

Cantar i Ottava

(Singing the Octave)

A DOCUMENTARY BY

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the documentary

The "poesia in ottava rima" (poetry in octave rhyme) is a living tradition of improvised-sung poetry widespread in the rural areas of Central Italy. One of the main forms in which octave rhyme poetry is expressed is the "contrasto" which consists of a poetic duel between two extemporary poet-singers called "poeti in ottava rima". The documentary intends to focus on the most well-known and renowned singer-poets in ottava rima of Tuscany and Lazio, proposing a comparison between the old and the new generation of extemporary poets.

the poets

Diva

Marco Betti & Donato De Acutis

(poeti in ottava rima)

Photo by D. Cappelletti

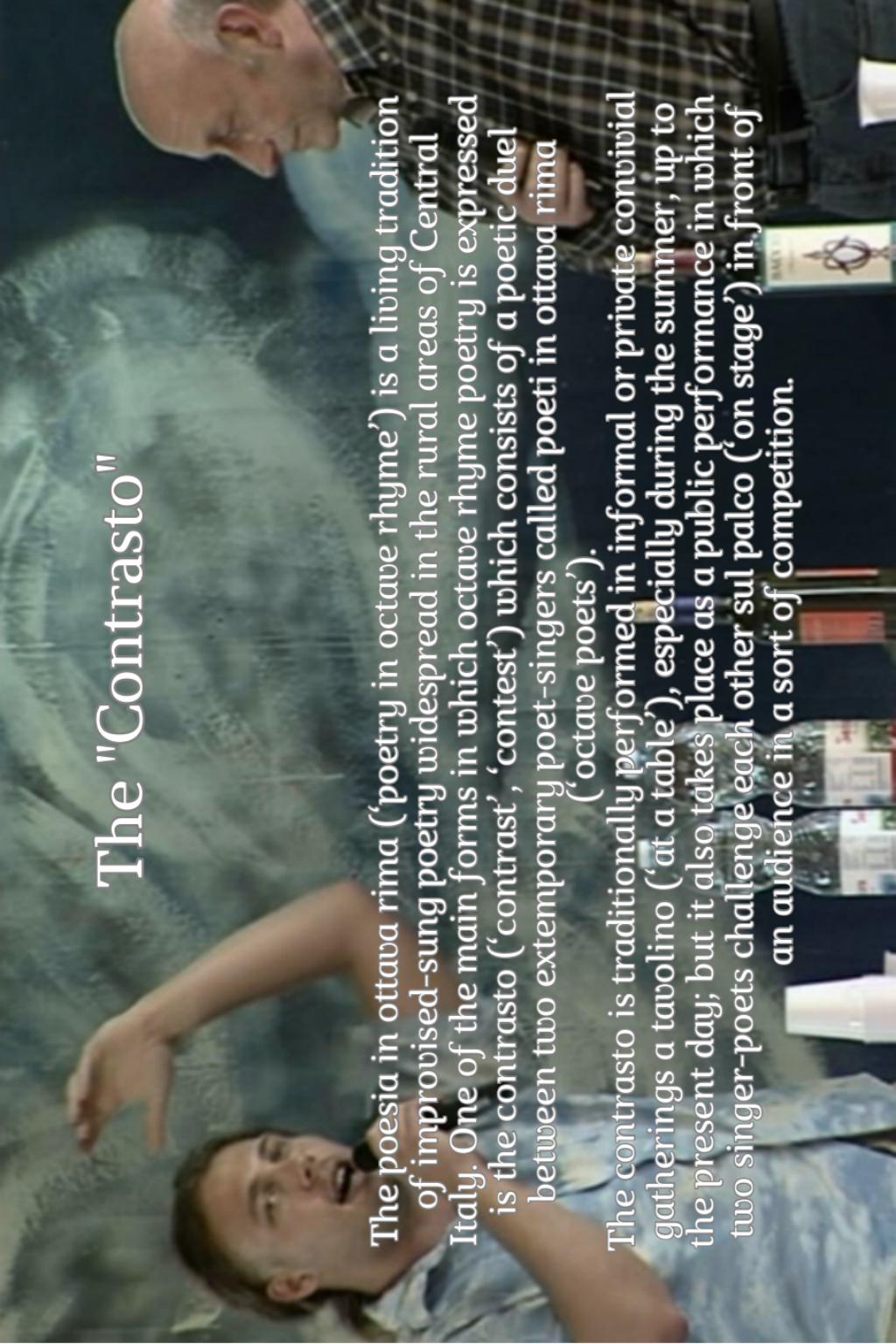
the octave

(rhyme scheme: ABABABABCC)

Siamo venuti a frotte e a reggimenti (A)
L'anno trascorre ed ecco viene aprile (B)
Si risvegliano gli estri e i sentimenti (A)
e ognuno viene qui col proprio stile (B)
Si alterna gioia e dolor, sono i momenti (A)
Un mondo a volte che ci sembra ostile (B)
Hanno cambia' i colori in questa stanza (C)
Perché verd'è il color della speranza (C)

Emilio Meliani (poeta)

The "Contrasto"

A photograph showing two men. One man in the foreground is singing into a microphone, wearing a light-colored shirt. Another man in the background is playing a guitar, wearing a plaid shirt. They appear to be performing on stage.

The poesia in ottava rima ('poetry in octave rhyme') is a living tradition of improvised-sung poetry widespread in the rural areas of Central Italy. One of the main forms in which octave rhyme poetry is expressed is the contrasto ('contrast', 'contest') which consists of a poetic duel between two extemporary poet-singers called poeti in ottava rima ('octave poets').

The contrasto is traditionally performed in informal or private convivial gatherings a tavolino ('at a table'), especially during the summer, up to the present day; but it also takes place as a public performance in which two singer-poets challenge each other sul palco ('on stage') in front of an audience in a sort of competition.

The "Maggio"



The Maggio ('May') or Maggiolata is a Spring festival taking place in the country villages in Maremma, Southern Tuscany. In May 1st, squadre ('team') of maggerini ('singers of Maggio'), adorned with flowers, roam the farms bringing their best wishes with their chant.

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