

Women & the Theater: Carlotta Corradi Wins the 1st Mario Fratti Award

Natasha Lardera (June 05, 2014)



The winner of the first Mario Fratti Award for Emerging Italian Authors, a program of the In Scena! Italian Theater Festival NY, is "Via Dei Capocci" by Carlotta Corradi. The play, a story of prostitution that jumps from present to past, will be staged as a reading on June 23 at 7:00 PM at Theater for the New City (155 First Ave.) as an event of the Festival.

Inaugurated last year as an official event of "2013 Year of Italian Culture" in the USA, the In Scena! Italian Theater Festival (www.inscenany.com [2]) returns for its second edition (June 9 to 24).

Presented by [Kairos Italy Theater](#) [3], the preeminent Italian theater company in NYC, the event, which is taking place in all five boroughs, will feature six full productions and four readings.

One of the biggest news of the year is that the festival will present the first [Mario Fratti](#) [4] Award for Emerging Italian Authors. "Last year, for our first edition, we dedicated part of the festival to



playwright Mario Fratti," [Laura Caparrotti](#) [5], founder and artistic director, told i-Italy, "For this edition we wanted to celebrate the theater work of an Italian who's very active in the New York theater scene. We searched high and low and all roads led to Mario.

That's when I realized there is no award dedicated to him and there was an immediate need for one!" "Laura Caparrotti is a volcano of ideas," Mario Fratti added, "She contacted me and gave me the great news. I am honored and excited as this is an amazing opportunity to attract new talents."

So Laura Caparrotti and Mario Fratti got to work and started to read the material that was submitted. The winning play was selected among over 30 submissions by a jury that included Alberto Bassetti (multi-awarded Italian playwright, director Teatro Lo Spazio, Rome), Emilia Costantini (theater critic for *Corriere della Sera* and playwright), Francesco Foti (actor/playwright), Giovanna Marinelli (theater consultant) and Ernesto Orrico (actor/director/playwright).

Selection criteria were: quality of the writing (technique, style, fluidity, staging potential), originality of the subject matter, treatment of the Award's theme (this year's theme: women's languages), and universality (potential to be meaningful in an international context, easily translated etc.).

The winner was just announced: her name is [Carlotta Corradi](#) [6], and her play is *Via Dei Capocci*. In the play, Lina, an old resident of Via dei Capocci in Rome, rents out rooms to immigrant prostitutes. Here she meets Irina, a former prostitute from Eastern Europe, who is looking for work as a cleaning woman. Their present situation mixes with scenes from the 1950s, in which prostitutes Viola and Mery share a room in a brothel. As the play progresses, we discover a secret connecting the women in it.

"The theme of the competition, as desired by Mario himself, was *The Woman*," Laura explained, "Carlotta's play not only followed the requested criteria but was particularly convincing for its character study, for the characters' tridimensionality and all the story's nuances.

This is a story of women, women of the past and of the present, and it hits the mark... totally." "The characters of this story are incredibly fascinating," Mario Fratti added, "they are women who are victims of their contemporary society, who confess themselves and deal with it all with irony. A recipe for success."

The play, directed by Laura Caparrotti and translated by her with Carlotta Brentan and Dave Johnson, will be staged as a reading on June 23 at 7:00 PM at Theater for the New City (155 First Ave.) as an event of the festival.

Beside receiving the reading of her play, Ms. Corradi will be presented with an especially created painting made by Victora Febrer, a visual artist who uses wine to create her paintings.

"The Award committee loved the play. I am also very happy that the winner is a young woman. We still have fewer women playwrights and directors in general, so to have a woman winning the Mario Fratti Award gives me extra pleasure," Laura added, "I prefer to avoid thinking about it, I don't like thinking that women are "set aside," but the truth is hard and being a woman I experience it on my skin. Here in New York I'm a member of the [League of Professional Theatre Women](#) [7], who are fighting hard to get at least an equal opportunity in the theater business. It's not easy. At *In Scena!* we are having a reading titled *FALLACI, a Woman Against*. In it author Emilia Costantini imagines a post-mortem interview with the famous and controversial journalist Oriana Fallaci who says she sees no difference between men and women and she does not understand why *The Woman* is treated like an endangered species. At Cannes a jury led by a woman has awarded a woman director. People talk about that, not about the film itself. The examples are endless... but what I want to say is that at *In Scena!* the winner of the Mario Fratti Award happens to be a woman and is awarded for her talent, not her sex."



Playwright Carlotta Corradi, already a director and documentarian, began writing for the stage in 2010. In 2012 she became part of a writing group led by famous Italian playwright Fausto Paravidino at Teatro Valle Occupato, Italy's oldest theatre which, since 2011, has been occupied by a group of actors, musicians, directors, technicians and creative staff who took it over when it was about to be shut down due to budget cuts, and have transformed the space into one of Europe's most ground-breaking cultural venues .

"Carlotta's play spoke to me," Mario Fratti concluded, "Especially these women's confessions. I learned this directly from Tennessee Williams and I want to share it with all the writers out there: the secret to make it is to be persistent. 9 times out of 10 your work will be rejected but if you're passionate about writing you can't give up. Keep going. And don't forget, always put something autobiographical in your story and confessions, confessions, confessions... This is what intrigues the audience."

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