“Singing-in-Italian” - Italian Language course for foreign Opera Singers that will be held in July 2012 by the Uguccione Ranieri di Sorbello Foundation in Perugia.  

“If I were asked about which one, among all the languages, must have the perfect grammar, I would answer that it is the one spoken by that people who ratiocinates at best; but the Italian language, gentle, sonorous, harmonious and most accepted within the others, is the most suitable for singing”

1753 -Jean-Jacques Rousseau - Letter on French music

**The origins of the opera**
During the Mid Age and the Renaissance existed several forms of performance including the melodrama, which was principally characterized by singing and musical accompaniment. The opera is strictly related to the melodrama (which is indeed its “parent”) but its music and singing have the important function of introducing and describing both characters and the situations they act.

**Florence**
What we nowadays call opera comes from some researches led during the last two decades of the 1500, by the Camerata de’ Bardi. To this circle belonged Jacopo Peri (1561-1633) and Ottavio Rinuccini (1563-1621) who are the authors of the first melodrama: "Eurydice". During the 1600, the librettos begun to collect various components such as historical, mythological, literary, and above all the opportunity for pompous special effects to be put on the stage.

**Rome: oratorio and opera**
The oratorio is a composition including solo voice, chorus and orchestra. It was meant to narrate (in Latin) a religious or spiritual episode taken from the Scripture, without the aid of theatrical scenes. Regarding the Roman opera, it comes to a certain importance not before 1620: from the stylistic perspective there’s no harmony between lyrics and music, while the theme becomes a little less important.

**The Venetian opera**
In Venice the theatrical elements of the stage are put in first line and added to all the other aspects of the Roman and Florentine opera, such as the bel canto, the dream (divine intervention), the comic. It is the birth of the public opera house, and the first one is the "San Cassiano" which is inaugurated in 1637.
**The Neapolitan opera**
The first performances including music were held in the academies of the nobility (Ferrante Sanseverino’s, the marquise del Vasto’s, ...). The first operas at the royal palace date back to 1650, such as "Dido" by G. F. Busenello and F. Cavalli. After a beginning concerning the Venetian repertoire, some local composers started staging operas, as A. Scarlatti did. He also introduced the comical operas in the Neapolitan dialect.

**Why the "Singing in Italian" course is important?**
The "Singing in Italian" course addresses systematically the forms of language and poetic structures which are built on those particular literary products that are opera librettos. It winds through the analysis of historical and literary context, the formal analysis, the correct pronunciation (phonetic) and finally the interpretation.