

Italian VOICES



a story of immigration, avoided history, personal stories
and the importance language

a film by
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Italian Voices

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Italian Voices

Introduction

To effectively understand the importance of history is to embrace that historical representation is based on perspective. As such, history as traditionally studied within a Canadian education landscape is reflective of a shared value system dictating which history is to be shared, preserved and ultimately taught to students to ensure a sense of national identity. It is in regards to this overtly conservative tradition of historical representation that the documentary film *Italian Voices*, brings to focus a marginalized history of Italian immigrants and the battles they faced as new Canadians and ultimately their triumphant success that came from a sense of community and self-determination. Focusing on three generations of Italians (The Time of War, The New Era and the First Generation) the film examines what it is to be Italian within a multi-cultural landscape. Rooted to the philosophies of authors, including Luigi Barzini (*The Italians*, 1965), the film represents a mosaic of voices that share what it is to be Italian-Canadians and how their personal histories impacted their Canadian experiences.

Italian Voices

Rationale

Within a critical discourse, documentary film in its purist form provides filmmakers with an intimate opportunity to explore and reflect on topical and real issues with a particular gaze and perspective. As such, with an understanding of history as multi-faceted, *Italian Voices*, is a topical film that brings to life a compelling representation of the immigrant experience while celebrating the stories of individuals who have made Canada their new home. As such, *Italian Voices* is very much a testament to truth as it brings forth a shadowed history of the immigrant experience as alienating/challenging the idealized portrait of the Canadian socio-political landscape as multi-cultural and welcoming.

Italian Voices

Treatment

Italian Voices, in relationship to Italian generations and their shared cultural experience as new Canadians, will be structured in three parts: Time of War, The New Era and the First Generation.

Time of War

In historical and socially oriented novels and text such as Joy Kogawa's Obasan, the story of ethnic and cultural groups in Canada during the Second World War has been marginalized and misrepresented in an attempt to mask a challenging part of Canadian history. Like many other groups, Italians were entrapped within the borders of cultural prisons, prevented from contacting family members over seas and lived their daily lives under the scope of police and community watch dogs. The reality of this social chapter has not been openly shared and thus needs to be understood with maturity, focus, and critical thinking. Although the film will focus on this history, it will also present Canada's sovereignty needs to protect its border and national safety.

The New Era

After the war and during the height of Canada's immigration boom, primarily under the pro-immigrant leadership of Prime Minister Trudeau, a great number of Italians born prior and during the war came to Canada with the hope to build a new life – promised on the scaffolds and foundation of opportunity and equality. However, as the stories will show, equality was not always exhibited and with opportunity came great work and determination.

The First Generation

In understanding that the social history of Italian Canadians is very much rooted in personal stories and experiences, it is also important to explore the significance of language as a mechanism to sustain culture, tradition, and values. Thus, the stories shared between grandparents and others who came from Italy and those born in Canada are important for the Canadian-born to understand their history and ultimately who they are as people of ethnicity.

Italian Voices

Visual & Sound Treatment

With a focus on personal stories, *Italian Voices*, will come to life within a visual canvas of intimate imagery and a gently soundscape that echoes the words being spoken and the stories being shared. With the goal of keeping the audience visually engaged, the interview structure of the film will be diverse in its picture and edit pattern. Interviews will be captured in a variety of camera compositions and angles – allowing for effective and engaging transitions to occur. This includes front and side profile of interviewees as they share the story. With that, as stories are being shared, the film will cut to reflective images of their individual's experience – such as photos of new immigrants on their boat journey during their travels or immigrant-related stock footage. Ultimately, the goal is to complement the mosaic of stories and voices with a collage of images that are dynamic, engaging, and relative.

In relation to the visual template for the film, the goal is not only to produce original music that is infused with ethnic tradition but also energize the film with an effective mood as related to the interview subjects. As such, the music will provide a constant backdrop to the emotions brought forward by the interview subjects. In the end, the mise-en-scene of *Italian Voices* will be ever moving and never stagnant. This promises to provide the viewer with a dynamic experience where the stories are the focus – it never losing a human connection.

Italian Voices

Audience & Distribution

The question of audience is essential to any filmic production. If there is no audience, there is no real reason to make a film, as it does not become part of a lived and shared experience. However, in regards to *Italian Voices*, distribution will target community organizations, film festivals, and educational institutions.

Target Audience: ages 15 – up

Potential Film Festivals: Canadian Italian Film Festival, Hot Docs, Toronto International Film Festival, Niagara Indie Film Fest, etc.

Potential Educational Institutions: school boards, universities and colleges, and cultural centres

Italian Voices

Production Schedule

Sun. May 1 <i>Pre-Production:</i> • Script Finalization • Location Scouting • Confirm Interviews	Mon. May 2 <i>Pre-Production:</i> • Script Finalization • Location Scouting • Confirm Interviews	Tues. May 3 <i>Pre-Production:</i> • Script Finalization • Location Scouting • Confirm Interviews	Wed. May 4 <i>Pre-Production:</i> • Script Finalization • Location Scouting • Confirm Interviews	Thurs. May 5 <i>Pre-Production:</i> • Script Finalization • Location Scouting • Confirm Interviews	Fri. May 6 <i>Pre-Production:</i> • Script Finalization • Location Scouting • Confirm Interviews	Sat. May 7 <i>Pre-Production:</i> • Script Finalization • Location Scouting • Confirm Interviews
Sun. May 8 <i>Production:</i> • Shoot Interviews	Mon. May 9 <i>Production:</i> • Shoot Interviews	Tues. May 10 <i>Production:</i> • Shoot Interviews	Wed. May 11 <i>Production:</i> • Shoot Interviews	Thurs. May 12	Fri. May 13	Sat. May 14
Sun. May 15	Mon. May 16 <i>Post Production:</i> • Picture and Sound Editing	Tues. May 17 <i>Post Production:</i> • Picture and Sound Editing	Wed. May 18 <i>Post Production:</i> • Picture and Sound Editing	Thurs. May 19 First edit due to producer for review	Fri. May 20 <i>Post Production:</i> • Picture and Sound Editing	Sat. May 21
Sun. May 22	Mon. May 23 <i>Post Production:</i> • Picture and Sound Editing	Tues. May 24	Wed. May 25	Thurs. May 26 Revised edit due to producer for review	Fri. May 27 <i>Post Production:</i> • Picture and Sound Editing	Sat. May 28
Sun. May 29	Mon. May 30 Final Review of film – Finished Video is submitted	Tues. May 31				

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Filmmaker's Biography

A graduate of Humber College's Film and Television Production program, Anthony Perrota has been active within the Canadian film/media industry for the past ten years at the independent, mainstream and corporate levels. Anthony continues to expand his commercial experience through Skyway Films – a producer of new media works with a focus on documentary, corporate film and video production. Also, Anthony holds both a BA in Film Studies (w/distinction) and a B.Ed. in Communications Technology from Brock University. As a teacher at the high school level and a filmmaker, Anthony not only focuses on his professional works and classroom but also the study of film academia and expanding his experience in the writing of media-based curriculum. He also shares his passion for film with professional colleagues at industry and teaching conferences. With all of this, Anthony's academic and practical experiences combine to provide him with the tools to create works that are diverse, engaging, entertaining, and relevant.

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Conclusion

It is with the hope of creating conversation through a critical exploration of history that *Italian Voices* is a viable and urgent documentary. With an understanding of history as written, along with embracing the relevance of personal stories in understanding a national space and one's self, *Italian Voices* promises to be an topical and engaging film about identity, historical perspective, the importance of language and the binding and evolving nature of culture.