Renzo Arbore and Nick La Rocca - From Palermo to New Orleans

Ricky Adamo (May 09, 2013)

A special event at the Italian Cultural Institute in New York presenting Arbore's documentary dedicated to Nick La Rocca, directed by Riccardo Di Blasi and entitled “Da Palermo a New Orleans” (From Palermo to New Orleans).

Renzo Arbore [2]has a special connection to the United States. Not only for having gone on tour with

his Orchestra Italiana [3], comprised of fifteen grand soloists, which promoted the classic Neapolitan song. Not only for having been part of groups such as "Swing Maniacs [4]". Not only because he is the Director of Umbria Jazz [5].

Renzo Arbore has a special relationship with the United States because of how he came to discover and to narrate the story of Italian-American jazz between the two oceans. It should be remembered that many Italian musicians (especially Sicilian), who emigrated at the beginning of the twentieth century, were originally band players, and from the outset, they played together with the inhabitants of the territories where they went to live. This happened precisely in the years during which jazz was born.

Few know this, both in Italy and in the USA. Let us speak, for example, of a group of musicians from New Orleans amongst which are counted the legendary Nick La Rocca [6] (Louis Armstrong was also inspired by him) and Tony Sbarbaro [7].

An Italian community existed that decisively contributed to the birth of jazz and to its success. People like La Rocca, Leon Roppolo, Louis Prima, Eddy Lang (whose real name was Salvatore Massaro), Joe Venuti, Tony Scott and many others.

It is for this motive that Arbore decided to make a documentary with the director Riccardo Di Blasi, entitled "Da Palermo a New Orleans" (From Palermo to New Orleans), dedicated to Nick La Rocca. It was 1880 when Girolamo La Rocca, Nick's father, left Sicily in search of a better life on American soil. Girolamo found his new homeland in New Orleans, where Nick was born. Nick immediately fell in love with the music that played in the streets and in the local venues, learning how to play the trumpet.

In 1916, the young La Rocca joined Johnny Stein's group, which shortly after transformed itself into the Original Dixieland Jass (and then Jazz) Band. His career is one of unforgettable success.

The Italian Cultural Institute will hold a special event to present the film as part of "2013 Year of Italian Culture [8]."
It will be held at the IIC 686 Park Ave on June 3rd at 6:00 pm
Please note that all programming is subject to change.
For more information about the event click here >>> **[9]**

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Links
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[2] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Renzo_Arbore
[3] http://www.arboristeria.it/jazz_usa.htm
[4] http://www.swingmaniacs.com/en
[5] http://www.umbriajazz.com
[6] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nick_LaRocca
[7] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tony_Sbarbaro
[8] http://www.italyinus2013.org/en
[9] http://www.iicnewyork.esteri.it/IIC_NewYork/webform/SchedaEvento.aspx?id=662&citta=NewYork