The Italian Cultural Society held its Gala Awards Dinner 2022 “Beyond the Runway” at the Italian Embassy on June 10, an event dedicated to Moda and Made in Italy. Ambassador Mariangela Zappia welcomed guests with opening remarks on the cultural superpower that is Italy, especially within the fashion industry! In fact, few companies have played a role like that of Gucci, a brand that has never needed any introduction and which received a peak of notoriety last year thanks to an interesting and controversial movie. The evening was full of inspiration and fun moments. Jazz music and appetizers cheer up the people who have not seen each other for some time. Our Master of Ceremonies this year was Amy Riolo, a television personality as well as a best-selling writer - a true ambassador of Mediterranean cuisine in the USA! But the highlight of the gala was the interview between the guest of honor, Domenico De Sole, the man who transformed the Gucci empire and Sara Gay Forden, the author of the book that inspired the film. Domenico De Sole is an Italian lawyer originally from Cirò, Calabria. He tells of his studies in Rome and then in the USA. He studied law at Harvard and worked in America for many years before returning to Italy as CEO of Gucci in 1994. In the 90’s the company went through a very difficult time because of the conflicts between Maurizio Gucci and his financial partner, InvestiCorp. De Sole managed to bring back the company as an international brand.

Sara Gay Forden is the outstanding author of House of Gucci: A True Story of Murder, Madness, Glamour, and Greed, the book that inspired the movie. Sara, a “native” of DC, was a business journalist in the Milan of the 90’s, where fashion was mainly business and she ended up dealing almost exclusively with the fashion industry. This was the context that led her to follow the murder of Maurizio Gucci very closely, and finally to write the book.

Scholarships were awarded to American students of Dante’s language as well two young music scholars - pianists Dylan Shenker and Xiabo Liu played Chopin and Liszt. Students of the Classics (Molly Williams, University of Maryland) and distinguished in Art or in the study of Art History (Brianna Cooney – American University) were also awarded. The Young Scientist Award went out to Dr. Marta Zampino, of the NIH in Bethesda.
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MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD

Dear ICS Members,

I hope you all had a wonderful summer! It is with great pleasure that I announce the opening of a new ICS Fall season.

After a stunning gala graced by the presence of so many of you and including Her Excellency, Mariangela Zappia, the Italian Ambassador, our guest of honor Domenico de Sole with his family and our famed author of the House of Gucci, Sarah Forden, it is time to forward. As we say in Italy, “si chiude una porta e si apre un portone”.

The lights of the gala have being shining bright on us and its excitement has stayed with us throughout the Summer as there is now a full program ready with cultural events, classes, guided tours, both local and to Italy, fully booked and went fantastic! I am currently on my way back from Italy after accompanying an enthusiastic group of Italophiles. More news will be coming soon about this new endeavor.

The first cultural event of the season is a chamber orchestra concert at Catholic University, on September 25, 2022 at 7:30 p.m. with a program including Verdi’s Preludio, Act I of La Traviata, Procaccini Marionette, Bottesini Concerto No.2 for double bass with Catholic U Faculty David Sheets, Mendelssohn Symphony No. 4 “Italian”. The Italian Cultural society is sponsoring a master class for music students taught by maestro Sheets, the associate principle of the Baltimore Symphony on October 10th at our ICS Head Quarters in Bethesda. The opening under the sign of music is to celebrate the coming back of our chorus and music school. Please look on our website for more information and how to register.

In October I will be guiding two tours at the National Gallery, one on the Italian collection and the other on the Italian portraits. Dates will be announced soon.

September is the month to renew your membership with the ICS and I take this moment to extend a huge heartfelt thank you to the corner stone of our society, that is all of you, our members that keep supporting and encouraging our work.

Happy Beginning!

Annelise Brody Morani
Chair of the ICS Board of Directors
SEASON OF VERDI

VERDI'S

MACBETH

LESTER LYNCH
MACBETH

JILL GARDNER
LADY MACBETH

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MANLI DENG
LADY-IN-WAITING

YI LI
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Music Center at Strathmore

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 23
7:30 PM

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 25
2:00 PM

TICKET INFORMATION AT WWW.MDLO.ORG!
Dear friends,

We are ready and we look forward to starting a new season with all of you.

Our courses for adults start the week of September 19th. Fall Schedule includes courses in person and/or online. Besides all levels of language classes, you will find:

Advanced courses for conversation, grammar, and reading; courses C1-C2 level, attended also by Italians, like La letteratura delle corti: Ludovico Ariosto e l’Orlando Furioso, I Promessi Sposi – I parte, Italian Cinema, Narrativa, The collections of the Barberini Palace in Rome, Live from Italy, Favole al Telefono, Isole intorno alla più bella penisola del mondo; and Special courses like Yoga in Italiano (at the park until the weather allows us – or from your home, through Zoom) and courses in English, like Cooking, Latin and the preparation course for next CELI exam (Nov. 22nd – registration by October 15th).

The ICS Music School is back to life, with PIANO (G. Bugliarello) and VIOLIN (Caterina Vannucci) lessons, and also with the popular CHORUS IN ITALIANO for 4-13 yrs old with Maestro Giampiero Bugliarello. The Music School is still under the direction of Maestro Felicia Toscano, who directs the program for chorus and other initiatives. CORO will start on Mondays at 5:30-6:30 pm, right after Advanced level courses for children 1-5th grade, or Saturday at 1:00, after Pre-School Italian Immersion 4-6 years old (We are still receiving input from parents, before deciding the final schedule.)

Our kids’ courses are offered for various levels, from beginners to advanced, which include native Italians. Our program aims to develop written and oral communication and teach the basics of Italian culture. Classes include Grammar, Mythology, History, Art History, Literature and Geography, from the younger ages to 12thgrade.

Through books, PowerPoint presentations, videos, and games, our multidisciplinary program provides a historical and artistic picture of Italy, including geographical knowledge of Italy and Europe.

Preparation for AP exam is included in the curriculum starting from the younger ages.

Finally, I would like to remind you to renew your membership. September is the month to renew your annual membership.

Please read the benefits of being a member. Feel an active part of our community of supporters of the Arts and the Italian language and culture. Contact us if you are interested in getting more involved.

All the best for this new academic year with the ICS.

Francesca Casazza
CEO & Executive Director
SEPTEMBER CULTURAL EVENT
AN ITALIAN EVENING: Chamber Orchestra Concert

Saturday, September 25th at 7:30pm, join us at Heritage Hall for an amazing concert organized in collaboration with the Catholic University of America.

Featuring repertoire from famous Italian composers including Verdi, Procaccini, and Bottesini. Featuring soloist and Catholic University Faculty David Sheets, double bass. The Catholic University Orchestra is under the music direction of Simeone Tartaglione.

Maestro Tartaglione currently holds a number of positions. At Catholic University in Washington DC he is Associate Professor of Practice, conductor of the orchestra, Head of Conducting and Orchestral Instruments. He serves as Music Director of the Delaware Youth Symphony Orchestra, Core Orchestral Department Head at the Music School of Delaware in Wilmington, Conductor of the Symphony at the Maryland Classic Youth Orchestras at Strathmore Hall in Bethesda, Artistic Director of ARIANNA Alliance in Wilmington, DE, and Artistic Director and Conductor of Musica Viva Kentlands. In May of 2010 he became the Music Director of the Newark (DE) Symphony Orchestra, during which time, this orchestra’s audience increased by 63%. The orchestra has also enjoyed record increases in donations, advertisers, and press coverage during this time.

Tartaglione has had extensive conducting experience in symphonic and operatic repertoire with orchestras from Italy, the United States, Spain, Russia, Romania, Mexico, Ukraine, and Bulgaria. In November 2019, he conducted Beethoven’s 9th Symphony in honor of the 30th Anniversary of The Fall of the Berlin Wall, in the presence of the President of Germany and top United States government officials.

Tartaglione has recorded several CDs and DVDs as conductor and pianist in duo with his wife, well known violinist Alessandra Cuffaro, the first Italian woman who performed all the 24 Paganini’s Capricci in one concert.

David Sheets is the Associate Principal Bassist of the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra. He started his career as Associate Principal Bass of the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra during his Sophomore year at the Eastman School of Music after playing for one season as a section player. After leaving Rochester to perform with the Saint Louis Symphony, David became the youngest member of the Baltimore Symphony section in 1996 and the Associate Principal in 2016. David has performed with the Philadelphia Orchestra, the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, the Bergen Philharmonic, the Philharmonia Orchestra in London, and spent two seasons in Minneapolis with the Minnesota Orchestra. He has taught aspiring orchestral bassists as a faculty member of the Asian Youth Orchestra in Hong Kong since 2006, and has taught classes at a number of leading music conservatories including the Eastman School of Music, the Boston Conservatory, and Johns Hopkins Peabody Institute.

The concert is free and open to the public, prior reservation encouraged. You can RSVP on the events page in our website.
Like any good Italian grandson, I have always revered “mia nonna,”

Elvira Assunta Garibotto Lagomarsino. She was born on February 15, 1904 in the North End of Boston, where many of her generation settled and which is a thriving Italian neighborhood today. Elvira (Vera) was the seventh child of ten born to Pietro Paolo Garibotto (1864 to 1937, born in Casarza, Italy outside of Genoa) and Carmela Bertucci (1872-1956, born in Cicagna, Italy). My brothers and I called her Nana. Nana loved being Italian, and all things Italian: Caruso, Pavarotti, Bocelli. Thinking about my grandmother’s approach to life, there are four principal tenets by which she navigated her 100 years on this earth: faith, perseverance, devotion, and curiosity. Combined, we can call these old-school values, and they define Nana’s well-lived life. These values are rooted in her Italian heritage.

In 1870, Vera’s grandfather, Giovanni Battista Garibotto, decided to move to America. Being Genovese, he reasoned that it was more economical to sail his own boat to America with his two older sons (aged 19 and 21) and some other men than to book passage on a ship. The men loaded up the boat with their possessions, including some furniture that they intended to use in their new home, and set sail. The men loaded up the boat with their possessions, including some furniture that they intended to use in their new home, and set sail. It is comical for us today, to picture these wily Italians, stuffing valises, chairs and beds onto a boat, as if they were taking a wagon to a nearby town. We can’t even imagine setting sail across the Atlantic Ocean in what was basically a fishing boat, and expecting to arrive at your destination at all, much less with your possessions and person intact. But this is what Giovanni Battista did. After all, my family is from the same stock as Cristofooro Columbo. Once settled in Boston, my great-grandfather purchased a transatlantic ticket from Genoa to Boston for his wife and children.

Like the famous son of Genoa, Christopher Columbus, my forbears set sail with great expectations, and like Columbus, felt discouragement in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean. Would they ever reach land? Was this a stupid idea? Should they have spent the money on a passenger boat? Their boat, like the Nina, the Pinto and the Santa Maria began drifting, and the men thought that their fates were sealed. They prayed, believing that they would die before they reached the New World. And, then, out of nowhere, they saw a sign in the sky: a big torch that seemed to be pointing them in the right direction.
They all saw it. There was no disputing that. And they all knew intuitively that the sign meant that they would arrive safely, that God was watching over them and their voyage.

The experience marked all the Garibottos for life—transformed the family. They called each other new names: the father became Capitano, or captain, and the two sons were called Piloto, or pilot, as if their very identities were changed by the experience. They were part of a miracle, and they never forgot it. And that miracle led them to the North End, where the elder Giovanna Battista sent for his wife and youngest son Pietro Paolo Garibotto (my grandmother’s father), who was 13 years old in 1877. They purchased tickets for the Genoa to Boston trip. “Capitano” was nana’s grandfather and the two “pilotos” were grand-uncles.

This is a photo of one of the “Pilotos” Giovanni Battista Garibotto (1852-1930) at his wedding in Boston to Candida Malatesta (1856-1892) on August 1, 1874. They had five children, Carlo (Charles) (1875-1917); Joh Louis (1877-1958); Maria Teresa (1879-1966); Louis John (1884-1969) and Ferro (1889-1974). Giovanni did not want to take his own boat back to Italy again, but his brother and father went back the same way. Most of them were married at Sacred Heart Church in the North End; most of them are buried at Mount Calvary Cemetery in Boston; Ferro Garibotto was buried at St. Michael’s Cemetery in Boston; and two of the five children married Italians.

Perhaps it is no coincidence that so many of my ancestors on that boat were named Giovanni Battista. They were like voices crying out in the wilderness (or the middle of the ocean, as the case may be). This generation of Garibottos are mostly buried at the Mount Calvary Cemetery in Boston. Their plots are all close together, so that they can play cards. That is the old joke my grandmother liked to tell us.

My Old-School Italian Genovese Grandmother

This story of both the intrepid 1870 voyage of her family and of divine providence helped to form my grandmother. She called herself an “old-school” grandmother because she believed in hard-work, honesty, kindness, and family. Her faith in God sustained her through the good times and the bad and enabled her to find balance and equilibrium. Her faith helped her to sustain the loss of her parents, her many brothers and sisters, her husband of 65 years, and more. She was also a rock to my family. Her telling of the story of how my family came to America from Italy illustrates the themes of faith, perseverance, devotion, and curiosity. The saving vision of the divine Torch, offered in a time of despair, and witnessed by her grandfather and uncles, stayed with her all the days of her life. My grandmother passed away on 14 September 2004, at 100 years and 6 months. While we miss her every day, we also feel her presence, never more than when we visit the “good old North End.” Of all the people I have ever known, my Italian grandmother is the most ordinary, the most extraordinary, and the most noble.
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ABOUT ICS

The Italian Cultural Society of Washington D.C. (ICS) is your home for cultural and social events in the Washington metropolitan area, and for courses to learn or improve your Italian. Our community is growing and involving the entire US.

OUR MISSION

The Italian Cultural Society promotes the appreciation and knowledge of the Italian language and culture by creating opportunities through language programs, cultural events, and partnerships.

OUR HISTORY

Founded in 1953 by Professor Salvatore J. Castiglione, Chairman of the Italian Department of Georgetown University, the Society launched its Italian Language Program in 1974, with contribution of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation.

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