

OSLO ITALIAN FESTIVAL 2009

The Oslo Italian Festival 2009 was officially opened by Italian ambassador HE Mrs Rosa Anna Coniglio Papalia and Oslo's mayor, Mr. Fabian Stang, on 25 May at the *Olivia* in Hegdehaugsveien attended by representatives from the Italian community, Norwegian business connections and friends of Italy.

The ensuing days saw a culinary tour of Italian cafes and restaurants in Oslo, and on the weekend of 6-7 June, Københavngt. 2 was turned into a market place where people could sample and purchase many Italian specialities. The atmosphere was enhanced by Italian music and song and bustling crowds!

A lecture was given at Litteraturhuset on the art of translation, and an encounter with author Claudio Magris also took place at Litteraturhuset in connection with the launch of the Norwegian version of his book *Alla Cieca*. Music, film, architecture and focus on business and trade, as well as various campaigns in the shops down Bogstadveien and Hegdehaugsveien, were all part of the Italian Festival, which was arranged for the fourth



HE Mrs Rosa Anna Coniglio Papalia and Oslo mayor Fabian Stang opened the Oslo Italian Festival 2009 at Restaurant Olivia (Photo: The Magazine)

time. A Norwegian version of the book *1432, il veneziano che scoprì il baccalà* (1432: When stockfish came to Venice) by Paolo Cossi was also launched during the festival (see page 62).

As early as March an exhibition of Italian drawings was held at

the Vigeland Museum to mark the centenary of the Futurist Manifesto published in 1909 by Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, an Italian ideologue, poet and editor and founder of the Futurist movement.

CORDIAL RECEPTIONS

5. Italy's National Day is 2nd June. The Official celebration in Oslo took place three days later when Italy's Ambassador to Norway HE Mrs Rosa Anna Coniglio Papalia and Dr Ugo Papalia held a very special concert for their many guests in Den Gamle Logen. The performer was the eccentric and exhibitionistic Italian pianist Giovanni Allevi. This artist is renowned for performing his own compositions where he mixes style forms from the Renaissance, baroque and romantic eras and onwards to jazz and rock. The artiste linked the various compositions with more or less interesting anecdotes and short extracts from his autobiography.

Despite Mr Allevi's frequent changes of both melodics and rhythmic in his compositions, the overall impression after more than one hour was rather monotonous. One composition in particular, *L'orologio degli Dei* (God's clock), stood out as a beautiful musical masterpiece.

Wearing training shoes and sporty leisure wear, the pianist indubitably formed a stark contrast to the formally dressed audience and the highly-polished black Steinway grand piano. Giovanni Allevi's well-rehearsed performance was supposed to give the impression of disorganised improvisation. As a "shock happening" Mr Al-

levi's musical offering and stand-up performance was very tame. In the year 2009 it takes more than this to knock a worldly-wise concert audience comprising hardened diplomats of its perch! The audience called for, and was given, several encores.

There was a highly convivial atmosphere during the ensuing reception and generous buffet (with some excellent Italian wines) so that many guests stayed far longer than usual.

Perhaps Giovanni Allevi helped create a positive undercurrent among the assembled guests with his untraditional and unceremonious behaviour?