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Genoa (Italy) • May 24th - 25th, 2017

EVENT VENUE Palazzo Ducale - Piazza Matteotti, 9

Brief history of Genoa and its palaces





"You'll see a royal city, superb in people and walls, leaning against an alpine hill. Its appearance indicates it is the queen of the sea". With these simple verses the poet Francesco Petrarca described Genoa in 1358 and since then, the city is often called "superb" to indicate its power, prosperity and pride. From the end of eleventh century and for eight hundred years, Genoa was the capital of the Republic of Genoa and a great naval power that disputed and defeated the hegemony of Pisa and Venice, the two rivals, to dominate the trade maritime routes. The city is often nicknamed "the Sovereign of the Seas" and "the Republic of the Magnificent" but all Genoese simply call it in dialect "Zena" from the greek "xenos" that means foreigner. The Ligurians used this name for the first citizens of the maritime city who were mostly sailors, traders and came from all over the Mediterranean Basin.



To have the best panoramic view of the city, the Genoese or the "zeneixi" recommend to climb 172 steps leading to the top of the Lanterna. It is the historical symbol of Genoa and one of the tallest lighthouses in the world built in the sixteenth century. It rises 117 meters above sea level and it offers the best all-embracing view comprising the Ligurian Sea, the Apennine hills and the city placed in a natural amphitheatre on the homonymous gulf that stretches from Voltri to the west to Nervi to the east. The modern city buildings rise vertically on the slopes of the hills and along the coast while the ancient town area is located all around the port forming one of the largest and best-preserved medieval historical centres in Europe. Its intricate irregular network of narrow and dark streets called "caruggi" and "crêuze" has become a World

Heritage Site since 2006.

Over the years, the city opened up to modernity and in 1992, on the occasion of the Columbus celebrations for the fifth anniversary of the discovery of America by the Genoese explorer Christopher Columbus, it was awarded the organization of the International Expo focused on the issue of the sea. With this event, a range of significant transformations was initiated to redesign the port area. Most works were entrusted to the architect Renzo Piano: the *Bigo*, a naval crane to upload and unload goods on ships. It transforms in a tensile structure and a panoramic rotating elevator; the Biosphere, a bubble of steel and glass suspended over the sea and housing a tropical environment; the Children's City, the largest space in Italy devoted to science and to children's games; the Aquarium, one of the largest and most important in the world. For this major structural and cultural renovation and for the historical, artistic, literary and musical wealth, Genoa won the title of European Capital of Culture in 2004.

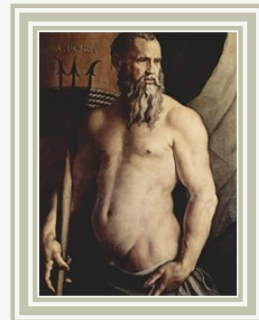


Historically, the great fortune and expansion of Genoa began towards the year one thousand with the Crusades. It became a powerful Maritime Republic and extended its commercial and military dominance over a large part of the Mediterranean Sea. In the



early 16th century, in the city were set economic and institutional foundations of a fortune and a prestige that will last until the end of the eighteenth. During these centuries, the city had an important international role thanks to the strong and solid commercial tradition and political relations with the major courts of the time. Many of its citizens were rich merchants, strong navigators and explorers such as Christopher Columbus, major shipowners, powerful bankers and financiers of European royalty through the Bank of St. George. Nice to know is that the British still bears the Crusader symbol of Genoa on their flag for having taken advantage of the protection of the Genoese fleet from pirate attacks in the Mediterranean Sea.

Around 1528, with the Doge Andrea Doria, the independent Republic of Genoa reached such a level of power that the sixteenth century was called “El siglo de los Genoveses”(the century of the Genoese). In this period, the Genoese nobility built in the city center an ensemble of sumptuous Renaissance and Baroque residences, known as “Palazzi dei Rolli” (the Rolli Palaces), placed along the so-called ‘new streets’ (Strade Nuove). Since 2006, forty-two of them are registered in the UNESCO list of the World Heritage Sites.



They represented the symbol of the wealthy Genoa and they were three or four storeys in height with an entrance hall featuring spectacular open staircases, courtyards and loggias overlooking gardens. Interior decorations featured stuccos and frescoes. In 1622, Europe began to know such residences and to imitate their architecture thanks to the Flemish painter Peter Paul Rubens who published in Antwerp the book "the Genoa palaces" after a long stay in the city. It still represents the first detailed collection of the main buildings of Genoa with lots of precise reproductions of the architectures.



At the time, there were approximately 150 Rolli. Since the city had no adequate hotel facilities to accommodate decorously distinguished guests, in 1576 the Senate decided to list on rolls (hence the name ‘Rolli’) the most outstanding private residences and designed them to host state visits. The Senate divided them in three special categories called “Bussoli” classified according to their importance, size, location, living comfort,

number of refined furnishings and other requirements. The Bussoli matched three categories of possible guests: princes/viceroy/cardinals, feudal lords/governors, princes of low rank/ambassadors.

Until 1700, on the arrival of a notable visitor to the city, the Rolli names were placed in a box (bussolotto) and one was selected randomly to host “compulsorily” the illustrious guest for the whole time of his stay in the city. The Genoese were already accustomed to the practice of drawing lots as they even used it in politics: twice a year they used to draw five names among 120 nobles to replace the members of the Senate and of the Council of Prosecutors for which the electoral mandate expired. The citizens used to bet sums of money on the names that would have been extracted thus beginning the modern lottery games that we know today.

For some years now, with the annual initiative of the Rolli Days, Genoa opens for few days to its citizens and tourists the splendid residences of the Genoese aristocracy, magnificently decorated with frescoes, furnishings and painted by greatest masters.



PALAZZO DUCALE



In the central via Garibaldi the Rolli are situated one beneath the other. A short walk from the Romanesque-Gothic Cathedral of San Lorenzo, which houses the emerald pot used by Jesus during the Last Supper (called "Sacro Catino" or "Sacra Scutela"), there is a public building rich in history that was the ancient seat of the Genoese Republic. It is the Ducal Palace also called "Paxos" by the Genoese. In 2001, the palace hosted the Heads of State and Government gathered in town for the G8 and today it is a multi-purpose museum center as well as the venue to the congress "AUTISMO Verso un futuro migliore. ADHD Quali proposte e quali interventi?" promoted by Fondazione Internazionale Menarini from May 24th to 25th, 2017.

The residence was born in the thirteenth century on the adjacent private buildings of the noble Doria and Fieschi families. As testimony of the old constructions remains the "Tower of the People" (La Torre del Popolo) or the "Grimaldi Tower" (La Torre Grimaldina) served to let people know the notices and as a prison for common and political crimes until the Second World War. Many important people were imprisoned here as the violinist Nicolò Paganini for the offence of seduction and in 1833 Jacopo Ruffini, the Genoese patriot who belonged to the party of La Giovine Italia of Giuseppe Mazzini and who committed suicide here.



At first, Palazzo Ducale became the public venue of the *Capitani del Popolo* (the administrative rulers) under the name of *Palazzo degli Abati*. In 1339, it acquired the

name of Palazzo Ducale since it became the residence of the Doge of Genoa, who was the highest city authority. The first Doge of the city was Simone Boccanegra.

During the XIV - XV century, the residence gradually expanded and new buildings were added closing the front square. The original medieval structure disappeared with the renovations of the sixteenth century assigned to the architect Andrea Ceresola from Ticino, called Vannone. He transformed the building both into a luxury palace to worthy represent the splendour of the Republic of Genoa at the time of its maximum glory and into a fortress to withstand long sieges. The residence was known as the third wonder of Genoa after the Cathedral of San Lorenzo and the Basilica of Carignano. For hundred and sixty years, it was called "Royal Palace." It had once a grandiose covered atrium flanked by two arcaded courtyards and an imposing staircase to access the upper floor where today still stand the former Great Council hall, for the meetings of the four hundred nobles holding the city power, and the Minor Council hall used during the meetings of the



Senate. Vannone also built the Doge's chapel, entirely decorated with frescoes by Giovanni Battista Carlone (1653-55), the connecting bridges with the Cathedral, the Church of St. Ambrose and the private apartments of the Doge. He was elected for only two years starting from 1528 and during his tenure, to avoid any kind of corruption, he could go out in public five days only to attend official events. One of them was June 24, the day of St. John the Baptist, the patron saint of Genoa.

In 1777, a devastating fire destroyed much of the center of the Palazzo Ducale and the



architect Simone Cantoni from Ticino carried out major reconstructions in neoclassical style with ornaments of marble and stucco and vaulted ceilings in the halls. He erected the present neoclassical marble facade on three levels adorned with a series of pairs of symmetrical columns creating the effect of chiaroscuro. On the top, he placed in the niches statues of eight chained characters representing the enemies of the Republic of Genoa: the pirate Mujahid, Giacomo Marsano, the Duke of Sessa, the pirate Dragut, Niccolò Pisani, the Saracen king Abu-

Yahya, Henry of Aragon, Alberto Morosini, James I of Cyprus.

In 1815, with the end of the Republic of Genoa and the annexation of Liguria to the Kingdom of Sardinia, Palazzo Ducale lost its political function and became the seat of the judiciary until 1975. The building was totally restored for the Columbus celebrations by the Genoese architect Giovanni Spalla and opened to the public as a museum and cultural center. To avoid intervention on inside historic structures a special steel spiral ramp called "strada appesa" (hanging road) was created leading from the ground floor up to the terraces.



THE GENOESE SINGER - SONGWRITERS

Amongst the many characteristics of Genoa there is the "Scuola Genovese" (Genoese School), a group of singer-songwriters formed in the '60s by the brothers Gian Franco and Gian Piero Reverberi, by Giorgio Calabrese, by Luigi Tenco, by Bruno Lauzi, by Gino Paoli, by Umberto Bindi, by Joe Sentieri, by Fabrizio De André and by Ivano Fossati. In the marine city frequented by different cultures these young musicians listened to various music coming from the United States such as jazz, rock, swing and especially to the music and lyrics of the French chansonniers like Jacques Brel, Georges Brassens, Charles Aznavour. Particularly from them the young Genoese singer-songwriters drew inspiration for their introverted and emotional lyrics.

The main subjects of their songs were the everyday real life, even the life of the people from the ill-famed narrow streets of the city, the troubled and uncertain love and the rebellion against the conformity and the hypocrisy of the bourgeois society that tent to forget the fundamental human values. The lyrics were simple, unadorned and often in the form of poetry, without rhetoric, to express the true inner feelings and sensations.

The best singers and songwriters included Gino Paoli with "Il cielo in una stanza" and "Sapore di sale", Luigi Tenco with "Ciao, Amore ciao", Bruno Lauzi with "Ritornerei" and the cultured Fabrizio de Andrè, nicknamed Faber. He was the most famous of the group and set to music poetic texts, often in the ancient form of ballads, and focused his lyrics on outcasts, rebels, prostitutes and underprivileged people. Very famous are still now his first works as "La canzone di Marinella", "Bocca di rosa", the story of a prostitute who was expelled because her sensual behaviour disrupted the peace of an entire conformist town, "La città vecchia" dedicated to Genoa, "Crêuza de mă" about the sea life and the hard work of the sailors. The famous song "Via del Campo" tells the life and emotions of the residents of a narrow street in the old Genoa populated by prostitutes and people of ill-repute often forced to live an illegal life. Today, via del Campo still exists and it hosts a cultural workshop for creative initiatives linked to music and poetry.

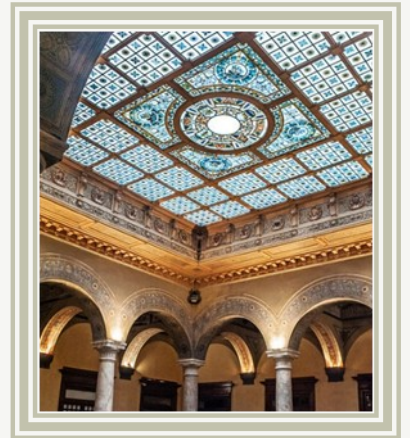


PALAZZO DELLA MERIDIANA



It is one of the 42 "Palazzi dei Rolli" that were declared World Heritage Site in 2006. In 1599, it hosted Margaret of Austria, the wife of Philip III, King of Spain. It is placed in Piazza della Meridiana between Via Cairoli and Via Garibaldi, the street that Madame de Staël nicknamed *rue de Rois* for the magnificence of the 14 Rolli along the way. The real name of the building is Francesco Grimaldi Palace and it was commissioned between 1536 and 1544 by

Geronimo Grimaldi Oliva, banker and merchant with interests in Portugal and Spain. The construction arose at the foot of Castelletto hill along the steep slope of Salita San Francesco. During the centuries, it repeatedly changed owners and in the early 1900, the Alliance Insurance Company of Evan Mackenzie rented the building to adapt the palace to the main offices. Mackenzie commissioned Gino Coppedé the cover of the courtyard with a skylight in Art Nouveau stained glass adorned with the symbols of the cities of Rome, Venice and Turin and images of the Caravelle of Columbus and St. George on rounds. The Palace still preserves many interior decorations as the "grotesque" and the stucco works attributed to Lazzaro Calvi beside frescoes by Luca Cambiaso representing the stories of Ulysses.



During the I World War Mackenzie converted the offices into a hospital and in 1922 gave here a great party for the Genoa Conference inviting all the foreign delegations. After becoming again a military hospital during the II World War, the Palace was repeatedly used as public building with different functions. Today it hosts events and weddings.



The palace and the square below it bears the name of the sundial that is painted a fresco on the south facade of the building. A local anecdote tells that when Gerolamo Grimaldi Oliva built the mansion, the Brignole family, the owners of the opposite building, did not permit him to build any window facing their property. Out of spite, Oliva painted on the façade of his Palace a sundial with two cherubs showing the buttocks so whenever the Brignole faced the mansion, they saw the bottom of those two cheeky cherubs.

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