

Divinamente New York: A Festival between Art and Faith

Benedetta Grasso (April 19, 2010)



Divinamente New York is a festival that will take place in the Big Apple from April 22 to April 26. Faith-inspired performances and discussion will contribute to this thriving series of cultural events.

There is a deep internal connection, though: sometimes music or art become an ecstatic experience or are essential to understand one's faith and, on the other hand, creativity itself depends on intuitions that are not entirely rational, that require an unconscious effort, something not necessarily divine, but often unexplainable...

For five nights the link between Spirituality and Art will be even stronger as the festival [Divinamente New York](#) [2] (Divinely New York) will take place in the Big Apple. Promoted by [MiBAC](#) [3], ARCUS, the [Italian Cultural Institute](#) [4] and the [ARMUSER Association](#) [5], the Festival was originally created in Rome by Pamela Villoresi.

There is no better place than New York City where faith can come alive through ethnic and artistic expression. Here the world of show business, the theaters on Broadway, the hundreds of museums, the gospel choirs in the churches, the display of different traditions in every neighborhood through street fairs, parades and events are constantly reminding people of the religious "melting pot" and also of the secular aspects of religion, the ones that have created and spread cultures since ancient times.

The theme of 2010 is "The Fear of God". The most ancient religious idea is that of a punishing, dangerous God. It was Christianity, and partially Judaism before that shifted religious observance towards an idea of devotion, love between divine and human, as God as a merciful being.

It's important to reflect on the fact that fear is what, according to many philosophies and religious authorities, induces faith and can sometimes become an instrument of religion.

From April 22 until April 26 2010, concerts will alternate to readings and round-tables intertwining



the secular with the religious, performances with intellectual reflections.

On Thursday April 22nd at the Italian Cultural Institute Pamela Villoresi will host a round-table where excerpts from Euripides' "Bacchae", Dante's "Inferno" and Michele di Martino's "Noah's Ark". A musical concert will follow, entitled The Path of the Soul with Russian musicians [Anton Dressler](#) [6] (clarinet) and [Uri Brener](#) [7] (piano) guiding the audience through Debussy's Rhapsody, Massenet's Meditation and Ravel's Kaddish, along with improvisation and jazz, to the music of the troubadours and Jewish and Klezmer music.

On April 23 the Neapolitan singer [Teresa De Sio](#) [8] will perform at Peter Norton Symphony Space at 8 PM, mixing popular Italian music and secular lyrics to create a prayer that will create Paradise on Earth.

On Saturday April 24 the show Stellarum Opifex will be held at The [Rubin Museum of Art](#) [9] (which preserves Himalayan and Buddhist Art) at 8PM. The performance (by Valeria Moretti) follows Galileo Galilei's only daughter who was born in 1600 and spent her life in a convent, trying to connect with her father.

"Francesca, la Santa degli Immigrati" (Francesca, the Saint of the Immigrants) is a dramatic monologue written by Enrico Groppali and performed by Vanessa Gravina. It will take place at St. Mark's Church at 8 PM. Francesca Cabrini was a nun who managed to build hospitals, schools and orphanages with politicians and thinkers of every faith.

The final event will be at the Italian Cultural Institute at 7PM on April 26. The powerful singers Evelina Megnaghi and Ashira Ensemble will sing "Di Voce in Voce" (Voice to Voice). Many Sephardic Jewish communities inhabited North Africa since Biblical times and the Middle-East came together through traditions, melodies and rituals that are unique to this area. Evelina Megnaghi will sing songs in "giudeo-spagnolo" (Spanish and a derivation of Hebrew) and others with Italian motifs and music.

There is a fascinating story ("The Aleph" by Borges) that has always made me look at Art and religion not as world in opposition but as shades of the same human instinct. It's a short piece by Borges in which a writer who cannot find inspiration goes to his cellar where he finds "the aleph", something that triggers his creativity and makes him look at the universe through the universe's eye, something magical and divine and yet very human. A principle that gives birth to imagination, a mystical feeling and ultimately Art.

Thursday April 22

Opening Night- Round Table and Concert

Venue: Italian Cultural Institute- 686 Park Avenue, New York, NY 10021

Time:

5:30PM- Round Table on the topic of the "Fear of God" hosted by Pamela Villoresi

6:30PM- Cocktail

7:00PM- "The Path of the Soul"

Tickets: \$ 10 (\$ 5 for members and Italian Cultural Institute Staff)

To reserve tickets, call: (212) 879 4242 ext. 365

Friday April 26

"Amen" di Teresa de Sio - Concert

Venue: Peter Norton Symphony Space- 2537 Broadway at 95th Street, New York, NY 10025,

Time: 8:00PM

Tickets: \$ 20 in advance, 25 \$ on the day of the show

To reserve tickets, call: (212) 864 5400

Saturday April 24

Stellarum Opifex- Show

Venue: The Rubin Museum of Art- 150 West 17th Street, New York, NY 10011

Time: 9:00PM

Tickets: \$30

To reserve tickets, call: (212) 620 5000 x 344



Sunday April 25

“Francesca, la Santa degli immigrati” by Enrico Groppali- Monologo Drammatico con Vanessa Gravina

Venue: St. Mark’s Church- 131 East 10th Street, New York, NY 10003,

Time: 8:00PM

Tickets: free entrance

Monday April 26

Evelina Meghnagi and Ashira Ensemble sing “Di Voce in Voce”

Venue: The Italian Cultural Institute, 686 Park Avenue, New York, NY 10021,

Time: 7:00PM

Tickets: \$ 10 (\$ 5 for members and Italian Cultural Institute Staff)

To reserve tickets, call: 212 879 4242 ext. 366

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[2] <http://www.divinamente.info/>

[3] <http://www.beniculturali.it/mibac/export/MiBAC/index.html>

[4] http://www.iicnewyork.esteri.it/IIC_Newyork

[5] <http://utenti.multimania.it/armuser/brani/vingtregardssurlenfantsjesus.htm>

[6] <http://www.antondressler.com/>

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