

*“To preserve and disseminate Italian language and culture”*

ISSN 1441-8592 Periodico bimestrale del Comitato di Canberra della Società Dante Alighieri - 2nd Floor Notaras Multicultural Centre  
180 London Circuit Canberra City ACT 2601 - Pfi: 02 6247 1884 - Email: info@dantecanberra.org.au - Web page: www.dantecanberra.org.au

## Regular Events

**Term 1 2014  
starts on  
Tuesday 11 February**  
***Dante Musica*  
Viva rehearsals  
on Thursday 5-7 pm  
from 23 January**  
**Conversation groups  
on Thursday 7-9 pm  
from 13 February**

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## FINAL CULTURAL EVENT FOR 2013

**Yes, we've almost reached  
the end of another academic year  
so it's time to celebrate at this *free event***

**Lots of ENTERTAINMENT is planned:  
performances by our choir  
Dante Musica Viva,  
some of its  
soloists and musicians  
and some  
Folk dancing!**

**Instead of a cooking competition  
this year we invite those who wish to share  
something special to bring it along  
and we might even publish their recipes**

**We will provide some food and drinks**

**7 pm Thursday 21 November**

**Function Room, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Notaras Multicultural Centre  
180 London Cct (entry via Civic Square)**

# News from the Office

## TO ALL MEMBERS PLEASE NOTE

The Dante Alighieri Society of Canberra Inc. office hours are:

**from 10:30am to 2:00pm  
Tuesday to Friday**

On Monday the Office will remain closed.  
We apologise for any inconvenience.

For enquiries please call the office on  
6247 1884 or visit our website:

**[www.dantecanberra.org.au](http://www.dantecanberra.org.au)**

We are also on **Facebook**:  
click '**I like**' to be up-to-date!

Our email address has changed;  
please use the new one:

**[info@dantecanberra.org.au](mailto:info@dantecanberra.org.au)**

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## LIBRARY

The Dante library is open during office hours. It includes the following sections:  
Reading, Education, Literature, Youth,  
Geography, History, Art, Music, Cinema.

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## COMMITTEE MEMBERS

### **President**

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Yvette Devlin; Sue Hancock

### **Treasurer**

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### **Secretary**

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### **Committee members**

Vittorio Beltracchi, Cellina Benassi,  
Francesca Foppoli, Orlando Di Iulio,  
Nicola Patini

*Journal Editor:* Yvette Devlin

*Note:* The journal editor wishes to  
acknowledge the assistance of Alessia  
of the Dante office in compiling this issue.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

- |        |   |
|--------|---|
| 7 Nov  | Conversation groups   |
| 13 Nov | Grammar classes:<br><b>end of Term 3</b>  |
| 14 Nov | Conversation groups:<br><b>end of Term 3</b>  |
| 21 Nov | End-of-year function (see p.1)  |
| 23 Nov | Voices in the Forest (see p.13)   |
| 8 Dec  | The Dante choir, Dante Musica<br>Viva, will perform at the High<br>Court (see p.16) |

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## FOR SALE NOSTALGIA D'ITALIA

The first CD of the Dante Musica Viva  
choir launched in November 2010 is  
available for sale at the Dante Office.

Prices are \$15 for one, \$25 for 2, \$10  
each if purchased when joining the soci-  
ety.

Hurry!

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## DANTE OFFICE CLOSURE

*Dear members,  
it's time to take a break!*

*Please note that the office will be  
closed from Monday, 9th December,  
to Monday, 13th January 2014 in-  
cluded.*

*We will be back on Tuesday, 14th  
January!*

*We would like to remind you that  
during this period you can always  
contact us via Facebook!*

# Modi di dire

## *Sayings*

di Francesca Foppoli

Animals play a big role in our lives and our close relationship with them is reflected in the language and culture.

***Anche il più piccolo dei felini è un capolavoro.***  
(Leonardo da Vinci)

*The smallest feline is a masterpiece.*

### Il gatto/La gatta

Non appena l'insegnante ha lasciato l'aula, gli studenti hanno cominciato a far baldoria. Quando il gatto non c'è, i topi ballano.

***As soon as the teacher left the classroom, the students were ready to have a party. When the cat's away, the mice will play.***

Purtroppo alla dimostrazione sindacale c'erano quattro gatti.

***Sadly there were only a few people (Lit. four cats) at the union demonstration.***

Per i miei genitori ogni occasione è buona per litigare – proprio come cane e gatto.\*

***My parents fight at every opportunity – just like cats and dogs\*.*** [\*note the word order]

Cerca di fare questo lavoro con attenzione; la gatta frettolosa fa i gattini ciechi.

***Take care with this task; haste makes waste. (Lit. the impatient cat gives birth to blind kittens).***

È una situazione difficile; per me hai una bella gatta da pelare.

***It's a difficult situation; I think you have a tough nut to crack.***

Il capo mi sembra sia troppo gentile oggi; qui gatta ci cova.

***The boss seems extremely nice today; there is something fishy going on.***

Non preoccuparti, prima o poi verrà scoperto. Ricordati che tanto va la gatta al lardo che ci lascia lo zampino.

***Don't worry, he will be discovered sooner or later. Remember that curiosity killed the cat. (Lit. So often the she-cat goes to the lard, that she loses her paw).***

# L'angolo della lingua

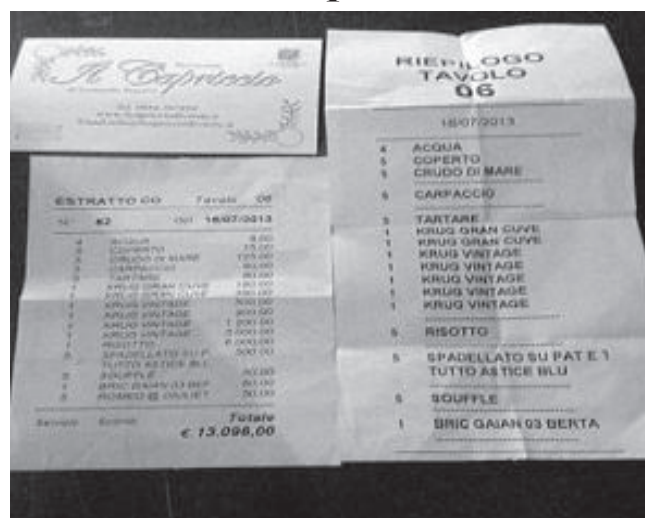
## *Language Corner*

di Yvette Devlin

A tricky word to translate in Italian is “also”. When it appears at the start of a sentence eg *Also, we played tennis after lunch* it is not correct to translate it as ‘anche’. In this case, you say *Inoltre, abbiamo giocato a tennis dopo il pranzo*. The word ‘inoltre’ means ‘additionally’ ‘furthermore’ – which is the meaning of ‘also’ in this instance. Contrast this with the sentences *I want to go to the movies too* = *Anch'io voglio andare al cinema* [NB: it is totally wrong to literally translate this as *Voglio andare al cinema anche*. In Italian you **never** finish a sentence with *anche*]; *We went on an excursion all morning and also played tennis all afternoon* = *abbiamo fatto un'escursione tutta la mattina e anche giocato a tennis tutto il pomeriggio*; *French children too know the story of Pinocchio* = *anche i bambini francesi conoscono la storia di Pinocchio*.

And now let's look at a ‘false friend’. The word *addizione* translates as *addition* whereas the similar English word *addiction* is translated as *dipendenza, assuefazione*. Eg *addiction to smoking/drinking/drugs is deleterious to your health* = *la dipendenza dal fumo/alcol/droghe nuoce alla salute*; *I checked the bill and the addition is correct* = *Ho controllato il conto e l'addizione è corretta*.

### Un conto un po'... salato!



# L'angolo della poesia

## *Poetry Corner*

di Yvette Devlin

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**Giovanni Pascoli** was born in Romagna on 31 December 1855 and died on 6 April 1912. He is a much-loved Italian poet with an “ear for words that lull” and a melancholy that inspired all of his poetry. His state of mind was due to a tragic childhood: at the age of 12 his father was murdered and in subsequent years he lost his mother, a sister and two brothers.

He studied at the University of Bologna, where his teacher and mentor was the poet Giosuè Carducci (who in 1889 founded the Dante Alighieri Society and in 1906 won the Nobel prize for literature). He worked as a high school teacher, a public servant and an academic at the universities of Messina and Pisa, and published several poetry collections. When Carducci retired, Pascoli replaced him as professor of Italian literature at the university of Bologna (the oldest university in Italy). His sad life drove him to alcohol and he died of liver cancer.

Here is a delightful poem inspired by autumn which also makes reference to the ‘All souls day’ (la giornata dei defunti - 2 November).

### *Novembre*

Gemmea l'aria, il sole così chiaro  
Che tu ricerchi gli albicocchi in fiore,  
e del prunalbo l'odorino amaro  
senti nel cuore....

Ma secco è il pruno, e le stecchite piante  
Di nere trame segnano il sereno,  
e vuoto il cielo, e cavo al piè sonante  
sembra il terreno.

Silenzio, intorno; solo, alle ventate,  
odi lontano, da giardini ed orti,  
di foglie un cader fragile. È l'estate,  
fredda, dei morti.

Here is the translation found in *The Penguin Book of Italian Verse* from which I also took the quotation above.

### *November*

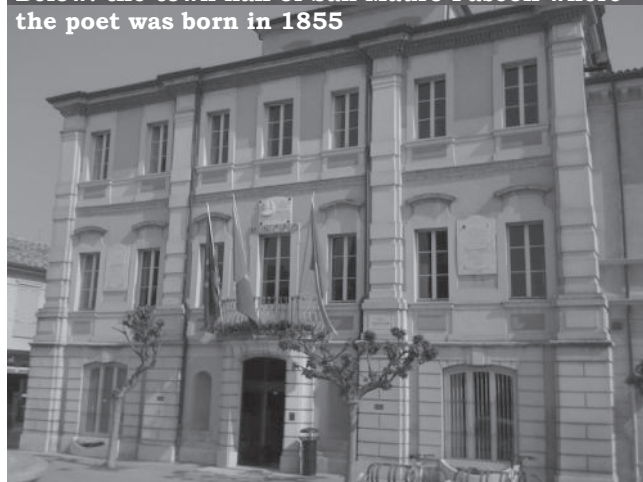
Gem-like the air, the sun so clear that you look for the apricots' blossoming, and smell in your heart the bitterish scent of the whitehorn...

But the thornbush is dry, and the stick-like plants mark the heavens with black designs, and empty is the sky, and the earth seems hollow, echoing to the step.

Silence, around: only, in the wind's quickening, you hear in the distance, from orchard and garden, a brittle falling of leaves. It is the summer, cold, of the dead.



Above: a portrait of Giovanni Pascoli.  
Below: the town hall of San Mauro Pascoli where the poet was born in 1855





# Cenno storico

## *A bit of history*

### di Yvette Devlin

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**L'imperatore romano Tiberio** nacque il 16 novembre 42 a.C. e morì il 16 marzo 37 d.C. Il suo impero durò quasi 24 anni (14 d.C. - 37 d.C.) ma in realtà se ne andò in esilio dopo dodici.

Tiberio era figlio di Nerone e Livia Drusilla. La madre divorziò Nerone e nel 39 a.C. sposò Augusto. In seguito Tiberio sposò la figlia di Augusto e Scribonia, Giulia, e fu adottato da Augusto acquisendo il nome di Tiberio Giulio Cesare.

Tiberio fu uno dei maggiori generali romani: conquistò la Pannonia, la Dalmazia e Raetia e temporaneamente anche la Germania, estendendo i confini nordici dell'impero, ma non aveva desiderato il potere politico. Venne descritto da Plinio come *tristissimus hominum* (il più triste tra gli uomini). Nell'anno 26 d.C. si autoesiliò da Roma lasciando il potere a due prefetti pretoriani purtroppo privi di scrupoli.

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Il busto dell'imperatore romano Tiberio



Alla sua morte l'infame Caligula (nipote adottivo di Tiberio) divenne imperatore.

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**The Roman emperor Tiberius** was born on 16 November 42 BC and died on 16 March 37 AD. His empire lasted nearly 24 years (from 14 AD to 37 AD) but in reality he opted for exile after twelve.

Tiberius's parents were Nero and Livia Drusilla. His mother subsequently divorced Nero and in 39 AD married Augustus. Tiberius later married Giulia, the daughter of Augustus and Scribonia, and was adopted by Augustus taking the name Tiberius Julius Caesar.

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Livia Drusilla, Tiberio's mother



Tiberius was one of the best Roman generals: he conquered Pannonia, Dalmatia and Raetia, and also Germany temporarily, thereby extending the Roman empire's Northern borders. Tiberius had never desired to be an emperor. He was described by Pliny as *tristissimus hominum* (the gloomiest of men). In the year 26 AD he exiled himself from Rome leaving the power in the hands of two unscrupulous praetorian prefects and on his death the infamous Caligula (who was his adopted grand-son) became emperor.

# How Italy and Italians are seen by foreigners

## *A talk by Concetta Perna*

by Yvette Devlin

Concetta Perna is an Italian-born academic at Macquarie Uni. She's also the president of the National Association of Italo-Australian Women and editing director of American publishing house Farinelli which focusses on books for students of Italian.

Concetta follows closely how Italy and its citizens are seen by foreigners and portrayed in the foreign media. Her thoughtful analysis was presented to our members on Thursday 19 September.



Are Italians a bit like... Pinocchio?

Concetta prefaced the presentation by clarifying that an 'Italian identity' is impossible to define due to vast regional and background differences. Political unification achieved in 1861 did not result in cultural unification. Indeed, soon after unification the statesman Massimo D'Azeglio in his *Mémoires* stated "L'Italia è fatta. Restano da fare gli italiani" ("We've made Italy; now we

must make the Italians").

The talk was illustrated by some short videos. In the first, Pinocchio (Italy's best known and loved toy), a mischievous character who wants to be liked, is shown as giving his creative best when free and unrestrained. Are Italians a bit like Pinocchio, Concetta wondered.

The second video presented a comparison of the portrayal of Italians in American films with actual crime statistics. The analysis showed a complete misrepresentation of the reality through negative stereotypes: Italians were overwhelmingly shown as criminal and violent whereas crime statistics show minimal Italian involvement in crime.

The third video showed Berlusconi (when he was still prime minister) as someone prone to gaffes and with a *penchant* for beautiful young women. The foreign media and foreigners in general were puzzled by the Berlusconi phenomenon where politics was mixed with money and sex, and 'conflict of interest' was not seen as an issue. Possible explanations for Berlusconi's lasting popularity was a tendency for Italians to shrug their shoulders combined with the lack of a clear political alternative.

Concetta drew attention to the way Italians are generally portrayed (through the stereotypes of pizza, pasta and tarantella) and summarised the



Over forty members were present for Concetta Perna's presentation

# How Italy and Italians are seen by foreigners

*A talk by Concetta Perna - cont'd*

by Yvette Devlin

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main features or characterisations over the decades since WW2. In the '50s the two-wheel Vespa got Italians moving; an 'Italian style' (fashion, design, architecture) acquired prominence in the '60s; the '70s saw a decline in our image due to the rise of the terrorist Red Brigades, but the '80s marked a revival associated with widespread prosperity. Italy's image took a dive again in the '90s due to perceptions of political dishonesty and incompetence although much attention was also given to the era of 'clean hands' (mani pulite) – the anti-corruption push. Concetta went on:

"People tend to forget the good things at the expense of the negative ones. For this reason the 'Berlusconi case' will remain in the memory of all for many years to come. Almost all the international press, including that of the Liberal

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"L'Italia è fatta. Restano da fare gli italiani" said Massimo D'Azeglio



Right, denounces the anomaly of a situation where the holder of an economic power of incredible size, holds also political power."

Concetta argued that in general Italy is portrayed positively and affectionately on the strength of its art, architecture, fashion, design. She reminded us that "il bel paese" holds 60% of the world art treasures – "we are an open-air museum". Italians eat, drink and dress well. 'Made in Italy' is synonymous with 'high quality' and 'aesthetically pleasing'. But the international media also covers the country's fragility particu-



Concetta Perna with Jonathan,  
one of the members present at the lecture

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larly with regard to its political system and economic weakness. Concetta noted that in recent times the main issue in Italy was whether Berlusconi should remain in Parliament despite his conviction for tax fraud, stressing that negative opinions on a country's leader reflect badly on the whole country.

So, the upshot is that Italy is portrayed by the foreign media as a country full of paradoxes: while on the one hand it is generally viewed with great affection and respect for its 'Made in Italy' and style, and is loved for its art; on the other and its political and economic realities attract negative coverage.



# Italy 2013

## *Italia 2013*

by Yvette Devlin

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At the conclusion of my annual trip to Italy, I wish to share with you my impressions of this marvellous country, so full of treasures and contradictions.

It took me a couple of days to adjust to a temperature difference of at least 30 degrees (between Canberra nights and daytime temperatures of Friuli where I spent most of my time).

This summer turned out to be particularly hot politically as well as meteorologically. The sentence of four years' imprisonment against Berlusconi was confirmed by the highest Italian court and this led to much recrimination by him and his party against the judges, typically accused of being 'communist'. Over the ensuing weeks, Berlusconi was consistently the No. 1 item in the media particularly because as a result of this sentence he should lose his position as senator but at the time of my departure his side of politics was still exploring various options to avoid this 'decadenza' (ie loss of political position).

To add to the political woes, the phenomenon of comedian Beppe Grillo's party Movimento 5 Stelle (that won a quarter of all votes at the 2013 elections, the second-highest percentage of any party) continues to dismay commentators. Having spoken to a range of people who voted for this party, I learned that it was a form of protest against all politicians who are typically seen as feathering their own nest instead of working for the good of the party. Many people said to me: what Italy needs now is a strong dictator to impose the respect for rules and honesty. It's scary to think some people miss a Mussolini-type figure because they have lost faith in democracy.

As for my region of Friuli, it made the national news for the wrong reasons. Firstly, there was a 'rave party' in our area called 'magredi' (an area characterised by highly permeable rocky/gravelly soil on which nothing much grows unless there is constant irrigation) attended by some 1000 young people arrived from all over Italy. The party lasted two days and the police, completely outnumbered, could not go in to stop

**Monte Lussari - a village on top of a 1745 m mountain in Friuli**





# Italy 2013

## *Italia 2013 - cont'd*

by Yvette Devlin

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it. It patiently waited for people to leave the party and then booked over 400 of them for various reasons.

Secondly, a battle between GM and GM-free agriculture is being fought using Vivaro as a base – in my village a field was planted with GM corn and this corn was almost ready to be harvested. The first Sunday of September those fearful of GM agriculture arrived in Vivaro and partly trampled the field. Opponents are sceptical about its safety, fearing medical repercussions down the track, maybe in a few generations, whereas supporters argue that GM corn is already entering Italy from other European countries where its cultivation is legal. It is hoped that the courts will reconcile the permission given by Europe to its cultivation with its illegality under Italian law.

Thirdly, some of the mountains of Friuli burnt for days as bushfires hit inaccessible areas – air-planes were called in to drop water on the fires. Bushfires here are quite rare. There was some talk of climate change.

But Friuli was also mentioned positively in relation to the nomination by President Napolitano of four life senators of whom one, 1984 Nobel prize winner Carlo Rubbia is a physicist from Friuli. Now, the concept of appointed 'life senators' would be inconceivable in Australia and indeed are a luxury that Italy can ill afford (they are entitled to many privileges), yet the tradition lives on.

The issue of refugees continued to be hot. Over the first 8 months of the year, 20,000 African people had arrived on rickety boats, mostly in Sicily. Many perish at sea [indeed, in October there was an immense tragedy with some 300 lives lost]. Italians are divided between compassion for these poor people and resentment due to compassion fatigue. In any case, they are placed in centres and their refugee status is evaluated

before being released in the community or sent back.

Australia made the news only rarely. Two issues stood out: our tough policy on boat arrivals and the election of a conservative government. There is great interest by young people in migrating to Australia and some awareness of the difficulty of doing so. People watch with interest the numerous documentaries on Australia shown on



The issue of refugees has not found a solution

Italian TV. At the time of the Venice Film Festival there were several articles on Kate Blanchett who has 'successfully combined motherhood with a film career'.

Fewer Italians could afford to go on holiday this summer and those who went spent less money. Pessimism was on the increase, despite official statements that Italy had turned the corner. Factories continued to close and ordinary people continue to do it tough: general unemployment was 12% while youth unemployment a staggering 42%. Italy has lost competitiveness due to its high costs of production and red tape. Just an example: a paper recycling factory in Friuli has closed because it was cheaper for the paper collected to be shipped to China from where it returned as cardboard than to have it processed in Italy!

# Italy 2013

## *Italia 2013 - cont'd*

by Yvette Devlin

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Venice hit the headlines when a German professor was crushed to death during a gondola ride he had taken with his wife and daughter. The gondola had collided with a vaporetto (water bus). Enquiries were proceeding but attention was drawn to the thousands of boats using the Grand Canal every day, ranging from water buses to taxis, transport and emergency boats, and gondolas.

Despite the church losing ground in terms of the number of practising Catholics, Pope Francis (Papa Francesco) is viewed very positively by Italians and his simple ways are refreshing and welcomed. He might even bring the faithful back as he is connecting with the people. I was in St Peter's Square on Sunday 8 Sept (together with some 100,000 other people) for his Angelus prayers at noon. He gave a short speech in which he condemned wars and suggested they might even be fought for the commercial interests of arms manufacturers and dealers before

giving his blessing. He captivated those present with a friendly "Buon giorno a tutti" at the start and "Buon pranzo" at the end.

Also on the positive side, I wish to acknowledge a special friend in my village – Sergio Tommasini. He had a career as an executive for Zanussi (a white-goods company from Pordenone subsequently bought by Electrolux) but who cultivated his love of literature throughout his life. And he's blessed with an amazing memory. I was surprised when during one of my visits, in talking about Lake Como, he launched on a recitation of the opening paragraphs of *I promessi sposi*, Manzoni's greatest historical novel, in which the writer describes the lake. Then while talking about Italian poets, he indicated his love of Leopardi – and proceeded to recite *L'infinito*. Finally, we got talking about Dante's *Divine Comedy* and I asked him to recite for me the canto of Paolo and Francesca – and he immediately obliged, after thinking for a few seconds how it started. I just wonder how many verses are imprinted in his memory. Sergio is now retired and spends his time tending his vegetable garden and his fruit trees as well as baking the occasional cake but my guess is that he's thinking literature even while digging his garden. Sergio would be admirable on stage.

Apart from the joy of listening to Sergio's recitations, I feel pleasure in playing the tourist while visiting Italy. This year I visited the Julian Alps again (Monte Lussari and the Tarvisio area); Turin – where I saw the Stupinigi palace, climbed the Superga hill on the little cog train (cremagliera), and saw two special exhibitions at the Venaria Reale palace (one of the frocks designed by famous fashion designer Capucci, and the other of the Bucintoro, the 18<sup>th</sup> c. boat built in Venice for the royal family of Savoy); Verona, where I attended a performance of the opera *La traviata* at the Arena; the Biennale in Venice – contemporary art that has the power to bewilder, amaze and entertain me. Unlike the

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La pietà - Michelangelo's statue as a mosaic



# Italy 2013

## *Italia 2013 - cont'd*

by Yvette Devlin

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Australian entries at earlier Biennali, this year's entry was most disappointing.

I visited again the amazing Scuola Mosaicisti del Friuli in Spilimbergo where art and craft combine as can be seen in the school's mosaic reproduction of Michelangelo's statue *La pietà*.

And I took another plunge into art by visiting again the Vatican Museums and spending half an hour inside the Sistine Chapel in contemplation of Michelangelo's masterpiece.

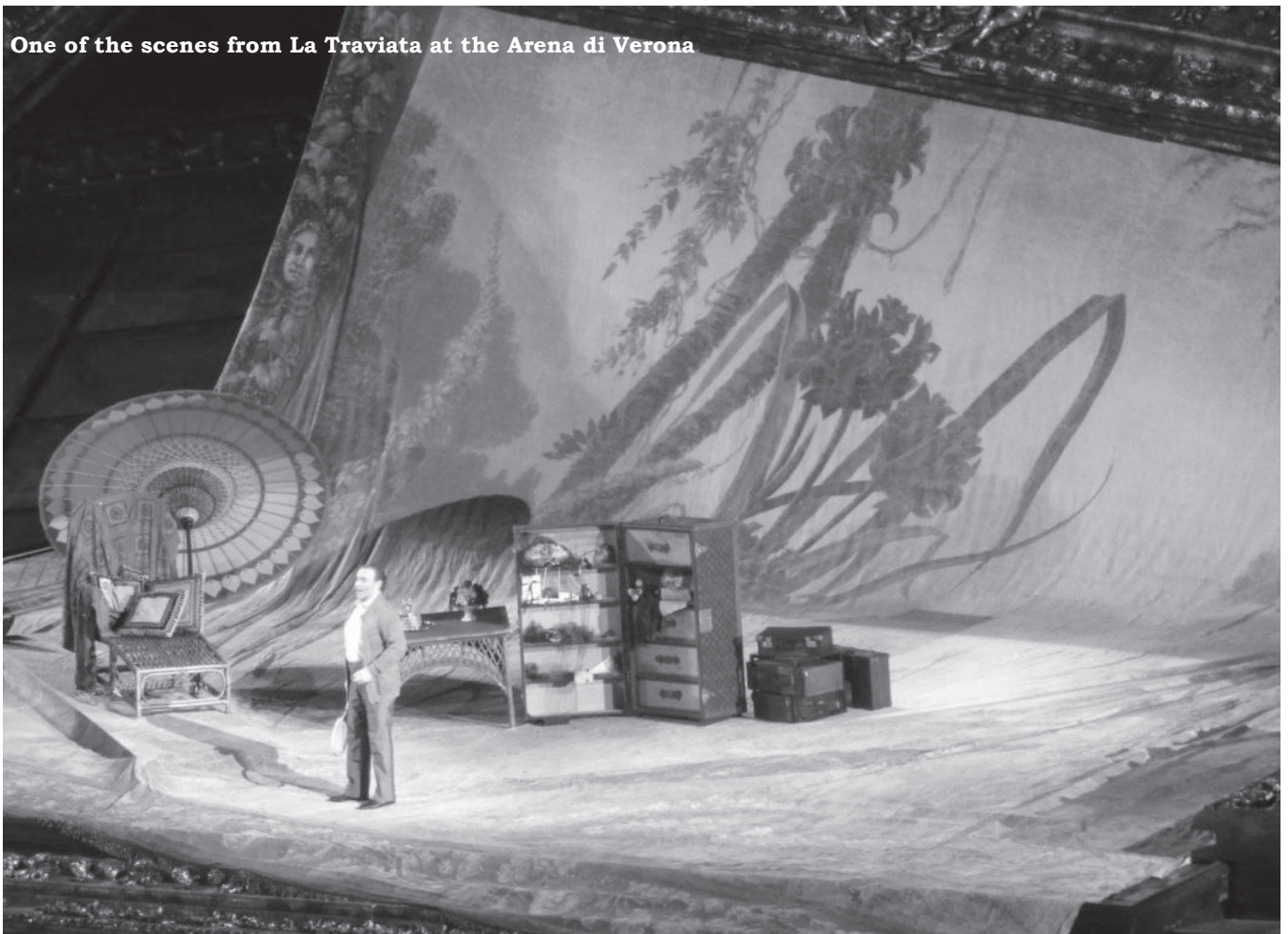
I had a negative experience in Rome, unfortunately common for tourists all over the world. Having stopped with a friend at a restaurant to have a salad (the price was shown on the menu at the door – €12) we also ordered a bottle of water

and two coffees during lunch but these came at ridiculous prices: €5 for the water and €12 for the coffees - prices totally out of kilter with the salad price. What rip-off merchants! So if you go to Rome, I suggest you avoid Romano in Via Borgognoni (not far from Piazza di Spagna).

Tourists like me continue to flock to Italy – truly **il Bel Paese** – for good reason. But it may be hard to beat a happy-looking English lady I met on a boat ride on Rome's Tiber who told me she loves everything about Italy ("...the Italians, the chaos!") and that she had been just about everywhere. "One day I flew from London just to climb to the top of the leaning tower of Pisa... and flew back home the same evening!"

Buone vacanze!

One of the scenes from *La Traviata* at the Arena di Verona



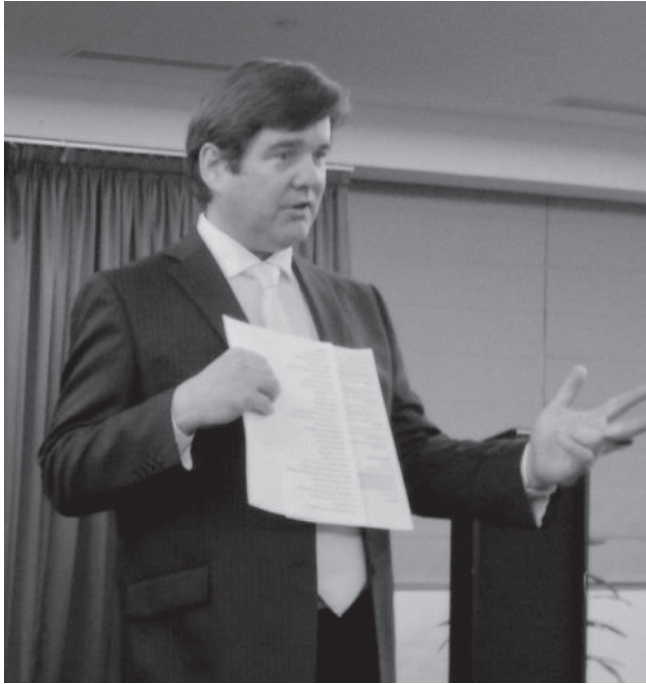


# Opera: the essential Italian art form

## *A presentation by Chris Latham*

### by Yvette Devlin

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Chris Latham underlines the greatness of Verdi

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On Thursday 17 October the Director of the Canberra International Music Festival and of 'Voices in the Forest', Chris Latham, enthralled us with his entertaining and non-technical presentation on opera.

Chris, himself a musician and boy soprano in his early life, sang the praises of singing in many different ways – “beautiful singers are also beautiful people”; “singing is the elegant manifestation of perfection”; and “why do we like beautiful singing? We are hard-wired to it from childhood. It connects us”.

After enthusing on the joys of singing, Chris went on to talk about opera reminding us immediately that it was 200 years ago - in October 1813 - that Giuseppe Verdi was born; that Verdi is the most performed opera composer in the world; and that he composed 31 operas, including three of his best-known ones in the short period of three years – *Rigoletto* (1851), *Il Trovatore* (1853) and *La Traviata* (1853).

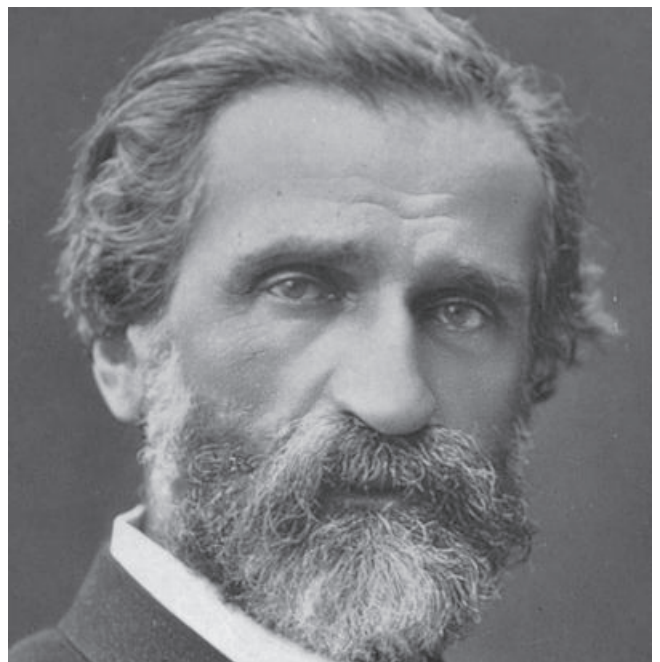
We learnt that as an art form opera started in the courts of Northern Italy in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, emerging from madrigals. The first opera performed was Monteverdi's *Il combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda* on the theme of the Christian invasion of the Islamic world. Monteverdi composed other operas like *L'Orfeo*.

Then came the Baroque composers – Vivaldi and Scarlatti Snr. At this point Chris stressed that the Italian language is most suited to opera singing because of the open vowels in contrast with German which is very difficult to render in singing. “Nasal vowels resonate more” he stated.

The era of *bel canto* (a style that features agile/light voices as distinct from loud/powerful ones) was brought in by Bellini, Donizetti and Rossini. A lot of the parts in their operas were sung by ‘castrati’ who, despite being grown men, could only develop a small vocal chord. Chris played two arias as examples of the opera of this period: Rossini's *Una voce poco fa* performed by Korean soprano Sumi Jo and

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Giuseppe Verdi is considered a preeminent opera composer of the nineteenth century



# Opera: the essential Italian art form

## *A presentation by Chris Latham - cont'd*

by Yvette Devlin

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Donizzetti's *Una furtiva lacrima* sung by Luciano Pavarotti.

Chris then moved on to the 'verismo' style that has Verdi and Puccini as its major composers. These operas dealt with real-life tragedies, real people, affairs of the heart. We listened to Verdi's *Sempre libera* from *La Traviata*, to *Questa o quella* from *Rigoletto*, and to *O mio babbino caro* from Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi*. This was the era of powerful, loud voices and thicker orchestration. The voices needed to be powerful and loud in order to be heard over the orchestra! It was also the era of exoticism (Eg the Japanese setting of *Mme Butterfly*) as well as beautiful melodies ("it is thrilling to sing top C").

Chris paused on Verdi, recounting the tragedies in his personal life (marked by the death of his wife and two children in the short period of three years) and also his role in Italy's unification. During this period, Verdi had become a national icon symbolising Italian nationalism. Verdi was by far the most prolific of opera composers, but Puccini was pretty productive too:

twelve operas of which three are still very popular and regularly performed – *Turandot* (which includes the famous aria *Nessun dorma* made famous by Pavarotti), *La Bohème* and *Mme Butterfly*.

On the state of opera these days, Chris explained that people like big powerful voices and that outdoor performances in scenic settings are gaining in popularity – for instance one at the base of Uluru and the increasingly popular stage on Sydney Harbour where opera is performed annually.

Chris used the opportunity to play the voices of the three major opera singers who will feature at the forthcoming 'Voices in the Forest' concert at the National Arboretum on 23 November – Yvonne Kenny, Emma Matthews and Rosario La Spina – and encouraged us to attend. (I have already booked the ticket and can honestly say that it is a performance not to be missed with the quality of the singing and the acoustics in a perfect outdoor setting. I've attended both previous editions of this concert that Chris very ably directs).

### ***Voices in the Forest***

Members of the Dante Alighieri Society of Canberra will enjoy the third annual *Voices in the Forest* concert, held once again **at the National Arboretum on Saturday 23 November**. This year's concert is a magnificent musical showcase to celebrate Canberra's Centenary and will feature renowned opera superstar **Yvonne Kenny** who will be joined by Opera Australia's **Emma Matthews** and **Rosario La Spina**.

Whether your preference is to be seated theatre-style, or to relax with friends and family enjoying a picnic on the grass, *Voices in the Forest* promises to be a delightful event for everyone.

In 2013 *Voices in the Forest* will showcase music from some of the world's most loved operas and Broadway shows. Arias from *La Traviata*, *Merry Widow*, *Carmen*, *The Magic Flute*, *Romeo and Juliet*, as well as Broadway hits by Gershwin, Bernstein and Berlin will feature in the program.

Tickets are on sale now and can be purchased from Canberra Ticketing.

For more information visit the website at [www.voicesintheforest.com.au](http://www.voicesintheforest.com.au)

# Natale in Italia

## *Christmas in Italy*

### di Lucrezia Samory

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Il clima natalizio si comincia a respirare all'inizio di dicembre: lungo le strade compaiono le luminarie, le piazze vengono dominate da alberi giganteschi addobbati con festoni e luci di tutti i colori. Immane i mercatini di Natale dove si possono acquistare piccoli oggetti di artigianato, prodotti tipici locali o un buon bicchiere di *vin br  l  *.

Si tratta di una festa che oltre al suo significato religioso rappresenta un momento per stare con la famiglia e gli amici pi  car. Per trascorrere questa occasione in allegria, la tradizione vuole che i festeggiamenti vengano onorati intorno ad una tavola impeccabilmente vestita a festa.



San Francesco d'Assisi fu il primo a realizzare una rappresentazione teatrale della nascita di Ges 

Il Natale   caratterizzato dall'albero decorato e il presepe che dovrebbe essere fatto il giorno di Santa Lucia, ovvero il 13 Dicembre, lasciando la mangiatoia vuota che accoglier  il Ges  bambino nella notte di Natale. Il presepe si completa il 6 gennaio con l'arrivo dei Re Magi [the three Kings] che portano oro, incenso e mirra. Lo stesso giorno i bambini ricevono leccornie [dolci, caramelle] di ogni genere, in memoria dei doni portati dai Magi.

A farci apprezzare le tradizioni del passato   il presepe vivente che rivive nel periodo natalizio in

tutte le regioni d'Italia. Il presepe affonda le sue radici nella vigilia di Natale del 1223 quando Francesco d'Assisi, sfruttando la naturale scenografia del borgo antico di Greccio, realizz  la prima rappresentazione teatrale della nascita di Ges . Caratteristico   anche il presepe vivente di Genga che per estensione   il pi  grande al mondo - copre infatti una superficie di circa 30.000 metri quadri all'interno della Gola di Frasassi [centro Italia].

Ma   anche vero che paese che vai pietanze che trovi! Specialmente a Natale, quando l'Italia diventa il paese delle tradizioni culinarie dove ogni famiglia ripropone a tavola i propri sapori ereditati da generazioni e basati sui prodotti tipici del territorio. Il cenone della vigilia   forse il momento pi  sentito dalle famiglie italiane; spesso coincide con lo scambio dei doni e precede la messa di Natale celebrata allo scoccare della mezzanotte.

Ricchezza gastronomica che ci unisce, ci appartiene e ci differenzia, che viene interpretata e vissuta in modo diverso, in base alle esperienze personali e le tradizioni di ogni paese. Un patrimonio meraviglioso, conosciuto in tutto il mondo e che deve essere difeso e salvaguardato.

Non posso non ricordare le tradizioni culinarie della mia regione, l'Emilia Romagna, dove ogni occasione   buona per trovarsi a casa di qualcuno, in un locale, in una piazza o una sagra per bere, mangiare e chiacchierare in compagnia, Natale compreso! Da Piacenza a Riccione, si fa di tutto per rimanere incollati al tavolo da pranzo, per almeno 3 giorni di seguito e difficilmente avanza qualcosa! Si inizia con il cenone della Vigilia che la religione vuole leggero, ma che la tradizione ha trasformato in un ricco pasto a base di pesce nel quale non possono mancare le frittelle di baccal  e il capitone marinato, segno di buon augurio. Il giorno di Natale e Santo Stefano, invece, dopo



# **Natale in Italia**

## ***Christmas in Italy - cont'd***

### **di Lucrezia Samory**

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un tripudio di antipasti a base di salumi (non può mancare il Culatello di Zibello) e formaggi, si passa alle paste ripiene in brodo di cappone: a Bologna e Modena ci sono i tortellini a base di carne, in Romagna i cappelletti a base di carne e formaggio. Come secondo, si passa al cotechino o lo zampone con le lenticchie (che la superstizione dice 'portino soldi'), puré di patate e mostarda, tutto 'bagnato' da un buon Sangiovese o un Pignoletto. Tra i dolci, oltre al classico panettone o pandoro, a Bologna c'è il Certosino o panspeziale (in dialetto panspzièl) con mandorle, pinoli, cioccolato fondente e canditi, antico dolce medioevale inizialmente prodotto dai farmacisti e solo in un secondo tempo cucinato dai frati certosini, tanto che il

dolce cambiò nome prendendo quello della confraternita.

Ovviamente dopo un pasto di queste dimensioni il riposino sul divano e un film di Natale sono immancabili.

Bando alla dieta, le festività natalizie vedono come protagonista il cibo e ancora pieni dal pranzo di Natale, gli italiani si preparano al cenone di Capodanno!

Con l'acquolina in bocca e la voglia di infornare un dolcetto di Natale, auguro a tutti voi di trascorrere le feste natalizie con gioia, serenità e soprattutto in buona compagnia!

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A Natale l'Italia si trasforma nel paese delle tradizioni culinarie che ogni famiglia ripropone a tavola



## ***Dante Musica Viva at the High Court!***

The Dante choir, Dante Musica Viva, as part of the program 'The Musical Offering' (free music every day of the year somewhere in Canberra to celebrate its centenary) will perform for about half an hour

**at 2.30 pm on Sunday 8 December  
in the Foyer of the High Court**

We are excited to be doing this as the acoustics in the foyer are fabulous – we won't even bring our sound system!

**Do come and listen to us!!!**

*Merry Christmas  
and  
Happy New Year  
to  
all our members!*

## ***Cultural Tour of Italy in 2014***

Ottavio Bagozzi is organising a cultural tour of Italy starting in Rome on 30 May and finishing in Venice on 23 June. In between participants will visit Tivoli, Ostia Antica, Capri, Naples, Taormina, Catania, Siracusa, Noto, Ragusa, Piazza Armerina, Agrigento, Palermo, Pompei and Bari. The tour also includes a six-day cruise along the Mediterranean and Adriatic Sea.

For further information on contact details, costs and itinerary, ask the office where Ottavio has left some material.

[NB: this is not a Dante or Dante-sponsored tour. Ottavio is a life member of the Society and we are simply publicising his tour].

Receipt No.....



**ENROLMENT FORM FOR TERM 1 2014**  
**COMMENCING FEBRUARY 11, 2014**  
**ENROLMENTS CLOSE WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 5, 2014**

(NB: students must be financial members of the Dante Alighieri Society of Canberra)

**PLEASE SELECT COURSE LEVEL**

- ☐ **Beginner 1**      ☐ **Beginner 2**      ☐ **Beginner 3**      ☐ **Beginner 4**  
☐ **Pre-intermediate**      ☐ **Intermediate**      ☐ **Advanced**

Enquiries: Office - Tuesday to Friday from 10:30 am to 2:00 pm Ph: 6247 1884

**Surname and Given Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address** \_\_\_\_\_ **Postcode** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone Numbers** \_\_\_\_\_ (h) \_\_\_\_\_ (w) \_\_\_\_\_ (mob)

**Email** \_\_\_\_\_

**How did you hear about this course?**

- ☐ Newspaper    ☐ Internet    ☐ Friend/Family    ☐ Previous Course    ☐ Other

**Full course fee: \$260.00**

**Discounted course fee: \$234.00 (CONTINUING STUDENTS)**

**Textbook for Beginners and Pre-intermediate: *Italian Espresso 1*, \$70.00**

**Textbook for Intermediate and Advanced: *Italian Grammar in Practice*, \$25.00**

**Payment by cash, cheque or deposit**

*Please make cheque payable to: "Dante Alighieri Society of Canberra Inc"*  
*or deposit at the National Australian Bank*

Account name: **Dante Alighieri Society**    BSB: **082 902**    A/c No: **515 003 825**

Please include your surname and initial as the reference when paying by EFT or send the deposit slip with your enrolment form. Your enrolment will be completed when payment confirmation is received.

We regret no refund, deferment or credit will be allowed (qualified cases considered according to the policies)

Paid \$

Date

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Received by \_\_\_\_\_  
(signature of student) (for the Società)



# **DANTE ALIGHIERI SOCIETY OF CANBERRA 2013 CALENDAR OF ACTIVITIES**

## **FORMAL COURSES**

**(6-8 pm Italo-Aust Club in Forrest or Dante Library, NMC, Civic)**

- Term 1    Tues 12 /Wed 13 Feb to Tues 16/Wed 17 Apr (10 wks then a 5-wk break to 21/22 May incl)  
Term 2    Tues 28/Wed 29 May to Tues 30/Wed 31 Jul (10 wks then a 5-wk break to 3 Sept incl)  
Term 3    Tues 10/Wed 11 Sept to Tues 12/Wed 13 Nov (10 wks)

## **THURSDAY CONVERSATION GROUPS**

**(7-9 pm Function Room NMC, Civic)**

- Term 1    14 Feb to 18 Apr (10 wks then 5-wk break - 25 Apr; 2, 9, 16, 23 May)  
Term 2    30 May to 1 Aug (10 wks then 5-wk break - 8, 15, 22, 29 Aug; 5 Sept)  
Term 3    12 Sept to 14 Nov (10 wks). Total: 30 weeks

## **CULTURAL ACTIVITIES**

**(8-9 pm Function Room, NMC, Civic)**

- 7 March        Gino Moliterno (Boccaccio's place in Italian literature)  
18 April       Gino Moliterno (Boccaccio's *Decameron* in Pasolini's film)  
20 June        Alessandro Giovine (Frescoes and painting techniques across the centuries)  
18 July        Gordon Bull (Tiziano)  
19 Sept        Concetta Perna (Italian culture and the image of Italy in the foreign press)  
17 Oct        Chris Latham (Opera: the essential Italian art form)  
21 Nov        End-of year function: Dante Musica Viva; refreshments.

**AGM (8-9 pm Function Room, NMC, Civic): 4 April**

## **CHOIR REHEARSALS**

**(5-7 pm Function Room, NMC, Civic)**

**Every Thurs from 24 Jan to 12 Dec.**

## **PUBLIC HOLIDAYS**

**Easter:** Good Friday on 29 March; Easter Monday 1 April

**Anzac Day:** Thurs 25 April

Notes: NMC = Notaras Multicultural Centre

This year we have ten full weeks of conversation in Term 3, with final event a week later.



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Girls Triathlon : Indigenous Sporting Events:  
Canberra Times Fun Run*

# 2014 Membership

## Dante Alighieri Society Membership

Dante Alighieri Society of Canberra Inc.  
PO Box 979  
CIVIC SQUARE ACT 2608

Receipt No.....

### Subscription for membership for one year commencing 1/1/2014:

- ☐ INDIVIDUAL      \$30  
☐ CONCESSION      \$15 (student/pensioner)  
☐ CHOIR              \$10 (in addition to membership)

Surname \_\_\_\_\_

Given Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Suburb \_\_\_\_\_ Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ (h) \_\_\_\_\_ (w) \_\_\_\_\_ (mob)

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

### Our newsletter is automatically made available to members electronically.

However, if you prefer the paper version, please tick this box ☐

Is this a renewal? Yes / No

Are you interested in assisting with the activities of the Society? Yes / No

**I agree to abide by the rules and regulations of the Dante Alighieri Society.  
Copies are available from the Dante office on request.**

**SIGNED:**

**DATE:**

*Please make cheque payable to: "Dante Alighieri Society of Canberra Inc"  
or deposit at the National Australian Bank*

Account name: **Dante Alighieri Society**      BSB: **082 902**      A/c No: **515 003 825**

**Please include your surname and initial as the reference when paying by EFT  
or send the deposit slip with your membership application form.**

**Your subscription will be completed when payment confirmation is received.**