

NYC's "Italian" Mayor between Past and Future

Fred Gardaphe (November 06, 2013)



Will this new mayor's Italian identity reflect more than nostalgia and impact our youth in the ways his Italian ancestors' experiences shaped Bill di Blasio?

Like many New Yorkers, I am filled with hope that our new mayor will indeed lead the city to progress in many social and cultural ways, and that he will live up to the promises to make one city out of two.

However, I noted that when di Blasio mentioned his Italian connection in his victory speech, it was



only in relation to his past: his immigrant ancestors and their home town.

Like so many Italian Americans, our mayor-elect's notion of Italian identity comes from the past, and so is destined to become irrelevant as that past recedes further and further away from today's needs. While his children, Dante and Chiara, have names that ring of Italianita', I wonder what they have to say about Italian American identity.

My hope is that this new mayor will mark an era in which Italian American identities can be strengthened through interactions with the Italy of today, and that whatever it is he loves about Italy will reflect more than nostalgia and impact our youth in the ways his Italian ancestors' experiences shaped Bill di Blasio.

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