



# tradizioni

NEWSLETTER OF THE ITALIAN FOLK ART FEDERATION OF AMERICA

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## EVENTS

Sebbi and Sadie Alongi of Hackensack, New Jersey, recently celebrated their 50th Wedding Anniversary.

They met in the early 1930's as members of the Coro d'Italia, eventually married, and to this day are deeply involved in Italian Folk Dancing.

At their house party, the Italian Folk Ensemble of New Jersey, arrayed in folk costume, entertained the guests by performing several dances that Sebbie and Sadie had originally taught them. In a surprise move, Sebbie and Sadie changed into their folk costumes and joined the other dancers to highlight this special evening.

Peter and Anna-Gloria Liberato of Philadelphia, PA. renewed their marriage vows at a church ceremony, marking their 25th Wedding Anniversary. This time they were dressed in folk costume rather than traditional wedding attire. The bridal party, members of the Ballerini, were also in folk costume.

Anna-Gloria wore a lovely wedding dress from Loreto in Le Marche, central Italy, copied in every detail from the book, *Il Costume Popolare in Italia* by Emma Calderini. The flowered tan cotton print dress, featuring the traditional red sleeves attached at the shoulders with bows, was reminiscent of weddings of long ago.

At the end of the reception, Elba Gurzau led the guests in a joyful Quadriglia. Interestingly, at the end of La Quadriglia, couples form two lines for a symbolic wedding ceremony. Each couple dances one tarantella step while the grandmother, holding a lighted candle, closely watches their behavior. When the newlyweds, who are at the end of the line begin to dance, the grandmother graciously backs away, permitting them to dance, hug, and kiss...

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Let me happily share a few bits of news with you:

First: We welcome back Dr. Anthony F. Le Pera as editor of *Tradizioni*. Dr. Joseph J. Bentivegna has curtailed his workload, but has not abandoned us. We take this opportunity to express sincere appreciation for his stint as editor.

Second: The Annual Conference in Des Moines, Iowa, was a tremendous success — the greatest number of participants represented many midwestern states and California. Many thanks to Pat Civitate and her kids, Il Trattenimento Italiano.

Third: Utica, New York, October 27, 28, 29, 1989, is the site of the upcoming annual IFAFA conference. Prof. Philip J. Di Novo and the Italian Heritage Dancers of Central New York are hosting. More will be forthcoming on this event.

Fourth: As of this writing, the 1990 Italy Tour is ON!!! As soon as this event shapes up, you will be hearing from us.

So, dear friends, we are moving ahead and we invite your participation and support. Keep in mind that all work is handled by volunteers, and your dues and contributions are most encouraging.

  
Rita Tonitto  
President

## POEMS

Dr. Mario Gagliardi authored a book of poems in Calabrian dialect. One of his poems is reprinted here with his permission.

ANTONELLA

Teni de lu canariu pur' u cantu,  
capuzza russa, cudette ccu ra  
francia;

ten'itra l'occhi 'nu pizzidd'e mantu,  
celest'azzurru, com' u celu cangia'!

Si' fatt'e latt'e mele, cussi' duce,  
te ridu' l'occhi, puru quannu dormi;  
me 'ncantadi 'u sonu de la vuce:  
me levi de la capu li talorni!

Canta' l'anima tua, chi sempre  
cangia,  
de gioia, senza fine, ccud'amure:  
canta' 'na melodia, 'n'eternu cantu!

Capuzza russa, ..cudette ccu ra  
francia, ..

te guardu l'occhi, chi cangiu'  
culure..

..parca su' fatt'e.. 'nu pizzidd'e  
mantu!..

The following is a loose translation of the above poem, which expresses the author's thoughts as he admires his two-year-old daughter.

ANTONELLA

You are the purity of a canary's  
song, my little redhead with braids  
and bangs. Your eyes are azure  
blue, celestial colored.

You're milk and honey; your face  
smiles even when asleep. Your soul,  
a song of love, sings a melody of in-  
finite joy. I'm enchanted by your  
voice: you make my worries  
disappear.

My little redhead with braids and  
bangs; I look into your eyes...they  
seem to be a spec of heaven.

Mario Gagliardi, M.D., was born in Malito, Prov. Cosenza, Italy. A resident of the United States for the past thirty years, he maintains a private practice and is head of the Department of Physical Therapy of Christ Hospital in New Jersey.

## FORMING A YOUTH GROUP

Probably every adult folk dance group has considered forming a youth group in conjunction with their own organization. Almost everyone recognizes the benefits, both to the youth who participate and to the parent group who gains in energy and enthusiasm that only the young possess. When Don Castronova and Jeannette Sias of Balli D'Italia, Baltimore, went to the IFABA Conference in 1983 and met Pat Civitate from Iowa, heard her speak about her group and saw pictures of "her kids," they returned to Baltimore, inspired to start a youth group.

There are a few steps that should be taken on beginning this undertaking. Obviously, the first is to receive a full, unqualified commitment from the parent group for support, both financial and emotional. The adult group must be willing to fund the extra equipment and supplies. They must also be willing to share the limelight with the children, which can sometimes be difficult. The next step is to find two or three people willing to dedicate the time and effort directing and supervising the children.

Don and Jeannette began looking for children at a Catholic school in an urban area, where the children usually live within walking distance of the school. The community does not have to be Italian, but it certainly helps. The adult group must realize that they are providing a babysitting service to most parents. There are always a handful of parents who cooperate. Balli D'Italia finds that a group such as this works best when the practices are scheduled on a weekly basis, whether there is a performance or not. Children, it must be remembered, enjoy these practices which are often the highlight of their week. To them, practices are as important as performances. Ragazzi D'Italia meet on Friday nights, which means that practice usually ends at approximately 10:30 p.m. with no worry of school the next day.

The children work well with the adult group. During a performance in which both groups are involved, they both share the stage. The children also sing in Italian, which adds more interest to the program. The funds received from a performance go to the adult group. There is one bank account for both groups. When the children reach the age of 14 or 15, they normally get bored with the group. This is an excellent time to begin teaching them the adult dances and allowing them to fill in for adults. The benefits to both groups are apparent: The parent group can be assured of a flow of new membership, and the children learn more through their increased exposure to Italian heritage.



### FOLK DANCES, COSTUMES AND CUSTOMS OF ITALY

128 pages include illustration, 17 dances with description and music, information about Italy, costumes, customs, etc. \$10.00. An educational tape with music is available for the dance — \$5.00.

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The leadership for a youth group may come from the same leaders of the adult group, as it did in Balli D'Italia. Two or three other adults may be appointed to direct and supervise the children. It is suggested that group leaders be selected from among the children themselves. Captains and directors are other titles that can be award-

ed to the ones with more experience. The older ones always teach the younger children and appear happy to do so. Ragazzi D'Italia now has a membership of approximately fifty children; about ten are teenagers, and about ten are under 6 years of age. The ages range between 3 (must be potty-trained) and 18 years old. They perform well together and know about ten youth dances, besides starting to learn some adult dances.

Some tips for administering the children: Start practices with a vigorous, spontaneous tarantella and encourage them to be expressive during the dance. This tires them out a bit. Then have them sit on the floor and discuss future events and their opinions of the last performance. Tell them your plans for the next month or so. Speak to the older ones separately and let them feel part of the decision-making process. Hold a break in the middle of practice and supervise a running game, like a relay race. Again, this helps them run off excess energy. Hold practices consistently and cancel only for holidays or very special events. Do not hesitate to call extra practices before a big performance. Most importantly, be consistent with discipline. Children are expected at practice every week unless they have a good excuse. All the costumes are uniform and we make no compromises or exceptions. The children must be in costume and must have every element of their costume at a performance. They must know that you are serious and committed to performing, as well as to teaching and preserving the dances.

Balli D'Italia recommends forming a youth division for an adult group. The children will enthusiastically accept what you teach them and you have helped to preserve the customs and heritage of Italy with a group of young people who can impart these wonderful traditions to the next generation.

For specific dances, steps, and music, write to: Jeannette Sias c/o Balli D'Italia  
2306 Baltimore Street  
Baltimore, MD. 21214

## DONORS 1988

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Italian Folk Ensemble,  
Ricordi d'Italia



## UNIVERSALITY OF DANCE

Carl A. Hammerschlag worked as a family physician in a Native American Hospital in the American Southwest after years of conventional training in Western medicine and psychiatry. One day, as the author was making his morning rounds, he was introduced to a patient named Santiago, an old man who had been admitted the night before.

"I didn't know that he was a Pueblo priest and clan chief," the author informs us. "I only saw an old man in his seventies lying in a hospital bed. Suddenly there was this beautiful smile, and he asked me, 'Where did you learn to heal?'"

"Although I assumed my academic credentials would mean little to the old man, I responded almost by rote, rattling off my medical education, internship and certification.

"Again the beatific smile and another question: 'Do you know how to dance?'"

"Somehow touched by whimsy at the old man's query, I answered that, sure, I liked to dance; and I shuffled a little at his bedside. Santiago chuckled, got out of bed, and, short of breath, began to show me his dance.

"'You must be able to dance if you are to heal people,' he said.

"'And will you teach me your steps?' I asked, indulging the aging priest.

"Santiago nodded. 'Yes, I can teach you my steps, but you will have to hear your own music.' □

"Dance, it's life, it's motion, it's energy. It's putting something in the space where there was nothing before. It's hope, it's beauty, it's passion.

Dance is a natural outpouring of what you are as a person, your culture, background, your family, your heritage.

Dance is from the people. □

Alvin Ailey

The dance is the mother of the arts. Music and poetry exist in time, painting and architecture in space. The dance lives at once in time and space. The creator and the thing created, the artist and the work are still one and the same.

The dance breaks down the distinctions of body and soul, of fully expressed emotions and controlled behavior, of social conformity and expression of individuality -- all the distinctions that modern civilizations have established. Dance is simply life on a higher level. □

Curt Sachs\*

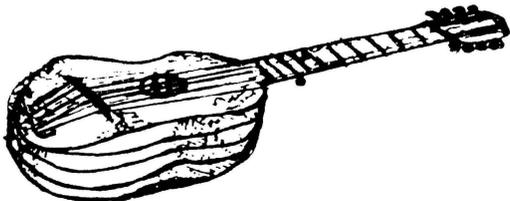
\*Books by Curt Sachs

World History of the Dance

The Rise of Music in the Ancient World

The History of Musical Instruments

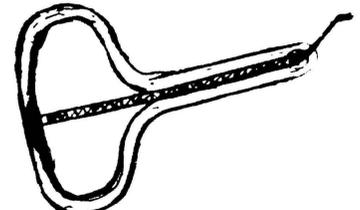
## CONTINUATION OF FOLK INSTRUMENTS: (See Vol. 2, No. 2)



**La Chitarra Battente** is an antique form of the guitar. It has a deeper body than the modern guitar, and it usually has five strings. It is tuned differently from its modern descendant and is generally strummed rather than picked. The *chitarra battente* is still made and played in Calabria and other parts of Southern Italy.



**L'Organetto** is a diatonic pushbutton accordion that usually has either two or four alternating basses. Despite the popularity of its descendant -- the modern piano accordion -- the *organetto* is still an extremely popular instrument in Italy today.



**Il Marranzano** is also called "lo scacciapensieri" (thought-chaser) or, in Campania, "la tromba degli zingari" (gypsies' trumpet). Known as the jew's harp in English, it is a lyre-shaped piece of metal with a central tongue made of copper or silver. The player holds the *marranzano* between his teeth and rhythmically strikes the central tongue with his right hand.

## THE ETHNIC FOLK ARTS CENTER

The Ethnic Folk Arts Center, founded in 1966, is a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting the traditional ethnic music and dance of urban immigrant communities in New York and throughout the United States through research, documentation and presentation. The Center records and brings to the stage performing artists who carry on the rich and varied traditions of Greek, Irish, Italian, Jewish, Balkan, Central Asian, Scandinavian, Latino and other ethnic communities in the United States.

At our Performance Center at 179 Varick Street in Manhattan, we present an ethnic music concert series, special workshops in traditional music and dance, and weekly folk dance classes and sessions. The Center also produces records, tapes, films and publications, and maintains archives documenting traditional music and dance.

For more information write: Ethnic Folk Arts Center, 325 Spring Street, Room 314, New York, N.Y. 10013

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### ITALIAN FOLK COSTUMES

71 slides taken from Emma  
Calderini's book, *Il Costume  
Popolare in Italia*, with written

description for each, available from  
E.F. Gurzau, 1325 West Roosevelt  
Blvd., Philadelphia, PA 19150.  
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### THE QUEEN OF MULBERRY STREET

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The Italian Folk Art Federation of America, Inc. is a non profit, educational federation. Its purpose is to research, preserve and foster interest in the various aspects of Italian folklore.

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### IN FUTURE ISSUES:

- ✓ INTERVIEW WITH ALAN LOMAX — one of the greatest international folk music collectors and authorities.
- ✓ IUGALE — Calabrian sage and folk hero.
- ✓ VINCENZO DE PRETORE — Folk tale by the famous Neapolitan actor and writer.
- ✓ SELECTED FOLK DANCE
- ✓ REFERRAL SERVICE UPDATE

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