



**PBS Announces Broadcast Premiere of
DANTE: INFERNO TO PARADISE for March 18th & 19th**

Film by Ric Burns Explores the Riveting Life and Times of Dante Alighieri and the Incomparable Masterpiece He Left Behind, “The Divine Comedy”

ARLINGTON, Va. (March 12, 2024) - Today, PBS announced the documentary film **DANTE: INFERNO TO PARADISE** will air Monday & Tuesday, March 18 & 19, at 8:00 p.m. ET on PBS (check local listings), [PBS.org](https://www.pbs.org) and the PBS app.

The two-part, four-hour film explores the life, work and legacy of the great 14th century Florentine poet Dante Alighieri, and the epic masterpiece he left behind, “The Divine Comedy.”

DANTE: INFERNO TO PARADISE highlights Dante’s incomparable achievement and brings his story to life for a worldwide English-speaking audience. Exploring his 14,233-line poem – in which crucial issues of politics, power, corruption, sin, violence, virtue, beauty, love, humility and compassion mingle and converge – the film addresses universal human questions relevant to our own time: questions of morality and truth, life and death, the love of family and children, the love of country, the belief in something larger than oneself, and the love of God.

Conceived by Italian scholar Riccardo Bruscaagli and Emmy and Peabody Award-winning filmmaker Ric Burns, the film undertakes a gripping odyssey into the depths of Dante’s turbulent life, the faction-torn times he lived in, and the great poem he left behind. Along the way, it juxtaposes stunning live cinematography from across Italy; a dazzling array of paintings, drawings, manuscripts, maps, and frescos, many filmed on location and in the original in Florence, the Vatican and elsewhere; and riveting interviews with scholars, writers, poets, politicians, clergymen, and historians who have made the study of Dante the centerpiece of their life’s work.

Woven throughout, forming the film’s narrative and emotional core, are dramatic re-enactments filmed for the production in locations across Italy from Florence to Carrara and Ravenna and beyond. The scenes are drawn from “The Divine Comedy” and the “Vita Nova,” the masterwork of Dante’s early career.

“Why should we care about Dante Alighieri?” Bruscaagli asks in the film. “Because Dante addresses the core of our humanity. Dante had the ambition of embracing everything – of embracing the sense of us being humans on this planet. What you immediately understand reading ‘The Divine Comedy’ is that “Okay, that was the life of Dante Alighieri, 700 years ago.” But the message is: Your life matters. Take care of it; take care of it – your life matters.”

Reflecting on Dante and his great poem, Burns remarks: “Dante wrote at a moment not unlike our own of tremendous upheaval, crisis, doubt and change – a world beset from without and within with greed, corruption, factionalism and violence – in which every aspect of the moral, political, social, religious and economic order seemed to be breaking apart. Seeking to change his readers and save the world, he created a poem that embraced every aspect of the learning of his time – addressing universal questions relevant to this day. What is justice? What is love? How can we

live a moral life? How can we heal ourselves and the world? Committed to a breathtakingly egalitarian vision that placed women on an equal footing with men and determined to communicate to the widest possible audience – men and women, young and old, high born and low, literate, and unlearned – he wrote in a form of vernacular Florentine that became the Italian language itself. Our intention in creating the film has been to follow Dante’s lead, wherever possible, at every turn, using the lingua franca of our own global times – film, visual media, and the English language.”

Part One: Inferno, premiering Monday, March 18 at 8:00 p.m. ET (check local listings), chronicles the historical background of medieval Florence from 1216 to Dante's birth in 1265, and recounts the dramatic details of Dante’s childhood, education and early literary and political career, culminating in his exile in 1302, and his decision to begin “The Divine Comedy” in 1306 – and plunges thereafter, with Dante and his readers, into the underworld the poem itself where – guided by the Roman poet, Virgil – Dante will meet a vast cohort of historical and mythological figures – culminating, at the very bottom of hell, in his encounter with Lucifer himself.

Part Two: Resurrection, premiering Tuesday, March 19 at 8:00 p.m. ET (check local listings), explores Dante’s experience in exile, and his completion of the last two parts of “The Divine Comedy,” shortly before his death in Ravenna in 1321. Interweaving scenes drawn from Dante’s life in exile with passages drawn from Dante’s journey up the mountain of Purgatory and thence up through the luminous celestial spheres of paradise, the film chronicles the final years of Dante’s life, culminating with his death in exile, and goes on to explore the literary and cultural afterlife and impact of Dante’s masterpiece from the time of his death down to the present.

Scholars and actors – from Italy, France, Britain and the United States – collaborated with Burns over the course of the last seven years to make this unprecedented film.

The film, a production of Steeplechase Films and Dante Productions, was produced by Leigh Howell and Bonnie Lafave; executive producers Jane Morrow, Regina K. Scully, Geralyn White Dreyfous and Jeff Bieber. It was written by Riccardo Bruscaqli and Ric Burns, and directed by Ric Burns. The music was composed by Brian Keane. Directors of Photography: Buddy Squires and Tim Cragg. Edited by Omry Maoz, Margaret Metzger, Li-shin Yu, and Parker Dixon. Assistant Editor: Mischa Aletta.

Narrated by Alan Cox, the film includes dramatic performances by Antonio Fazzini (Dante), Fattori Fraser (Beatrice), Dikran Tulaine (Virgil), and Alan Cox (Boccaccio), among many others. Including interviews with Riccardo Bruscaqli (University of Florence); Lino Pertile (Harvard); Elena Lombardi (Oxford); Heather Webb (Cambridge); Catherine Adoyo (George Washington); Theodore Cachey (Notre Dame); Manuele Gagnolati (Sorbonne); Teodolinda Barolini (Columbia); David Quint (Yale); Rev. Timothy Verdon (Museo dell’Opera del Duomo); Giuseppi Ledda (Bologna); Claudio Giunta (independent historian); Guy Raffa (University of Texas); and Albert Ascoli (Berkeley); among others.

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