

La Voce della Dante

April, 2026

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

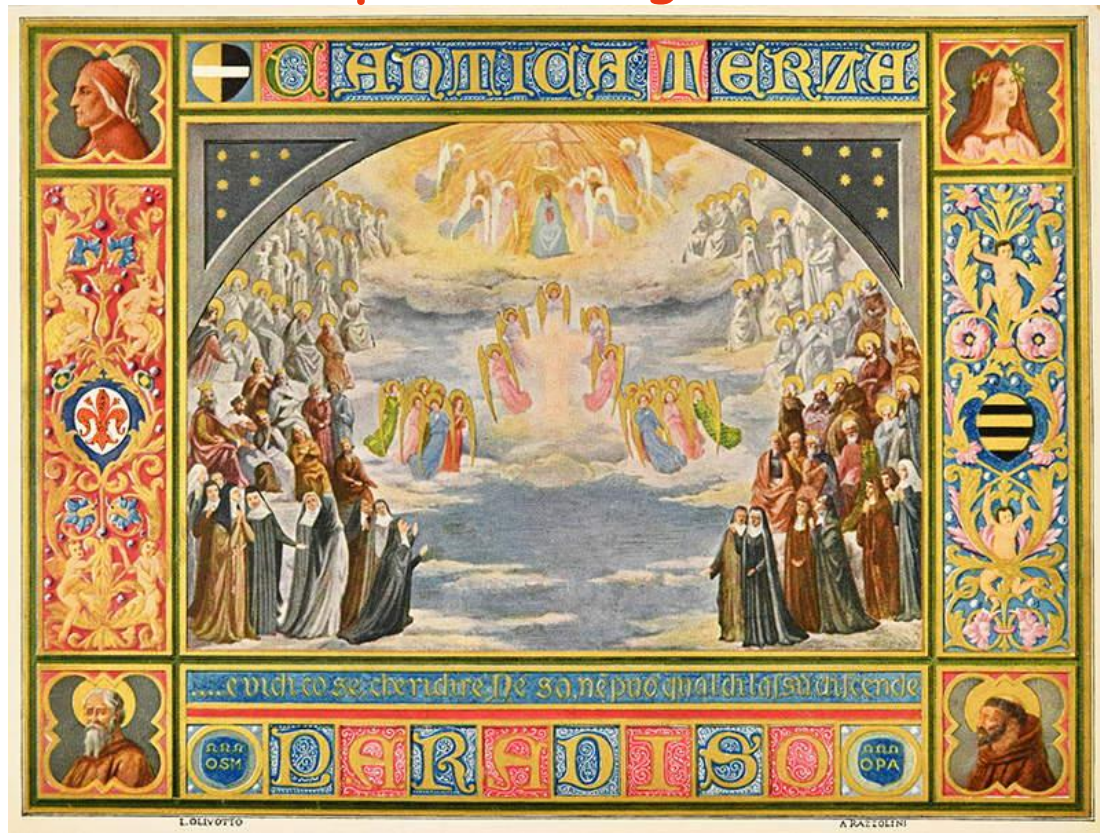
by Judy Klayman

By the time you read this letter, I should be in Turkey. I say *should* only because travel is less certain these days, between the effects of our war in Iraq and the partial government shutdown. But travel to tourist sites in Turkey is supposedly safe, so hopefully off I go! I am going on a tour, and as far as I can tell tours to Turkey are proceeding as scheduled in March and April.

This is my last President's letter. I was elected as Vice-President at our last Annual General Meeting in April 2025. However, as Vice-President, my role as an officer included filling in for the President. So I was elected President in November, when our former President resigned from her position. I was one of three officers elected in November, becoming President at the same time that Joyce Ramee became Vice-President and Harry Reinert became our Treasurer. I want to thank them in particular, for taking the time to work with me and for agreeing to continue serving as Dante officers for another year. And I also appreciate working with all the rest of our Board members and with our Program Chairs, Carol DeMatteis and Cecilia Paul. It has been an honor to serve as your President, and I appreciate the opportunity to do so.

I want to encourage everyone to attend our annual meeting this month. Dinner will be free and should be very good, since our Program Chairs will be our cooks! This meeting is the chance for Dante members to be brought up to speed on the status of our organization and to elect the members and officers of our Board for another year. I am sorry I will miss it, but I am scheduled to still be in Turkey at that time. But I know that our Nominating Committee has successfully recruited some outstanding members to join our Board. I have faith that Dante Seattle remains in good hands, given the slate of capable people recruited to be elected as our Board's officers and members at the annual meeting!

April Meetings



April 8, 2026 English Meeting

with Pre-Dante Pasta dinner ~ [by reservation](#)

The Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Dante Alighieri Society of Washington, and the proposed slate of nominees for the Board of Directors.

The AGM will be held April 8, 2026 at the Greenwood Senior Center, 525 N. 85th St. Seattle 98103. Doors open at 6:00 and a wonderful dinner will be provided by our Program Chairs. Reserve your place for dinner please!! Attendees are asked to bring beverages, appetizers or desserts to share.

The meeting will begin at 7:15. Current members of Dante are eligible to vote ([renew here](#)).

Our agenda for this meeting also includes member feedback, reports from the Language Program and Treasurer and discussion of plans for next season!

Proposed Board of Directors for 2026-2027

Joyce Ramée, President
Bruce Leone, Vice President
John Steedman, Secretary
Harry Reinert, Treasurer
Domenico Minotti, Counselor
Karen Stash, Counselor
Debra Rovetto Gillett, Counselor

Greg Wetzel, Counselor
Dominic Sportelli, Counselor
Tiziana Bertolini, Counselor

Ex-Officio Board Members
Judy Klayman, Past President
Giuseppe Tassone, Language Program Director

Submitted by Joyce Ramée, John Steedman, Nominating committee

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Meet your proposed board members!

Joyce Ramée, President

Joyce is a professional violist and teacher without a single drop of Italian heritage. Her love of the Italian language, food, wine and music led her to Festa Italiana in 2008, where she met then-President of Dante Jane Cotrell, and the rest is history. She has been a member of Dante for 18 years and on its Board of Directors for many of those years. Besides professional life and Dante, Joyce is also a music volunteer and vestry member at St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Renton.

Bruce Leone, Vice President

"I am a retired contractor and 2nd generation Italian. I have been involved with Dante for 15 years. I have been attracted to my Italian heritage beginning from a very young age. I am a dedicated Italian language scholar, traveler, and enthusiast of Italian food. Evviva L'Italia!" Bruce has served many years on the Dante Board, as a consigliere, as Treasurer and as Vice President.

John Steedman, Secretary

John is retired, an amateur woodworker, mediocre piano player (his own description!), and Melinda and John travel around the US and Europe to visit their grandchildren. John's membership in Dante began more than 20 years ago when he took DAS Language Classes. He has been an active volunteer and Board member for several years, serving as a counselor and as Secretary.

Harry Reinert, Treasurer

Harry has been a member of Dante Seattle since the mid-2010s. He has no Italian heritage that he is aware of but feels that he must have been Italian in a former life. He has been on the Dante Board for several years, first as Vice President and then as Treasurer. Harry is also responsible for maintaining the Dante Seattle website. He is looking forward to his replacement for both positions.

Domenico Minotti, Consigliere

Domenico has been a member of Dante for years and a consigliere on the board for many of those years. He has given presentations at Dante meetings, cooked Pre-Dante Pasta dinners, and has volunteered at Festa Italiana. Nico's parents came from Molise. He has lived in Seattle since 1976, now retired from medical and military careers.

Karen Stash, Consigliere

Karen is happily retired and is travelling and enjoying life with her husband. They lived in Italy for a year many years ago. They have since visited every region, biked in several, and spent time hiking in the mountains. Karen has built friendships in Italy, gone to a wedding, and has taken a few language classes there. Karen and her husband have two grown children and will have another golden retriever in their future - once the time is right.

Debra Rovetto Gillett, Consigliere

Debra worked at a grocery store where she happened to meet Terri Hanlon, who introduced her to Dante in the 1990's, and she has been an active member and volunteer ever since. She has served on leadership boards with Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts and PTA groups. Debra's grandparents came from Piemonte, Treviso and Veneto. She loves gardening and all aspects of Italian food!

Greg Wetzel, Consigliere

"I am a retired telecommunications engineer with a PhD in Computer Science. I moved to Seattle in 2010 and retired in 2015. I've always loved Italy: the food, the wine, the people. I've taken Italian 101 at least 4 times, the last in Venice in November 2024! I joined Dante a couple of years ago for the interesting talks and community. I don't have a drop of Italian in me (mostly German with a dab of Irish). I am privileged to be maestro of the Order of Knights of the Truffle and Wines of Alba in Seattle."

Dominic Sportelli, Consigliere

Domenic Sportelli has been an active Dante member for over 40 years. He was previously a Consigliere in the 1990s. He looks forward to sharing his knowledge of the club with the current board. Dom's professional interests include real estate investing, small business development, and ski instructing.

Tiziana Bertolini, Consigliere

Tiziana is originally from Brescia. After receiving her Degree in Translation Studies from the University of Trieste, she worked in Moscow and Cambridge (UK) before moving to the US in 1998. For almost 3 decades she was employed in the exciting world of Localization/Language Services. She is currently taking a break from the corporate world and dedicating more time to visiting her family and her elderly mother in Northern Italy. Her personal interests are cooking, traveling, linguistics, cinema, reading, and music. She hopes to soon take her cello out of the closet! She is also a Seahawks fan.

Greenwood Senior Center
525 N. 85th St
Seattle WA 98103

[Pre-Dante Pasta Dinner](#)

please reserve by 5:00 Monday April 6
and bring wine, antipasti or desserts to share
Doors open 6:00; AGM 7:15

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April 22, 2026 Italian Meeting

Ludovica Punzi, Presenter



Ludovica Punzi is a versatile and experienced arts leader, having worked in many different roles in Italy and the United States. Since 2023 she has been the Executive Director of Early Music Seattle, a 50 year-old organization who presents the best performers of early music from all around the world.

She is the Founder and Executive Director of Vivace Music Foundation, an international organization dedicated to equitable music education opportunities for the world’s most talented youth, and also serves as Program

Manager of the St. Lawrence String Quartet Chamber Music Seminar at Stanford University.

Equally at home in concert halls and community spaces, Ludo has worked with The Concert Truck, a non-profit organization which strengthens communities by redefining the concert experience through a mobile concert hall. She has also worked with the Florence and Milan conservatories, where she has led hundreds of chamber music, opera, orchestra and jazz productions and tours in Europe, Dubai and the US.

Ludo earned an academic diploma in piano performance at Mantua Conservatory. She loves podcasts and radio shows and has an uncontrollable passion for rockabilly jive music and dance. She speaks four languages and has an identical twin sister. A tattoo on her left wrist says “vero”, which in Italian stands for “true” and is also her twin sister’s nickname.

Tema - Quando in Firenze: avventure nell’industria musicale italiana

Cosa significa costruire una carriera musicale nell’Italia di oggi? In questo incontro, Ludo Punzi condivide storie e riflessioni nate da anni di esperienza nel mondo musicale italiano—con particolare attenzione a Firenze, una città dove storia, tradizione e creatività contemporanea si incontrano continuamente. Tra collaborazioni inaspettate e le realtà quotidiane dell’organizzazione di concerti e progetti culturali, la presentazione offre uno sguardo dall’interno su come musica, imprenditorialità e patrimonio culturale si intrecciano nell’Italia di oggi. Attraverso aneddoti ed esperienze personali, l’incontro racconta sfide e opportunità del lavorare nel panorama musicale italiano.

Topic - When in Florence: Adventures in the Italian music business

What does it mean to build a career in music in Italy today? In this talk, Ludo Punzi shares personal stories and reflections from years of navigating the Italian music world—especially in Florence, a city where history, tradition, and contemporary creativity constantly intersect. From unexpected collaborations to the realities of

producing concerts and cultural projects, the presentation offers an insider’s perspective on how music, entrepreneurship, and cultural heritage meet in modern Italy. Through anecdotes and experiences, the talk explores both the challenges and the surprising opportunities of working in the Italian music ecosystem.

Greenwood Senior Center
525 N. 85 St
Seattle WA 98103

No reservations for Italian meetings, but please bring beverages, antipasti or desserts to share
Doors open 6:00; Presentation 7:30

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Thanks to all who have renewed their Dante Membership. If you haven't done so yet, please renew soon. Dues fund all our activities. And only members can vote at our AGM on April 8, 2026.

\$40/individual, \$60/family. [Renew now!](#)



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THE PERIODIC TABLE

COMPOSED BY **JESSI HARVEY**
PERFORMED BY **JESSICA ANDREWS-HALL**

FRIDAY MAY 8, 5:30 PM, 8 PM
BENAROYA HALL — OCTAVE 9: RAISBECK MUSIC CENTER

Here's a unique, upcoming musical event that might be on interest to Dante members. This is how the composer herself describes the piece:

I am a composer based here in the Puget Sound Region and with my work, *The Periodic Table*, I recently received the Seattle Symphony Orchestra's Community Engagement Fund as the Octave 9 Artist in Residence. *The Periodic Table* is the musical translation of Primo Levi's book of the same name and is dedicated to both Levi and Levi scholar, Nicholas Patruno, to continue their legacies of maintaining cultural memory and speaking against injustice.

Performance Date: Friday, May 8, 2026

Time: 5:30pm, 8pm (2 ~70 minute shows)

Location: Octave 9: Raisbeck Music Center at Benaroya Hall

Tickets: <https://www.seattlesymphony.org/en/concerttickets/calendar/2025-2026/26-composing-life>

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And finally, notice of a renowned Italian guitarist appearing in Seattle from the Seattle Classic Guitar Society-

Seattle Classic Guitar Society is thrilled to present virtuoso guitarists from Italy and Croatia:

[A-to-Z Guitar Duo](#)



Saturday, April 25, 2026, 7:30pm

Illsley Ball Nordstrom Recital Hall at Benaroya Hall,

200 University Street, Seattle, WA 98101

Featuring guitar duo music by Piazzolla, Albéniz, Rodrigo, and more!

[Tickets](#)

Online discount code: SCGS26

Two of the most celebrated guitarists of their generation, Aniello Desiderio and Zoran Dukic, have joined forces as the A to Z Guitar Duo. Known for their fiery technique and explosive sound, the duo delivers a powerful and poetic program that showcases the guitar's virtuosity. They won some of the most important international solo guitar contests in the 1980s and 1990s. With only a two-year difference, they were awarded first prize at the prestigious International Francisco Tárrega Competition in Spain (Aniello in 1992 and Zoran in 1994). Since then, they have enjoyed successful solo careers and have collaborated as a duo since the early 1990s. They have performed at numerous European festivals and prestigious venues, including Barcelona's Palau de la Música, and have explored their long-standing passion for Baroque music, as well as Spanish and Latin American music. In 2021, the duo released their album, A & Z, which features music from these genres. Aniello Desiderio, born

in Naples, Italy, has performed as a recitalist and soloist with orchestras in North and South America, Europe, Asia, and Africa. Zoran Dukić, a native of Zagreb, Croatia, is one of the most distinguished classical guitarists of our time. He has performed in the world's most prestigious concert halls, including the Palau de la Música in Barcelona, Carnegie Hall in New York, the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, and the Tchaikovsky Hall in Moscow.

"Hearing one of these masterful artists is incredible; hearing both is awe-inspiring." - Marlow Guitar International