

il Bollettino

dedicated to the history and culture of Italians in America



2022 • VOLUME 15 • NUMBER 2

LETTER FROM THE DEAN

Care Amiche, Cari Amici,

Welcome to Volume 15.2 of the Calandra Institute's *il Bollettino*! Since I last wrote, numerous significant events have taken place in these intervening months, and you will read about many successes in this issue related to those events and the individuals involved.

Our future activities will continue to explore the many sectors of our community as we move forward. Join our mailing list! Our contact information is at the bottom of this page.

As I close, I am delighted to say that we continue to benefit from the unyielding support of both Chancellor Felix Matos Rodríguez of CUNY and President Frank Wu of Queens College. They and their staffs have cleared many a path throughout their respective tenures.



Anthony Julian Tamburri
Dean and Distinguished Professor

ITALIAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY SUMMIT

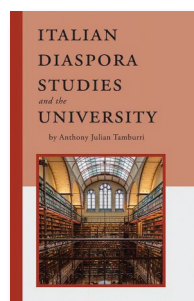
On September 16, 2022, a group of eminent members of the Italian American community came together at the Calandra Institute to discuss the state of Italian American studies and the University and to underscore the importance of Italian American participation in humanistic philanthropy—namely, supporting the humanities, social sciences, and the arts.

In attendance were philanthropists, leaders of prominent area organizations, state legislators, academic administrators, and scholars of Italian American and Italian diaspora studies.

Speakers included Anne Prisco, President, Holy Family University; Katia Passerini, Provost, Seton Hall University; and Donna Chirico, former Dean of Arts and Sciences, York College, CUNY. Consul General Fabrizio Di Michele made opening comments and Fabio Finotti, Director of the Italian Cultural Institute, offered closing reflections.

Principal topics were the critical importance of Italian American and Italian Diaspora courses in the college curriculum and how influential academics can promote these studies, especially in collaboration with the Italian American population.

In conjunction with the summit, Anthony Julian Tamburri's three-part essay, *Italian Diaspora Studies and the University* (Bordighera Press, 2022), provides a compelling analysis of the importance of Italian Diaspora studies and a practical roadmap for maximizing its potential.



THE ITALIAN IMMIGRANT EXPERIENCE: BETWEEN BLACK AND WHITE

The symposium “The Italian Immigrant Experience: Between Black and White” was held at Tulane University, New Orleans, on September 23–24, 2022, as a collaboration between Tulane's department of French and Italian and the Calandra Institute.

Scholars gathered to explore shared aspects of the Italian American and Black experiences, ranging from the history of jazz to cinema and the roles of Italian Americans and African Americans within the film industry.

Issues of discrimination and violence against Italian Americans in New Orleans go back to the late nineteenth century, when the city received a massive wave of immigration from Italy, and Italians were often seen as racially closer to Black than white. The most infamous example of violence against the Italian community was the lynchings and murders in 1891 of eleven Italian Americans by a vigilante mob for their alleged role in the killing of New Orleans Police Chief David Hennessy.

Frank Wu, president of Queens College, CUNY, and Brian Edwards, dean of the School of Liberal Arts, Tulane University gave remarks. Both men stressed the importance of this intercollegiate collaboration and its significance for the Italian

American and African American communities as well as all others who experience or have experienced bias.

Presenters included Jessica Barbata Jackson, George de Stefano, John Gennari, Mark Reid, and Frank Williams. Commentators were Elena Daniele, Professor of Practice, Tulane University; Fred Gardaphé, Distinguished Professor of English and Italian American Studies, Queens College, CUNY; Joseph Sciorra, Director for Academic and Cultural Programs, Calandra Institute; and Anthony Julian Tamburri, Dean, Calandra Institute.



Pictured, left to right: Fred Gardaphé, Rev. Frank Williams, Jessica Barbata Jackson, George De Stefano, Mark Reid, Joseph Sciorra, John Gennari, and Anthony Tamburri



Event Highlights

APRIL 12, 2022

Lecture: A Reconsideration of Italian/American Cinema

by Anthony Julian Tamburri at the Columbus Citizen's Foundation.

APRIL 14, 2022

Lecture: Preserving Italian Immigrant Music Making

by Joseph Sciorra at the Center for Modern Italian Art, including an interview with Ernie Rossi, owner of E. Rossi & Co., and Zoom conversation with filmmaker Martin Scorsese.

APRIL 19, 2022

Roundtable: The Columbus Affair: Imperatives for an Italian/American Agenda

with Anthony Julian Tamburri and Giuseppe Gazzola at Stony Brook University Center for Italian Studies.

APRIL 23, 2022

Lecture: Embroidered Stories: Interpreting Women's Domestic Needlework from the Italian Diaspora

by Joseph Sciorra at the Italian American Museum of Los Angeles.

ITALICS: TELEVISION FOR THE ITALIAN AMERICAN EXPERIENCE

The April 2022 episode of *Italics* featured an interview with John Peter Didato (pictured at right), Senior Creative Director/Editor, Sesame Workshop. Didato discussed his first documentary, *Ciao, Sesame Street!* which was selected as a grant recipient of the 2019 Russo Brothers Italian American Film Forum.

Ciao, Sesame Street! goes behind the scenes of *Sesame Street* to profile Italian Americans who have contributed to the success of the most beloved children's show in television history. The documentary highlights many known personalities, including Tony Bennett, Robert De Niro, James Gandolfini, and Marisa Tomei, as well as less known Italian American members of the cast, crew, puppeteers, researchers, and writers.



Ciao, Sesame Street! will be screened at the Institute, November 15, 2022 at 6pm.

Italics premieres the second Tuesday of each month at 9:30 pm and is rebroadcast the following Wednesday at 10:30 am and 4:30 pm, Saturday at 7:30 am, and Sunday at 6:30 pm on CUNY TV Channels 25.3, 30, 75, and 77 in Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens, Staten Island, and the Bronx.

Italics can be viewed on demand at



tv.cuny.edu/media/italics



youtube.com/ItalicsTV

War against Prohibition: Italians and Booze in New York City, 1920–1933

FRANCESCO LANDOLFI

This article highlights the New York Italian ethnic community's relationship to the enactment of the Eighteenth Amendment in 1920, which prohibited transportation, commerce, and manufacture of all alcoholic beverages. Italians, a mostly foreign-born ethnic group of about 800,000 in a city of 5 million people, took a negative view of the “dry” political move by the Republican Party. Both judicial sources (kept at the National Archives at New York City and the New York City Municipal Archives) and press sources (*Progresso Italo-Americano*, *New York Times*, and *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*) reported long series of Italian American misdemeanors for violation of the National Prohibition Act by making homemade stills or opening nightclubs and speakeasies throughout the 1920s. From the consultation of the primary sources, it is clear that bootlegging was undertaken not only by Italian organized crime, but also by unexpected retailers, real-estate agents, restaurant keepers, and police officers in order to supplement their income. With the election of “wet” Republican Fiorello La Guardia to the office of mayor in November 1933, there was a turning point from the Roaring Twenties to the Great Depression and the end of bootlegging and Prohibition, with the repeal of the Eighteenth Amendment a month later.



Locations mentioned in this article where alcohol was sold: smuggling and street bootlegging (1 to 9), homemade stills (10 to 21), speakeasies (22 to 31), nightclubs and Democratic clubs (32 to 40).

Italian Fascists and the Rewriting of American History

JESSICA LEE

Before Benito Mussolini ever came to power in Italy he was already rewriting American history to support his political agenda. After he became prime minister, his government continued to manipulate American history, though with more resources and sophistication. This article probes the records of the Italian Foreign Ministry as well as Italian American media of the 1930s to reveal the propagandists' enterprising efforts at turning American history Fascist. Through newspapers, radio shows, and public ceremonies, Fascists connected famous Americans to Mussolini and uncovered “forgotten” Italians in the American historic record. They rewrote George Washington as a dictator, likened Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation to Mussolini's invasion of Ethiopia, turned Columbus's voyage into a Fascist allegory, and promoted Francis Vigo, William Paca, and countless other early Americans as model Italians. Through their efforts, Fascists forged a common ground between the United States and Fascist Italy and encouraged immigrant support of the homeland.

Italian Politics and Culture from Fascism to Postwar Democracy in the Life and Work of Uguccione Ranieri di Sorbello (1906–1969)

This article explores a crucial and controversial period in the history of Italy—the country's transition from Fascism to democracy—focusing on the life and work of Uguccione Ranieri di Sorbello. Sorbello's experience provides an interesting case study in what has been called *il lungo viaggio*, the long journey away from the myths and illusions of Fascist propaganda. During the 1930s Sorbello worked as a lecturer and instructor in the US, a country where the teaching of Italian as a second language had been constantly increasing, partly because of the active involvement of the Italian government in its promotion, and partly because of the work of a community of Italian/American and Italian intellectuals such as Leonard Covello, Angelo Patri, and Giuseppe Prezzolini. The article presents and discusses Sorbello's family roots and education as well as the key moments and circumstances that shaped his political transformation in the 1940s when he moved away from nationalist ideas, renouncing his Fascist faith and choosing to become an active participant in the Resistance war. Sorbello later returned to the US as cultural attaché leading an office at the Consulate General of Italy in New York City that fostered the new image of a reborn democratic Italy, a country with roots planted in the past yet able to look forward, to renovate and re-invent itself thanks to the unquestionable genius of its people.

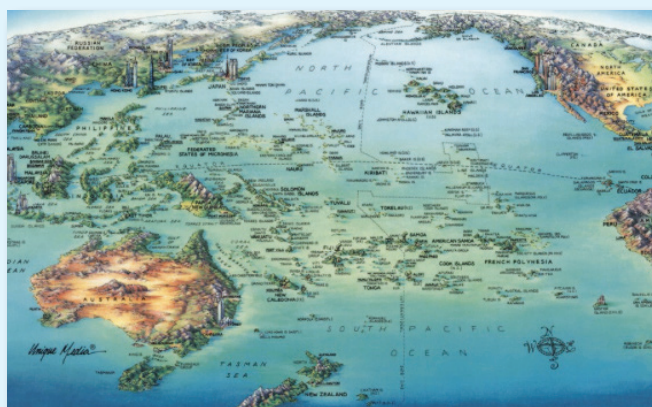
ANNUAL CONFERENCE: ITALY AND THE PACIFIC RIM, APRIL 27–29, 2023

Critical interpretations of modern Italy's histories of migration and mobilities are often set within the confines of the Mediterranean basin or along a transatlantic trajectory. Such neat accounts serve to highlight the nation's narratives of colonization and linear notions of migration to North and South America. This path, for instance, has long undergirded studies of Italian presences in cities like Buenos Aires, New York City, and Toronto.

What happens to our understanding of modern Italy in the world when we shift our focus away from Atlantic Ocean and Mediterranean locales to consider the historical and contemporary connections between Italy and the Pacific Rim as part of transnational and transcultural interactions? How does a reconfigured study on Italy, Italians, or things Italian within contexts of lands bordering the Pacific heighten or challenge our understandings of national discourses and cultural spaces? Do Italian communities in the Pacific Rim share characteristics that set them apart from other areas of global Italian migration? What possibilities does such a

realignment of perspective offer in diversifying Italian studies and migration studies, especially in regards to matters of race, gender, class, ability/disability, and other matters concerning power dynamics?

This interdisciplinary conference is open to topics concerning connections between Italy and the Pacific. The 2023 Calandra Institute conference proposes a transnational and inclusive approach to Italy and Italian mobilities.



PETE PANTO IN THE *NEW YORK TIMES*

The July 9, 2022, edition of the *New York Times* published an article, “Where Is Pete Panto?,” by Helene Stapinski, best-selling author and freelance journalist, about Joseph Sciorra, Director of Academic and Cultural Programs, and his quest to procure a headstone for longshoreman Pietro “Pete” Panto. Panto, an Italian American labor activist and foe of the Mafia-run dockworkers union in the 1930s, was murdered in 1939; his body was recovered two years later. A GoFundMe campaign



received contributions from many, often in memory of their dockworker ancestors. The Institute thanks the trustees of the Francesco and Mary Giambelli Foundation, members of the Italian Heritage and Cultural Committee of New York, and all who pledged their financial support.

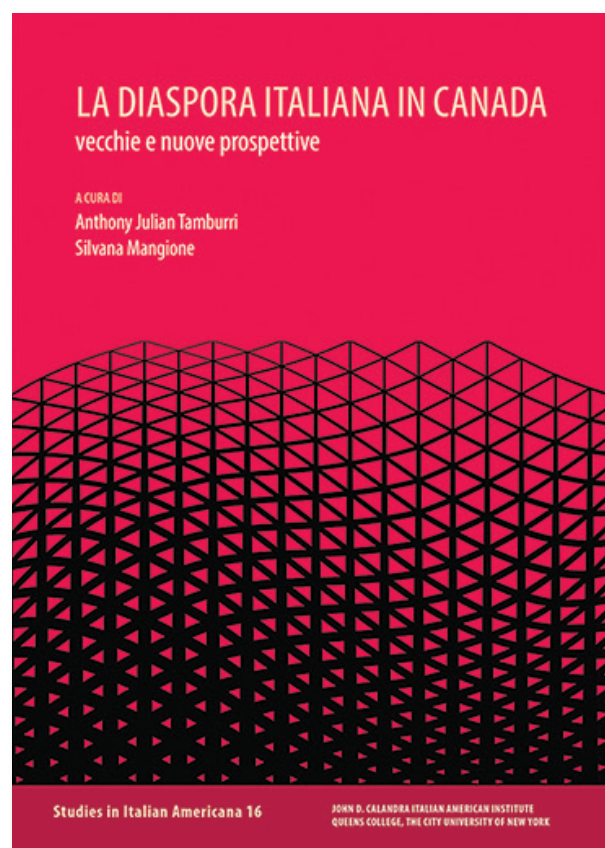
La diaspora italiana in Canada: vecchie e nuove prospettive

Edited by Anthony Julian Tamburri and Silvana Mangione

Contributing authors: Antonio D'Alfonso, Luisa Del Giudice, Giovanna Del Negro, Silvana Mangione, Daniela Sanzone, Anthony Julian Tamburri, Pasquale Verdicchio.

STUDIES IN ITALIAN AMERICANA, VOLUME 16

RECENTLY PUBLISHED!



INTERNATIONAL STUDY

Italian Diaspora Studies Summer Seminar

The Calandra Institute's Italian Diaspora Studies Summer Seminar was established in 2015 as a three-week professional development seminar conducted primarily for college professors and advanced graduate students. It is held in Rome in collaboration with Roma Tre University.

Fellows have come from Asia, Eastern Europe, and Latin America to participate. IDSSS provides participants with a foundation of knowledge of the Italian diaspora so that they may return to their home institutions and offer a course on any aspect of Italian migration and its impact on host countries. Scholars have gone on to develop coursework and lead courses based on research conducted during the Seminar.

The Seminar is the recipient of a recurring gift from Alexandra de Luise and Normand Tourangeau and a five-year grant from the Francesco and Mary Giambelli Foundation. Additional supporting institutions include the American Association of Teachers of Italian, Italian American Studies Association, Italian Language Inter-Cultural Alliance, National Italian American Foundation, Order Sons of Italy Grand Lodge of New York, Unico Brookhaven, Unico National, and CUNY's Office of the Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs.

CUNY/Italy Exchange

The CUNY/Italy Exchange program is designed for undergraduate and graduate students interested in coursework and research in many areas of intellectual pursuit. The program provides participants with an individualized focus in their academic discipline and opportunities to gain international perspectives and skills to support their career goals. Participating universities include: Roma Tre University, University for Foreigners of Perugia, University of Perugia, and the University of Siena. The exchange program also places researchers at the Institute and various CUNY campuses.

Summer Study Abroad in Perugia

The Summer Study Abroad in Perugia program provides American students the opportunity to study Italian language and culture in Perugia, Italy. This program is offered in collaboration with the Department of European Languages and Literatures at Queens College, CUNY.

[For more information, go to calandrainstitute.org.](https://calandrainstitute.org)
[Under the Research and Education link, click on Italian Diaspora Summer Studies Seminar or Study Abroad.](#)

IN MEMORIUM

JOSEPH F. SEMINARA 1930–2021

Joseph F. Seminara passed away in June at the age of ninety-one. Born in Sicily, he and his family suffered through the Allied invasion of Sicily during World War II. Thanks to his American-born father, Joseph crossed the ocean alone at age seventeen to claim his American citizenship and begin a new life in New York. Eventually his widowed mother, Antonina, and three brothers, Frank, Vincent, and Vito, followed.

Despite poverty and language barriers, Joseph excelled in the United States, graduating from Brooklyn College and then NYU Law School. His dream of practicing law was temporarily interrupted when he was called to serve in the US Army during the Korean War as a member of the 264th Regiment of the Ninth Infantry (the same Ninth Infantry he had watched march by a few years earlier as Sicily was liberated). Joseph was then assigned to the Third Armored Division based at Camp Chaffee in Fort Smith, Arkansas, where he served in the judge advocate's office. Joseph married Anita Garofalo, and the couple had four children, Joanne, Juliette, Joseph, and Frank.

Joseph had a long and illustrious legal career serving hundreds of Italian immigrant families in southwest Brooklyn and an intense corporate and labor law practice in New York City for business clients as a partner of Kurzman Karelsen & Frank LLP. In legal practice as in life, Joseph lived in several worlds: sharing the joys and tragedies of his neighbors

with sincere, generous, and compassionate counsel while challenging and defending corporate clients in the board room and tribunals. Joseph ran for the New York City Council, US Congress, and was elected to the local District 20 school board. He also served as Assistant Special Counsel on the NYS Assembly Committee on the Judiciary (1962–1963), the NYS Committee on Urban Public Education (1990–1992), and the Congressional Panel on Special Education (1966).

Joseph F. Seminara's many honors and awards include the Ellis Island Medal of Honor (2004); Army Soldier of the Year Award Fifth Armored Division (1955); and Guild for Exceptional Children Appreciation Award (1983). He was most proud to receive the Cesare Beccaria Award from the Italian American Legal Defense and Higher Education Fund for his legal work to fight against illegal ethnic discrimination against Italian Americans in higher education.

Joseph is past president of Bay Ridge Lawyers Association and was a member of the Knights of Columbus Regina Pacis Council, board member and counsel to Bay Ridge Day Nursery, and board member of Catholic Charities, among other volunteer civic activities. Joseph is survived by his four children, eight grandchildren, three great-grandchildren, and his brother Vincent. Joseph F. Seminara will be missed by each of them and by all with whom he shared his talents and love.

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STAFF NEWS

STEPHEN CERULLI was accepted into the PhD program in Modern History at Fordham University and awarded a New Student Distinguished Fellowship through the Richard and Eileen Bennett Graduate Assistantship. Stephen graduated magna cum laude with a BA in history from the University of Connecticut and earned an MA in liberal studies from the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. In 2016 Stephen completed a Certificate in Italian Diaspora Studies



from the Institute and in 2017 a Certificate in Social Ecology from The Institute of Social Ecology. Stephen is a lecturer at Hostos Community College, CUNY, where he was recognized with the “Teacher Appreciation Award” in 2021 and was a featured professor in Hostos Early College Initiative’s “Meet Our Professors” in 2022.

SCHOLARSHIPS

A range of scholarship opportunities is available to students of Italian descent, primarily for high school students enrolled full time in a US accredited institution of higher education. Scholarships for advanced degrees and specialized study in the arts, science, and technology are also available. Organizations offering scholarships include Columbus Citizens Foundation, La Scuola d’Italia, National Italian American Foundation, National Organization of Italian American Women, Order Sons of Italy in America, and Unico Foundation. In addition, the Gilman Scholarship to study abroad, in Italy and elsewhere, is available through the US Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs.

For more information, go to calandrainstitute.org. Under the Research and Education menu, click on Scholarship Information.

IN PIAZZA

ALTA Book Award

The American Literary Translators Association administers an annual Italian Prose in Translation Award to recognize the importance of contemporary Italian prose and promote the translation of Italian works into English. The winner of the 2022 award is *Penelope*, by Silvana LaSpina, translated by Anna Chiafele and Lisa Pike, published in 2021 by Bordighera Press.

Francesco Durante Award

To honor the legacy of the late Francesco Durante, a prize of \$1,000 is awarded annually for the best original essay in English or Italian by an emergent scholar of Italian American literature, history, or culture, from Italy or the United States. The 2022 award winner is Erica Verducci of the Università degli Studi Roma Tre. Her essay, “Ellis Island: Il ‘libro dei mutamenti,’” was published in the journal *Polisemie. Rivista di poesia iper-contemporanea*.

Italian American Studies Association Conference

The 54th annual Italian American Studies Association conference was held in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, on October 27–29, 2022. This year’s topic was Mining the Diaspora: Italian American Materialities, Archaeologies, and Intersections. For more information, go to italianamericanstudies.net.

New York State Conference of Italian American Legislators

On May 23, 2022, the New York State Conference of Italian American Legislators resumed its annual gathering in Albany and Troy, New York, to distribute scholarship monies, recognize notable Italian American citizens, and celebrate at an evening festa. The Institute, as always, received a gracious invitation and attended the day’s events.

VIOLA ARDUINI: Chimera Manifesto

Featured on the cover of this newsletter is a detail from “The Chimera Manifesto,” by Viola Arduini. Arduini is an Italian artist and educator, currently based in Albuquerque, New Mexico, whose work investigates the relationships formed by humans, nature, and technology. She creates connections between biology and mythology through photography, poetry, installation, and sound.

Arduini received a Bachelor of Art degree from Nuova Accademia di Belle Arti, Milan; Master of Fine Art in documentary photography from University of South Wales, UK; and Master of Fine Art in Art and Ecology from University of New Mexico. Her work has been exhibited in the US and Europe and is in the collections of the Chippendale Studio, Milan, and Museum of Southwestern Biology, Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Arduini says of her inspiration and work: “We are made of molecules that speak the same language across species of any type and size. We are made of the memories of who came before us, and all their contaminations. How many among our ancestors were microbes? How many birds were my great grandmothers when we acknowledge the shared flu virus genetics? My practice investigates the relationships formed by humans, nature, and technology. Exploring liminal spaces between disciplines, media, and languages, I create installations that incorporate visual, sculptural, and time-based art. I foster engagement through embodied storytelling, a space for generating different views of extinction and cohabitation.”

violaarduini.com



Italian American Review

VOLUME 12 • NUMBER 2



JOHN D. CALANDRA ITALIAN AMERICAN INSTITUTE

The *Italian American Review* features scholarly articles about Italian American history and culture, as well as other aspects of the Italian diaspora. The journal embraces a wide range of professional concerns and theoretical orientations in the social sciences and cultural studies. The *Italian American Review* publishes book, film, and digital media reviews.

VOLUME 12, NUMBER 2 INCLUDES:

- “War against Prohibition: Italians and Booze in New York City, 1920–1933,” by Francesco Landolfi
- “Italian Fascists and the Rewriting of American History,” by Jessica Lee
- “Italian Politics and Culture from Fascism to Postwar Democracy in the Life and Work of Uguccione Ranieri di Sorbello (1906–1969),” by Roberto Dolci, Ruggiero Ranieri, and Antonella Valoroso

For more information, go to calandrainstitute.org. Under the Publications menu, click on *Italian American Review*.

FALL 2022 PUBLIC PROGRAMS

PHILIP V. CANNISTRARO SEMINAR SERIES IN ITALIAN AMERICAN STUDIES

Tuesday, September 27, 2022

Italian Women in Basilicata: Staying Behind but Moving Forward during the Age of Mass Emigration, 1876–1914

VICTORIA CALABRESE, Lehman College, CUNY

Thursday, October 13, 2022

Talking to the Girls: Intimate and Political Essays on the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire

MARY ANNE TRASCIATTI, Hofstra University

WRITERS READ SERIES

Thursday, September 15, 2022

KOSSI KOMLA-EBRI reads from *EmbarRACEments: Daily Embarrassments in Black and White . . . and Color* (Bordighera Press, 2019) and *Home* (Bordighera Press, 2022)

Thursday, October 20, 2022

JOHN D'EMILIO reads from *Memories of a Gay Catholic Boyhood: Coming of Age in the Sixties* (Duke University Press, 2022)

Thursday, December 5, 2022

JONATHAN GALASSI reads from *School Days: A Novel* (Other Press, 2022)

DOCUMENTED ITALIANS

Wednesday, October 5, 2022

Calliari, QC (2022), 48 minutes
ANITA ALOISIO, director

Tuesday, November 15, 2022

Ciao, Sesame Street! (2019), 38 minutes
JOHN PETER DIDATO, director



All events are free and open to the public and begin at 6 pm at the John D. Calandra Italian American Institute. COVID protocols will be followed.

RSVP BY CALLING (212) 642-2094.

QUEENS COLLEGE IS 