

Lucca's Role in Creating the Roman Empire

Even today the Triumvirate held in Lucca in 56 B.C.E. is considered one of the most important events in the city's history, both for the political and military power of the protagonists and for our understanding of how important and well-established Lucca was at the time of pre-imperial Rome.

The protagonists were Caio Giulio Cesare, Gneo Pompeo and Marco Licinio Crasso – three of the most significant personalities in Rome at that time. Caesar himself wanted the meeting, officially to reach an agreement with Pompeo and Crasso about a pact of alliance that would make them invincible against the other political factions.

Caesar, though, had already envisioned a form of government, both for himself and for Rome, that would be quite different from the republican one. Thanks to the success of its military campaigns, its extension over conquered territories and its great administrative and logistic capacities, Rome needed a more authoritative and incisive central power. It had to create an empire guided by an emperor.

The agreement reached by the members of the first Triumvirate at Lucca had that very aim: Pompeo and Crasso would be accorded the consulate, in other words ruling power in Rome,



while Caesar would obtain the renewal of his governance over the Gauls for another five years.

This allowed the great warrior to acquire even more prestige and force, so that when the time was right he could present himself as the ideal figure in his political scheme to be nominated Emperor with the full acclaim of the populace.

Why did he choose Lucca for this meeting? A law of the Republic prohibited anyone with armed men from crossing the line that stretched from the river Serchio to the river Rubicon. This law was violated by Caesar himself seven years later in 49 B.C.E. when he crossed the Rubicon with his army, pronouncing his historic phrase *Alea iacta est* (the die is cast), in the sense that the decision had been taken to march on Rome.

Caesar in fact never became the first emperor, because of the plot to which he fell victim in 44 B.C.E. He was an emperor only in a symbolic way, so that we now link the name Caesar with the word *dictator*. From his name we derive the words *Czar* in Russian and *Kaiser* in German.

– by Carlo Puccinelli

Editor's note: *Cisalpine Gaul lay between the Alps and the Apennines; the Rubicon and the Serchio (then referred to as the Auser) would have marked the limits of the Roman Republic.*

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Concerts for Music Lovers

from the Associazione Musicale Lucchese

Leonora Armellini (piano) offer us Mendelssohn and Beethoven. Then on March 13 the Savinio String Quartet and Matteo Fossi (piano) will bring us the music of Schumann and his dearest, Clara Wieck.

An especially stellar musical event will be the Valentine's Day concert on February 14, featuring composer and cellist Giovanni Sollima (photo), with AML's Simone Soldati at the piano. Sollima is an artist of incredible scope and courage. He has collaborated with top-notch musicians such as Yo-Yo Ma and Phillip Glass, with dancer/choreographer Karole Armitage, with film and theatre directors Peter Greenaway and Bob Wilson, with American poet and musician Patti Smith, and many more. His musical innovations and compositions range from Jurassic to Metal. He has been referred to as a post-minimalist. And on top of all this, he teaches at Santa Cecilia in Rome and the Romanini Foundation in Brescia. This concert is an event not to be missed, with music composed by J. S. Bach, L. Boccherini, Beethoven, and yes, Giovanni Sollima.

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The Associazione Musicale Lucchese, now in its 52nd season, is offering a series of Sunday afternoon concerts at the L. Boccherini Auditorium in Piazza del Suffragio. What a perfect way to usher in springtime!

There is a richness of choice for music lovers, beginning with the February 7th concert dedicated to Boccherini and Schubert performed by Alain Meunier (cello) and the Nous String Quartet, and ending on March 20 with Schubert's *Winter Journey*, a narrative for voice, tenor and piano – when we certainly hope to find Winter far behind our backs! On February 21, Fabrizio Giovannelli will coordinate a program of music, theatre, poetry and painting dedicated to Lucchese artist/composer Gaetano Giani Luporini. On February 28 we can enjoy an afternoon of Liszt with Giuseppe Albanese at the piano, while the following Sunday the lovely musicians Laura Marzadori (violin) and