Benigni to lead one-man show in Malta

by Valerie Fenech - valfen@di-ve.com
Current Affairs -- 31 March 2008 -- 11:20CEST

Roberto Benigni

Italian award-winning actor Roberto Benigni is set to lead a one-man show in Malta, following his acceptance of an honorary degree as a Doctor of Literature from the University of Malta.

The 55-year old actor will be conferred an honorary Ph.D. in literature on April 22nd from the University of Malta, and perform in a one-man show on the 23rd.

Entitled “Tutto Dante”, the show has drawn more than one million spectators in Italy since it was launched in July 2006.

On the night of the 23rd, Benigni will delve into a discussion about the 1st century poet Dante Alighieri with scholar Robert Hollander, Professor of European Literature Emeritus at Princeton University and the founding director of the Princeton Dante Project.

This will be followed by a recital of one of Benigni’s favourite canti from Dante’s Divine Comedy.

During his short stay in Malta, Benigni is also set to launch an exhibition of illustrations of Dante’s epic poem by artist Monika Belsner at the Istituto Italiano di Cultura in Valletta.

03.31_dive
Benigni’s Dante: a fusion of tradition and the contemporary

by Alan Fenech - fenechalan@yahoo.co.uk
Local News — 18 April 2008 — 17:06:23BST

The upcoming visit by Oscar-winning film director and actor Roberto Benigni and the programme of the visit were the subjects of a press briefing addressed by Prof. Dominic Fenech and Dr. Gloria Laura Lucente on Thursday morning.

Benigni will arrive in Malta on Monday 21st April on a four-day visit, on the initiative of the Faculty of Arts. Apart from being honored with the conferment of a Doctor of Literature degree Honoris Causa, Benigni will also hold a “Serata Dantesca” and inaugurate an exhibition of illustrations of Dante’s “Divina Commedia” by Monika Beinener.

The ceremony of the conferment of the degree will take place at the Jesuit’s Church in Valletta on Tuesday 22nd April as will the inauguration of the exhibition while on Wednesday 23rd April there will be the “Serata Dantesca” at the Sir Temi Zammit Hall at the University of Malta, during which Benigni will recite part of the “Divina Commedia”.

Speaking of Benigni’s interpretation of Dante Dr. Laura Lucente said that Benigni has been studying the works by the father of the Italian language for over 17 years specializing in the Tuscan traditions connected with the masterpiece. “Benigni’s interpretation of Dante is therefore a fusion of the traditional with the contemporary” said the Deputy Dean of the Faculty of Arts.

Seats at the Sir Temi Zammit Hall have been reserved mainly for students and the academic staff of the University of Malta, however the “Serata Dantesca” will be shown live on a multi-screen in the main quadrangle of the university campus. “Even though one would be watching the event on a screen it is an occasion not to be missed since the rights of the event belong solely to the agents of the actor and therefore it is up to them to decide whether to transmit it or not,” said Dr. Laura Lucente.

Accompanying Roberto Benigni during his stay in Malta will be Professors Robert and Jean Hollender, authors of the new annotated and illustrated translation of the “Divina Commedia”. Benigni prefaced the Hollender publication.

Roberto Benigni to visit Malta
4/10/2008 4:23:45 PM
Awtur: Fabian Demicoli

The director of the film ‘La Vita e Bella’, the famous actor Roberto Benigni will be in Malta in the coming days to receive an Honoris Causa from the University of Malta. Benigni will not only be in Malta to be honoured since at the Sir Temi Zammit Hall at the University of Malta he will participate in a evening about Dante as he will be interpreting pieces from Dante’s Divina Commedia. This evening will be open to the Maltese public and will be free.

Since the hall only takes 900 people, in the quadrangle at the University a big screen will be set up so that those who do not manage to find a seat they would still be able to see. Benigni is expected to be in Malta on the 21st of April.

Details about this visit will be given in a press conference. The Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Dominic Fenech said that during his four day visit in Malta, Benigni will also address the Maltese media. He will also be inaugurating an art exhibition by Monika Beinener.

Accompanying Benigni to Malta will be Professor Robert Hollender and his wife Jean Hollender, the authors of the translation of the Divina Commedia. The Dante Evenings - on the Italian national station Rai Uno - are followed by 12 million people.
A vast array of subjects made it to the headlines on Sunday’s newspapers.

The Sunday Times presents a story in which it says that the MLP government in 1997 had planned to re-route Malta towards EU membership. In another story the weekly speaks of patients who should not be at Mater Dei hospital.

The Malta Independent on Sunday accuses local councils of hijacking and blocking the waste separation scheme leading to the absence of an agreement a mere two days before it was to begin. It also presents two stories one with regards to a Malta-based Italian who is accused of arms trafficking and the other about an Islamic extremist who paid 2000 pounds sterling to be smuggled from Malta to the UK.

KulHadd in its front page presents a story with regards to the alleged abuse which went on at Lourdes Home in Ghajnsielem in the 1970s and 1980s and speaks of allegations of sexual abuse as well as the physical abuse already cited.

Il-Mument speaks of the upcoming elections of the new MLP leader and says that Joseph Muscat has hurt MLP supporters especially with regards to his position on whether Jason Micallef should still occupy the post of party general secretary which is still unclear. The PN weekly also speaks of Helena Dalli as a possible candidate for leadership.

It-ToRca speaks of the reforms in pensions and says that the government intends to the process it began in the last legislature in the next budget. The weekly also publishes a story about what it calls a u-turn with regards to polyclinics.

MaltaToday’s main story speaks of the four persons who were arrested in connection with an sms which incited hunters to go to the streets and race the country to the ground. In its front page the newspaper also speaks of what it calls a farcical cleanup of MEPs before Gori’s visit and the decision of Roberto Benigni not to hold any official appointments with public figures.

Illum’s main headline chooses to speak about the number of people who are managing to obtain a divorce from abroad. It also presents a story about PBS having turned down a programme proposal for dramatized Maltese novels saying that they are not commercially viable.
Benigni: To hell with officialdom

MAVERICK Italian celebrity actor Roberto Benigni will be taking Malta by storm next week when he comes to get his honorary doctorate from University and perform pieces from Dante’s La Divina Commedia.

Benigni’s four-day programme is expected to peak on the Wednesday with an evening event in which he will be reciting excerpts from La Divina Commedia, the early fourteenth century epic that has adorned its author, Dante Alighieri, the title of ‘the father of the Italian language’.

Benigni, who hails from the same Italian region as Dante, has been commissioned for reviving the Tuscan traditional form of poetry recital a moneta, which was dwindling in popularity over the recent years.

“A moneta recital is unique in that it popularised the Divina Commedia also among the illiterate in Tuscany,” said deputy dean of the Faculty of Arts Gloria Lauri Lucente, the brains behind Benigni’s trip to Malta.

“The first thing that springs to mind when Benigni is mentioned is ‘Life is Beautiful’, and the Oscar awarded to him for this film,” Lauri Lucente said.

At the Awards ceremony in 1998, announcing the Best Actor award was Italian veteran actor Sofía Loren, when filled with emotion she called out: “Fabio!”

Benigni had made his way up on stage hopping on seat backrests, boisterously making his way through the seated palls night attendance. Hugging co-natural Loren on stage, he marked one of the most memorable Oscar moments.

His first recital of the Divina Commedia was in 1989 and throughout the years he made extensive efforts in popularising Dante. His recitals in Florentine squares have at times attracted larger audiences than the Pillo di Siena,” she continued, referring to the traditional Tuscan homeseed attracting massive numbers of tourists to the region every year.

“Furthermore, he has extended this form of recital on television, where on his Rai programme Tutte Dante he managed to attract an audience of 12 million for the general public to follow the event from the outside,” she said.

A lot of universities in Italy would wish to have this type of opportunity,” he stated.

Commenting on Benigni’s explosive charisma, French recalled when once he called Gloria on her mobile phone while he was next to her. You can only imagine what a scene there was in the whole room.

“Anything can be expected,” he said, warning of the joyous impulsiveness the ‘Maestro’ is known for.

In 1991, when Benigni was more or less at the start of his career, he was censored when, invited to a special guest of the 30th edition of the San Remo song contest, he delivered a speech on free love. In the speech he referred to Pope John Paul II as “waylaid” (big, nasty Woytila), contradicting his act by kissing the then sex symbol Olimpia Carlisi, who was presenting the show.

Benigni to recite Dante in Malta

DAVID DARMANIN

WORLD-RENOVATED Spanish cinema all-rounder Roberto Benigni will be flying in to Malta on 21 April, where he will be conferred a doctorate of honoris causa by the University of Malta for his contribution to the humanities.

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(http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8-VkS575rTY)
Roberto Benigni to receive honoris causa degree in Malta

by Alan Fenich - afen@di-v.eu.com
Current Affairs — 22 February 2008 — 17:55CET

Oscar-winning film director, screenwriter and actor, Roberto Benigni will be honoured by the University of Malta with the honorary degree of Doctor of Literature on April 22nd.

A press release issued by the University of Malta explained how the conferment of this degree recognizes not only Benigni’s distinctive exploration of the emotional range possible in cinema, but also the significant contribution he made to Dante scholarship, to the study of literature and, by extension, to the humanities in general.

The degree of Doctor of Literature will be awarded to Benigni in a ceremony which will be held on April 22 at the Jacuttes Church in Valletta. The oration will be delivered by Dr. Gloria Lauri-Luciente, Senior Lecturer in Italian and Comparative Literature and Deputy Dean of the Faculty of Arts, and will be followed by the acceptance speech of the Honorary Graduate.

The Dean of the Faculty of Arts will be sponsoring.

Much to the delight of the numerous Benigni admirers among the faculty members and the university students, many of whom have recently followed an Italian television the enormously successful series of performances TuttoDante, Benigni will also be treating the University of Malta to a “serata dantesca” on April 23 on the University Campus at the Sir Tabrizi hall.

The evening will start with a discussion on Dante between Benigni and the eminent Dante scholar Robert Hollander, Professor of European Literature Emeritus at Princeton University and the founding director of the Princeton Dante Project. Following the discussion, Benigni will give a much-anticipated recital of one of his favourite “canzoni” from the Divina Commedia.

A maxi-screen will also be set up on campus to relay the performance in order to extend the benefit of the “serata” to non-university members.

While in Malta, Benigni will also be inaugurating an exhibition of illustrations of the Divina Commedia by the artist Monica Basaran at the Istituto Italiano di Cultura in Valletta. The illustrations form part of a translation into English of the Divina Commedia by Robert and Jean Hollander with a Preface by Roberto Benigni published by Edizioni Valdoroga in 2007.
Benigni honoured with Honoris Causa

4/22/2008 7:20:04 PM
Awtur: Fabian DEMICOLI

A unique ceremony held at the chapel of the Old University in Valletta - with the presence of the country's highest authorities; film director of 'La Vita e Bella' and famous actor Roberto Benigni was given his doctorate degree in literature as an acknowledgement of the University of Malta for the hard work he conducted during his career.

After a speech by Gloria Lauri Lucente, Senior Lecturer at the University of Malta, the actor of international fame, Roberto Benigni was called before the Rector of the University of Malta to collect his degree.

However in one of the most serious moments of the ceremony, Benigni cracked everybody with his humour. While the rector presented him the Honoris Causa Benigni felt emotional and praised the Maltese.

Due to the emotions overload, Roberto Benigni expressed his gratitude to the President of Malta Eddie Fenech Adami in a euphoric way. Benigni proceeded praising the Maltese in the Maltese language.

Whilst saying that he was impressed with the beauty of various localities around Malta and Gozo as well as the surrounding islands.

During his spontaneous speech, Roberto Benigni expressed his enthusiasm for the Dante' evening which will be held on Wednesday evening at the University of Malta where he'll be meeting with the Maltese and Gozitan students.

04.22_maltarightnow
Benigni pleases Malta: Beautiful
4/22/2008 4:42:14 PM
Awtur: Annette VELLA

A few hours before being given the Honoris Causa, the Italian comedian Roberto Benigni addressed a press conference at the Aula Magna, in Valletta. During the conference and for all questions asked, Roberto Benigni replied in his usual style: making fun of everything and is difficult for one to make out whether he is actually being serious or whether he is joking.

This is the first time Roberto Benigni visited Malta but he said that he finds the country beautiful, with a language that contains the best of all the languages it is made up of. Roberto Benigni is currently in Malta after an invitation by the Faculty of Arts of the University of Malta, and it was the faculty itself that requested that he will be given the Honoris Causa for his work and the love he has towards Dante Alighieri's "Divina Commedia"

Whoever follows Roberto Benigni knows him as a comical person. But when asked whether life for him is one continuous joke or not, he said that like everyone else he goes through emotional moments but he always looks for something comical to help him move on.

During the press conference, the Italian comedian did not keep back from hinting on Italy's politics. He said that while in Malta we have the Order of the Knights, in Italy there is only one Cavalier: Silvio Berlusconi. He also mentioned the fight against Head of Italy's Opposition Walter Veltroni, who according to Benigni, he brought his candidature forward when in actual fact he does not understand anything on politics.
Roberto Benigni awarded today Honoris Causa

4/22/2008 10:01:05 AM
Awtur: maltarightnow.com

Italian actor and film Director in ‘La Vita e’ Bella’ Roberto Benigni is in Malta to be honoured with a doctorate honoris causa for his contribution to humanities at the University of Malta. The ceremony which starts at 4:00pm is being held at the Jesuits Church in Valletta and will be presided by the University Chancellor.

A press conference shall be addressed earlier on, and later in the evening, he will be opening an artistic exhibition by Monika Beisner, at the Istituto Italiano di Cultura in Valletta.

Roberto Benigni is tomorrow taking part in the Serata Dantesca, where he shall be interpreting pieces from Dante’s Divina Commedia. The event, which is free entrance is open to the public.
Benigni takes the degree conferment ceremony by storm

by Paul Cachia – pcachia@di-ve.com
Local News – 22 April 2006 – 19:30CET

Photos by Fernando Sanchez
An exuberant Roberto Benigni was conferred with the honorary degree of Doctor of Literature by the University of Malta and the Italian film director showed his delight at the award by kissing the feet of President Edward Fenech Adami.

Roberto Benigni is renowned for his slapstick pranks. At the Oscars ceremony in 1999, he climbed on the back of his seat and applauded the audience.

This time, at the Church of the University in Valletta, he offered hugs to random strangers, scholars and dignitaries alike.

As he took centre stage after the conferment of the degree, Dr Benigni barked few words in Maltese: “E-llum, E-llu, gabb, gabb, llobba, llobb, llobb!” and went on to pronounce a number of Maltese villages including Siggiewi, Birkirkara, Marsa, Birgu and Gżira.

He then joked at Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi and the political elite. “You have the knights of Malta, we have lost one – Berlusconi but he is terrible in Italy. Berlusconi is popularly known as il Cavallerei”.

“In the past years, we had the general elections and I found refugee here in Malta,” President Attard (Fenech) ghumu, ghumu (please come to my rescue!), he uttered.

On a more serious note, Dr Gloria Lui-Lucente paid tribute to Benigni as a “unique artist who enables us to suspend our disbelief and draws us into a fantasy world where everything is dreadful and everything is joyous, where everything is sad and everything is funny”.

“Their is only one Charles Chaplin, one Buster Keaton, one Stanley Laurel and one Oliver Hardy, one Toto.” And there is only one Roberto Benigni”, she said.

With his typically tongue-in-cheek playfulness and deep reverence, Benigni lectured on Dante to three-quarters of a million people in the past two years alone, she added.

“Dante was too much forgotten [but thanks to Benigni] is as relevant today as it was more than seven hundred years ago”, she said.
“Life is something extraordinary” - Roberto Benigni

by Alan Fenex - alfen@d-v.com
Local News – 22 April 2008 – 14:10CEST

Photos by Fernando Sanchez

UPDATED: 16:10CEST - What was to be a normal press conference addressed by
Oscar-winning actor Roberto Benigni soon became a show in itself when the actor from
Tuscany answered the questions in a theatrical atmosphere
in which Benigni’s role brought to mind characters such as Johnny Stecchio.

After having made just a few steps inside the Aula Magna at the Old University he started
talking with photographers. Those present soon found themselves in a theatrical atmosphere
in which Benigni’s role brought to mind characters such as Johnny Stecchio.

When asked how he feels about being in Malta he said that life is something extraordinary. “I
am not here to seek asylum from the new Berlusconi Government,” he joked, “but I would
not mind at all to be one of the knights of Malta since in Italy we have only one cavalier,”
with obvious reference to the Italian PM.

In response to the question on which
part of the Divina Commedia he would
see himself in, Benigni took the
opportunity to mount further satirical
attacks on his country’s politicians:
“probably in hell... It’s ok as long as it’s
in one of the sections as far as possible from Berlusconi... but then
again Vetriani has no idea of politics.”

Benigni described Dante’s “Divina
Commedia” as a beautiful
encyclopedia, really like internet,
where one can seek biographies of
persons such as Farinata which might
be unknown to the massese.

The Italian actor went on to say that
he would not know if he preferred the
stage to cinema or vice-versa.

“Surely I have changed along the years. You should see my photo at three years of age.
Seriously, I think that life changes a person’s soul and personality. Life is a journey. I am
sure I have changed along the years. We all live to seek something in life.”

When asked whether he would consider filming in Malta, Benigni said that he would, since he
likes the country and loves the sea.

“At the moment I’m trying to come up with a story. If my time in Malta inspires me to it,
then I see no reason why I should not produce the film here.”

According to the Italian star, the “Divina Commedia” is too vast to make a film out of. “It is
full of filming techniques if one looks closely. Two hours would not be enough for just the
first ‘cantos’ of the Inferno.”

Roberto Benigni addressing the press conference

Roberto Benigni, who won 1999’s Best Foreign Film Oscar for his film “Life Is Beautiful”, will
receive the Doctor of Literature Honoris Causa at 16:30CEST on Tuesday and will then treat
an audience at the Sir Tani Zermit Hall at the University of Malta to a “Serata Dantesca” on
Wednesday.

All photos by Fernando Sanchez
Life is Beautiful: With Roberto Benigni

by Charles M. Rood - editorial@di-vw.com
Opinion – 21 April 2006 – 09.55CEST

Charles M. Rood speaks to Dr Gloria Laurin-Lucante in an exclusive interview for www.di-vw.com about Roberto Benigni’s artistic performances and his visit to Malta.

Just whispering his name evokes so many memories of comic moments often punctuated with a tear of compassion. Roberto Benigni’s talent as actor and comedian resonates with moments where humanity shines through his performances.

In the film Life is Beautiful (1997), Benigni plays the part of Giotto who is held captive with his son in a concentration camp. Benigni’s amusing wits and light-heartedness draw his son’s attention from the unfolding tragedy as he speaks to his son and calms his son’s fear and sorrow. Benigni’s role in Life is Beautiful is inspired by the real life experiences of his father, who spent two years in a work camp.

But what makes Benigni’s performances deeply touch our emotions? I discussed the topic with Dr Gloria Laurin-Lucante, a film scholar and Senior Lecturer in Italian and Comparative Literature and Deputy Dean of the Faculty of Arts. Dr Laurin-Lucante will also be delivering the oration during the ceremony where Benigni will be awarded the honorary degree of Doctor of Literature by the University of Malta on the initiative of the Faculty of Arts.

Dr Laurin-Lucante explains, in an interview that the role of a “refugee” played by Benigni in Life is Beautiful is the “mother” of all his performances.

In the film D’Amo (1994), Benigni plays the part of Loro who is suspected of being a serial killer and a sexual maniac because of his eccentricity which makes him the classic “refugee”. His real life wife Nicoletta Braschi plays the part of the police officer Jessica Resin, accused of a series of murders of which she is innocent. When Loro is found guilty to prove he is really the “misterio”, Loro is completely unaware of her intentions, and his gestures and reaction lead to a series of hilarious situations.

In another role as a crook in Johnny Stecchino (1991), Benigni plays the double role of two characters that are identical. One is a gentle tax driver called Lazzaro, whose naïvety enables him to understand only the literal meaning of words. The other role is that of Johnny Stecchino, a dangerous “pizzaiolo” and member of the Mafia. When Dantes is mistress for Johnny Stecchino, a burst of comic situations follows, many of which are based on a series of puns and “double entendre”.

But who of the most famous comedians inspire Benigni? Dr Laurin-Lucante mentions Charles Chaplin and Buster Keaton as two of his mentors. However, she added with an enigmatic laugh that she will reveal more in the subject in her oration in the presence of Benigni during the ceremony where he will be honoured.

Dr Laurin-Lucante refers to Benigni’s physical gags and slapstick comedy whose origins hark back to the Italian “Commedia dell’Arte”, but also stressed that one should not overlook the underlying intellectual depth and wide range of emotions.

Was this the key of the success in the recent performances of the Divine Commedia, a literary work over 700 years old?

It was Benigni’s unique ability to fuse his intellectual in a contemporary performance of Dante’s unapproachable work that captivated the attention of world audiences across Italy.

Dr Laurin-Lucante also recalls the first time she saw Benigni on television. She was still in her teens, and every Sunday afternoon she used to watch with inspiration together with her brother for Benigni to appear on L’Altra Domenica, a programme conducted by Renzo Arbore. Benigni played the part of a confused film critic whose extraordinary improvisational linguistic skills gave rise to a series of comic situations.

I also reminded Dr Laurin-Lucante that Benigni is known for his improvisational and comic moments during official ceremonies. Who knows if this will be the case this time in Malta? Well, Dr Laurin-Lucante responded, we will just have to wait and see!

Note - During his visit to Malta, Benigni will also be treating the University of Malta in a “teatro d’arte” on April 22 in the University Campus at the Sir Temi Zammit Hall. The evening will start with a discussion on Dante between Benigni and the eminent Dante scholar Robert Holubosch, Professor of European Literature (Emeritus) at Princeton university and the founding director of the Princeton Center Project. Following the discussion, Benigni will give a reading of one of his favourite “canzoni” from the Divine Commedia. A big screen will also be set up on campus to relay the performance in order to extend the benefit of the “serata” to the general public.

04.23_dive
Italian actor Roberto Benigni, Oscar winner for the film "Life is Beautiful", yesterday was honoured with a doctorate honoris causa in literature by the University of Malta.

See story on back page.

Photo Jonathan Borg
Funniest graduation ever

BERNARD BUSUTTIL

The funniest ever graduation in the University of Malta's 60 year history took place yesterday at the Jesuits' Church, St. Paul's. Roberto Benigni was bestowed with the doctorate of literature degree.

The congregation of academics, politicians, members of the judiciary and other interested persons were never to forget the mass of laughs brought on by the antics of a blues musician. Dr. Benigni, who completed his studies in the United States, was invited to the country to give a lecture on the architecture of the US.

The lecture, which was delivered in English, went on for over an hour, covering topics ranging from the history of architecture to the role of the architect in today's society. Dr. Benigni's slides were punctuated with a series of humorous and unexpected images, which left the audience in stitches.

Following the lecture, Dr. Benigni was presented with the doctorate of literature degree. He thanked the university and the attendees for their hospitality, and then delivered a speech

Ejjew 'kollha’ – Roberto Benigni

BERNARD BUSUTTIL

"Ejjew 'kollha', With these words, pronounced in seeming- ly-English, Maltese, the bubbly, Italian, actor and director Roberto Benigni yesterday invited all and sundry to the opening ceremony of the new university campus at the University of Malta, Valletta.

During a news conference held at the Asia Gardens of the Vatican, the media had the opportunity to ask Benigni a few questions on the subject of his upcoming work. As he was seated at a table in a dimly lit room, he spoke with passion and conviction.

He declared to the media that he was going to ask President Edward Fenech Adami's last shakes, which he inevitably grab off at a tangent and fast track.

He declared to the media he was going to ask President Edward Fenech Adami's last shakes, which he inevitably grab off at a tangent and fast track.

The tension shown on him did not know whether Daniel would put him in Purgatory or Paradise and pointed out that he would be happy to stay anywhere, just as long as he was far away from any other work.

In conclusion, Benigni said that he would be going back to his native country and jokingly accused opposition leader Walter Calleja of "joking policy skill."
The inimitable Roberto Benigni was yesterday conferred an honoris causa by the University of Malta. The Italian comic actor and film director did not fail to lighten the solemnity of the ceremony after he gave none other than the President of Malta a bear-hug and knelt at his feet in a send-up of the ceremony.
Benigni moved by Malta’s warmth, sensuality

Making a grand entrance at a press conference at the Old University building by exclaiming “Buongiorno, buongiorno!” (Good morning, friends) in Broken Maltese, before Benigni yesterday confirmed that, even beyond the TV screen, his persona remains explosive, jovial, and eccentric.

“I do not happen every day that one receives a degree from Malta,” he began, referring to the commendation of his honoris causa bestowed. “When I received the degree last January, I was very moved, as I was picking upnot a degree but a memory of my student days.”

And it’s not like I came to Malta to seek asylum after the Italian elections... In Italy we only have one.

and he’s not like the ones you have in Malta. I will be asking God for help to lead my country up to Italy and confront the Italiano,” he said in allusion to the pro-Catholic faction in a medieval political battle that oversees the empire and the Holy See.

In Dante Alighieri’s epic, “The Divine Comedy,” in which Benigni will be reciting excerpts on the university campus this evening, this political conflict is very much brought to life in the epic poem, complete with an anti-clerical figure known as the Ghirlandaio.

Asked a hypothetical question on whether Dante would have placed one in Hell. Purgatory or Heaven, Benigni said: “I was not expecting such a question. I was just saying something more on the lines of what Dante would have put Benedetto.”

Describing Malta as “a crossbow, old woman”, Benigni explained how he fell in love with the country, comparing it to a pot containing a mix of all languages on the boat. “Your language makes you want to fall,” he said.

Benigni was accompanied by acclaimed Dante scholars Robert Hollander, who recently published a full English translation of the Divine Comedy. Original printed with a foreword penned by Benigni himself.

At one point, Hollander turned to Benigni to request him of something suggested by his wife Jean about a country in which Benigni would play the part of Dante Alighieri. After roasting with surprise, Benigni later answered a question on what his next international film will be about by saying: “You must read the book.”

After a day of meetings and talks, Benigni helped him rise, hugged him warmly and kissed him on the cheek, “Tchobobchob, tchobobchob,” he said. “I love you. I love you a lot.” Benigni said, this time pronouncing his Maltese flawlessly.

Moved by this stunt, Fenech Adami helped him rise, hugged him warmly and kissed him on the cheek. “Tchobobchob, tchobobchob,” he said. “I love you. I love you a lot.”
Benigni jinghata l-Honoris Causa

Fabian DEMICOLI
22 ta' April, 2008 - 19:20 CET

F'ċeremonija uniqa li saret fil-Kanija ta' l-Universita' l-Antika fil-Belt Valletta - fil-prekċenza ta' l-ġhola awtorizzajiet tal-pajjiż - id-direttur tal-Film 'La Vita e Bella' a uttar ċelebri Robert Benigni jinghata Degree tad-Donor tal-Literaturi Maltija rikonoxximent mill-Universita' ta' Malta għax-xogħol kollu li weitaq tal il-karrlem tiegħu.

Wara d-diskors ta' Gloria Lauri Lucante, Senior Lecturer fl-Universita' ta' Malta, l-artist ta' fonna internarzjonali Robert Benigni issejjaħ biet imrie qaddem ir-rettur ta' l-Universita' ta' Malta biet jippreżentata l-id-Degree.

Iżda l'wiedied mill-aktar mumenti scrji taċ-ċeremonija ma naqxs li Benigni jkompli juħtog il-kompičita tiegħu. Hekk kif ir-rettur ippreżentalu l-Honoris Causa Benigni hass u emozjonat hafna u grant lejn il-poplu Malti kollu.

Sforz l-emozzjonijiet Robert Benigni salħansitra b'mod eswitoriku esprimi r-ringsrizzament tiegħu fili-President ta' Malta Eddie Fenech Adami. Bi-ż比l-Malti Benigni komplita jesprimi l-emozzjonijiet tiegħu.

Waqt li qal li kien impresjonat bis-suħija l'ċerti lokalitajiet mdawar Malta u Għawdex u salħansitra l-Gzejjiet ta' modwarra.

Mattit id-diskors spontanju tiegħu Robert Benigni esprima l-entużjużma u l-ħannijja tiegħu biet fis-senita Dantiscu li se ssir l-eriżgha fil-għaxxiżja fl-Universita' ta' Malta jiluqa' ma l-istudenti Maltin u Għawdxin.
Benigni at the University of Malta

4/23/2008 7:47:08 PM
Author: Michael Caruana

Italian Artist Roberto Benigni this evening gave an excellent performance at the Notte Dantesca held at the University of Malta.

Benigni was greeted by a loud applause as he went on stage with the hundreds waiting in the hall at the University and from the crowd which was seeing the show from the big screen outside. At the beginning of the ceremony a short feature was shown with the best cinematic moments of the Italian actor, amongst which were pieces from La Vita e Bella, the oscar winning film.

Roberto Benigni gave an excellent interpretation of La Divina Commedia together with an actor renowned for his love for Dante’s work, Robert Hollander. Roberto Benigni, just like yesterday, chose to joke with everyone around, making fun of himself, jumping and dancing on stage. He did not miss out on showing everyone all the Maltese words he has learnt till now in his visit in Malta.