

NY. Best of Italian Culture in 2017

i. I. (December 21, 2016)



We reached out to the heads of different Italian and Italian-American institutions in and around New York to find out what major events they have planned for the upcoming year. Here's what they responded...

The Italian Cultural Institute of New York

This winter the [Italian Cultural Institute](#) [2] will be presenting a series of events dedicated to renowned Italian writer [Italo Calvino](#) [3] on the occasion of the new translation of his landmark book *Six Memos for the Next Millennium*, a collection of lectures Calvino was to give at Harvard in the fall of 1985 but never delivered as he died before leaving Italy. Five of six planned lectures were completed, each focusing on a specific quality that the writer considered essential in literary writing: Lightness, Quickness, Exactitude, Visibility and Multiplicity. Accordingly, five separate events will be held at various venues throughout the City, each based on one of Calvino's "American lessons." Also of note is an exhibition curated by art expert [Marco Bertoli](#) [4] who selected a number of beautiful paintings by various artists born not long after the fall of the "Serenissima" Republic of Venice in 1797, 220 years ago. [Guglielmo Ciardi](#) [5], [Giacomo Favretto](#) [6], [Rubens Santoro](#) [7] and [Pietro Fragiacommo](#) [8] are just a few of the painters who will pay tribute to the stunning city.



Casa Italiana Zerilli-Marimò, New York University

The [Casa Italiana of the New York University](#) [9] will host several events in collaboration with [Carnegie Hall](#) [10]'s citywide festival "La Serenissima: Music and Arts from the Venetian Republic." On February 9, Casa Italiana will present the US premiere of a staged version of *Memoirs*, a play written by [Carlo Goldoni](#) [11], the innovative 18th century Venetian playwright. On February 10, a roundtable discussion will be held on the remarkable tradition of early modern Venetian women's writing. Next up, on February 11, is another US premiere, *The Worth of Women*, based on *Il merito delle donne*, a dialogue written by [Moderata Fonte](#) [12], a Venetian poet of the 16th century. Fonte, a woman way ahead of her time, was an advocate of gender equality. Finally, an "interfaith exchange" based on Italian baroque music will be held on February 16. On March 23, the Casa kicks off a fascinating art exhibition centered on the relationship between America's founding father [Thomas Jefferson](#) [13], President of the US between 1801 and 1809, and the Italian architect [Andrea Palladio](#) [14] (1508-1580). The exhibit aims to show the politician's lesser-known passion for neo-classical architecture and the extent to which he was influenced by Palladio's style.

Consulate General of Italy in New York

The [Consulate General of Italy](#) [15] will begin the New Year by reviving their "New York Loves Italy" series, a project begun in 2016 that brings to light Italy's important role in New York City's everyday life. Monthly conversations will be dedicated to topics such as film, fashion and art, to name a few. The Consulate will also continue their "Meet the New Italians of New York" program, a dynamic series of encounters that brings together new generation Italian immigrants to exchange ideas and experiences with fellow countrymen who have established themselves in the social and professional fabric of the City. A job fair and an art fair will also be held during 2017 as yet another way to help engage and unify the community. Our overall aim is to strengthen the relations between New Yorkers in love with Italy and Italians who love New York.

The Italian Academy for Advanced Studies in America, Columbia University

A few beautiful concerts will be held this winter at [Columbia University's Italian Academy](#) [16], starting December 2 with *Nero and the fall of the Lehman Brothers*, the highly anticipated world premiere of the latest opera by [Jonathan Dawe](#) [17]. On January 26, *Romantic Vienna* will feature classical pieces by [Schubert](#) [18] and [Brahms](#) [19], and on February 23, don't miss *Prague: Czech Romantics* with music by [Antonin Dvorák](#) [20]. The last concert of the series is [Clara Schumann](#) [21]: *Artist and Muse*, dedicated to Robert Schumann's wife, Clara, an incredible composer in her own right. Her music reveals the woman behind the muse. As part of Carnegie Hall's "La Serenissima" festival honoring the city of Venice, the Italian Academy will host two roundtable discussions. On February 2, forensic musicologist [Jordi Savall](#) [22] and musician [Magdalena Baczewska](#) [23] will talk about the musical styles and influences of the Venetian Republic. On February 13, a panel discussion with several experts will examine the cultural exchange between the Ottoman Empire and the Venetian Republic.

John D. Calandra Italian American Institute, Queens College (CUNY)

The 2017 cultural program of the [Calandra Institute](#) [24] is rich and diversified as always. On February 22, a documentary entitled *The Barese Icemen of New York* will open their "Documented Italians" Film & Video Series. It traces the lives of Italian immigrants from Apulia who dominated ice making and delivery in New York City from the 1920s to the 1960s. Another film will be screened in April, *Sicily Jass: The World's First Man in Jazz* followed by a discussion with the director, Michele Cinque, led by independent scholar George DeStefano. Two interesting events will be held in March: on the 16th, cultural historian John Gennari will talk about "Flavor and Soul: Italian America at its African American Edge," aiming to show how deep does the affinity between black and Italian cultures run in this country. Soon after, on March 22, three young emerging Italian American writers will turn to memoir to explore their roots as part of Calandra's Writers Read Series. Like every April, the Institute will hold its annual conference (April 27-29). This year the focus will be on music: "Italian Sonorities and Acoustic Communities: Listening to the Soundscapes of Italianità." Finally, two exhibits will also take place at the Institute: one called "Transnationalizing Modern Languages" and



another displaying the work of Italian painter, [William Papaleo](#) [25].

Center for Italian Studies at Stony Brook University (SUNY)

The mission of [Stony Brook's Center for Italian Studies](#) [26] is twofold: on the one hand, they organize scholarly events for the academic community. On the other, they hold a variety of cultural activities that engage the Long Island community. For next year we're planning a number of events of great intellectual and cultural interest. Besides a lecture series, two big conferences are in the works. The first is scheduled for mid June and entitled "Latin and Italian Linguistics." Coordinated by Professor Lori Repetti, it will bring to campus distinguished scholars to explore programmatic and pedagogical connections between Classical Civilization and the Italian language. The second focuses on "Migration as a Global Phenomenon" and is part of a three-stage initiative involving universities located in three continents: the University of Palermo in May, the University of Sidney in June, and Stony Brook University in October. The migration phenomenon and its different players (refugees, displaced people, dreamers for a better future) will be put into geographic and historic context. The conference is supported by the Fondazione Migrantes. Literary events are fundamental to colleges. In keeping with that idea, the Center for Italian Studies will host a presentation of a special issue of *Forum Italicum*, *Lucania Within*: [Carlo Levi](#) [27] and Rocco Scotellaro, accompanied by an exhibit of Levi's paintings and sketches, some never seen before.

Italian American Experience Lecture Series, Hofstra Cultural Center at Hofstra University

[Hofstra University's Italian American Experience Lecture Series](#) [28], now in its twentieth year under the direction of Dr. [Stanislao Pugliese](#) [29], will host three lectures by master chef and culinary authority Enrico Bazzoni, entitled "Italian and Italian American Cuisine Reconsidered." (Date to be announced). There will also be a special presentation of *The Routledge History of Italian Americans* edited by William Connell & Stanislao Pugliese. The book is a new multi-authored history of one of the largest ethnic groups in the United States. The collection brings together leading scholars and critics to create a narrative of the trials and triumphs of Italians in America. Concentrating on themes ranging from immigration to religion, labor rights to women's rights, the collection reflects the field of Italian American Studies in its current form and highlights unique elements of Italian American culture that have particularly influenced the American experience as a whole.

The Inserra Chair in Italian and Italian American Studies, Montclair State University

The Spring 2017 [Inserra Chair](#) [30] calendar of events offers programs for dedicated Italophiles as well as Italian-American history buffs. On February 23 [Joseph Sciorra](#) [31], Director for Academic and Cultural Programs at the Calandra Institute, will present his book *Built with Faith: Italian American Imagination and Catholic Material Culture in New York City*, a fascinating look at the impact of Italian-American religious practices. In March (date TBA). [Daniele Balicco](#) [32], editor of *Made in Italy e cultura* and author of several articles on food, technology and healing practices, and Maurizio Forte, Director of the Italian Trade Agency, will discuss "Food Sustainability and Bio-technologies" as part of a series that approaches the concept of Made in Italy from a philosophical and cultural, as opposed to a commercial, vantage. Finally on April 27 award-winning filmmaker Andrea Segre will premiere his documentary *Come il peso dell'acqua* (RAI3). The event provides a much-needed Italian perspective on the Mediterranean migrant crisis. The screening and Q&A are part of "Italy and the Euro-Mediterranean Migrant Crisis National Reception, Lived Experiences, E.U. Pressures," an event in collaboration with Columbia University, which includes a panel of experts on contemporary immigration in Italy (April 26, Columbia University). Each event demonstrates the Inserra Chair's interest in how the movement from and to Italy of people, ideas, and goods reflects the dynamic nature of the country's culture and economy.

Casa Belvedere, The Italian Cultural Foundation, Staten Island

Staten Island's [Casa Belvedere](#) [33] kicks off a series of not-to-be-missed 2017 events with *Il Presepio della Solidarietà*, a solidarity crèche crafted by hand by master artisans from Italy's Campania Region and presented to the New York City Fire Department as a gift from the Naples Chamber of Commerce in honor of 9/11 victims and the brave fire fighters, police officers and EMS workers who made the ultimate sacrifice that day. In 2011 the International Columbia Association of



FDNY entrusted the Italian Cultural Foundation at Casa Belvedere to be the custodians of this significant display. On display until January 6. On March 19 the traditional St. Joseph's Day dinner will be held at the Belvedere Club. The celebration of "[Festa di San Giuseppe](#) [34]", a popular holiday in Italy, especially in the South, provides an occasion to showcase traditional regional fare and the customs that make St. Joseph's Day special. Also scheduled is the Annual Corrado Joe Manfredi 'Taste of Italy' Golf Outing (June, Date TBD). Corrado Joe Manfredi was an accomplished businessman and community leader known throughout the tri-state area and a beloved role model in Staten Island. By celebrating his life and spirit, the Italian Cultural Foundation aims to preserve his legacy and develop a network for the next generation of Italian Americans to follow in his footsteps. Last but not least, there will be two festivals at Casa Belvedere this summer: "Cinema Sotto Le Stelle," an outdoor Italian film festival (every Wednesday evening starting mid July); and the "Festa d'Italia/Motori d'Italia" Italian Festival and Car Show (September, date TBD). Both festivals are widely popular and attract hundreds if not thousands of visitors.

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- [26] http://www.stonybrook.edu/commcms/italian_studies/index.html
- [27] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carlo_Levi
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