

italian heritage and culture month

mese della cultura italiana

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 14, 2008

PRESS RELEASE

**ANDREA
PALLADIO**



1508-2008

**ANDREA PALLADIO
1508-1580
ARCHITECT FOR THE AGES
ITALIAN HERITAGE AND CULTURE COMMITTEE OF NEW YORK, INC.
CELEBRATES THE 500th ANNIVERSARY OF HIS BIRTH**

The Italian Heritage and Culture Committee of New York, Inc. celebrates its 32nd annual Italian Culture Month and, as with every October, highlights Italian history, culture, language and accomplishments through proclamations at every level of government and coordinates lectures, seminars, concerts, art exhibits, theatrical presentations and other events, related to its annual theme. Throughout this year to celebrate the theme, a series of events on Andrea Palladio will take place both here in the United States and in Italy. The IHCC-NY, Inc. consists of a group of leaders in the greater New York Italian and Italian American community, who meet with the collaboration of the Italian Consul General in New York and the Istituto Italiano di Cultura. Joseph Sciamè, its President/Chair, notes: "This volunteer Committee enacts an important cultural and educational role throughout the year, but when it heads into the month of October annually, it performs its greatest task of celebrating the theme. This year, 2008, we have a truly great theme: **ANDREA PALLADIO: ARCHITECT FOR THE AGES**. Indeed, he was then and even now a great personage, for we see Palladian style buildings and monuments all about us."

The IHCC-NY, Inc. joins the world in celebrating the genius of Andrea Palladio, one of the most influential and imitated architects of all times. Born Andrea di Pietro della Gondola in Padova, in the Republic of Venice, Palladio began his career as an apprentice stonecutter at the age of thirteen years and by sixteen years of age was working in nearby Vicenza with the leading masons and stonecutters under the patronage of Count Gian Giorgio Trissino, his mentor and patron. It was Trissino who first called him Palladio, a reference to the Greek Goddess of wisdom, Pallas Athene. Palladio was given his first work on a building project by Trissino and through his direction studied and traveled to Rome where he was inspired by classical Roman architecture. Thus began his style, after which an entire movement was named: Palladian, most remarkable for its beauty, harmony and use of columns, domes, arches, pediments and a flattened classical portico. Subsequent commissions from the richest Venetian society brought him fame and more commissions, so that his body of work included country villas, urban palaces, civic structures, churches and bridges. He compiled his knowledge into the treatise *The Four Books of Architecture*, translated into English in 1715, one of the most definitive works on architecture.

His work was and still is admired, copied and interpreted by architects, especially in England, Ireland and America. The great English architect Christopher Wren borrowed from Palladio for London's magnificent structures, such as St. Paul's Cathedral. Thomas Jefferson specifically drew his plans for Monticello after Palladian designs. One can find examples of Palladian architecture, especially in all of the glorious columned and domed buildings in Washington, DC and Virginia, but also in several in Baltimore, New York and elsewhere. In greater New York, to mention only a few, the Grand Central Station, Harvard Club and Morgan Library are in the Palladian style while the Hudson City Savings Bank, Hudson Columbia Courthouse and Plattsburgh City Hall all enjoy Palladian architecture.

Throughout 2008 there are celebrations worldwide to commemorate Palladio's work, most notably in Italy beginning with the Italian National Committee *Andrea Palladio 500* events and several sponsored by the Institute of Classical Architecture and Classical America in New York. A comprehensive Palladio exhibit, curated by the Centro Internazionale di Studi di Architettura Andrea Palladio, Vicenza, and the Royal Academy of Arts, London, shown in Italy throughout 2008, will travel to England and America in 2009.

For more information concerning events, the theme, poster, bookmark and pamphlet on Palladio, reference is made to the www.italyculturemonth.org website and/or <http://www.classicist.org/resources/year-of-palladio/>