

# THE Italic Way

XXVII 1997

The magazine of the Italic Studies Institute

**The Next Millennium:  
Will our heritage survive?**

**An Aurora Youth Class**

In this Issue:

**The Piave 1917:**

Italy's Finest Hour

**Robert Mondavi:**

Prince of Wine

**Overkill:** Hollywood vs the  
Italic People

**An Almost Lost Art:**

Calligraphy

**Vincent Burnelli:**

Air Safety (part II)



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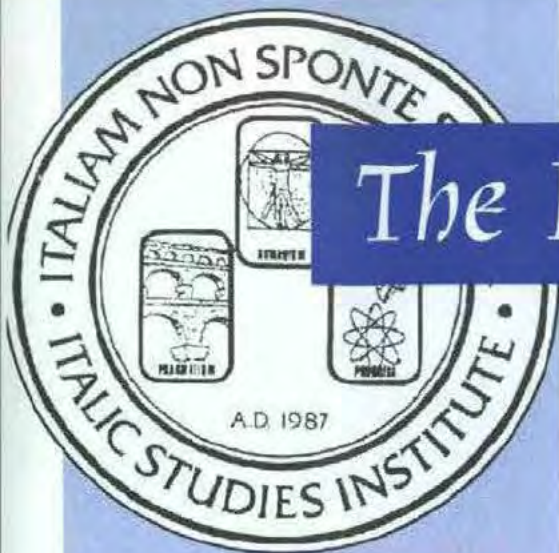
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**DESMOND J. BURKE**



# The Italic Way

## The Italic Way

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### IRELAND, THE LAST WORD

In our last issue we recounted the hitherto unknown Roman presence in ancient Hibernia. A Roman settlement dating from at least 79 A.D. is being excavated outside Dublin. How could the history books not know of this extension of the Roman Empire?

Fortunately, our Institute library carries a decent array of classical works including *Satire III* by the Italic author Juvenal, written about 112 A.D., in which the following lines can be read:

"Our arms indeed we have pushed beyond Juverna's (Ireland's) shores, to the new-conquered Orcades (Orkney Islands) and the short-nighted Britons..." (Ivvenalis Satvra III)

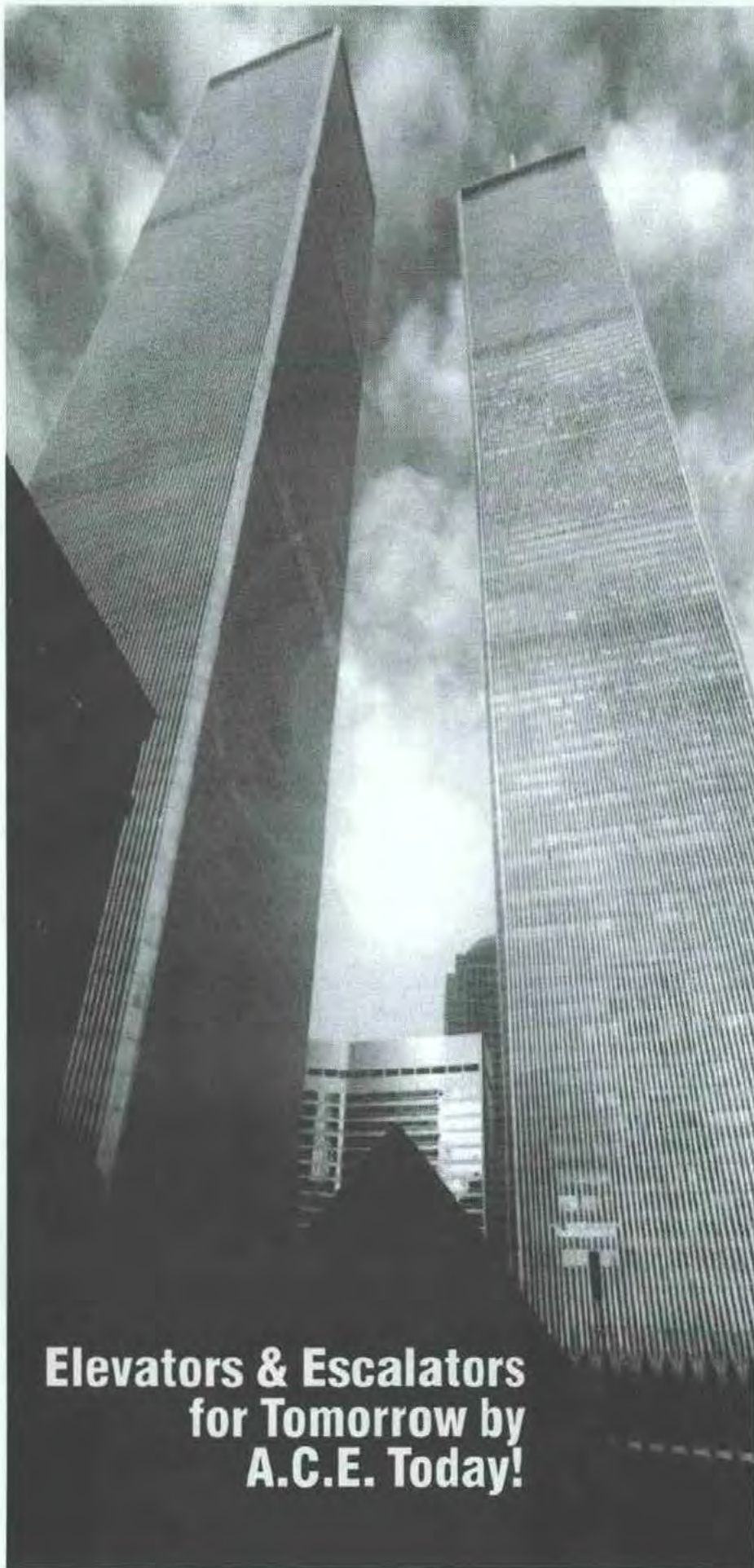
An Italic presence in Ireland would also explain how civilization was first introduced there. The later Roman missionary, St. Patrick, couldn't have done it all by himself.

— Editor



Continued on page 3





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# Letters

## ANOTHER HAPPY READER

We caught the Italian Consul General of Chicago, Hon. Pasquale D'Avino, with a copy of *The Italic Way*.

We are in good hands.



## 1942 SUPPORTER

Just a few lines to let you know I have written to Senator D'Amato urging him to support Congressional funding for a Public Television documentary about the persecution of Italian-Americans in the United States during the Second World War.

*Mille grazie* for all you are doing for the Italian American community.

Prof./Cav. Philip J. DiNovo, President  
American Italian Heritage Assn.,  
Morrisville, NY

[Ed. See page 8 for an update on this initiative.]

## SERVING OUR YOUTH

We enjoyed the Italian classes very much and we learned a lot. Thank you for our Italian parties. We will use this language now and in the future. *Grazie!*

Nicole and Stephanie Vanella,  
W. Hempstead, NY

Thank you for all your time, talent and dedication in teaching my son Bryan Tantillo (as well as the other children). He has truly enjoyed going to Aurora class and learning about Italy and part of his heritage. Please let us know if you are having another series of classes. Thanks again!!

Virginia Lynch, Elmont, NY

We, the undersigned, wish to thank the Italic Studies Institute for the beautiful *Pix Romana* medal and the cash award which our teacher, Dr. Giedre Kumpikas, presented to us. We were enrolled in an Accelerated Latin I class this year and we enjoyed it tremendously. We learned about the beginnings of Rome, the legends, the history, the architecture, the culture and we read excerpts from Caesar's *De*

*Bello Gallico* and recited an ode from Catallus. It was difficult but rewarding. As our teacher told us, the study of Latin is a mental discipline. Latin is beautiful and it is not dead, it is immortal! *Lingua latina immortalis est! Gratias tibi!*

Maria Bashian, Cathryn Popowytch,  
Jonathan Kaufman, Jonathan Kelner  
The Wheatley School, Old Westbury, NY

(Ed: We also presented awards at another school to students Christopher Mongehuzzi and Anne Moore.)

## JUST THE FACTS

I wish to inform you that a copy of your letter of March 31, 1997, regarding Italy's role during both First and Second World Wars, which has been over the years minimized or omitted in textbooks, was forwarded to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Rome. In thanking you for your attention to this issue, I avail myself of this occasion to send you my best regards.

Franco Mistretta,  
Consul General of Italy in New York

Percentage of Allied Casualties



[Ed. This pie chart, found in a New York State high school textbook, purports to show the percentage of battle deaths among the Allies in World War I. Italy, which sustained 10% of the war dead, is not even included. The chart was credited to a V.J. Esposito, no doubt another ill-informed Italian-American.]

## WAKE UP CALLS

Your editorial "Fatalism and Ethnic Degredation," was right on target and it pleased me so much that a publication with at least some influence stated what should have been obvious to NIAF and OSIA; namely, no way are we going to fete those who denigrate our ethnicity. Thank you for that brilliant piece of "wake up."

Dan A. D'Amelio, Yucaipa, CA

As we sail on to a new century, Italian-Americans of good will need to lock arms and shout BASTA to the media and movies. They will continue to malign us for as long as we let them. As things stand now, we may never have an Italian-surnamed president. The media can easily sink any political aspirant at will with their stock of buzz words. Just ask Geraldine Ferraro, Al Salvi of Illinois or Mario Cuomo and a few others.

Walter Santi, Bloomingdale, IL

**NORTH VS. SOUTH** (letter reprinted from the *New York Times*, 22 Nov. 1996)

Southern Italians are no less willing to work to improve their economic conditions and no more corrupt than northerners. The political scandals that have transformed the Italian polity began in Milan, not Calabria. Why should southerners be prohibited from using funds that provide relief from floods or earthquakes to improve their region? The tendency for northerners to treat the Mezzogiorno as a colony should not define reporting on Italy. As Italians struggle with calls for secession, it is important to refuse a bias that denigrates southerners.

Alan S. Zuckerman,  
Prof. of Political Science,  
Brown U., Providence, RI

**ROMAN LAW** (letter reprinted from the *New York Times* 23 April 1997)

The argument of Willard B. Fishburne that the Ten Commandments formed the basis of the laws of the United States (letter, April 17) is patent nonsense. The basis of law in Canada and the United States is English common law, imposed on England by a Frenchman, Henry II, in the 12th century. He had standardized local laws into a "common" law, adding some precepts from Roman law that had survived in the canon law of the medieval church.

The church played a great role in establishing our legal precepts, but it was by keeping alive Roman law, which survives today as civil law in much of Europe, Louisiana and Quebec, not by promulgating the Judeo-Christian tradition via the Ten Commandments. Simply put, the Bible didn't form the basis for our laws; Rome did.

To suggest that because early statute writers in the United States were Christian it is therefore a Christian state is like saying that because ancient Romans believed in a pantheon of gods Europeans should today bow at the feet of statues of Jupiter and Juno.

Jeremy Gilbert, Toronto

Please address all letters to: Letters, The Italic Way, P.O. Box 818, Floral Park, New York 11001



# All'Italiana

## MILESTONES

### OBITUARIES



**Dennis James**, 79, known primarily for his unstinting commitment in the fight against Cerebral Palsy, was a radio and television personality since 1938. Forty-seven of those years he hosted the United Cerebral Palsy telethons, raising some \$700 million for the cause. He was born Demic (*sic*) James Sposa in Jersey City.

**Dr. Thomas Vincent Santulli**, 82, a pioneer of pediatric surgery and founder of the NY Pediatric Surgical Society. Dr. Santulli organized one of the country's first training programs at Columbia University in the 1950's for operating on the immature systems of infants and children. Nine of his former students became directors of pediatric surgery in major medical centers around the nation.



**Adriana Caselotti**, 80, the voice of Snow White in Disney's first major animated movie, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*. Personally hired by Walt Disney, Miss Caselotti was paid \$970 (1937 dollars) for her role which featured the



song "Someday My Prince Will Come." Disney obtained his loan for the production from Bank of America founder Amadeo Giannini.

**Marie Torre**, 72, noted television columnist in the late 1950's, was thrust into the limelight for her refusal to reveal her news source during a libel suit initiated by actress Judy Garland. Miss Torre spent 10 days in jail in 1959, the first reporter to gain national attention defending freedom of the press.

**Gino Santi**, 81, developer of the pilot ejection seat in 1949. In the process of perfecting his aviation safety systems for the Air Force, Santi invented the air bag in the 1950's long before it became an automotive standard.

**Joey Faye**, 87, Burlesque comic and actor. His 65-year career matched him up as "second banana" with Phil Silvers, Gypsy Rose Lee, Gary Cooper, John Wayne, Woody Allen and Cary Grant. He developed routines like "Slowly I Turn" and "Floogle Street." Faye was born Joseph Palladino on the Lower East Side of Manhattan.

**Col. Henry A. Mucci**, 88, war hero. Mucci led the daring raid by Army Rangers in 1945 that freed 500 survivors of the Bataan Death March from a Japanese prison camp in the Philippines. The American



public was stirred by his exploits in the Philippine jungle and by his signature image with pipe, mustache and shoulder holster. Mucci, a West Pointer and resident of Connecticut, returned home to enter politics in 1946. He lost his bid for a Congressional seat to John Davis Lodge, a Boston Brahmin, according to one assessment, because Mucci couldn't speak Italian to his constituents and Lodge could.

The swashbuckling Colonel continued getting into harm's way well into his sixties. During the Vietnam War he worked for an oil company in southeast Asia which took him frequently to Saigon. Although he denied rumors that he worked for the CIA, Mucci stayed in Saigon until the day before the city fell to the Communists.

**Carl Fassi**, 67, skating coach to Peggy Fleming, Dorothy Hamill and Nicole Bobek, among others. A native of Milan, Fassi was a champion skater in the 1950's. In 1961, after a devastating plane crash wiped out the United States skating team, he was invited to the U.S. to rebuild the program. Beside being a great trainer, his language skills in English, French, Italian, and German gave him better rapport with international judges.

**Frank Angelo**, 49, co-founder of MAC Cosmetics and a leading fundraiser for AIDS research. The Canadian-born innovator developed an extensive line of individualized cosmetics that are now popular in multi-ethnic fashion photography.

**Vittorio Mussolini**, 81, devoted son of the *Duce*, passed away in June. As a brash 19-year-old pilot during the Italo-Abyssinian War Vittorio, shocked the world with his romantic descriptions of bombing enemy formations. He is survived by his brother Romano, father to Alessandra Mussolini, noted Italian political figure of the Republic.

**Carmine Anthony Capobianco**, 74, noted DJ and Midwest television host famous for his Stock Market Observer (1976-1986). As a DJ with WJJD-AM in the 1950's, he made famous the Top 40 broadcast format.

**Theresa Sortino**, 107, possibly the oldest Italian-American (let us know if she wasn't). A former nun who survived tuberculosis, Mrs. Sortino never needed a cane and walked unassisted to the hospital where she passed away.

**Richard Fenicchia**, 88, Rochester, NY, horticulturist who developed some 250 varieties of flowers in the rhododendron, azalea, and lilac families, notably the Eisenhower Lilac which was planted at the White House during the Nixon administration.

**Gianni Versace**, 50, world-class fashion designer. Murdered in Miami by a suspected serial killer. The Calabria-born entrepreneur established a fashion empire with \$1 billion in sales last year. His work touched the lives of every level of international society.

## TEACHING THE TEACHER

For the first time since 1982, the Scholastic Assessment Test (S.A.T.) had to revise upward about 45,000 grades because math whiz Colin Rizzio of Peterborough, NH, did not accept the school solution for one answer.

The day he took the test, Rizzio realized that the question had two possible assumptions and a quite different answer, something a battery of educators and millions of students had not seen. He made a mental note of the question and confirmed his assumption with his math teacher and his father who is a chemical engineer.

Rizzio's correction could have some very positive results for many marginal students who may have been marked wrong. The value of the question was ten points and could mean the difference between getting a scholarship or not. It could even make a difference in getting accepted at a preferred school.

Rizzio's work earned him a spot on the *Good Morning America Show* and the front page of the *New York Times*.



## LOST LOVER

It is with a great deal of sadness that we report the loss to the Italic race of one Giacomo Casanova, 18th Century writer, adventurer, and lover. It seems that the Venetian rogue who immortalized the adjective "a Casanova" was, by lineage, Spanish.

With the publication of a new English edition of Casanova's 12-volume autobiography, this little known fact has come to light. Although he was born in Venice his parents were Spanish actors. Worse still, he originally penned his life story in, well, French!

This now gives the Spanish two great lovers - Don Juan and Casanova. Italians are now left with Julius Caesar and Benvenuto Cellini.

Considering that Italy's Borgia family (Pope Alexander VI, Cesare and Lucrezia) were also notorious lovers of Spanish descent, Italians have taken some undeserved "credit" over the years.



## WHICH ONE IS DEAD?

Would you believe that more high school students study Latin than Italian? It's true. While close to 2% are still uttering the words of Caesar, less than 1% are reading Dante.

Latin is holding its own against German (3%), outpaced by French (9%) and buried by Spanish (28%). That wasn't always the case. In 1900, Latin had almost 60% of the students with German in second place (25%)

But Latin is gaining again in college and grad schools. Enrollment is up 25% and the National Latin Exam attracts nearly 106,000 takers

So what's the problem with Italian? With 15 million Italian Americans, global Italian cuisine, and Italy a top tourist destination, what seems to be the problem? Would it be that parents and schools have been sold on the idea that only Spanish is useful? *Che sbaglio!*

And by the way, according to the late Leo Rosten, author of *The Joys of Yiddish*, the word *yenta* was derived from the Italian *gentile*. Unfortunately, the derivation got a negative connotation along the way.

Finally, Italian is number 6 in home pages on the internet with just under 1% of the sites. By contrast English covers 82% of the sites, German 4%, Japanese 1.6%, French 1.5%, and Spanish 1.1%.

## FLAG YEAR

In 1797, the Italian tricolor was adopted by the Cisalpine Republic centered in Milan and the Cispadana Republic comprised of Modena, Ferrara and Bologna. Both republics were created during Bonaparte's Italian campaign as the Austrian occupiers were routed from northern Italy. The short-lived republics were eventually reconquered by the Austrians but the flag became the symbol of a resurgent Italy. Through the efforts of Italian patriots like Garibaldi, Mazzini, and Benso di Cavour, the reunification of Italy after 1,500 years of fragmentation was accomplished in 1870.



## ZERO ITALIANS

According to an April PBS special entitled *Grandchild Gap*, birthrates in industrialized nations are dropping dramatically. The worst news is that if current rates continue there will be no Italians in 200 years.

This news didn't faze Rocco and Beverly Boniello of Floral Park, Long Island. They were the proud parents of sextuplets in March. Mrs Boniello's 29-week pregnancy is considered a U.S. record: the longest among mothers of sextuplets. To be on the safe side the babies were delivered by a team of doctors headed by an Italian-American, Dr. Edmund LaGama. Donations for the children may be sent to Boniello Family Fund, Astoria Federal Savings & Loan Assoc., 155 Jericho Tpke, Floral Park, NY 11001.





# WORLD NOTES

## ITALY THE PEACEKEEPER

For the third time this century Italian armed forces landed in poverty-stricken Albania. During the First World War Italian troops were needed to defend the Balkans from Turks and Austro-Hungarians. Prior to the Second World War the Fascists claimed it as a province of greater Italy. This time, Italy is leading a United Nations force sent to protect humanitarian aid from brigands and urban terrorists. Under the command of Admiral Guido Venturoni (photo below), the multi-national force of 6,000 soldiers mostly from Italy, Spain, France, and Greece was welcomed by the Albanian government and people. Despite criticism by some American diplomats for the limited scope of the mission and for acting more like "Boy



Scouts than soldiers," the Italians have managed to calm down the country well enough to permit the populace to elect a new government.

Some United Nations officials expressed the wish that all that body's peacekeeping operations ran as smoothly.

On the other hand, the Italian role in the previous Somalia peacekeeping mission came under attack when it was revealed that some of its troops committed atrocities. According to a former Italian infantryman, Boy Scouts they were not. Photos of Somalis being blown up and tor-

ture were released to the world press and the Italian military was rocked by the revelations. But no sooner did the soul searching hit its stride than the truth came out. The former soldier had lied to sell a story to an Italian magazine. And the photos? One was of a jeep full of Somalis who had hit a landmine.

Blessed are the peacekeepers who must endure the spiteful.



Cohen, who is Jewish, made an inspection tour of South Korea. Greeting Cohen on the tour was **General John Tilelli Jr.** (photo above), an Italian American and commander-in-chief of the United States forces defending the peninsula.

General Tilelli earned his command after having served as commander of the First Cavalry Division during the Gulf War. It might be remembered that General Carl Vuono was Army Chief of Staff during that conflict and African-American Colin Powell was head of the Joint Chiefs.

And let's not forget Marine **General Anthony Zinni** (photo right) who oversaw the safe evacuation of the Italo-Amer-



ican forces from Somalia. Lt. Gen. Zinni is a sure bet to fill General Schwarzkopf's old slot as Commander-in-Chief of the United States Central Command which covers North Africa and most of the Middle East. The job comes with a fourth star.

## SOUTH OF THE BORDER

Italy's premiere automaker Fiat intends to stay a top producer of cars in South America. Fiat's existing production in Brazil and Argentina is nearly neck and neck with Volkswagen at some 636,000 cars per year. But when the Torino-based giant completes its planned expansion, it will be *numero uno* with 957,000 cars per year, leaving Volkswagen and General Motors in the *numero due* and *numero tre* positions.

And if dominating the Ibero-American market weren't enough, the Latin giant has slated a \$1 billion investment in India.

## WEST MEETS EAST

He didn't last long but American Umpire Mike Di Muro now holds the title of the first Westerner to umpire in the Japanese baseball leagues.

It started out as a good concept: bring Japanese *besuboru* up to American standards so that some day there can be a truly "world" series. The trouble in Japan is that umpires are not revered like the emperor. Enforcement of basic rules is weak. Players and coaches can persuade umps to reverse their calls so that *wa* (harmony) is maintained.

Well, Mike, a 29-year old class AAA umpire (one step below major league) soon found out that few Japanese hankered for the autocratic American method. Except maybe for the Japanese Umpire Association, no one on the field or in the stands thought much of a foreigner ejecting homeboys from the diamond. The last straw came when Japanese players ganged up on him while the crowd egged them on. Di Muro held his ground but the shoving match was enough for U.S. baseball officials to recall the ump to safer shores.





## ENGLISH DEBT

What Columbus did for Spain, Cabot did for England. Essentially, navigator Giovanni Caboto launched the British Empire on June 24, 1497 by planting the English flag in North America. The Gaeta-born (between Rome and Naples) explorer



also planted the flag of Venice, his adopted city-state. Could that mean...? Perish the thought! To commemorate this 500 year anniversary a very grateful Britain recreated Cabot's ship, Matthew, and sailed it across to Canada where it was met by British and Canadian dignitaries. The Matthew was named after Caboto's wife Mattea.

Therefore, we speak English because of an Italian. And today's famous Cabots of New England, why they are our "lace curtain" *paesani*. Some of them even admit it.

## BIBLICAL HYPE?

Italian archeologists working through the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank have determined, after a month's dig, that the ancient city of Jericho did not have walls that "tumbled down" as claimed in the Bible. If Joshua "fought the battle of Jericho" his trumpeters didn't exactly do the sonic damage ascribed to them. The scientists, Lorenzo Nigro and Nicolo Marchetti from the University of Rome, may well be opening up a new controversy between Israelis and Palestinians. After all, Joshua was Moses' right hand man.

## PETROCELLI LIVES AGAIN

Back in the 1960's, before *The Godfather*, television actually cast Italian-Americans as good guys. As though previewing the reality 35 years later, a series called *Petrocelli* starred a crackerjack attorney by that name.

Warp speed ahead to 1997, and presto, a real life guy named Dan Petrocelli does

what the multi-cultural dream team of the LA Prosecutor's Office could not – make O.J. Simpson bleed, figuratively of course.

The 43-year-old native of New Jersey, who envisioned his life as a first-class trumpet player, ended up in law school and in California. The meticulous Petrocelli and his team put together an ironclad case on behalf of the Goldman family in a civil suit against Simpson for the death of Goldman's son who was murdered along with Nicole Brown Simpson. Petrocelli's victory will cost Simpson \$8.5 million.

Oh, and there was another "Italian" who helped win the case – Bruno Magli. Those were the "ugly-ass" shoes that Simpson claimed he never owned but was photographed in just a few months before the murders. The distinctive sole pattern was evident in the blood stains at the crime scene. Dum de dum-dum.



## GRANT'S TOMB

In what has to be the most insulting of oversights, Columbia University student Frank Scaturro was not officially invited to the rededication of Grant's Tomb in New York City. It was Scaturro, a passionate devotee of the late Civil War general and president, who brought the nation's atten-

tion to the deteriorated state of the 100-year-old monument on Manhattan's East Side. After becoming a tour guide at the site, Scaturro began bombarding the U.S. Park Service with memos detailing the shameful condition of the tomb. Finally, in desperation, he released his reports to the press and to every national politician, including Grant's descendants. It was after Scaturro and Grant's relations initiated a lawsuit against the Park Service that a \$1.8 million restoration was undertaken.

When the anniversary ceremony took place last April the Park Service "forgot" to invite Frank Scaturro. Fortunately, Ulysses Grant Dietz, the President's great-great-grandson, asked Scaturro to sit beside him.

## THE SUN SETS

While every newspaper expected the nation of Italy to split north and south, the United Kingdom is reverting to its component parts. Scotland and Wales will soon have their own parliaments and Northern Ireland's days as a British colony may be numbered. England by the year 2000 may well have to struggle on its own resources after an imperialist reign of some 300 years. But since the loss of Hong Kong (originally won in a drug war), the Sceptred Isle still rules over an assortment of Caribbean islands and the Malvinas, oops, the Falklands.

On the positive side, English is still the dominant language of the globe.

## U.S. SCREWS ITALY

The Italian government is waking up to reality now that the Clinton Administration has nixed its bid for a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council. The Clinton plan would expand the permanent seats by five: Japan, Germany and three from the developing world. They would join the victors of World War II: U.S., Russia, Britain, China, and France.

Italy is ranked fifth in United Nations funding and has participated in many peacekeeping operations, most recently losing four soldiers in Lebanon. U.S. Senate approval is required for any changes in the U.N. charter. (*ISI has distributed petitions to its membership for an appeal to Congress.*)



# EDITORIALS

## Political Agenda

On the opposite page is the first-ever Italian-American Political Agenda assembled by our Advisory Council under the direction of Alfred Cardone.

The point of the Agenda is simple: if there is such a thing as an Italian-American community, this is what it needs to prosper.

Even the most tolerant among us has to admit that our ethnic group, the fifth largest in the United States, has been sailing without a rudder for too many years. Compared to other major and minor groups in this country, we have yet to reach a consensus on any goals. That can be remedied with this Agenda.

If you support it, make a copy and send it to each of your Italian-American representatives. Tell him this is what you expect from your own kind, and nothing less.

**Update:** Our initiative in Congress to fund a documentary on the 1942 persecution of Italian-Americans has gained the support of NIAF (National Italian American Foundation). Under the guidance of John Calvelli of NY Congressman Eliot Engel's office, the House and the Senate have initiated resolutions to acknowledge this unfortunate episode. This bi-partisan effort is being sponsored by Senators Torricelli (NJ-D) and D'Amato (NY -R) as well as Representatives Engel (NY -D) and Lazio (NY -R).

This is the kind of political action and cooperation that is long overdue. We tip our hats to John Calvelli and NIAF for their work.

## The New Italic Way

You may have noticed (if you look at the little things) that the magazine credits no longer lists the Council of Governors of ISI nor any officers. This is because, with the revised constitution of June 19, 1997, *The Italic Way* has become an autonomous program, funded from membership dues and its own advertising.

We have also dropped our Italian language section in order to expand our English features.

Unfortunately, we still suffer from delays in publishing. The main reason for this is that we are all part-time volunteers. Weeks turn into months as soon as the last issue

hits the mail. Please bear with us if you appreciate what *The Italic Way* stands for. We are unique in every way.

## The Demanding Ones

The Italic people are by nature critics, not praisers. Even the most ignorant among us should realize that Italian civilization was built on the demand for excellence. That our ancestors never settled for anything less than the best is apparent in everything they have bequeathed us from food to science. And, infrequently, we come to realize our accomplishments beyond the realms of food and fashion.

But it seems that other ethnic groups appreciate the gifts of Italian civilization more than we do. For example, the last British governor of Hong Kong defended his nation's colonization of that Chinese city by comparing the royal rule to ancient Rome's beneficence to conquered peoples. We cannot recall in all the years of our earthly existence any Italian-American politician who even acknowledged the existence of Classical Italy.

You will notice in the article on page 25 on Italic calligraphy that the author is not an Italian-American. In fact, within the international society for the promotion of this magnificent script few if any members are Italic. It is almost shocking, as if Japanese- and Chinese-Americans abandoned their calligraphy to more appreciative folk.

And look at the list of recipients of our Latin awards in area high schools (see *Letters*, page 3). There is only one Italian name among the students and none among the teachers. Latin, an Italic language, with more students in this nation studying it than the Italian language, is a stranger to many of us.

Finally, behold the obituaries that appear in the *All'Italiana* section. Every issue has contained these tributes to men and women who have left their marks on our world. Compare these real lives to the glorified tripe many Italian-American writers and filmmakers monger to the public. These media images are the antithesis of our positive and productive heritage.

Should we not be more demanding of ourselves and our fellows? Aren't we betraying our ancestors and short-changing our children and grandchildren by settling for less?

# Forum of the People



## An Italian-American Political Agenda

For Italian-American Politicians and Organizations

- I. To actively monitor and vigorously respond to all untrue, distorted, or blatantly anti-Italic articles, news stories, or programming in the various media.
- II. To use the bully pulpit to speak out against Hollywood and other media depictions of Italian stereotypes, be they mafia images, buffoon images, et al.
- III. To demand the end of the use of the phrase "crime family" when used by law enforcement agencies and the media in describing Italian-American criminal gangs and syndicates. To replace the term RICO with something more politically correct.
- IV. To propose and support U.S. Government funding of positive educational activities on behalf of Italy and Italian-Americans. (eg.: cultural centers, institutes within universities, library programs, Public Television productions such as the story of the 1942 persecution of Italian-Americans.)
- V. To secure funding to conduct government studies of media stereotyping and its effect on the Italian-American educational performance and drop-out rates.
- VI. To actively pursue government funding, on all levels, to establish chairs in Italic Studies and Roman Studies at public universities.
- VII. To actively pursue funding, at all levels, for the promotion of the Italian language in public-supported elementary, middle and high schools.
- VIII. To actively promote October as Italic Heritage Month. To restore Columbus Day as an observed holiday by government and corporate America.
- IX. To actively pursue the naming of selected public facilities and infrastructures, and the design of commemorative postage stamps, after Italian-Americans whose lives have shaped America in a positive and significant way.
- X. To work on behalf of a career Italian-American diplomat, or similarly qualified background, for his/her appointment to the Ambassadorship of Italy.
- XI. To actively pursue the appointments of qualified Italian-Americans to high government positions in the federal, state, and city governments.
- XII. To encourage and support Italy's Mission to the United Nations if not in conflict with U.S. foreign policy. To support Italy's permanent seating on the Security Council.
- XIII. To encourage the media to spotlight state visits by highranking Italian Government officials.
- XIV. To promote bi-lateral changes of Italian professionals, academics, and cultural experts to enrich American life.

*Submitted by the Advisory Council of the Italic Studies Institute,  
8 March 1997.*

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# Hollywood versus Italians

Them - 400    Us - 50

by  
William Dal Cerro

You've heard the arguments before: "It's only a movie" ... "You're being over-sensitive" ... "Well, there are Italians like that" ... "We all have to laugh at ourselves" ... "Why fight it? You can't change anything" ... *ad infinitum*.

These are some of the standard responses encountered by those who bring up the issue of institutionalized Ital-bashing in the media, specifically in Hollywood. The fact that Italian Americans use these arguments against their fellow Italic people isn't surprising; many African American actors voiced similar sentiments while defending Stepin' Fetchit roles in the 1930's.

Yet despite Hollywood's admirable change-of-heart toward such American groups as blacks, Hispanics, Asians, Jews, Russians, and homosexuals (even whales, from the killer *Orca* to the heroic *Free Willy*), Italians remain targets of caricature even on the brink of a new millennium.

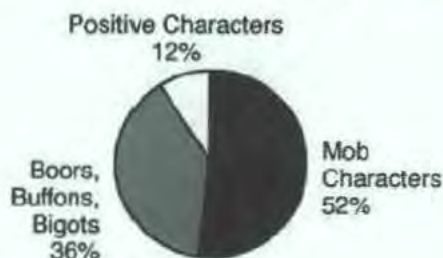
In order to document our case, we decided to research Hollywood's portrayal of Italian culture in the movies. We began in 1931, the year of Edward G. Robinson's epochal performance as Rico in *Little Caesar*, and continued to the present day. Over the past sixty-six years, a solid, consistent pattern emerges regarding a national perception of our community — and it's not an encouraging one. As you can see by the "score" listed above, the negative films about "Italians" outweigh the positive ones so overwhelmingly (88% to 12%) that, if it were indeed a softball game, it would have been canceled by the slaughter rule long ago.

Here, then, are the 450 titles which have created a cultural "Berlin Wall" of Italian stereotyping. The positive films are noted with an asterisk. Shockingly, this isn't a complete list. A few obscure films may have escaped our purview, and we deliberately made no mention of television specials, plays, pulp fiction, or TV sitcoms—all of which also traffic heavily in Ital-bashing.

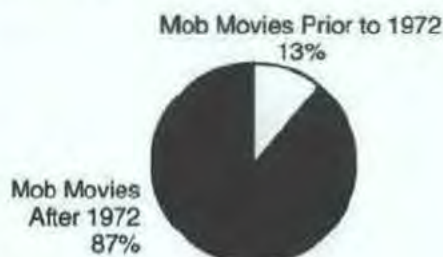
So why bother doing such research? Isn't this just intellectual nit-picking? Well, consider that A.P. Gianinni, the brilliant businessman who founded the Bank of America, became "Mr. Dickson" when a film was made about him in 1932 (*American Madness*), in 1949 he became an evil banker (*House of Strangers*); that the two heroes of World War II, Medal of Honor winner John Basilone and ace fighter pilot Don Gentile, were ignored on the Silver Screen in favor of Audie Murphy and imaginary "top gun" Tom Cruise, respectively; and that the Italian wine-growing families of California became Mexican immigrants in *A Walk in the Clouds* (1995).

In short, an Italian name has become a stock label for the "bad guy" among character-driven screenwriters.

## Italian Characters as Portrayed in Films



## Influence of the Godfather (1972) in Films



## THE EVIDENCE

♦ denotes a positive portrayal

- Across 110th Street—fake mob character (1972)
- A Day at the Races—Chico Marx as the buffoonish Chicolini (1939)
- Age of Innocence—young Italian maid to wealthy WASP family (1993)
- ♦Agony and the Ecstasy—Hollywood's version of the painting of the Sistine Chapel, complete with Anglo actors (1966)
- Analyze This — fake mob character (1997)
- A Night at the Opera—Chico Marx/Chicolini (1935)
- A Night in Casablanca—Chico Marx/Chicolini (1945)
- Albino Alligator—criminals hang out at Dino's Last Chance Bar (1997)
- All the President's Men—real-life "dirty trickster" Donald Segretti (1976)
- American Friend—fake mob character (1977)
- Anderson Tapes—fake mob character (1971)
- Angie—Geena Davis as Bensonhurst bimbo (1994)
- Animal Crackers—Chico Marx/Chicolini (1931)
- Another Stake-Out—fake mob character (1993)
- Arthur—working class waitress/kleptomaniac (1981)
- Armed and Dangerous — fake mob character (1986)



## Hollywood vs. Italians

- Assassins—Sly Stallone as a hit man (1994)  
 At The Circus—Chico Marx/Chicolini (1939)  
 At Long Last Love—Italian gigolo (1975)  
 Austin Powers—evil mob character and seductive bimbo (1997)  
 Baby Doll—Sicilian American landowner seduces his rival's teenage wife (1956)  
 Baby, It's You—Italian greaser/lounge lizard (1983)  
 Back to School—slob chauffeur (1986)  
 Bad Lieutenant—Harvey Keitel as corrupt cop (1993)  
 Barefoot Contessa—slick Italian count (1954)  
 ♦Beach Blanket Bingo—cheesy commercial drivel; nevertheless, leads Frankie Avalon and Annette Funicello are presented as wholesome and attractive (1965)  
 Beat the Devil—international thieves plot in Rome (1954)  
 Beautiful Girls—loud-mouth, working class broad (1996)  
 ♦Bell for Adano—American G.I. helps poor but picturesque Sicilians get a bell for their church (1946)  
 Ben Hur—decadent Rome (1959)  
 ♦Berkeley in the 60's—documents the Free Speech student movement at Berkeley, led by student/orator Mario Savio (1990)  
 Betsy's Wedding—fake mob character (1990)  
 Big Combo—fake mob character (1955)  
 Big Easy—fake mob characters (1987)  
 ♦Big Night—Two Italian brothers try to revive their struggling New Jersey restaurant (1996)  
 Big Red One—World War II film with generic Brooklyn boy (1980)



*Once Around* (1990), positive ♦

- Big Sleep—fake mob character (1946)  
 Big Slice—fake mob character (1990)  
 Big Store—Chico Marx/Chicolini (1941)  
 ♦Bikini Beach—see Beach Blanket Bingo (1964)

- Billy Bathgate—based on Dutch Schultz and mob (1993)  
 Black Hand—based on real-life incident (1950)  
 Black Orchid—fake mob characters (1959)  
 Bliss—evil sex therapist (1997)  
 Bloodbrothers—buffoonish blue-collar workers (1978)  
 Blood and Concrete—fake mob characters (1993)  
 Blood Vows—fake mob characters (1995)  
 Bom to Run—fake mob characters (1993)  
 Bound—two lesbians outwit a fake mob character (1996)  
 The Brain—Italian buffoon (1966)  
 Breach of Trust—fake mob characters (1996)  
 Breakaway—fake mob characters (1993)  
 Breaking Away—champion Italian cyclists turn out to be cheaters (1979)  
 ♦Brian's Song—true story of friendship between Chicago Bears Football players Gayle Sayers and Brian Piccolo (1971)  
 Bride of the Mafia—fake mob characters (1994)  
 ♦Bridges of Madison County—Meryl Streep as unfulfilled Italian wife who cheats on her husband (1995)  
 Broadway Danny Rose—fake mob characters (1983)  
 Bronx Tale—fake mob characters (1993)  
 Brooklyn State of Mind—Italian girl seeks revenge on fake mob character who killed her father (1997)  
 Brotherhood—fake mob characters (1968)  
 Brothers Rico—fake mob characters (1957)  
 Buggy—based on Buggy Siegel and Lucky Luciano (1991)  
 Buggy Malone—kids done up as fake mobsters (1975)  
 Busybody—fake mob characters (1967)  
 Bulletproof Heart—fake mob characters (1995)  
 Bullets Over Broadway—fake mob characters (1994)  
 Cadillac Man—fake mob characters (1990)  
 Caligula—classical Rome as Porno City (1980)  
 Capone—based on Al Capone (1957)  
 Capone—based on Al Capone (1975)  
 Carlito's Way—fake mob characters (1993)  
 Carry On Cleo—spoof of classical Rome (1964)  
 Carry On Columbus—spoof of Columbus's journey (1992)  
 Casino—based on crook Tony Spilotro (1995)  
 Charley Varrick—fake mob character (1974)  
 China Girl—Italian greasers (1987)  
 Citizen Kane—Yes, even the Great American Movie has an amusing but broad caricature of an opera coach hired by the title character (1941)  
 City Hall—fake mob characters (1996)  
 ♦City of Hope—features corrupt Italian mayor, yet middle-class Italian family is viewed as genuine (1991)  
 Cleopatra—decadent Rome (1963)  
 Clerks—reference to fake mob character (1994)  
 Client—fake mob character (1994)  
 Clockers—racist Italian cop (1996)  
 Cobra—Stallone as cartoon cop (1986)  
 Coconuts—Chico Marx/Chicolini (1929)  
 Code of Silence—fake mob characters (1985)  
 ♦Cold Wind in August—Italian father tries to discourage his teenage son's affair with an older



*Little Caesar* (1931), negative

- stripper (1961)  
 Concrete Wars—fake mob characters (no date given)  
 Conquest of Paradise—Christopher Columbus as exploiter (1992)  
 Copland—fake mob subplot (1997)  
 Cops and Robbers—fake mob characters (1973)  
 Cotton Club—based on Dutch Schultz and mob (1984)  
 Cousins—crotchety Italian nonna (1989)  
 Crimes and Misdemeanors—fake mob character (1989)  
 Crazy Joe—based on thug Crazy Joe Gallo (1974)  
 Daisy Miller—comical Italian native (1974)  
 Daytrippers—cheating Italian husband (1997)  
 Dead Man—Italian pioneer settler as transvestite (1996)  
 Dead Poets Society—study of Latin equated with oppressive educational system (1989)  
 Deal—fake mobster (1997)  
 Deathwish IV—fake mob character (1987)



*Lorenzo's Oil* (1992), positive ♦

Continued on page 30

# Millennium: Will We Survive?

by John Mancini and Don Fiore

Part 1: The Way We Were – page 12

Part 2: Why We Are Unprepared – page 17

Part 3: Where Do We Go From Here – page 21

## Part 1

### The Way We Were

It has clearly been the case, as we shall show, that Italian-American self-respect has taken a nose dive over the decades. It is an amazing plunge into an abyss that few, if any, other ethnic groups have experienced. What is more remarkable is that this wholesale cultural destruction is overwhelmingly self-inflicted. Like lemmings we are being led over the cliff by a handful of image-makers, oblivious to the finality of our inaction. Our tolerance of, and even admiration for, mafialore has poisoned the minds of many of our youth and, no doubt, sent the more rational of our Italic brethren scurrying to find holes of assimilation that will distance them from this orgy of defamation. Not since our second-generation fathers abandoned their Little Italys to escape an Old World mentality have we experienced a comparable Italophobia among our educated class. Even our politicians keep their ethnic heads low until election time.

Let's dig deeply into our communal memory to see what life was like before image-makers like Mario Puzo and Franky Coppola hitched our destiny to the Mafia.

#### The 1930's and 1940's

It is a fact that the media moguls had their way with us at the turn of the century and into the 1920's and 30's. And why not? Our first generation immigrants were "greenhorns" concerned mainly with economic survival. Characters like Rico Bandella (Little Caesar), Chico Marx and Luigi (from the radio show *Life with Luigi*) were two early examples of the goon/buffoon stereotypes played for effect by the sons of earlier immigrants. Although clearly Italian, Rico Bandella came with little other ethnic baggage à la the Corleones (*The Godfather*) who were fleshed out with religion, wedding scenes, and extended family. This was understandable insofar as the actors and filmmakers were non-Italic, unlike today. Besides, no one group had a cinematic lock on crime as is now the case. Notwithstanding Al Capone's pre-eminence at the time, criminals of the Irish, German, Jewish, and Anglo origin all had a hefty piece of the box-office.

Yet, despite the struggle of the second generation to reconcile the old and the new, they were an eloquent group in the 1930's: Judge Michael Musmano, who went on to try Nazis at Nuremburg, prosecutor Ferdinand Pecora, the terror of Wall St., Congressman Fiorello LaGuardia, histo-



Ernest Borgnine  
*Marty/Play or Die*

rian Giovanni Schiavo. Many Italian ethnic magazines that were published in English were a cut above much of today's glitter. Among them was "Atlantica" Magazine, a compendium of political and historical articles.

With the coming of the Second World War, Hollywood put on a good face to drum up ethnic support for the war effort. Now could be seen characters like Major Joppolo (*Bell for Adamo*) and Richard Conte as the stewart Italo-American infantryman in the epic *A Walk in the Sun*. There were real life heroes like Army Air Force ace Don Gentile, Marine Anthony Basilone, military and then civilian filmmaker, Frank Capra, singer Frank Sinatra, actor Don Ameche, entertainer Jerry Colonna, singer Russ Colombo, atomic scientist Enrico Fermi. Despite the wartime propaganda that portrayed Italian soldiers as military ineffectives (eg. *Sahara*), the Italian-American was a strong patriotic citizen whose loyalty was without question, at least in the movies.

During and after the war, men like the anti-corruption mayor of New York, Fiorello La Guardia, San Francisco Mayor Angelo Rossi, America's premier banker A.P. Giannini, publisher Generoso Pope (*Il Progresso*), best-selling author Pietro Di Donato (*Christ in Concrete*), and of course slugger Joe Di Maggio, were the gems of Italic image.

These were the folk heroes of a generation of proud Italian-Americans.

#### The 1950's

Sinatra hit his stride during this decade. Crooners Dean Martin and Perry Como, the original Rockys – Graziano and Marciano, and even wrestlers Bruno Sammartino and Antonino Roca were real life heroes. The television show *Blue Angels* featured a pilot named Bellini. Lou Costello endeared himself to television audiences. And even though Lou's character friend, Mr. Bacigalupo, was a stereotype he

Continued on page 13



## Millennium

was also the neighborhood entrepreneur. Jackie Gleason's *Honeymooners* featured, albeit infrequently, apartment neighbor Tommy Manicotti, a 14-year-old who had no bizarre speech pattern or leather apparel. In a word, Tommy was a normal American boy. The movie *Marty*, written by a non-Italian - Paddy Chayevsky, depicted Italian-American family life in the Bronx as civilized albeit lonely. The "losers" in that movie went

to church every Sunday and hung around the corner bar in jackets and ties talking trash without the expletives. Even the biography of Rocky Graziano had a nice ending despite Rocky's juvenile delinquency.



Rossano Brazzi

The pre-Coppola Hollywood brought us Rossano Brazzi, Sophia Loren, Anna Mangani, Gina Lollobrigida, Marcello Mastroianni and a view of Italy that was modern and of breathtaking beauty. Television's *Sgt. Bilko* featured Cpl. Barbella, no worse a bunko artist than his Sarge and certainly not "connected." The book, movie and later television series introduced America to Dr. Rossi, a respected character in Peyton Place. Sinatra and Martin played normal Italian-American soldiers in *Here to Eternity* and *The Young Lions*, respectively.

Late in the decade the Appalachian Summit was hyped by the media as the first Italian gangster convention. Albert Anastasia was gunned down in a New York barber chair. The television series *The Untouchables* recreated Al Capone and Frank Nitti of the 1930's era. Yet, one of the characters was an Italic G-man played by actor Paul Picerni and other ethnic criminals had cameos of their own. Moreover, these Italic gangsters did not have the trappings of Italian culture - religion, family, food - merely Italian names. Italian-American leaders made headlines protesting this series but most of their constituents ignored the warning signs. It only got worse.

Nevertheless, our youth was preoccupied with rock 'n' roll and a *capella* harmony. The



Annette Funicello and Frankie Avalon have been superceded by *My Cousin Vinny!*

the gamut of ethnic music. Composer Henry Mancini and orchestra leaders Mantovani and Guy Lombardo were our classy side. Even Mousketeer Annette Funicello inspired pride in Italic kids across the nation (I know, I was one of them). Imported Italian hits like *Volare*, *Arrivederci Roma*, and *Ciao Ciao Bambina* were played on radio and television to the delight of all Americans. Vocalist Connie Francis (born Concetta Franconero), already a success in American rock, paid homage to her roots by singing Italian-language favorites. By comparison, Madonna has yet to pay homage to anything Italic.



Connie Francis

These were also the years of John Pastore, first Italian-American senator, and controversial politicians Vito Marcantonio and Carmine DeSapio of New York.

Even the Pope had to be Italian!

### The 1960's

Sinatra was still big, so was Dino Martino. Sophia Loren and Marcello Mastroianni continued the romantic Latin image on screen. Ernest Borgnine starred as Lt. Petrosino in the 1960 movie *Pay or Die*, the true story of the first Italian-American police detective who fought and was killed by the Black Hand at the turn of the century. It was an engrossing look at our community and the real values we held. Anthony Franciosa, Robert Loggia, Joseph Campanella, James Farentino, and Ben Gazzara were television

singing groups and the soloists (eg. Vito Picone & The Elegants, Frank Avalone, Dion & The Belmonts, and Lou Christie, to name a few) put Italic youth on the pop charts. Vocalists Lou Monte, Jimmy Rosselli, and Mario Lanza ran

stars appearing as positive characters. There was even a TV series called *Petrocelli* about a lawyer. The part was played by non-Italic actor Barry Newman. Lt. Colombo (Peter Falk, non-Italic) made his debut. Joseph Alioto was mayor of San Francisco, Ella Grasso was the first elected female governor (of Connecticut) in America. Anthony Celebrese and then Joe Califano became the nation's Secretary of Health. John Volpe and Albert Rosellini were elected governors of Massachusetts and Washington respectively. The novel and movie, *Seven Days in May*, contained an Italian-American vice president named Gianelli. We were thought to be next in line for the number two spot but the Greeks (Agnew) beat us to it.

Italian-American rock groups peaked with the Rascals and the Four Seasons. Soloists from Dion to Lou Christie were big time.

A guttersnipe named Valachi mesmerized television viewers, testifying before a Congressional committee, and regaling listeners with tales of secret oaths and mob rub-outs. Out of his testimony came the phrase "crime family" which later took wings in books and cinema. About this time, Italian author Luigi Barzini wrote the book *The Italians* which made the community proud but also featured the Mafia as a global network. In 1968, a down-and-out writer named Puzo got his fiction *The Godfather* published.

Coppola fleshed out Puzo's *Godfather* with all the blood and sinew of Italian culture so as to make *mafiosi* traditional as well as heroic. The British invasion pushed out Italian-American rock stars. Italian-American actors flocked to become mobstars and Italian-American filmmakers brought their heritage to the screen in a new generation of gangster movies. Relegated to obscurity were those bits and pieces of the heritage that had rounded us out in the previous decades. Italians as stock goons and buffoons became the tools of scriptwriters and filmmakers. The transition was easy because Italian-Americans themselves were willing participants. Remarkably, only Lt. Colombo, played by actor Peter Falk, maintained a positive image.

### The 1970's and Beyond

Through the 1970's and 1980's the goon/buffoon portrayals were supplemented by other negative variations of the ghettoized Italian-American. *Saturday Night Fever* and





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### *Millennium*

*Rocky* added "color" to our ever-degrading image. It is interesting to note that in 1972 two movies debuted, *The Godfather* and *Serpico*. Both leads were played by Al Pacino. While *The Godfather* was myth laced with Valachi lore, *Serpico* was reality, the story of an honest New York City cop who blew the lid off of police corruption. *Serpico* was the last "Italian good guy" movie made, probably in this century. However, television managed to field another cop-hero name Capt. Furillo in the 1980's series *Hill Street Blues*.

The 1990's brought us yet more variations on the not-too-serious Italic culture: *Moonstruck*, and *My Cousin Vinny*, *Kiss Me, Guido*, and, more Mafia movies. The balance we enjoyed decades before was thrown out of kilter by an obsession for stereotypes. A new bizarre Italian culture was now embodied in the Mob and media-hyped murderers like Sammy the Bull and John Gotti. Intermarriage and assimilation have worked their magic in cleaving the community into at least two separate camps: those that accept and enjoy any media defamation and those who would rather be called "Americans" just

to avoid the issue. Relatively positive television shows like *The Commish* features a non-Italic actor who is married to a Jewish character. They raise their only son as a Jew. The debased value of Italian heritage is further reinforced by born-again authors like Maria

*"The [degrading]  
transition was easy  
because  
Italian-Americans  
were willing  
participants."*

"DeMarco" Torgovich who publish their ethnic trashing as "Italian-American literature."

The consequence of all this is that Italian-American culture is not to be taken seriously by the media. Media respect is given to those ethnic groups who exhibit pride in themselves. As far as the media is concerned, and this has been borne out by numerous non-Italic commentators such as TV critic

Marvin Kitman, movie critic John Goodman, and satirist Russell Baker, Italian-Americans are the target of opportunity for any treatment that comes to mind. Despite their economic wealth or sometime control of major Hollywood studios, or even their talent in filmmaking, Italian-Americans have never produced a *Braveheart*, a *Joy Luck Club*, a *Schindler's List*, a *Dances With Wolves*, a *Roots*, a *Michael Collins*, an *Exodus* or even an *I Remember Mama*.

The sad fact is that most Italian-Americans who lived through these decades rarely reflect on what has been lost, or what might have been. Were we properly led – by politicians, media stars, and literati – our culture would have risen to its proper station in this mosaic. Notwithstanding the thousands of triumphs our brethren have achieved individually, by dint of their own sweat, the community has managed to undo three decades of positive growth in the name of artistic expression. We have been ill-served, primarily, alas, by our own.

End of Part 1  
Part 2 begins on page 17





A true Italian American hero

# Mondavi: No "Little ol' wine maker"

by Robert A. Masullo

*The scene: A press luncheon at the Robert Mondavi Winery in the heart of California's Napa Valley, last April.*

Sumptuous food, fantastic wines (Mondavi, of course) are being served to a hundred or so journalists, a breed known to be famished and parched most of the time. Although happy, they start buzzing: *Where is Mondavi? When are the announcements going to be made? After all, we've got to turn something in to our editors.*

Finally, Margrit Biever Mondavi, wife of the *pater familias* of the modern California wine industry, comes to the podium.

"We will be getting started shortly," she says. "I must apologize. The reason Robert is not here yet is my fault. I sent him to pick up some dry cleaning and he got a little lost. He went to the wrong cleaners."

Mondavi shows up a few minutes later. He greets everyone with a wave, and shrugs off the mix-up, saying he always goes to this one particular cleaner and didn't know why his wife switched.

This wouldn't be much of a tale if it happened to the average Joe. But Mondavi is hardly that. This is the giant of his industry. What Enzo Ferrari was to cars, Mondavi is to wine. Although "retired" he still makes nearly a million dollars a year (according to a stock prospectus) advising his sons, Michael and Tim, on the running of the winery. One doesn't expect such a person to be picking up dry cleaning.

But in a way, it is a measure of the man. He has not let fame and fortune remove his common touch.

After the announcements (they dealt with concerts to be held at the winery during the summer) and a final glass of wine, all the journalists except me leave.

I was there to cover the announcement for a California newspaper, but had also asked for a one-on-one interview for *The Italic Way*.

Although quite busy that day, Mondavi agreed. Wine industry people are known for their graciousness and Mondavi could well be their poster boy.

In his handsome but modest office, Mondavi began our session by stating: "I am a lucky man. My vocation and avocation are one and the same."

The young-at-heart, still handsome wine maker is now 84. But no stereotypical "Little ol' wine maker" is he. In fact, he sees his life's work as far from done.

He has at least one more project he intends to complete: building



the American Center for Wine, Food and the Arts. A \$65 million museum to rival Europe's best, it will sit on 13 acres alongside the picturesque Napa River and trace wine and food back to ancient Rome and beyond.

It is an undertaking Mondavi has been working on for 10 years. He expects to see it open in the year 2000 "and I expect to be at the opening," he says emphatically.

"We're already on the map as a great wine area," he adds. "This will put us on the map culturally."

Before Mondavi went on his own, California was already producing wine. But that wine was regarded poorly — drinkable but little more than *vin'ordinario*.

Today California wines, at least those produced by Mondavi and wine makers who have followed his lead, are regarded as equal to and in many instances superior to the best wines of the rest of the world, much to the chagrin of the French.

If there is any doubt that others followed Mondavi, consider this fact: When the Robert Mondavi Winery opened for business in 1966 there were some 20 wineries in the Napa Valley; today there are nearly 300 (some of them owned by French wine companies). The growth of wineries elsewhere in California and other states has been equally impressive since the "Mondavi revolution."

Mondavi, a modest man with an easy sense of humor, would be the first to point out the work hundreds of others have done to make this so. But it all grew from his conviction that California, with proper care in growing and production, could produce a much greater quality wine.

The Mondavi family involvement with wine goes back to Robert's father, Cesare Mondavi, who in 1910 emigrated from *Sasso Ferrato* in Italy's *Marche regione* to Virginia, Minnesota, for work in an iron-ore mine.

Cesare was not a wine maker in Italy, but shortly after arriving in the United States became involved in a local Italian self-help club that



## Mondavi

put him on the road to becoming one.

After being elected its secretary, the group assigned Cesare to go to California to purchase grapes for club members. These hardy Italian immigrants used the grapes to make wine for their tables.

Cesare liked what he saw of California. It was more like Italy than Minnesota, both in climate and attitude. So he moved his family again. At first he intended only to be a grape broker, but eventually bought a winery.

"I remember only a little about Minnesota," said Robert, who was 9 when the family moved to Lodi, California, in 1923. "I know it was cold, incredibly cold. I remember my parents speaking to me in Italian and answering them in English. And I remember hearing my father called 'Dago' and 'Wop' and wondering what those words meant."

*"We (Italian-Americans)  
can do anything we set  
our minds to do,"  
said Mondavi.*

Mondavi, who is nothing if not a positive thinker, was annoyed by those words and continues to be sensitive to Italian stereotypes. He believes, however, that they are diminishing.

"I've been around long enough to see some real changes in day-to-day life. In

many ways Italian Americans are better off than when I was a kid. Society is more open. We still have the movie stereotypes, of course, but they're going to change. People, including non-Italians, are beginning to realize how wrong they are."

Furthermore, Mondavi firmly believes the United States will see an Italian American president before long.

"I really thought (Mario) Cuomo could have done it. I wish he had run. I don't know who it will be, but I can feel it. It's not far off."

Looking around the Robert Mondavi Winery, a magnificent structure set among 1,600 acres of vines with the beautiful Coastal Mountains in the distance, inspires confidence. A man that could build it, and see it grow to a \$250 million a year business, is one whose intuition is not to be regarded lightly.

"We (Italian Americans) can do anything we set our minds to do," said Mondavi.

He was referring, I think to his nascent museum but it could have been about almost any endeavor in which he has been involved. Although he's had his share of troubles, including a much-ballyhooed split with his brother Peter (now parched up), the man doesn't know the meaning of defeat.

Mondavi's daughter Marcia, who promotes Mondavi wines on the East Coast, summed up the man quite well recently when she told a Northern California newspaper:

"What I think sets dad apart is not only the firmness of his vision but the idea that he is totally, throughout his whole being, an



ultimate optimist. He will always see the positive side of every person, any story, any situation. He fully believes he can move mountains by positive thinking and he does."

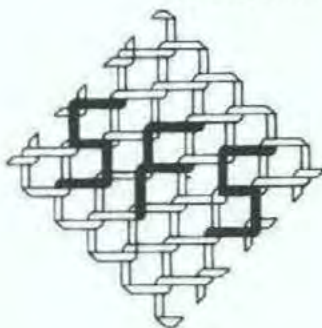
\* \* \* \*

*Note to Francis Ford Coppola (who used some of the fortune he made exploiting Italian Americans to buy a winery just down the road from Mondavi's):* Robert Mondavi has been praised widely, in and out of the wine industry, for years. If a movie maker were looking for an Italian American hero as the subject for a film, Mondavi might be an excellent choice.

\* \* \* \*

*Note to readers:* Don't hold your breath waiting for such a Coppola film.

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Part 2

# Why We Are Unprepared



Eighty or ninety years ago, during the peak of Italian immigration, America was not nearly so hospitable and tolerant a place as it is today. No sympathetic, multiculturalist media or politically correct, academic elite were around to assure the new arrivals of the value of their culture and its retention.

If the immigrants themselves were too busy eking out a living with their picks and shovels to care, the humiliations and anti-Latin scorn that radiated from all sectors of the solidly Northern European mainstream was not missed by their American-born children. To carve out their slice of the American pie, many of the economically and socially ambitious found it necessary to distance themselves, as thoroughly as possible, from the embarrassing, old country ways of their parents and grandparents.

In some cases, this was just as well, since these same parents and grandparents, representing Italy's poorest and least educated, knew little about Italy themselves. They left an Italy that had the lowest rate of literacy in Europe. They departed as teenagers or young illiterate men. In many cases they were invited to leave by the government which counted on immigrant remittances to balance the Italian budget. What could be passed along was not towering national heritage, but the simple ways of rural towns and provinces. It was as if American culture were presented to the world by way of *The Beverly Hillbillies* reruns or millions of high school drop-outs. Yet, this distinction was often incomprehensible to Italian-Americans themselves. When, for instance, an immigrant's grandchildren were told that *nonno's* village lacked indoor plumbing, it meant that Italy lacked indoor plumbing.

There was no recounting of Garibaldi's heroic exploits or the Roman Empire, but everyone knew how Zi'Angela stomped grapes with her feet or how delicious the figs were. The fruits of this foggy, cultural legacy remain with us today, as evidenced by the millions who hold the unshakeable belief that "goomba" and "pastafazool" are proper Italian words. One of us recalls an incident from the late 1950's when a second-generation uncle, a longshoreman, announced to the family that his work gang on the pier couldn't think of the Italian word for "plumber." The gang concluded that there was no such word, further evidencing that their forefathers were unfamiliar with the trade or the concept. That the ancient Italians developed plumbing, hydraulics, and water treatment was unknown to the old gang down on the docks. Anecdote served as history. (By the way, the word for plumber was and is *idraulico*.)

Unlike many other immigrant masses, Italians were not accompanied to this country by their intellectuals, clergy, or bankers, nor did they speak English. Groups that escaped Europe for religious or political reasons like the Jews and Germans possessed the elite to preserve the higher end of their cultures. It is only because of the humiliation of two world wars that German-Americans are not the ethnic leaders of this nation. The fact is, despite the wars more German-Americans claim a hyphenated heritage than even the Irish or Anglos. Even the Greeks and the Irish had their own religions and clergy to guide them. Italians were at the whim of Irish clergy and had to bend or fall back on their own meager resources. •

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### Millennium

It wasn't until Mussolini that a sense of national (as opposed to regional) pride took hold. His sensitivity to international image and his willingness to spend money on overseas Italians (colonies as he called them) began a new chapter in Italian-American history. For example, *la Casa Italiana* at Columbia University in New York was established with his funding. While constantly reminding them of Italy's glorious past, he strove to prove that the old Italy was a thing of the past. In aviation, sports, hydro-electric technology, public works, and engineering, the new Italy was an inspiration during the 1920's and 1930's. However, the Fascist success in suppressing the mafia

brought to America that criminal scourge. Some five hundred hard-core criminals escaped Italian justice during these years including Carlo Gambino, Joe Bonanno, Joe Masseria, and Joe Profaci. Mussolini's

*It was as if American culture were presented to the world by ... millions of high school drop-outs.*

prefect in Sicily, Cesare Mori, had dealt such a fatal blow to these gangs that once in America they feared government and created an informal "commission" to keep in touch with each others' activities. This has come into Italian-American culture as

a media albatross.

Italy's defeat in the Second War World left Italian-American culture vulnerable to the immigrant mentality once again. Nevertheless, there was a general resurgence of pride, although not as deep as before, that carried us into the early 1970's. The new Italian Republic was an economic miracle. Second generation adults could now see the wonders of Italy firsthand. Italian-American talent was bursting forth in every field. But that revived spirit was ignominiously destroyed with the assassination of controversial figure Joe Colombo (Italian Civil Rights League) and the premiere of *Godfather I*.

End of Part 2  
Part 3 begins on page 21



# The Battle of the Piave

## The 80th Anniversary

by Alfred Cardone

When Italy entered World War I, on the allied side, the forces of the Austrian-Hungarian Empire were well entrenched along the Alpine front in mountains dotted with natural caves. The Russians had just suffered serious defeats, enabling the Austrians to focus more attention on the Italian Front. For over two years, Italy fought alone in the harsh conditions of the Alps holding the armies of the Austrian Empire in check. Between May 1915 and October 1917, the Italians launched eleven costly offensives against the entrenched Austrians along the line of the Isonzo River. Although the Italian capture of Gorizia in 1916 was one of the only Allied land victories of that terrible year, the offensives along the Isonzo did not achieve a strategic breakthrough. More than 115,000 Italian and 90,000 Austrian troops were killed in these fierce battles.

During the last half of 1917, with twenty-three of Italy's sixty-nine provinces already subject to martial law under General Luigi Cadorna's jurisdiction, Austria's forces were reinforced by carefully selected German shock troops in preparation for a major offensive against the Italians. Using unorthodox tactics of deep penetration, this massive



General Armando Diaz

attack succeeded in inflicting upon Italy the defeat of Caporetto on October 24, 1917, in which 10,000 Italians were killed, 30,000 wounded and 293,000 taken prisoner. Hundreds of thousands of Italian troops were forced to fall back a hundred miles, abandoning both Gorizia and the Karst Plateau to the advancing Austrians, Hungarians, and Germans. Italy faced its darkest hour, and it was feared that this defeat could turn into national disintegration. North

Italy was exposed to invasion from the Julian Alps to the Adriatic Sea, and the potential collapse of national morale threatened. Sadly, the defeat at Caporetto is the only aspect of Italy's participation in World War I familiar to the English-speaking world, probably due to Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms* and countless history books of questionable accuracy and objectiveness.

THE WAR IN ITALY 1915-1918



Instead, with a mighty force of national will, the retreat was halted before it became an irreversible rout. The national police (*Carabinieri*) were ordered to shoot deserters and many units were decimated in order to restore discipline. The Italian army's rapid recovery illustrated the admirable fighting quality of the nation. General Cadorna was replaced by General Armando Diaz. Battle-fatigued units were rotated off line and a more liberal leave policy was instituted. Mountain defenses were strengthened with extensive construction in the Monte Grappa and Monte Pasubio areas. Field hospitals were installed, and a supply road seventeen kilometers long was built climbing 8,000 feet from the plain below. The Venetian Plain was fortified by the construction of five successive defensive lines, the first of which was along the Piave River. Italian industry made every effort to increase its output of war material, and the civilian population made do with meager provisions so that the army could be supplied. There was hardly an Italian city outside the war zone that had more than a fortnight's supply. Civil liberties were curtailed as anti-war Socialists were suppressed and defeatists arrested. Strict censorship converted Italy into a near-totalitarian state. The whole nation braced itself for the deadly enemy offensive which it knew would come in the spring. The Italian Army's battlecry along the defensive line of the Piave became "*Di qui non si passa!*" (Here, but no further!) For the *London Times* correspondent, Sir William McClure, the stand at the Piave was "an astonishing achievement."

In response to Italy's request for fifteen divisions in a meeting on November 6th and 7th, the Allies promised five British and five French divisions from the Western Front. (It must be noted that four Italian divisions were fighting in France and other forces in the Balkans in support of the French and British. These were not recalled to Italy.) Those who would unfairly disparage Italy's armed forces should note well that Italy was to stem the tide of the Austrian and German advance on the Piave River before a single British or French soldier had reached the Italian Front. The Allied forces were held in reserve behind the Mincio River, which the British and the French regarded as more defensible than the Piave. According to Marshal Foch, the French had been sent to protect France's southern flank in the Western Alps, not to strengthen the Italian position on the Piave. In fact, as the winter wore on without any significant military activity, four French and two British



## *The Battle of the Piave*

divisions left Italy and returned to France. The Americans sent only one regiment for moral support. As President Wilson explained, any increase in the American commitment required approval by Foch, the Supreme Commander. Predictably, no further aid arrived, as vast American forces poured into France to bolster the Western Front. This contrasts with the fact that during the war six German divisions served in Italy. Numbering among the German forces was a young officer named Rommel. Italy would face its moment of supreme national crisis alone, as the Allies waited to see if the Italian Army could recover its morale and stand fast.

Italy refused peace initiatives from the Vatican and Lloyd George of Britain at this moment of supreme crisis, determined to pursue the war to victory. The United States, fearing an Italian collapse, even joined Britain in pressuring Italy to scale back its war aims and make peace. Austria's tempting offer to guarantee Italian territory as it was before the war was, however, rebuffed by Italy despite Caporetto. Foreign Minister Sonnino remained steadfast and refused to make any concessions to the enemy. Britain turned pessimistic at the prospect of facing an even greater German threat with Russia forced out of the war (a result of the Communist Revolution), prompting Lloyd George to consider a separate peace with not only Austria, but with Germany itself.

The Italian Supreme Command had full knowledge of a major attack which was expected in May or June 1918. General Diaz had fifty-six divisions deployed along the Piave

front from Monte Grappa to the Adriatic Sea including a small number of British and French troops facing seventy-two enemy divisions. The Austrians planned to push down from the mountains onto the plain, cutting communications lines and turning the Italian flank at Monte Grappa. The offensive began on June 15th as great masses of Austrians crossed the Piave with desperate impetus at Santa Dona di Piave near the coast, at Fagare opposite Treviso, and at Nervessa under the withering fire of the

*The national police  
(CARABINIERI) WERE ORDERED  
TO SHOOT DESERTERS AND  
MANY UNITS WERE DECIMATED  
IN ORDER TO RESTORE  
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Italian artillery. The Austrians also gained a footing on the strategic ridge of the Montello, which is about seven hundred feet high and over seven miles long.

On June 18th, the Italians launched their main counter-offensive. The Italian Eighth Army advanced against the Austrian Sixth Army. To the south, the Italian Third Army, commanded by the Duke of Aosta, broke through the Austrian center between Fagare and Candelu, occupying the bank of the Piave at Saletto. Under the pressure of a massive Italian attack, the Austrian forces on the commanding heights of the Montello were slowly pressed back. Realizing that the tide of battle had turned, Austria's Marshal Boroevitch

ordered a retreat on June 19th. The entire strategic ridge of the Montello was again in Italian hands by June 23rd, and it became clear that the Austrian offensive had failed. The Italians had rallied with such sudden force, hurling the Austrians back across the Piave River along the entire defensive line.

The heroic Italian stand and dramatic counter-offensive at the Piave forced the enemy to fall back in disorder from the left bank of the river with immense losses. In a communique dated June 27, 1918, General Diaz proclaimed: "From the Montello to the sea, the enemy defeated and hard pressed by our brave troops, is recrossing the Piave in disorder." This ended Austria's hope of victory. The Battle of the Piave had cost them 25,000 prisoners, about 100 guns and 150,000 casualties. Caporetto had been avenged! The victory of the Piave signaled the recovery of Italy. After years of suffering and tenacious effort, the heroism of the army and the self-sacrifice of the nation was rewarded. Later in 1918, Italy was to resume the offensive, culminating in their spectacular victory at the Battle of Vittorio Veneto from October 24th through November 4th. The Italian Army stormed the enemy's heavily fortified position on Monte Grappa and overran the Austro-Hungarian defenses, resulting in the complete annihilation of Austria's army. Austria was forced to surrender with half a million Austro-Hungarian and German prisoners and over 5,000 guns in Italian hands at the time of the Armistice. Italy had secured a great victory thanks to the heroism of its armies, and the threat of invasion from across the Alps had been decisively eliminated, fulfilling the dreams of Italian patriots from the days of the *Risorgimento*.

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## Part 3

# Where Do We Go From Here?

### Acknowledge the problem

Clearly, most Italian-Americans do not recognize the importance of heritage. Being Italic, from their perspective, is not much different than being, say, Catholic or caucasian. It's what you are but not who you are. Intermarriage and the gradual loss of ethnicity are seen as the normal path of Americanization. Stereotypes in the media are not considered a real problem because they bear no resemblance to "assimilated Italians," rather, movie characters mimic only the "old neighborhood types." Italy, the ancestral homeland, is considered less an inspiration than an abstract immigrant memory or as a tourist destination. In short, many people can take or leave their heritage.

In the case of those who recognize the loss of Italian-ness or the defamation in the media but feel powerless to reverse it, it becomes more difficult to shrug off the problem. Often, the fight versus flight dilemma is resolved by saying "Hey, it doesn't bother me." To assuage their own guilt they even go out of their way to deny a problem exists — writing letters or calling talk shows to counter the "whiners" who embarrass them by spotlighting the problems.

It is safe to say that upwards of 90% of Italian-Americans act out the above-mentioned attitudes, which partly explains why things have deteriorated to this point. For those who attempt to preserve and defend, it is an uphill battle merely to convince the other 90% to join their efforts or to not interfere in the anti-defamation work.

So why isn't the majority right?

Looking around and seeing thousands of Italian-American politicians, executives, and entrepreneurs may assure us that preserving and defending the heritage is not really necessary. We have not done badly by the American system. But have we succeeded because the system is user friendly? America did not ameliorate our immigrant poverty through affirmative action, civil service jobs or corporate networks. Rather, our path was backbreaking construction and agricultural work and the exploitation of Italian food with the opening of pizzerias, delis, restaurants and the importing of foodstuffs. In our case our ancestral values, strong extended families, an amazing diversity of talent, physical labor, risk-taking, high savings rates, voting majorities, and family businesses may have had more to do with our economic success than a kind and gentle America. If that is the case than we must be careful not to give up these values too readily. Should we be willing to lose a value system that has survived 3,000 years? Can anyone make it in America without a strong value system? What "American" values are presented to us as an alternative?

Years ago our diet was condemned by Americans. We drank too much wine, ate too much garlic, and used too much olive oil. Now, doctors praise us for it. On the other hand, today, the southern Italian family is deemed "amoral" for its "clannishness," yet we are fed a steady diet on the acceptability of single parenthood, the born-again doctrine, the nuclear family and gender bending. Of course, there are some Italic traits we can do without, for example, the ones that see life as a purely economic venture or ones that view political involvement as pointless. These are remnants of the immigrant mentality. We must, therefore, acknowledge our strong points, the ones worth saving, and the bad points, the ones that have stymied our ethnic growth.

Then there is the question of role-models. Assuming we have done well by the economic system, could we do even better with a positive heritage? Could our children aspire to even greater heights if the media treated our heritage as a cornerstone of Western Civilization and less like an Olive Garden commercial or mobster farm?

Are we being distracted from the richness of our heritage by distilling it down to an immigrant experience and a romantic notion of poverty in the old country? What happened to Roman government and law, Renaissance questioning, and Italic social justice? Our forefathers touched on every problem of earthly and heavenly dimension. Have we fully explored our own vast wealth of knowledge and experience before we embrace the superficiality of the newest, improved American dream?

### Go back to basics

The way we of the second or third generations learned to be Americans is the same method that must be used to rediscover our heritage. We began as youngsters enrolled in the American school system and subjected to the repetitive and positive view of America. Everything from the Pledge of Allegiance to buzz words like "the Founding Fathers," "liberty for all," "home of the brave," "the American dream," "the System works," "my country right or wrong," etc. surrounded our lives and reinforced the belief that America is the center of the universe and can do no wrong.

Clearly, we do not want to become Italians or become ethnic fanatics but in order to deepen our appreciation of the Italian heritage we need to begin with Italian-American children. We need to expose these young minds to the diversity of *italianità*. Right now, the only values that are unconsciously passed on are concepts like "the family first," "it's who you know," "*mangia!*" "we are lovers, not fighters." These sorts of attributes, while well-meaning, prob-

Continued on page 27



# Italian-Americans In Jazz

## Part Two: The Second Line

by William Dal Cerro and David Anthony Witter

**A**fter its birth in New Orleans with Dixieland and the heyday of the big bands, jazz took a decidedly different turn after World War II. Even during the war, there were signs that this new music would eventually branch off into new directions. In 1940, for example, Johnny Guarneri, the pianist for Artie Shaw's Gramercy Five Band, introduced the harpsichord into the jazz ensemble, a definite break with tradition. Accepted musical styles continued to fall with the emergence of such new styles as be-bop, cool jazz, and avant-garde recordings.

There were numerous reasons for this shift: the advent of the Cold War, which dampened America's post-war exuberance (and which sowed the seeds for the social unrest represented by such movements as beat poetry and rock-'n'-roll); the burgeoning self-confidence of second-generation Italian Americans, who now comfortably viewed themselves as part of the mainstream; and the natural development of improved musical technology, which allowed for greater freedom and experimentation.

As jazz changed and progressed, so did the Italian Americans who influenced it. Artists like Buddy De Franco, Louis Bellson and Joe Venuti left the big bands to become consummate small-combo musicians, playing with the likes of Ella Fitzgerald, Dizzy Gillespie, Stan Getz, et al. Dodo Marmarosa joined Charlie Parker during the early days of be-bop, becoming one of its acknowledged leaders.

Yet unlike the first wave of Italian American musicians, who used the free-form music as a means of releasing the pent-up frustrations in adapting to a new country, this new group was composed largely of second generation immigrants. Often born, raised, and schooled in the United States, they had many educational advantages that the first group did not have. Lacking the fire and performance flash of a Louis Prima, Winky Manone, or Nick La Rocca, they took a calmer, more intellectual approach to the music. Instead of being creative on stage, their brilliance often occurred behind the scenes through composition and arrangements.

In jazz lingo, the phrase "second line" refers to the parade of revelers who dance merrily behind the band in a funeral procession. Applying that same ecstatic-yet-sober attitude to post-war America, Italian Americans had their own "second line" of jazz greats who revitalized the conventions of their art in serious, original ways. A particularly notable Roman triumvirate includes:

**Lennie Tristano**—(1919-1978) This Chicago-born piano virtuoso lost his sight at an early age but opened the eyes of his contemporaries with his audacious, experimental jazz improvisations. Tristano's free-form jazz either baffled people or, like the Europeans, inspired them. Though his pieces were considered "cold," Tristano was anything but,

directly influencing (as a musician and teacher) such jazz greats as Miles Davis, Lee Konitz, Billy Bauer, Wayne Marsh, McCoy Tyner, and Cecil Taylor. Many avant-garde pianists owe a great debt to Tristano's ground-breaking work.

**Scott (Rocco) La Faro**—(1936-1961) A Newark, New Jersey native, La Faro's brilliant bass playing opened the door for a new generation of "superstar" bassists such as Jaco Pastorius. He played and recorded with the giants of cool and modern jazz (Chet Baker, Ornette Coleman, Stan Getz) and his work with master composer Bill Evans was an enormous influence on Miles Davis' bass driven, modal style. Unfortunately, this young genius died in a car wreck at the age of twenty-five. Had he survived, he would truly be recognized as one of the giants of modern jazz.

**Charlie Mariano**—(born Carmine Ugo, 1923— ) A trumpeter from Boston, Mariano joined drummer Shelly Mann to form one of the pioneer bands in "West Coast" jazz in the late 1950's and also accompanied Charlie Mingus on "Black Saint and Sinner Lady" and "Mingus, Mingus, Mingus," two essential works in the Mingus canon. A natural prodigy like Adrian Rollini, Mariano teaches and performs around the world and has always been at the forefront in promoting the latest developments in jazz styles.

Like the musicians listed above, other second generation jazz artists began making their mark directly after the war, adding unique Italian "spice" to the cozy blandness of the Eisenhower years. Paterson, New Jersey guitarist Bucky Pizzarelli (*photo right*) established a name for himself while also backing up such legends as





## Italian-Americans In Jazz

Benny Goodman. The brassy saxophone sound of Vido Musso, an immigrant from Carrini, Sicily, was quickly adopted by the new rock-'n'-rollers. Detroit trombonist Frank Rosalino played with the Gene Krupa and Stan Kenton bands.

Pete and Conte Condoli from Mishawaka, Indiana, were the star trumpet soloists for the Woody Herman Band and displayed their talents in the 1959 film *Bell, Book, and Candle* with Jack Lemmon and Kim Novak. In the same year, Pete La Roca became the first drummer to record a completely free-tempo drum solo before retiring to become a full-time lawyer in New York. Pete Rugolo, an arranger with Stan Kenton's band, is credited with discovering trumpeter Maynard Ferguson at a jazz club in Montreal. Rugolo also happened to be a close friend of the late film composer Henry Mancini (see *ITALIC WAY*, issue XXII), whose jazz-influenced score for the popular television series *Peter Gunn* gave mainstream America its first exposure to this catchy, exotic music.

In the 1960's, when Las Vegas became America's most popular vacation spot thanks to Frank Sinatra and his Rat Pack., Tony Pastor (born Antonio Pestritto in Middletown, Massachusetts) was already an established headliner, performing in a jazz group with his sons Guy, John, and Tony Jr. The Vince Guaraldi trio of San Francisco provided the snappy theme music for Charles Schultz's "Peanuts" characters as they made their way from the funny pages to television and film. Philadelphia guitarist Pat Martino added the Eastern sitar influences of the period to his already acclaimed string work.

In the Disco Decade, Italian Americans brought much more to the music of the era than the image of John Travolta in a flashy white suit. Francis Ford Coppola's artfully slanderous *Godfather* films (1972-74) did introduce audiences to an authentic Italian heroine: jazz singer Morgana King, who, as the fictional Mama Corleone, belts out *C'è la luna* in her robust, lilting voice. New York guitarist and sax player Pat La Barbara hit his stride, touring with his brothers John (trumpet) and Joe (drums). In the Midwest, cutting-edge Ohio saxophonist Joe Lovano cut his eye teeth.

The 1980's and 1990's have yielded an interesting array of fresh young talent: John Pizzarelli (*photo right*), son of Bucky yet a distinguished guitar player and ballad singer in his own right; Chicago songstress Joannie Pallatto, setting the standard for Italian American women; and East Coast piano sensation Sergio Salvatore, who has been wowing audiences for years—all before his fifteenth birthday!

Today's jazz musicians have easily transcended the "ethnic" label



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## Italian-Americans In Jazz

often used to disparage Italic achievements past and present. Indeed, modern Italic artists are such an integral part of the American fabric that their influences range the entire gamut from cult following to mainstream success. The following players demonstrate this point:

**Al Di Meola**—(1954- ) One of the greatest innovators of the jazz fusion movement, Di Meola, from Bergenfield, New Jersey, has played with Chick Corea and recorded over a dozen albums on Columbia Records. Although virtually unknown to the general public, Di Meola is regarded by his peers as one of the premier virtuoso jazz guitarists in the world.

**Chuck Mangione**—(1940- ) (*photo right*) This trumpet player from Rochester, New York, is well-known to the general public thanks to his Grammy winning, smooth jazz hit *Feels So Good*. Before that, Mangione's impressive list of credits included stints with Woody Herman (big band), Maynard Ferguson (fusion), and Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers (small band).



**William Russo**—( 1928- ) A protege of Lennie Tristano, Russo gained fame as the chief composer and arranger for Stan Kenton's Orchestra and also composed a symphony for Leonard Bernstein and the New York Philharmonic. He currently heads the Chicago Jazz Ensemble, a large-scale jazz orchestra that he created in the nineteen fifties which continues to play new and classical jazz pieces.

It should also be noted that for every well-known Italic jazz musician, there are probably four or five who have permanently slipped through the cracks of American history. This is due, oddly enough, to the much-vaunted Italian institution of family. The strong bonds of loyalty which many Italians felt toward their families, even to the neighborhoods where they grew up, prevented many of them from embarking on the rootless, often lonely existence of a professional jazz musician.

A modern example of this is Chicago saxophonist Richard Corporongo. A college classmate and bandmate of Herbie Hancock in the 1960's, Corporongo declined an invitation to tour with the future jazz legend's first band in order to take care of his invalid mother. After three decades of supplying theme music for television commercials, Corporongo finally returned to the jazz world in the 1990's.

After playing a jazz concert in Milan, Louis Armstrong explained why the Europeans treated American jazz with the same reverence afforded a Verdi or Puccini. "The Europeans figure our music's the same," Armstrong said. "We play them both from the heart." Once again, the great Satchmo hit the sweet note of truth: Italians bring passion to whatever they do, be it art, food, business, or music—and especially, all that jazz.

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# Calligraphy

## Perfected then Neglected by the Italians

by William A. Bostick

**T**homas Carlyle, the great 19th century Scot essayist, said irrefutably, "Certainly the Art of Writing is the most miraculous of all things man has devised."

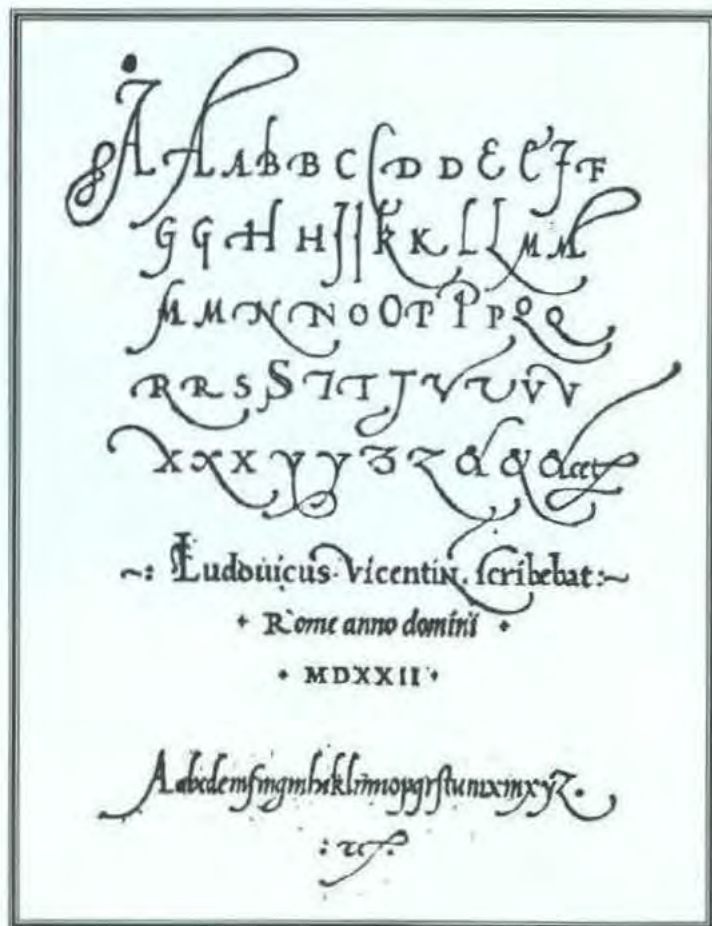
For twenty-seven centuries the inventive inhabitants of the Italian peninsula innovated styles which have become milestones in art history: Etruscan, Roman, Renaissance, Baroque and Futurist. A parallel accomplishment in the visual arts is the Italian genius for taking other civilizations' ideas and adapting them with the singular Italian eye for beauty and proportion. The written word was among these.

No Italic civilization invented writing. Its genesis is buried in the pre-history antecedents of hieroglyphic and cuneiform writing over six millennia ago. But the Romans did give us the most enduring and beautiful of alphabets. Rome's alphabet ranks close to the Art of Writing itself in historical impact.

*To the Roman eye there was something too angular with some of the Greek letters; the angles were converted into soft curves such as (delta) becoming D*

Rome's writing, like its architecture, was adapted. Roman reverence for Greek letters was not as faithful as its devotion to the preservation of classic columns. The Greeks had derived their alphabet from the Phoenicians, who are generally given credit for the revolutionary idea of having a symbol stand for a single sound rather than a whole word. The Greeks introduced vowels into the Semitic alphabet of the Phoenicians and began left-to-right reading around the 5th century B.C., as opposed to the opposite method still followed by Semitic peoples. The Greek alphabet and reading direction filtered into Rome via the Etruscans well before the Latins starting conquering the Greeks in the second century B.C. The Greeks also gave Latin and its progeny the roots for the word calligraphy - *kalli* (beautiful) and *graphia* (writing).

To the Roman eye there was something too angular with some of the Greek letters; the angles were converted into soft curves such as (delta) becoming D and (sigma) filling out to S. The Romans took directly 13 of the 24 Greek letters, remodeled and refinished eight others, revived two others which the Greeks had discarded and gave the western world a 23-letter alphabet with J, U and W to be born in



the intervening centuries.

Gradually the speeding up of writing caused certain letters to ascend and descend from the uniform height of the capitals.

The writing of the later Romans and the Irish monks hastened the divorce of majuscules (upper case) and minuscules (lower case), but the real separation came during the reign of the Germanic Charlemagne, crowned Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire (which we know was neither Holy nor Roman) in 800 A.D. He was a great patron of the arts, and in his *scriptoria* (medieval copying rooms) at Aachen in Germany and Tours in the French Loire Valley he sponsored the



## Calligraphy

recopying of many classic Greek and Latin texts.

At Tours, the scribes, directed by the scholarly abbot Alcuin of York, developed a true miniscule together with such innovations as paragraphing and punctuation. This clear and beautiful Roman hand perpetuated its patron's name, the Carolingian Miniscule.

Early in the 15th century the outstanding Florentine manuscript scholar Niccolò Niccoli established a style of writing based on the Carolingian miniscule. The clear and beautiful script gained such acceptance that during the pontificate of Eugenius IV (1431-1447) it was declared the official hand for Papal briefs and bulls (edicts). Since these were preserved in the chancery office of the church, the writing came to be known as the Chancery Cursive or *Cancellarescha Corsiva*. Its beauty and clarity suited the desire of Renaissance Popes to have their edicts clearly understood and aesthetically appreciated.

Chancery also became the handwriting of literate and famous people who were not professional scribes — Michelangelo, Cellini, Raphael, Elizabeth I, Lady Jane Grey, to name only a few. And it was Ludovico degli Arrighi who published an instructional book on this style in 1522 called *La Operina* (The Little Work). It is generally considered the most important guide to italic calligraphy.

The writing tool was usually the quill of a large bird such as a goose or crow, cut with a stub point slit for a short distance to permit the ink to flow onto the vellum. In all of the principal western European languages except English, pen and feather are the same word. Our pen comes from the Latin *penna* — feather.

Today, the tool has changed from Arrighi's quill to the stub-pointed fountain pen, although purists such as Donald Jackson, the current Queen Elizabeth's calligrapher, continue to favor their own hand-cut quills. Jackson in 1981 authored a handsome and informative book, *The Story of Writing* (Taplinger, NY). Until a few years ago most of the calligraphic fountain pens were two British makes — Osmiroid and Platignum with interchangeable nibs in seven different widths. But now American pen companies

are becoming increasingly involved with Sheaffer and others producing models to meet the increasing demand. Cartridge pens, which eliminate squeeze-bulb filling, are proliferating as are chisel-point felt-tip markers in a rainbow of colors. Availability of pens has spread from art supply stores to drug-stores and discount outlets as well. Calligraphy kits with instructions rather deceptively promise proficiency after only a short amount of practice. Despite a wide variety of styles which the budding calligrapher can put under his hand, the fundamental and most important is the Chancery Cursive, the fine Italian hand. And it is the only current calligraphic style which is really adaptable to handwriting — the others are actually lettering with no connections between the letters, except for Copperplate.

*describing my two latest manuals. I hope you don't mind. My thought was that some of your readers would like to take up the fine Italian hand and would appreciate knowing where and how they could acquire instructional material. I enclose a*

### A sample of the author's fine italic hand.

In 1977 La Stampa Calligrafica first published my calligraphy guide entitled *A Manual on the Acquiring of a Beautiful and Legible Handwriting*. I have used it and its experimental predecessors to teach over 1,000 students. The two editions of the manual since 1977 have been sold to another 4,000 budding calligraphers for self-teaching, and 32 calligraphy teachers in the U.S. and Canada have used it for classroom instruction to another 2,500 students. The method it teaches seems to be effective. Basically it is copying sample calligraphy line for line to achieve slant, letter connections, spacing and the elusive "thicksies" and "thinsies." There are no lengthy exercises in making individual letters; the student starts making words immediately. The manual was designed so that any blank page with light blue guidelines could be opened opposite any sample calligraphy page. For classroom instruction, the manual was covered in eight two-hour sessions. The conquering of a passable Chancery in this period by a considerable percentage of students was very gratifying. This manual went out of print in the mid 80's, but I have published two more which are still in print: *Calligraphy for Kids* (\$9.95) and *Back to the*

*Second Basic R* — 'Ritin' (\$8.97). They are available from La Stampa Calligrafica, Box 209, Franklin, MI 48025, postpaid. To date, over 12,000 of the three manuals have been sold to budding calligraphers desirous of learning the beautiful and legible handwriting of the Italian Renaissance.

One discouraging note is that few Italians, to my knowledge, write this way any more, except if they have taken a calligraphy course. A number of students in my classes with Italian heritage have spoken the language but none has brought a knowledge of Italian calligraphy to class. I have examined an autograph book of an American friend of Italian descent. The signatures extend over a period of 60 years. Many of them are of Italians, including such notables as composer Ottorino Respighi. Not one was in the *cinquecento* (1500's) hand. Many were nearly illegible.

As Arrighi gazes down at earth from his scribal desk in the celestial curia, he may be disheartened by his countrymen's neglect of what he left them. But he should be encouraged that in the lands of the Anglo-Saxons his legacy is alive and growing. His wish that posterity would also benefit — *ma delli posteri ancora* — has come true. He should be *molto fiero della sua Operina* (very proud of his little work!)

\* \* \* \* \*

[For 30 years, before his retirement in 1976, William A. Bostick was the Secretary and Administrator of the Detroit Institute of Arts and did all of the museum's calligraphy in addition to his administrative duties. Evenings and weekends he taught calligraphy and prepared his calligraphy manuals. In 1969 the President of Italy awarded him the rank of Cavaliere in the order of Stella della Solidarietà Italiana for his promotion of Italian culture. As far as he knows, Mr. Bostick has no Italian blood in his veins, but he does speak a fair Italian and he was born in the little Illinois town of Marengo, named after Napoleon's famous battle in northern Italy.]

\* \* \* \* \*

[ed. Special thanks must be given to Ms. Kate Gladstone of Albany, New York for bringing the subject of calligraphy to our attention.]



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### Millennium

*Continued from page 21*

ably will not survive a couple of generations of intermarriage. Instead, we should be inculcating the basic values that made Italy great. The Romans taught their children the virtues of discipline, frugality, dignity, and industry. Our Renaissance teachers taught us experimentation, inquiry, and ingenuity. You can see these traits today in the various parts of Italic society: from the dignity and discipline of the Church (ancient Rome's direct heir) to the sheer genius of Italians through the ages.

We need to reestablish our connection with Classical Italy, where the roots of our nationalism, literature, music, sports, arts, technology, and law had their start. Those who would lead us need to be grounded in classical Italian writers like Cicero (law and moral essays), Martial and Juvenal (masters of satire), Livy and Tacitus (historians) as well as Seneca, Marcus Aurelius, Vergil and the scores of other great authors of our Golden Age.

Trashing our classical heritage and labelling it irrelevant, despite it being the

cornerstone of everyone else's culture, is the height of ingratitude. It is more indicative of laziness than scholarly opinion. One of the very few Italian-Americans who grasped this basic concept of knowing your ancient roots was former Yale President and Baseball Commissioner A. Barlett Giampatti. We need more Giampattis and less Puzos.

To reinforce these newly rediscovered values we need to spread them to the media through novels, feature films, and television. We need more Frank Capras and less Franky Coppolas. Italian-American characters need to reflect the virtues of real-life *paesani*: LaGuardia, Cabrini, Montessori, Sirica, Giannini, Tonti, Mazzei, et al. We can only hope that years of Italian-American anti-defamation activities may pay off. Danny Aiello's *Last Don* is now followed by private investigator *Dellaventura*. But many more conversions are needed just to equal what we had in the 1960's.

And of course every Italian-American, or part thereof, needs an introduction to the Latin and Italian languages as well as frequent trips to the ancestral homeland. The trip alone is worth the price of an education.

Finally, this is not a fight that we can win alone. There needs to be real leadership and cooperation at high levels. That means the major organizations, the Italian government, and our political leaders need to apply themselves to a new course of action. Political leaders cannot merely assume that their main function is to be role models. In today's world, regarding any politician, that has a negative connotation. Rather, if politicians bear any sense of community they need to step up to the plate and help us using their bully pulpits to berate the media, their votes to support our cultural needs, and their influence to confirm Italy's place as an equal partner with the U.S.

The long and the short of it is we need to learn from the other ethnics to take the long view. Being earthy and priding ourselves on immigrant roots in the next millennium may win us a place beside the dinosaur but it is not the stuff of survival.

In short, we needn't feel uptight about advocating our heritage in public. It should be openly voiced with the same sense of pride as that of our fellow ethnics. After all, it's the American way.

End





This 1948 scale model of a Burnelli jet fighter incorporates a lifting fuselage, presaging fighter jet designs now a quarter century in use.

## Part 2: Saga of the Lifting Body/Flying Wing

by Ed Cantilli

**T**he concept of the "lifting fuselage" or "blended wing" sometimes called a "flying wing" was developed first by Vincent Justus Burnelli, a Texan, who began designing and building airplanes when he was still a teenager (he was eight years old when he heard about the Wright Brothers' first flight).



Burnelli's 1921 RB-1 was the first "lifting-body" aircraft reduced to practice.

He applied for his first lifting-body patent January 6, 1921, and finally received it on May 13, 1930. His last lifting-body patents were granted in the mid-1960s. During those decades, his designs, based on sound principles, developed into configurations that look very much like those currently being announced by McDonald Douglas, Aerospatiale of France and Airbus of Europe for 500-passenger jetliners.

Even before Burnelli died, design concepts that appear to resemble some of his own kept coming back in proposed and actual military and civilian airplanes. Consider not only the proposed blended-wing jetliners, but the space shuttle, Stealth bombers and the variety of fighter aircraft with lifting-fuselage surfaces that blend into the wing structures.

His first such plane was built in 1921, and his last, of nine, in 1946. Every one of them was based on his original concept: turn the fuselage into an airfoil that contributes significant lift, and you have a plane that, in fact, is less expensive to build, structurally stronger, has greater capacity in terms of floor space and payload and is safer. The increased lift translated to lower wing loadings, and therefore lower takeoff and landing speeds, which offered a lower probability of mishap. The lifting-fuselage structure formed a protective cage around passengers and cargo, offering greater protection in the event of a crash.

Throughout the 1920s and '30s, Burnelli was considered to have the answer to powered flight. He was regularly in the news showing off his new designs. Famous aviators of the time, such as Jimmy Doolittle and Clyde Pangborn, were his test pilots. His fervent admirers included Gen. Billy Mitchell and, later, Generals "Hap" Arnold and Carl Spaatz of World War II fame.

### Political Disfavor

It seemed natural that Burnelli would be among those chosen to build the warplanes needed for the defense build-up in the years before Pearl Harbor and then for the sudden war effort. In September 1939, Gen.

"Hap" Arnold, Chief of the Army Air Corps, made an impassioned plea to his boss, the Secretary of War, that concluded: "In my opinion, it is essential, in the interest of national defense, that this procurement [for Burnelli aircraft] be authorized." Yet, after Burnelli's design had won three Army competitions for warplanes, the Burnelli procurement, which might have changed aviation history, was not to be.

A secret September 1941 Army Air Corps panel, after contradicting all of the positive statements the Corps (and NACA) had made previously, recommended that "the Air Corps inform both the Central Aircraft Corporation and V.J. Burnelli Airplanes, Inc., and any other concern which may later possibly become interested in the Burnelli 'lifting fuselage,' that this design is of no interest to the Air Corps, and that for this reason no further correspondence, consultations, or reviewing of data embodying this design will ever again be considered by the Air Corps or the Materiel Division."

What happened between September 1930 and September 1941 to turn Burnelli from favorite into pariah? Burnelli chief engineer Charles Mullen described Burnelli's meeting with President Roosevelt at which FDR was to sign a directive for the procurement of Burnelli planes. When Roosevelt heard that Burnelli's financial backer was one Arthur Pew of Sun Oil Co., he was said to have thrown his pen across the room and ordered Burnelli and his group out, stating that he would do nothing to help that backer of Wendell Willkie's campaign for the Presidency.

In spite of these setbacks, Burnelli continued to demonstrate his product. A British Burnelli, the "Clyde Clipper," was built in 1940 and used throughout World War II by the Free French forces in Africa. The Canadian Car and Foundry Co. was ready to build what they described as a far superior (to conventional bombers) aircraft, the B-1000, but was unable to get military contracts.

In 1943, Gen. Arnold, disturbed by the 1941 secret report, asked Col. Harold Hartney of World War I fame (94th, "Hat-in-Ring" Aero



## Saga

Squadron) to investigate the Burnelli case. Hartney asked Dr. Max Munk to analyze the design concept. He said, "The superior performance of the Burnelli plane is not, in any way, obtained by sacrificing a low landing speed. On the contrary, the Burnelli plane has a lower wing loading and, in consequence, will land much slower than a conventional plane. It is doubtful whether the high landing speed of the conventional plane will make it suitable for commercial operations."

Hartney then reported to Arnold that, "Regarding air safety, wing loading has been going up at such a dangerous rate of late that an effort of some kind must be made to stop it. With increased wing loading, the impact in a crash — from greater speeds — mounts up so rapidly that the chances of passengers surviving diminishes about as the square of the increased pounds-per-square-foot loading, something distressing that few seem to appreciate. I recommend that you direct a memorandum to the joint War Production Committee suggesting that planes of the Burnelli type be put on the integrated program of requirements."

But nothing happened.

In 1946, Canadian Car and Foundry produced Burnelli's CBY-3 "Loadmaster" — his latest plane, which, after considerable interest by TACA (a Central American carrier), was not ordered by airlines, in spite of its advantages. Although its cargo-carrying capacity exceeded that of comparable contemporary designs, it was hard pressed to compete with surplus DC-3s and C-47s then readily available for \$5,000 each. From then until he died in 1964, Burnelli continued to produce, and to patent, concepts culminating in the GB-888A — a supersonic aerospace plane.

### Burnelli's Legacy

Burnelli's airplanes, although workhorses that did the jobs asked of them, were not commercially successful during his lifetime. Some would argue that to have gained acceptance in a conservative industry, a new design would have to have been not only superior, but also so vastly superior as to render competing designs obsolete. Burnelli may have been in a position to do just that. However, if the factories to produce the competing designs are already tooled and amortized, during a war, and decision makers need proven aircraft "now," then you've got an uphill battle. In the absence of political support, the odds became tougher still. Nor has the Burnelli Company been successful in exploiting the numerous patents granted Burnelli, all of which have now expired.

Today, the most assertive Burnelli advocate is Chalmers H. "Slick" Goodlin, Chairman and President of the Burnelli Co. A former Bell Aircraft engineering test pilot, Goodlin piloted the Bell XS-1 aircraft before they were delivered to the U.S. Army Air Corps in June 1947. In Goodlin's opinion, and he is as fearless in expressing his views today as he must have been as a test pilot, nothing less than a conspiracy could have suppressed Burnelli's inventions and technology, which now appear to be reemerging. He has compiled evidence that in the 1940s, Burnelli's designs were rejected despite superior test results vis-a-vis competing designs. Goodlin claims also that, inexplicably, even today, nearly all parties continue to ignore Burnelli's contributions in an unbroken web of silence based on vested interests in existing designs.

Many industry observers take a different view. Some say that Burnelli's lack of commercial success was because airframe companies and aircraft purchasers must have had some legitimate reasons not to accept the concepts Burnelli offered. But what were they?

Having pointed out this now decades-old and ongoing debate, this remains clear: Burnelli focused on the concept of a lifting-body design

Vincent  
Justus  
Burnelli  
in a  
December  
1946  
photo  
from  
Science  
Illustrated.



and kept plugging away at it while others focused on more easily commercialized, though not necessarily better, concepts. Burnelli's lifting-body designs were based on sound principles now finding expression in some of the largest and smallest aircraft on the cutting edge of design. His contributions were many. They include pioneering large transport aircraft, patenting of the first breakaway leading edges, reducing to practice flat-metal stressed-skin construction as well as retractable landing gear on multi-engine aircraft, and other diverse innovations.

At the very least, Burnelli should be recognized as one of the aviation geniuses of the century as well as one of the most tenacious. Few have worked so hard to prove a concept and, of those who have, few have tasted so little commercial success. He had a dream, and what's more, he had his convictions and didn't give up.

But the mystery remains why Burnelli's genius, recognized up until 1939, refuted in 1941 and shunted into the limbo of aviation history even before his death in 1964, is not more widely heralded today. Incredibly, Burnelli seems to have been banished from both aviation history books and textbooks for about half a century. He pioneered the lifting-body concept in nine actual airplanes from 1921 to 1946, and his many great contributions to American aeronautics are referred to in his 1944 Fawcett Aviation Award. Shouldn't Burnelli be recognized as one of the great aviation geniuses of the 20th century? Sometime in coming decades, it is likely that planes employing lifting-body technology wearing airline livery will be commonplace. When that happens, let's hope the name "Vincent Burnelli" is remembered with honor.

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[Edmund J. Cantilli is a member of the Institute and professor of transportation and safety engineering at the Polytechnic Institute of New York and executive director of the nonprofit Institute for Safety in Transportation Inc. of West Hempstead, NY.]

Burnelli's UB-14B  
flies over Newark,  
NJ, in 1935.  
The plane was  
used by TACA to  
transport freight  
between Miami  
and El Salvador  
during WW II.



## Hollywood vs. Italians

Continued from page 11

- Demetrius and the Gladiators—decadent Rome (1954)
- Detective School Drop-out—fake mob characters (1994)
- ♦Destination Tokyo—heroic Italian sergeant (1943)
- Dick Tracy—fake mob character (1990)
- Dillinger and Capone—based on real-life crooks (1973)
- ♦Dominick and Eugene—medical student Ray Liotta takes care of mildly retarded brother Tom Hulce (1988)
- Don Juan DeMarco—schizophrenic seducer (1996)
- Donnie Brasco—based on real-life case (1997)
- Do the Right Thing—racist Italian pizzamaker; based on director Spike Lee's misreading of the Howard Beach incident (1989)
- Down by Law—Italian prisoner/buffoon (1986)
- Duck Soup—Chico Marx/Chicolini (1933)
- Dumb and Dumber—fake mob character (1994)
- Easy Living—prissy Italian hotel manager (1937)
- Easy Money—Rodney Dangerfield as Italian slob (1981)
- Eight Heads in a Duffel Bag—fake mob characters (1997)
- Eraser—fake mob character (1996)
- Excess Baggage—fake mob character (1997)
- Eureka—fake mob character (1995)
- Eyes of an Angel—fake mob character (1994)
- Faithful—fake mob character (1996)
- Family—fake mob characters (1986)
- Family Business—fake mob characters (1989)
- Fast Times at Ridgemont High—buffoon (1982)
- Fatso—Italian slob (1980)
- Federal Hill—fake mob characters (1994)
- Firm—fake mob characters (1993)
- First Wives Club—fake mob character (1997)
- Fisher King—tough broad character nearly redeemed by Mercedes Ruehl's performance (1991)
- E.L.S.T.—based on real-life labor story (1978)
- For Roseanna—fake mob character (1997)
- \*Fort Apache, the Bronx—Ken Wahl as good-guy cop (1981)
- Freebie and the Bean—fake mob character (1974)
- Freshman—Marlon Brando parodies his Vito Corleone character (1990)
- Friends of Eddie Coyle—based on Boston crime gang (1973)
- ♦From Here to Eternity—Sinatra wins an Oscar playing little-guy hero Maggio (1953)
- Fugitive Kind—Marlon Brando impregnates unfilled housewife Anna Magnani (1957)
- Funeral—fake mob characters (1996)
- Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum—burlesque of classical Rome (1966)
- ♦Galileo—Stacey Keach as the Italian astronomer who challenged both Church and State (1973)
- Gambler—fake mob characters (1974)
- Gangsters—fake mob characters (1994)
- Gauntlet—fake mob characters (1977)
- Gang that Couldn't Shoot Straight—criminals/low-lives (1973)
- Getaway—fake mob character (1973)
- George Raft Story—based on actor's life (1961)
- Get Shorty—fake mob characters (1995)
- Ghost—fake mob characters (1990)
- Glengarry Glen Ross—slimy Italian real estate salesman (1992)
- Class Shield—racist Italian cop (1995)
- Gloria—fake mob character (1980)
- Gloria—new version; see above (1997)
- Godfather I—fictional film which officially represents the Italian American immigrant experience (1972)
- Godfather II—same as above (1974)
- Godfather III—same as above (1990)
- ♦Golden Boy—classic tale about young Italian American boy who has to choose between boxing or music as the road to success (1939)
- GoodFellas—based on real-life incidents (1990)
- Goonies—fake mob characters (1985)
- Gotti—based on real-life crook (1997)
- Go West—Chico Marx/Chicolini (1940)
- Grease—Italian greasers in leather jackets (1978)
- Grease II—sequel to above (1982)
- ♦Great Canuso—bio of famed Italian singer (1951)
- Greatest Story Ever Told—decadent Rome (1965)
- Grumpier Old Men—Sophia Loren is in it, but so is her dressed-in-black harridan mother (1994)
- Hangin' with the Homeboys—sarcastic Italian police officer (1991)
- Hard Justice—fake mob characters (1992)
- Harlem Nights—fake mob characters (1989)
- Hiding Out—fake mob characters (1987)
- History of the World, Part One—burlesque of classical Rome (1983)
- Hoffa—based on real-life teamster incidents (1992)
- Honor Thy Father—based on crook Joseph Bonanno (1971)
- Hoodlum—based on Lucky Luciano (1997)
- Horse Feathers—Chico Marx/Chicolini (1932)
- Household Saints—buffoons and religious crackpots (1993)
- House of Strangers—corrupt Italian bankers (1949)
- ♦How to Stuff a Wild Bikini—see Beach Blanket Bingo (1966)
- Husbands—Long Island bores run out on their wives (1971)
- Ice—fake mob character (1994)
- ♦Idolmaker—based on talent agent Bob Marcucci, who managed pop singers Frankie Avalon and Fabian (1980)
- I Love You to Death—Kevin Kline as the cheating Italian husband (1990)
- I'm Not Rappaport—Walter Matthau does a mobster impression (1996)
- Inside Detroit—based on crook Albert Anastasia (1957)
- In the Soup—fake mob character (1994)
- In the Line of Duty: Mob Justice—fake mob characters (1993)
- ♦Italian American—filmmaker Martin Scorsese's documentary about his parents (1974)
- It Happened in Naples—Sophia Loren and city of Naples exploited as tourist objects (1958)
- ♦It's a Wonderful Life—Italian immigrant family is accepted into all-American town (1946)
- J.E.K.—speculation "the Mob did it" (1991)
- Jane Austen's Godfather—spoof of Godfather films (1997)
- Jerky Boys—fake mob characters (1994)
- Jesus Christ Superstar—decadent Rome (1973)
- Jimmy Hollywood—Italian loser (1991)
- Johnny Dangerously—fake mob characters (1984)
- Johnny Roselli Story—based on real-life incidents (1997)
- Jojo Dancer—comedian Richard Pryor's life story, including reference to working for Italian crooks (1986)
- Judge Dredd—Italian villain named Rico (1995)
- ♦Julius Caesar—Hollywood version of Shakespeare's play (1953)
- Juror—fake mob characters (1996)
- Jungle Fever—racist Italians (1991)
- Kansas City—based on real-life incidents (1996)
- ♦Karate Kid—Ralph Macchio becomes karate hero (1984)
- ♦Karate Kid II—sequel to above (1989)
- Key Largo—fake mob characters (1948)
- Killing of a Chinese Bookie—fake mob characters (1973)
- Killing of a Chinese Bookie—(1997 remake)
- King of New York—fake mob characters (1990)
- Kiss Me, Guido—obtruse Brooklyn boy (1997)
- Kiss of Death (old version)—Italian crook turns informer (1948)
- Kiss of Death (new version)—Italian crook AND crooked Italian lawyer (1995)
- Kiss Me Deadly—fake mob character (1955)
- ♦Lady in Cement—Frank Sinatra as detective Tony Rome (1968)
- Lady Mobster—fake mob character (1988)
- ♦Lady in White—Lukas Haas as young Italian American boy caught up in supernatural events (1988)
- Last Action Hero—fake mob chieftain (named Vivaldi) (1993)
- Last Days of Pompeii—gladiator dies when Mt. Vesuvius explodes (1935)
- Last Don—fake mob characters (1997)
- Last Exit to Brooklyn—Burt Young as Italian slob (1989)
- Last Mafia Marriage—based on real-life incidents (1995)
- Last Man Standing—fake mob characters (1996)
- Last Seduction—fake mob character (1994)
- Last Temptation of Christ—pop singer David Bowie as Pontius Pilate (1988)
- Leplee—based on real-life crook (1975)
- Little Caesar—Edward G. Robinson as the archetype for Brando's Don Vito Corleone (1931)
- Living Italian—fake mob character (1994)
- Long Good Friday—fake mob characters (1982)
- Long Goodbye—fake mob character (1974)
- Lords of Flatbush—Italian greasers in leather jackets (1974)
- ♦Lorenzo's Oil—true story of parents who save their son from a rare disease (1992)
- Love Happy—Chico Marx/Chicolini (1948)
- Love Is All There Is—feuding Italian families (1996)
- Love Portion No. 9—suave Italian industrialist (1993?)





## Hollywood vs. Italians

- Love Story**—Ali McGraw as foul-mouthed teacher who becomes ennobled by dying of a mysterious disease (1970)
- Lovers and Other Strangers**—Italian family caricature, though working-class father Richard Castellano has believable sweetness (1971)
- Lucky Luciano**—based on real-life crook (1973)
- Lucky Lady**—fake mob characters (1975)
- Mac**—feuding blue-collar family (1993)
- Machine Gun Blues**—fake mob character (1996)
- Machine Gun McGann**—fake mob characters (1970)
- Mad Dog and Glory**—fake mob characters (1993)
- Made for Each Other**—Italian family caricature (1971)
- Madigan's Millions**—Dustin Hoffman as U.S. Treasury agent sent to Italy to recover monies stolen by fake mob characters (1968)
- Mafia Princess**—based on real-life incidents (1986)
- Magnum Force**—fake mob characters (1973)
- Man I Love**—sleazy nightclub owner (1946)
- Man of the House**—fake mob character (1994)
- Man with a Gun**—fake mob character (no date given)
- Married to the Mob**—fake mob character (1988)
- Marked Woman**—based on real-life incidents (1937)
- ♦ **Marty**—lonely butcher finds true love (1955)
- Master Touch**—Italian thief (1972)
- Mean Streets**—based on real-life incidents (1973)
- Meet Wally Sparks**—tough broad female assistant (1997)
- Me, Natalie**—Al Pacino's debut as a hood named Tony (1967)
- Men of Respect**—fake mob characters (1996)
- Mickey and Nicky**—low-life friends who betray each other (1976)
- Mickey One**—fake mob characters (1966)
- Midnight Cowboy**—Dustin Hoffman as all-around slob Rizzo (1969)
- Midnight Run**—fake mob character (1987)
- Miller's Crossing**—fake mob character (1991)
- ♦ **Misfits**—Eli Wallach in supporting role as an Italian rancher and pilot who mourns his deceased young wife (1960)
- Mr. Imperium**—American woman confronts Italian man who did her wrong (1946)
- ♦ **Mr. Rico**—Dean Martin as an attorney who defends a black radical (1968)
- Mob Girl**—based on real-life incidents (1997)
- Mobsters**—fake mob characters (1991)
- Money for Nothing**—fake mob characters (1993)
- Money Talks**—fake mob characters (1997)
- Monkey Business**—Chico Marx/Chicolini (1932)
- Monkey Troubles**—fake mob characters (1994)
- ♦ **Monty Python's Life of Brian**—Romans nicer than Zealots (1979)
- Moonstruck**—moony Italian caricatures (1987)
- Mortal Thoughts**—working class low-lives (1991)
- Moscow on the Hudson**—Italian bimbo (1984)
- Movie, Movie**—fake mob character (1978)
- Mulholland Falls**—fake mob character (1996)
- Muppet Treasure Island**—rat puppet named Rizzo (1996)
- ♦ **Muscle Beach Party**—see Beach Blanket Bingo (1964)
- My Blue Heaven**—Steve Martin as fake mob character (1990)
- My Cousin Vinny**—Joe Pesci as slob lawyer (1992)
- My Own Private Idaho**—male prostitute (1991)
- Narrow Margin**—fake mob character (1990)
- National Lampoon's European Vacation**—all-American family assaulted by Italian crooks while in Rome (1985)
- Natural Born Killers**—slob Italian detective (1994)
- Neon Empire**—based on real-life crooks (1990)
- New Jack City**—crazy, irresponsible cop (1991)
- New York Cop**—fake mob character (1995)
- Night and the City**—fake mob character (1994)
- Night Falls on Manhattan**—corrupt cop (1997)
- Night on Earth**—buffoonish cab driver (1991)
- Nitti the Enforcer**—based on real-life incidents (1988)
- Nixon**—based on real-life incidents (1995)
- North Avenue Irregulars**—fake mob characters (1979)
- ♦ **Once Around**—normal middle-class Italian family from Boston (1990)
- One Fine Day**—fake mob subplot (1996)
- One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest**—Italian mental patient (1975)
- ♦ **Only You**—Marisa Tomei finds love in magical Rome (1994)
- Once Upon a Time in America**—based on real-life incidents (1984)
- Only the Lonely**—Sicilian American girl made butt of insults (1991)
- On the Waterfront**—based on real-life incidents (1954)
- Oscar**—Stallone as a fake comical mob guy (1991)
- Outfit**—fake mob characters (1974)
- Palookaville**—fake low-lives (1996)
- Palermo Connection**—fake mob characters (1990)
- Panther**—fake mob characters (1995)
- Paper**—newspaper drama with fake mob subplot (1994)
- Paradise Alley**—three buffoonish Italian brothers in Hell's Kitchen (1978)
- ♦ **Pay or Die**—Ernest Borgnine in true story of mob-buster Joseph Petrosino (1960)
- Pete Kelly's Blues**—based on real-life incidents (1955)
- Phantom of the Paradise**—Italian thug (1974)
- Pick-Up Artist**—fake mob character (1987)
- ♦ **Pinnocchio**—Disney classic about father-son relationship (1940)
- Playing God**—doctor is forced to operate on fake mob characters (1997)
- Plot against Harry**—fake mob characters (1968)
- Pope of Greenwich Village**—fake mob characters (1984)
- Pope Must Diet**—corrupt Italian Cardinal (1993)
- Power of Attorney**—fake mob character (1994)
- Prince of Mulberry Street**—fake mob characters (1998)
- Prince of the City**—crooked cop turns informer (1981)
- Prizzi's Honor**—fake mob characters (1985)
- Professional**—fake mob character (1995)
- Public Eye**—fake mob characters (1994)
- Pulp Fiction**—fake mob character (1994)
- Punisher**—fake mob characters (1991)
- Purple Rose of Cairo**—Danny Aiello as wife-beater (1985)
- Pushover**—fake mob character (1954)
- Puzzle of a Downfall Child**—sleazy photographer (1971)
- Q&A**—fake mob characters (1990)
- Quo Vadis**—decadent Rome (1951)
- Radio Days**—Italian gigolo (1987)
- Raging Bull**—boxer and wife-beater Jake LaMotta (1980)
- Rambo: First Blood**—Stallone as macho cartoon Rambo (1982)
- Rambo: Part Two**—see *Rambo: First Blood* (1984)
- Rave Review**—fake mob character (1994)
- Ready to Wear**—Marcello Mastroianni and Sophia Loren parody a scene they first filmed thirty years ago (1994)
- ♦ **Reds**—Paul Sorvino as Italian American communist leader Louis Fraina (1981)
- ♦ **Renaissance Man**—teacher Danny DeVito inspires down-and-out Army recruits (1994)
- Requiem for a Heavyweight**—Anthony Quinn as a desecrated fighter who hits the skids (1956)
- Rhinestone**—Italian caricature (1984)
- Rich Man's Wife**—fake mob character (1996)
- Risky Business**—Guido the killer pimp (1983)
- Roadhouse**—fake mob character (1989)
- The Robe**—decadent Rome (1953)
- Robin and the Seven Hoods**—Italian thieves (1964)
- Rocketeer**—fake mob character (1991)
- Rocky I**—heroic boxer based on Rocky's Marciano and Graziano (1976)
- Rocky II**—Stallone's hero becomes a cartoon (1979)
- Rocky III**—same as above (1983)
- Rocky IV**—same as above (1985)
- ♦ **Roman Holiday**—Audrey Hepburn finds love in magical Rome (1953)
- Roman Scandals**—burlesque of classical Rome (1933)
- Roman Spring of Mrs. Stone**—Italian gigolo (1962)
- Rome Adventure**—Italian gigolo (1962)
- Romeo is Bleeding**—fake mob character (1995)
- Room Service**—Chico Marx/Chicolini (1938)
- ♦ **Rose Tartoo**—Anna Magnani wins an Oscar as Sicilian American widow who finds new love (1956)
- Ruby**—Danny Aiello as real-life killer of Lee Harvey Oswald (1992)
- Ruby**—spirit of dead gangster possesses young girl (1977)
- Rumble in the Bronx**—violent Italian biker (1996)
- Saints and Sinners**—fake mob characters (1994)
- Saturday Night Fever**—John Travolta as graceful but inarticulate Tony Manero (1977)
- Scarface**—based on Al Capone (1932)
- ♦ **Serpico**—true story of honest New York cop Frank Serpico (1973)
- Set It Off**—homage to Don Vito Corleone (1996)
- Sergeant Bilko**—goofy Italian recruit (1996)
- ♦ **Seven Hills of Rome**—Mario Lanza visits magical Rome (1958)
- Seven-Ups**—fake mob characters (1973)
- Shaf's Big Score**—fake mob characters (1972)
- Sharkey's Machine**—fake mob characters (1981)
- Sherlock Holmes's Smarter Brother**—fake Italian villain (1977)





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- She's So Lovely—character alleged to have "mob" past (1997)
- Showgirls—Italian-American bimbo (1995)
- ♦Sing—Lorraine Bracco as inner-city teacher Miss Lombardo (1991)
- Sister Act—fake mob characters (1992)
- Sleepers—fake mob characters (1996)
- Sleuth—murderer and adulterer (1972)
- ♦Somebody Up There Likes Me—Paul Newman as boxer Rocky Graziano (1956)
- Some Like it Hot—running away from Al Capone (1959)
- Someone to Watch Over Me—fake mob character (1989)
- Spaceman - fake mobster (1997)
- Spartacus—a slave rebels against decadent Roman Empire (1960)
- Spike of Bensonhurst—fake mob characters (1988)
- Stayin' Alive—see Saturday Night Fever (1983)
- Stealing Beauty—city of Florence attracts poseurs and weirdos (1996)
- Steelyard Blues—Italian thief (1973)
- Stop or My Mom Will Shoot—kooky Sicilian American mom (1992)
- Story of Temple Drake—fake mob character (1932)
- Stranger Among Us—The mob shakes down Hasidim (1995)
- St. Valentine's Day Massacre—based on real-life incidents (1967)
- Sugar Hill—fake mob characters (1994)
- Sugartime—fake mob characters (1995)
- Summertime—American spinster Katherine Hepburn seduced by married Italian man (1955)
- The Super—Joe Pesci as slum landlord (1993)
- Super Mario Brothers—based on children's video game (1993)
- ♦Sweet Smell of Success—Tony Curtis as ruthless yet quick-witted Broadway theater agent (1957)

- Tango and Cash—buffoonish cop (1990)
- Teamster Boss—based on real-life incidents (1993)
- Thank God It's Friday—Italian lounge lizard (1976)
- That Old Feeling—greasy photographer (1997)
- They Knew What They Wanted—Charles Laughton as Italian wine-grower who is cuckolded by his American wife (1940)
- Thief—fake mob character (1981)
- Things Change—fake mob character (1989)
- Things To Do In Denver When You're Dead—fake mob characters (1996)
- Thinner—fake mob character (1996)
- ♦Three Coins in the Fountain—American tourists visit magical Rome (1954)
- Titanic—illiterate Italian immigrant (1953)
- To Die For—fake mob characters (1995)
- Tom and Jerry - fake mobster (1997)
- ♦Tony Rome—see Lady in Cement (1967)
- To the Limit—fake mob characters (1995)
- Trash—sexually impotent, lice-ridden oaf (1970)
- Trial by Jury—fake mob characters (1993)
- Trick Baby—fake mob character (1974)
- Troop Beverly Hills—homage to Vito Corleone (1989)
- True Love—Italian newlywed caricatures (1989)
- True Romance—fake mob characters (1994)
- Truth or Consequences, N.M.—fake mob characters (1997)
- Twenty-Ninth Street—fake mob character (1990)
- Twin Sisters—fake mob characters (1994)
- ♦Two Bits—nostalgic look at growing up Italian in Philadelphia (1993)
- Two Days in the Valley—fake mob character (1996)
- Untouchables—based on Al Capone (1987)
- Used Cars—slick and dishonest car salesman (1981)
- Used People—Italian immigrant as outsider (1994)
- Valachi Papers—dramatized mob history (1972)
- Valentino—Italian screen idol as effeminate fop (1977)
- Vampire in Brooklyn—fake mob characters (1996)

- Vendetta—fake mob characters (1950)
- View from a Bridge—Italian longshoreman falls in love with his wife's niece (1958)
- Von Ryan's Express—bumbling Fascists (1965)
- Walk in the Clouds—Italian wine-growing families of California become Mexican American wine-growing families (1995)
- Wanderers—Italian greasers in leather jackets (1979)
- Wedding—Italian as outsider to wealthy WASP family (1977)
- ♦Weeds—Joe Mantegna in supporting role as New York acting coach of prisoner drama group (1987)
- We're Talking Serious Money—fake mob characters (1993)
- West Side Story—Italian greasers in leather jackets (1961)
- While You Were Sleeping—Italian slob (1995)
- White Men Can't Jump—fake mob characters (1994)
- Who's That Knocking At My Door—unemployed loafer (1967)
- Wild is the Wind—Anna Magnani as an unfulfilled Italian housewife who falls in love with her adopted son (1957)
- Wild 90—novelist Norman Mailer plays a fake mob guy (1968)
- Willie and Phil—Italian family caricatures (1980)
- Winners - buffoon (1997)
- Wise Guy—fake mob character (1985)
- Wiseguys—fake comical mob characters (1986)
- World's Greatest Lover—spoof of Valentino legend (1977)
- Woman Under the Influence—blue-collar family man (1974)
- Year of the Gun—innocent American in Italy is stalked by terrorist group (1991)
- Zebrahead—racist Italian student and principal (1993)





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