

Italian Culture, Food, and Fun at Hofstra University

Alex Catti (September 27, 2017)



Earlier this month, Hofstra University hosted its 25th annual Italian festival. The day was a chance for the Long Island community to experience a bit of traditional Italian culture, from dancing to food, and to enjoy the beautiful weather that day on the University's campus.

The morning fog lifted, and the sun began to shine over [Hofstra University](#) [2]'s 25h Annual "Italian Experience Festival." On the top floor of the [Joan and Donald E. Axinn Library](#) [3], the day began with a breakfast by the [Association of the Italian American Educators \(AIAE\)](#) [4]. After the breakfast, Italian culture was in full-swing in the heart of Hofstra's beautiful campus. The festivities were lead by Cav. Josephine Maietta, who is the President of AIAE, the host of WRHU 88.7's [Sabato Italiano](#) [5] radio program, and also an Italian teacher.

AIAE Breakfast

The AIAE breakfast was a chance for educators of Italian to come together in order to discuss the



latest developments in the Italian and educational communities. A series of presentations was arranged for the guests including that of Dr. Salvatore Nicosia. Nicosia was chosen as this year's keynote speaker. He discussed the importance of teaching children to be politically active members of society, and he touched upon his own personal experiences as an Italian-American that led him to where he is today and to the writing of his book [Empowering Our Children To Be More Effective in the Political Process](#) [6].

Additionally, guests of the breakfast were treated to a video presented by Dr. Alessio Nesi from the [Istituto Linguistico Mediterraneo \(ILM\)](#) [7]. The video offered viewers a glimpse into the "[Programma Ponte](#) [8]." This program, organized by AIAE and ILM, brings young American students to Italy in order to immerse them in the language and culture.

Traditional Italian Entertainment

Following the breakfast, the outdoor festivities ensued. The National anthem was sung by Giovanni and Marco Vittozzi. [Poet Laureate Roberto Savino](#) [9] recited his poem "No Distance Between Us"—"Nessuna Distanza Tra Noi." Next up, spectators were treated to traditional dress from Italy's various regions. Members of the [New York Grand Lodge Order Sons of Italy](#) [10] showed-off their traditional regional clothing onstage as they were introduced by Roberto Ferrito.

Keeping with regional traditions, artistic director, founder, and lead performer of [I Giullari di Piazza](#) [11]—Alessandra Belloni—wowed the audience with traditional southern Italian folk dances. The public was up and on their feet, dancing with the performers. The music didn't end there though as [Moreno Fruzzetti](#) [12] performed Italian music for the audience. Fruzzetti sang both well-known and lesser-known Italian selections. Fruzzetti was previously awarded the prestigious honor of "Ambassador of Italian Music to America."

Later in the afternoon, members of the [Bronx Opera Company](#) [13] performed Italian vocal classics. Next, [Tony De Nonno](#) [14] took children at the festival on a journey into the life and legacy of puppeteers Mike and Aida Manteo. The final performance of the day was then given by the [Long Island Mandolin and Guitar Orchestra](#) [15].

Food and Fun

In addition to the planned entertainment, plenty of vendors set up shop along the sidewalks of the campus green. Among the many items to be purchased were jewelry, gelato, t-shirts, and zeppole. Children could be seen at getting their faces painted and playing in the bounce house.

If this sounds like fun to you, a date has already been chosen for Hofstra's 2018 Italian Festival, so be sure to be there on Sunday, September 16, 2018!

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- [1] <http://ftp.iitaly.org/files/hofstraitalianfestival.jpg>
- [2] <http://www.hofstra.edu/home/index.html>
- [3] http://www.hofstra.edu/library/library_libaxn.html
- [4] <http://aiae.net/>
- [5] http://www.hofstra.edu/academics/colleges/soc/wrhu/wrhu_listen.html
- [6] <https://www.amazon.com/Empowering-Children-Effective-Political-Process/dp/1560432101>
- [7] <http://www.ilm.it/it/>
- [8] http://aiae.net/?page_id=167
- [9] https://www.pw.org/content/robert_j_savino
- [10] <http://www.nysosia.org/>



[11] <http://www.igiullaridipiazza.com/>

[12] <https://www.morenofruzzetti.com/>

[13] <http://bronxopera.org/>

[14] <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/21/nyregion/little-italy-puppets-feast-of-san-gennaro.html?mcubz=0>

[15] <http://www.longislandmandolinandguitarorchestra.com/>