



ALL'ITALIANA-BOSTON ITALIAN THEATRE COMPANY PRESENTS:

# IO MI CANTO DA SOLA

## STORIE DI DONNE MAI ARRESE

I SING MY OWN SONG - STORIES OF WOMEN WHO NEVER SURRENDERED

A SERIES OF MONOLOGUES ABOUT HISTORICAL ITALIAN WOMEN  
SURVIVORS OF VIOLENCE, ABUSE AND PATRIARCHY

IN ITALIAN WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES

WARNING: EXPLICIT LANGUAGE ABOUT VIOLENCE

June 9-10 at 7:30 PM

June 11 at 3 PM

Boston Playwrights' Theatre  
949 Commonwealth Avenue  
Boston, MA 02215

### FEATURING:

Eleonora Francesca Cordovani  
Chiara Durazzini  
Rossella Mancullo  
Carmen Marsico

### DIRECTED BY:

Eleonora Francesca Cordovani

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**All'italiana - Boston Italian Theatre Company**  
presents:

*Io mi canto da sola - Storie di donne mai arrese*  
*I sing my own song - Stories of women who never surrendered.*

This show is a series of monologues about historical Italian women survivors of violence and patriarchy. The goal is to raise awareness about the condition of women, throughout history, in a mostly male-dominated society.

I started to work on this show many years ago, when I was still living in Italy. The idea came from Eve Ensler's *V-Day*, an event I have taken part in with different productions. I thought that it would have been interesting to do something similar and specific to the Italian situation. In fact, Italy still has a high femicide rate, where the perpetrator is often a partner or a relative. Women in my family and myself have been victims of harassment and abuse.

The process of finally giving life to this play has been long, sometimes difficult, and full of satisfaction as well. I am very proud of my team, and I deeply hope and think that, through art, we can heal ourselves and the world around us.

*Eleonora Francesca Cordovani*

*Co-Artistic Director of All'italiana and Director of Io mi canto da sola - I sing my own song*

**All'italiana - Boston Italian Theatre Company** was founded in 2019 and is affiliated with Pazzi Lazzi LLC under the artistic direction of Chiara Durazzini and Eleonora Francesca Cordovani.

It's the only Italian theater company in New England that performs exclusively in Italian and specializes in staging shows by Italian playwrights. The actors are mostly Italian and/or fluent Italian speakers. Some are theater professionals, while others come from widely different backgrounds, such as medical science, computer science, the arts and humanities.

The company also runs theater labs where participants learn and practice acting through drama exercises and games, improvisation, and experimenting with theatrical plays, as well as a repertoire of shows in Italian.

**Past events:**

- Celebrating the Dialects and Languages of Italy
- Favole al... Videochat! 100 Years of Gianni Rodari
- All'italiana supports BLM
- Theater lab for students of Italian and native speakers
- *LA GIARA (The Oil Jar)* by Luigi Pirandello

*[www.pazzilazzitroupe.com](http://www.pazzilazzitroupe.com)*

*“Ricordatemi come vi pare. Non ho mai pensato di mostrarmi diversa da come sono per compiacere qualcuno. Anche a quelli che mi odiano credo di essere stata utile, per autodefinirsi. [...] Non è vero che il mondo è brutto; dipende da quale mondo ti fai.”*

*“Remember me as you like. I never thought of showing myself differently than how I am just to please someone. I believe I have been useful even to those who hate me, to self-define themselves. [...] It's not true that the world is ugly. It depends on which world you create for yourself.”*

~ Michela Murgia, May 2023 ~

**We dedicate this work to Michela Murgia, wishing her to live this time in the best way, to all the women who create their world every day, and to all the women who did not make it because someone oppressed them.**

## Cast (alphabetical order)



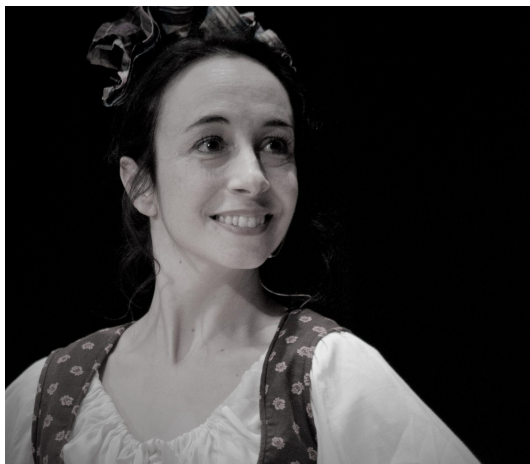
### **Eleonora Cordovani (Director, Beatrice)**

Originally from Tuscany, Eleonora has been living in the Boston area since 2012. She studied theater in Italy and has worked as an actress, acting teacher, and director first in Italy and then in the US. She is currently the co-artistic director of *All'italiana - Boston Italian Theater Company*.

Her performances often delve into social topics and she has volunteered for a crisis hotline for survivors of domestic and sexual violence, and for The Trevor Project.

Eleonora is also a yoga teacher and an active supporter of social justice in the yoga field.

Eleonora would like to thank her colleagues for their work, trust, and for teaching her something new everyday, and her family for their support.



### **Chiara Durazzini (Producer, Franca Rame)**

Chiara is a native of Florence, Italy, and has lived in Boston since 2000. She is the founder and co-artistic director of *All'italiana* and of the Commedia dell'Arte and Renaissance music troupe Pazzi Lazzi for which she performs, teaches and directs. She obtained her Master's degree in Art, Music and Theatre at the University of Bologna.



**Rossella Mancullo (Artemisia Gentileschi)**

Rossella moved from Naples to Boston in 2016, after finishing her high school diploma. She is currently attending Bunker Hill Community College and is taking theatrical improvisation classes at ImprovBoston. During the Summer of 2017, she worked as an entertainer with the Swiss animation company, Life Entertainment, in Rhodes, Greece.



**Carmen Marsico (Singer, Gostanza)**

Award-winning Italian vocalist, composer, actress, and dancer Carmen Marsico hails from the mountainous and wild region of Basilicata. Best known as lead singer and front person of the award-winning group Newpoli, she currently co-leads a new ensemble, Zafarán, which performs a variety of music spanning from

Turkey to Greece and Southern Italy, Cape Verde, Spain, and Portugal, as well as traditional and modern Romani repertoire. She has performed at theaters, PAC's, and festivals all over the United States, and her recordings have been heard on radio all over the Americas and Europe. Since 2019, she has been collaborating with the Boston-based Italian theater company Pazzi Lazzi, directed by Chiara Durazzini. Carmen is currently an Assistant Professor of Voice at Berklee College of Music.



## **Crew**

*(in alphabetical order)*

### **Federica Ganzarolli Jancek (Set Designer)**

Federica was born and raised in Verona, Italy, where she studied interior design and conservation of art. Her early career was devoted to restoring frescoes, oil paintings and sculptures, as well as painting murals for private and public spaces.

After moving to Boston in 2012, she obtained certification in Universal Design and has continued to provide design and art restoration services to private clients. She constantly explores new mediums and has branched into ceramics and textiles. For Federica, art is a vital source of joy and sharing her joy with people is her greatest passion.



### **Sarah Netsky (Subtitles Coordinator)**

Sarah is a lifelong resident of Cambridge, MA and is thrilled to be providing subtitles for this show.

She graduated from Smith College in 2017 with a Bachelor of Arts in Italian Studies, which included a semester abroad in Florence.

She is currently an usher for the Boston Symphony Orchestra, as well as a tour guide at two Boston churches and for Boston By Foot, a non-profit organization that promotes the diverse history of the city of Boston through out-door public walking tours.

When not immersing herself in Italian, Sarah enjoys going to museums and taking walks.



**Gabriel Weiner (Music Tech)**

Gabriel is a student at UMass Amherst majoring in Psychology and Anthropology. He has been working with Pazzi Lazzi Troupe behind the scenes for several years.

In his free time he likes to play the piano. During his senior year in high school, he wrote a paper about the art of Artemisia Gentileschi, so he is particularly excited to be involved in this show.

**Björn Wennås (Guitar Player, Recording)**

Swedish-born Björn Wennås is an award-winning guitarist and composer based in Boston. He is currently the guitarist in Zafarán, an Italy/US based world/folk ensemble as well as Ishna, an Irish group based in the US. He is one of only a handful of people outside of Italy that plays the 10 stringed Chitarra Battente.

**Marco Zanelli (Light Designer)**

Marco has worked as an actor, director, lighting designer and translator. Lighting designs include such shows as Little Shop of Horrors, A Chorus Line, The Wizard of Oz, Isabella Unmasked, Sweeney Todd, Fiddler on the Roof and The Miracle Worker, among others. Marco has also translated theatrical, literary, journalistic, historical, academic and geopolitical texts. Marco holds a Master of Arts in Italian from Middlebury College.





## Characters (in order of appearance)

### **Michela Murgia (*born 1972*)**

Michela Murgia is a writer, playwright, blogger, and activist.

She won the Premio Campiello, Dessì and Super Mondello prizes with her book *Accabadora* (2009).

The texts in the show are from *Stai Zitta, e altre 9 frasi che non vogliamo sentire più* (*Shut up, and other 9 sentences that we don't want to hear anymore*), (2021).

### **Franca Rame (1929 - 2013)**

Franca Rame was an actress, writer, politician and feminism activist.

She was married to Nobel laureate playwright Dario Fo.

On March 9, 1973 she was kidnapped, tortured and raped by fascists who were commissioned by high-ranking police officials (carabinieri). The trial ended in 1998, and the offenders were not prosecuted because the statute of limitations had passed.

She wrote about this event in a monologue, *Lo Stupro (The Rape)*, (1981). The last sentences in the monologue are the actual words uttered by the judge, doctor, policeman, and lawyer who were all present at the trial.

### **Artemisia Gentileschi (1593 - 1653)**

Artemisia Gentileschi was a painter and the first woman to become a member of the Accademia di Arte del Disegno in Florence.

In 1611, she was raped by Agostino Tassi, friend and a painter colleague of Artemisia's father, Orazio. Agostino promised Artemisa to marry her to restore her and her family's honor, but he never did as he was already married. Artemisia's father then pressed charges against him. During the trial, Artemisia was subjected to gynecological examinations and the torture of the thumbscrews, to verify that she was telling the truth. Artemisia has expressed her trauma in many of her paintings.

The monologue of the show is taken from the original depositions during the trial.

**Gostanza da Libbiano (1535 - c. 1600)**

Gostanza da Libbiano, a widow, healer, midwife, and spinner, was arrested and accused of witchcraft in 1594 by the Holy Inquisition.

In reality, she was an expert midwife with a deep knowledge of medicinal plants. After a long trial, Gostanza finally regained her freedom, but was banished from her hometown in Northern Tuscany and forbidden from practicing her work.

Gostanza was also tortured during her trial, in order to coerce her into saying “the truth.” The original documents of the trial were found in the Archives of San Miniato (Pisa). This was quite a unique discovery, since most documents from inquisition trials were normally destroyed or burned.

This monologue is part of her trial.

**Beatrice Portinari (c. 1265 - 1290)**

Beatrice Portinari is the woman commonly identified as the inspiration for poet Dante Alighieri’s *Vita Nuova* (1294) and *Divina Commedia* (1321). According to Dante himself, he and Beatrice had only actually met twice, although he carried his love for her throughout his lifetime.

This fictional monologue is part of Stefano Benni’s *Le Beatrici* (2011). Stefano Benni is a contemporary writer, poet and journalist.

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**Featured music performed  
by Carmen Marsico on voice and Björn Wennås on guitar (recording):**

***Forgotten (composition by Catharina Josepha Pratten)***

Catharina Josepha Pratten (1824 - 1895) was a German guitar virtuoso, composer and esteemed teacher, based in London, UK.

Aged eight, Catharina started touring and performing in Europe with her father. By 20, she was London's most prominent guitar teacher and composer.

She founded her own guitar school and taught Queen Victoria's daughters and other famous musicians.

***La Ballata di Carini (lyrics by anonymous & music by Romolo Grano)***

This song is about Laura Lanza di Trabia, or the Baroness of Carini (*Sicily*), who lived in the 16th century. Her father, Cesare Lanza, Count of Mussomeli, arranged her wedding with Don Vincenzo II La Grua-Talamanca, son of the Baron of Carini, when she was 14 years old. Laura was never in love with her husband though, for she had a relationship with her true love, Vincenzo Vernagallo, her husband's cousin. Once discovered, they were killed by Laura's father. Because of the prominence of the families involved, the event was kept hidden for many years. The killers were also acquitted by virtue of law: honor killings were only finally repealed centuries later under Italian law, in 1981.

***Rosa canta e cunta (lyrics & music by Rosa Balistreri & Bernardino Giuliano)***

This song is one of Rosa Balistreri's repertoire. Rosa Balistreri (1927 - 1990) was born in Licata (Sicily) to an extremely poor family. Rosa was able to buy her first pair of shoes at age 15, and she learned to read and write at 32. Her father was very abusive.

Rosa had an arranged marriage with a man who was also violent and an alcoholic. He lost all their money gambling, so Rosa once tried to kill him for that. She later turned herself in to the police and served a few months in prison. Later on, while working for some time in a church, she was molested by the priest. Finally, she emigrated with her family (daughter, brother, and sisters) to Florence, but, once again, she witnessed violence, when her abusive brother-in-law followed and killed one of her sisters.

Rosa started to collaborate with the artistic community of Florence, achieving success as a theater actress, poet, and musician, singing in her native Sicilian language.

### **La Regina senza Re (lyrics & music by Otello Profazio)**

This song is about Franca Viola (*Alcamo, Sicily, 1948*), the first woman to refuse a *shotgun wedding* (an enforced or hurried wedding). She got engaged very young to Filippo Melodia, a member of a family belonging to the mafia. When he got arrested, Viola's father interrupted the engagement, and a series of threats and vexations started from Melodia's family. Viola was finally kidnapped, raped and kept hostage by Melodia and his accomplices. When the police freed her, the only solution to repair the honor of Franca Viola and her family seemed to be a shotgun wedding. During the trial against Melodia, the Defense tried to accuse Franca of consenting to all events, and of being responsible for refusing to marry Melodia, after some disagreements between the two families.

While the laws protecting shotgun weddings and honor killings in Italy (*matrimonio riparatore* and *delitto d'onore*) were repealed in 1981, rape was only recognized as a crime against the individual (originally being only a crime against morality and decency) in 1996.

### **Canzone Arrabbiata (lyrics & music by Lina Wertmüller & Nino Rota)**

This song was part of the soundtrack of Lina Wertmüller's movie *Love and Anarchy* (1973), a declaration against fascism.



## **Man Prayer (Poem by Eve Ensler)**

May I be a man

Whose confidence comes from the depth of my giving

Who understands that vulnerability is my greatest strength

Who creates space rather than dominates it

Who appreciates listening more than knowing

Who seeks kindness over control

Who cries when the grief is too much

Who refuses the slap, the gun, the choke, the insult, the punch

May I not be afraid to get lost

May I cherish touch more than performance

and the experience more than getting there

May I move slowly, not abruptly

May I be brave enough to share my fear and shame

and gather the other men to do the same

May I stop pretending and open the parts of me that have long been numb

May I cherish, respect and love my mother

May the resonance of that love translate into loving all women and living things

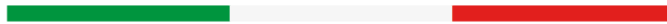


**Preghiera degli uomini**  
**(Translation by Eleonora Cordovani and Alex Suheck)**

Possa io essere un uomo  
La cui confidenza deriva dalla profondita' del mio donare  
Che capisce che la vulnerabilita' e' la mia forza piu' grande  
Che crea spazio invece di dominarlo  
Che apprezza l'ascolto piu' della conoscenza  
Che ricerca la gentilezza invece che il controllo  
Che piange quando il dolore e' troppo  
Che rifiuta lo schiaffo, l'arma, il soffocamento, l'insulto, il pugno

Possa io non essere spaventato dall'essere perso  
Possa io onorare il tocco gentile piu' che la prestazione  
e l'esperienza piu' che l'arrivo  
Possa io muovermi lentamente, non bruscamente  
Possa io essere coraggioso abbastanza da condividere la mia paura e vergogna  
e convincere altri uomini a fare lo stesso  
Possa io smettere di far finta, e aprire quelle parti di me che sono state intorpidite  
troppo a lungo  
Possa io onorare, rispettare e amare mia madre  
Possa l'eco di quell'amore trasformarsi in amore per tutte le donne e tutti gli esseri  
viventi

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Casa Myrna is Boston's largest provider of shelter and supportive services to survivors of domestic violence, providing safety, resources, advocacy and information since 1977. Casa Myrna delivers solutions to end domestic and dating violence through intervention, awareness, and prevention.

*[casamyrna.org](http://casamyrna.org)*



Mabel Center for Immigrant Justice provides expert pro bono legal services to asylum-seeking families that have been separated, detained in family detention centers, and/ or subjected to expedited removal through the dedicated docket. We believe that every human - regardless of status or place of origin - deserves the dignity and respect of legal representation. That's why we take on tough and complex asylum cases, representing women and children whose strength and resilience have allowed them to survive unimaginable violence in pursuit of safety in the United States.

*[mabelcenter.org](http://mabelcenter.org)*