

## ■ RISING STAR TO *tackle key Verdi role* IN LYRIC DEBUT

Tenor Giorgio Berrugi has picked the perfect role for his Lyric Opera debut. With his warm, Italian sound, exceptional musicality and passionate interpretations, he's the ideal Alfredo for the Lyric's upcoming production of Verdi's "La traviata."

"We are excited to welcome Giorgio Berrugi to our stage for his Lyric debut and his first performances in North America of Alfredo," says Lyric President and CEO Anthony Freud. Berrugi has sung the role internationally.



Giorgio Berrugi

A rising star in the opera world, Berrugi was an award-winning concert clarinetist before vocal instructions in 2007 with La Scala baritone Carlo Meliciani dramatically altered his professional trajectory. He made his operatic debut at Teatro La Fenice in Venice as Rodolfo in "La bohème" the very next year.

Since then, Berrugi has performed in the world's most important opera venues, including Teatro alla Scala, Royal Opera House in London, Lincoln Center in New York, Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow, Théâtre des Champs-Élysées in Paris, Deutsche Oper in Berlin, San Francisco Opera, Gewandhaus in Leipzig, Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, Suntory Hall in Tokyo, Wigmore Hall in London, Parco della Musica in Rome, Arena di Verona and Teatro Regio in Turin. Along the way, no less than Plácido Domingo dubbed Berrugi one of his musical successors.

Recent engagements have included La Bohème of the 120th anniversary at Teatro Regio in Turin and Simon Boccanegra at La Scala.

"La traviata" will be performed 10 times between Feb. 16 and March 22. ([www.lyricopera.org](http://www.lyricopera.org))



Albert Belmonte

## ■ CASA ITALIA TO *shine spotlight on* AL BELMONTE

Casa Italia will honor Albert Belmonte as Man of the Year on Feb. 9 at Alta Villa Banquets in Addison. (708-345-5933)

A cornerstone of the Calabrese community, he has been involved in the Feast of San Francesco di Paola since its inception 37 years ago, and he has been active in the Calabresi in America Organization for more than two decades. A longtime CIAO board member, he has been running the group's monthly meetings for 16 years.

Membership in the Chicagoland Italian American Charitable Organization and the St. Anthony Chapter of the IANU Foundation round out his community involvement.

Belmonte is best known as the proprietor of Belmonte's Florist. The business was founded on Taylor Street in the early 1930s by Belmonte's dad, Umberto, and his uncle Victor.

Belmonte grew up in the florist shop, which his father moved to 6264 W. North Ave., and he started working there right after high school. He joined the business full time after attending Triton College and graduating from Northeastern University, and he's never looked back.

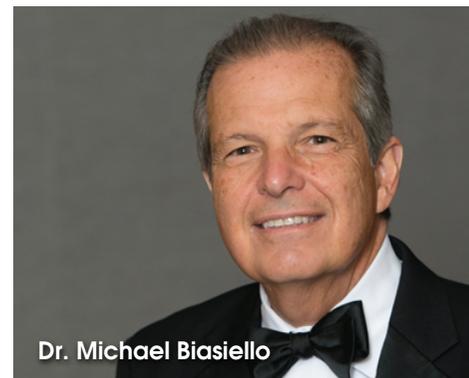
For the rest of the story, visit [www.francoi.com/profiles/ci18A](http://www.francoi.com/profiles/ci18A)

## ■ DR. BIASIELLO *sworn in as dental* SOCIETY DIRECTOR

Bringing more than 30 years of experience in dentistry to the post, Dr. Michael Biasiello stepped up as a director of the Chicago Dental Society's Northwest Side Branch effective Jan. 1. A past president of the branch, Biasiello will focus his efforts as director on increasing membership and getting young dentists involved in the Chicago Dental Society and in organized dentistry. This past year, Biasiello was the general chairman for the 2018 CDS Midwinter Meeting, one of the largest exhibitions of dental products and continuing dental education in North America.

A general dentist with a practice in Park Ridge, Biasiello earned his undergraduate and dental degrees from Loyola University-Chicago, and holds fellowships in the Academy of General Dentistry, American College of Dentists and the International College of Dentists. He is a member of the Illinois State Dental Society, American Dental Association, Academy of General Dentistry, American College of Dentists, International College of Dentists, Independent Dental Organization and Arcolian Dental Arts Society, and is a past president of the latter two organizations.

Biasiello has earned several honors in the course of his career for his outstanding commitment to the dental profession, including Arcolian Man of the Year, the Dean Raffaele Suriano Award from the University of Illinois College of Dentistry, and the Dr. Chauncey Cross Political Action Award for the last three years from the Illinois State Dental Society.



Dr. Michael Biasiello