

Alessandro Coppini



Prof. Alessandro Coppini has just published a new book in the field of Second Language teaching. The title of this book is *Nuovi articoli da Italia e Italia (Livello basilare)*. This is a selection of articles extracted from *Italia e Italia*, a monthly periodical that has offered students of Italian from all over the world, a valid didactic support. Topics relate to contemporary Italian life and culture and refer to public figures and events of particular importance to Italy's past and present. This book is divided in six sections: *Arte e Cultura, Costume, Curiosita', Persone, Societa', Turismo, Tempo Libero*. It also includes exercises for reading comprehension and written expression, tests to verify student's linguistic competence and solution keys for self testing.

Jonathan Nelson



Prof. Jonathan Nelson had a busy week following the fall break. On the Monday, November 7, he spoke at the day-long conference at the Galleria dell'Accademia dedicated to "Michelangelo's 'David', between Beauty and Myth." Jonathan offered a glimpse at a private obsession, his collection of David postcards, in his talk on "The Postcard Man: The 'David' in Popular Culture". The acts will be published next year. Three days later, Jonathan met with Ian Jones, director of a forthcoming hour-long program on the BBC on Leonardo's Last Supper. After an interview, the crew filmed him giving a lesson in the 'depandance'. Before a dozen SUF students, he argued against Dan Brown's view that the figure next to Christ represents Mary Magdalene. Jonathan's interest in how Leonardo represents feminine-looking features will be the subject of his April 22, 2006 'Lettura Vincina', the yearly Leonardo lecture given in Vinci.

Caterina Paolucci



Political Studies
Association

As member of the Italian politics specialist group of the British Political Science Association (PSA), Prof. Caterina Paolucci was invited to speak at the latest meeting of the general conference of the Association in England. She presented a paper entitled: "A thousand blue shirts: the impossible institutionalization of Berlusconi's Forza Italia", which is due to appear shortly in a special issue of the British Journal, *South European Society and Politics*. Caterina has also been elected for three years to the executive board of the Italian Politics Specialist Group of the PSA and will be acting as the liaison of PSA and the Italian Political Science Association (SISP). In this capacity, she will organize a SISP panel to discuss how foreign political scientists see Italian politics. Finally, Caterina has also just signed a contract with Manchester University Press for collaboration to an edited book on the 2006 Italian general election, with an essay on the electoral campaign.

Debora Spini

November was a busy month for Prof. Debora Spini. On November 8 she was a discussant at the conference: "Il futuro dell'Europa: I giovani e il lavoro" in Florence, organized by *Euroforum*. On November 12/13, Debora gave a paper on the topic: "La società civile nella costellazione post nazionale" at the sixteenth "seminario di teoria critica e filosofia sociale" in Milano. Finally, on November 17/18 she was a discussant at the conference: "L'Europa e il Mediterraneo," Florence, organised by the "Forum per i problemi della pace e della guerra."

By Genevieve
Goetz
University of
Southern California

Interning at the Teatro Comunale has thus far been my best decision here in Florence and one of the best experiences of my life, and will no doubt be invaluable to the career I plan to pursue in arts management.

During my fall semester in Florence I have had the excellent opportunity to be the lighting intern at Florence's opera house, *Teatro del Maggio Musicale Fiorentino*. As a theater major and a lover of music, dance and opera I have seen several theaters. I have worked backstage at USC's Bovard Auditorium,

Bing Theater and Scene Dock Theater and been on backstage tours of opera houses such as the Lyric Opera House in Chicago and even sung in the chorus of two operas with Chicago's l'Opera Piccola, but I have never before worked in such a large historic theater as *Teatro Comunale* or understood the sheer number of people involved in a full opera house that is home to opera, one of the best orchestras in Italy and a ballet company.

By interning in an Italian opera house I have not only had the chance to improve my Italian conversation skills, I have done hands-on work with the lighting crew for Giuseppe Verdi's (1813-1901) "I Lombardi alla Prima Crociata" and Gioacchino Rossini's (1792-1868) "Tancredi" and seen the ballet "In Una Parte di Cielo" (2005). I will also soon work on one of my favorite operas, Verdi's "La Traviata".

I have gotten a backstage tour of the *Teatro Comunale* and the *Teatro Goldoni*, and seen both the scene shop and the makeup crews in action. I have sat in on production meetings and seen two opera productions materialize from each step of the production process, from plans on paper to dress rehearsals to opening night. I have seen the studios where the dancers rehearse and have eaten in the theater's own mensa (cafeteria) with the lighting crew.

As a lighting intern I am supervised by the Stage/Technical Director of Teatro Comunale, but I have worked most closely with Gianni Miranda, one of two in-house Lighting Directors of the opera house. Gianni's love for the theater make him an ideal supervisor, and his ability to speak English far superior to my Italian helps as well. Having worked in American theaters it was interesting to see the differences between the way Italian and American theaters are run. Most notably is the fact that the technical crews are strongly unionized and there is the possibility of 'tenure' which gives them more leeway in what they will and will not do. If they are asked to do something not in their contract they will stand around and discuss it for a long while. It has been my experience in American theaters that if a technical crew member is asked to do something they do it without discussion and one would never talk back to a supervisor. Also different here is the

level of government involvement in the theater finances. In Italy, theaters are controlled much more by government politics and who is in power at the time. Right now at *Teatro Comunale*, the Superintendent, who had trouble balancing the books of the theater, is currently replaced by a *commissario* (high commissioner) from the culture ministry. There are a lot of strikes instead of performances. In America, theater and theaters may be political, but they are not so directly controlled by the ruling political parties.

The first opera I worked on was "I Lombardi alla Prima Crociata" (1843) by Giuseppe Verdi, directed by Paul Curran (Irish), and conducted by Roberto Abbado, with scenes and costumes by Kevin Knight (British) and lighting designed by David Jacques (American). I observed the final dress rehearsals and found the relationships between the house designers and directors, the *Teatro Comunale* designers and directors, and the visiting designers for the specific production, very interesting. I helped set up and take down the stand lights for the orchestra pit and, because the opera was already up and running, there was not a lot of technical work to be done. >

