
La Voce della Dante

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Ciao a tutti!

Today it was still more-or-less DAYLIGHT in Seattle at 5:00 PM. We are making progress out of winter!! Hope this La Voce mailing finds you well.

Not too much news from Dante HQ here – we have now successfully had two of our four winter presentation meetings on Zoom, our Dante Language Program has great enrollment and is thriving, and membership renewals are doing well, (renew now if you have not). We have also received some lovely donations from members and will publish our thanks for these in time for the AGM!

[Click here to renew your membership!](#)

Meanwhile, it is now time to begin the annual process of nominations for the

Dante Board. Carol DeMatteis and Debra Gillett have agreed to serve as our 2024 Nominating Committee. Their job will be to recruit a few new board members and officers, as well as completing the slate of nominees, with record of those whose terms are ending. By March, all our membership will be informed of the new slate so that our elections can take place at the Annual General Meeting (“AGM”) on April 10. So, watch your email box. If you get an

email from Carol and Debra, be sure to read and respond to it! Also in board news, a survey will be sent out again this year to gather feedback about presentations you would like to see from Dante. Your participation in the survey will be very helpful.

[Gabrielle Orsi's January 10 presentation on Elsa Morante](#) and [Sergio Mauro's January 24 discussion of Italian Genius](#) are now available on the Dante YouTube Channel.

Many thanks as always to Stacey Howe-Lott, our La Voce Editor, and to all who have sent her stories and articles for this edition. Enjoy!

A presto,
Joyce

INFO ON THIS MONTH'S MEETINGS

February 14 – English Meeting (Zoom)

Laser Plane Photography by Iole Alessandrini



In this presentation, we explore the captivating world of light as a medium for artistic expression with Iole Alessandrini, an artist renowned for her groundbreaking use of Laser Plane Photography. Despite its intangibility, light plays a fundamental role in reshaping our perception of the world beyond traditional art forms. Iole's journey in the Arctic Circle using light as an artistic medium is a tale of inspiration, and an unquenchable thirst for understanding. Her Laser Plane Photography brings yet an original insight into a place in the world that plays a crucial role in maintaining our overall ecosystem's well-being.

Biography

Iole Alessandrini is an Italian-American artist known for her Laser Plane Photography and large scale installations. She holds Master's degrees from both the University La Sapienza in Rome, Italy, and the University of Washington in Seattle. Alessandrini is the recipient of fellowships and awards including Betty Bowen Award; Pollock-Krasner; The Civita Institute; Rockefeller Film and Video Nominee. She has taught in Italy through the Comparative

History of Ideas Department at the University of Washington before joining

DigiPen Institute of Technology where she teaches Art History; and at Bellevue College, teaching Color Theory and Typography. Alessandrini is a licensed architect in Italy in the Lazio Region (1987-2001),

Among her public art-light installations feature prominently: The Raven and The

Light; Counterbalance Park; Capitol Hill Library; Westlake Fountain all in Seattle, and Luminous Forest in Edmonds, using interactive technologies with a focus on sustainable resources using solar-powered technology. Her recent expedition to the Arctic Circle aligns with her interest in sustainable environments.

She has led award-winning grants through The Civita Institute TCI (1996-2022) resulting in the World Monument Fund nomination for the preservation of the 3000 years old Civita di Bagnoregio. She served as president of the TCI from 2016-2018. She is a SOIL member, Seattle artists-run gallery.

Her groundbreaking work on Laser Plane Photography (LPP), a photographic technique she invented, captures a light phenomenon in time exposure when objects and/or people move through the Laser Plane (Jack Straw Production 2004). She calls those photos loleograms™ her name + photograms. The LLP features in her recent expedition to the Arctic Circle.

February 28 - Italian Meeting (Zoom)

Dante and the process of nation-making in Italy by Beatrice Arduini

Dante and his works, especially *The Divine Comedy*, seem to be inevitably present in writers and readers of Italian literature, from the fourteenth century to the present, even in those period of time when the appreciation for his style was feeblest, most notably in the seventeenth century. Cultural memory is, however, highly selective, and later readers and writers responded to Dante and his legacy by tailoring him to their own contexts, especially in relation to issues of national identity, since Dante's language was early recognized in Italy as the foundation of what Italian culture had become. For this reason, in my

presentation I will explore some episodes of Dante's reception and how they are defined by interpretative frameworks and filters through which readers and scholars have approached his work and life.

Biography

Beatrice Arduini is Associate Professor of Italian and current Chair of the Department of French and Italian Studies at the University of Washington. Her research centers on Medieval Italian literature, Dante studies, manuscript culture, and textual studies. Her book, *Dante's Convivio: the Creation of a Cultural Icon*, examines the tradition of this work in manuscripts and early printed editions. Her projects include a book manuscript on the lyric production of a 13th-century Tuscan poet, Monte Andrea da Firenze, and a study on representations of domestic slavery in medieval and early modern Italy. Dr.

Arduini has published on these and other topics in *Mediaevalia*, *Heliotropia*, *Romance Philology*, *Textual Cultures*, and *Medioevo Letterario d'Italia*.

Language Program

by Giuseppe Tassone

As for the previous issue of La Voce you will find in my news, in addition to some updates about our language program, five sections dedicated to well-known cultural facts, Italian words, proverbs, idioms, and a tongue twister. I hope you will enjoy reading them as much as I enjoy sharing them with you and don't hesitate to contact me for comments, questions and/or suggestions. Since February is the month of Carnevale and February 2nd the Canderola, I included two proverbs related to the events and other references.

Our winter quarter classes are regularly attended by our students who have the privilege, on these cold Winter days, of learning Italian with us from the comfort of their home on Tuesdays and Thursdays evening. Registration for spring quarter is open. For those



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interested in the PLIDA – Italian Certification Exam the first exam of 2024 is scheduled for February 21. [Click here for our PLIDA page for all the details and registration.](#)

• **COSE CHE TUTTI SANNO. Well known characters in daily conversation.**

Ci sono dei personaggi che gli Italiani conoscono molto bene che chi più degli altri sono ancora presenti nelle loro conversazioni mentre altri, per esempio **La casalinga di Voghera**, sono oggi controversi, in disuso o diventati iconici. Con il personaggio della casalinga di Voghera ci si riferiva ad una donna di casa operosa e concreta, di poca cultura ma dotata di buon senso che nel linguaggio giornalistico serviva ad evocare una fascia di popolazione con un basso livello di istruzione e con un lavoro molto semplice. Più fortuna mantengono **Il signor Rossi** vale a dire l'Italiano medio e **Pinco Pallino** per riferirsi ad un Italiano qualsiasi. A partire dagli anni Settanta, **Cipputi**, personaggio iconico dei fumetti creato da Francesco Tullio Altan, impersona l'operaio tipo dotato di coscienza di classe succube del padrone ed in generale la classe operaia. **Bombolo** è un uomo piccolo e grasso e **Marcantonio** uno alto e robusto. **Pierino** è invece un bambino terribile che dice cose che non dovrebbe dire. In tema di Carnevale dire che si è **Arlecchino** significa essere poco seri e senza carattere o vestirsi con colori molto discordanti.

• **PAROLE DEL MESE**

libero, agg. *free*

“Tutti gli uomini nascono liberi ed uguali.”; “Chi è veramente libero non ha padroni.”; “I popoli hanno il diritto di essere liberi.”; “Scusi, è libero quel posto?”; “La prima domenica del mese possiamo andare al museo senza pagare, l'ingresso è libero.”; “Sei libera, sabato sera?”; “A che ora i soldati hanno libera uscita?”; “Sembra che i liberi professionisti abbiano nuove agevolazioni fiscali.”; “In quel parco non posso lasciare il mio cane libero.”; “Cosa pensi del libero scambio?”; “E` ancora libero l'appartamento in centro o è stato affittato?”; “Non sempre si è liberi di fare quel che si vuole.”; “Il tempo libero è una parte importante di tutti noi.”.

meno, avv, agg. sm, prep. *less*

“Dopo Carnevale manger di meno.”; “La mia casa è meno grande della tua.”; “Il biglietto è costato meno di quel che pensavo”; “Quest'inverno è stato meno freddo dell'altro.”; “I corsi finiranno in meno di un mese.”; “Da casa mia al parco ci saranno più o meno cento passi.”; “Meno male che il freddo è finito!”; “Non riuscirei a fare a meno di dormire.”; “Quando sei arrivata stavamo parlando del più e del meno.” “Poverina, per il freddo e la fame quella donna è venuta meno.”; “Pierino, non dovresti fare a meno di studiare!”; “Sei meno tre fa tre.”; “Sono le dieci meno dieci.”.

• ESPRESSIONI IDIOMATICHE DEL MESE

Non avere peli sulla lingua.

Not to mince words. Literally, not to have hairs on one's tongue.

“Andr di sicuro alla conferenza di mercoledì. Il relatore dirà la sua senza peli sulla lingua da idealista e uomo libero.”

Mettere troppo carne al fuoco.

To have too many irons in the fire. Literally, to put too much meat on the fire.

“Purtroppo alla riunione non si è presa nessuna decisione significativa probabilmente perché si era messa troppa carne al fuoco.”

• PROVERBI DEL MESE

A Carnevale ogni scherzo vale.

During Carnival every joke counts.

Per la Santa Canderola se tempesta o se gragnola dell'inverno siamo fora; ma se è sole o solicello siamo sempre a mezzo inverno. (Proverbio toscano)

For the Holy Canderola if it is stormy or there will be hail we are through winter; but if it is sunny or partially sunny we are still halfway through winter.

• SCIOGLILINGUA DEL MESE

“Chiodo schiaccia chiodo”

Nail smashes nail.

Pratica. Now let's practice one of the *parole del mese* by [listening to the song](#)

[*Liberi Liberi* by Vasco Rossi.](#)

INTERESTING LINKS AROUND THE WEB

by Janet Lenart

Dante's political activities and power in Florence

In this podcast Alessandro Barbero explains Dante's political activities and power in Florence. Professor Barbero is well known for his enthusiastic and engaging presentations.

[Il Potere Politico di Dante.](#)

Harvard University's Romance Language department

Harvard University's Romance Language departments have a [video archive of interviews](#), most by native language speakers. It is sponsored by [The Romance Sphere](#).

Talking with Il Nido's Katie Gallego about turning hot dog buns into breadcrumbs, learning to taste the seasons of Italy, and being a Jason Stratton protege. by Trevor Pogue



I first met Katie Gallego when I went for a tryout in her kitchen. I knew the Alki homestead, where KG works as executive chef and co-owner, as one of two restaurants in the city doing honest Italian technique. I didn't get the job. But I left feeling like I'd seen something special. Something that others needed to know about.

Il Nido, which means "The Nest," was opened by pasta maestro,

Mike Easton, in 2019. Two hurricanes of a year later, Gallego and her business partner, Cameron Williams, took over. The restaurant is housed in a 1903 log cabin built from old-growth Douglas Fir. Like the forgotten Duesenberg, its historic craftsmanship draws you in closer and closer until you eventually find

yourself looking at every burl like they somehow hold the secret to surviving a fire.

Plates of hand-made agnolotti move through the warm cabin on the palms of Valkryne servers. Live edge wood and melted candle wax abound. Sixty-four seats and more coming in the warmer season with boneware chandeliers and enough of a waitlist to make reserving a last-minute table seem like a real fine fortune.

Like the osterie of Florence, there is a sense of home when you walk in the door of Il Nido. It's not your home, but it isn't a collection of nameless Arizona investors either. Kids are in the kitchen, chefs laugh while they cook, and the dried garlic and rosemary above the bar give the sense that you aren't too far from something rare: hand cooking and very very good seasonal ingredients. Plenty give lip service to locally-rooted Italian food made with the heart of a nonna, but Katie Gallego and her crew walk the walk every night.



ME: What role did food play in your childhood?

Katie Gallego: My mom is Italian-American and my father is Filipino. They split when I was young, but when my father lived with us, he was the cook of the family. He made lots of lumpia and lots of rice dishes. My mom was a vegetarian. She never forced me to be one, but we ate a lot of whole foods and no preservatives. She traveled a lot when I was a kid. So I spent a lot of time at my grandparents' house where I would watch my grandma cook. She cooked giant pots of soup. Or at least those were always my favorite.

One of my first memories of cooking was with my grandmother. We were stuffing artichokes. Breadcrumbs, parsley, garlic, and some olive oil. It's a very Sicilian-style dish that you just don't see served a lot. It wasn't until my family went to Little Italy in New York, that we found stuffed artichokes on a menu.

They weren't as good as grandma's.



My grandma did the same thing. Often with lemon.

My grandma used to freeze leftover hot dog buns. She would use a cheese grater to grate them. And that's how she made breadcrumbs. I look back on it now, and it's one of my favorite memories of her.

How long have you been cooking professionally?

My first kitchen job was when I was sixteen or seventeen at PCC in Issaquah.

You're thirty-two now?

Thirty-three.

How long have you been exclusively working in Italian food?

Since I graduated culinary school and went to work at Spinasse.

Does Italian cuisine still excite you?

There's a comfort there and I enjoy eating it. But there is also Italian eating culture. Like what it means to really eat in Italy. That's what excites me most.



What was it like in the early days at Spinasse?

Well, first I worked at Spinasse. Then I helped open Artusi. We were cooking all the pasta on induction burners at the time. There were like ten tables right in front of us when we would do it. Nowhere to hide.

Induction burners, back in 2011? I feel like that was early.

Oh, yeah. And they're still cooking on induction burners. The only difference is that they've tripled the amount and they don't have to do their own dishes like we did. Back then I had maybe two or three burners, a hot plate, and an oven. I remember picking up polenta in the oven, like, in a pot. I look back and I can't believe we cooked for the amount of people we did in a night the way that we did. It taught me resourcefulness and cleanliness really fast.

Jason Stratton was the chef at the time?

Yeah, it was his menu, his guidance, his leadership. And then Sasha Rosenfeld was his sous chef for Artusi. So Sasha was like my chef and then it was Jason at the top.



You referred to yourself in old interviews as Jason's protege. What did you mean by that?

I adore the man. Not in a weird way as in I drank the Kool-Aid or something like that. But I will say the first time I dined at Spinasse, back when he was the chef there, it felt like eating in Italy for the first time. It was like being under a spell.

Can you describe that first bite in Italy?

I was fifteen with my mom. She had just turned 50 and we went for her 50th birthday.

This reminds me of a trip you just made for your sister's 50 birthday in France.

My mom has worked in travel since I was born. That is how she and my dad met. It's a big thing in my family. We like to be out in the world.

Sorry, I interrupted. Take me back to that first taste in Italy.

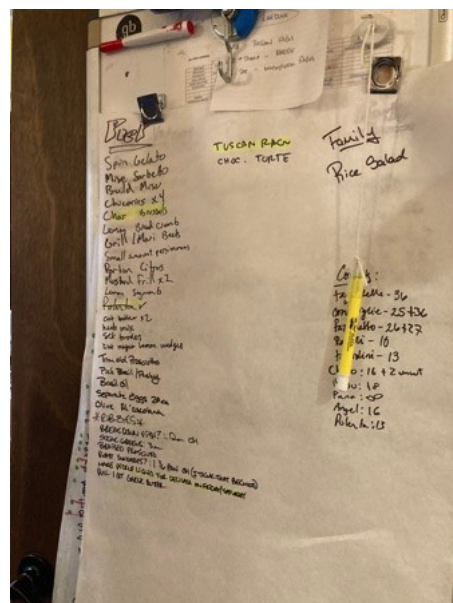
I remember my mom woke me up in the back of the little rental car. We had rented a villa in Tuscany and we were driving somewhere, I don't know where, but she woke me up in the back seat where I was sleeping and handed me a piece of bread with a bunch of salami in it—my mom still loves to tell this story—I took a bite and then I looked at her and I was like, “I want to move to Italy one day.”

And that was where it all started.

Pretty much.

So now take me back to Spinasse.

Right, so I was still in culinary school at Seattle Central. I had to do what they call the COD—Chef of The Day. So my ex at the time took me to Spinasse as a kind of inspiration, because my menu for the COD was going to be Italian. I was kind of stuck on some of my dishes. So we went to Spinasse, before the expansion., back when it was like a little 25-seat restaurant.



And there was all this wrought iron and all this wood, and the light fixtures. It just transported me right back to Italy.

Then I looked into the kitchen and it was an open kitchen. I could see all the garlic and the herbs, and all the crocks of salt, vinegar, and oils. Everything was wooden or pottery. There were all these natural elements. Carrie Mashaney was on expo that night. So she was kind of leading the dance. But just seeing a woman at the helm of an Italian restaurant, I was just like, “This is it,” and I knew that I wanted to work there



KG and Cameron Williams—Il Nido's Owners

How did you go from eating there to working there?

A little time goes by and through culinary school, I have the opportunity to volunteer at Cochon555. It was an event that I don't think they do anymore, but they had five heritage pigs, five chefs, and five wineries. And each chef got to kind of do what they wanted.

Do you remember what breed of pig you got?



No. But what I found out was that Jason was gonna be there. As culinary students, we were all dressed in our chef whites looking like freaking rookies. But I showed up and I was like, “Hey, can I work with Jason tonight” I didn't know if that was a thing you could do or not, but they put me with Jason anyway.

I remember helping him plate and I remember his business partner at the time, Michael Galloway, took one of the platters. And Galloway being this businessman, was like always in flannels and jeans. But when he came and grabbed the platter he had on rubber gloves. And so I was like “Hey, do you mind taking off your gloves?” And he was like, “What?” And I was like, “You're going to hand

out food? Will you just take off your gloves?” At that point, I knew that I had overstepped as a volunteer and should just shut up. But also like, you just don't wear gloves out on the floor.

You've mentioned work ethic a few times, and you seem to have a really strong one. What fuels that?

Family. My grandfather on my mom's side was a huge worker with a great ethic. My mom has a great work ethic. I mean, she's a workaholic, for sure, but has a great work ethic. And then there's my father being an immigrant. Really I just think it just came from watching my parents hustle. Hustle to do what they needed to do to put food on our table.

A mutual friend of ours told me that you once gave an impassioned speech about how women would never get the respect they deserve in kitchens. You were standing over a hot stove and it brought tears to everyone's eyes. Do you remember that speech?

No.

Apparently, it was enough for her to remember some 6 years later.

I love that. But I also don't think that I could've imagined where I would be today back then. My view on that has changed a little bit because I don't think that I knew what I could accomplish. The advice I'll continue giving: if there's an opportunity, take it. That's really what I've done to get to where I am now. For me, it's like, "Okay, there's a thing." I don't know how I'm going to get to the things, or how I'm going to do it, but I just go do it. Like cooking in Italy. I didn't have the money to really do it. I just did.

Why did you feel like you needed to go to Italy? You were already cooking at a high level here in Seattle.

Spinasse and Artusi were beautiful experiences. I worked from the bottom up there. Then Jason and Carrie opened Aragona downtown. But then it closed, and basically overnight it reopened and became Vespolina. Jason then asked me to go down and be sous chef because he wanted somebody that he could trust. So I went down and did that.

But then Carrie got pregnant and left and Jason sat us down one day and told us that he was leaving the company too. That was a really big hit for me. I was 23 and working in the restaurant industry. I was a line cook and a sous chef, living on Capitol Hill. I drank a bit, went out, was living the culture and the dream and all those things., But then basically overnight, I had this giant restaurant in my lap.

Downtown has different needs than Capitol Hill. The owners wanted a Caesar salad on the menu. They wanted King salmon. That was not the food that I knew. That was not the food that Jason and I were doing. I felt like I was starting to sell out a bit. And then just one day they decided to close the restaurant. I took that very personally,

What did you do?

I went into a little bit of a daze. I didn't know what to do. I had a lot of chefs and restaurants reach out to me and offer me jobs. Kevin Davis, of all people, reached out to me. He was opening a restaurant in Belltown where I was living. He offered me much more money than I'd been making and a sous chef position. I'd never worked in a corporate kitchen, but I was just so over being in a little restaurant that had investors. Because with Vespolina I had given and given and given, and then all of a sudden, it went away. I don't think I had any more to give at that point.

So you went corporate....

It was a huge operation, a six-person line, 200 covers a night, minimum. The type of place where you walk in and you have your chef coats already clean. You put them on and you get to work. I remember walking into their dry goods area and they had all these Progresso breadcrumbs. I was like, "We make bread, why buy breadcrumbs?" Anyway, that type of restaurant just wasn't a good fit for me. I wanted to be in a scratch kitchen. Though I didn't know the words for it at the time. So I went to Italy.

What's the biggest difference between an Italian and an American kitchen?

Seasonality.

What about the kitchen you were working in specifically?

I was in the back with one of those swinging doors with the little eye-hole thing. It felt like working in a hospital. There was an ashtray near the backdoor and always a guy standing outside smoking.

When people say Italian food is simple, what do you wish you could tell?

Simplicity is one of the most complex things. It takes a lifetime to master.

Were there any specific lessons you learned in Italy that you feel like you couldn't have about food and cooking over here?

Simplicity.

Give me an example.

The basis of it actually started with Jason. We used the best vinegar that I ever saw. And the best oils. So when I went to Italy and started watching everything come from within 15 miles of where I was cooking. Like the olive oil was basically harvested from behind the kitchen, the tomatoes were grown only a few feet away, and the mozzarella was made in town. That's when you begin to

really understand what a caprese is. Sure, it's just three different things. But when you eat them it is just like, "Oh, my gosh, those are the best of the best of those things." And that's what simple really means. It's like the best of the best in the season at the time.

What's the difference between a Mike Easton and Jason Stratton kitchen?

They're both pretty punk rock, but in different ways. Jason is kind of as eccentric as it gets. Especially as far as his mind, space, matter, and all those things. Sometimes I'm just like, where are you at, man? Where's your mind? He is such a free thinker, and a true creative.

I think that Mike is also a creative. But Mike is more business savvy. He's got endless ideas. And I think that makes a really good businessman. With Mike, it's just idea after idea after idea. But what Mike has that Jason might not have had is that Mike is very much a mechanic. Mike is very much a morning person and I think Jason is very much like an afternoon or evening person. Mike would wake up and be in the kitchen at 6 am. I would come in and he had already taken apart the pasta machine and put it back together again.



And what about you? How would you describe your kitchen?

I'm a little in the middle, more of a chameleon. Like I would say that I'm a night owl for sure, but if I have to get up in the morning. I will. At a young age, my grandfather gifted me my own drill and my own toolbox. So I'm self-sufficient and I fix things. I'm not necessarily a mechanic. I can't pull it all apart and put it all back together, but I think that I can wear any hat that needs to be worn.

Is the feminine perceivable in your kitchen?

I think where the feminine plays a part is in my heart. I'm pretty good at bringing the kitchen together. When the shit hits the fan and people are going through personal things, I think that I'm very good at rallying and bringing us together as a team. The women that I have in my kitchen, too, there's a knowing between us. And as far as the front of the house, we're 90% female, so I really thrive off of those interactions. I think there's a different type of detail orientation there.

I've got five minutes and four questions. Ready for rapid fire?

Okay.

What's the key to a good minestrone?

Vegetables. In season. And then adding bases of flavor as you go. So adding salt after each addition: sofrito, tomato, brodo. Also, use really good brodo. And don't add pasta to it. Pour the pasta on top if you want to have pasta.

If you weren't a chef, what would you be?

Right now in my life, I would like to be a mother. And that feels really weird to say.

What single question would you ask your 100-year-old self?

Single question? I guess I would be curious, "What's the best thing you ever ate?"



And what answer would you give if you had to answer today?

Oh, gosh. There are so many answers to that question. I think I would need to be 100 to be able to answer. I'm thinking of pasta and red sauce on a Sunday. A specific time and place. I'm also thinking of having a family meal in Tuscany and just sitting with everyone. Lots of people, sharing, and laughing.

Thank you for your time, Chef.

Il Nido is located in West Seattle. Eat there as soon as you can.

Subscribe to [MeatballAmericano](https://meatballamericano.com) for Additional Stories and Interviews.

DANTE CARNEVALE IN ITALIANO E INGELESE

by Sandra Bordin

Dante Carnevale in italiano

Il Carnevale e' quel periodo di circa due settimane che precede la Quaresima.

La Quaresima inizia il Mercoledì' delle Ceneri, che quest'anno cade il 14 Febbraio. Fino al giorno precedente la Quaresima, cioè il Martedì' Grasso, sfilate, divertimenti, mascherate, scherzi, canti e balli sono attivamente organizzati in molte città' e paesi italiani con la partecipazione di tutta la popolazione. Tra i più' famosi e antichi Carnevali ricordiamo quelli di Venezia, Viareggio in Toscana, Cento in Emilia-Romagna, Fano nelle Marche, e Ivrea in Piemonte. Oltre le maschere tradizionali, sfilano personaggi che ridicolizzano i potenti e i politici.

Il nome Carnevale deriva dal latino "carnem levare" e fa riferimento all'ultimo banchetto che si teneva il giorno precedente la Quaresima, dopo il quale si dava l'addio alla carne, inclusi i piaceri della carne, per purificarsi prima di celebrare la Pasqua.

Al di là' della tradizione cristiana, il Carnevale ha origini più' antiche e pagane, connesse ai riti propiziatori di abbondanza e fertilità' detti Saturnalia che, in occasione del solstizio d'inverno, si celebravano nell'antica Roma in onore del dio Saturno. Saturno era il dio dell'età' dell'oro, un periodo felice in cui regnava l'uguaglianza. Durante i Saturnalia al popolo era permessa ogni licenza. Le barriere sociali tra le classi, i sessi e le religioni potevano essere impunemente abbattute, il potere sbeffeggiato, ed ogni freno inibitore allentato alla ricerca del divertimento più' sfrenato. Durante i Saturnalia gli antichi Romani adottarono dai Greci l'uso di maschere e costumi per nascondere la propria identità' e poter trasgredire in piena libertà' tutto ciò' che non si aveva il coraggio di fare nel resto dell'anno.

Seguendo la tradizione dei Saturnalia, il Carnevale di Venezia fu istituito nel 1296 dal governo per concedere ai ceti più' umili uno sfogo alle tensioni e malumori della loro condizione sociale con un periodo dedicato interamente al divertimento che durava 6 settimane, dal 26 Dicembre al Mercoledì' delle Ceneri.

A Venezia, Firenze e altre città' italiane, il periodo di Carnevale era temuto da tutti quelli che avevano qualcosa di poco onorevole da nascondere. Succedeva spesso che persone mascherate, che si proclamavano inviati speciali di Re

Carnevale, si recassero sotto le loro finestre per sbeffeggiarli pubblicamente senza pietà'. Mariti traditi, bottegai disonesti con pesi e misure, osti usi ad annacquare il vino, preti e cappellani poco casti, avvocati e notai venduti, famosi ubriaconi e golosi fino all'eccesso, libertini impenitenti e donne di facili costumi, tutti erano messi alla berlina e costretti al silenzio dalla drammatica consapevolezza che ogni reazione non avrebbe fatto altro che intensificare la vergogna.

Alle maschere che nell'antica Roma rappresentavano personaggi mitologici si sostituirono altre maschere dall'aspetto ridicolo che mostravano i difetti e i vizi dei diversi paesi e città d'Italia, come Arlecchino, Pulcinella, Colombina, Pantalone, ecc. Queste maschere comiche e satiriche che si esprimevano con cadenze dialettali diedero origine alla Commedia dell'Arte, che si ispirava alla vita di ogni giorno. Anche oggi abbiamo inventato nuove maschere, come Zorro, Batman, Wonder Woman, Spider Man. E' sempre divertente assumere diverse identità con maschera e travestimento.

Il detto "A Carnevale ogni scherzo vale" riassume lo spirito che ancor oggi anima questa festa, cioè che gli scherzi devono essere accettati di buon grado!

A tavola si celebra il Carnevale con dolci speciali. Ogni città ha le sue tradizioni, l'importante è che ogni specialità sia frita e preparata in casa. Chiacchiere, castagnole, fritole, sanguinaccio, cicerchiata, sono alcuni tipici dolci che si mangiano a Carnevale per fare "il pieno" di calorie prima del digiuno quaresimale.

Ricetta tradizionale delle "Chiacchiere" o "Crostoli"

Ingredienti

- 50 gr. Burro
- 40 gr. Zucchero
- Latte (quanto basta)
- 250 gr. Farina
- 1 Uovo + 1 Tuorlo
- 2 Cucchiari di Rum
- Scorza e succo di mezzo Limone
- Strutto (lard) per friggere, (oppure Olio di semi)

Preparazione

- Sciogliere il burro in un tegamino posto sopra un recipiente d'acqua calda.
 - Aggiungere lo zucchero, un po' di latte tiepido, e mescolare.
 - Fare una fossetta nella farina ammicchiata sulla tavola.
 - Versare nella fossetta il burro preparato con lo zucchero, l'uovo, il tuorlo, il rum, il succo e la scorza grattugiata del limone.
 - Lavorare la pasta per 30 minuti che deve essere morbida e perciò' aggiungerlatte tiepido
-

- Stendere la pasta in uno strato molto sottile, e tagliatela a nastri o rettangoli.
- Friggere
- Cospargere di zucchero le chiacchiere fritte

Dante Carnevale in English

Carnivale is the period of about two weeks preceding Lent, which begins on Ash Wednesday. This year, Ash Wednesday falls on February 14th. Right up to the previous day, Mardi Gras, parades, amusements, masquerades, jests, songs, and dances are actively organized in many Italian cities and towns with the entire participation of the population. The most famous and oldest Italian Carnevali are held in Venice, Viareggio (Tuscany), Cento (Emilia-Romagna), Fano (Marche), and Ivrea (Piedmont). In addition to the traditional Carnival characters, ridiculous parodies of powerful people and politicians are also paraded.

The name Carnevale refers to the last banquet on Mardi Gras, and derives from the Latin "carnem levare", a phrase depicting a time dedicated to preparing for the rigors of Lent during which meat and the pleasure of the flesh are renounced.

As with many popular Italian traditions, the origins of Carnevale derive from ancient Rome, specifically from the propitiatory rituals to Saturn, the famous Saturnalia, celebrating abundance and fertility in occasion of the winter solstice.

Saturn was the god of the golden age when everybody was happy and equal. During the Saturnalia the people were permitted any liberty. The social barriers between the classes, the sexes and the religions could be shamelessly ignored, power mocked, and every inhibition released in the search of the wildest pleasures. During the Saturnalia, the ancient Romans adopted the use of masks and costumes from the ancient Greeks celebrating the lustful rituals to Dionysus, the god of wine-making, pleasure and frenzy. The anonymity, guaranteed by disguising their own identity, ensured safety from punishment, and allowed liberties otherwise inconceivable during the rest of the year.

Following the tradition of the Saturnalia, in 1276, the Venetian government sanctioned a six-week long Carnevale from the day after Christmas to Ash Wednesday, as a period totally dedicated to amusements in order to give vent to the social tensions and discontents among the lower classes.

In Venice, Florence, as in many other Italian localities, Carnevale was a period feared by all who had something dishonorable to hide. Often, masked, self-proclaimed envoys go Re Carnevale, would stand beneath the windows of the guilty ones mocking them with pity. Cheated husbands, dishonest shopkeepers, tavern owners used to watering down wine, priest and chaplains unobservant of their vow of chastity, corrupt lawyers and notaries, drunkards and gluttons to the extreme confirmed libertines and loose women, all were subject to scorn, and forced to be silent, aware that any reaction would only intensify the ridicule.

The ancient Roman masks depicting mythological characters were gradually substituted by characters with grotesque and ridiculous masks and dialectal inflections for the purpose of satirizing human vices and defects of many Italian towns. Famous are the masks of Arlecchino (Bergamo), Pulcinella (Napoli), Pantalone e Colombina (Venezia), Gianduia (Torino), Dottor Balanzone (Bologna), Capitan Spaventa (Liguria), Stenterello (Firenze). These masks became the fixed characters of La Commedia del'Arte, considered the basis of all modern comedy. Even today, it is fun to assume new identities disguising ourselves with new "masks" like Zorro, Batman, Wonder Lady and Spider Man!

The traditional saying "A Carnevale Ogni Scherzo Vale" (At Carnival time anything goes) reflects the spirit still fueling Carnevale in Italy. Today Carnevale is celebrated with sweets typical of every region, but all must be fried and homemade. Chiacchiere o crostoli are popular all over Italy, castagnole (Friuli), fritole (Nord-Italia), cicerchiata (Abruzzo e Italia Centrale), sanguinaccio (Sud-Italia) are just of the sweets providing plenty of calories before the fasting of the Lent period.

Traditional recipe of Chiacchiere

Ingredients

- 50 gr. Butter
- 40 gr. Sugar
- Milk, as needed
- 250 gr. Flour
- 1 Egg plus 1 Egg yolk
- 2 tablespoons Rum
- Peel and Juice of 1/2 lemon
- Lard or oil

Preparation

- Melt the butter in a bowl placed on top of a pot with hot water and mix sugar and a few tablespoons of warm milk.
- Make a hole in the middle of the mound of flour on your table, and pour in the melted butter and the egg, egg yolk, rum and lemon peel and juice. • Knead the dough for at least 30 minutes. The dough should be soft, therefore, if necessary, add some warm milk.
- Flatten the dough and cut out shapes of ribbons, rectangles or other forms.
- Deep fry in lard or oil, and cover with sugar.

Buon Appetito!

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