SOCIAL MEETINGS AND EVENTS OVERVIEW

FESTA DI CARNEVALE 2019 - IN COLLABORATION WITH LE D.I.V.E. AND ITALIANS IN DC

Sunday, February 24th, 3:30pm at the Chevy Chase Village Hall
5906 Connecticut Ave. NW, Chevy Chase, MD 20815

PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

On January 20 we had a crowd of over 50 people come to the ICS headquarters to listen to Prof. Gianni Cicali’s presentation on “The Grand Tour and the birth of the myth of Italy”. The presentation was very engaging and it explained the passion with which Italian patrons invested in talented painters, sculptors, architects and other artists, who contributed to what came to be known as the Italian Renaissance. It also covered the subject of the beginning of the launch of tourism in Italy.

Our next event will occur on February 24 and is intended to celebrate Carnevale at the Chevy Chase Village Hall. In collaboration with Le D.I.V.E. and Italians in DC, we will provide music by the i-Taliens, and beverages. Please contribute a Carnival dessert. Other details are specified in this issue. Come in a costume and join in the fun.

The Italian word “Carnevale” refers to a Christian interpretation of the expression “carnem levare” (to abstain from meat), a celebration of merry making that reached its climax in Italy in cities like Venice, Rome, Florence, Naples, Ivrea and Turin during the middle ages, and is believed to have derived from the pagan Saturnalian feast of ancient Rome. This city in fact has been most notable as a center of carnival activity, and the splendor and riches of the festivities that marked its observance in Rome have rarely been surpassed elsewhere. We look forward to your participation and anticipate a festive atmosphere for adults and children alike.

- Luigi M. De Luca, President ICS
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TABLE OF CONTENTS
January Social Event............................................3-6
February Social Event - Festa di Carnevale.............7
From the ILP............................................................8
Letterature Italiana...................................................9-10
Advertisements...............................................10-11

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JANUARY SOCIAL EVENT WITH DR. CICALI
BY LUIGI M. DE LUCA

Il Professor Gianni Cicali dell’Università’ di Georgetown è stato il nostro speaker domenica 20 gennaio.
Nella sua presentazione su “Il Grand-Tour e la nascita del mito dell’Italia” Cicali ha riassunto in modo elegante e divertente il periodo fecondo di eventi e conquiste culturali, il periodo che ha seguito il Medioevo in Italia e soprattutto in Toscana. Cicali ha spiegato come i diversi mecenati hanno investito somme ingenti di denaro nella produzione di opere di pittura, scultura, architettura ed altre discipline che poi sono venute a rappresentare il Rinascimento Italiano. Il professore ha anche spiegato come queste opere e la loro ammirazione hanno creato quanto e’ poi diventato la ragione fondamentale del Grand-Tour e del mito della nostra Italia, che ha attratto e continua ad attrarre tanti visitatori.

Our guest speaker for January 20 was Prof. Gianni Cicali of Georgetown University. His presentation on “The Grand Tour and the birth of the myth of Italy” gave an articulated and entertaining synopsis of the very fruitful period that followed the Middle Ages in the Italian peninsula and mainly in Tuscany. It explained the passion with which Italian patrons invested in talented painters, sculptors, architects and other artists, who contributed to what came to be known as the Italian Renaissance. It also covered the subject of the beginning of the launch of tourism in Italy. Cicali started his lecture with the images of Imperial Rome, with the Tiber river as the centerpiece for the beginning of the legend of Romulus and Remus and the site where most typical Roman buildings such as the Fabricius bridge (now in ruins) and the Castel Sant’Angelo are portrayed. He then switched to the equally important subject of the Florentine language and of its becoming the official language of Italy through the writings of the Geniuses that were Dante, Petrarca and Boccaccio. Dante is celebrated all over the world and his statue in Meridian Park had been the subject of a previous talk by Prof. Charles Russell. Banks and merchants greatly contributed to the Renaissance by providing support for artists of different disciplines, including sculptors, painters and architects. Professor Cicali proceeded with showing the painting of the Ideal City now at the Walters gallery. The Ideal City is a 15th-century painting usually attributed to the architect and artist Fra Carnevale. The painting consists of a city landscape, uncontaminated by human activity. There are five structures that define the space. At the center is a Roman triumphal arch, reminiscent of the Arch of Constantine in Rome; the amphitheater, which recalls the shape of the Colosseum in Rome, and which could represent the importance of providing entertainment for the well-being of the people. The octagonal building is the only structure not specifically Roman, being modeled after
definiscono lo spazio centrale, fra queste c’e’ un Arco di Trionfo simile all’Arco di Costantino; un anfiteatro che ricorda il Colosseo, e che rappresenterebbe l’importanza di offrire spettacoli per il benessere ed il divertimento del popolo. Un palazzo ottagonale e’ l’unica struttura non-romana, ma che ricorda il Battistero di Firenze. Cicali ha concluso che lo spazio rappresentato in quest’opera e’ una piazza italiana tipica, dove le attivita’ umane, incluse lo scambio di vedute politiche ed in generale l’interazione sociale avvengono, come d’altra parte si puo’ osservare tuttora anche nei piccoli centri urbani. Questo periodo di grande produttivita’ artistico-culturale ha coinciso con la costruzione dell’enorme cattedrale di Firenze, Santa Maria del Fiore. I Fiorentini superarono tutti i loro competitori al Nord o al Sud della penisola e produssero una bellissima struttura, che pero’, per via dell’enormita’ della sua struttura, non pote’ essere coperta da una cupola e rimase senza tetto per un intero secolo! Finalmente il genio di Brunelleschi riuscì a colmarla con una cupola che a tuttora e’ la piu’ grande cupola in mattoni mai costruita al mondo. Questo naturalmente richiese nuove tecnologie, incluso l’uso di strumenti speciali per permettere il sollevamento di grandi pesi, l’approvvigionamento di quantit’ di legno da tutta la Toscana e zone limitrofe ed altri sviluppi tecnologici che permettessero la fabbrica di quantita inaudite di mattoni, di conci e di tegole.

La Saga dell’Italia e dell’influenza italiana rimane fino ad oggi. Il mito dell’Italia e della sua cultura ha attratto le menti piu’ interessate ed ambiziose. Tours della nostra penisola sono stati organizzati per famiglie reali e per gruppi di nobili e di studiosi stranieri. Ed infatti, nessuno poteva essere considerato una persona di cultura e finezza, se non avesse sperimentato e visto i prodotti artistici del nostro paese. Byron, Goethe, Causeway, Milton, Munte, Stendhal, Keats, Shelly e molti altri scrittori ed artisti stranieri volevano visitare l’Italia e includere questa esperienza nella loro vita. L’architettura della città’ di Washington col suoi monumenti d’ispirazione greca e’ stata influenzata notevolmente da architetti italiani. Cicali ha fatto vedere l’architettura del the Baptisterio in Florence. Finally, Cicali argued that the space encircled by these monuments was a typical Italian Piazza where human activity, including political exchange and social discourse usually took place and still do in different cities and even more so in small urban centers. This most fruitful period of flourishing arts, including architecture, painting, and sculpture is defined by the building of the huge Cathedral of Florence (Santa Maria del Fiore). The Florentines outdid all their competitors to the North and South of the peninsula and produced a beautiful structure, which however, because of its humongous size, could not be covered by a dome at the center and remained without one for some one hundred years! When the genius of Brunelleschi permitted its construction, the dome was the largest structure and still remains such for brick domes all over the world. This required major advances in technology, including the use of special instruments for leverage, the harvesting of wood from the entire region of Tuscany and vicinity and other developments in technology. In the meanwhile the rules of social behavior and interaction were being defined in the book Il Cortegiano by Baldassarre Castiglioni. This book was ordered and became available in most Courts and in many languages.

The Saga of the Italian influence has continued after the Renaissance. The Myth of Italy and its culture was attractive to the most inquisitive and ambitious minds. Tours of Italian sights were being organized for Royalty and High Society people. No one could be considered as acculturated and sophisticated who did not have
Palazzo della Corte Suprema che ricorda gli edifici delle ville palladiane del Veneto. Il Professore ha anche parlato dell’influenza che Macchiavelli ha avuto con il suo Principe nell’ambiente delle beghe e sottofugi politici per ottenere il controllo del potere.
Prof. Cicali ha concluso la sua presentazione parlando della nascita del teatro con il Metastasio e dell’opera con Rossini e Verdi fra gli altri e del cinema con Fellini, Rossellini, De Sica, Pasolini, e molti altri.
La sua ultima diapositiva mostrava la scena di una calle di Venezia che dava su un canale reso invisibile perché sovrastato dalla massa di un’enorme nave da crociera. Questa visione portava alla mente la possibilita’ di eventi catastrofici che distruggerebbero quanto è stato costruito in millenni di lavoro e di arte. Questi eventi sono da evitare a tutti i costi, ha concluso il Professore.
SUPPORT ICS’S MISSION TO PROMOTE ITALIAN LANGUAGE AND CULTURE!

In addition to ILP tuition, memberships, sponsorships and donations support ICS objectives to enhance the appreciation and knowledge of Italian language and culture in the Washington, DC area. ICS Board Members serve without remuneration.

Join or renew your membership online or send form on the last page of Poche Parole. Membership is open to everyone who shares an interest in Italian culture, regardless of heritage.

ICS membership renews in September.

If you are not currently a member, please join by February 24 to receive a special gift of Framore pasta and sauce, which may be picked up at La Festa di Carnevale or at the ICS headquarters.

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS:

Access to an impressive library of Italian books and DVDs
Discount on Italian courses
Discounts on special events, social meetings organized by ICS, as well as, concerts, films and events organized by other organizations (e.g., some Kennedy Center concerts)
ICS newsletter delivered by mail, upon request

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BECOME AN ESSENTIAL PART OF ICS - VOLUNTEER

The Italian Cultural Society continues to expand and our network of volunteers plays a vital role. Whereas our volunteers have a wide range of experience and interests, all enjoy working in a positive environment and being able to speak Italian language in an informal setting.

Please call the office for information on supporting ICS’s mission.
FESTA DI CARNEVALE!

The program is below and you can find more info and RSVP at http://www.italianculturalsociety.org/carnevale-2019/

Get dressed in your favorite costume and join us for a very special Carnevale party

- Arts & crafts for your children (by Le D.I.V.E.)
- i-Talians live concert
- Children sing (with the i-Talians) and brief recital
- Costume contest and Dolce tipico di Carnevale contest (you are kindly invited to bring a traditional Carnevale sweet, or another dessert of your choice) - Gourmet prizes for the winners!
- Merenda e aperitivo (spritz, prosecco, wine and soft drinks; light appetizers)
- Karaoke for teenagers, kids and adults

February 24th, from 3:30 to 6:30 pm
Chevy Chase Village Hall, 5906 Connecticut Ave NW, Chevy Chase, MD 20815

TICKETS: $15 for ICS, DIVE and Italians in DC members, $20 for non-members. KIDS are free. RSVP by February 20th and purchase tickets: http://www.italianculturalsociety.org/carnevale-2019/
FROM THE ITALIAN LANGUAGE PROGRAM
FEBRUARY 2018

On January 26th, Chiara Gastaldi and Jenna Lordo, Assistant to the Executive Director, attended the 2019 Bilingual Education Fair of DC, promoting the Italian language together with Casa Italiana and the Embassy of Italy. This fair is part of the DC Language Immersion Project, a non-profit founded by the Italian Dott.ssa Vanessa Bertelli.

This Winter term, 37 courses for adults, and 10 kids courses began in Bethesda and 3 courses for adults and 2 for children began in Fairfax. In our headquarters, we also host Music Together in Italian, for children 0-5 years old and their parents and grandparents, which is organized by Music Together. I recommend it for those of you who have babies and toddlers, as a fun activity for the entire family. Sixteen more courses should start in February (Winter Session 2), including Cooking classes, with a 3 lesson-course in Chevy Chase or Potomac, “Live from Italy: conversation and writing (B1-C2)”, an intermediate/advanced course with the journalist Nicoletta Nencioli and Regional cuisine: history, traditions and recipes with Viviana Di Sciullo.

I would like to draw your attention to our Courses + Trips, in particular Discover Veneto in February and Discover Sicily, starting in March. Please visit our website at http://www.italianculturalsociety.org/coursestrips/ to learn about the unique, personalized trips that we recommend, and see our Study abroad webpage.

Finally, Summer Camp registration is open! We are offering a significant discount for enrollment before April 1st.

Children are now getting ready for Carnevale, and are learning the song La gatta, by Gino Paoli, one of the famous Italian songwriters. They will sing it with the band, the i-Talians, at Festa di Carnevale. After their fun concert, the band will lead karaoke for adults, teenagers and kids who are willing to sing! See you all at the Festa di Carnevale, on February 24th!

Un caro saluto,
Francesca Casazza

Oggi, per dodici mesi l’Italia celebra i due secoli dell’amatissimo poema e del suo capolavoro di intensità emotiva, con una serie di eventi, mostre, conferenze. Sia nelle Marche, patria di Leopardi, che in altre regioni e città della penisola e persino dell’Europa. Un’iniziativa globale chiamata ‘Infinito Leopardi’. Si tratta di incontri volti a ricordare e celebrare non solo la poetica rivoluzionaria ma anche l’umanità di quel Leopardi, primogenito di 10 fratelli, figli del conte Monaldo e della marchesa, Donna Adelaide. Autore tra i piu’ analizzati e studiati tanto dai critici letterari quanto dagli studenti delle scuole del Belpaese, Leopardi ha lasciato con l’ ‘Infinito’, in eredita’ alla lingua italiana, frasi e diciture che si usano persino oggi. Intellettuale a tutto tondo a livello mondiale, filosofo, scrittore, glottologo, Leopardi nacque nel 1797 a Recanati, nelle Marche. Giovan aristocratico, di costituzione fragile, sino a sviluppare una vera deformità con il passare degli anni, Giacomo e’ un erudito soprannimo: iniziale sostenitore del Classicismo diventa – pur senza mai formalmente aderirvi – grande esponente del Romanticismo. Secondo 200 years, and it does not show its age. “Infinity,” that elusive and timeless concept – then as now it inspired a patrimonial emotion of humanity without distinctions. But it was exactly between 1818 and 1819 that “infinity” found itself more accomplished, unapproachable in its perfection: in a poem of the same title, that many claim to be the greatest of the nineteenth century. Fifteen loose lines of eleven syllables that move subtly and rapidly enclosed within one word, expressions of the soul and exasperated sensibility of Count Giacomo Leopardi, author of many works, at barely 20 years of age.

Today for 12 months Italy celebrates two centuries of the much loved poem, Leopardi’s masterpiece of emotive intensity, with a series of events, exhibits, lectures, both in Le Marche, Leopardi’s region of origin, and other regions and cities of our peninsula, and even of Europe. An initiative known as “Infinito Leopardi”. It consists of meetings designed to remember and celebrate not only the revolutionary poetry, but also
alcuni, precursore dell’Esistenzialismo. Il poeta imparò sin da ragazzo il latino e il greco antichi, e l’ebraico. Sempre chino sui libri nella biblioteca paterna, Leopardi sviluppo’ una tristezza esistenziale, un pessimismo cosmico che lo portò ad essere definito ‘poeta dei sentimenti e dell’immaginazione’.

Immaginazione necessaria a volare nel suo ‘Infinito’, anche a causa delle sue precarie condizioni fisiche che lo costrinsero per anni fermo nella magione di famiglia, a guardare il mondo dalla finestra.


taking part in it. According to some people a precursor of Existentialism, the poet learned, even as a child, Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. Always immersed in books in his father’s library, Leopardi developed an existential sadness, a cosmic pessimism, which caused him to be defined as “poet of sentiments and imagination”, an imagination needed to fly in his “infinity”, also because of his precarious physical conditions that for years limited him to remain inside his family mansion, looking at the world from the window.

After several years traveling between Milan, Bologna, Pisa, and Florence without getting any pleasure from this, it was in these circumstances that “Infinity” was born. Here are a few lines that end with one of the most well known verses by Italians “ed il naufragar mi e’ dolce in questo mare” (with an impossible English translation corresponding approximately to “and to lose myself in this ocean becomes so sweet”)

The poem appears for the first time publicly in 1825 on “Nuovo Raccoglitore” (new collector). The words revolve around the places dear to the poet, his hills, in a transmutation of his existential pain in a search for “infinity”, finally found among those indeterminate spaces, that “silent infinity”, that very deep quiet.” Where man with his imagination can feel himself finally happy, immersing himself in a nature made of immensity in which one can perceive the eternal”. The manuscript, that appears to have been composed as a draft is now conserved in the National Library of Naples. Among the celebrations inaugurated at the end of December and in the course of the entire year there is also the achievement of expositive sections in turns, including the one with the title “infinity/immensity/Manuscript” at the University of Macerata. Antique manuscripts, autographed documents, objects once belonging to the poet now the property of the town of Recanati, are also on display at Vila Colloredo Mels.
LOCAL EVENTS OF INTEREST

Please visit our webpage: www.italianculturalsociety.org/events
And visit The Italian Cultural Institute’s calendar: www.iicwashington.esteri.it/iic_washington/it

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