

February 22, 2010
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Public Info: Humanities West www.humanitieswest.org
Tickets: City Box Office 415/392-4400, www.cityboxoffice.com

HUMANITIES WEST PRESENTS
The Florence of the Medici:
Commerce, Power, and Art in Renaissance Italy
Friday & Saturday, April 30 & May 1, 2010
Herbst Theatre, San Francisco

Humanities West's 25th Anniversary Season culminates with ***The Florence of the Medici: Commerce, Power, and Art in Renaissance Italy***, a two-day program of lectures, discussions, and music exploring the outburst of artistic and intellectual creativity that put Florence on the cutting edge of changes that transformed western culture. The program takes place on Friday, April 30, from 8 pm to 10:15 pm and Saturday, May 1, from 10 am to 4 pm, at Herbst Theatre, 401 Van Ness Avenue in San Francisco.

Tickets for ***The Florence of the Medici: Commerce, Power, and Art in Renaissance Italy*** are priced as follows: Single tickets for the Friday program are \$45 orchestra/grand tier and \$30 balcony; single tickets for the Saturday program are \$65 orchestra/grand tier and \$40 balcony, single tickets for both days are \$100 orchestra/grand tier and \$55 balcony. Special Student/Teacher tickets are available at \$20 balcony for single day admission. Order direct from City Box Office at 415/392-4400 or www.cityboxoffice.com. Humanities West extends a special 25th Anniversary offer for teachers and students aged 25 and under: free tickets to the program. For more information call Humanities West at 415/391-9700 or check the website at: www.humanitieswest.org.

In celebration of its 25th Anniversary Season, Humanities West is hosting ****Cucina Toscana***, a festive Italian dinner party in the Green Room (upstairs from the Herbst Theatre) on Friday, April 30, from 5:30 pm to 7:30 pm. Co-sponsored by the Italian Cultural Institute, catered by C'era Una Volta, with wines from Rubicon Estate, proceeds from *Cucina Toscana* will benefit Humanities West. Dinner tickets are \$75; advance reservations are required. For details and tickets contact City Box Office at 415/392-4400 or www.cityboxoffice.com. (*see additional news release)

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The Florence of the Medici: Commerce, Power, and Art in Renaissance Italy brings together a panel of noted scholars and performers to explore the wealth of art, business, and intellect that flourished in the city of Florence under Medici rule. Out of a small but fiercely competitive city of some 60,000 inhabitants there erupted, between the 14th and 17th centuries, a torrent of artistic and intellectual creativity that transformed western culture. The wealth of the city, and especially of its rulers, the Medici, whose patronage and influence embraced much of Italy and beyond, made possible an outburst of artistic and intellectual innovations that had consequences throughout Europe. Home to Dante, Toscanelli, Michelangelo, Machiavelli, and Galileo, Florence in these years was at the cutting edge of changes that eventually were to shape the modern world.

On Friday evening moderator **Theodore Rabb** (History, Emeritus, Princeton University) will introduce the program. **Dale Kent** (History, UC Riverside) provides the keynote address on Cosimo de' Medici's patronage of art. Celebrated for his political prowess, Cosimo de' Medici is also legendary for his devotion to the arts and his patronage of the greatest artists of the early Renaissance. Kent will examine the image that Cosimo's commissions expressed; his dedication to family, friends and city, his concern for salvation after death, and his pleasure in the cultivated enjoyment of this life. **Loren Partridge** (Art History, UC Berkeley) follows with an illustrated lecture on the extraordinary marble and bronze figures that embellish the public spaces of Florence. These monumental works represent some of the most significant aesthetic achievements within Medicean Florence and constitute some of the greatest glories of Renaissance art.

On Saturday **Paula Findlen** (History, Stanford University) will lecture on one of the most enduring legacies of the Medici, the Uffizi Gallery. Findlen will trace the transformation of the Medici collections and explore how the Uffizi became one of the most famous and visited museums in the world. **Theodore Rabb** (History, Princeton University) talks about the birth of new political views in Medicean Florence, exploring the contributions of skilled diplomats Machiavelli and Guicciardini, both of whom served the city's government and were rethinking the very nature of politics and political destiny. **Susan Rode Morris** (Soprano), **Michelle Levy** and **Shira Kammen** (Vielle, Medieval Harp) will perform a selection of compositions from the Italian Renaissance. The songs concern love and politics, and the instrumental dances represent a spicy and highly ornamented repertoire. **Morten Steen Hansen** (Art History, Stanford University) completes the program with an illustrated presentation on Michelangelo and the conflicted relationship between the celebrated artist and the Medici family.

A panel discussion with all the presenters will follow, addressing questions from the audience. For a complete program schedule and additional information about the presenters please visit www.humanitieswest.org.

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Humanities West, a non-profit serving the Bay Area since 1983, is devoted to exploring history to celebrate the mind and the arts. The only independent non-profit offering humanities and arts programs of this scale, Humanities West presents a diverse series of lectures and performances encompassing fine arts, social history, music, politics, and philosophy of the arts. These interdisciplinary programs are designed to entertain and educate audiences and to illuminate and elevate the human spirit through exploration of the many sources of modern culture.

This program is supported by the Consul General of Italy; the Italian Cultural Institute; Grants for the Arts/ San Francisco Hotel Tax Fund; Bank of the West; C'era Una Volta; Rubicon Estate Wines; the Center for Medieval and Early Modern Studies, Italian Studies, and the Stanford Humanities Center at Stanford University; the Institute of European Studies, Italian Studies, Townsend Humanities Center, and Office of Resources for International Area Studies (ORIAS) at UC Berkeley. Cooperating Institutions include American Decorative Arts Forum Northern California; California Academy of Science; Docents Council, Fine Arts Museums of SF; Fromm Institute for Lifelong Learning; Mechanics' Institute; Osher Lifelong Learning Institute; SFSU Humanities Department; and Stanford University Libraries.

CALENDAR LISTING: EVENT/LECTURES/ARTS & CULTURE

WHAT: *The Florence of the Medici: Commerce, Power, and Art in Renaissance Italy*

Humanities West's 25th Anniversary Season culminates with ***The Florence of the Medici: Commerce, Power, and Art in Renaissance Italy*** a two-day program of lectures, discussions, and music exploring the outburst of artistic and intellectual creativity that put Florence on the cutting edge of changes that transformed western culture. Presenters include Dale Kent (UC Riverside), Loren Partridge (UC Berkeley), Paula Findlen (Stanford), Theodore Rabb (Princeton), Morten Steen Hansen (Stanford), and music by **Susan Rode Morris** (Soprano), **Michelle Levy** and **Shira Kammen** (Vielle, Medieval Harp).

**WHEN: 8pm to 10:15pm, Friday, April 30, 2010
10am to 12noon and 1:30pm to 4pm, Saturday, May 1, 2010**

**WHERE: Herbst Theatre
401 Van Ness Avenue, San Francisco**

**TICKETS: \$20 - \$100
Tickets are available through City Box Office at
415/392-4400 or online at www.cityboxoffice.com**

Group tickets: info@humanitieswest.org

PUBLIC INFO: 415/391-9700 or www.humanitieswest.org

CALENDAR LISTING: BENEFIT EVENTS

**WHAT: *CUCINA TOSCANA*
 Humanities West's 25th Anniversary Celebration Benefit**

WHEN: 5:30pm - 7:30pm, Friday, April 30, 2010

**WHERE: The Green Room, San Francisco Veterans War Memorial
 (2nd Floor, above Herbst Theater)
 401 Van Ness Ave., San Francisco**

TICKETS: \$75.00

PUBLIC INFO: City Box Office 415/392-4400, www.cityboxoffice.com

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