



# IL DUCE CANADESE

Writer  
**Bruno Ramirez**

Producer  
**Claudio Luca**

Director  
**Giles Walker**

Broadcasters  
**CBC / Showcase / Radio-Canada**

*Il Duce Canadese* is a four-hour television mini-series produced by Ciné Télé Action with the participation of the Canadian Television Fund, created by the Government of Canada and the Canadian Cable Industry, CTF: Licence Fee Program, Telefilm Canada: Equity Investment Program, Quebec and Canadian government Tax Credit Programs, in association with Showcase, with development assistance from the Cogeco Program Development Fund, and in association with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and Société Radio-Canada.

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**Official nominee in the Series and Serials Category at the 17th Festival International de Programmes Audiovisuels (FIPA) to be held in Biarritz, January 20 to 25, 2004.**

## Series Synopsis

As the storm clouds of the Second World War form, Canada seems to be a centre of calm. Certainly Angelo Alvaro, an Italian immigrant baker living in Montreal, and his family are blissfully unaware that their lives are soon to be uprooted.

Angelo and his wife, Sara, work energetically to expand their small business. On the advice of community leader Aldo Mazzotta, Angelo joins the local Fascist organization in hopes of drumming up more business. Their teenage son Mario is a budding musician and looks forward to being sent to Italy by the same Fascist organization for some serious music instruction. Mario's mentally challenged uncle Momo is so taken with Mussolini that he dresses up as a Black Shirt and salutes Il Duce at every opportunity. Fascism is not a political philosophy for the Alvaros—or indeed for most Italian Canadians. They are naively unaware of Italian Fascism's insidious forces. Only Sara's father, Turi, has any real sense of what Fascism means; for the rest, being Fascist in Canada is simply an expression of pride in their Italian heritage. Indeed, even in the wider community, Mussolini has long been seen as a bulwark against godless communism and the Canadian government has never discouraged Italian Canadians from joining the Fascist Party—it is perfectly legal.

War comes, and everything changes. The Canadian government initiates a series of rapid raids through the Italian community; anyone suspected of being a threat to national security is arrested and interned in military prison camps. Being Fascist is no longer perceived as an innocent expression of Italian pride. Angelo, Mario and Momo are caught up in the sweep, turned in to the RCMP by Mazzotta, who buys his own freedom by playing the informer and selling out his harmless fellow countrymen.

**Il Duce Canadese** is a four-hour mini-series for prime-time television that tells the story of these events. It is dramatic fiction based on real events and follows the experiences of the fictional Alvaro family as they struggle to survive these trying times. It is the story of how Angelo, Mario and Momo came to be considered a threat to national security, were arrested by the RCMP and held prisoner in the camp. It follows Sara and Turi, who strain to keep the bakery afloat in a community impoverished by the arrest of its men and the effects of anti-Italian prejudice. It traces the predatory actions of Mazzotta as he takes advantage of the situation to both save his own skin and pursue Sara. **Il Duce Canadese** shows a family and community trying to come to terms with events over which it had no control, and throws light on a little-known chapter in history, which has new relevance for the world today.

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## Episode Synopses

### Hour 1

As the storm clouds of the Second World War form, Canada seems to be a centre of calm. In Montreal's Little Italy, teenaged Mario Alvaro spends time at the local Italian youth club, where he watches Italian newsreels and plays clarinet in the youth orchestra. He brings his mentally challenged uncle Momo with him. Momo is enthralled when the movies show Mussolini and wants to see more of Il Duce. Mussolini and the exploits of modern Italy are a point of pride within the immigrant community, and the local Fascist organization is strong and well respected. Even in the wider community, Mussolini has long been seen as a bulwark against godless communism. The Canadian government has never discouraged Italian Canadians from joining the Fascist Party—it is perfectly legal. Soon, Momo is dressing in a Fascist uniform and saluting pictures of Mussolini at every opportunity. His father, Turi, doesn't like it, but it makes Momo happy, so Turi puts up with the behaviour.

Businessman Aldo Mazzotta is one of the leaders of the local Fascist organization. He wants to convince Angelo Alvaro (Mario's father) to join the party. Angelo and his wife, Sara, are anxious to expand their small bakery, and joining the Fascists might be good for business but first they agree to go to a Fascist fundraiser at the church. It is there that trouble begins. Momo, dressed in full Fascist regalia, walks into the church and loudly salutes Il Duce. It would be funny if it weren't so embarrassing to the family and the local Fascist dignitaries. It is a double blow to Angelo, who is already embarrassed before the entire community by Sara's refusal to donate her wedding ring to the fundraiser.

Mazzotta threatens to rescind his offer to sponsor Angelo for membership in the Fascists unless Angelo does something about Momo. He backs up the threat by reducing the size of his restaurant's bread order. Mario adds to Angelo's anxiety by neglecting his deliveries. Against Sara's wishes, Angelo takes Mario out school to work full-time at the bakery. Tension in the family is high.

Angelo finally gets his wish to join the Fascists, but it leads to a rift in the family. The very night of his swearing in, Momo rides the bakery's draft horse up and down the street pretending to be Mussolini, much to the amusement of the neighbours and the embarrassment of the family. Angelo threatens to put Momo away. Turi is offended and refuses to go back into the house without an apology. Angelo will not apologize. To Mario and Sara's dismay, Turi and Momo leave the family home. The split seems irreparable.

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## Hour 2

Mario is more and more serious about playing the clarinet. He prepares for a competition sponsored by the local Fascist organization; the prize is a trip to a youth camp in Italy for some serious musical instruction. He has the full support of his mother, but Angelo does not like the idea of losing his son's help at the bakery. Mario wins first place, but in order to claim it he must now join the Fascist party. In addition, he learns, due to increasing tensions in Europe, that the trip is cancelled. Mario refuses to join the Fascists and so forfeits even the honour of being the first-place winner.

Following Germany's invasion of Poland, there is growing anxiety in the Italian community as Canada goes to war: What will Mussolini do and how will it affect Italian Canadians? Already, they see Germans being arrested in Canada.

It is not long before there is growing anti-Italian sentiment in Canada as well. Mario is witness to an Italian being beaten up at the movie theatre. He begins to worry that his father joining the Fascists may have unforeseen consequences... and it does.

Mussolini joins the war as one of the Axis powers. The Government of Canada takes steps to defend the country from perceived fifth-column elements in the Italian community. The government initiates a series of rapid raids through the Italian community—anyone suspected of being a threat to national security is arrested. Angelo is one of them and in the midst of his deliveries is whisked away to a sorting centre at a military base, his horse and wagon left abandoned in the middle of the street. Mazzotta, despite his high profile with the Fascist organization, manages to avoid arrest by playing the informer and selling out his harmless fellow countrymen to the RCMP.

Turi, Sara and Mario realize that in this climate Momo will draw attention to himself. They decide that Mario will take him to his sister in Hamilton. They leave on the long drive, Momo steadfastly refusing to take off his Fascist uniform. Like the vast majority of other Italian immigrants, Sara is forced to register with the local authorities, where she is fingerprinted. Finally arriving in Hamilton, Mario discovers anti-Italian riots and his aunt gone. He and Momo find temporary refuge in a bar until the local police arrive. Using the Defense of Canada Regulations as an excuse, they have come to arrest a local Italian gangster they could never convict on other charges, but the police cannot ignore Momo in his Fascist uniform. Momo and Mario are arrested as well. Held in the local jail in separate cells, Momo is brutalized by the non-Italian prisoners.

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## Hour 3

Mario and Momo arrive at the military internment camp in the middle of the night. They are given camp uniforms with targets painted on the back and escorted into the darkened barracks, which is now their home. Mario discovers that Angelo is in the same barracks.

Back in Montreal, Sara and Turi have no idea of their fate; they continue to believe that Mario and Momo are safe and that Mario will be back home soon. No one in the community knows what has become of the men who were arrested. The first news comes from Mazzotta: the authorities have promised him they will deliver letters written to the missing men. Sara's letter to Angelo arrives at the camp and Mario reads it out loud to his illiterate father. It is clear from the letter that Sara still has no idea that Mario has been arrested. This has a profound effect on Angelo and Mario. Sara discovers the brutal truth when the car Mario used to take Momo away is found abandoned in Hamilton.

Eventually the military authorities realize that Momo does not belong in the internment camp. They send him to a hospital for the mentally challenged, where Turi visits him, but Momo is so traumatized by events that he can barely respond to his father.

The prisoners try writing petitions to have their case heard. Mario has his own plans. He starts watching the comings and goings of the trucks that enter the camp. Angelo realizes what is going through his son's mind and tries to talk him out of escaping. There is a rift between father and son.

Sara struggles to keep the bakery going, but when Turi delivers the normal order to Mazzotta, he cuts the order in half. Turi is so insulted by the abruptly reduced order and so outraged that a Fascist like Mazzotta is free while his family is in jail that he refuses to leave any bread at all. Sara cannot believe her father has been so irresponsible. Desperate for business, she goes to apologize to Mazzotta for Turi's behaviour and beg him to buy her bread again. Mazzotta agrees, but Sara is desperate for money and has to ask for an advance. She offers to leave her wedding ring as security. Mazzotta gives the advance but slips the ring back on her finger. Holding her hand against his cheek he begins to kiss her hand, her face, her lips. Sara tries to fight him off, but he overpowers her and rapes her.

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## Hour 4

Mario escapes from the internment camp. Although Angelo is opposed to the escape, he creates a diversion to distract the guards from finding his son as he slips into the back of a truck leaving the camp. It is not long before Mario's absence is discovered. The search begins. MPs enter the bakery searching for Mario. They give Sara no information, but she realizes they are hunting him. She is worried sick for her son. After the MPs leave, Turi has more bad news for Sara: he has proof that both Angelo and Mario were given to the RCMP by Mazzotta in exchange for his own freedom.

Free from the camp but a hunted man, Mario goes to the hospital where Momo is being kept. Momo happily recognizes Mario. Mario is determined to take Momo out of the hospital, but as they head for the door, the MPs enter. Mario is arrested and led away to the sound of Momo's traumatic cries.

Sara is bent on revenge, more for the injustice Mazzotta inflicted on her men than for what he did to her. She goes to see Mazzotta again and makes him believe she has come to be in his arms. As he begins to caress her, she hits him on the head with a heavy bookend. She pours kerosene all over him and strikes a match, ready to burn him to death, but despite her strong desire, she cannot bring herself to commit murder. Mazzotta regains consciousness enough to realize his life is in danger. He takes a shot at Sara. He misses, but she is startled into dropping the lighted match on the kerosene. Mazzotta dies in the fire.

The prisoners finally get their day in court when the government appoints a review judge to hear their cases. Angelo apologizes for joining the Fascists, admits that it was a mistake, that he never intended to harm Canada, the country he loves. Mario takes a more defiant stance: he tells the review judge that they arrested him illegally and violated his rights as a Canadian. Angelo gets released from the internment camp. Mario does not. It is not until Allied troops invade Italy that Mario is finally released.

The Alvaros try to put their lives back together and come to terms with the events of the last few years, over which they had no control. Mario discovers that some things can never be regained as he visits the now unresponsive Momo in the hospital.

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## Cast

Mario	<b>Gianpaolo Venuta</b>
Angelo	<b>Tony Nardi</b>
Sara	<b>Marina Orsini</b>
Turi	<b>Dino Tavarone</b>
Momo	<b>Joe Pingue</b>
Mazzotta	<b>Ron Lea</b>
Ginette	<b>Louise Laparé</b>
Avvocato	<b>Carlo Rota</b>
Larini	<b>Michael A. Miranda</b>
Vince	<b>Romano Orzari</b>
Rocco Perri	<b>Mark Camacho</b>
Elvira	<b>Nathalie Cavezzali</b>
Rico	<b>Luciano Zema</b>
Ciro	<b>Bruno Di Quinzio</b>
Tano	<b>Giancarlo Caltabiano</b>
Colleen Kelly	<b>Sarah Allen</b>
Agent K	<b>Andreas Apergis</b>

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## Crew

Production	Ciné Télé Action 1306 Sainte-Catherine Street East Montreal, Quebec H2L 2H5 Tel.: (514) 524-1118
Producer and Executive Producer	Claudio Luca
Associate Producer	Anne-Hélène Brunet
Line Producer	Emmanuelle Pré-Daigle
Creative Consultant	Paul Risacher
Writer	Bruno Ramirez
Director	Giles Walker
Director of Photography	Sylvain Brault
Production Designer	Mario Hervieux
Editor	Denis Papillon
Costume Designer	Anne Duceppe
Casting Directors	Lise Beauchamp (Montreal) Jenny Lewis (Toronto)
Sound	Yvon Benoit Viateur Paiement Pierre Labbé
Original Music Score	Gerry Labelle
Media Relations	Judith Dubeau IXION Communications (514) 495-8176

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## Production Notes

*I remember June 10, 1940 as if it were yesterday... I was 28 years old. That was the day that the King government ordered the police to arrest all Italians. They closed the bridges leading to Montreal and arrested 17,000 people—without any explanation. We were surrounded by soldiers with guns and bayonets and forced to march across town on foot, like common criminals. Then we were driven to Petawawa. I was interned for 14 months... For the first three months of detention, our parents had no idea where we were. Women whose husbands had been arrested could not find work. Children were forced to drop out of school. For months, they starved. Families were not allowed to visit imprisoned relatives for a year. When we finished work at night, the guards would lock us up in our cabins, and we would cry ourselves to sleep... Even after they were freed, between 5,000 and 6,000 Italians had to report every month to the RCMP to be fingerprinted.*

The eyewitness account is that of **Antonio Capobianco**, a victim of the 1940 raids. Today at 91, Capobianco has explored every avenue in search of an official apology from the Canadian government for the wrong done to the Italian community during the Second World War. The film crew of *Il Duce* was honoured to have Capobianco visit the set.

“As a boy, I grew up around men who had endured the same fate as Mr. Capobianco,” explains producer **Claudio Luca**. It was only in 1991, when he heard Brian Mulroney express his regrets to the Italian Congress in Toronto for the treatment of Italian Canadians during the Second World War that Luca began to probe the extent of the damage done to his compatriots. The deeper he searched, the more he realized that all these men had been arrested for no reason—no charge was ever laid against them. “Those poor souls left their homeland to escape hardship; they were honest labourers. Yet they spent years in a camp without knowing what they were accused of, and they lived with the shame of having a criminal record for the rest of their lives. The Canadian government has never issued any official explanation!” The producer, who spent 10 years on the project, adds that this story of injustice needed to be told—not only to make the public aware of this unfortunate episode but also because history repeats itself. “Since 9/11, Arabs are the ones being arrested.”

“The fact that a community as integrated into Canadian society as the Italian community could be forced to endure such treatment opens up questions,” underscores Luca, “especially considering that, in the beginning, Mussolini was viewed by the West as a bulwark against Communism; he instilled Italians with national pride. The unification of Italy was a relatively recent event when he came to power; only a few decades separated Garibaldi and Mussolini. Before the war, people were Fascists out of pride and not political conviction; belonging to

the Fascist party was well perceived by Canadian authorities at every level. So it made the shock even greater when the raids began. Families were torn apart, not only in Montreal but in such places as Nova Scotia, where, from one day to the next, miners of Italian descent were fired. Even those who were not arrested had files kept on them and were forced to report to the authorities. This is part of our history, part of our past as Italian Canadians.”

Luca is proud of having brought such an ambitious project to fruition. “We were asked to produce a period drama for the same budget as a contemporary drama. We had to jump through some financial hoops to do it,” he notes. “It was a huge job recreating 1940s Montreal and building the camp, but otherwise the filming experience was extraordinary. We were blessed with a great crew and great actors!”

“My biggest challenge in writing the script for *Il Duce* was to strike the right balance between the human dimension and the dramatic dimension,” states **Bruno Ramirez**. “Choosing to tell the story using fictional characters meant it was important not to fall into melodrama or praise the victims. You didn’t want to focus on the documentary nature of the story too much either. What was needed was to invent a story peopled with believable and authentic characters, one built on a deep understanding of the Italian Canadian culture and historical context. That required a lot of research—not just going through the archives. I spent two years interviewing internees and their families in Montreal, Hamilton and Toronto. My background as a historian and my experience in writing scripts dealing with historical subjects were especially helpful.”

“*Il Duce Canadese* recounts one of the least known chapters in Canadian history. I knew nothing about the event until Claudio Luca asked me to direct the mini-series,” admits **Giles Walker**. “But Bruno Ramirez’s outstanding script won me over immediately. I also have to say that it was a huge privilege to work with three of the country’s finest actors—Tony Nardi, Marina Orsini and Dino Tavarone. As Italian Canadians, they brought a passion to the project that inspired us all, as did the fervour of Claudio Luca, without whose dedication the series would never have been possible; I was able to benefit from his unending support. The whole crew was fantastic. It’s rare to have such a great mix of content and talent. Everybody put their heart and soul into the production. Every day of filming was an adventure. Everyone felt carried along by something greater than ourselves and lucky to be on this journey. They all did a fabulous job.”

“The story of *Il Duce Canadese* immediately struck a deep chord with me. As soon as I read the script and, even before when Claudio started talking about the project, it resonated because of the direct ties to my Italian roots. It brought me close to my father,” explains **Marina Orsini**. “I was honoured to play Sara. Ironically, like a lot of other people, I knew nothing about this episode in our history, and yet it happened just a few kilometres from where we lived. Being part of the production of *Il Duce* has meant a great deal to me culturally. I’m just sorry that my father is no longer alive so that I could talk to him about it. He came to Canada shortly after the war, so I’m sure that he experienced the fallout from the event. Something truly special is that 99 percent of the people on the set spoke Italian. It was like being back with my family in Rome. It was a joy for me to be part of *Il Duce*, a very important return to my roots, and a major cultural and emotional voyage.”

“My character, Turi, symbolizes the immigrant of that time, who experienced hardship in Italy, on a political or socio-economic level,” explains **Dino Tavarone**. “He doesn’t believe the fine words of government officials who sit cozily at home while they send others off to fight a war. I’m convinced that Momo wasn’t born that way. I’m sure he suffered some kind of trauma, probably during the First World War (when he was 8 or 10 years old). Despite his son’s megalomania, Turi is still very attached to him. Momo symbolizes the apolitical Italian. He is under Mussolini’s control. That’s understandable, because you have to remember that Mussolini, with his big technological projects, his airplanes, put Italy back on the map.” Before he came along, Italians were categorized as some kind of fourth-class people. So it’s normal that Il Duce would be an object of pride for Italians who were looked down on so much. Turi doesn’t fight because he is against the Fascists but because he is against power and against war. As he says, if the poor don’t die in the war, they die of hunger after. Tavarone readily admits that there were many scenes that profoundly touched him during filming: moving scenes, both forceful and tender. It is a very beautiful production, in which every detail has been treated with care, well written, done with precision, as is everything produced by Claudio Luca.

“This story needs to be told,” maintains **Tony Nardi**, who plays Angelo. “A lot of people don’t know anything about what happened to their fellow citizens. They were called Italian, but they were 100 percent Canadian. They were simple people who had lived here for years. It’s so important to know about what happened to them because it had such a deep effect. The hurt was felt more in English Canada; there wasn’t the natural affinity that exists between French-speaking Quebecers and Italians because of the closeness of their languages and culture. Even if this episode profoundly marked Montreal’s Italian community for a long time, it had a more terrible and all the more lasting impact for Italian Canadians living in English-speaking communities. The backbone of entire communities was broken. People changed their names. Businessmen saw their goods liquidated. Even as late as the 1970s, the Toronto police systematically forced groups of young Italian Canadians standing on street corners to move on: this was a direct result of the events of 1940. It wasn’t until 1982 and the Italian soccer team’s victory in the World Cup that Italian Canadians in other provinces were finally able to ‘come out of the closet,’ lift their heads high and feel pride again in their roots. They stopped being afraid. From that time on, it became chic to go to Italian cafés, restaurants and neighbourhoods. Unlike their parents, young people in Toronto now attend Italian school and are interested in their roots.”

“Airing the series *Il Duce* is important for another reason,” continues Nardi. “By knowing what went before, we can better understand today’s reality; we can make links between events in the past and present. For example, look what happened in Toronto during the Gulf War when Canadians of Iraqi descent were assaulted, and no one denounced it, or Quebec during the October Crisis of 1970. Every time authorities invoke national security to suppress the basic rights of citizens, events like these become topical. Knowledge lets you see the grey zones and make distinctions. There are always ‘assholes’ in any community, but you have to avoid tarring everyone with the same brush because of a few unscrupulous individuals.”

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## Production House

Since 1987, under founder and president Claudio Luca, Ciné Télé Action Inc. has distinguished itself by its respect for well-articulated storylines, choice of daring subject matter and self-assurance in producing top-quality television series. Ciné Télé Action has also excelled in feature-film production, choosing each theme for its emotive ability and supporting it with the best cinematographic team available.

Ciné Télé Action has earned accolades for the quality of several productions. Many of its made-for-television series have captivated the public and garnered numerous awards. In addition to capturing seven Gemini Awards in 1994, the Broadcasting Award at the 1995 George Foster Peabody Awards, Best TV Miniseries Award at the National Board of Review in 1995, the only Grand Prize ever awarded by the Banff Television Festival to a Canadian production and two FIPA d'or in the categories of Best Series and Serials and Best Actor at the 1993 Festival International de Programmes, the mini-series *The Boys of St. Vincent* was also showcased in New York, Umbria (Italy) and Cologne (Germany). *Les Orphelins de Duplessis* carried away a FIPA in 1998, while the mini-series *The Edge* garnered three awards at the Worldfest Houston in 1998. Between 1996 and 2000, the series *Radio Enfer* earned its producers and artists nine Prix Gémeaux, while the mini-series *Big Bear* garnered two Geminis, as well as awards for best script and best production at the American Indian Film Festival. The two seasons of the series *The Last Chapter/Le dernier chapitre* were filmed simultaneously in English and French in 2001 and 2002. The series won a Gémeaux its first season and a Gemini its second season.

In the feature film category, Ciné Télé Action's 1989 production of Marc-André Forcier's *Une Histoire inventée* garnered two awards at the 1990 Montreal World Film Festival and was shown at the Directors' Fortnight at Cannes in 1991. Ciné Télé Action's production of Mort Ransen's *Margaret's Museum* headlined several festivals, including the one at San Sebastian, where it was honoured with la Concha de oro, as well as garnering the People's Choice Award at the 1995 Atlantic Film Festival, the Most Popular Canadian Film Fedex Award at the 1995 Vancouver International Film Festival and six Genie Awards in 1995; the production of Nicholas Kendall's film *Kayla* also won honours at several youth film festivals.

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## Biographies

### **CLAUDIO LUCA**

Producer

Prior to founding Ciné Télé-Action Inc. in 1987, Claudio Luca had already acquired over 20 years of experience in television and film. He began his career in the late sixties as an assistant film editor and later film editor with Radio-Canada. During this time, he also worked as an assistant cameraman and collaborated with such filmmakers as Paul Almond, Denis Héroux and Larry Kent. In the seventies, he became a director of photography and sought-after cameraman, working on such projects as a documentary by Italian filmmaker Marco Ferreri. Starting in 1975, Claudio Luca became associated with three of Radio-Canada's leading shows *Le 60*, *Télémag* and *Les Beaux Dimanches*, filming in over 30 countries, in every part of the world and against every kind of political and cultural backdrop.

In the eighties, Claudio Luca concentrated his talent and energies on production, first with a series of variety, sports and news shows for Super Écran, then with the documentary *Les Risques du métier*, written and presented by Fernand Séguin. Since 1987, through Ciné Télé-Action, Claudio Luca has produced some 200 hours of documentaries, TV series (including *Radio Enfer*, *Radio Active*, *Avoir su...*, *Fries with That?*), mini-series (including *Big Bear*, *The Edge*, *Les Orphelins de Duplessis*, *The Boys of St. Vincent*, *The Last Chapter* and *The Last Chapter II : The War Continues*) and feature films (including *Margaret's Museum*, *Le Sphinx*, *L'île de Sable*, *Kayla*, Michel Brault's *Quand je serais parti... vous vivrez encore* and *Une histoire inventée*). Several of these productions have been showcased at major festivals and international events.

### **PAUL RISACHER**

Creative Consultant

Paul Risacher, Director of Development for Ciné Télé Action, has produced, directed and written film and television programs in such wide-ranging areas as drama, entertainment, current affairs and children's programs. Prior to *Il Duce Canadese*, he was creative consultant on *The Last Chapter*, a CBC prime-time mini-series about outlaw bikers, and created *Fries with That?*, a tween sitcom for YTV.

Before joining Ciné Télé Action, he developed the action/adventure youth series *Back to Sherwood* as well as story editing and writing the bulk of the episodes. He helped create the widely sold preschool series *Whimzie's House*; and his children's sit-com *Extra! Extra!*, which he directed, co-produced and co-wrote, won the Children's Broadcast Institute Award of Excellence for Best Network Program and ran for three seasons on CTV. He co-wrote the MOW *Platinum*, which aired on CBC, and wrote the animated theatrical feature *Princess Sissi* for Fox/Saban. For the CBC, he conceived, developed and produced the award-winning mini-series *Empire, Inc.* and produced the English television adaptation of the award winning play *La Sagouine*. He has extensive experience in international co-production, including the Canada-Germany puppet show *Anna Banana*, which he created, and *The Big Garage*, a Canada-UK children's show. His programs have won ACTRA, ANIK, CAN-PRO and CBI awards.

## **BRUNO RAMIREZ**

Scriptwriter

An internationally renowned Montreal historian and professor in the Department of History of the Université de Montréal, where he headed the Italian Studies program, Bruno Ramirez has also authored several works on Italian immigration to Canada, including *Les premiers Italiens de Montréal* (1985) and *On The Move* (1991).

In the area of cinema, he co-wrote scripts, with director Paul Tana, for *Caffé Italia, Montreal*, which won the Prix Ouimet-Molson at the Rendez-vous du cinéma québécois in 1985, and *La Sarrasine*, which was awarded the 1992 Prix SARDEC (for best script) and the Prix du meilleur scénario (best script) at the 7th Festival International du cinéma francophone in Namur. Bruno Ramirez also co-wrote the script for *La Déroute*, again with Paul Tana.

## **GILES WALKER**

Director

Giles Walker began his directing career at the National Film Board of Canada in 1977 with the short film *I Wasn't Scared*, going on to direct the drama *Bravery in the Field*, which was nominated for an Oscar in 1979 in the Short Film Category. His directing credits include many NFB documentaries, including *A Right to Survive* (1973), *Freshwater World* (1974), *No Way They Want to Slow Down* (1975), *The Sword of the Lord* (1976) and *I Like to See the Wheels Turn* (1981). In 1984 he undertook work on a feature film trilogy dealing with the state of man: *The Masculine Mystique*, *90 Days* and *The Last Straw*, directed in 1987. In 1990 he directed *Princes in Exile*, for which he was awarded the Gold Nymph for Best Television Film at the 1990 Monte Carlo Television Festival. Recently, he directed actress Nastassja Kinski in *Blind Terror*, also starring Quebec actress Maxim Roy.

Giles Walker's television credits include series that have recently made their mark on the small screen: including five episodes of *Sirens*, the series produced by Robin Spry for Téléscène, and seven one-hour episodes of the series *Emily of New Moon* and *The Neverending Story*, both of which aired on the CBC network. He made an excursion into the fantastic universe of *Galidor—Defender of the Outer Dimension* for the Fox and Disney networks. Most recently in 2002, he directed two series for YTV: *Mental* and *Phunkee-Zee*.

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## **GIANPAOLO VENUTA**

Mario

A graduate of the John Abbott College theatre program, Gianpaolo Venuta has worked consistently in film, television and voice. Some of his theatre credits include lead roles in *Suburbia* and *Biloxi Blues*. He has worked on many television series shooting in Montreal and appeared last year in the Stephan Gaghan feature *Abandon* opposite Katie Holmes. Gianpaolo Venuta has the lead role in the independent feature film *Pure*, directed by Jim Donovan.

## **TONY NARDI**

Angelo

Tony Nardi began his impressive film career in Paul Tana's *Caffe Italia*, playing a role that cast the spotlight on Montreal's Italian Community. He has gone on to win Genie Awards (for best actor in *My Father's Angel*, *La Sarrazine*) and the Prix Guy-L'Écuyer québécois for best actor in his role in *La Déroute* at the Rendez-vous du cinéma.

He has starred in several theatre productions, including *The Lesson* at Theatre Soul Pepper, which earned him the prestigious Dora Mavor Moore Award in 2002. His television credits include appearances on the series *Platinum*, *Bonanno: A Godfather's Story* and *Da Vinci's Inquest*. His talents also include writing for the theatre: *La Storia dell'Emigrante* (winner of the James Buller Award for best original Canadian play) and *A Modo Suo (A Fable)*, for which he was nominated for a Dora Mavor Moore Award for Outstanding New Play. He also co-wrote the script for *La Déroute* with Paul Tana and Bruno Ramirez.

## **MARINA ORSINI**

Sara

An accomplished actress, Marina Orsini has appeared most often on television in a series of compelling roles that have marked important steps in her evolving and flourishing career. She starred as Suzie Lambert in *Lance et compte* (1986–88) and as Sophie in *L'Or et le Papier*. In 1990, she portrayed Émilie Bordeleau, first in *Les Filles de Caleb*—a role that won her two Prix Gémeaux and a MétroStar—and, then, in 1992, in *Blanche*. She played a native American in *Shehaweh*, then transformed herself into Sœur Marie in the mini-series *Miséricorde*. In 1995, she was back as Dr. Michèle Imbeault in the series *Urgence* and, in 1999, starred as Lucille Teasdale in the made-for-television movie *Dr. Lucille: Un rêve pour*

*la vie*. She took a starring role in the TV series *L'Or* and *Cauchemar d'amour I-II-III* and received the Best Actress Award—Comedy for Part I of the series at the Monte Carlo Television Festival. She also performed Karen in the series *The Last Chapter I-II*, garnering a Gemini as Best Actress for the role in 2003.

An adept performer in English, Marina Orsini has appeared in the cast of such television movies and series as *Black Harbour* and *The Hunger*. In 1996, she played Jane Conroy in the mini-series *The Sleep Room*. In 2002, she was seen in *Agent of Influence*, for which she earned a Gemini nomination in 2003. She has also starred in several feature films, including *La Grenouille et la Baleine*, *L'Emprise*, *Eddie Lives*, Robert Favreau's *Les Muses orphelines* and Paolo Virzi's *My Name Is Tanino*, and recently in John N. Smith's *Les Belles-Sœurs*. Onstage, she has notably played under the direction of Denis Bouchard in *Grease* and Martine Beaulne in *Les Années*. In addition to a FIPA d'Or at Cannes, Marina Orsini is a three-time winner of the Rose d'Or for performer of the year, as well as a Lion d'Or from the Italian Canadian Cultural Association for her overall career achievements. In 1993, she won a MétroStar for female performer of the year.

## **DINO TAVARONE**

Turi

Dino Tavarone's role as Giuseppe Scarfo in *Omertà I and III* brought him to public attention and earned him two Gémeaux nominations (1996, 1999). He has also been seen on television in such series as *Watatatow*, *Paparazzi*, *Juliette Pomerleau*, *L'Or* and *Tabou II*. His film credits include roles with Jim Allodi (*The Uncles*), Yves Simoneau (*36 Hours to Die*), Peter Rowe (*The Best Bad Thing Rinko*), Manon Briand (*2 secondes*) and Émile Goudeault (*Mambo Italiano*). In 1999, he was a finalist for the Jutra award for best actor for his role as Lorenzo in Manon Briand's film. Dino Tavarone has also taken part in numerous Italian stage productions.

## **JOE PINGUE**

Momo

Joe Pingue has held leading roles in some 30 film and television productions. This multitalented actor has starred in dramas, comedy, action films and police thrillers, most recently in *Zeyde and the Hitman* (Melanie Mayron), *Direct Action* (Sidney Furie), *Icebound* (Roger Spottiswoode) and *Highway Man* (Robert Harmon). He has been seen on the big screen in Richard Kwietnioski's *Owning Mahowny*, Antoine Fuqua's *Bait*, Troy Duffy's *The Boondock Saints* and in made-for-television movies in *Phantom of the Megaplex* (Blair Treu), *Knockaround Guys* (Brian Koppelman, David Levien) and *Mr. Headmistress* (James Frawley). Joe Pingue has also had starring roles in American series, including *Falcone*, *Guilty Hearts* and *The Last Don—Part 2*. His stage credits include lead roles in *Girls and Horses*, *Ladies Night*, *For Those Who Sleep in the City* and *Baal*.

## **RON LEA**

Mazzotta

Ron Lea's successful television and film career spans over 20 years. A familiar face to audiences in English Canada and the United States, he is equally well known to Quebec audiences as Gino Favara in the television series *Omertà*, a role he played from 1996 to 1999. Ron Lea will appear on the big screen in *Summer with the Ghosts* (Berne Neuberger), *A Home at the End of the World* starring Colin Farrell and *Different Loyalty* starring Sharon Stone. His film credits include *The Recruit* with Al Pacino, *A Map of the World* (Scott Elliott), *Hurt* (Steve DiMarco), *Clear Cut* (Ryszard Bugajski) and *Anonymous* (Steve DiMarco). He has also worked with Denys Arcand in *Jésus de Montréal*, Jacques Leduc in *La Vie fantôme* and David Wellington in *The Carpenter* and *Without Work: Killing Time*. His most recent TV credits include *Doc*, *Les Aventures tumultueuses de Jack Carter*, *Largo Winch: The Heir*, *Eleventh Hour*, *Blue Murder*, *Live Through This*, *Sea People*, *Lies He Told*, *Wind at My Back* and *Street Legal*. Ron Lea is currently directing episodes of the series *Doc*.

## **LOUISE LAPARÉ**

Ginette

Since first starring with Jean-Claude Labrecque in *Les Smattes*, Louise Laparé's talent has caught the eye of countless top directors: Gilles Carle (*Les Plouffe 1*), Denys Arcand (*Joyeux calvaire*), Jean-Claude Lauzon (*Piwi*) and Jean Beaudin (*Nouvelle France*), among many others. Her contribution to the success of some of the best television series of recent years is undeniable: *Annie et ses hommes*, *Emma*, *Ent'Cadieux* (TVA), *Shehaweh*, *Scoop I et II*, *Le Crime d'Ovide Plouffe* and *Marilyn* (SRC). She has appeared onstage in more than 20 plays under the direction of Lorraine Pintal, Michel Dumont, Gilbert Lepage and Gaétan Labrèche, to name just a few.

## **CARLO ROTA**

Avvocato

Born in the U.K. of Italian parents, Carlo Rota first came to Canada in the eighties. He spent a few years trying to find himself and owned and operated a number of restaurants in Toronto. He gave up the restaurant business to dedicate himself exclusively to acting. The latest word on that is... "still looking but I feel strongly that I might be just around the next corner."

Carlo Rota appears on television a great deal. Latest shows include recurring roles on *Queer as Folk* and *Nero Wolfe* as well as many other guest-starring roles. He also has had long running involvement in shows like *La Femme Nikita* and *Traders*.

In Canada, Carlo Rota is very recognizable as the host of the Gemini-nominated *Great Canadian Food Show*, which airs on the Food Network. Over 65 episodes of this show were shot with Carlo zooming across Canada and felling up all sorts of food and people responsible for it.

## **MICHAEL A. MIRANDA**

Larini

The public has seen Michael A. Miranda in numerous Canadian and American productions for television and the big screen. He recently completed filming in Italy of the mini-series *Lives of the Saints*, directed by Jerry Ciccoritti, in which he plays alongside Sophia Loren. He can also be seen in the made-for-television movie *Bonanno: A Godfather's Story* by Michel Poulette. His credits include appearances in such films as Timothy Bond's *She* and Ciccoritti's *Boy Meets Girl*. Michael A. Miranda has starred in several television series, including Paramount's *Our America*, CBS/Columbia's *Falcone* and TNT's *Boss of Bosses*. He has often appeared onstage in Toronto, performing such varied roles as Herman in *Danton's Death*, Pedro in *Pedro & the Captain* and Torch in *Beirut*.

## **ROMANO ORZARI**

Vince

Romano Orzari began his theatre training in Montreal with Joe Dowling, currently artistic director of the Guthrie in Minnesota. He moved to New York City to study at the Lee Strasberg Institute, and at the Stella Adler Conservatory, which included classes with Mrs. Adler. With the TV series *Omertà III*, Romano received two prestigious nominations for best lead actor: one for le Prix Gemeaux (Gemini) in 1999 and the other for the Gala Metrostar (People's Choice Award) in 2000. He also won the Yves Montand Award for Best Actor at the 1997 Kiev International Film Festival for Eugene Garcia's film *Burnt Eden*. His latest credits in film include *Wilder* (co-starring with Pam Grier and Rutger Hauer), *The List* (with Ryan O'Neal and Ben Gazzara) and the HBO production *Stiletto Dance* (starring alongside Eric Roberts). His New York theatre credits include *Hamlet* (title role) and *The Cherry Orchard* (as Trofimov). Romano Orzari dedicates his Montreal stage debut to Andrea Sbrana.