

## ROME INTERNATIONAL LITERATURE FESTIVAL III EDITION

# LETTERATURE

## *REALITY, IMAGINATION*

- **WHO:** The Municipality of Rome. Artistic Director: Maria Ida Gaeta. Responsible of 'Casa delle Letterature' ("The House of Literatures")
- **WHERE:** In the beautiful and evocative night-time setting of the Basilica of Maxentius in the heart of Rome's forum
- **WHEN:** May 21<sup>st</sup> -June 22<sup>nd</sup> 2004
- **HOW:** Fourteen of today's most brilliant and talked-about writers will be in Rome over a series of 10 evening events. Each author will read an unpublished piece of his or her work under the night-time sky in one of the world's most beautiful settings. They will read in their own language while a simultaneous projected translation will accompany their words. To homage every writer, each evening a different actor or actress of theatre, cinema or television will read a selected passage from one of the author's most recently published works. And, throughout the evening, well-known musicians will provide live musical accompaniment and comment.
- **WHY:** The aim of the Rome International Literature Festival is to provide people with a unique opportunity to encounter new cultures and new visions of the world in which we live. It will give people a chance to reflect on some of the issues that define the contemporary human condition and soul. It will remind us all, once again, that literature lies at the heart of life and freedom.

## AUTHORS AND DATES

1. **ANTONIO TABUCCHI** Friday, May 21<sup>st</sup> – Actor: **Remo Girone**
2. **JONATHAN FRANZEN** Wednesday, May, 26<sup>th</sup> – Actress: **Galatea Ranzi**
3. **AGOTA KRISTOF** Friday, May 28<sup>th</sup> – Actor: **Sergio Rubini**
4. **J.M. GUSTAVE LE CLEZIO** Friday, May 28<sup>th</sup> – Actress: **Giuliana LoJodice**
5. **COLSON WHITEHEAD** Tuesday, June 1<sup>st</sup> – Actress: **Valeria Golino**
6. **ABBASSE NDIONE** Tuesday, June 1<sup>st</sup> – Actress: **Licia Maglietta**
7. **BANANA YOSHIMOTO** Thursday, June 3<sup>rd</sup> – Actress: **Michela Cescon**
8. **NICCOLO' AMMANITI** Tuesday, June 8<sup>th</sup> – Actress: **Lorenza Indovina**
9. **MELANIA MAZZUCCO** Thursday, June 10<sup>th</sup> – Actress: **Margherita Buy**
10. **AZAR NAFISI** Tuesday, June 15<sup>th</sup> – Actress: **Anna Bonaiuto**
11. **JHUMPA LAHIRI** Tuesday, June 15<sup>th</sup> – Actress: **Ottavia Piccolo**
12. **CARLOS FUENTES** Thursday, June 17<sup>th</sup> – Actor: **Michele Placido**
13. **GUILLERMO ARRIAGA** Thursday, June 17<sup>th</sup> – Actor: **Fabrizio Gifuni**
14. **JOHN MAXWELL COETZEE** Tuesday, June 22<sup>nd</sup> – Actress: **Laura Morante**

## THE WRITERS

This year's authors come from the most diverse countries and from the most different backgrounds, from the English speaking literary world and the Latin-American school, but also from Africa and Asia, and the stage of Maxentius will offer established writers as well as the new literary protagonists of the international scene.

The Festival will open with the Pisan writer **Antonio Tabucchi**, today considered one of the most representative voices of European literature. His writing is the deepest expression of fantasy and interiority, but also the place for social involvement. The second evening will be dedicated to **Jonathan Franzen**, a young American author capable of writing about reality both through sophisticated plots and through the fragile filter of internal needs and anxieties. Then will be the turn of **Agota Kristof**, an Hungarian exile and now Swiss citizen, whose work retraces the painful memory of the oppression in communist Eastern Europe. There will then be **Jean-Marie Le Clezio**, French by birth but with life experiences in the most diverse corners of the world, who has made of travel the raw material of writing and the source of discovery and of new horizons for the mind. More urban are the stories of the new Yorker **Colson Whitehead** who ranges from the metaphysical thriller to the novel with historical nuances while narrating the details and absurdities of postmodernism with impressionistic style and innovative prose. **Abasse Ndione** will follow, a Senegalese author who has made of his writing a probe into the social sphere and the life of the young in his country, becoming such a valuable observer to have his books taught in Senegalese schools. Of great international popularity and much loved in Italy are instead the writings of the young Japanese author **Banana Yoshimoto**. Her books move with delicacy between sleep and wake, talking of the contact between the inner and the outer worlds, often depicting nature as a vehicle for emotions. After Banana Yoshimoto will be the turn of the other two Italians of this year: **Niccolò Ammaniti** and **Melania Mazzucco**; the former has just come from the great success of his *Io non ho paura* (which he later screenplayed for Salvatores), the latter from the Premio Strega 2003 for her *Vita*. Ammaniti has been one of the protagonists of the Italian "cannibal generation," and in a few years he has produced works that range from the pulp short story to the realistic and formative novel, while maturing on the side a fruitful collaboration with cinema. After years of award-winning work as a writer for theatre and radio, Melania Mazzucco has moved on to narrative, writing both imaginary novels and novels inspired by historical figures. More troubled is the experience of **Azar Nafisi**, an Iranian exiled in the United States; from her difficult and for many years illegal experience of teaching Western literature in Iran comes her book *Reading Lolita in Tehran*, which describes literature as escape and subversion, as an experience of freedom and as a key for reading reality. The theme of exile



dominates also the work of **Jumpha Lahiri**, English by birth but with Bengalese parents, who's characters are in constant search for identity and a land to call theirs. The second last evening of the Festival will present the Mexican authors **Carlos Fuentes** and **Guillermo Arriaga**. The former is a veteran writer, publicly and socially involved, who has used his work to produce historical frescos and social investigations with a style that ranges from realism to experimentalism. The latter is a novelist of the last generation, author of intimate and anguished novels, but also screenwriter of successful films such as *Amore Perros* and *21 Grams*. The Festival will conclude with the South African 2003 Nobel prize winner **John Maxwell Coetzee**. Like the Swedish Royal Academy wrote, Coetzee "is a scrupulous doubter, ruthless in his criticism of the cruel rationalism and cosmetic morality of western civilization. His intellectual honesty erodes all basis of consolation and distances itself from the tawdry drama of remorse and confession... It is in exploring weakness and defeat that Coetzee captures the divine spark in man."

[www.festivaldellelettere.it](http://www.festivaldellelettere.it)