



La Rondine

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ITALIAN CLUB OF ST. LOUIS

April 2004

Roman Gladiators: Blood, Guts and Glory ***presented by Anna DiPalma Amelung***

Next Meeting

Wednesday

April 21st

Cocktails— 6:30p.m.

Dinner— 7:00p.m.

RSVP—Dan Viele

(636) 537-5960 or

**ItalianClubSTL
@aol.com**



Jim Tognoni, President,
Susan Wohl, Speaker,
Gene Mariani, Past-
President

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#3- Luciano
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In AD 404, the emperor Honorius decreed the end of Rome's gladiatorial games. Throughout the almost 700 years of their existence, the moral value of these bloody, and violent contests had never been seriously questioned – not even by the Christians. Some classical scholars have opined that the moral acceptance of such brutal combat was due to its symbolic representation of the structure and values of Roman society – a culture wherein such fundamental qualities as bravery,

strength, masculinity, authority, obedience, and militarism were highly esteemed as the core virtues underlying the power, might, and success of the empire. In our April program, Dr. Anna Amelung will discuss the origin, evolution, history, and cultural symbolism of gladiatorial combat; the development and significance of its carefully planned and organized rituals; how gladiators were chosen and trained; the various fighting styles, equipment and techniques of gladiators; and the social

status and family life of gladiators, both male and female, in contemporary Roman society. Anna Amelung received a Ph.D. in French Literature from Washington University and currently teaches Latin and French at University City High School. She is President of the Classical Club of St. Louis and an active member of the Italian Club of St. Louis. Her previous IC presentations have been *Augustus, Virgil, and the Aeneid*, and *Gravestones of Ancient Roman Women*. *by Gene Mariani*

An Evening with Seven Tenors presented by Susan Wohl

The March 17th meeting of the Italian Club was an operatic romp. Susan Wohl, the facilitator of courses on opera for Washington University's Life-Long Learning Institute and for OASIS, was our speaker. It was a lively evening of music and running knowledgeable commentary. The top "Seven Tenors" featured Ms. Wohl's seven favorites. They each sang an aria that fitted their individual style and talent. She began with Enrico Caruso and how he and the gramophone came onto the operatic scene at the same time. He sang his trademark aria from *Rigoletto...La donna è mobile!* The next tenor, Beniamino Gigli, had won the Parma International Competition in 1914. Although haunted by Caruso's shadow, his lyrical tenor voice with his dramatic intensity and emotional vitality produced the most sensuously beautiful voice of his time. Gigli sang *Amor ti vieta* from

Giovanni's "Fedora". Then came Sir John McCormack, perhaps due to the fact that it was St. Patrick's Day. However, his operatic talent still stands as a monument to one of the greatest *bel canto* singers of his generation. He sang the beautiful, *Questa o quella* from "Rigoletto". Richard Tucker, the only American, followed. A cantor in a Brooklyn synagogue, Tucker was signed by the Metropolitan Opera General Manager, Edward Johnson, after Johnson heard him sing at the synagogue. A tenor with a tremendous repertoire, he sang *Di quella pira* from "Il Trovatore". Franco Corelli followed, undoubtedly one of the greatest tenors of all time. Ms. Wohl suggested that he may well have been the best. Of the top three tenors, Wohl listed #1- Franco Corelli; #2- Jussi Bjoerling, #3- Luciano Pavarotti. Corelli, a consummate artist, had a tremendous ego

and yet was plagued with horrendous stage fright. Mr. Corelli sang from Gaetano Donizetti's "La Favorita"...*Favorita del re...spirito gentil*. Jussi Bjoerling was next- Wohl's all-time favorite. With his voice, singing technique and musicality, he was unbeatable. A great lyric tenor, he was an ideal Italian opera tenor. He sang from "Tosca"... *E lucevan le stelle*. Ms. Wohl then spoke of Luciano Pavarotti, not the 68 year old Pavarotti of today, but Luciano in his prime with a naturally beautiful voice and his tireless determination to perfect it. He sang the magnificently beautiful *Nessun dorma* from Giacomo Puccini's "Turandot". Susan Wohl's comments and asides were both interesting and most effective in making this evening a truly gala event!
by Vito Tamboli

L'Angolo Del Presidente *by James Tognoni*

My Fellow Members:

Well spring has sprung. Everything starting to bloom and the promise of renewal and a hint of freshness fills the air. We have some outstanding activities coming up in the next few months. We will host outstanding speakers; take a road trip; and enjoy our film and opera series, as well as, the upcoming Film Seminar Series.

There are few reminders and a request that I would like you to consider. If you have not yet sent in your dues for 2004, please do so as soon as possible. Additionally, the Club needs someone to take over responsibility for the sound equipment at our monthly meetings. It would be preferable to have two or

three people. I will train you (it looks intimidating but is very easy to use). Please call me or email me to talk about it. It would be a great service to the Club to have you assist in this capacity.

If you were at the March meeting, I'm sure you were delighted with Susan Wohl's presentation. I will openly admit that I am not a big fan of opera. However, the presentation of the major tenors was most educational and interesting.

Be sure you attend the April 21st meeting, we will honor two students from Washington University with the Fred Giacomo Award given by Southwest Bank and the Frank LoPiccolo and Mario Pertici Award given by

the Italian Club. These awards recognize these exemplary students with financial assistance for their study this summer in Arezzo, Italy. We will also have a presentation on *Roman Gladiators* by Anna Amelung. Annually, at its June meeting, the Club presents its Italian Heritage Award to an individual who has distinguished him or herself through unselfish community service. Please contact a member of our Board with your nominations. We ask that you include a brief explanation giving the reasons why you think the person should receive the award.

Ciao, Jim

jtognoni@earthlink.net

Fourth Annual Young Artists' Competition *sponsored by the Federation of Italian-American Organizations*

**Sunday, April 18
2:00p.m.**

St. Ambrose Church

Adult tickets: \$5.00 Students: Free

For information or to purchase tickets:
(314) 995-1474

Don't miss this wonderful opportunity to hear beautiful Italian music played by the piano and string finalists.

Italian Tenor Concert

Tenor **Alberto Fraschina** of Cuggiono, Italy, will perform a concert of operatic, religious and popular songs, including *Quanto e' bella, quanto e' cara* from L'Elisir D'Amore by Donizetti, *Ave Maria* by Schubert, and *O Sole Mio* by Di Capua on **Sunday, May 16th, 2004, at 2 p.m. at St. Ambrose Church.** The concert, which will honor St. Louis' Italian-American community, will be free and open to the public.

Alberto studied at the prestigious Accademia Chigiana di Siena and won the 50th edition of the Concorso giovani cantanti lirici della 'Comunita' Europea di Spoleto. He has sung all over the world, including New York, Berlin, Tokyo, Buenos Aires, and appeared in the 2003 production of *La Boheme* at Milan's La Scala.

In order to cover costs related to the concert, including piano rental, accompanist, airfare, and reception afterward, Carolyn Stelzer, Joann Arpiani, and Barbara Klein have asked for donations to be made to the Italian Club of St. Louis through which the concert is being organized. In the event that donations exceed expenses, the monies will be used for the 2004 Hill Nativity Walk. As the Italian Club of St. Louis is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization, your contributions may be tax-deductible. If you have any questions, or would like to donate, please contact Carolyn Stelzer at 314-772-3355 or Barbara Klein at 618-233-7261. Please mark your calendars and tell all your friends about this exciting event!

Italian Club Plans Trip to Herrin, Illinois' Italian Festival. Please plan to join us on Sunday, May 30th, for a bus trip to Herrin, Illinois. We will have a tour of Herrin and then attend their Italian Festa. More details will follow at our April meeting.

Italian Club Seminar on Classical Italian Cinema

The seminar will consist of a series of four sessions, each lasting from one and one-half hours to two hours, based on American director Martin Scorsese's recent four hour documentary on the influence of classical Italian cinema on his own work. In addition to learning more about Italian cinema and the influence of great Italian directors and actors, this seminar will enable one to improve their understanding of Italian language.

The seminar will be led by WU Professor Carla Bossola. All film clips used will be sub-titled. Discussion will be in both English and Italian. No knowledge of Italian is necessary to participate and to derive full benefit from all sessions, although it would be helpful. Admission will be strictly limited to 25 participants. An enrollment fee of \$10 will be charged to participate in the seminar.

The sessions will be held on the following dates (all are Thursday evenings) from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. at the SWB Executive Conference Room.

May 13 Introduction to the seminar. View about 0.5 hours of Scorsese documentary. Discussion

May 20 View about 1 hour of Scorsese documentary. Discussion of the work of Roberto Rossellini

May 27 View about 1.5 hours of Scorsese documentary; Discussion of work of Vittorio DeSica and Luchino Visconti

June 3 View about 1 hour of Scorsese documentary. Discussion of work of Federico Fellini and Micheangelo Antonioni; Seminar overview and conclusions

Committee: Carla Bossola, Barbara Klein, Gene Mariani, and Dorotea Rossomanno-Phillips

For additional information, please contact Gene Mariani at (314) 352-5484 or emariani@sbcglobal.net

TERZA PAGINA

I capolavori della poesia italiana

a cura di Barbara Klein

Salvatore Quasimodo (Modica 1901-Napoli 1961) era geometra del Genio Civile quando si recò a Firenze, dove il cognato Elio Vittorini lo presentò ai suoi amici letterati. Nel dicembre 1959, Quasimodo ricevette il premio Nobel per la letteratura.

Colore di pioggia e del ferro

di Salvatore Quasimodo

Dicevi: morte, silenzio, solitudine;
come amore, vita. Parole
delle nostre provvisorie immagini.
E il vento s'è levato leggero ogni mattina
e il tempo colore di pioggia e di ferro
è passato sulle pietre,
sul nostro chiuso ronzio di maledetti.
Ancora la verità è lontana.
E dimmi, uomo spaccato sulla croce,
e tu dalle mani grosse di sangue,
come risponderò a quelli che domandano?
Ora, ora: prima che altro silenzio
entri negli occhi, prima che altro vento
salga e altra ruggine fiorisca.

In giro per l'Italia

a cura di Barbara Klein

Pasqua in Sicilia

Pasqua è tra le più importanti celebrazioni dell'anno liturgico ed in Sicilia ha dato origine a molte feste cittadine che uniscono magnificamente i momenti salienti della Passione, Morte e Resurrezione di Gesù Cristo alla ritualità popolare le cui origini affondano in tempi antichissimi, a forme espressive a volte teatrali e drammatiche. Quello che colpisce principalmente delle feste pasquali siciliane è l'attiva partecipazione popolare che si manifesta nei classici cortei e pellegrinaggi, nell'alternanza tra i sentimenti tristi di lutto per la morte del Redentore e quelli allegri e festosi per la Sua Resurrezione.

Trapani

La processione dei Misteri di Trapani prevede un lavoro particolare delle varie maestranze coinvolte già durante i venerdì di Quaresima. In tutto ci sono diciotto gruppi statuari che rappresentano i diciotto misteri, a partire dalla Separazione,

la Lavanda, Getsemani, Caduta al Cedron, Hanna, la Negazione, Erode, la Flagellazione, la Coronazione, Ecce Homo, la Sentenza, il Calvario, la Spogliazione, la Sollevazione, Ferito al costato, la Deposizione, fino al Trasporto: in più ci sono l'Urna e l'Addolorata. Ogni mistero è affidato ad una particolare confraternita di artigiani e lavoratori. Queste statue risalgono per lo più al '600 quando la loro realizzazione fu affidata ad artigiani specializzati nella tecnica del legno, tela e colla.

La processione dei Misteri di Trapani ha inizio nel pomeriggio del Venerdì Santo e si protrae fino alla mattina del Sabato per tutte le vie della città, accompagnata dalle



confraternite in abito nero e dalle bande musicali. E', senza dubbio, uno spettacolo altamente suggestivo ed avvincente che offre un forte coinvolgimento emotivo ai partecipanti ed agli spettatori.

Comiso

A Comiso prima che la giornata di sabato santo sia conclusa, la statua della Madonna è prelevata dalla sua nicchia all'interno della Chiesa perchè il giorno di Pasqua ci sarà la processione di questa statua insieme a quella del Cristo risorto. Tale processione è denominata anche "la pace": raggiunto uno spiazzale abbastanza grande, le due statue sono poste l'una di fronte alla altra, a distanza di circa 50 metri, per poi ricongiungersi in un incontro accompagnato dal battere delle mani dei fedeli, dal movimento di fazzoletti bianchi per aria e dall'esecuzione dell'inno reale da parte della banda musicale; questo incontro è ripetuto più volte e raggiunge il suo culmine quando il rito è ripetuto nella piazza fonte Diana, quando l'evento è anche accompagnato dal suono delle campane della chiesa. L'ultima rappresentazione della "pace" si ha quando le statue rientrano in Chiesa.



Palermo

La settimana santa del capoluogo isolano prevede varie manifestazioni come le rappresentazioni sacre dell'ultima Cena all'interno delle varie chiese cittadine. Ma un giorno veramente particolare è il Venerdì Santo che prevede quattro processioni. La prima è quella dei "cocchieri" che in passato, quando la nobiltà palermitana era fiorente, era molto più fastosa perchè c'era l'utilizzo di livree molto eleganti con i colori delle casate d'appartenenza. Oggi tale confraternita si è allargata a tutti i ceti sociali. I cocchieri portano in processione la bara del Cristo morto e la statua della Madonna, scortate da figuranti che indossano armature tardo-medievali.

Nella seconda processione, organizzata dalla confraternita dei panettieri, i due simulacri citati precedentemente sono scortati non solo dai fedeli, ma anche dai figuranti che indossano delle armature romane costruite artigianalmente basandosi sull'esempio dei maestri pupari. Il corteo si conclude a notte fonda con un rito religioso, dopo aver coinvolto i figuranti con le armature romane, le fanciulle devote alla Madonna, un "centurione romano", l'urna del Cristo morto e la Statua della Madonna



La terza processione riguarda la vergine SS. Addolorata della Soledad, una processione che porta per le vie della città la scultura lignea del Cristo morto e della Vergine della Soledad. La quarta ed ultima processione del venerdì santo coinvolge gli artigiani palermitani, devoti della Madonna del Lume, che portano il simulacro della loro protettrice per le vie cittadine.

Per ulteriori informazioni vedi www.pasquainsicilia.it

Buon viaggio in Italia!!!

Buona Pasqua a tutti!



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ITALIAN CLUB OF ST. LOUIS
LA RONDINE**

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Prossime Manifestazioni

FUTURE ITALIAN CLUB MEETINGS

- April 21- Roman Gladiators:
Blood, Guts and Glory
by Anna Amelung
Washington University
Awards Night**
- May 19- Luigi Pirandello
by Tony Perrone**
- June 16- Report of the
Vice-Consul
by Joseph Colagiovanni J.D.
Presentation of the
Italian Heritage Award**
- The Italian Club meets the
third Wednesday
of each month for dinner at
da Baldo's Restaurant
Cocktails—6:30p.m.***

THE SPRING FILM AND OPERA SERIES

PRESENTED BY THE ITALIAN CLUB OF ST. LOUIS AT THE BOCCE CLUB

Friday, April 2- Two one-act operas by GIACOMO PUCCINI:

"IL TABARRO" "Torn-from-the-headlines" saga of infidelity, circa 1900, that still retains its raw emotional charge. "GIANNI SCHICCHI" - A comedic masterpiece, dramatically immortalizes a passage from Dante's "Inferno." Greedy family members are tricked out of their inheritance by the cunning Schicchi, who uses his new wealth to help two young lovers wed.

Friday, April 16 -THREE BROTHERS (TRE FRATELLI), 1980

In this moving and interesting film the director Francesco Rosi portrays three brothers of modern Italy. The brothers, who have been separated by work and life and live in different towns (Rome, Turin and Naples) return home to their small village following the death of their mother. Main actors are Philippe Noiret, Vittorio Mezzogiorno, Michele Placido and Charles Vanel.

Friday, May 7- "ATTILA" by GIUSEPPE VERDI : La Scala presents a rare revival of this early Verdi masterpiece. Conducted by the renown Riccardo Muti, this production comes to life through the thrilling voices of the infamous bass Samuel Ramey and soprano Cheryl Studer. Set in the time of Empire, "Attila" tells a story of murder and barbaric mayhem.

Films will be introduced by Dr. Carla Bossola, and operas by Dorotea Rossomanno-Phillips. All programs are in Italian with English sub-titles and begin promptly at 7:30 p.m. Admission is free. The St. Louis Bocce Club is located at 2210 Marconi Avenue. For further information contact Dorotea Rossomanno-Phillips at 535-9748 or e-mail: dorotearp@aol.com.

Opera Theatre of St. Louis

The Opera Theatre of Saint Louis will be presenting two one-act Italian masterpieces, *Cavalleria Rusticana* by Pietro Mascagni and *Sister Angelica* by Giacomo Puccini, on the same evenings May 27, 29 June 2, 4, 15, 19, 23, 27. For further information see www.experienceopera.org