoy the tastes of Italy, thanks to local restaurants Biagio, Culinary Studio, Vecchio Frak Café, and Romagna Mia. Yellow Wine Club will conduct the Italian wine tasting. ♦

Tuesday March 15, 2011 to Saturday March 26, 2011 Berkeley Street Theatre 26 Berkeley Street, Toronto *Basso Ostinato* from March 22 to 26 *La Festa* from March 22 to 26 event schedule [www.canadianstage.com/italy](http://www.canadianstage.com/italy) Tickets \$22-32 For tickets and information: 416.368.3110

## Toasting a successful fundraiser

### University of Western Ontario languages program gets a boost

By Cristina Caracchini \*

The University of Western Ontario's Department of Modern Languages and Literatures organized a fundraiser on Saturday March 5 at the Marconi Club in London, and the evening was a great success. About 350 guests attended the dinner, including some high-profile personalities from the world of politics, finance and culture.

The stated objective of the initiative was to raise funds to establish scholarships for students interested in expanding their knowledge of the Italian language and culture. However, the event also represented a significant commitment on the part of the University to open up to the broader community in order to join forces towards a common goal: the promotion of social integration and cultural exchanges.

Encouraging knowledge of Italian as a second language concerns more than just the professional interest of a little group of students and researchers. In a globalized world, made smaller by mass travel, instantaneous communication, and financial transactions of international scope, the capacity to use languages and a genuine desire to gain an understanding of foreign cultures takes on a high social, political, and economic importance. Getting to know one another is the first step towards a mutual esteem that can only be attained through an understanding of the differences to conciliate, and an attitude of respectful dialogue. Those Canadians of Italian origins who now occupy high profile and high-level positions within the social fabric of this country are well aware of this. This said, it bares also stating that better familiarity with the Italian culture is of interest not just to those with an Italian background who wish to embrace their roots, but also to



Top: Elise Di Francesco, Lauren Sykes, Marc Powell, Diana McLaren-Kennedy, Patrick Arteaga, Cassie La Voie, Teresa Fumo; above: University of Western Ontario professors. From left: Luca Poggi, Cristina Caracchini, Marc Powell, Yuri Sangalli, Pietro Pirani.

those who intend to be in contact with Italy and Europe on a professional level and, lastly, to those who live here and have a growing taste for Italian cinema, art, music, fashion and cuisine.

This instance of active collaboration, in which the academic world has met with the political and financial communities to engage issues of shared concern, is of great importance and beneficial to all.

So much was firmly emphasized by the Consul General of

Italy in Toronto, Gianni Bardini, in a letter sent to Professor Pietro Pirani who, along with Pasquale Palombo, was one of the organizers of the initiative. Also contributing to its success were Professors Luca Poggi, Yuri Sangalli, and Cristina Caracchini.

The response by London's public and the Italian community in particular was extremely positive. Among the personalities who with their presence demonstrated their support to the project were the Italian Consul,

Gianni Bardini, the Mayor of London Joe Fontana, Attorney General Chris Bentley, Minister of Health Deb Matthews, MPP Khalil Ramal, the director of the Italian Cultural Institute in Toronto, Adriana Frisenna, the President of the University of Western Ontario's Board of Governors, Frank Angeletti, the Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Professor Michael Milde, and the Chair of the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures, Melitta Adamson.

The initiative was preceded in the afternoon by a meeting for scholars and researchers at Western, whose fields of interest relate to Italy. The aim of the meeting was to identify a common ground for collaboration among academics from various faculties and departments. The evening opened with a cocktail reception offered by Honorary Vice-Consul Franca Giacomelli-Suri. The organizers are hopeful that this first encounter between London's Italian community and the academic world will result in lasting and fruitful synergetic relations. ♦

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**How is this Ontario structure organized?**

"The model is always the same: there are base cells which are the connected 'ndrine within a territorially-established structure referred to as the 'locale' which in turn answers to an 'organo di vertice' (authority body). From the investigations in Canada, we can infer that there are two 'locali' in existence: one in Toronto and the other in Thunder Bay."

**How many 'ndranghetista are in the Toronto 'locale'?**

"I don't have numbers available. I can only say that in the Calabrian territory, wherever there's a 'locale', there is a minimum of several dozen components. When I talk of components, I refer to the 'affiliates', to the 'organizations', without including those in collusion or those in their favour."

**Does a family also constitute the starting point in Toronto?**

"The defining model is built on the same family nucleus, but doesn't end there."

**And what are these 'locali' involved in? What business interests do they have?**

"To understand their range of activity, we have to clarify certain presuppositions. The mafia has no ideologies and the 'ndrangheta has massive economic resources in comparison to other honest operators who have to work hard to earn money. The 'problem' for these criminal organizations is their 'excessive' financial resources that have to be invested. The choice, naturally, falls in places, in territories where this dirty money is less recognizable and less easily traceable to the organization itself."

**So therefore there are better territories where to invest with respect to others. Is Ontario one of them?**

"In general, they have to be clean, wholesome areas where this money can easily flow out into legal entrepreneurial activities – in short, these are legal business supported by illegal capital. The 'ndrang-

heta invests anywhere there's a possibility of earning income and deriving earnings from investments. As a consequence, there's no particular field – it could be the real estate sector, commerce, or the entrepreneurial sector, that is having liquidity issues. In these cases, the 'ndrangheta intervenes, wearing the hat of a financier, and fills the coffers of the business which then thrives under the constraint of a new mafia owner. The input of these resources into the economy's healthy sectors alters market rules and has devastating effects."

**Can you give an example of how this system operates?**

"The commercial operator who allows dirty money to flow through no longer has issues of having to sell at reduced prices. Because he can alter the market prices thanks to the influx of dirty money that covers the difference between the regular and reduced price. The same thing applies for those who buy because they can buy at a higher price thanks to the dirty capital that allows them to not resort to credit. This is how honest businesses that cannot compete are shut out."

**In Canada, there is no such thing as crime of association, and it's probable that no one will arrest this Verduci. How do you intend to proceed?**

"We've been cooperating with other judicial authorities for over two years. These instruments aren't the same for all jurisdictions. On this occasion we've executed arrests in Italy and Germany thanks to ties consolidated over time. Clearly, the fact we find ourselves intervening in a country like Canada that isn't aware of the crime of association causes some problems. But we hope to overcome that very soon."

**How so, seeing that no one in Canada is considering amending the Constitution?**

"In the past, not even other states took our requests into consideration. Now instead, they're following us. International cooperation is making strides, and I hope more is done." ♦

– M.C.