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EMILIA  
ROMAGNA

N.3  
2009

## INTERVISTA INTERVIEW

Pupi Avati,  
40 anni di ciak  
Pupi Avati,  
40 years of film making



## ANNIVERSARI ANNIVERSARIES

I quattro secoli  
di Bertoldo  
Four centuries  
of Bertoldo



# SEMPRE PIU VERDE

## GREENER AND GREENER

Emilia-Romagna invests € 21 million  
on new parks, natural reserves  
and protected parks

L'Emilia-Romagna  
investe 21 milioni  
di euro per nuovi parchi,  
riserve naturali  
e paesaggi protetti

# EMILIA ROMAGNA



Trimestrale d'informazione dell'Agenzia informazione e ufficio stampa della Giunta della Regione Emilia-Romagna e della Consulta degli emiliano-romagnoli nel mondo.

N. III - Anno XII  
Settembre 2009

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Publicazione registrata  
col n. 5080 presso  
il Tribunale di Bologna  
il 30 aprile 1994

**Progetto grafico**  
**Graphics**  
Moruzzi's Communications Group (BO)

**Stampa e spedizione**  
**Printing & mailing**  
Labanti e Nanni (BO)

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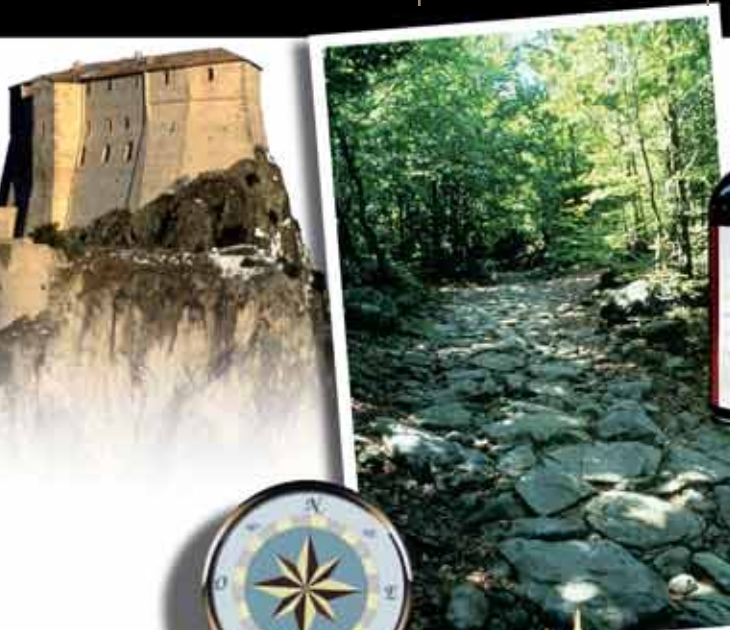
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## THE HOUSE OF TREES

by Giorgio Bardeschi

There will be more parks and protected areas in Emilia-Romagna. And more events to define, promote and get known. Tourism, culture and knowledge play a primary role in the development of these natural resources, in addition to being an important hub for a more sustainable new development model which focuses on the environment. The Council of the Emilia-Romagna Region has earmarked about ? 21 million in its three-year plan between 2009 and 2011. "It is now finally apparent to everybody that it is important to extend protected areas to combat climate change and loss of biodiversity, but also to improve peoples' quality of life and produce new employment opportunities", explained the regional alderman of sustainable development Lino Zanichelli. "Farmers too have understood that protected areas can lead to interesting business opportunities which need to be explored". The plan provides for the institution of two new regional parks, two new natural reserves, seven natural and semi-natural protected landscapes and 54 sheltered areas distributed in all the regional provinces. The surface area of protected areas in Emilia-Romagna thus goes from 294,000 to 385,500 hectares, that is, 13% to 17.4% of the regional territory, while the number of regional parks increases to 15 and natural reserves to 16. A new component of the three-year plan are the natural and semi-natural protected landscapes and the sheltered areas, which are two forms of less-demanding nature protection entrusted directly to the provinces or Councils. ? 11 million will go directly to the natural park and reserve systems to fund environmental resources restoration and development. ? 6 million will go to the Provinces for biodiversity projects, that is, animal and vegetable species variety. ? 3 million will go to the two National Parks in the region – the Tuscan-Emilian one and the Casentinesi, Monte Falterona and Campigna Forests – and the Po Delta regional park. ? 700,000 will be used to fund environmental information and education in parks and reserves. ☞

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## VINEGAR WITH GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATION STATUS

by *Saverio Malaspina*

After a wait of 15 years, Brussels has finally certified the Modena Balsamic Vinegar as a GI (Geographical Indication) product. The decision, announced by Michael Mann, the spokesperson for the European Agricultural Commissioner Mariann Fischer Boel, will protect one of the products of the Emilian culinary tradition par excellence from falsifications: the vinegar is widely imitated, even out of Europe. The outcome received an ecstatic response which confirms Italy's record for GI products (Italy is the country with the most GI products: 178 out of 856, which is 21% of the total, subdivided into 115 PDOs (Protected Designation of Origin), 62 PGIs (Protected Geographical Indication) and 1 PGS (Protected Geographical Status)), from various sections of the national agricultural world. For example, the Cia, Confagri and Fedagri, Modena institutions and Emilian parliamentarians. The regional alderman for Agriculture, Tiberio Rabboni, said he

was "very satisfied" and underlined the importance of a group effort in achieving this result. "European protection of Balsamic Vinegar from Modena is recognition of a unique and inimitable product and awards the team work undertaken by the Province, Region, Ministry and the Product Consortiums. There were no prima donnas in this process, only protagonists who were conscious of the fact that united we are strong".

The first step in registering the "Modena Balsamic Vinegar" name was in 1994 by the Consortium of the same name, founded in 1993. "The procedure seems simple enough – Consortium President Cesare Mazzetti says – but in reality it turned out to be a tangled and incredible process of withdrawing the application and reapplying, appeals and counter-appeals, and delays, delays, delays". This could have been due to a certain possessiveness of the producers of the Modena Balsamic Vinegar and those of the more noble and refined Traditional Modena Balsamic Vinegar (which is already PDO). But most of the opposition came from foreign producers (especially from France, Greece and Germany) which sought to slow down the process to exploit the growing commercial success of the product, with attempts to produce "balsamic vinegars" which were only imitations. ☞

## WATCH OUT FOR THAT DISH

by *Giovanni Sanvitale*

Discovering the negative health effects of contaminants in food products and thus understanding the risks we run when consuming them, is the subject of a study conducted by researchers from the Modena and Reggio Emilia University and Japanese scholars. The research has precise practical applications in the food safety sector and lays the foundations for discovering how combinations of toxic substances interact in living organisms. The discovery has received widespread interest in the international scientific community: in June the Chemical Research in Toxicology magazine of the American Chemical Society decided to publish the results accompanied with an editorial on the implications and effects of the research. The study was conducted by the Biomedical Science Department and involved a group of scientists coordinated by Gian Paolo Rossini in collaboration with Albertino Bigiani and Japanese researchers: Takeshi Yasumoto, now with the Okinawa Science and Technology Promotion Center, and Makoto Sasaki and Haruhiko Fuwa from the Graduate School of Life Sciences of the Tohoku University. Test results have shown how simultaneous treatment with two toxic substances induces distinct molecular responses depending on the single molecular response which was studied. In some cases the responses were synergistic, in others they were independent, while in others they were antagonistic, and a toxic substance opposes the manifestation of a response induced in the other one. The study thus shows that the cell response with a combination of toxic substances cannot be predicted as a simple superimposition of the responses induced individually of the two substances. "Let's take an imaginary example which can be understood by most people, at the organism level, which is not the molecular one which is the subject of our research", explains Gian Paolo Rossini, born in 1952 in Bologna, professor at the Modena and Reggio Emilia University with a lengthy experience in the United States, Sweden and France and author of about 70 papers in important scientific journals. "Let's take – Rossi-

ni says – a toxic substance A, which, let's imagine, causes headache, lowering of blood pressure and sleepiness. And let's take another toxic substance B which causes stomach ache, depression and increases appetite. We cannot presume that if we are exposed to A and B simultaneously we will have headache, lowering of blood pressure, sleepiness, stomach ache, depression and increase in appetite". Nor can we presume that, if we are exposed to A and B simultaneously and notice that our headache is increasing, that we can also expect an accentuation of the other effects of A (ignoring those of B for simplification reasons), and that our blood pressure will decrease even more and we will fall asleep while driving. "What we can say though – Rossini goes on to say – is that if we are exposed to A and B simultaneously our headache will increase, blood pressure will go back to normal, we will be sleepy nevertheless but we will not have stomach ache, we will be euphoric and we will never be hungry. Our results allow us to make conclusions at the molecular level. The other levels have to be examined to test if our conclusions are also applicable to other levels of complexity like the example that I outlined". ☞

## THE STRAUSS OF ROMAGNA

by *Claudio Bacilieri*

"Couples passed by here, when the music pumped out the whirling beats of a waltz, like a flash, and once the dance had finished, the women plopped themselves down on the couches, panting, pale and with eyes full of languor". This is the news story, published in L'Avvenire on 24 August 1890, of a dance party in Rimini, in the full throes of the Romagna Belle Époque, which was inaugurated about twenty years before with the opening of the first seaside towns. The soundtrack to this new desire to enjoy life in Romagna between the 1800s and 1900s was played by small orchestras composed of few members who played in the café-concerts, small villas and sea platforms, socialist clubs, the countryside and patron saint celebrations. The most famous of these small orchestras was Carlo Brighi's, nicknamed Zaclèn, duckling, because of his love for hunting ducks. He was the person who first got couples dancing together in an embrace, in Romagna and in Italy. Prior to Zaclèn's waltzes, the Romagna people did not have a typical dance of their own, apart from the saltarello (the hop), which came though from Central Italy. So

they danced, like all Italians did, the manfrina (a Venetian dance), the quadriglia (square dance), the trescone (a Tuscan dance), that is, dances involving groups and jumps, where the male and the female didn't even touch each other. Dancing was one of the few court-ing opportunities. Before Zaclèn, if a young man wanted to express an interest in a girl, he had to go to the priest or a middle-man, or wait for the right moment during a dance to let her know. The girl, so as not to offend him and appear rash, had to answer "Av ringrezi e av darò l'arposta" (I thank you and I will let you know). Then Carlo Brighi arrived on the scene. Born in 1853 in the small town of Fiumicino in the Savignano sul Rubicone council area, Brighi was touched by the sacred hand of music. Every day he went to Cesena on foot to take violin lessons, and when he got back in the evening, the tunes flowed out of him, which he would then flesh-out during studies with a band leader and, in particular, when he was learning the ropes with various orchestral groups, to end up being directed by Arturo Toscanini. He wrote his first dance tunes at night by whistling them in the dark of his room, after having left Toscanini's prestigious orchestra to spread music all of his own, which was a cross-pollination of Central European waltzes and the music played in the farmyard which was lodged in his heart. What Zaclèn produced was the original "popular dance music", he was the real inventor of this genre, and not, as is erroneously attributed, to the talented Secondo Casadei. In reality, the writer of Romagna mia was Zaclèn's heir, having taken from him the mood of his music, and having played as second violinist in the orchestra conducted by Emilio Braghi, who took over the reins after his father, Carlo's, death in 1915. Secondo Casadei gave rise to his famous orchestra in 1928 bringing ballroom dancing from Romagna to worldwide success, up to the 1970s when Raoul Casadei commercialized it as dance hall music, which, over time, would become increasingly more stereotyped. Today dance hall music is at a dead end. Unlike, for example, the pizzica from Salento or Grecanic music, the Romagna type of ballroom dancing has not changed with the times. What popular dance music needs is a talent like the diatonic accordionist Riccardo Tesi, who creatively took traditional music from the Bolognese Apennines and mixed it with new artistic languages. Carlo Brighi was an artist whom we would now call "glocal", global and local. What he managed to do was to take the universal cultural model of the refined Viennese bourgeoisie – Strauss's waltzes, which had superseded the jaded

court dances of the 1700s – and expressed it "Romagna" style, for tastes more suited to the petty bourgeoisie, workers and peasants who flocked to the dance halls, local clubs, political party centres, rural celebrations and seaside towns. It is of no coincidence that a music of that type could only be born in Romagna. In the 1800s, Romagna, which had shaken off the all-encompassing papal vigilance, set free its anarchic and progressive vein and filled the region with recreational and political social clubs, and multiplied the opportunities to have fun and dance in inns, theatres and associations. A staunch socialist and friend of Andrea Costa, Carlo Brighi transformed cultured music from Central Europe – waltzes, polkas, mazurkas – into popular music. He made them faster, making them suited not to sumptuous Schönbrunn-mirrored dance-halls, but to big rooms (cambaroun), badly-lit by oil-lamps, which are the origins of the dance halls. Popular music dancing, called "liscio" ("smooth", as a reference to the sound of feet dragged across the dance floor), was thus born as a popular Romagna version of the vivacious Viennese tunes, dirtied by the sweat of jumping dancers with their acrobatics learned in their farmyards with chaff under their feet, or in republican or socialist clubs between a glass of wine and a political speech. "Two first violins, one second violin, a guitar, a double bass and a clarinet sounding like a warbling nightingale. Dancers went wild to Zaclèn's barn-storming waltzes. The orchestra played without sheet music. The violinist used his unending source of creativity to make up the tunes. The double bass kept the beat on the strings like a rumble of a cannon shot", commented the Romagnolo writer Rino Alessi, for whom the greatest thing was to dance the waltz "cun e Zaclèn" (with Zaclèn) holding a "bela mora" (beautiful brunette). After a hard day at work, the magical moment arrived for our grandparents and great-grandparents: taca, Zaclèn! The man himself, his hair greased with piuppen, the predecessor to hair cream, would bang his heel three times on the ground to signal to the musicians that it was time to dance. His music also got the young Benito Mussolini dancing, who he remembered in his writings as a very famous violinist. He was so adored that during the tenth anniversary of his death, the fascist mayor of a small town near Forlì hosted a dance and commemorative party, despite Brighi's well-known socialist activism. And during the opening speech, the fascists called upon Aldo Spallicci, one of Zaclèn's admirers, doctor, historian of Romagna and staunch antifascist, who was arrested the year after and was later

condemned to exile. Carlo Brighi's sheet music is kept in the Raccolte Piancastelli in the Forlì Council Library. The 831 sheet music pieces are annotated carefully or hurriedly in pencil, some still dirty with drinking glass stains: these are what remain of the approximately 1,200 compositions that got people from Romagna dancing between 1970 and the first years of the 1900s. Five classical, world music and jazz musicians have been working on Carlo Brighi's handwritten music sheets for a couple of years, and formed the Piccola Orchestra Zaclèn, keeping the original formation of first and second violin, clarinet in C, guitar and double bass. And they have produced a CD on which there are all the different types of his dance music, as a supplement to the volume Carlo Brighi. Suoni e immagini della Romagna fra Ottocento e Novecento (Carlo Brighi. Sounds and images in Romagna between the 1800s and 1900s) which the Council of Savignano sul Rubicone (birth-place of Secondo Casadei too) dedicated to the Strauss from Romagna. ☞

## THE MASTER EDUCATORS

by *Paolo Petroni*

"I make books to help people understand the world", states Federico Enriques, president and chief executive officer of Zanichelli in Bologna, who was asked for a definition of his job, during the 150th anniversary of his publishing house. "150 years old and shows no sign of ageing", he says, even though the Zanichelli brand is perhaps not that well known by most people who, nevertheless, have used at least a few of their books, like the famous dictionaries - the Zingarelli -, and the school texts, from the history text by Camera-Fabietti to the physics one by Amaldi, to Pazzaglia's anthology, to name just a few. Even somebody like Italo Calvino who had little interest in scholastic popularisation, got involved and with his interest in this world and his passion for culture, thereby agreeing to produce a literary anthology, La Lettura, which came out, not by chance, in 1969. He wrote at the time: "Dear friends: producing an anthology is a damn difficult endeavour. I spend my days reading without making any choices of note, perhaps I have yet to find the right way of working; this thing of chasing memories of old readings is a frustrating exercise which occupies an inordinate amount of time". To coincide with the anniversary, a historical catalogue 1859-2009 Zanichelli has been published and Il Mulino has published Castelli di carte by

Federico Enriques (pp. 558 - 32 euro), the former director and current chief executive officer and president of Zanichelli, his family company in which he started working for in 1965 after a stint as the assistant to Pietro Rescigno at the University of Bologna. It's a particular kind of book, which talks not only of the history of the publishing house, but also events surrounding an endeavour from all angles, from the meeting with a person of Calvino's calibre to considerations on the private lives of his employees, where they go on holiday and how to get from home to the office. Enriques, talking about Zanichelli, at times brings to mind Olivetti of the past. He says: "My father worked there for a long time and I did 10 years of school in Ivrea, so I hope something has stayed with me from that experience. For example, our interest in people, their importance as individuals, the meaning of working together, the significant role of each person within a community". Today, two thirds of Zanichelli's work consists in school texts, but focusing on "instruments for a high quality education, that is, a school which develops knowledge, ability and skills, which awards excellence and helps the less able while not penalising the best students". When asked to look ahead to the future, he says that the publishing house is "half-way through its journey: jokes aside, if in 150 years there will still be private businesses dealing with material that people want to buy (and it is to be seen if we will be dealing with objects or services) I think I can say that Gutenberg will live on. That is, his way of publishing using movable type. But paper probably won't be involved, which, in any case, has a relatively short history of use in Europe of just over 800 years and which at the beginning he considered too fragile compared to parchment and banned its use, like Frederick II in the Kingdom of Sicily". While looking back to the past, he explains that "in the last 50 years (the period in which he has worked for the publishing house) what strikes him is how little the publishing sector has changed compared to the world around us, the birth of radio and TV and the web, which had reduced the time that we devote to reading". He concludes by inviting everyone to "rather than buying and reading, to reread books, which is the only way to attempt to really understand".

## ONCE UPON A TIME THERE WAS BERTOLDO

by Renato Bertacchini

Ugo Tognazzi, a valley dweller à la the greedy and sly Bertoldo, once spoke

about the necessity of stripping off all the bark from the trunk of a tree. "For what?" asked his sidekick Raimondo Vianelli, the Bertoldoesque journalist. "Why, to make a toothpick completely by hand!". In the same vein is the Bertoldoism from the Walter Chiari-Carlo Campanini duo, with their unforgettable theatrical line: "Come here, moron!". Four modern, foolish and free Bertoldos, worthy of their forefather. Impressively, in the meantime, the loutish Bertoldo - the absolute "moron", "a man unlike any other and ugly looking", who is shrewd and wise - and his father, the Bolognese storyteller Giulio Cesare Croce, a buffoon and enchanting story-teller, have persisted over the centuries to notch up 400 years of existence. The first date that Sottilissime astuzie di Bertoldo (The Very Subtle Shrewdness of Bertoldo) was published is uncertain, but we know of the 1609 edition which came out the year of the author's death, when he was 57 years old. At the Veronese court of King Alboin the freak Bertoldo, the grotesque ham actor, bearer of a culture placed between popular and semi-literate, of an unmistakable Po Valley variety, changes his own fate. Welcomed and respected by the Longobard sovereign, Bertoldo becomes a counsellor, somebody who is honoured, gifted and entrusted with a license to speak and hold court. But forced to eat food which is unusual for him - non peasant food - and gobbling up "barbaric" food like meat, sauces and spices, he dies "with the sharp pain of not being able to eat turnips and beans". A very symbolic death. This event was an inconceivable and negative departure from his natural state, from his condition as a rough, difficult, motionless peasant. We learn of this from the start. Questioning him on his origins, Alboin asks him: "Who are your ancestors and descendants?" Bertoldo answers: "beans, which, while being boiled on the fire ascend and descend in the pot". With this "absurd" witticism, Bertoldo, the sacred buffoon, the living enigma, is not too far from the truth. The authenticity of his origins is for all to see. His demonic agrarian fertility pedigree is irrefutable. This explains the use of "bean" in the language of the "low" village-dwellers, the black and simian-like men in the fields, the boors, the beasts. Not to mention the food symbolism of the "damned prolific race": the word refers to testicle, the male organ, the main fertility genital. In medicine in the 1600s beans were considered "the food of the uncivil", that is, multipliers of energy. While fava beans in the diet of the time, which was a food suitable for people who "work a lot", was a staple food from the earth, it was filling and followed

wheat and fava beans in order of importance. At the court, while bloody and badly cooked meat, fowl and game devastatingly fermented in his stomach, the vegetarian, grain-loving Bertoldo displayed his elusive role as oracle, forewarner and fortune-teller. By dint of paradoxes and proverbs, jokes and utterances - the oral weapons of the uneducated - Bertoldo pokes fun at the vain pride of abstract, doctrinal knowledge. The fool, the consummate "moron" was more important than the all-knowing upstart. Bertoldo, with his red neck and acute mind, energetically asserts some moral principles which are as valid today as ever, expounding equality between the high classes and the humble ones: "I knew that we are all equal / and that the sun shone on all of us". As a prudent and mischievous farmer, he shows how the poor peasant classes are superior than the noble ones, the marquis and counts of abstruse, multi-generational genealogical origin. He reflects on the transience of power and the sudden fall of the powerful: "the history of a thousand years disappears / in an hour". His main scorn is directed towards flattery: "the cruellest and most wretched plague / that pervades this mortal life". Such "high and stupendous things, / which would amaze Solomon", many of these truthful phrases can be found in the will under the bedside table of the dying Bertoldo. But who really was Bertoldo's father? Who is the real man behind the mask of the ramshackle, mocking peasant who uses his mind as a weapon? Giulio Cesare Croce was born near Bologna, in San Giovanni in Persiceto in 1550. His father, a blacksmith, tried to keep him away from furnaces, hammers and pliers so he could become "learned". So his father, Claudio, encouraged Giulio Cesare to study and then, after his death, the endeavour was carried on by his uncle from Castelfranco. But his teacher in Castelfranco, instead of teaching Virgil or Dante, took his students to the stables to take care of horses and donkeys or in the fields to sow the land or cut wheat. He had to wait until he was 18 before he left the toils of the countryside. "And I came to Bologna...", he said. But how? And with what expectations? He worked here as a blacksmith and workshop assistant.

The city meant dives, markets and crowds of people, it meant wandering around the streets at nights with flasks of lambrusco and singing. As a boisterous wanderer of the night amongst alleys and squares, Croce, armed with a one-string fiddle and a bladder and pumpkin as a speaker, performed his sing-songs and rhymes. He would go around saying "bread to bread pear tree to pear tree" in

the "folksy" language, stories of everyday life of poverty and toil, injustice and pain, revelry and crimes. It was curious, small-time news, accompanied with "ventarole", light multi-coloured sheets of paper sold for a bolognino (the currency of the time), on which Croce would then print everything he narrated. Having to support two wives and a rabble of 14 hungry kids, Giulio Cesare Croce would eat with one hand while writing hundreds of "ventarole" with the other one, disposable stories which were spread in no time, imitated, stolen and counterfeited. However, the story-teller, the "small-time poet in dark times", never managed to gain the support of a longed-for patron in the Bologna of the Counter-Reformation who could assure him of well-being and serenity.

## FROM TEENAGER TO POPSTAR

by Giovanni Sanvitale

Of the thousands of budding musicians aiming for success, few are actually given the chance to do so. Even rarer is the case of someone like Cesare Cremonini who, as a young boy even before sitting his final high school diploma exam, saw the promise of a future as a pop star. It should come as no surprise then that the former leader of Lunapop, Cremonini, defines his ascent as "the most beautiful story that I know".

The Bolognese singer has dedicated a book *Le ali sotto ai piedi* (Wings beneath My Feet), published by Rizzoli, to this "modern fable of a boy who enjoyed the luxury of dreaming". The book is both a portrait of an artist as a young boy and a novel on the coming of age, which comes out exactly ten years after the success of the single 50 special and the million-and-a-half-selling album *Squerez?*, followed by the new single *Il pagliaccio*.

The book talks about his first love, conflict with his parents, the discovery of his musical idols, Freddie Mercury at the top of the list, and indifference to the tragedies of the modern day coming to him from the sterile confines of his television set: all of these elements, which are part and parcel of any ordinary kid who grew up in the 80s, for Cremonini became the secret of an out-of-the-ordinary fortune. The founder of Lunapop recounts all the events of his adolescence - the first piano lessons with the moustached Sister Ignazia, the various jams with his friends in the band *Senza filtro*, the cheek with which he introduced himself to the producer Walter

Mameli up to winning the San Marino festival - as though even back then they were imbued with the promise of his future success. "I am the last child of the old generation of musicians - the artist explains - those who began by playing in cellars, who cut their teeth doing concerts and who went around looking for a producer. The years I talk about were my personal 60s". For this reason, today Cremonini feels light years away from the new generation of musicians coming out of talent shows. "They're programs which are good for music from a record perspective - he admitted - but I would never change my past, because a talent show does not teach you how to write songs". There are two supporting actors in Cremonini's rise to stardom in his autobiographical novel: one is his Bologna - "if it hadn't been the centre of my life, I wouldn't have become what I am", while the other one is Walter Mameli. Cremonini's admiring recognition of the Bolognese producer ("the first person who treated me as an adult"), is also an indirect promise of following in the footsteps of his friend who is 20 years older than him. As he writes in *Le ali sotto ai piedi*: "With the right people and records, it's inevitable that I'll bring to fruition the lessons the great maestro taught me".

## FROM PLAINS TO PLAINS

by Claudio Bacilieri

"In this migrant space, where tortelli are eaten on Sundays and mate is drunk on weekdays" an "historical peripatetic" came in, from Reggio Emilia. Clocking up kilometre on kilometre on old coaches through the enormous pampas, Antonio Canovi, a researcher working on historiography and memory, followed the same route taken by the Lower Reggio Emilia area migrants from the Po Valley plains to the Argentinian ones. Canovi, who has numerous contributions to the study of migratory phenomena under his belt (in particular, emigration from Piacenza to Argenteuil, in the outskirts of Paris, and the fascist and exiles ones) runs the Laboratorio Geostorico Tempo Presente study centre in Reggio Emilia. Seven councils from the Lower Western Reggio Emilia area who are co-promoting the research project proposed by him ("research-action", because the project involves interviews with the protagonists on site) sent him on a "mission" to recover memories, emotions and thoughts, as part of the solidarity program "Argentina chiama

Italia" (Argentina calling Italy): the councils are Castelnovo di Sotto, Boretto, Brescello, Gattatico, Gualtieri, Guastalla and Poviglio. A book has been produced from the work, *Pianure Migranti* (Migrant Plains), published by the Reggio Emilia publisher Diabasi, in which the movement routes are reconstructed through the generations, family stories and belongingness, in a constant to-and-fro between places of origin and destinations, suspended between the sounds of dialect and Spanish. A DVD comes with the volume, produced by Daniele Castagnetti, in which stories from paper archives and "solicited" oral archives are unravelled. In the book, the Argentinian president Domingo Faustino Sarmiento is cited, not only because he imported birds with a porteno whistle from France, which surprised Canovi in Buenos Aires, but also because in his *Viaje a Italia* from 1847, he displayed an admiration not for Rome, or Naples, but - hold your breath - the Po Valley Plains: "I saw the pampas plus civilisation", he wrote.

Armed with only addresses and sketchy traces supplied by the Offices of Italians residing abroad of seven councils in Reggio Emilia, the researcher set out to check a departure assumption: that the memories of the elderly who were born in the Lower Reggio Emilia area constitute the roots of the young people who have always and only lived in Argentina. Quite a few of these young people have been stirred by the stories of their grandparents, possibly during the Argentinian Christmas where steaming hot *cappelletti* in broth are served up in the 40 degrees of the pampas summer, to venture on an educational trip to find their Emilian roots.

The interweaving of voices and the myriad of migrant figures which the book abound in present us with important aspects of both Argentinian and Italian history. For example, before leaving, Canovi interviewed in Poviglio Fernando Manfredi, born in 1960 in Mar del Plata. Fernando returned to his roots in 1983, after the Falklands War in which he served for his country. "I remember when we finished, they gave us our pay, a bundle of money in front of us, which was worth practically nothing. We stopped off at a restaurant, the day they cast us out, I'll always remember it because we watched Italy-Brazil on television (...) the 1982 World Cup, and we stopped and ate, we put all our money on the table which they had given us and we had just enough to eat (...). After that I was disillusioned with your Argentina, (...) for me Argentina was over". In Italy, Fernando discovered a different situation: "In Argentina, we could have fun without

money. The people get you involved more, while here if you're nobody important, if you don't have a house and a job, nobody will give you the time of day". In Mar del Playa, Canovi, accompanied by the president of the Emilia-Romagna Association, Sandra Nannetti, met Jorge Horacio Manfredi and his father Norberto. They spoke, went through the family history in Jorge Horacio's excellent Italian which he had learned to reclaim the language that had always been part of his family. At a certain point, he mentioned the name of a dead cousin, Fernando Manfredi, and Canovi immediately made a connection between the parentage with the Fernando interviewed in Poviglio. On the Dur road, and past the circle of councils that make up the Gran Buenos Aires, the peripatetic historian arrived in Tres Arroyos to listen to the memories of Emilia Vernizzi, whose first impression of the pampas was "Sky and cows. Sky and cows". Not unlike Franca Gatti's, who emigrated from Gattatico, in the Reggio Emilia area, who added the little railways epic story of the "famous train which left the Buenos Aires station of Retiro at six in the morning to arrive at Mendoza at midnight. Slowly moving on that train which went through those small towns, dust everywhere, immense grasslands with cows, cows and more cows grazing everywhere, sheep grazing, what hell! Mo' mamma! Mo' che brit lavòr (Oh my god! What a disaster!) (...) where have we ended up? That dust... On that train run by coal, through the smoke and the dust and those wooden seats".

The fascination with the pampas is constant in the immigrants' stories. The Reggio Emilia farmers, who were used to their small plains, let their imaginations go when faced with the endless pampas. It's the Argentinian geography - says Canovi - which attracted them. The snowy Andes, the glaciers in Patagonia, the frenzy of Buenos Aires. "Seen from Mar del Plata - the researcher observes - the Po plains area is seen (...) as a 'small ancient world', interwoven with ancestral customs and endowed with unchangeable culinary traditions. In reality (...) it is a world undergoing radical transformation. (...) A world which, in regards to the value of work, has learnt to "hold dear" a solidarity and progressive character, seeing itself as the primary shaper of its own social emancipation.

Which is nothing compared to Mar del Plata, where in the breezy urban spaces one breathes in the intimate promise of freedom and the city, in other words, it invites you to shake up your life". It's as though the inhabitants of Ancient Europe had already taken in what excites Argentinians today. In

Necochea, Canovi met Olga Cavalca, the founder in 2000 of the Centro Residentes de la Emilia-Romagna. And a judge, Eugenia Quagliaroli, who speaks fluent Italian and joined the Centre due to her father's Piacenza origins. For her, "Italianess is an emotion (...), an emotion of a lot of nostalgia". For everybody here, Italian is the language of affection and memory. When telling the story of the Cavalcas from Poviglio, Olga and her sister Raquel highlighted a strong social mobility: over the course of a generation, the misplaced Emilian campesinos had become middle class. Other family stories speak of a similar route to emancipation. Before crossing the Rio Colorado, where Patagonia can already be felt, Canovi went on a search for the migratory chain on the Boretto-Bahía Blanca line. In this city, the "social question" which clashed in Italy between Catholics and socialists, is condensed. In Bahía Blanca there is a religious Boretto informed by the Salesians, with two important figures: Artémides Zatti, a lay assistant who died in Viedma in 1951 and known as the enfermero santo of Patagonia, beatified in 2003 and don Juan Vecchi, who actually became the Rector Major of the Salesians in 1996. And there's the story recounted by Melide Cantarelli, heir to a Masonic family and a socialist who arrived in Bahía Blanca in the same years in which the Zattis and the Vecchis arrived there. As president of the Italian Club between 1927 and 1932, Marzio Cantarelli, a wealthy builder, tried to contrast the fascist influence on the immigrant associations by constructing, at his own expense, a monument to Garibaldi, which was inaugurated with a Masonic liturgy, and funding the prestigious Rivadavia Library created by Italians at the end of the 1800s. In the cool air of Viedma, which was then the capital of Patagonia and which is now the capital of the Province of Rio Negro, Canovi met a young woman, Magali Pizarro who, reconnecting to her maternal interests, embarked on the study of Italian - the only one in her family who did so - and on work on memory which brought her to Italy for an internship for the Emilia-Romagna Region and a visit to the town of her origins, Montescudo, in the Rimini province. From Plains to Plains, from the Po Valley to the wide Argentinian rivers, many small personal epics within the great Italian migratory epic are unravelled by the historian from Reggio Emilia. And the concept of memory, lodged between alienation and belongingness, gives us exemplary cases of courage, dedication and commitment which pay tribute to the migrant that is in each of us.