

**LA CANTATA DEI PASTORI**  
*(The Shepherd's Cantata)*

*A Neapolitan renaissance Christmas Play*

*presented by Alessandra Belloni and I Giullari di Piazza*

Based on the Traditional Southern Italian Play by Andrea Perrucci in the 17th century (still performed annually in the environs of Naples) and told by masked characters of Commedia dell'Arte, puppets, Archangel Gabriel on stilts, narrated in English by LA BEFANA (the Good Witch of Christmas) featuring music from traditional sources tarantellas, villanellas and pastorales and instruments such as the Italian Bagpipe, original music by John La Barbera.

The musical version has been adapted and directed by Alessandra Belloni and enacted by masked commedia dell'arte characters, puppets, devils, and the Archangel Gabriel on stilts. Narrated in English by *La Befana* - the Good Witch of Christmas; music composed & directed by John La Barbera.



*"A musical play presented by the traditional Italian group I Giullari di Piazza (is) a rarity among Christmas programs; it somehow manages to be both riotously entertaining and curiously haunting, even profound... a vibrant and uproarious performance."*  
—Alex Ross, **The New York Times**

"La Cantata dei Pastori" is a musical holiday delight for people of all ages and a tale of the triumph of good over evil.

Join the commedia dell'arte characters who enact this beloved story of the journey of Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem, during which the Devil has dispatched demons to stop the birth of Jesus.

Along the way, the holy couple's escapades are entwined with the hapless commedia dell'arte character Razzullo, a comic mischievous Neapolitan scribe who is always hungry and looking for something to eat. The demons, in the meanwhile, conjure up tempests, dragons, and do all they can to stop the birth. The holy couple experiences funny, outrageous, and dangerous adventures before they finally reach Bethlehem and Good triumphs over Evil!

"La Cantata dei Pastori" is still performed annual during the Christmas season in the environs of Naples. Written by Andrea Perrucci during the height of commedia dell'arte popularity in Italy, it combines commedia characteristics with those of the Italian medieval sacra rappresentazione. These elements are fused in settings which borrow from a third genre, the Italian pastoral drama. Songs are sung in Italian; costuming and music instrumentation is traditional Southern Italian; narration is in English. The play ends with a singing by the Company of the oldest known Neapolitan Christmas song.