



*Le sonate di questo disco:*

- 1) Prologo
- 2) Miseria e riposo [Trad.le anonimo]
- 3) Tra veglia e sonno [di Luigi Canora]
- 4) La nevera [Trad.le anon.]
- 5) Te voglio bene assaie  
[1839 - R. Sacco - Donizetti (?) ]
- 6) I' te vurria vasá.  
[1900- V. Russo - E. di Capua]
- 7) Fiorello [da Ripalimosani - CB -, i Plettri]
- 8) Lacreme napoletane.  
[1925 - L. Bovio - F. Buongiovanni]
- 9) La Zittola blu [Trad.le anon.]
- 10) La Danza ! [Trad.le anon.]
- 11) Reginella [1917- L. Bovio - G. Lama]
- 12) Salughe



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## THE MONTENERO VALCOCCHIARA SERENADES



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Before everything changed in the 60s, our grandparents and parents had the time to tell us about the happy times of Montenero between the two World Wars, when, although there was no radio, TV and LPs, everyone knew how to play at least one instrument, preferably the mandolin or the guitar.

Before the scourge of emigration and depopulation, our villages had their own, rich culture that nowadays few people know, and that many have forgotten, due to a misunderstood sense of "modernity". In those days, the church housed up to 8 priests, in addition to the archpriest and livelihood was also granted to two notaries and to other professionals (doctors, lawyers, pharmacists). The community was able to pay a "maestro" from outside to direct a music band of 80 people. At his home in the "Colle", Nicola Martino hosted a theater where were staged his own and other's popular plays; the Carnival, with its masks, songs, costumes and jokes, raged during a month, starting from January 17, in the harsh winters when you could rest from rural labor; girlfriends were sought through singing passionate serenades; several dozen relatives intervened in marriages, with sumptuous final dances and lunches prepared by professional cooks, still narrated nowadays. In the central square, in addition to the wineries, were the butcher's, barber's and the tailor's shops, where usually music was played on Sundays.

People from Montenero brought this same music along around the world, anywhere they went. It was performed in New York, Chicago, Erie PA, Lorain OH, Toronto and Mulhouse, and I am convinced that Nicola Martino's daughter, who lives in Buenos Aires, played one of her dad's songs or read a poem in Latin America, before my group did. My uncle Getulio Di Nicola used to meet with his friends in the basement of his home in Toronto to play with his violin, and so did his brother Julius in Chicago. In Mulhouse instead the Baldassarre brothers played for years, with their exceptional aural skills and nimble fingers.

In Erie (Pennsylvania) Arturo di Filippo (Art Phillips, from whose photographs we deduce that he played Rock n' Roll or Bob Dylan's music in the '60s), told us with nostalgia about evenings spent playing music in his grandfather's kitchen, whose Gibson mandolin accompanied his father and uncle's guitars in Montenero's sonatas. Art is nearly 60 years old today and has visited Montenero for the first time in 2012. He has recorded a poignant version of "Tra veglia e sonno" and has composed in "our" style a moving version



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of "Grandpa's Kitchen". With his music, Art obtained two Emmy Awards and he is a Member of the Music Council of Australia. He has performed with and directed the best artists of the world scene, but among many records he has published his dearest: "Chitarre italiane", the most affectionate tribute to his grandfather and dad.

This album does not try to achieve a nostalgic return to the past. Quite the contrary. Thanks to Roger Cayre's magic arrangements and Cristina Cuitiño's "wise" guitar, it was possible to read this music on a pentagram for the first time, passing it on to those who will play it in the future. We have proposed it (along with some Neapolitan classics, kindly interpreted for us by the soprano Beatrice Fornabaio, at first to "play", then with increasing conviction) to the Argentine public, who has appreciated it in all our concerts, in the Cuyo Province and in Buenos Aires.

Its purpose is to document the existence of musical material, miraculously saved from oblivion by the accidental record, in 1977, of a portion of the vast repertoire that was passed on from ear to ear in Montenero, mainly by tailors (Vincenzino Di Marco) and barbers (Antimuccio Cannone) whose hands were not ruined by the rural work.

Our (few) young people still living in Montenero and those who were forced to leave have the right to know their origin and, in other words, their roots. Like their peers in the city, they only passively receive deleterious television news, usually deceptive and misleading; they merely generate the imitation of the worst transmissions or even the invention of a pseudo-local culture. The lack of knowledge of the village's ancient cultural roots and the blind following of wrong patterns and ambiguous traditions are responsible for the current cultural weakness that causes fear of invasion by outside cultures. On the contrary, in other places in Italy (for example, Sardinia or Salento, where the pride of authentic traditions is still alive) there is no fear of invasion or external intervention of other cultures, and we are witnessing the birth of interesting hybridization phenomena.

We know, love, and especially "feel" the culture of our village as ours and nobody else's. That is why we are open to all other cultures that we respect and want to know and appreciate.



Mendoza (Argentina), July 22, 2014. (Trad. Gianleone Pede)