

La Giara (The Oil Jar)

By Luigi Pirandello

A One Act Play with Southern Italian Music

Performed in Italian by All'italiana - Boston Italian Theatre Company
Directed by Chiara Durazzini

Sponsored by Bentley University
Under the Auspices of the Consulate General of Italy in Boston and Com.It.Es

Thursday March 30, 2023 - 7:30 PM
Koumatzelis Auditorium
Bentley University
175 Forest Street, Waltham, MA 02452



The play. Pirandello derived his single-act play, *La giara* (1916) from a short story with the same title he wrote in 1906. The play was originally written in Sicilian. A few years later, Pirandello wrote a translation into standard Italian, which was performed in Rome in 1925: this is the version we will perform today. Among Pirandello's theater plays, *La giara* is the one that is most indebted to the great tradition of Sicilian theater and literature. For one, it is not set in a city and among the middle class, but in a *massaria*, a land property in the country; the characters you will meet are farmers, common people whose lives have been defined by physical labor, their small community, and nature. It is indebted to another masterpiece of Italian literature, the short story, *La roba* by Giovanni Verga. Both texts have a main character who is obsessed with property and are ultimately ridiculed because of it.

The plot. The play is set in an olive grove in Sicily, Italy around 1890. It is harvesting season, and land owner Don Lolò is anxious to put his freshly squeezed olive oil in a new, shiny ceramic oil jar. Don Lolò is surrounded by his employees, women (Gnà Tana, Trisuzza, Carminella) and men (Mpari Pè, Tararà, Fillicò), who mock his attitude and fear his temper in equal measure, and his lawyer, Scimé, who made the mistake of accepting Don Lolò's invitation to spend the summer in his estate and is now regretting it, as Don Lolò keeps pestering him with legal questions. There's a new, unprecedented case waiting for them around the corner. The oil jar has been broken. The farmers convince Don Lolò to call a *conciabrocche* ("jar-fixer"), Zi' Dima, to fix the broken jar. Zi' Dima is famous for having created a mysterious glue that holds everything together. Don Lolò, however, does not trust that glue to work and orders Zi' Dima to use both the glue and the traditional rivets. Zi' Dima does as instructed, but he accidentally remains stuck inside the jar. What will Don Lolò do? Will he break his precious possession to set Zi' Dima free? Or will the oil jar become a prison for Zi' Dima?

The author. Luigi Pirandello is one of the most famous Italian novelists, playwrights, and short story writers from the twentieth century. Native of Agrigento, Sicily, he called himself a "son of chaos" and believed that we are all prisoners of roles ("masks") imposed by society. In his writing, Pirandello explored themes such as the blurred lines between reality and illusion, the trappings of social conventions, the relative nature of our own perspective on life. He won the Nobel prize for literature in 1934.

The Language. Pirandello himself translated the play from Sicilian to standard Italian, using some farmers' vocabulary and many Tuscan terms. ImproNati is faithful to his Italian, but each actor keeps his/her own regional accent.

Glossary:

palmento = building where olives are pressed

abbacchiare = to harvest olives, beating the trees with sticks

capezza = horse's bridle

scartare = to select the olives, separating the good ones from the bad.

fornaciajo = the person who makes the jars

incignare = to christen

The Company. *All'italiana - Boston Italian Theatre Company* is affiliated with Pazzi Lazzi Troupe, LLC and is under the artistic direction of Chiara Durazzini and Eleonora Francesca Cordovani. The group performs in Italian and specializes in staging shows by Italian playwrights. The actors are mostly Italian or fluent Italian speakers. Some of them are theater professionals while others come from widely different backgrounds, such as medical science, computer science, arts and humanities. To all of them theater is an exciting way to express their creativity and love for Italian culture and language. The company consists of theater labs where participants learn and practice acting through drama exercises and games, improvisation and experimenting with theatrical plays, and in a repertoire of Italian shows. More info at www.pazzilazzitroupe.com

The Music.

Si Maritau Rosa (If Rosa gets married) - Traditional Sicilian folk song

Tarantella del '600 - Traditional tarantella, Naples 17th Century

Acidduzzu (Little bird) - Traditional Sicilian folk song

Fischiettato (Whistling) - Traditional Sicilian tarantella

A virrinedda (The drill) - Traditional Sicilian folk song

Marranzano (Mouth harp) - Traditional Sicilian tarantella

Special Thanks. *All'italiana - Boston Italian Theatre Company* is deeply grateful to the wonderful people who collaborated and helped with this project: Prof. Alessia Dalsant, Neelangi Gunasekera and the staff and students of Bentley University.

Cast and Crew (in alphabetical order):

Giulia Arsuffi - Tararà

Giulia is from the little town of Anguillara Sabazia near Rome, where she lived until the end of high school. She lived in the UK throughout her undergrad and PhD, and she moved to Boston in 2020 while writing her PhD thesis. She works as a synthetic biologist at Ginkgo Bioworks and started her theater experience as part of the improv group *All'italiana* in 2022. When she's not tending to her cells in the lab or acting as a Sicilian farmer, she loves to learn languages and to dance salsa and swing.

Rossella Bruno - Gnà Tana

Born in Pinerolo, near Turin, Italy, Rossella lived in different locations in Italy and France before moving to the US six years ago. She studied acting at the studios of the well-known Italian director Scaglione. Since then, she performed for over twenty years in theaters and on TV shows. Rossella now owns an Italian bakery in Newton, MA.

Eleonora Cordovani - Assistant Director

Eleonora is originally from Tuscany, and she has been living in the Boston area since 2012. She studied Music, Cinema and Theater at the University of Pisa, and with "Isole Comprese" Theater Company in Florence. She has worked as an actress, acting teacher and director. She is currently the co-artistic director of *All'italiana - Boston Italian Theater Company*. Eleonora is also a yoga teacher.

Diego Cordovani Laurino - Nociariello

Diego was born 7 years ago in Cambridge MA. This is his debut in the Theater! Diego is also a dancer, a gymnast and a soccer player. When he is not on stage, you can see him playing video games or with his dog Ginger.

Alessia Dalsant - Mpari Pe'

Alessia was born in Trento, Italy, and moved to the US in her twenties. She holds a PhD in Spanish medieval literature and teaches Italian and Spanish at Bentley University, where she also directs the Center for Languages and International Collaborations (CLIC). She joined *All'italiana* in January 2022 and La Giara is her first theatrical experience.

Chiara Durazzini - Zi' Dima/Director

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 - Trisuzza

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 - Carminella

Award winning Italian vocalist, composer and dancer, Carmen hails from the mountainous and wild region of Basilicata and she is currently best known as lead singer and front person of the Mediterranean/Italian World Music group Newpoli. She was a winner of the 2015 Independent Music Award for Traditional World Music, finalist in the USA Songwriting Competition in the World category (2015, 2018) and in the "Premio Nazionale Città di Loano per la Musica Tradizionale Italiana" (2015, 2019).

Dan Meyers - Recorders

A versatile multi-instrumentalist, Dan Meyers is a flexible performer of both classical and folk music; his credits range from premieres of contemporary chamber music, to headlining a concert series in honor of Pete Seeger at the Newport Folk Festival, to playing Renaissance instruments on Broadway for Shakespeare's Globe Theatre Company. He enjoys playing traditional Irish music with the bands Ulster Landing and Ishna, as well as eclectic fusion from around the Mediterranean with the US/Italy-based group Zafaràn; he also played winds and percussion for over a decade with the award-winning Italian folk music group Newpoli.

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 BA 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.

Fabio Pirozzolo - Percussion

Fabio is a highly in-demand drummer, percussionist, and singer. His extensive performing experience includes drumming for a long list of internationally recognized performers including Newpoli. His theater credits include *The Revels* (2017) and *Yerma* (2019).

Yefim Somin - Understudy Avvocato Scimè

Originally from St.Petersburg, RU, Yefim first came to Italy as a refugee in 1979 and immigrated to the US in that year. After finishing his career in computer science, he became an actor on screen, stage and live character events. He acted in many languages including in Shakespeare both in the original and in Russian. He participated in two Zoom productions of *All'Italiana*. In his spare time he translates poetry from many languages, some of which was published in literary journals.

Nicola Spiniello - L'avvocato Scimè

Nicola is from Genoa, Italy. He studied Computer Science in Genoa and then moved to Boston in 2009. He works in technology - Industrial Automation and Product lifecycle Management field in the Boston area, currently for a french company.

His first theatrical experience was with Impronati where he played Improv sketches and then the role of Alfredo in *Questi Fantasmi*.

Alex Sucheck - Fillicò

Born in Pozzuoli, Italy, and has lived in Italy, Spain, China and the USA. His father is American and his mother is Sicilian. He has been living in Boston since 2015, to attend graduate school, focusing on linguistics and bilingual learners. He is currently working as a high school Spanish language teacher. He is a big flamenco aficionado, studying both guitar and dance. He also enjoys dancing traditional Southern Italian dances such as *tammurriata* and *pizzica*.

Mauro Tedeschi - Don Lolò

Native of Perugia in Umbria, Italy. He studied Engineering in Perugia/Bologna. He moved to Boston in 1999 and since then he's been working at the Research & Development department of Nuance Communications Inc, a Boston based speech technology company. He had his first theatrical experience with Impronati when he played the role of Gastone in *Questi Fantasmi*.

Luca Troncone - Mulattiere

Neapolitan researcher in Cardiology at Brigham and Women's Hospital with training experiences also in Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center of Boston and Mount Sinai Medical School of New York. He acted during High School where he played different roles in modern and classic comedies.

Björn Wennås - Guitar

Swedish born Björn Wennås is an award winning Boston based guitarist and composer. 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 - Lighting Design and Subtitles Translation

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.