

INTERNATIONAL STORYTELLING FESTIVAL RACCONTAMIUNASTORIA 2025

11^o edition


MUSES AND PILGRIMS

ROME - 5 APRIL / 29 JUNE 2025

STORIES - MUSIC - DANCE - WORKSHOPS, ARTIST RESIDENCIES AND ARTISTS FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD

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 Raccontamiunastoria - Festival Internazionale di Storytelling

 compagnia_raccontamiunastoria

FESTIVAL PROGRAM 2025

Saturday, April 5, 2025

Location: Itinerant, starting from the Church of Saint Ignatius of Antioch and arriving at the Colosseum

9:30am – 5:00pm **“AD BESTIAS”** by and with Paola Balbi and Davide Bardi, a storytelling walk through the Appian Way Archaeological Park, in collaboration with the “Urban Pilgrimage of Saint Ignatius of Antioch”

Language: Italian
Admission: Free
Target Audience: All

Saturday, May 17, 2025

Location: Cultural space LA VACCHERIA (Via Giovanni l'Eltore, 35 – Rome)

6:00pm **“THE DREAM OF AL ANDALUS”** by and with Sef Townsend (UK), Let yourself be transported through space and time to the ancient kingdom of Al-Andalus (modern-day Andalusia) in medieval Spain, where—during a brief, almost otherworldly moment—a cultural miracle occurred: Muslim, Christian, and Jewish cultures coexisted in peace, giving rise to an unparalleled artistic and cultural renaissance. Be enchanted by tales of wise sultans and noble Spanish knights, impossible loves and clever servants—stories that invite us to dream of a time when peace, tolerance, and intercultural harmony might return to our world once more.

Language: English and Italian (artistic consecutive translation)
Admission: Free
Target Audience: All

8:00pm **“RACCONTAMIUNASTORIA OPEN FLOOR - CIAO BELLA! Stories of unity, justice, and liberation”** An interactive storytelling session, where anyone who wishes so — storytellers and audience alike — can share a story related to the theme of the evening. Presented by Germana De Ruvo and Lorenzo Caviglia.

Language: Italian and English
Admission: Free
Target Audience: All

Saturday, May 24, 2025

Location: Basilica of San Sebastiano FLM (Via Appia Antica, 136 – Rome)

8:30pm **“AD CATACUMBAS: THE PRAETORIAN OF CHRIST”** Created and performed by Davide Bardi and Paola Balbi. Sebastian is a young and handsome man, commander of the Praetorian Guard - the most sought after position in the Roman army - and personal bodyguard of the emperor Diocletianus. He has a brilliant career, he is powerful and popular all over Rome and is considered the perfect embodiment of "Romanitas" (Roman virtue) and "mos maiorum" (the moral virtue of the ancestors) but the course of his life will change dramatically when he comes across the teaching of a revolutionary travelling preacher from the obscure province of Palestine, sentenced to death two centuries before. This powerful and passionate story comes to life through the voices and bodies of **Davide** and **Paola** in a performance that is a real Storytelling marathon, where each of the performers embodies four different characters. Set against a violent and corrupt imperial Rome, unforgettable male and female figures emerge, shaping the course of human history and spirituality. This captivating and emotionally engaging performance will immerse the audience in one of the lesser-known periods of ancient Rome, where being a

Christian was considered the worst of crimes, and defying the emperor was pure madness and meant certain death.

Language: Italian
Admission: 10€
Target Audience: Adults

Sunday, May 25, 2025

Location: Spazio Culturale NOUS (Via Lucrino, 15 - ROMA)

6:30pm **“LEONARDO’S JOURNEY”** A story-musical about the life of Leonardo da Vinci, written and performed by Davide Bardi, Paola Balbi, and Mario Costanzi. In a small town in Tuscany, a boy draws on the ground with leftover charcoal from the fireplace. His parents are separated, he is left-handed, and many consider him "weird"... To find his path, he will have to undertake a long journey of both body and soul, freeing himself from prejudices and the limitations imposed by his condition as an illegitimate child. A poetic and intense performance, blending storytelling, songs, and music to revisit the lesser-known aspects of the life of one of the greatest figures of the Renaissance. A story of human and artistic evolution that is extremely relevant today, serving as a paradigm of the endless possibilities inherent in every human being when they manage to break free from a predetermined destiny and embark on their own journey. The story of a boy who had no right to be born and who would become an artist and scientist whose fame will never die!

Language: Italian
Admission: 10€
Target Audience: Adults

Friday, May 30, 2025

Location: Church of Domine Quo Vadis (Via Appia Antica, 51 – Rome)

8:30pm **“QUO VADIS: TALES OF THE PILGRIM”** With Paola Balbi, Davide Bardi, Germana De Ruvo, and Lorenzo Caviglia. Stories of Saints, Martyrs and Miracles accompanied by the immortal music of La Buona Novella by Fabrizio De André. Itinerant performance within the premises of the historical Church of Domine Quo Vadis.

A captivating traveling performance where stories of saints, martyrs, and miracles intertwine with the timeless melodies from Fabrizio De André’s La Buona Novella. This narrative and musical journey leads the audience along paths of spirituality and memory, rediscovering the evocative power of the oral tradition of early Christianity through the art of storytelling, poetry, and songwriting. A unique event that blends faith, culture, and beauty.

Language: Italian
Admission: 10€
Target Audience: All (10+)

Monday, June 2, 2025

Location: Borgo di Farfa, Fara Sabina (RIETI)

“WALK, WALK, WALK... STORY-TRIP to Farfa” An immersive storytelling experience in the village of Farfa (RIETI), with story concert in the village, lunch and story-trekking on mount Acuzio. By and with artists of the Raccontamiunastoria Company: Paola Balbi, Davide Bardi, Germana De Ruvo, Lorenzo Caviglia and the guest storyteller Valentina Zocca.

Programme of the day

10:00 am meeting point in front of Saint Brigid

10:30 am "Stories of journeys, wanderers, and pilgrims" - story walk to Saint Brigid chapel (open to the public only during the summer)

1:00 pm lunch at the Convent

2:30 pm relaxing concert of stories under the trees (inner gardens of the Convent of Saint Brigid)

3:30 hike to Monte Acuzio (medium-easy hike, bring proper shoes)

6:30 end of the experience, and return to Rome

Language: Italian

Admission: 35€ (lunch included)

Target Audience: All (10+)

Friday, June 13, 2025

Location: Church of San Nicola a Capo di Bove – Appia Antica Archaeological Park

(Via Appia Antica, 161 – Rome, across from the Mausoleum of Cecilia Metella)

8:30 PM – **“THE SONG OF THETIS” – WORLD PREMIERE** The Iliad as it has never been told before—as if Homer were a woman living in our time. Written and performed by Paola Balbi and Davide Bardi, directed by Joele Anastasi. Powerful goddesses and formidable heroes, mortals striving for Olympus and immortals threading on earth; battles and beds, hatred and love, bravery and cowardice—this contemporary, emotionally resonant retelling of Homer’s Iliad offers a sharp, socially conscious perspective on gender, war, slavery, and both physical and spiritual freedom. An “epic” performance in the truest sense, where Homer’s poetry returns to its original form: oral storytelling. Emotions run high, and the metaphors linking ancient myth to our present day remain vivid and piercing throughout. Two actors on stage— a man and a woman, Homer and the Muse, masculine and feminine, human and divine—transform into a myriad of characters who, for 2,800 years, have never stopped speaking to the human heart. The production was developed through a two-year innovative creative process within the frame of MYTHICA Project 2024/2025, supported by the Culture in Movement grant from the City of Rome. The creation of the dramaturgy involved international artistic residencies, open door rehearsals with audience involvement, and contributions from international storytellers, including young emerging voices. Crucial to the creative process were real-time testimonies from women artists whose lives are presently affected by the ongoing war in the Middle East: **Palestinian storyteller Fidaa Ataya and Lebanese storyteller Sarah Kassir, both of whom will be present at the event. A key contribution came also by Martinican storyteller Valer Egouy, who supported the cast in exploring the psychological and social dynamics of slavery.** The performance will be followed by a Q&A session with the artists and the international collaborators to the production.

Language: Italian

Admission: Free (upon admission to the Archeological Site - separate ticket 8€)

Target Audience: Adults

Saturday, June 14, 2025

Workshop

Location: Basilica of San Sebastiano FLM (Via Appia Antica, 136 – Rome)

10:00am-4:00pm **Masterclass with Sara Kassir, Johan Theodorsson, Paola Balbi, Davide Bardi:** a unique opportunity to explore advanced storytelling techniques with a broad international perspective, spanning from the Middle East to Northern Europe.

Language: English and Arabic
Admission: Free (limited seats - booking required)
Target Audience: Young Storytellers, Storytellers, Storytellers in Training

Performances

Location: Basilica di San Sebastiano FLM (Via Appia Antica, 136 - Roma)

A wonderful evening of riveting performances, with a stunning cast of international performers. Come for one, two, or all three shows!

Admission: Single show 10€, All evening 15€.

6:00pm **“A WOMAN’S MIND”** by and with Shereen Saif (INDIA): A Woman’s Mind is a live dance-music-storytelling show based on the tale of Ahalya, a mythological woman from the Indian epic, Ramayana. Created and performed by multi-disciplinary artist Shereen Saif in collaboration with award-winning Welsh storyteller and director Michael Harvey and Hindustani classical musicians Jogiraj Sikidar and Prashant Yeware, the show interweaves classical dance and music with contemporary storytelling to spotlight a woman who was deviant from the cultural image that was construed for women of her times... Ahalya was created by the deity Brahma as an impossibly beautiful woman. A besotted Indra seduces her in the guise of Gautama, her husband. Although Ahalya sees through his deception, she chooses to submit to her passions, only to face its dire consequences. Through a retelling of this ancient myth, A Woman’s Mind explores traditional values in a modern world through the themes of love and loyalty, marriage and morals, desire and deceit, rage, revenge and repentance. Awarded the Abu Dhabi Cultural Foundation's production grant in 2021

Language: English and Italian (artistic consecutive translation)
Admission: Single show 10€, All evening 15€
Target Audience: Adults (14+)

7:30pm **“HOLY, WISE AND WILD: Saints, Sages, and Wild Women”** An evening of stories and aperitif in the garden of the Basilica dedicated to women in sacred scriptures, mythology, and folk tales. By and with Sara Kassir (LEBANON), Fidaa Ataya (PALESTINE), Alham Saed (PALESTINE), Germana De Ruvo (ITALY)

Language: English and Italian
Admission: Single show 10€, All evening 15€
Target Audience: All

8:30pm **Aperitif dinner:** Italian style finger food accompanied by a drink.

Cost: 12€
Target Audience: All

9:00pm **“ORIXA/YORUBA STORIES FROM BRAZIL”** (via West Africa) – created and performed by Michael Harvey (UK). Tales of creation, struggle, and healing. Come and enjoy stories featuring strong female protagonists performed by internationally acclaimed master storyteller Michael Harvet. A unique occasion to savor stories rarely heard outside of Nigeria and Brazil.

Language: English and Italian (artistic consecutive translation)
Admission: Single show 10€, All evening 15€
Target Audience: Adults

Sunday, June 15, 2025

Workshop

Location: Associazione La Farfalla (Ostia) via di Castel Fusano 152

10:00am-4:00pm **Masterclass with Michael Harvey, Fidaa Ataya, Paola Balbi, Davide Bardi:** a unique opportunity to explore advanced storytelling techniques with a broad international perspective, spanning from the Middle East to Northern Europe.

Language: English and Arabic

Admission: Free (limited seats - booking required)

Target Audience: Young Storytellers, Storytellers, Storytellers in Training

Performances

Location: Teatro Tor Bella Monaca

4:00pm **“O POVESTE PENTRU COPII - a story for kids”:** Storytelling performance for the Romanian community, by the internationally acclaimed performer Giorgiana Popan

Language: Romanian

Admission: Free

Target Audience: Families

Location: Park of the Aqueducts (entrance via Via Lemonia – Rome)

7:00pm **“DE AQUA”** International story walk in the scenic atmosphere of the ancient Roman Aqueduct Park. Stories will flow like water, surrounded by powerful nature and archeological heritage. By and with Johan Theodorsson (SWEDEN), Michael Harvey (UK), Fidaa Ataya (PALESTINE), Davide Bardi, Paola Balbi, Lorenzo Caviglia.

Language: English and Italian

Admission: 10€

Target Audience: All

9:00pm **“PANTA REI - EVERYTHING FLOWS”** An interactive storytelling session, where anyone who wishes so — storytellers and audience alike — can share a story related to the theme of the evening. Presented by Germana De Ruvo and Lorenzo Caviglia.

Language: Italian and English

Admission: Free

Target Audience: All

Monday, June 16, 2025

Storytelling-for-tourism day: discover Rome through a series of engaging and immersive activities blending performance and sight-seeing.

All programs will be held in English.

Location: Basilica of San Sebastiano FLM (Via Appia Antica, 136 – Rome)

3:00pm **Site specific storytelling program at Basilica of Saint Sebastian**

“STORY-VISIT” of the church with storytelling tour guide Ambra Naspi

“UMM MARIAM”: the story of the Virgin Mary in the version of the Holy Quran, interpreted by master storyteller Sara Kassir (LEBANON). A story of bravery, faith, and feminine power, brought to life by one of the greatest women tellers of the Storytelling Revival in the Middle East. A Muslim performer in a Christian church to challenge the audience, and bring awareness to the fact that what unites us should always be more important than what divides us.

“PETER AND FEVRONIA”: In the kingdom of Murom, a prince falls in love with a humble village girl. Despite their different worlds, their bond grows stronger than tradition. Together, they rule with love and compassion, proving that true love transcends social class. By and with Giorgiana Popan (ROMANIA)

“AD CATACUMBAS: THE PRAETORIAN OF CHRIST: Sebastian is a young and handsome man, commander of the Praetorian Guard - the most sought after position in the Roman army - and personal bodyguard of the emperor Diocletianus. He has a brilliant career, he is powerful and popular all over Rome and is considered the perfect embodiment of "Romanitas" (Roman virtue) and "mos maiorum" (the moral virtue of the ancestors) but the course of his life will change dramatically when he comes across the teaching of a revolutionary travelling preacher from the obscure province of Palestine, sentenced to death two centuries before. This powerful and passionate story comes to life through the voices and bodies of **Davide** and **Paola** in a performance that is a real Storytelling marathon, where each of the performers embodies four different characters. Set against a violent and corrupt imperial Rome, unforgettable male and female figures emerge, shaping the course of human history and spirituality. This captivating and emotionally engaging performance will immerse the audience in one of the lesser-known periods of ancient Rome, where being a Christian was considered the worst of crimes, and defying the emperor was pure madness and meant certain death.

Language: English

Admission: 10€ (free for FEST Conference participants)

Target Audience: All

Location: Castel S. Angelo (start of the tour)

7:00pm **Site specific STORYTELLING TOUR of the city center**

“RoMEMORIES - Immortal stories of the Eternal City” *(N.B. Attività in lingua Inglese)*

Story-tour of the city center, with a cast of storytellers and storytelling guides: Lorenzo Caviglia, Germana De Ruvo, Johan Theodorsson (SWEDEN), Ambra Naspi, Marco Conti. In Rome legends are one with History, and sometimes it is impossible to tell them apart. Distant stories of noble families and simple people create a network of memories, close to us in a wheel of passions, time and space. Telling those stories is like moving the wheel, connecting the past with the present and shaping the future. Walk with us in the wheel of time, welcome to the Eternal City!

Language: English

Admission: 10€ (free for FEST Conference participants)

Target Audience: All

Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday – June 17–19, 2025

Location: Roma Tre University (Via Ostiense, 234 – Rome) - Evening events at Castello Chigi in Castel Fusano and Associazione La Farfalla (Ostia)

“FEST CONFERENCE ROME 2025 – WORLD STORYTELLING CONFERENCE”:

Intensive programming with 30 events daily from 10:00 AM to midnight: performances, workshops, interactive events, story walks, round tables, storytelling for tourism. To receive the full program, contact: info2raccontamiunastoria.it. As an international event, all activities will be held in English.

Language: English

Friday, June 20, 2025

Location: Associazione La Farfalla (Ostia) via di Castel Fusano 152

A wonderful evening of riveting performances, with a stunning cast of international performers. Come for one, two, or all shows!

Possibility to book a buffet dinner for 15€.

Admission: Single show 10€, All evening 15€.

5:00pm **"TALES FROM THE MIDDLE EAST"**: story concert with Sara Abu Sharar and Amiri Montassier, translated by Lorenzo Caviglia.

Language: English and Italian (artistic consecutive translation)
Admission: Single show 10€, All evening 15€
Target Audience: All

6:00pm **"LEONARDO'S JOURNEY"** A story-musical about the life of Leonardo da Vinci, written and performed by Davide Bardi, Paola Balbi, and Mario Costanzi. In a small town in Tuscany, a boy draws on the ground with leftover charcoal from the fireplace. His parents are separated, he is left-handed, and many consider him "weird"... To find his path, he will have to undertake a long journey of both body and soul, freeing himself from prejudices and the limitations imposed by his condition as an illegitimate child. A poetic and intense performance, blending storytelling, songs, and music to revisit the lesser-known aspects of the life of one of the greatest figures of the Renaissance. A story of human and artistic evolution that is extremely relevant today, serving as a paradigm of the endless possibilities inherent in every human being when they manage to break free from a predetermined destiny and embark on their own journey. The story of a boy who had no right to be born and who would become an artist and scientist whose fame will never die!

Language: English
Admission: Single show 10€, All evening 15€
Target Audience: All

7:30pm **"IRRATIONAL"** by and with Lorenzo Caviglia (Liguria). "The diagonal of a square is not commensurable with its side". A few words, yet full of unexpected implications: a number like this—neither whole nor fractional, conceivable but unknowable, mad, irrational—is a source of chaos that threatens the very order of things. The step from mathematics to heresy is a short one, and in the time of Pythagoras, one could even die for mathematics. A performance poised between mathematics and storytelling, where the story of Hippasus of Metapontum becomes an opportunity to reflect on the role of mathematics in our Western culture.

Language: English and Italian (artistic consecutive translation)
Admission: Single show 10€, All evening 15€
Target Audience: All

8:30pm **Aperitif dinner**: With a vast selection of traditional dishes. Drinks are not included.

Cost: 15€
Target Audience: All

9:00pm **"QUL YA TAYR: SPEAK, BIRD OF THE SKY, SPEAK AGAIN!"** Stories, songs, and music from Palestine and beyond. With Fidaa Ataya (Ramallah, Palestine), Alham Saed (Gaza, Palestine), and the Seraj Libraries Storytelling Group (Ramallah, Palestine).

"I tell stories because I am Palestinian—because it helps me rediscover who I am and who our ancestors were. In the stories of other women, I find my roots—in folk tales, wonder tales, and oral legends—because within stories lies the knowledge of our unwritten history, the parts that are forgotten. In our grandmothers' stories, we see that imagination is the other face of truth—an intangible cultural heritage that binds us together as the Palestinian people."

Language: English
Admission: Single show 10€, All evening 15€
Target Audience: All

Saturday, June 21, 2025

Location: tbc

10:00am-1:00pm **"BODY AND EMOTIONS IN STORYTELLING" Masterclass with Michael Harvey, Steve Killick (UK), and Paola Balbi:** a unique opportunity to explore advanced storytelling techniques with a broad international perspective, with artists from the United Kingdom.

Language: English
Admission: Free (limited seats - booking required)
Target Audience: Young Storytellers, Storytellers, Storytellers in Training

Location: Ex Cartiera Latina - Parco Regionale dell'Appia Antica, Via Appia Antica 42

SPECIAL EVENT: SOL STAT - LITHA - MIDSUMMER NIGHT

Come celebrate the Solstice with us: cross the threshold into the world of stories and myth, and learn what powers keep the sun in the sky on the longest day of the year!

Don't forget to bring water and a packed dinner.

Admission: Single show 10€, All evening 15€.

7pm **"MABON FAB MODRON":** by internationally acclaimed storyteller and director Michael Harvey, a story about how the spirit of Youth was released from imprisonment. Venture into Welsh mythology, following the events of the epic Mabinogion through a tapestry of symbols to celebrate the Solstice.

Language: English and Italian (artistic consecutive translation)
Admission: Single show 10€, All evening 15€
Target Audience: All

8.00pm **"MIDSUMMER STORY WALK":** a story walk in the ancient site of the Appian Park, threading on the path of gods, goddesses, nymphs and magical creatures. Follow the lead of storytellers Valentina Zocca, Germana De Ruvo, Paola Balbi, Shereen Saif through the gates of summer and into the shortest night of the year.

"MAGIC AND POSSIBILITIES: Swedish stories about midsummer's eve" with Johan Theodorsson (Sweden). Midsummer's eve is the biggest holiday in Sweden. It is a magic night. Mysterious forces are on the move. The border between the world of humans and the supernatural is open. Secrets of existence unfold. It is the brightest night of the year... but also the time when darkness begins to return. A turning point... and the night when most children are being made during the year. The Swedish storyteller Johan Theodorsson has toured from Martinique to Dubai to Rome with his stories. Here he shares some stories about the night when anything can happen, Midsummer's night. This night the fairies are able to speak and the trolls walk all the way up the church tower to eat the church bells. It is a night of danger...and a night of opportunities. If you know how, you can see into the future. If you undress naked and roll in the dew, you will stay healthy during

the winter. You can even become a sorcerer, if you manage to pick a flower from a fern. Be prepared, anything can happen during this storytelling show about a night filled with magic and possibilities.

“MIDSUMMER CELEBRATION / SOLSTICE RITUAL”: with Ariel Giulia Troiano and Erika Dell’Acqua. Midsummer night is the brightest night of the year: the sun born in the Winter solstice has now reached its full splendour. It’s a night of magic and transformation, a night of togetherness where the borders between the worlds are subtle. It’s a magic night of light, water and fire, a night of love! We will build a joyful celebration of the summer solstice, raising an energy of peace, comprehension and union through dance, music and stories. A special event to sing, tell and play the transformation we wish for in our bodies, minds and souls.

MIDSUMMER STORY CIRCLE AND MUSIC: all storytellers are welcome to share a story, dance, song or poem on the theme of Midsummer, harvest, transformation

Language: English and Italian
Admission: Single show 10€, All evening 15€
Target Audience: All

Sunday, June 22, 2025

Location: tbc

10:00am-1:00pm **“BODY AND EMOTIONS IN STORYTELLING” Masterclass with Michael Harvey, Steve Killick (UK), and Paola Balbi**: a unique opportunity to explore advanced storytelling techniques with a broad international perspective, with artists from the United Kingdom.

Language: English
Admission: Free (limited seats - booking required)
Target Audience: Young Storytellers, Storytellers, Storytellers in Training

Location: Associazione La Farfalla (Ostia) via di Castel Fusano 152

Continue the Solstice celebration with us: one more day to share stories and food in the shadow of the pine trees.

Admission: Single show 10€, All evening 15€.

5:00pm **“SHARING STORIES, SHARING BREAD - freedom of the body, freedom of the soul”** A story concert with women tellers from different parts of the world, to knead community like our grandmothers used to knead bread. Sometimes the best stories are born in times of trouble... and have the power to shape history. With Giovanna Cavasola (MEXICO), Enedina Sanna (ITA), Marie Georges Giboyau (MARTINIQUE), Alham Saed (PALESTINE).

Language: Italian and English
Admission: Single show 10€, All evening 15€
Target Audience: All

6:30pm **“LEBANESE MAGIC STORIES”** by and with Sara Kassir. Step into the Magic of Lebanese Folktales with Sara Kassir! Get ready for an unforgettable journey through the heart of Lebanon’s storytelling tradition! Join renowned Lebanese storyteller Sara Kassir as she brings to life the rich tapestry of Lebanese folk tales—with laughter, wonder, and wisdom for all. Whether you’re 7 or 77, this show will enchant you, connect you to your

roots, and leave you smiling long after the final word. Live storytelling. Real connection. Timeless stories. Don't miss it—Lebanon's magic is waiting for you!

Language: English and Italian (artistic consecutive translation)
Admission: Single show 10€, All evening 15€
Target Audience: All

8:00pm **Aperitif dinner:** Italian style finger food accompanied by a drink.

Cost: 15€
Target Audience: All

9:00pm **“FINAL CONCERT OF STORIES”:** An interactive storytelling session, with all the artists of the festival: Paola Balbi, Davide Bardi, Johan Theodorsson, Michael Harvey, Shereen Saif, Sara Kassir, Fidaa Ataya, Germana De Ruvo, Lorenzo Caviglia.

The night continues with stories, music and songs until the moon is high!

Language: Italian and English
Admission: Single show 10€, All evening 15€
Target Audience: All

Friday, June 27, 2025

Location: Church of San Nicola a Capo di Bove – Appia Antica Archaeological Park
(Via Appia Antica, 161 – Rome, across from the Mausoleum of Cecilia Metella)

8:30 PM – **“THE SONG OF THETIS” – WORLD PREMIERE** The Iliad as it has never been told before—as if Homer were a woman living in our time. Written and performed by Paola Balbi and Davide Bardi, directed by Joele Anastasi. Powerful goddesses and formidable heroes, mortals striving for Olympus and immortals threading on earth; battles and beds, hatred and love, bravery and cowardice—this contemporary, emotionally resonant retelling of Homer's Iliad offers a sharp, socially conscious perspective on gender, war, slavery, and both physical and spiritual freedom. An “epic” performance in the truest sense, where Homer's poetry returns to its original form: oral storytelling. Emotions run high, and the metaphors linking ancient myth to our present day remain vivid and piercing throughout. Two actors on stage— a man and a woman, Homer and the Muse, masculine and feminine, human and divine—transform into a myriad of characters who, for 2,800 years, have never stopped speaking to the human heart. The production was developed through a two-year innovative creative process within the frame of MYTHICA Project 2024/2025, supported by the Culture in Movement grant from the City of Rome. The creation of the dramaturgy involved international artistic residencies, open door rehearsals with audience involvement, and contributions from international storytellers, including young emerging voices. Crucial to the creative process were real-time testimonies from women artists whose lives are presently affected by the ongoing war in the Middle East: **Palestinian storyteller Fidaa Ataya and Lebanese storyteller Sarah Kassir. A key contribution came also by Martinican storyteller Valer Egouy, who supported the cast in exploring the psychological and social dynamics of slavery.** The performance will be followed by a Q&A session with the artists and the international collaborators to the production.

Language: Italian
Admission: Free (upon admission to the Archeological Site - separate ticket 8€)
Target Audience: All

Sunday, June 29, 2025

Location: Basilica of San Sebastiano FLM (Via Appia Antica, 136 – Rome)

8:00pm **“ONLY I LOVE YOU: PETER AND MARY MAGDALENE”** A Storytelling Performance / Sacred Representation written and performed by **Paola Balbi** and **Davide Bardi**. The passionate and moving tale of a fisherman with a family and an ordinary life, and a prostitute with a past marked by suffering and poverty. Two fiery stories of love, passion, and deep tragedy set against a backdrop of conquest, hunger, and violence. Though starkly different, the lives of Peter and Mary Magdalene are forever linked by the magnitude of the events that shook their world. Their stories are raw, powerful, and deeply human — offering a spiritual experience through the lens of the senses: the audience will see the depth of the waters Jesus walked on, and feel the dust washed from his feet.

Language: Italian
Admission: 10€
Target Audience: All