

## Don't Worry, Be Happy...in Italy!

Giulia Madron (June 15, 2014)



The Italian National Tourist Board organized “The Importance of The Grand Tour of Italy for College Students,” which took place at the Italian Academy of the Columbia University.

Many college students, especially nowadays, have the chance to travel and experience studying abroad through several exchange programs organized and supported by numerous academic and cultural institutions.

On June 10th, at the [Italian Academy of the Columbia University](#) [2], the [Italian National Tourist Board](#) [3] (ENIT) organized “The Importance of The Grand Tour of Italy for College Students,” an event which had an enormous participation of the audience, amongst which als representatives of the most important Italian and Italian American Institutions of New York: Lucia Pasqualini, Deputy



Consul at the [Consulate General of Italy in New York](#) [4], Claudio Bozzo, President of the [Italy America Chamber of Commerce](#) [5], Berardo Paradiso, President of The [IACE](#) [6] (Italian American Committee on Education) and Stefano Albertini, Director of [Casa Italiana Zerilli Marimo' NYU](#) [7], just to name a few.

After a lovely “aperitivo” in a perfectly Italian style, the event opened with the performance of a young talented Italian musician, Erene Mastrangeli who with her incredible voice transported the guests back to their college years with beautiful pieces of music.

In thanking Erene for her fantastic performance, Eugenio Magnani, the Director of [The Italian National Tourist Board](#) [3] presented the projects which have been developed in order to attract young people to travel to Italy because “the travelers of today are the travelers of tomorrow,” said Magnani.

These projects for youth tourism in Italy consists in particular of new students exchanges, visits intended also to experience the [Expo Milano 2015](#) [8] which is to begin in May of next year and will last until October, as well as other initiatives toward the promotion of Italy for college students.

“The most incredible ingredient to make a trip successful is happiness,” affirmed Magnani. “We hope that young people are looking for experiences that will bring them happiness, something that Italy is able to give.”

Magnani also used this occasion to say “arrivederci” (goodbye) to a special person: Lucia Pasqualini, Deputy Consul of Italy whose NYC mandate has come to an end. And he did it with a very touching video which put together many pictures of the Deputy Consul during her experience and work in the Big Apple.

“I am deeply moved,” said Pasqualini while thanking everyone for this pleasant surprise. “This moment in particular with you also brings me also to my memories and the wonderful time I spent not only in Germany (she was there as an exchange student) but to all the moments spent in different countries all around the world.”

“If you really want to understand a country, you have to travel” concluded the Deputy Consul of Italy “because it is extremely important, especially for young people who live in a globalized world, to learn the culture, the history and the language of the country they visit.”

Then, Magnani welcomed Stefano Albertini, Director of [Casa Italiana Zerilli Marimo' NYU](#) [7], who talked from a more insider point of view as a representative of a major institution, which promotes and spreads Italian culture and language within and beyond the campus of [New York University](#) [9].

Albertini talked about the importance of the exchange programs to the students’ academic career and the key role of the institutions to promote Italy to the future generations.

There are 120 exchange programs in Italy, 40 of them in Florence, aimed at bringing students into the country. This means that an enormous number of American students goes to Italy every year for extended periods of time. And this is a life changing experience for all of them.”

“Moreover, our students are also tourists and they want to see places in Italy, travel around and they also ask to be part of cultural programs when they go to Italy. They want to have cultural experiences like going to the opera, to a museum, to a good restaurant.”

Because of this thin line that exists between students and tourists, Albertini said that the academic Institutions want to find answers and discover more and more why students want to go to Italy.

“We want to get from students the reasons why they decide to go to Italy. Our idea was to create a website in which students will have the chance to answer some questions we prepared for them,” affirmed Albertini.

The project, that will be launched in a week or two, is called “Dream It! Win a Trip to Italy!” and was



created in collaboration with [Blend Communications](#) [10]. On this website, as explained by Albertini, students and people between 18 and 25, will have the possibility, for two months, to answer 10 simple questions and also submit an entry which could be either a short video or a photograph of something which is linked to their experience in Italy or which makes them connect it to the image of Italy before they go abroad. Then people can vote and the winner will win a trip to Italy.

“This project,” concluded Albertini, “is a way of promoting Italy for the future generations through language, images and the desires of young people of going to Italy.”

After more interesting insights about this project, given by Francesco Brazzini, the event concluded with a wonderful performance by Maestro Alberto Veronesi, Music Director of the [Opera Orchestra of New York](#) [11] and the Soprano Maria Carfora, who at the end was given the award for her operatic musical career together with other two artists who unfortunately could not be present at the event: Tenor Nicola Pisaniello and Orchestra Director Salvatore Percacciolo.

After the performance, all the guests were pampered with great Italian food and wine. Just a little tasting of Italian delicacies, because they all should crave going to Italy for more!

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#### **Links**

[1] <http://iitaly.org/files/38210pasqualinierenecarfora1402806385jpeg>

[2] <http://www.italianacademy.columbia.edu/>

[3] <http://www.enit.it/it/sediestere/nord-america/new-york.html>

[4] [http://www.consnewyork.esteri.it/Consolato\\_NewYork](http://www.consnewyork.esteri.it/Consolato_NewYork)

[5] <http://www.italchamber.org/>

[6] <http://www.iacelanguage.org/>

[7] <http://www.casaitaliananyu.org/>

[8] <http://www.expo2015.org/en/index.html>

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[10] <https://www.facebook.com/blendcommunications>

[11] <http://www.operaorchestranyu.org/index2.html>