



SOCIETÀ DANTE ALIGHIERI
IL MONDO IN ITALIANO
COMITATO DI CANBERRA

Dante Review

"To preserve and disseminate Italian language and culture"

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180 London Circuit Canberra City ACT 2601 - Ph: 02 6247 1884 - Email: info@danteact.org.au - Website: www.danteact.org.au - Issue: July/August 2015



Regular Events

**DMV rehearsals
on Thursday 5-7pm**

**Conversation groups
on Thursday 7-9pm**

**Enrolments for Term 3
starting in September
are now open!**

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**Let's go back to
Roman Times
for a night!**

ELIZABETH MINCHIN

**Emeritus Professor of Classics at the ANU
will give us a presentation on this topic**

**The garden in the ancient
Roman World:
what can we learn from
Pompeii and Herculaneum?**

**8 pm Thursday 16 July 2015
Function Room, 2nd Floor Notaras Multicultural Centre
180 London Cct Civic (entry via Civic Square)**

News from the office

Office Hours

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

10:30am - 2:00pm Tuesday to Friday

For enquiries please call the office on **6247 1884** or send us an email to **info@danteact.org.au**

Visit us at **www.danteact.org.au**

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

Library

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

All members are welcome!

Committee Members

President

Professor Franco Papandrea

Vice-Presidents

Yvette Devlin; Tamsin Hong

Treasurer

Mario Rosi

Committee members

Luigi Catizone, Francesca Foppoli, Giuliana Komnacki, Alessia La Cavera, Nicola Patini, Bruno Santagostino Baldi

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

2 July: conversation groups @7pm

9 July: conversation groups @7pm

16 July: conversation groups @7pm

16 July: Elizabeth Minchin's talk:
"The garden in the ancient Roman world"
@8pm (see p.1)

23 July: conversation groups @7pm

30 July: conversation groups @7pm

5 August: Term 2 ends

6 August: conversation groups @7pm



The Italian Language School (I.L.S.)
is an organisation that
**promotes and supports the study
of Italian language and culture
for students from 5 to 15 years of age**

When

Every Saturday 1.30pm to 4pm
during the ACT School Term

Venue

Gambarri Annex
Yarralumla Primary School

Cost

\$150 per child per term

Find us on Facebook!

For further information
italianlanguageschool@gmail.com

Dante Alighieri Society

President's report to Annual General Meeting 2015

by Franco Papandrea

I am pleased to report on some of the main activities undertaken by the Dante Alighieri Society over the past year.

As reported at last year's general meeting, the society has been experiencing an ongoing tight revenue situation following the Italian Government's ending its financial support of our Italian language teaching activities some three years ago. As a result, much of the committee's focus in the past 12 months has been concentrated on the continued implementation of a cost-containment strategy to restore a healthy balance between costs and lower revenues.

The Committee has always been reluctant to increase fees for the services provided to our members. As a non-profit society we see our mission as providing members with the best quality services at the lowest possible prices. We reluctantly introduced a nominal fee for our conversation classes and we are most grateful for the supporting response from those who regularly attend our Thursday night conversation groups. Although we became aware in early 2014 that our language class fees had not kept pace with increasing costs, as a gesture of goodwill towards our students, we decided to delay the necessary fee increase until the beginning of classes in 2015. Our prices had not changed for several years, and the increases we have introduced do no more than maintain our offering as the lowest price, best quality service in the Canberra market. Our finances continue to be tight, however, and we may well need to make some further modest adjustments to all our fees in the year ahead to ensure that the Society remains healthy and viable.

Looking forward, we anticipate the tight revenue situation will continue in the year

ahead. Demand for our courses seems to be depressed and our first term enrolments in 2015 are the lowest we have had for the past several years. As the general economic situation in Canberra is not promising, we do not expect dramatic improvement in demand for our classes in the two forthcoming terms this year. As part of our response to the current situation, we are looking at ways of improving the range of services we provide to members. Starting from term two, we will be offering private lessons to individuals or small groups (of 4 or fewer students) targeted mainly to those seeking to deepen their learning of Italian.

Since the beginning of 2013, most of our language classes have been held at the Italo-Australian Club. In addition to the shared cultural affinity between the Club and our Society, the arrangement was financially mutually beneficial. As the Club is about to embark on a major restructure of its facilities we need to once again relocate our classes starting from second term this year. With this in mind, we have been negotiating access to suitable classrooms at the Yarralumla English-Italian bilingual school. The school is very keen to pursue a mutually supportive agreement with our Society and we anticipate we will be able to conclude the negotiations shortly. Initially, the arrangement will apply only to language classes. The indisputable synergy between the Society's membership and the School's community is a major factor driving the development of a closer and more integrated relationship between the two organisations. As our understanding of each other grows in the months ahead, we will look at other ways of strengthening the relationship for mutual benefit.

The cultural program offers an attractive and

Dante Alighieri Society

President's report to Annual General Meeting 2015

by Franco Papandrea - cont'd

appealing range of cultural and social experiences to participating members. The many group attendances at the Italian Film Festival organised by the Society as part of a cross-promotional accord were a particular highlight of the variety of experiences that members have been able to enjoy. We are also exploring ways of expanding the variety of Italian cultural experiences accessible to members including the possibility of live teleconferences with Italian personalities. We recently (6 March) successfully tested this arrangement with a 'live' presentation by the acclaimed author and journalist, Pino Aprile, on the impact of Italian unification on the South of Italy. Our cultural/social program for 2015 will be marked by special celebrations for the 750th anniversary of the birth of Dante Alighieri.

To complement and expand our communications with members and the wider community we will soon be launching an i-newsletter. The new electronic-only publication will contain a mix of brief Italian and English articles highlighting issues and events of interest to the Italian community and friends of Italy in the wider Canberra region. Produced and edited by the Dante Office it will include contributions from other organisations and from readers. It will be freely available to members and non-members alike who opt to receive it by email. The Dante Review will not be affected and will continue to be published regularly as per its current schedule.

Our Choir continues to go from strength to strength and has now established itself as a favourite performance group in Canberra and the broader region. Following the success of its first CD of Italian music, a second CD has been recorded recently and will be available for sale shortly. Please show your apprecia-

tion to the choir by purchasing the CD and promoting it among your friends and contacts generally. I take this opportunity officially to record our gratitude to the organisers, musicians and members of the Choir and thank them for being wonderful ambassadors for the Society and Italian culture generally.

The Society is well served by the dedicated group of people that serve on the Committee. Each and every one of them makes a substantial contribution to the management of the Society's affairs. In particular, I thank our two vice presidents Yvette Devlin and Tam-sing Hong and our Treasurer Mario Rosi for their efforts and dedication to the Society. I also thank the other members of the Committee, Francesca Foppoli, who is taking on increased responsibilities in the management of teachers and classes, Alessia La Cavera, Bruno Santagostino Baldi, Luigi Catizone, Nicola Patini, Orlando di Iulio (often ably assisted by Catharina Koopman) and Davide Lucchetti who held the position of Secretary for some months at the beginning of the past year.

I would also like to acknowledge the support of our language class teachers and particularly of our volunteer conversation group leaders and of our office staff.

Last, but not least, I thank all the members of the Society for their continued support of the Society's efforts in Canberra.



*Dear Members,
Thank you to all of you
for your continued support of the
Society's efforts in Canberra!*

L'angolo della lingua

Language corner

by Yvette Devlin

In English you very commonly use *before/after* to indicate the timing of particular actions. Let's see how you translate them into Italian. The most important thing to remember is that instead of the participle, in Italian you must use the infinitive of the verb. The other important thing is that you use the preposition *di* with *prima* but not with *dopo*.

Before going to bed I have a cup of chamomile tea = **Prima di andare a letto bevo/prendo una tazza di camomilla.**

Before going out to play, Pierino must finish his homework = **Prima di uscire a giocare Pierino deve finire i compiti.**

After graduating, my daughter moved to Sydney for work = **Dopo essersi laureata, mia figlia si è trasferita a Sydney per lavoro** (note that *to graduate* becomes reflexive in Italian - *laurearsi*).

After reading the reviews of this film I decided not to go and see it = **Dopo aver letto le recensioni su questo film ho deciso di non andare a vederlo.**

The English verb *to stop* is a very useful word that applies to many situations. But it's not so straight forward in Italian. Look at the way it is translated in different contexts.

He stopped the car just before crashing into the guard rail = **ha fermato la macchina poco prima di sbattere contro la guardrail.**

I carabinieri hanno fermato i ragazzi che stavano per entrare senza biglietti = *the military police stopped the young people who were about to enter without tickets* (in these

cases *fermare* is used as a transitive verb ie you stop something or someone).

Mi sono fermata al semaforo = *I stopped at the traffic lights* (here the verb is reflexive – *fermarsi*).

My uncle stopped smoking after being diagnosed with lung cancer = **Mio zio ha smesso di fumare dopo aver ricevuto la diagnosi di cancro ai polmoni** (*to stop or quit doing something* = *smettere di fare qualcosa*).

Stop whingeing! = **Smettila di lamentarti!** (*lamentarsi di qualcosa* = *to complain/whinge about sthg*).

Children, stop ringing the bell! = **Bambini, smettete di suonare il campanello di casa!**

Per ridere un po'!



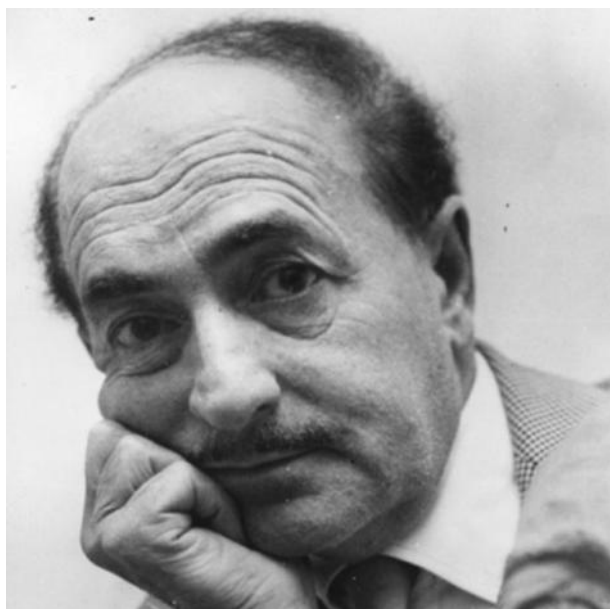
Cara, sei proprio sicura che questa sia la cura del ferro che mi ha ordinato il dottore?

-
- "Mamma, mamma sono felice perché domani ci trasferiremo nella scuola nuova!"
 - "E perché sei tanto contento?"
 - "Perché le nuove aule sono rotonde e la maestra non potrà più mettermi in castigo nell'angolo".

L'angolo della poesia

Poetry corner

by Yvette Devlin



The great 20th century poet and classicist Salvatore Quasimodo was born in Modica (Sicily) on 20 August 1901 and died in Naples on 14 June 1968. He first graduated from the local technical college then moved to Rome with the intention of completing an engineering degree. For economic reasons, however, he was forced to work but still pursued Latin and Greek studies. From Rome he moved to Florence where he met other poets including Montale. Over the years he moved again and again for work reasons - to Reggio Calabria, Imperia, Genoa and finally Milan, all the while continuing to write and publish his poetry and also translating Greek and Latin writings. His increasing moral and social engagement is clear in his more recent poetry. In 1959 he was awarded the Nobel prize for literature. He was also awarded two honorary doctorates - by the University of Messina and by Oxford University.

In another part of this Review I mention the bombing of Milan in August 1943 by the Allied air forces, which caused significant dam-

age to the city. Quasimodo was living in Milan at the time and wrote this touching poem.

Milano, agosto 1943

Invano cerchi tra la polvere,
povera mano, la città è morta.
È morta: s'è udito l'ultimo rombo
sul cuore del Naviglio. E l'usignolo
è caduto dall'antenna, alta sul convento,
dove cantava prima del tramonto.
Non scavate pozzi nei cortili:
i vivi non hanno più sete.
Non toccate i morti, così rossi, così gonfi:
lasciateli nella terra delle loro case:
la città è morta, è morta.

This is a translation by Canberra poet Geoff Page and Loredana Nardi-Ford in *Day after day – Selected Quasimodo Poems*.

Milan, August 1943

Sad hand, in vain you search the dust. / Milan
is dead. / It's dead: the final roar / was heard in
the heart of the Naviglio. And the nightingale /
fell from the spire on the convent / where it
sang before twilight. / Don't bother to sink
new wells in the courtyards: / the living are no
longer thirsty. / Don't touch the dead, so red,
so bloated: / leave them there in the soil of
their homes: / the city is dead; it is dead.



Cenno storico

A bit of history

by Yvette Devlin

The bombing of Milan

During World War II Italy was the target of widespread bombing raids by the British and American Allied forces intent on ridding Italy of fascism. Milan was hit on several nights in the summer of 1943: on **8, 13, 14 and 15 August**. By the end of that summer, Milan was left in ruins and its population in shock. Many of Milan's key buildings had been damaged by the raids including the Duomo, the Galleria Vittorio Emanuele, the opera house La Scala, the royal palace and the church of Santa Maria delle Grazie. It is at the back of this church, on one of the walls of the old convent refectory, that Leonardo painted *The Last Supper*. Fortunately most of the painting was saved as it had been sand-bagged for protection.

Milano bombardata

Durante la II Guerra Mondiale l'Italia divenne il bersaglio di bombardamenti mirati a debellare il fascismo. Milano fu colpita duramente nel corso di quattro notti di bombardamenti nell'estate del 1943: l'8, il 13, il 14 e il 15 agosto. Alla fine di quell'estate Milano era in rovina e la sua popolazione in shock. Molti degli edifici e dei palazzi principali erano stati danneggiati incluso il Duomo, la Galleria Vittorio Emanuele, il teatro lirico La Scala, il palazzo reale e la chiesa di Santa Maria delle Grazie. È sul retro di questa chiesa, su un muro del refettorio del convento, che Leonardo dipinse *L'ultima cena*. Per fortuna la maggior parte di questo dipinto non fu danneggiato perché era stato protetto da sacchi di sabbia.

Modi di dire

Sayings

by Francesca Foppoli

L'acqua nei modi di dire

Perché non facciamo una sorpresa a Luigi? Mi raccomando, acqua in bocca!

Why don't we surprise Luigi? No word to anyone!

Non esagerare, non è un grosso problema. Fanno una tempesta in un bicchier d'acqua!

Don't exaggerate, it's not a big problem. They are making a storm in a tea cup.

Mi dispiace dirlo, ma il nuovo sistema informatico fa acqua da tutte le parti.

Sorry to say that the new IT system has holes from start to finish.

È una buona idea, ma non pensare di aver scoperto l'acqua calda.

It's a good idea but don't think you have discovered the wheel.

Gianni è una persona di talento, ma si perde in un bicchier d'acqua.

Gianni is a talented person but he can drown in an inch of water.

Crisi economica: piccole imprese, con l'acqua alla gola, sono obbligate a calare i prezzi.

Economic crisis: in dire straits, small businesses are forced to lower prices.



750th Anniversary of Dante Alighieri's birth

Il 750esimo anniversario della nascita di Dante

by Susan Reye

To celebrate the 750th anniversary of Dante Alighieri's birth, a special event was held on 18 June 2015. A large audience, including the Italian ambassador, heard a presentation by Gino Moliterno on Dante's epic poem *La Divina Commedia* and a recitation from the work by Mario Serenellini.



Gino Moliterno focused on visual interpretations of *La Divina Commedia*, from medieval manuscripts to cinema and television

Gino's presentation took an unusual approach to Dante's great work. As he commented, much has already been said about the beauties of the text and about Dante as "father" of the Italian language. Instead, Gino focused on visual interpretations of the work, from medieval manuscripts to cinema and television. Gino is particularly well qualified to deal with this subject. He is Senior Lecturer in Film and New Media at ANU, but previously he was for some years a lecturer in Italian literature, including the works of Dante.

The history of visual representations of the *Commedia* is almost as old as the text. As soon as it appeared in the early 14th century, the *Commedia* (consisting of the *Inferno*, the *Purgatorio*, and the *Paradiso*) became phenomenally popular. Very quickly, artists felt impelled to represent episodes in the work

pictorially. Within 12 to 15 years, illustrated editions started to appear.

Among the illuminations of 14th and 15th century manuscripts that Gino showed us, the works of Bartolomeo di Fruosino and those in the Yates Thompson Codex (1444-1452) were particularly splendid. A striking feature of the Yates Thompson illuminations is that often the same characters appear a number of times in the same frame, showing different parts of the action. So a single illumination does not just capture a single moment; it narrates the story, like a comic strip.

One of the most famous artists to illustrate the *Commedia* was Sandro Botticelli in the 1480s. He did not succeed in his attempt to illustrate the entire work, but 92 drawings survive. These, too, depict characters moving through time in the same frame, in a way that we would describe today as "cinematic".

The *Commedia* itself refers to the ability of the visual arts to tell a story, as in the parts of the *Purgatorio* dealing with the expiation of the sin of pride. In Canto X, Dante describes wonderfully life-like sculptures that recount stories from the Bible and ancient Rome, while in Canto XII pictures on the ground conjure up ancient myths.

Artists have continued to be drawn to the task of illustrating the *Commedia*. They include, in the 1820s, the English mystic poet and artist, William Blake. Probably the most influential of all the illustrators of the *Commedia* is Gustave Doré. Editions with his dramatic, atmospheric, and highly detailed black and white drawings were first published in the 1860s.

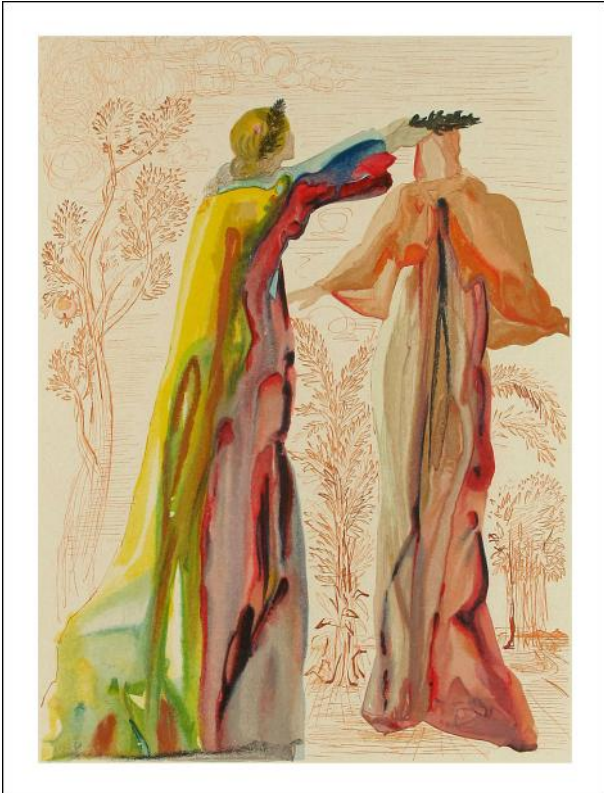
In the 1950s, Spanish surrealist Salvador Dali was commissioned by the Italian Government to illustrate an edition of the *Commedia*. Fol-

750th Anniversary of Dante Alighieri's birth

Il 750esimo anniversario della nascita di Dante

by Susan Reye - cont'd

lowing a negative public reaction, it withdrew the commission, but Dali went ahead and produced almost a whole edition.



Virgil's last words, Salvador Dalí (1951-1960)

Clearly, there was already a strong visual tradition associated with the *Commedia* by the time cinema began. The Italian film industry got underway in about 1905. It is a sign of how central the *Commedia* is to Italian culture that in 1909 work was already underway on a silent film version of the *Inferno*. It was released in 1911 by Milano Films. Faithful to Dante's text, and lasting an exceptional 64 minutes - the average for a feature film at the time was only 20 minutes - it was extremely popular both in Italy and abroad.

Visually, the film is based on the Doré illustrations. Gino showed us the part of the film devoted to Canto V of the *Inferno*, in which the souls of carnal sinners, including Fran-

cesca da Rimini and her lover Paolo, are constantly tossed through the air by violent winds. This episode in the film includes the first cinematic "flashback", in which Francesca describes their love affair.

Subsequent films relating to the *Commedia* have tended to deal with individual episodes or characters, or to introduce depictions of Dante's version of hell into modern stories for moralistic reasons. Such films were often not particularly serious or highbrow. They include, for example, *Toto all'Inferno*.

A more serious venture was a 1990 television version of the *Commedia*, by Tom Phillips and Peter Greenaway. However, the project was abandoned after 8 Cantos, when the producers pulled the plug. Gino showed us this version of the Paolo and Francesca episode. It is strikingly modern and experimental, even including material

Mario Serenellini gave us an expressive recitation of Dante's original text of Paolo and Francesca's story



750th Anniversary of Dante Alighieri's birth

Il 750esimo anniversario della nascita di Dante

by Susan Reye - cont'd

external to Dante's text, in a way that echoes the experience of reading that text with foot-notes.

Mario Serenellini then gave us an expressive and moving recitation of Dante's original text of Paolo and Francesca's story. Though an engineer by profession, Mario has been fascinated by Dante ever since, as a small child, he watched his uncle recite parts of the *Commedia* from memory. The story of Paolo and Francesca is a favourite of his. He pointed out that, while the violent winds of hell generally drive the souls of carnal sinners apart (just as their lust had driven them together), Paolo and Francesca remain united.

Francesca, telling their story, refers the cause of their damnation as love, not sin, and she does not repent.

At the end of the evening, there was a toast to Dante Alighieri on the occasion of his 750th birthday, and an opportunity to admire a display containing a number of the illustrations by Gustave Doré and Salvador Dali.

Note: many of the illustrations of the Commedia can be seen online at: http://www.worldofdante.org/gallery_main.html You can also leaf through the whole of the Yates Thompson manuscript at: http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=yates_thompson_ms_36_fs001ar.

Gino Moliterno, the Italian Ambassador Pier Francesco Zazo, Franco Papandrea and Mario Serenellini



Dante Musica Viva - Know your choir

Profile of David Wilson



A long and slow awakening to the power of (almost) all kinds of music

When I was about four and a half, I would apparently regale the rest of my family with oft repeated renditions of the two song fragments reproduced above, whose words and tunes I still remember quite well. Apart from nursery rhymes, which I must have picked up at an earlier age, these are my very earliest memories of music.

The words are obviously mondegreens - i.e. mistaken interpretations of misheard or misunderstood lyrics. The first is from *Rose, Rose, I love you*, which was a hit for Frankie Laine in 1951. When I listened to his interpretation on YouTube some 10 years or so back, I was flabbergasted to find that nowhere did it contain anything at all resembling the words "China Bobby and sing". I finally solved this conundrum, however, when, as part of the preparation for this article, I did a web search for a score, and discovered a version in which the second phrase was "Chinese Romeo sing". This presumably must have been the phrase I had heard and was trying to reproduce with "China Bobby and sing".

I have never been able to identify the source of the second fragment, in which I pronounced the word "booses" in the third measure like "bosoms", but without an "m". Not having a particularly comprehensive vocabulary at the time, I didn't have much of an idea what the good people of Dintzman's Dun were supposed to be getting up to, except that it might have had some possible, if rather uncertain, connection with dancing or bosoms, or perhaps both.

The inquisitiveness which later led me to study science and mathematics manifested itself at a very early age. One thing which particularly fascinated me was hearing that falling cats always land on their feet, so I decided to perform some scientific experiments on one of the family pets. These consisted of hurling the poor animal back first from the top of the back steps of our house onto the path below. The fact that it did always land on its feet only increased my fascination, but its rapidly increasing reluctance to play any further role in my scientific education called a premature halt to the whole enterprise. I therefore turned my attention to some more cooperative experimental subjects from my mother's cutlery collection.

I would carefully observe the effect of gravity on spoons by dropping them through a hole

Dante Musica Viva - Know your choir

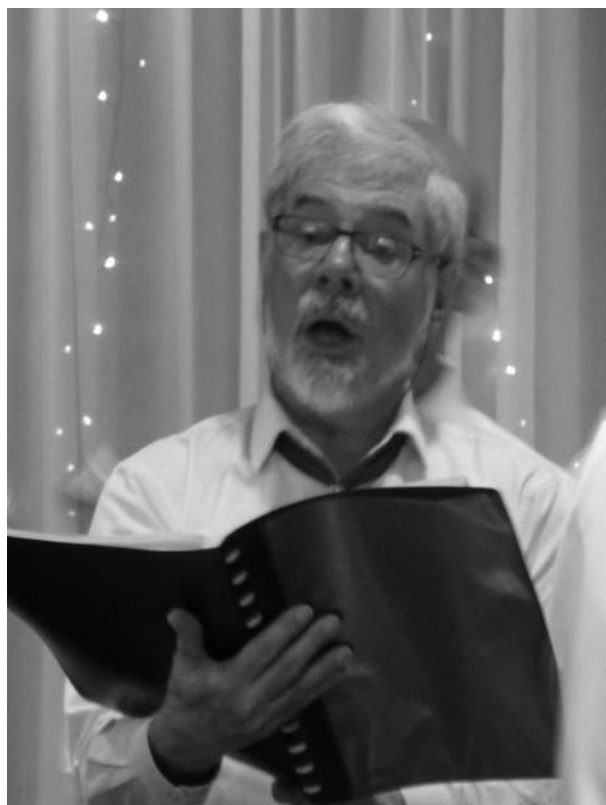
Profile of David Wilson - cont'd

in the floor of the back room of our house. My mother's mystification at the gradually diminishing size of her collection of spoons was eventually dispelled when my father had some reason to inspect the storage space under the house, where he was astonished to find a pile of the missing spoons immediately beneath the hole through which I had dropped them.

As a very young child I think I was reasonably fond of music, but I can't recall having anywhere near the same interest in or enthusiasm for it as I did for dogs, steam trains, aeroplanes, ships, football, and models of all forms of mechanical transport. Until I had thought more deeply about it, I would have said that we weren't a particularly musical family during my early childhood. But, on reviewing the pieces of music I can remember being played on my parents' radiogram during this period, I realise they must have had a profound influence in developing my own musical tastes.

My father had come from a very musical family. His mother played the banjo, his father the concertina, one of his sisters was a keen cellist, and another a keen violinist. He himself had learnt to play the piano at an advanced level and with sufficient skill to win prizes. He nevertheless stood in awe of his mother's ability to play a tune by ear immediately after hearing it for the first time. Since he was never able to acquire this skill himself, he would many years later adopt an unjustifiably dismissive attitude towards his own very considerable musical talent.

Shortly after we moved from Sydney to Adelaide - when I was 7 years old - we



David Wilson at Dante Musica Viva's third annual concert

acquired an upright piano, which my father would continue to play regularly for some years. About the same time my parents bought a new radiogram on which one of the earliest songs I can remember being played often was Bill Haley and His Comets' 1954 hit, *Rock around the Clock*. This is the only song from the contemporary hit parades I can remember my parents ever owning a record of.

My parents' record collection eventually grew to contain a wide selection of classical instrumental and orchestral music. I can't remember it containing much classical vocal or choral music until long after I had left

Dante Musica Viva - Know your choir

Profile of David Wilson - cont'd

home - unless one counts the operettas of Gilbert and Sullivan and Sigmund Romberg as being “classical”. Most of the vocal and choral music in their collection was of lighter genres, such as the Gilbert and Sullivan and Romberg operettas already mentioned, musicals such as *Showboat*, *South Pacific*, *My fair lady* etc., and songs by such popular artists as Gracie Fields, Bing Crosby, Paul Robeson, Nelson Eddy and Jeanette MacDonald.

Although I can remember listening to hit parades on a radio I had received as a present, and I enjoyed all of the music in my parents' record collection, I had nevertheless developed a strong preference for classical orchestral and instrumental music by my early teens. By my early twenties I had become something of a musical snob, looking with disdain on almost anything apart from classical orchestral and instrumental music written between the mid 18th and late 19th centuries. I think there was one piece of music which played a far greater role than any other in my recovery from this disease. This was Gustav Holst's orchestral suite, *The Planets*.

The fourth movement of this suite, *Jupiter - bringer of jollity*, was a piece of music I had come to like very much from hearing it on one of my father's records. So when a version of the whole suite was issued by the *World Record Club*, a few years after I had joined it, I wondered whether it would be worth getting a copy. It was, after all, written around 1915, and according to my ideas at that time, anything written that late wasn't likely to be much good. I was aware, however, of some wonderful 19th-century music still being

written well into the 20th century (by Rachmaninov, for instance), so I decided to risk some of my hard-earned money on buying a copy of *The Planets*.

When I played my new acquisition through for the first time I was really, really disappointed. Apart from *Jupiter*, which I was already familiar with, there was nothing else in *The Planets* that I thought worth listening to ever again. I would nevertheless occasionally trot out the record just to listen to *Jupiter*, and to see if the rest of it really was as awful as I had originally thought. On one of these occasions, although I hadn't really been paying much attention, I was suddenly struck by the thought “Say, that planet's almost as good as *Jupiter*” (it was probably *Uranus*). I therefore started listening to the record more often, and gradually I came to recognise all the other planets as being nearly as good as (or maybe even better than) *Jupiter* and *Uranus*. Thus, over the course of a year or so, *The Planets* had risen in my estimation from being almost beneath contempt to being one of my favourite pieces of music.

From this and similar experiences with other pieces of music, I have now become much more reluctant to describe any music as being “not worth listening to”, preferring instead to refer to it as “music I haven't yet learnt to appreciate”. I have nevertheless recently received a rude reminder that I probably still have a long way to go before I can be considered truly eclectic in my musical tastes.

Late one Saturday night in November last year, I returned to my brand new Subaru Impreza after a night out. As soon as I turned

Dante Musica Viva - Know your choir

Profile of David Wilson - cont'd

on the ignition, the most hideous noise erupted from what appeared to be the direction of the front right wheel well. The closest I can come to describing this noise is as being like the sound of the grating of gears that results from mistiming the release of the clutch pedal in a car with manual transmission. Needless to say, the disappointment I felt was far, far worse than that I had experienced on listening to *The Planets* for the first time. I was somewhat relieved, therefore, when I discovered that the noise was actually emanating from the radio. On further investigating the extent of the apparent damage to the radio, I found that the noise seemed to be limited to just the one station - ABC Classic FM. By this time it had degenerated to a steady hiss punctuated by a series of regular clicks. With even greater relief, I then suddenly realised the significance of the time: between 10:30pm on Saturday night and 12:30am on Sunday morning ABC Classic FM used to broadcast a programme somewhat charitably titled *New Music up Late*. Although I was still a little sceptical that what I was hearing really could have been described as “music”, a few minutes later the voice of Julian Day indeed informed me I had been listening to *Switches and Hose* by Dale Gorfinkel. With all due respect to Mr Gorfinkel, however, I fear *Switches and Hose* is destined to remain forever in the category of music I haven’t yet learnt to appreciate.

A more accessible genre of music which I was somewhat slow in learning to appreciate is grand opera. My parents’ record collection contained none that I can recall, and my early acquaintance with it was limited to some of the more popular arias and choruses that were played regularly on the radio. When I was in my early thirties, however, and possibly

having become more sentimental than I had been as a younger man, I found that it had the power to move me to tears. The first time I can recall this occurring was in a wonderful live performance of Gounod’s *Faust*, in the late 70s in Melbourne. During the final trio, just before Marguerite’s apotheosis, I found it impossible to hold back the tears. Since then, there have been several other arias and choruses which have had the same effect.

Until I was about 50 (in 1996), my enjoyment of music was entirely passive, since I had never had any formal musical education, never played a musical instrument, and was unimpressed by occasional tape recordings of myself singing. At various times I have participated enthusiastically in a wide variety of other recreations, without demonstrating much talent in any of them. They included Australian rules football, squash, orienteering, chess and bridge. Once I had concluded that the lady of my dreams had not the slightest interest in fulfilling them (some years after this should have already been obvious), I sublimated my frustrated desire by learning to fly light aircraft, eventually securing an unrestricted private pilot’s licence. Although flying light aircraft was a very enjoyable pastime, I quickly discovered that the expense to fun ratio was rather high, and decided to try and lower it a bit by taking up hang gliding. The highlight of my hang gliding career was a 3-hour flight of 80km, during the 1986 Victorian hang-gliding championship. At the start of this flight I had the great pleasure of sharing my first thermal briefly with a wedge-tailed eagle. As I circled left, this magnificent creature accompanied me, just a couple of metres off my right wing-tip. I would love to have enjoyed its company for a lot longer than

Dante Musica Viva - Know your choir

Profile of David Wilson - cont'd

I did, but as soon as the thermal gained strength, my companion shot upwards so rapidly that it had disappeared almost before I had time to blink.

About the time I turned 50 I finally discovered that singing in a choir could be great fun. A friendly colleague (thank you, Elke) had persuaded me to join *The Defence Choir*, which gives two performances of carols each year before Christmas. Sometime after I joined it, it also started doing mid-winter performances as well. Stewart Skelt, Julia Mayne and Katrin Hingee, the three colleagues who served as directors of this choir while I was in it, were all excellent at getting the best out of it, while making it a real pleasure to participate. Unlike the *Dante Musica Viva Choir*, though, *The Defence Choir* did eventually develop proper standards for participation, which Katrin formulated as “not singing off-key, loudly, and often”. While she was prepared to tolerate violations of any two of these criteria, she threatened to give marching orders to anyone who violated all three. By the time she took over as director, though, I had learnt from Stewart that if a bass raised his eyebrows and squeezed his buttocks together when trying to sing notes above middle C, he could look and feel as though he were hitting them without squawking. I’m sure Katrin was too good a musician to be fooled by this, but she was also kind enough never to let on.

At the end of 2003, a good friend, Denis Oram, who had been learning the guitar for some time, gave me one as a Christmas present. As I had come to regret never having learned to play a musical instrument, this was a wonderful surprise, and I decided

immediately to engage a teacher with the hope of avoiding the bad habits I was sure to fall into if I tried to teach myself. I was lucky enough to make inquiries at the now defunct *Casals Academy*, located near my home in Braddon. Its head of guitar was Mark Norton, a very good guitarist and teacher, who has remained my teacher ever since. While I haven’t entirely avoided developing bad habits (such as not practising regularly enough, for instance), they aren’t ones for which a teacher could be assigned any share of responsibility.

Denis and I would get together regularly to play guitar duets, and we both joined the *Canberra Guitar Ensemble* when it was formed in early 2008, under the auspices of the *Canberra Classical Guitar Society* founded a couple of months earlier by Dan Sloss and Tim Kain. Both the original director of the *Ensemble*, Steve Allen, and its current director, Leslie Spencer, as well as the other members of the *Ensemble*, have made this a very rewarding experience.

When the *Dante Musica Viva* was formed in late 2005, under the direction of Francesco Sofo and Corinne Tarnawsky, I was sufficiently confident of my ability to avoid singing off-key, loudly and often that I jumped at the chance of becoming a founding member. It’s a decision which has provided me with an immensely enjoyable experience.

*If you want to listen
to the Dante Musica Viva choir live,
see page 20 to find out when the
Next performance will take place!*

Io... e l'inglese

The English language... and me!

di Sabrina Casu



Prima di partire per l'Australia ho letto decine di racconti scritti da italiani che, soprattutto in questi ultimi anni, hanno lasciato l'Italia per cercare all'estero nuove opportunità. Più si avvicinava il giorno della partenza, più mi divertivo ad immaginare che cosa avrei potuto scrivere anch'io, un giorno, dall'Australia!

Avrei insegnato italiano o forse francese... anzi no, non sarebbe stato possibile! "Chissà quanti insegnanti italiani e francesi ci sono già a Canberra" - pensavo -. "Inoltre, finché non conoscerò perfettamente l'inglese, non potrò superare nessun colloquio!".

Allora potevo a malapena ipotizzare cosa sarebbe successo... Sicuramente non avrei mai potuto immaginare che, dopo soli dieci giorni dal mio arrivo a Canberra, avrei dovuto affrontare uno tra gli eventi più temuti: il colloquio di lavoro! Considerato che avrei dovuto sostenerlo in inglese, quello che per molti è un evento normalmente stressante si è trasformato per me in un incubo, dal quale ho tentato di sottrarmi in tutti i modi.

Una mattina, mentre mi godevo la mia

colazione a base di tè, marmellata e fette biscottate (trovate al supermercato dopo giorni di "caccia al tesoro"), squilla il telefono. Non può essere mio marito, è seduto di fronte a me. Non può essere la mia amica italiana di Canberra, il suo nome apparirebbe sullo schermo. Panico. Non posso rispondere, non capirei niente... Mio marito mi osserva e, contrariato, mi dice che prima o poi dovrò abituarli anche a parlare al telefono in inglese. Appunto, tra il prima e il poi scelgo la seconda opzione. Quarto squillo... ho la soluzione! Mi viene in mente che gli australiani hanno l'abitudine di lasciare messaggi nella segreteria telefonica. Quest'abitudine, che gli italiani non hanno affatto, mi torna molto comoda. Ascolterò il messaggio vocale con calma e scoprirò se si trattava di una telefonata importante o meno.

Così, se da un lato ho evitato la *conversation* al telefono, ora mi eserciterò nell'attività di *listening*. L'esercizio mi mette in difficoltà perché il parlante, una donna, ha un accento asiatico. Tuttavia, non mi sfugge l'unica



Io... e l'inglese

The English language... and me!

di Sabrina Casu - continua

parola che non avrei voluto sentire: “*interview*”. Credo voglia incontrarmi per un colloquio, ma prima di farmi prendere dal panico verifico sul dizionario il significato di un altro termine, “*meet up*”. Ho studiato che il verbo “*to meet*” significa “*incontrarsi*”, ma se c’è una preposizione dopo... si salvi chi può, tutto può essere! Questi *phrasal verbs* mi faranno diventare matta! Il verbo in questione significa “*incontrarsi*”, esattamente come “*to meet*”, ma allora perché non ha usato direttamente “*meet*”? Sono nervosa.

Mi siedo sul divano, cerco di ritrovare la ragione e rifletto su quale sia la cosa migliore da fare. Per ora ho solo immaginato che un ipotetico datore di lavoro voglia incontrarmi, ma dovrei riascoltare il messaggio per capirne i dettagli (orario, luogo e giorno dell’incontro). Penso a quanto sia vero quello che ripeto spesso ai miei studenti prima di fare le attività di comprensione orale: durante l’ascolto non è necessario capire tutto, l’essenziale è cogliere le idee importanti, talvolta alcune parole chiave (*interview* e *meet up* nel mio “sfortunato” caso) si rivelano utili per formulare ipotesi e congetture.

Ma ora arriva il bello, perché dovrò richiamarla e darle la mia disponibilità ad incontrarla. Penso che se la richiamassi subito mi risponderebbe quasi sicuramente, mentre se aspettassi un po’... forse potrei trovarla impegnata e, in quel caso, potrei evitare ancora una volta un’imbarazzante conversazione! Così decido cosa dire nel messaggio vocale che lascerò in segreteria, nel caso in cui la fortuna fosse dalla mia parte: *Hi, this is Sabrina. I got your message, thank you! It would be great to meet you, see you then! Have a g’day!*

Richiamo. Uno, due, tre, quattro squilli... e segreteria! Fantastico, ci vuole un po’ di fortuna ogni tanto! Lascio il messaggio e tiro un sospiro di sollievo. Non passa neanche un minuto e squilla di nuovo il telefono. Il numero è sempre lo stesso: ora sono fregata!



Inizio a sudare freddo e ho le palpitazioni... non ho scelta, devo rispondere e così faccio! La voce mi si strozza in gola, deglutisco in maniera irregolare e cerco di guadagnare tempo per pensare alla correttezza delle mie frasi usando espressioni come *you know*, *I mean*. Vado avanti e indietro per la stanza aspettando con ansia di sentire la frase “*ok, see you!*”, o qualcosa di simile, che metta fine a questa tortura.

Chiudo il telefono e invece di rilassarmi inizio a tormentarmi pensando a quali errori ho fatto, a cosa avrei dovuto dire al posto di... Insomma, la tortura continua! Mi viene in mente un altro consiglio che spesso do ai miei studenti: non preoccupatevi troppo degli errori, l’importante è comunicare e farsi capire, perché se il messaggio passa all’interlocutore significa che l’obiettivo comunicativo è stato raggiunto.

Primo obiettivo raggiunto dunque, il secondo è ottenere il lavoro. Ma questa è un’altra storia!

Terroni?

Undeserved vilification of Southern Italians

by Luigi Catizone

The Italian version of this article was published in the last review. Due to lack of space the English translation, which benefited a little bit from Yvette's help, could not be included at the time. Here it is.

The Dante Alighieri Society of Canberra promotes the dissemination of the Italian language and culture through several initiatives: formal language courses, conversation groups and lectures on topics chosen in order to raise the knowledge of Italian issues and personalities. It also publishes this *Review* with articles in Italian and English, and very soon it's going to publish a newsletter to inform all subscribers about news and events of general interest.

The Dante has now launched a new cultural initiative: Skype-supported videoconferences with important Italian figures able to update us on hot topics in Italy.

The first videoconference was held on 6 March 2015 at the Italo-Australian Club, which kindly hosted us, and with the collaboration of several Italian regions, especially Calabria e Campania. We appreciated the attendance of the Italian Ambassador, His Excellency Pier Francesco Zazo.

The first invited speaker was Pino Aprile, journalist, writer and essayist, born in Puglia. He was editor of the magazine *Gente* and vice editor of another magazine, *Oggi*. He also worked with Sergio Zavoli on the Italian television program titled *Viaggio al Sud* and on the weekly program TV7. He wrote *Il trionfo dell'apparenza*, about the disappoint-

ing debut of the third millennium, *Elogio dell'imbecille*, *Elogio dell'errore*. All books have received very significant attention and have been translated in many countries. In particular, the *Elogio dell'imbecille* has been a hit for a long time in Spain. He also edited the magazine *Fare vela* and wrote several books about sea and sailing, like *Il mare minore*, *A mari estremi* e *Mare, uomini, passioni*.

His greatest editorial success has been the essay titled *Terroni* (more than 500,000 copies sold). This title is untranslatable in English and indicates a poor, rural, uneducated person, and carries a derogatory connotation. He subsequently wrote others essays - *Giù al sud*, *Mai più terroni*, *Il sud puzza*. The last book published is *Terroni 'ndernescional*.

In all these essays, with extensive historical documentation the author explains how, until Italy's unification in 1861, the people of Southern Italy were more evolved and wealthier than those in the North. A progressive pillaging of the wealth of the Southern population to advantage the North followed, and this situation persists today.

Aprile's opinion, which is shared by more and more historians, is that the unification of Italy came about as a consequence of the economic needs of Piedmont and the Savoy royal family as a result of very expensive wars. They wanted to take possession of the very great wealth (in solid gold) of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies and the Bourbon family. Furthermore, there was England's interest in freedom of movement in the Mediterranean Sea in view of the imminent opening of the Suez Canal. The canal opened in 1869. It's

Terroni?

Undeserved vilification of Southern Italians

by Luigi Catizone - cont'd

for these reasons that England supported Piedmont's and Garibaldi's military expedition.

During the joint military campaign there were many historically-established massacres, including massacres of civilians. Some historians consider these events a real colonization which led to the dispossession of the South for the benefit of the industries and the economy of the North. This brought about the brigandage phenomenon; mass emigration towards all corners of the world; an increase in organized crime and eventually the cultural, social and economic impoverishment of Southern Italy.

The topic of the videoconference dealt with these very issues. Its title was "*Terroni? Undeserved vilification of Southern Italians*".

For about an hour the speaker argued his point of view with great passion to a very interested audience. As expected, this original and unusual interpretation of the Italian history of the last 170 years left everyone a little disoriented: it is a perspective that differs from the one presented in the official versions of history. However, this new interpretation is meeting with growing acceptance in Italy.

The speaker made a very interesting observation: the history of Southern Italy is in many ways similar to the history of American Indians, Australian Aborigines and the residents of East Germany but with the important difference that their Governments have apologized to all these peoples. The same thing has not happened in Italy.

Pino Aprile then explained that only the es-

tablishment of a truly united and fair Europe could solve the economic and social problems of Italy's South, problems which have developed over many decades.

During the discussion that followed the speech, Pino was adamant that this novel view of history is absolutely not aimed at pitting Northerners against Southerners but simply at raising awareness of how history actually unfolded at and since unification.

He also hoped that a new and unbiased political class, from whatever Italian region it originates, could address the severe differences between the two parts of the country, differences which also have a negative impact on Italy's global economic position.

The audience highly appreciated this first videoconference. Technically everything worked very well, with satisfactory audio and video.

The Dante Alighieri Society plans to hold more events of this type in the coming months, both in Italian and in English, in the hope that an increasing number of Australians and Italo-Australians will take an interest in Italy's current affairs.



Our busy choir

Un anno ricco di eventi

by Yvette Devlin

Dante Musica Viva, now over ten years old, has been extremely busy during May and has a number of engagements for the rest of the year.

Its second CD – *Nostalgia d'Italia 2* – was launched early in the month. It's available for purchase (\$15) from the office.

On 2 May it travelled to Griffith in the Riverina to give a two-hour concert focussing mainly on folk and popular Italian/regional songs. The local Italian community supported us wholeheartedly. Some 200 people attended the concert and were so delighted that they asked us to return as soon as possible.

On 24 May it held its third annual concert at the Italo-Australian Club. The repertoire for this audience extended beyond folk/popular Italian/regional pieces – four well-known opera arias were included to the delight of the audience. The most popular pieces (judging by the applause) continue to be *Libiam* and *O'sole mio*.

The third major performance of the months was on 31 May at the Italian Cultural Centre on the occasion of the community celebrations of Italy's national day. It performed a variety of popular and lyric pieces.

For the rest of the year, it plans to sing in June at the Uniting Church arts and crafts fund-raising concert in Yarralumla; in September at a special concert at the Llewellyn Hall to raise funds for Canberra Hospital's Neo-natal Intensive Care Foundation; on 3 October at the Italian ambassador's residence during a dinner to celebrate Dante's 750th anniversary; in November at the first Festa Italiana in the Embassy Gardens (8 Nov), at the Italian Community Festival (15 Nov in Queanbeyan) and the end-of-year function of the Dante Society (26 Nov).

I urge all of you to support our dedicated choir that does such a great job of promoting Italian language and culture through music!

The Dante Musica Viva choir performing at Damiano Hall for its third annual concert



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Enrolments close on Monday September 7, 2015

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Ambasciata d'Italia a Canberra

2015 Cultural Program

8 March: 'Italy, Art, History and Emotions' – an exhibition of the works of Princess Nike Borghese at the Crisp Galleries

21 April: Luciano Bellini – piano recital at the ANU School of Music

3 June: Christian Leotta – piano concert at the ANU School of Music

4 July: Henry Laska and Nicholas Milton with the Canberra Symphony Orchestra – an evening with Puccini

22 September to 11 October: Lavazza's Italian Film Festival at Palace Cinema

10-11 October: Windows to the World: Open Days at the Italian Embassy

24 October: Settimana della Lingua: Italian Language in Music and the Music of Italian – Conference at the Italian Embassy

October: Riccardo Minasi – a violin concert at the ANU School of Music (precise date yet to be determined)

8 November: Festa Italiana in the Embassy Gardens

December: selected contemporary artworks from the Farnesina collection at the residence of the ambassador (precise date yet to be determined)

For further information: Facebook: Education & Culture Italian Embassy Canberra or annarita.tamponi@esteri.it

2015 CALENDAR OF ACTIVITIES

FORMAL COURSES: 6-8 pm Italo-Aust Club in Forrest, Yarralumla Primary School or Dante Library in the National Multicultural Centre, Civic

Term 1	Tues 17 /Wed 18 Feb to Tues 21/Wed 22 Apr	(10 wks then a 5-wk break)
Term 2	Tues 2/Wed 3 June to Tues 4/Wed 5 Aug	(10 wks then a 5-wk break)
Term 3	Tues 15/Wed 16 Sept to Tues 17/Wed 18 Nov	(10 wks)

THURSDAY CONVERSATION GROUPS: 7-9 pm Function Room NMC, Civic

Term 1	Thurs 19 Feb to Thurs 23 Apr	(10 wks then 5-wk break)
Term 2	Thurs 4 June to 6 August	(10 wks then 5-wk break)
Term 3	Thurs 17 Sept to 19 Nov (10 wks).	Total: 30 weeks

CULTURAL ACTIVITIES: 8-9 pm Function Room, NMC, Civic

5 March: Grazia Miccichè (ANU) - The art of cooking and eating in Italy

6 March: videoconference with Italian author Pino Aprile: Terroni? Undeserved vilification of Southern Italians

9 April: David Wilson: Galileo v the Church – who was the hero and who the villain?

18 June: Gino Moliterno (ANU): celebrating the 750th anniversary of Dante's birth

16 July: Elizabeth Minchin (ANU): The garden in the ancient Roman world

1 October: Mathew Trinca of the National Museum of Australia: The Italians in Australian Museums: how we represent the Italian diaspora through objects and their stories

11 October: readings of Italian poetry – at Manning Clark House

29 October: Christopher Latham: Puccini – the populist revolutionary

26 November: end-of year function

AGM: 23 April (8-9 pm Function Room, NMC, Civic)

CHOIR REHEARSALS: every Thursday from 29 January to 10 December (5-7 pm Function Room, NMC, Civic)

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS: (all during our term break) Easter: Good Friday on 3 April; Easter Monday 6 April; Anzac Day: Friday 25 April

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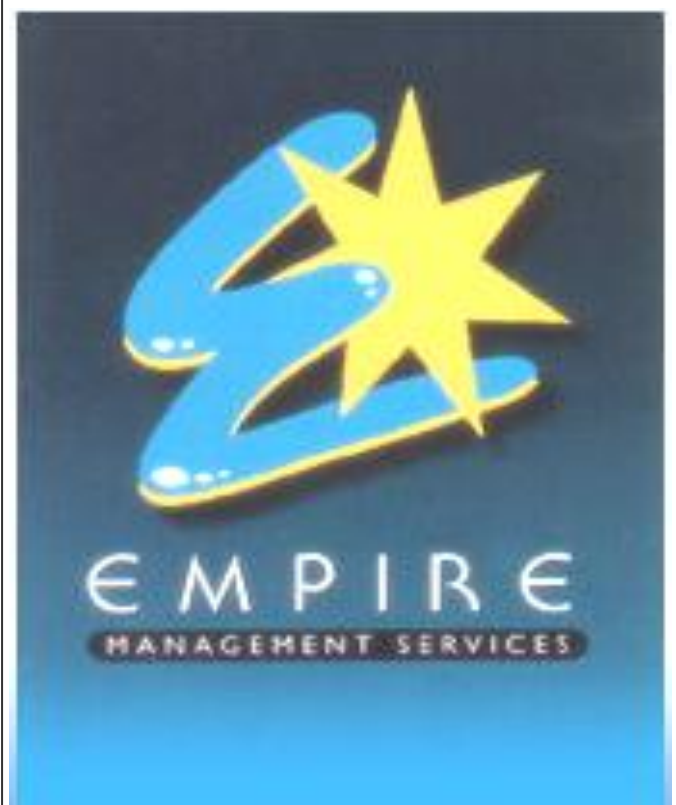
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