



**For Immediate Release**

**2 October 2020**

**Festa Italiana Raleigh hosts first international, on-line benefit concert to support local charities**

An international cavalcade of music, dance, spoken-word, and film making will premiere Festa Italiana Raleigh's first, on-line benefit concert, streaming free of charge at 7:00 p.m. Eastern Time on Monday October 12 from the Festa Italiana Raleigh FaceBook page and YouTube channel.

This first international, entertainment film-card produced by Festa Italiana Raleigh, Inc., entitled "Raleigh Virtuale Venti Venti," comprises 37 performances; by 28 music, dance, spoken-word, and film making ensembles; totaling more than 90 artists; from 20 provinces, regions and states across the US, Italy, and Morocco; totalling 2.5 hours of original entertainment—all in support of Festa Italiana Raleigh's 2020 charities, Spare Some for Autism and Military Missions in Action. Viewers may make a donation at any time to support the Festa 2020 charities at <https://www.FestaItalianaRaleigh.com/Charities>.

International and regional headliners in the concert film include Genoa Italy's Beppe Gambetta, a musical mentee of the late Arthel "Doc" Watson of Watauga County North Carolina; North Carolina Poet Laureate Jaki Shelton Green; Suffolk England international troubadour, Martyn Wyndham Read; Raleigh, NC swing-balladeer, Bill Stonehouse; Milan Italy blues-rocker, Daniele Tenca; nationally-recognized folk dance troupe, Allegro Dance Company; international performing and composing team, Michela Musolino & Fabio Turchetti; Chapel Hill, NC Natalie Marrone's The Dance Cure; and NC regional favorites, Mebanesville, showcasing their distinctive transatlantic roots, rhythm, and roll.

Film makers include Durham, NC's Cindy & Michael Salerno; Chapel Hill, NC's Mark Spano; and Calabria Italy's Pasqualino Bongiovanni, in a unique collaboration with North Carolina Poet Laureate Jaki Shelton Green, Rome Italy-based actress Aurora Cancian, and Chapel Hill, NC photographer, Barbara Tyroler.

Artistic director and executive producer of the streaming film, Loreins "Larry" Vellani of Mebane, NC, personally recruited each of the performing groups, based upon the strength of his existing collegial contacts, and the Festa's growing recognition as an important, regional, cultural celebration. "Public health concerns prevent our annual street fair this year. In its place, international friendships, and shared artistic and humanistic values allow us to bring more of the world than ever to our viewers and friends across the Triangle, the state, the nation, and our ever-shrinking globe," noted Vellani. "Such a diverse, artistically-rich, original collection of professional and community performance is only possible

because of the artists' generosity of spirit and their deep love and appreciation of all things Italian—whether in the peninsula or throughout the world-wide Italian diaspora.”

Fran Giannuzzi, Festa Italiana Raleigh co-chair, shared, “The beauty of our film is you can spend Columbus Day evening watching the entire production, or you can sample some of this, some of that, come back to what you really like, save something a bit new to you for later, and continue to grow in your appreciation of our beautiful culture.”

Three former recipients of the Outstanding Italian American in North Carolina award, presented annually by the Triangle Chapter of the Order of Sons and Daughters of Italy in America (OSIA), contributed to the film: Wilmington, NC author and musician, Paul Paolicelli (2018); Chapel Hill, NC author and film maker, Mark Spano (2020); and “Raleigh Virtuale Venti Venti” artistic director, Larry Vellani (2017).

On October 1, North Carolina Governor Roy Cooper proclaimed the month of October 2020 as Italian American Heritage and Culture Month in North Carolina.

Premiering on Monday October 12—a national day of recognition of Italian heritage and culture in the United States—“Raleigh Virtuale Venti Venti” will remain available on-line for free screening, as well as for viewers to make on-going on-line donations to the Festa charities after October 12.

For further information about “Raleigh Virtuale Venti Venti,” contact executive producer Larry Vellani, 336.380.6313 or [LarryV@Mebanesville.com](mailto:LarryV@Mebanesville.com); for further information about Festa Italiana Raleigh, Inc., contact Festa Italiana’s co-chairs, Frannie Palermo Giannuzzi, [FGiannuzzi94@gmail.com](mailto:FGiannuzzi94@gmail.com) and 919.650.3142; or Anthony Luise, [ALuise@bellsouth.net](mailto:ALuise@bellsouth.net) and 919.796.4494.

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