

English translation of an interview with Lua Hadar, for *L'Italo-Americano*, by Roberto Natalini, November 26<sup>th</sup>, 2015.

**1) Tell us briefly how the artistic collaboration for Cabaret Comico was born.**

Twenty-seven years ago I met Nini Giacomelli and Bibi Bertelli. I was working with a theatre company in Verona, Italy, and I needed a lyricist who could translate the lyrics for several songs from the American musical Peter Pan. Journalist Enrico de Angelis introduced me to Nini Giacomelli and the rest is history. Through the years Nini, Bibi and I have had several cultural exchanges involving music, theatre and education, including in 2003, when I was invited to bring my harmony trio, The Kitchenettes, to appear in the first edition of *Dallo Sciamano allo Showman* to perform an all-comic cabaret set. In 2013, at the urging of Nini and Bibi and with the support of Society Cabaret at the Hotel Rex Union Square, I was able to launch an American version in a pilot production, which we called *Cabaret Comico*. We wanted a title that would feel Italian but that would be immediately comprehensible by an English-speaking audience, to attract the public to the unique concept of an entire evening of comic song, much of it original material. We also included wonderful cabaret artists who did not sing their own material but who instead contributed songs from our American musical theatre tradition, which has given rise to songs known around the world, from Cole Porter to Mel Brooks. In 2014, we expanded the event, going from 4 singers to 11 and from one night to two, still at Society Cabaret. In 2015, with the support of the Italian Consul of San Francisco, we were able to bring *Cabaret Comico* into the heart of the North Beach community, at the San Francisco Italian Athletic Club, where we presented 16 performers.

**2) What is there in common between your show and the festival that is held in the Valle Camonica?**

Both festivals are dedicated to comic song. *Dallo Sciamano allo Showman* presents exclusively original song by singer-songwriters, representing the contemporary style of music. *Cabaret Comico* also includes material that grows out of our American tradition of musical theatre, so we include styles that are both vintage and contemporary.

*Dallo Sciamano allo Showman* is, of course, a very developed festival, thanks to a great deal of vision, work and sponsorship. For 13 years they have presented well-known artists, given Conferences and Art Exhibitions, and conducted Workshops with youth and adults. The festival now spans the Vallecamonica and takes place during 5 months of the year.

**3) How did you choose the 16 artists who participated in this show?**

Some of the artists have participated during the two pilot years of *Cabaret Comico*. Some were brought in with other artists to sing in groups. Some were students of mine years ago in professional classes taught at my studio. Others are colleagues and friends from the music community of which I have been a part for about 20 years in the San Francisco Bay Area. One I met last year!