

# A Question of Loyalty

**Book. Play. Exhibition.**

## Backgrounder

When the Second World War broke out, 4500 Italian-Canadians were living relatively normal lives in Vancouver. On June 10, 1940, when Fascist Italian Prime Minister Benito Mussolini joined forces with Nazi Germany, Italy was suddenly at war with Canada. Any sense of normalcy in this community vanished. Their lives were forever changed.

Canada's federal government of the day invoked the War Measures Act, which led to the detainment and internment of 44 Italian Canadian men residing in Vancouver. These heads of households were taken to camps away from their families. Around 1,800 more were designated as "Enemy Aliens." While not interned, they had to report to the RCMP every month. These developments had profound emotional and financial effects on these individuals and their families.

Vancouver's Italian Cultural Centre (ICC) has been awarded federal funding for three major projects, collectively called A Question of Loyalty, including a book, a play and a museum exhibition, to explore and examine this little-known but significant part of Vancouver's Italian-Canadian history.

-Local author Ray Culos is writing a book, ***Injustice Served, the story of BC's World War Two Italian Enemy Aliens.***

-Vancouver theatre company BellaLuna Productions and playwright Lucia Frangione are creating a new play, ***FRESCO***, about the lasting impact of these events as one woman looks into her family history.

-Il Museo, the museum at the Italian Cultural Centre, will feature a special exhibition called ***Beyond the Barbed Wire: experiences of Italian Canadians in World War Two***, to examine the effects of the War Measures Act on the local community.

The project will be launched March 6, 2012, at the ICC. The play will be performed March 21-31 at the Shadbolt Centre in Burnaby and The Cultch in Vancouver.

Attendees on March 6 can view the thought-provoking exhibit, obtain a copy of Ray Culos's book and reflect on complex events that, while legal at the time, are not consistent with the values of present-day Canada.

-30-

Media Contact:

**Ann Gibbon**  
COMMUNICATIONS

T 604 263 0634  
F 604 263 0634  
C 778 999 0064

[info@anngibboncommunications.com](mailto:info@anngibboncommunications.com)



A QUESTION OF LOYALTY:



*il Museo*  
AT THE ITALIAN CULTURAL CENTRE



**BellaLuna**  
Productions

**shadbolt centre**

Funded by the  
Government  
of Canada

Financé par le  
gouvernement  
du Canada

**Canada**