



KingWeeklySentinel

Arts & Entertainment

'Neapolitan Ice Cream: The Musical' celebrates Italian Heritage Month at Humber River Centre on June 7

By Jim Stewart

In honour of Italian Heritage Month, award-winning storyteller and producer Loredana Cunti is presenting *Neapolitan Ice Cream: The Musical* at the Humber River Centre in Bolton on Sunday, June 7.

At our table at 'The Valley' eatery across from the HRC, the charming and ebullient producer describes the forthcoming show: "It's an intimate and emotionally-powerful story inspired by shocking true immigrant stories of Italians destined for North America, but stranded through deceit and abandoned on the shores of Scotland and Wales. It blends iconic Italian songs, soaring soprano, guitar, accordion, narration, and a scoop of gelato after the show. The show is based on Caterina, a young Italian woman who leaves Naples in search of a better life, but faces betrayal, heartbreak, and reinvention on unfamiliar shores."

Cunti outlines the cast that will be gracing the stage in Bolton next weekend: "Italian Canadian soprano Reilly Bianchi-Nelson, world-renowned accordionist Matti Pulkki, and Italian Canadian guitar legend Tonino Chiodo, the production also features a special guest performance by 17-year-old Bruno Monardo — helping carry Italian musical heritage proudly into the third and fourth generations."

The local production helps mark a historically-significant and personal-

ly-poignant intersection in Cunti's life. Its arrival coincides with "the 80th anniversary of Italian women voting for the very first time in Italy — a milestone that holds special meaning for me as a tribute to my grandmothers, mother, and all Italian women like Caterina, whose courage and sacrifices helped shape future generations."

Cunti noted that "we got a standing ovation at the Hunt Club in Toronto from a largely-English Canadian audience and at a recent sold out show at the Columbus Centre in Toronto, an audience member told me that 'As the daughter of immigrants, the story hit home — sacrifice, dreams, love, perseverance, music, and gelato!'"

The Bolton-raised producer and author described the advantages of using a musical to transmit the show's timeless themes: "Through the musical, we've woven these public domain songs into a fun story — it's a new way to experience culture. It's so important to never forget where you've come from."

It's evident that Cunti is passionate about this project. Her animated expressions about the music reveal her genuine quest to preserve Italian culture and she breaks out into song at our table at The Valley.

The impromptu sneak preview to some of the songs featured in *Neapolitan Ice Cream* is engaging and Cunti — a celebrated children's literature author — describes the genesis of the script she wrote for the musical: "It



was in 1998 when I first read about the seeds of this story — about scammed immigrants who left Naples for North America, but corrupt operators left them in Wales, Liverpool, and Glasgow. I learned that in Anstruther, Scotland, gelato has been there all the way back to 1932. I based my main character on one of those misdirected Neapolitans, Caterina, who settles in Scotland and

creates a three-flavored ice cream — vanilla from the widely available cream produced on Scottish dairy farms, wild strawberries from the nearby fields provided by a Scottish fisherman who has fallen in love with her, and the third layer — chocolate — was created from cocoa she brought with her from Italy. While it's a story about uprooting, it's also about creating on a fresh blank page, and mostly, it's about the journey."

Since writers write about what they know, Cunti connected her own family's immigration experience and the songs sung to her as a child to Caterina's epiphanic moments: "My dad once described to me what he was thinking when he was leaving the port in Naples and coming to Canada. He said 'I remember looking out and saying: Am I really doing this? My nonna would sing these songs that are in the show—and I get a lump in my throat. They mean so much to me. So bring your nonna. Bring your mom and dad.'"

The event takes place Sunday, June 7 at 3 p.m. at the Humber River Centre, 28 Ann Street, Bolton.

Seniors and Youth U18: \$25, General Admission \$30. Tickets available on Eventbrite https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/neapolitan-ice-cream-the-musical-june-7-2026-tickets-1989045144571?keep_tld=true

For more information visit: <https://www.iloredana.com/neapolitan-ice-cream>

Students learn about innovative agriculture at Boreal Farms

Students at King City Secondary School recently visited Boreal Farms recently to see how computer science is used in the agricultural industry.

During a morning workshop at Kingsbridge Centre, students used refractometers to measure sugar levels and worked in pairs to build small hydroponic growing systems.

At Boreal Farms, students toured the farm and explored how technology is used to support farming practices, including robots that target pesticide use and assist with harvesting, and drones used for seeding, fertilizing and monitoring plant health.

"At first we didn't think that farming would have much application from what we're learning, but it actually has a lot more than we thought," said Matthew, a Grade 11 student.

The visit connected directly to concepts students have been studying in class, including sensors, micro:bits and soil moisture monitoring.

"We were looking at micro:bits and sensors and how we can see how much moisture there is in the soil and different software," said Lenna Tomour, Computer Science Teacher, King City S.S. "I think it's great for students to see that application in everyday life."

During the visit, students also learned about how farms use data to guide decision-making, from tracking crop health to monitoring production.

