Vol. 5 No. 3
Spring 1989

Celebrating the City

Urban Resources

"O' Giglio e Paradiso": Celebration and Identity in an Urban Ethnic Community

Joseph Sciorra

Joseph Sciorra received his M.A. from New York University's Department of Performance Studies and is a Ph.D. candidate at the Department of Folklore and Folklife, University of Pennsylvania. Since 1980, he has worked as a freelance folklife consultant for a variety of folklore projects and has conducted extensive field work among New York City's Italian-American community.

Each July, Italian-American residents of Williamsburg, Brooklyn stage a religious celebration in the streets surrounding Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church. This Roman Catholic feast, held in honor of Saint Paulinus, was introduced at the turn of the century by immigrants from Nola, a town outside Naples. According to church publicity, the "main event" of the twelve day feast is that Sunday which commemorates Paulinus' safe return from captivity in the fifth century. As the story goes, Bishop Paulinus offered himself in exchange for a widow's only son who had been enslaved by marauders. In time, Paulinus secured his freedom, and that of his compatriots, and sailed for home. Upon its arrival, Paulinus' boat was met at the harbor by townspeople, each carrying a lilly, or in Italian, *giglio* (pronounced JILL-YO).

In Brooklyn, the *giglio* that is used to welcome home the bishop saint is a multi-story tapering spire made of aluminum. The *giglio* facade consists of a series of painted panels of *papier-mâché* religious figures and architectural embellishments. A model of Paulinus' boat is also constructed, complete with fitted mast, sail, and rigging. These ceremonial structures are each carried through neighborhood streets by two groups of approximately 125 men, each known as a *paranza*. To lift the *giglio*, the men place their shoulders beneath the bars which jut out from around the structure's base just under shoulder height. Beginning their journey from separate locations, the *giglio* and the boat converge at the intersection of Havemeyer and North 8th Streets in a reenactment of the fifth century narrative.

Music is a vital component of the Brooklyn *giglio* event, so much so that it is said that the *giglio* is "danced." A pair of singers and brass bands ride both on the platform on which the *giglio* tower rests and inside the boat. The contemporary band leader for the feast is trumpeter Larry Laurenzano, a resident of Staten Island. Laurenzano has been responsible for booking the union musicians since 1976, when he was hired by the late *giglio* band leader Phil Caccavalle (1916-1983). Some players are old-time Italian feast musicians; others are younger performers and Laurenzano's students, who can occasionally be heard playing jazz riffs during a lull in feast activities. Their numbers vary from year to year; the instrumentation for the *giglio* in 1981 included seven trumpets, two tubas, one bass drum, one tenor drum, and a pair of cymbals, while the boat carried four trumpeters, two trombonists, and three percussionists.[1]

The *giglio* makes its way down Havemeyer Street not in a continuous parade but in a series of "lifts," which last roughly three minutes and cover approximately thirty feet. Each lift is led by a *capoparanza*, that is, leader of the lifters. A man becomes a *capo* by working his way up the feast hierarchy, finally reaching the position of *Capo* Number One. It is this *capo* who, during his two-year term, is ultimately responsible for the feast's success. Afterwards, he joins the ranks of former or "honorary" *capos*. Only those men who have attained the rank of *capo* and their apprentices are allowed in front of the structure to "command" the *paranza*.

The prominence of the musicians and the special way they are carried indicate the essential role music plays within the *giglio* event. It is said that without music the structures "would never get off the ground." This is because the signal for the men to lift the *giglio* in concert is encoded in the song *"O' Giglio e Paradiso"* ("The *Giglio* of Paradise"), which begins each and every lift. As the band ends the music to the first stanza with a seven note crescendo, the capo raises his cane, a symbol of his authority, and the 125 individual lifters coalesce into the single *paranza* which lifts the *giglio* off the ground.

While the band continues to play the tune, the men march the structure forward for about 45 seconds. The *capo* signals the band to stop playing by slicing the air with his cane. He then shouts, "*Musica*!" and another song, either an Italian or American popular tune, begins. The tune's tempo and rhythm determine the way in which the *giglio* is danced. With a song like "*Vicino e Mare*," the structure is gently swayed back and forth. With the tune, "Gonna Fly Now," the theme song from the movie *Rocky*, the *giglio* is roughly bounced on the lifters' shoulders as they march. Remaining in front of the moving *giglio*, the *capo* may direct a

special choreographic movement during his lift. With a "Three-Sixty," the *giglio* is turned around in a full circle; for a "Number Two," the structure is quickly dropped and immediately lifted again.

For a second time, the *capo* signals the musicians to stop playing and the lifters cease their forward motion. Stepping up to the front of the *giglio*, where a microphone is strapped to a bar, he shouts four commands in the Neapolitan dialect: *"'Uaglio'!"* (Boys!), *"Aizate i' spalle!"* (Lift your shoulders!), *"Gungi-Gung'!"* (Get ready!), and finally, *"Aggett'!"* (Throw it!). As the men bend their knees and step out from under the bars, the structure comes crashing down on its supports with a thud. The crowd lets out a collective cheer, and the men are congratulated. As the next *capo* takes his place in front of the *giglio*, the band once again strikes up *"O' Giglio e Paradiso,"* as the *paranza* prepares for the next lift.

Not only is the *giglio* song, as *"O' Giglio e Paradiso"* is often called, used to coordinate the lifting of the *giglio* and the boat; it is also incorporated into the numerous activities that comprise the entire festival. As feast time approaches, the recorded version of the tune is heard with increasing frequency on neighborhood jukeboxes and home turntables, and impromptu bands made up primarily of non-musicians trumpet the song around the streets. The *giglio* band performs the tune to mark the feast's official opening, and the church organist plays her own rendition of *"O' Giglio e Paradiso"* at the end of the ten o'clock mass celebrated on *Giglio* Sunday, the day the two structures are danced.[2]

A History of the *Giglio* Feast and its Music

In contemporary Nola, the feast of St. Paulinus consists of a boat and eight *giglio* towers which are associated with different guilds established during the Renaissance: the farmer, the pork-store owner, the tavern keeper, the baker, the butcher, the cobbler, the tailor, and the blacksmith. The Italian event is comprised of a constellation of objects which are created anew each year and consumed, thrown away, or destroyed by the end of the feast. Each group raises the money necessary to hire a designer and the artisans who create a new *giglio*. A composer and lyricist are commissioned to write the structure's new theme song, which is recorded on a 45 r.p.m. disc and sold in Nola before the feast.[3] The songs' lyrics are printed up by the thousands, and during the feast the sheets are thrown from the moving structures to the crowd below. In Nola, the guilds compete for prizes in various categories: best-designed *giglio*, best maneuvering by a *paranza*, and best *giglio* song.[4]

In 1903, the Nolani immigrants who settled in Williamsburg held their first feast in honor of their patron saint. This religious *festa* was not sponsored by the local Roman Catholic church but was organized instead by a mutual aid society, the *Società M.S. San Paolino di Nola*. Only one *giglio* tower was erected for the Brooklyn celebration, and not until 1958 was the boat danced in Williamsburg. But these Italian-Americans continued the feast tradition of writing a new song for the *giglio*, and each year they tossed the printed lyrics and music from the dancing tower.[5]

The history of *giglio* music making before World War II is a rich one, but for the purposes of this article I will focus on the feast and its music in the post-war years. After Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church was demolished in 1947 to make room for the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway, the clergy attempted to wrest control of various neighborhood feasts from the respective sponsoring organizations. In 1954, with help from a small group of parishioners, the Saint Paulinus celebration was reintroduced under the auspices of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church, where it has been held ever since.

From 1954 until 1959, three individuals—Phil Caccavalle, Antonio Rosalia, and Pasquale Ferrara—collaborated on writing songs for the feast. Caccavalle was a semi-professional musician who played trumpet alongside his godfather, Joseph Ferrara, in the latter's *giglio* band. He also played in the (in)famous "Dodger's Symphony Band," which performed unofficially in the bleachers of Ebbet's Field, and led his own American-style dance band under the stage name Phil Valli. Sicilian-born Rosalia (1895-1979) played clarinet and saxophone professionally for a variety of Italian-American feasts in the New York area and in stage bands for Italian-language vaudeville and radio shows. Lyricist Pasquale Ferrara (no relation to the band leader) was born near Nola and owned a luncheonette on the corner of Havemeyer and North 8th Streets.

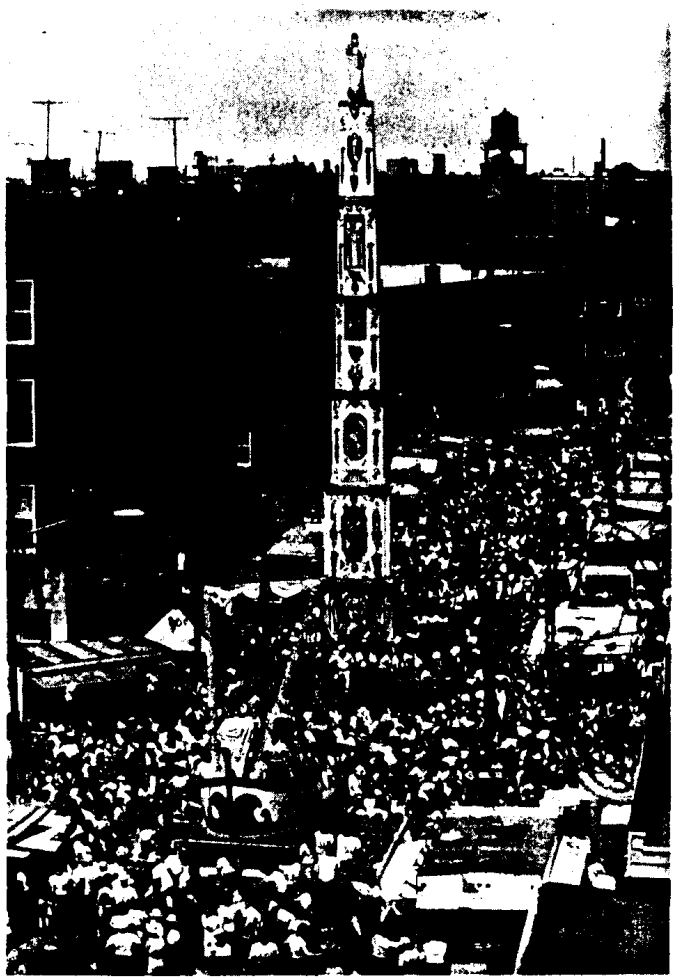
The surviving sheet music is an invaluable source of documentation for the trio's composi-

tions. Their first collaboration was the 1954 feast song, *"O' Giglio e' Turnate"* (The *Giglio* Has Returned), which celebrated the feast's new life under church sponsorship.[6] In 1956, they wrote *"O' Giglio de' Fedeli"* (The *Giglio* of the Faithful), and followed it with *"O' Giglio do Popolo"* (The *Giglio* of the People) in 1957 and *"O' Giglio Trionfa"* (The *Giglio* Triumphs) in 1958. When he died late in 1958, Ferrara left a new set of lyrics, the 1959 feast song, *"O' Giglio e Paradiso"* (The *Giglio* of Paradise), which consisted of his last set of lyrics and the music from the 1957 song.[7] The following summer the feast committee voted to keep *"O' Giglio e Paradiso"* as the feast song. By breaking with tradition, the committee initiated a new tradition, and *"O' Giglio e Paradiso"* remains until the present day.

The lyrics of *"O' Giglio e Paradiso"* adhere to a model established by pre-World War II composers. The words are written and sung in the Neapolitan dialect.[8] *"O' Giglio e Paradiso"* uses a compositional formula of three sets of alternating *parte* (parts) and *cori* (choruses), each made up of eight lines. The first stanza calls attention to the mass of people who actually make up the feast and voices their feelings about the occasion. In this process, the singer makes a series of interesting shifts in regard to his relationship to the people in attendance. People are referred to in the third person until the sixth line, when the singer addresses them directly. Though standing above the crowd, the singer has already joined the people as part of the collective "we" in line four. The cyclic nature of the calendrical festivity is captured in the stanza's changing time frame: people anticipate the approaching feast (line three), which finally arrives (line one), and is already a fond memory (line eight).

The first chorus praises the men who were responsible for organizing the event and comments on their devotion to Saint Paulinus. Before the church took over the feast, this section dealt with the members of the saint society and occasionally would name the president.

In the second stanza, the song makes direct references to itself and to the musicians. Some people say that the Ferrara mentioned in the song is the lyricist, while others maintain it is a reference to Pasquale's American-born son, Salvatore "Tutti," who sang on the *giglio* from 1939 until 1981. But Caccavalle claimed that the name originally signified his godfather Joseph, because the three musicians always performed together as a group.[9] The second chorus is an aesthetic appreciation of the *giglio* as *objet d' art* and a homage to *giglio* designer and builder Romualdo Martello (1903-1988), who constructed the ceremonial towers in America from **1927 until 1970.**



Dancing the *giglio* and boat, North 8th and Havemeyer Streets, Williamsburg, Brooklyn, 1982. Photograph by Martha Cooper, Courtesy *City Lore*.

The final stanza extols the lifters' strength and dedication, and praises the *capo's* ability to lead. The outcome of the *capo's* performance, as the last four lines illustrate, is dependent on his relationship with the *paranza*. The three men who were *capos* in the early 1960s are listed in the chorus. These names are crossed out in Sam Iovino's photocopy of the typewritten lyrics and the names of subsequent leaders have been written in the margins.

Context and Community

The popularity of *"O' Giglio e Paradiso"* and its stabilization as a feast standard are due to several

O' Giglio e Paradiso

I

Torna a festa indo core e sta gente
Che na festa chiu bella a vede
Tutto l'anno se penza e sa aspetta
Chistu iurno ca' ivimmo gude.
Chesti strada so tutto affullate
Quanta gente ca miezo verite
E na iornate chiu cara da' vita
Ca stu popolo sta arricurda.

Coro
Stu comitato ogni anno
Chiu forte se sta affa
Po fede e chistu santo
Nu stanno a ripusa.
Se prestono co core
So gente troppo oneste
Po santo monacone
Fanno sta bella feste.

II

Chesta musica ngoppo a stu Giglio
Chiu allegro a stu popolo fa
Sta canzone trasi a tutti indo core
Quanta vota a stanno a suna.
Rosalia, Caccavalle e Ferrara
Sacquistato tutto bene e sta gente
Sempe e stessi tenimmo presenta
Quanta vota sta festa se fa.

Coro
Nun ge sta chiu a dicere
So cose che se sanno
Chisti lavori artistico
E sape appresenta.
Stu masto custruttore
Martello vuie o sapite
Stu Giglio e paradiso
Fa stu popolo nganta.

III

Sotto o Giglio sta ricca paranza
So quasi tutto e chistu quartierre
Cu' na smanie e uno penziero
Vonno ogni anno stu Giglio culla.
Chistu capo che dace o' cummanna
Ommo affabile e bene vuluto
Cu sta paranza i' acciaro e sicuro
Chiu successo chisti anno sta affa.

Coro
Te fa iza stu Giglio
Chiu bello o fa abballa
Stu capo e Mike Miranda
Che stace a cummanna.
Cu Paolo Albanese
E' Eddie Di Domenico
Tre rose e chistu mese
L' avimma, riala.

The *Giglio* of Paradise

I

The feast which dwells in the hearts of these people has returned;
It's the most beautiful feast to behold.
All year long they think about it and await
This day we are going to enjoy.
These streets are mobbed,
How many people you see in the crowd;
It's a day more beautiful than life
That these people will always remember.

Chorus
Each year this committee
Keeps getting stronger;
Because of their faith in this saint
They never rest.
They press him to their hearts
They are people who are too honest;
For this great saintly monk
They make this beautiful feast.

II

This music on top of this *Giglio*
Makes the people happier;
This song enters everyone's heart
Everytime they play.
Rosalia, Caccavalle and Ferrara
Took all the love of these people;
We must always have them amongst us
Everytime we make this feast.

Chorus
There is nothing more to say
It's something everyone knows
This artistic work
He knows how to present it.
This master builder
Martello, you all know him
This *Giglio* of paradise
Makes the people happy.

III

Under the *Giglio* is this rich *paranza*
Almost all of them are from this neighborhood
With just one thing in mind:
They want to carry this *Giglio* each year.
The *capo* who gives the command
[Is] A man who is well liked
[And] With this steel-like and confident *paranza*
[He] Is going to be more successful this year.

Chorus
He makes you lift the *Giglio*
He makes it dance with more beauty
The *capo* is Mike Miranda
Who is going to command.
With Paolo Albanese
And Eddie Di Domenico
Three roses for this month
We have to treat them like kings.

factors. Sometime between 1961 and 1963, singer "Tutti" Ferrara and a neighborhood band, the Ralph Tuorto Orchestra, recorded the song (Variety Records, #856, MTC-1).[10] Although there had been previous recordings of *giglio* songs on 78 r.p.m. discs, this was the first one reproduced on the new 45 r.p.m. format. The success of this single is witnessed in its various reincarnations. In 1964, the song traveled to Italy, where it was recorded by the noted Neapolitan singer Gino Maringola (Universal, PH 103) and subsequently sold in the United States by E. Rossi & Company, a well-known store in Manhattan's Little Italy.[11] Ferrara's original recorded version has been re-released on three different albums: on the singer's mid-1960s album, *E Feste d'o Giglio* (Cobal Records); as part of *Joe O'Brien's All-Time Great Italian Hits* (Baci Records, CS 1691), a 1967 collection of Italian songs by a popular deejay; and finally on Caccavalle's 1979 LP entitled *Giglio Melodies* (DVX International Records, DVX-62879). Caccavalle's album and Ferrara's original single are sold each year at the feast.[12] In the early summer months, Italian music aficionado Joe O'Brien would give the song considerable airplay during his now defunct radio show on WMCA-AM. The outside world's recognition and appreciation of *"O' Giglio e Paradiso,"* as well as the numerous recordings, contributed to the stabilization of the tune within the feast structure.

As an instrumental piece, *"O' Giglio e Paradiso"* is played for religious processions and feasts throughout the New York metropolitan area and as far west as Chicago. In these new settings, appreciative audiences unfamiliar with the tune's title, lyrics, or original context request the song over and over again.[13] How is it that the *giglio* song has moved beyond the feast complex in Williamsburg and become a standard in the larger repertoire of Italian-American feast bands? In addition to being a well crafted *giglio* song, *"O' Giglio e Paradiso"* conforms to some people's notion of what constitutes a certain type of "Italian" music. As a musical symbol, *"O' Giglio e Paradiso"* is a "potent package" of content and context.[14]

Williamsburg's Italian community transformed a locally written song into a musical symbol at a time when the neighborhood was experiencing a turbulent transformation. In the late 1940s, people's homes, local businesses, and the community's spiritual center, Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Church, were demolished to make room for the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway, which subsequently cut the neighborhood in half. The church takeover of the *giglio* feast in 1954, the result of a bitter feud between clergy and parishioners, coincided with another transition as immigrant parents handed over control of local institutions to their American-born children. From the 1950s to the early 1970s, the area experienced a major shift in population as many Italians relocated to other parts of the city and the developing suburbs. The vacated apartment buildings were increasingly occupied by Blacks and Puerto Ricans, a new ethnic presence perceived as a threat by the remaining Italians. During the 1960s and 1970s, however, a new wave of immigration from Southern Italy helped invigorate the neighborhood's economic and social life, and strengthened its Italian character. Yet again, during the 1970s, the effects of the economic realignment in northeastern urban life, known in New York as the

As the band plays *"O' Giglio e Paradiso,"* the *capo* "commands" the lifters by swinging his cane skywards. Singer Sam Iovino (in the dark shirt) stands behind the late band leader Phil Caccavalle (in white pants), 1982. Photograph by Martha Cooper, courtesy *City Lore*.

"Budget Cuts," resulted in a major decline in services for this working class neighborhood. In the face of these changes, the *giglio* feast acted as an anchor for the neighborhood, and the song *"O' Giglio e Paradiso,"* a feast staple for thirty years, provided reassurance to a changing community.

"O' Giglio e Paradiso" has become a sort of theme song for Williamsburg's Italian residents, addressing the larger identity issue crucial for this small urban ethnic community. Italian-Americans in Williamsburg now reside on both sides of the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway. The Northside is home to a number of working-class ethnic groups, including Italians, Hispanics, and Poles. While Italians once resided in large numbers in the Northside, today the vast majority are concentrated east of the expressway in that section known by its neighbors as "Italian Williamsburg." I repeat, "by its neighbors," because Italian-American residents have no name for that area. A speaker's location in relationship to the expressway determines place references: one may either say "the Northside and the other side" or "this side and the Northside." Since Mt. Carmel Church is an ethnic parish technically open to all Italians, it has no parish boundaries which would help define the area.

In addition, there is confusion for Italian-Americans as to whether they live in Williamsburg or Greenpoint, a predominantly Polish neighborhood. Newspapers locate the feast in either of these two places. In fact when the *New York Times* publicized Williamsburg and Greenpoint in two separate articles for the paper's weekly real estate column, the Northside and Italian Williamsburg were completely excluded from both areas.[15] This identity crisis can be attributed to two sources. One is the way in which the various borders of political districts and city services such as those for Congress, the New York State Senate and Assembly, the New York City Council, and city police precincts dissect Italian Williamsburg and the Northside.[16] Another contributing factor is the negative image of Williamsburg in the eyes of its residents and outsiders alike. In an examination of another Brooklyn neighborhood, sociologist Jerry Krase wrote, "The stigma of certain people can be transferred to a place they occupy; alternately, people can be stigmatized by their free choice of, or especially their involuntary, residence."[17] Williamsburg's Italian-American residents are constantly confronting this image problem in their everyday affairs and in promoting the feast to outsiders. As one feast official stated, "When you say that the feast is in Greenpoint, people think *Polish*. When you say Williamsburg, they don't want to come."[18] Feast publicity invariably avoids naming the neighborhood in which the event occurs.

Yi-Fu Tuan's observations of the ways in which urban dwellers create a sense of place are useful for looking at Williamsburg's Italian community: *Places can be made visible by a number of means: rivalry or conflict with other places, visual preeminence, and the evocative power of art, architecture, ceremonials, and rites. Human places become vividly real through dramatization. Identity of place is achieved by dramatizing the aspirations, needs, and functional rhythms of personal and group life.*[19] The feast of St. Paulinus has helped impart a sense of identity, a sense of place to a community experiencing change; alternative names for the *giglio* song have specific geographic references: the "Brooklyn Song" and the "North 8th Street Song." In turn the feast has taken on new meaning. Italian-American residents can depict themselves as larger than life in the gigantic ceremonial object and the huge scale of the feast itself. The *giglio* is an exclamation point proclaiming the community's continuing presence; the song *"O' Giglio e Paradiso"* is its aural equivalent.

Festival and Musical Performance: Symbol and Meaning

The *giglio* feast is an emotionally charged social event, a time when Williamsburg's Italian community "attempts to make manifest, in symbolic form, what it conceives to be its essential life, at once the distillation and typification of its corporate experience."[20] Staging this cultural performance involves the interplay of privileged behaviors and objects which have achieved their special status within the festival context through their creation and development in common and their continuous use over time. Through its centrality to the feast and its repetition year after year, the song *"O' Giglio e Paradiso"* has become encoded with those values dramatized in this public celebration.

For many, the contemporary Brooklyn feast is about the remembered past of the "old neighborhood," a time when a strong sense of community is believed to have prevailed. This sentiment is often

Continued on page 44.

Sciorra (continued)

expressed by former Williamsburg residents who return each year for the feast, some from as far away as Florida and California. This connection with the immediate past is tied to participants' deep connection with immigrant parents, grandparents, and other family members. Lifting the *giglio* has become a tradition passed on from one generation to the next by men who value familial loyalty and responsibility. At the same time, *Giglio* Sunday presents two ideals of masculinity—the young and virile lifter and the *capo*, the older and respected member of the community. Expressions of regional Neapolitan and generic Italian identities, as well as American patriotism, are also articulated during the twelve day festival.

Like the *giglio* itself, the song *"O' Giglio e Paradiso"* has become a key symbol for this community. This song can be "seen as summing up, expressing, representing for the participants in an emotionally powerful and relatively undifferentiated way," what the dancing of the *giglio* and boat has come to mean for them.[21] A neighborhood man explained the tune's power to stir emotions: *You get a feeling when you hear the music. When they play the giglio song, you start bouncing with the music. It goes through you. You can't fight it. It's a feeling that automatically comes to you. It gets in your blood.*[22] *"O' Giglio e Paradiso"* releases a flood of memories of past feasts; it evokes shared feelings and ideas. Besides becoming an auditory symbol of the event, ultimately it has come to stand for the community itself.[23] All this can be achieved with the sounding of just a few notes; as a man drove past a friend preparing for the 1982 feast, he beeped on his car horn the seven note crescendo from *"O' Giglio e Paradiso."*

So powerful is this musical symbol that people have in turn incorporated it into their daily lives, reinforcing group identity and solidarity beyond the feast time and space. It is the link that marks the transition from one feast to the next and reaffirms the community's tie with individual members, especially during rites of passage. The song *"O' Giglio e Paradiso"* is one of the ways adults in the community introduce children to the feast and emotionally tie them to the celebration. Speaking about her two-year-old grandson, Rosanne Mirando stated, "When my husband plays the song on the trumpet, he knows when to raise his hands. He doesn't even know how to say *Grandma* yet, but he knows the commands."[24] As the feast gears up, neighborhood boys can be seen playing *"giglio,"* lifting a small chair on their shoulders and singing their own version of *"O' Giglio e Paradiso."* Up until the early 1970s, boys built miniature towers out of wooden milk boxes, holy cards, and other found objects, performing the *giglio* song on kazoos. Today, the dancing of the children's *giglio* and boat is an official part of the overall adult feast and is accompanied by the same musicians who ride on the adult *giglio*.

Weddings are a time when the feast, via *"O' Giglio e Paradiso,"* is conjured up most strongly. While occasionally performed by the church organist at weddings, the song is most often heard during the subsequent receptions. Whether they are familiar with the tune or not, the band will be made to play *"O' Giglio e Paradiso."* Several men will then lift the bride and/or groom on their shoulders and "dance them like the *giglio*."

Feast elders who are no longer able to attend the July festivities are serenaded at their homes with *"O' Giglio e Paradiso"* in the course of the *giglio* band's numerous marches through the neighborhood. Until he permanently hurt his legs, Pete Donna, better known as "*Numero Uno,*" would tape record the music during the feast and then travel to the different senior citizen centers in the neighborhood to entertain his comrades. During the month of July, members of the Swinging Sixties Senior Citizen Center carry their own six foot replica of the *giglio* to recorded music.

"O' Giglio e Paradiso" is also present at the time of death. When the beloved honorary *capo* Joseph "Jackie" Ambrosino died in 1983, the *giglio* song was played by the church organist during the funeral. Michael Farinaccio, a junior member of the feast hierarchy, was able to keep his emotions in check until he heard the song. "That's when I broke down," he said.[25] At the 1985 funeral service for Antonio Barricelli, former president of the *Societa M.S. San Paolina di Nola*, pallbearers raised the coffin on their shoulders as the organist reached the musical break that signals the lifting of the *giglio*.

Conclusion

Williamsburg's Italian-American community, as well as the feast, weathered the storm of change by concentrating itself into a smaller but denser area.

But the need for such a powerful group symbol as *"O' Giglio e Paradiso"* seems to have diminished in recent years, and there has been talk of breaking with tradition once again. This year's *Capo* number one, Anthony "Paste" Vecchiano, lifted the *giglio* not with the customary *"O' Giglio e Paradiso"* but with a new song, *"E' Arrivata O' Momento"* (The Moment Has Arrived) composed by Anthony Cappola. Whether or not this innovation will be accepted is hard to tell, but clearly the new song marks the beginning of another phase in the Brooklyn *giglio* feast. Such adaptations reflect the ever-changing nature of life in this urban ethnic community.

* * *

This article is based on my M.A. thesis, which I completed in the Department of Performance Studies, New York University. I am indebted to my advisor, Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, for her close reading of my original drafts and her continuing support. I have also benefited from discussions with Anna Chairetakis and Shelly Posen, who have consistently shared their insights on the Brooklyn giglio *feast and other related subjects.*

Notes

[1]The *giglio* band's repertoire and performance style are considerably different from those brass bands which have traditionally performed for Italian-American religious processions. While Italian and American pop tunes are occasionally played by contemporary bands, religious hymns and "symphonic marches"—classical pieces arranged for a marching band—have historically comprised the feast bands' repertoire. Research on this neglected musical heritage has recently been conducted in different parts of the country. See Don Fiore, "Bands Add an Indispensable Sound to Feast," *Fra Noi* (July 1985), 35-7; Mary Jo Sanna, "Italian and Portuguese Village Bands in Massachusetts," in *Festival of American Folklife Program Book* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1988), 10-12; and Emma Scogna Rocco, "Italian Wind Bands: A Survey of Traditions in the Milltowns of Lawrence and Beaver Counties of Pennsylvania" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Pittsburgh, 1986). This type of music can be heard on the *Banda Napolitana's* album, *"Evviva La Banda!"* (Chicago, IL: Emporio Italo-Americano, 1983).

[2]There currently exist a good number of essays on the Brooklyn *giglio* feast. The *capo's* role and his relationship with the *paranza* are explored in an article by I. Sheldon Posen and Joseph Sciorra, "Brooklyn Dancing Tower," *Natural History* (June 1983), 30-7. Posen unpacks the symbolic meanings that comprise the festival event and the *giglio* structure itself in his piece entitled, "Storing Contexts: The Brooklyn *Giglio* as Folk Art," in John Michael Vlach and Simon J. Bronner, eds., *Folk Art and Art Worlds* (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1986), 171-91. The premise that émigré Sam Rodia's "art environment" in Southern California was inspired by the Italian St. Paulinus feast is put forward by Posen and Daniel Franklin Ward in "Watts Towers and the *Giglio* Tradition," *Folklife Annual I* (Washington, D.C.: American Folklife Center, Library of Congress, 1985), 143-57. For a history and description of other religious feasts in the neighborhood, see Joseph Sciorra, "Religious Processions and Italian Williamsburg," *Drama Review*, 29, No. 2 (1985), 65-81.

The *giglio* has also been danced in three other Italian communities: Astoria, Queens; on 108th Street in Harlem (currently held in the Pelham Bay section of the Bronx); and in Cliffside-Fairview, New Jersey.

[3]According to Francesco Iorio, curator of *Mostra Pauliniana*, 45 r.p.m. recordings of feast music were introduced in 1970. Sixty-minute tape cassettes comprising all the *giglio* songs for the year appeared soon afterwards. Personal comments, September 17, 1986. Since 1983, Salvatore Esposito has published both the lyrics and the music to feast songs in souvenir booklets. Each year, these items are mailed to relatives and friends in America or are brought back by New Yorkers visiting Nola during the feast.

[4]For more information in English on the feast in Nola, see Mimmo Jodice and Roberto De Simone, Chi e Devoto: Feste Populari in Campania (Naples: Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, 1974).

[5]I would like to thank the Barricelli family, Mike Gaimaro, Sam Iovino, Jerry Nunziata of the Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church centennial committee, and Achille [illegible] for allowing me to photocopy giglio sheet music from their respective collections. I am grateful to my father, Enrico Sciorra, who translated the songs' Neapolitan lyrics.

[6]I have been unable to locate a copy of the 1955 song.

[7]The knowledge of composing Neapolitan lyrics in the genre's formulaic fashion did not die with Ferarra in 1958 since other lyricists in the community have retained these skills.

[8]I am indebted to Sam Iovino, who has been singing on the Brooklyn *giglio* since 1982, for providing and translating the song's Neapolitan lyrics.

[9]Phil Caccavalle, October 23, 1982.

[10]The song ends with the commands used during the feast to signal the lifters to lower the *giglio*. The tune on the flip side was an alternative version entitled, *"Giglio Cha-Cha,"* which continues to be performed for the dancing of the *giglio*.

The authorship listed on this recording and all subsequent re-releases have been credited only to Caccavalle and Pasquale Ferrara. I have been unable to discover why Rosalia's name was dropped and what were the possible repercussions, if any.

[11]The song's title was spelled with a slight variation in the last word, *"O' Giglio e Paraviso."* Not receiving any royalties from this Italian cover, Caccavalle promptly copyrighted the music to the Brooklyn feast song in 1965. Interview with Phil Caccavalle, October 23, 1982.

[12]A 45 r.p.m. disc was also issued on the Audiosonic label and listed as a "Mt. Carmel Church Recording." I would like to thank Mark Pezzano for bringing this updated recording, as well as other material relating to *giglio* music, to my attention. Vincenzo Maio and Joseph Peluso, Jr. also shared records from their collections. To obtain Ferrara's single and Caccavalle's L.P. album, write or phone Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church, 275 North 8th Street, Brooklyn, New York 11211.

[13]Larry Laurenzano has done much to popularize the tune through his association with other feasts in New York. According to Pezzano, *"O' Giglio e Paradiso"* has also been performed by feast bands led by maestros Al Cardone, Ralph Mazza, John Neglia, "Red Mike," and Carmine Venezia. Telephone conversation, April 5, 1989. Marty Caliendo's *Banda Napolitana* plays the *giglio* song for Chicago-area feasts. Telephone conversation, October 2, 1988.

[14]The term comes from Mark Slobin, *Tenement Songs: The Popular Music of the Jewish Immigrants* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1982), 183. A full musical analysis is beyond the scope of this article but would need to examine not only the band's performance style and the singer's vocal technique but also the role neighborhood performers "Tutti" Ferrara and Phil Caccavalle played in the song's local success.

[15]David Dorian, "If You're Thinking of Living in: Williamsburg," *The New York Times*, 15 June 1986, R9; Teresa L. Petramala, "If You're Thinking of Living in: Greenpoint," *The New York Times*, 6 December 1987, R11.

[16]*They Represent You* (New York: League of Women Voters of the City of New York Educational Fund, 1985), 8-11.

[17]Jerome Krase, "Stigmatized Places, Stigmatized People: Crown Heights and Prospect-Lefferts Gardens," in Ruth Seiden Miller, ed., *Brooklyn USA: The Fourth Largest City in America* (New York: Brooklyn College Press, 1979), 252.

[18]Joseph Peluso, Jr., July 17, 1984. When a coalition of neighborhood Italian-American associations was formed in 1985, it was named "The Federation of Italian-American Organizations of Greenpoint-Williamsburg, Inc."

[19]Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1977), 178.

[20]Victor Turner, "Introduction," in *Celebration: Studies in Festivity and Ritual*, Victor Turner, ed. (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Press, 1982), 16. As Turner points out, humankind has a strong "need for the repetitive, motor, visual, or auditory driving stimuli, combined with the cadence of words and chanting which many kinds of celebration provide, producing arousal, heightened activity, and emotional responsiveness." 19 For further discussion of festivals in the same book, see Roger D. Abrahams, "The Language of Festivals: Celebrating the Economy," 161-77.

[21]Sherry B. Ortner, "On Key Symbols," *American Anthropologist*, 75 (1973), 1339.

[22]Unidentified man, July 2, 1981.

[23]The transformation of one song into an aural icon of a Canadian village is discussed by I. Sheldon Posen, *For Singing and Dancing and all Sorts of Fun: The Story of the Ottawa Valley's Most Famous Song, The Chapeau Boys* (Toronto: Deneau Publishers & Company, 1988).

[24]Roseann Mirando, June 17, 1987.

[25]Michael Farinaccio, May 23, 1984.