SOCIAL MEETINGS AND EVENTS OVERVIEW

GALA AWARDS DINNER

Our annual GALA AWARDS DINNER will take place on Thursday, May 23rd, 2019, at the Embassy of Italy. There are only a few days left to reserve your seat or your table, if you did not do it yet! More information and RSVP can be found on the Gala webpage.

PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

On the occasion of our April social event, Dr. Pamela Long presented a most interesting and well documented lecture (see article by Arrigo Mongini) on “Engineering the Eternal City”. On that occasion she discussed the contributions of generations of architects and engineers, as well as the entire citizenship to the building and maintenance of Rome over the centuries, thus permitting our inheriting it in fairly pristine conditions. The social year will culminate with our Gala dinner at the Embassy of Italy on Thursday, May 23rd. It will be a celebratory event for yet another aspect of Italian culture, the world of ballet! We will celebrate Italian dancer and choreographer Mimmo Miccolis, Choreographer at The Washington Ballet and winner of the “Outstanding Choreographer Award” at the Youth American Grand Prix Finals in New York City in April 2015. Mimmo Miccolis has also been recognized in several other occasions, including the BBC Performing Arts Fund Dance in London, in 2011. To follow the theme of dancing, an article by Nicoletta Nencioli Aiken highlights the contributions by Italian ballet dancer Carla Fracci to the world of ballet and to La Scala Ballet School, of which she was an alumna and then a sustainer. As it is customary, we will also recognize young scholars who have distinguished themselves in the Arts and Sciences, particularly in achieving a high degree of proficiency in learning Italian, in the study of Greek and Latin, and for their accomplishments in other fields of scholarly endeavor, such as piano performance. A delicious dinner and a silent auction will crown the evening. Show your support of our Society by joining in, and contributing to the festivities with your presence.

- Luigi M. De Luca, ICS Pres.
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APRIL SOCIAL EVENT: ENGINEERING THE ETERNAL CITY
PRESENTATION BY PAMELA O. LANG, HISTORY PROFESSOR

On April 14, our guest speaker, historian Pamela O. Lang made a presentation based on her book Engineering the Eternal City, regarding the late 16th century rebuilding of ancient monuments, bridges, roads, and aqueducts, in Rome. The book was the culmination of several years of her research in archives of the municipality of Rome, the Vatican, and other organizations. Prof. Lang led her audience through the city’s deteriorated conditions due to periodic floods, and inadequate and poorly maintained infrastructure. Much of the damage had been centered in the areas adjacent to the Tiber river, which, in that period did not benefit from the massive flood control retaining walls we see today. Among the many slides in her talk Prof. Long showed photos and lithographs of major public works projects including the relocation of the Vatican Obelisk (made from a single piece of stone) the reconstructed Ponte Sisto which withstood the flood of 2008, (imagine what the damage would have been of the old bridge and the unprotected river banks.), and the “Ponte Rotto”, which has never been rebuilt. There was also a discussion, with active participation of the audience, of the absence of standards for education of professional engineers and architects, the decision making process for the design and construction of public works, and the conflicts between the Vatican and the City Council of Rome, including comparisons with modern day experience.
Gala Awards Dinner Reminder

Our annual GALA AWARDS DINNER will take place on Thursday, May 23rd 2019, at the Embassy of Italy. There are only a few days left to reserve your seat or your table, if you did not do it yet!

This year’s theme is “L’Italia e la danza” and the Honorary Guest will be internationally renowned Italian choreographer Mimmo Miccolis of the Washington Ballet. We will celebrate his career with a dance performance and a conversation led by art critic Renato Miracco, with the participation of former American Ballet Theater star Julie Kent, the Artistic Director of the Washington Ballet. As is our tradition, the evening will continue with an Italian-style Aperitivo and formal dinner, a unique Silent Auction and our Scholarship Awards ceremony, which will include a piano performance.

More information and RSVP can be found on the Gala webpage.

On this occasion of celebration of Italian excellence, we welcome Sponsors and major Individual donors to support our mission of promoting Italian culture and language.

Our Gala Program, as well as our website and newsletter for the entire year, will list our Bronze to Diamond supporters. Your precious contribution will help us grow and expand our cultural, language and scholarship programs even further. Grazie infinite!
THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE ITALIAN CULTURAL SOCIETY OF WASHINGTON D.C. invites you to:

GALA AWARDS DINNER

a special evening to celebrate

L’ITALIA E LA DANZA

Honorary guest: MIMMO MICCOLIS
internationally renowned, award winning choreographer

in conversation with

RENA TO MIRACCO, Art Critic
JULIE KENT, Artistic Director of the Washington Ballet

MAY 23 2019,
6:00 P.M.
Embassy of Italy
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Washington DC 20008

COCKTAIL ATTIRE

COCKTAILS, SILENT AUCTION, DANCE & MUSICAL PERFORMANCE, DINNER AWARDS CEREMONY FOR SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS
FROM THE ILP

As usual, May is an intense month, filled with events to promote our language and culture: Saturday May 11th, we will be at the Embassy for the annual European Embassy Open House. Sunday May 19th, we will be at the OAS for a Food Festival organized by the Organization of Women of Americas. The ILP will entertain kids with creative/cultural activities and will share information about our program. April 30th we were at the World Bank, invited by their Italian Club for the International Taste Fest. We provided cultural information on Italian gastronomy.

We will be working soon on the Summer Term, starting June 24th: we will offer classes for beginner, intermediate and advanced students: conversation, grammar review, cinema and a few new classes will help you practice your comprehension and speaking skills. Our Summer Schedule will be online at the middle/end of May.

For the kids, we are planning fun activities for our sixth Summer Camp, for the weeks of June 17th, June 24th, July 1st (4 days), July 8th, August 19th, August 26th. The first week will be dedicated to teenagers, to learn Italian through cooking, music, cinema, art and science, 10:00-1:00 (but a group of young children, full day, might also open). Latin 1 Summer immersion will also be offered in July upon request. We have a couple of teenagers interested, and we are looking for more. Adults are welcome to attend this course.

I hope to see many of you at the Gala, on May 23rd. Next issue of Poche Parole will be in September. Follow us on Facebook during the summer!

Cari saluti e buona estate!
Francesca Casazza
L’ICS IN VISITA ALLA LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
BY CRISTIANA FABIANI CON TRADUZIONE DI SALVATORE ROMANO


Durante la prima parte abbiamo visitato la Sala Grande, cioè l’ampio ambiente centrale dell’edificio Thomas Jefferson, l’asse centrale dei tre edifici che compongono la Biblioteca, inaugurata nel 1897. L’ambiente, in stile neoclassico è interamente ricoperto di marmo di origine in gran parte italiana. La Sala è fiancheggiata da due scale monumentali, lungo le cui ringhiere sono presenti statue di putti che rappresentano le diverse occupazioni umane. Sul pavimento della Sala, realizzato in marmo di Siena, è presente un grande intarsio in ottone che rappresenta la rosa dei venti circondata dai segni dello zodiaco.

Oltre l’arco della sala abbiamo poi potuto ammirare la gigante Bibbia di Gutenberg stampata in Germania nella seconda metà del XV secolo. Si tratta del primo libro stampato con caratteri mobili in Europa.

Grazie alla nostra guida siamo poi potuti entrare nella Sala di lettura principale, generalmente chiusa ai visitatori, ai quali è consentito ammirarla solo dall’alto. Da questa sala guardando in alto sulle balaustra abbiamo ammirato le sedici statue di bronzo che rendono omaggio ad uomini di cultura e di scienza. Queste rappresentano tra gli altri, Michelangelo, Platone, Omero, Cristoforo Colombo, Shakespeare e Isaac Newton. Le rappresentazioni femminili sono invece intagliate su otto colonne di marmo e rappresentano figure allegoriche.

Abbiamo inoltre avuto modo di apprezzare la mostra permanente della biblioteca originaria di Thomas Jefferson che vendette allo stato americano la sua collezione di ben 6,487 volumi gettando così le basi per la costruzione della biblioteca nazionale.

On 25 April, Liberation Day, the ICS in collaboration with Dr. Lucia Wolf, curator of the Italian collection at the Library of Congress, organized a visit to the Library of Congress. The visit, which took place partly in English, thanks to Dr. Mark Conner, who specialized in guided visits to VIPs, and partly in Italian with Dr. Wolf herself, was attended by a group of advanced students and two teachers.

During the first part we visited the Great Hall, that is the large central area of the Thomas Jefferson building, the central axis of the three buildings that make up the Library, inaugurated in 1897. The environment, in neoclassical style, is entirely covered with marble of origin largely Italian. The Hall is flanked by two monumental staircases, along whose railings there are statues of cherubs representing the various human occupations. On the floor of the Hall, made of Siena marble, there is a large brass inlay that represents the wind rose surrounded by the signs of the zodiac. Beyond the arc of the hall, we then admired the giant Gutenberg Bible printed in Germany in the second half of the fifteenth century. This is the first book printed with movable type in Europe.

Thanks to our guide we were then able to enter the main Reading Room, generally closed to visitors who are only allowed to admire it from above. From this room looking up on the balustrades we admired the sixteen bronze statues that pay homage to men of culture and science. These represent, among others, Michelangelo, Plato, Homer, Christopher Columbus, Shakespeare and Isaac Newton. The female representations are instead carved on eight marble columns and represent allegorical figures. We also had the opportunity to appreciate the permanent exhibition of the original library of Thomas Jefferson who sold his collection of 6,487 volumes to the American nation, thus laying the foundation for the construction of the national library.
La seconda parte della visita si è svolta in una stanza predisposta dalla Dott.ssa Wolf che sul grande tavolo centrale ha messo in mostra per noi alcune copie di manoscritti della Divina commedia, riprodotti a mano secondo le tecniche dell’epoca, alcune riviste femminili risalenti al XIX ed agli inizi del XX secolo e da lei riscoperte, ed altri libri della collezione da lei curata. La dottoresca ci ha raccontato del suo lavoro, delle mostre che organizza - la prossima sarà su Leonardo in occasione della ricorrenza dei cinquecento anni dalla sua morte – e ha condiviso con noi i suoi obiettivi, che oltre ad ampliare in generale la collezione di opere italiane, consistono nel ricercare e far conoscere scrittrici italiane dagli inizi del 1800 in poi. Ha infatti creato un blog interessante che vi invito a visitare: 

La Dott.ssa Wolf ha anche sottolineato come la Biblioteca del Congresso sia e voglia rimanere un’entità viva, che vuole mantenere il contatto con i ricercatori e con il pubblico in generale, organizzando mostre, pubblicando nuovi materiali didattici e svolgendo un ruolo di leader nella scienza della conservazione e della gestione dell’informazione.

L’ICS organizzerà presto un’altra visita alla Library of Congress per chi non ha avuto l’occasione di parteciparvi la settimana scorsa!

The second part of the visit took place in a room prepared by Dr. Wolf, who on the large, central table put on display for us: some copies of manuscripts of the Divine Comedy, reproduced by hand according to the techniques of the time; some women’s magazines dating back to the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and rediscovered by her; and other books from the collection curated by her. Dr. Wolf told us about her work, about the exhibitions she organizes - the next one will be about Leonardo on the occasion of the five hundredth anniversary of his death - and she shared with us her goals, which in addition to broadening the collection of Italian works in general, consist in searching for and making known Italian writers from the early 1800s onwards. She has created an interesting blog that I invite you to visit: 

Dr. Wolf also emphasized that the Library of Congress is and wants to remain a living entity, that it wants to maintain contact with researchers and the general public, organizing exhibitions, publishing new teaching materials and playing a leading role in the science of information preservation and management. The ICS will soon organize another visit to the Library of Congress for those who did not have the opportunity to participate last week!
CARLA FRACCI - A LIFE ON THE TIPS. ITALIAN ICON OF WORLD DANCE: FROM THE GOLDEN STAGES TO THE SQUARES

BY NICOLETTA NENCIOLI WITH TRANSLATION BY SALVATORE ROMANO

A life on the tips. From one stage to another of the Old and New Continents. In the arms of Rudolph Nureyev as among those of Mikhail Baryshnikov, Amedeo Amadio, Paolo Bortoluzzi and the Danish Erik Bruhn. World icon of dance, emblem of Italian grace and talent, today at 82 Carla Fracci still has the same face, the same chignon and the same determination as when she flew on the wings of her war horse, “Giselle.” And yet, one of the most loved and respected dancers of the 1900s tells: “mine was not really a good beginning, at the beginning of the first steps in the pink shoes I was almost discarded. Now after years of work I am convinced that there is something innate that leads to being a dancer.” Born 1936 in Milan, Carla is of humble origins, her father a tram driver, she dreams of being a hairdresser. But meanwhile she goes to the railway after-work with her father and dances for friends. She lives in a popular two-room cottage, squeezed into four. But here she is - for what she calls a “pure chance” - starting at the age of ten to study classical ballet at the Scala in Milan. Her teachers include Vera Volkova, a great Russian choreographer. At the age of 22, in 1958, her lightness and her pirouettes without hesitation made her first dancer. She was often protected, “I started by combination of some family friends, seeing me dance the tango and the waltz, who told my parents, Why don’t you register her at the Scala Teatro Ballet School? I was the attraction of the evening, to see a child dance these dances with adults was not a normal thing. That’s how it all started.” But Fracci - to every little girl who dreams of becoming like her - repeats: “Dance is a mysterious career that represents an unpredictable and elusive world. There are many qualities necessary to succeed: talent is not enough, it is necessary to support the vocation with tenacity, determination, discipline and perseverance” Carla Fracci has worked with all the greats of dance and with many foreign companies: including the London Festival Ballet, the Royal Ballet, the Stuttgart Ballet and the Royal Swedish Ballet, the American Ballet Theater. Her masterly interpretations of great romantic heroines have been projected into the starry sky of classical ballet: Giulietta, Giselle, Francesca da Rimini. Among the great dancers who were her partners on the stage were Rudolf Nureyev, Vladimir Vasiliev, Henning Kronstam, Mikhail Baryshnikov, Amedeo Amadio, Paolo Bortoluzzi and above all the Danish, Erik Bruhn. Some of the contemporary works of which she was the protagonist are:

Una vita sulle punte. Da un palcoscenico all’altro del Vecchio e del Nuovo continente. Tra le braccia di Rudolph Nureyev come tra quelle di Mikhail Baryshnikov, Amedeo Amadio, Paolo Bortoluzzi e del danese Erik Bruhn. Icona mondiale della danza, emblema della grazia e del talento italiani: oggi, a 82 anni, Carla Fracci ha ancora lo stesso volto, lo stesso chignon e la stessa determinazione di quando volava sulle ali del suo cavallo di battaglia ‘Giselle’.

Eppure, una delle ballerine più amate e rispettate del 900 racconta: “Il mio non fu proprio un bell’esordio, all’inizio dei primi passi nelle scarpe rosse fui quasi scartata. Ora dopo anni di lavoro sono convinta che ci sia qualcosa di innato che conduce a fare la ballerina”.

Milanese di nascita, venuta alla luce nel 1936, Carla è di umili origini, papa’ tranviere, lei sogna di fare la parrucchiera. Ma intanto va al dopolavoro ferroviario con il padre e balla per gli amici. Vive in una casetta popolare di due stanze, pigiati in quattro.

Ma eccola – per quello che lei definisce un ‘puro caso’ – iniziare a soli dieci anni a studiare balletto classico alla Scala di Milano. Tra le sue maestre c’è Vera Volkova, grandissima coreografa russa. A 22 anni, nel 1958, la sua leggerezza e le sue piroette senza esitazioni la fanno già prima ballerina. Lei si è spesso schermita: “Ho cominciato per combinazione: alcuni amici di famiglia, vedendomi ballare il tango e il valzer, dissero ai miei genitori: “Perché non la iscrivete alla Scuola di Ballo del Teatro alla Scala?” Ero l’attrazione della serata, vedere una bambina ballare queste danze con gli adulti non era una cosa normale. E’ così che è iniziato tutto”.

Ma la Fracci – ad ogni bambina che sogna di diventare come lei – ripete: “La danza è una carriera misteriosa che rappresenta un mondo imprevedibile e imprendibile. Sono tante le qualità necessarie a riuscire: non basta il talento, bisogna affiancare alla vocazione la tenacia, la determinazione, la disciplina, la costanza”.

Carla Fracci ha lavorato con tutti i grandi della danza e con tante compagnie straniere: tra queste il London Festival Ballet, il Royal Ballet, lo Stuttgart Ballet e il Royal Swedish Ballet, l’American Ballet Theatre. A proiettarla nel firmamento delle stelle del balletto classico sono state le sue magistrali interpretazioni di grandi eroine romantiche:
Giulietta, Giselle, Francesca da Rimini.

Tra i ricordi piu’ vivi il partner sul palcoscenico Nureyev: “Rudy non aveva un carattere facile, ma con lui ho trascorso dei momenti straordinari. I danzatori sono diversi e, quando danzano, hanno l’opportunità di scambiarsi emozioni. Lui aveva una forte personalità, possedeva un carisma e un’energia che accendeva il palcoscenico. Io ho ballato molto con lui, anche nelle sue coreografie era un tipo esigente. Ricordo che una volta, nel passo a due della “Bella Addormentata”, dovevo fare due piourettes con una precisa chiusura; io ne feci due e mezzo, ritrovandomi di fronte a lui; Rudy mi prese e mi fece tornare indietro, perché le piourettes dovevano essere due. Pensate un po’”. La Fracci e’ stata anche direttrice di vari corpi di ballo: quello del Teatro San Carlo di Napoli assieme a Gheorghie Iancu e quello dell’Arena di Verona. Nel 2003 le fu conferita l’onorevolezza di Cavaliere di Gran Croce. Ma per Carla Fracci la danza e’ arte popolare che va offerta a tutti: “Ho danzato nei tendoni, nelle chiese, nelle piazze. Volevo che questo mio lavoro non fosse d’elite relegata nelle scatole dorate dei teatri dell’Opera. Sono sempre tornata in Italia a esibirmi nei posti piu’ dimenticati e impensabili. Nureyev mi sgridava: ‘Chi te lo fa fare ti stanchi troppo’. Ma a me piaceva cosi’ e il pubblico mi ha sempre ripagata.”

“Romeo and Juliet” by Prokofiev, “Baroque concert,” “Les demoiselles de la nuit,” “The seagull,” “Pelléas et Mélisande,” “The stone flower,” “The sylphid,” “Coppelia,” “Swan Lake.” The director of many of the great operas played by Carla Fracci is her husband Beppe Menegatti.Among the curiosities of the personality of Fracci there is her discretion, symbolized by the passion for white color, “I started using it during pregnancy, in 1969. I had a very little belly but I was looking for a way to accentuate privacy even more at that moment. In short, white was discretion.”Among the most vivid memories was Nureyev as her partner on stage, “Rudy did not have an easy character, but with him I spent extraordinary moments. The dancers are different and, when they dance, they have the opportunity to exchange emotions. He had a strong personality, possessed a charisma and an energy that lit the stage. I danced a lot with him, even in his choreography he was a demanding type. I remember that once in the double step of “Sleeping Beauty,” I had to do two piourettes with a precise closure. I made two and a half of them, finding myself in front of him. Rudy took me and made me go back because the piourettes had to be two. Think about it.” Fracci was also director of various dance bodies: that of the Teatro San Carlo of Naples together with Gheorghie Iancu and that of the Arena of Verona. In 2003 she was awarded the honor of Cavaliere di Gran Croce. But for Carla Fracci the dance is folk art that must be offered to everyone, “I danced in the tents, in the churches, in the squares. I wanted this work of mine not to be an elite relegated to the boxes in the opera houses. I always came back to Italy to perform in the most forgotten and unthinkable places. Nureyev scolded me, “Who makes you do it, you get too tired?” But I liked it that way and the public always paid me back.”

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
Film Fest DC: Notti Magiche, by Paolo Virzì, Mazza Gallery, May 4th at 3:30
VINICIO CAPOSSELA in concert and conversation with Prof. Francesco Ciabattoni, Georgetown, May 4th at 7pm
Unexpected Italy: a celebration of Italy’s extraordinary artistic and cultural heritage. Throughout May 2019, the Center will present a variety of art forms that reflect Italy’s diverse arts and culture. See the full program at: http://www.kennedy-center.org/calendar/series/ITL?fbclid=IwAR2pkWLnfdH_EjuXNQd2ewN6WIGSicuiplDv-VyumDKNcdNUftGj_ZnhsM and https://iicwashington.esteri.it/iic_washington/en/gli_eventi/

EU Open House: Saturday May 11, 2019 - 10 am 4 pm (We will be at the Italian Embassy!)

XXII FOOD FESTIVAL - The Organization of Women of the Americans OMA-OWA - Organization of American States OAS: Sunday May 19, 2019 - 11 am 5 pm - 17th St & Costitution Avenue, NW DC


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