

Life of Italian mafia to be revealed in city performance

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The confessions of a Sicilian mobster are to be exposed in a one-off performance of Dacia Maraini's *My Name is Antonino Calderone* at the mac next week as part of a three-day 'Italy and the Mafia' spectacle coming to the city of Birmingham.

International prize-winning author, Dacia Maraini will be in the city for a three day exploration of Italy where there will be the opportunity for members of the public and University of Birmingham students to meet her. There will also be special a one-off performance of her new Italian play during her visit, which was translated by Dr Alex Standen, a Teaching Fellow in Italian Studies at the University of Birmingham who studied Maraini's work during her PhD.

Dr Alex Standen explains:

"Dacia Maraini is enormously well-known in Italy, not just for her writing, but also for being a feminist commentator, she's like Italy's answer to Germaine Greer if she wrote novels. Her work is something that should be translated more as she has some amazing stories to tell and it has been a real pleasure to work with her to bring Antonino's story to Birmingham."

The play is a monologue which is to be performed by popular British actor Tim Woodward and is based on the true story of a member of the Mafia which caused sensation in Italy and led to the arrest of over 200 mafiosi. The performance is taking place on Tuesday 28 February at the mac, Canon Hill Park from 7.30pm.

Dr Alex Standen adds:

"My Name is Antonino Calderone is based on a real-story of a member of the Mafia who fled Sicily after a rival gang killed his brother, only to be caught and then he became an informant for the police as a result. The story is certainly very Italian."

"After working on the translation for so long and studying Italian literature and fact checking all of the content, it is really great to see the script coming to life. One of the main challenges we faced was to ensure we received the same response from an English audience as you would an Italian – making sure everybody was laughing in the spots they were meant to be laughing – and it was not until I heard Tim Woodward reading the script through that the story came to life for me and it really will be an unmissable performance."

This will be a preview performance of *My Name is Antonino Calderone* on Tuesday 28 February, presented by New Shoes Theatre in association with the University of Birmingham and supported by Birmingham City Council's 'Big Cities' campaign, prior to the play's premiere at the Brighton Fringe Festival later this year. Tickets are £12 for adults and are available from the mac ticket office via 0121 446 3232 or online www.macarts.co.uk (<http://www.macarts.co.uk/>).

• *My Name is Antonino Calderone* will be performed on the second day of Birmingham's 'Italy and the Mafia' event. Dacia Maraini will be hosting a meet and greet session on Monday 27 February in Waterstones, New Street from 7pm and the University of Birmingham will be screening an Italian film, *I cento passi* (One Hundred Steps), with subtitles, on Wednesday 29 February at 5pm.

For more information, please contact Dr Alex Standen, University of Birmingham via the University's Press Office, 0121 414 6029.

Notes to Editors

• Dacia Maraini is available for interview on request.

Dacia Maraini is one of Italy's foremost contemporary authors, whose works tackle many of the political and social issues that face Italy today. A finalist for the Man Booker International Prize 2011, her works have been translated into many languages and her plays have been performed to high acclaim around the world.

Tim Woodward is known for his Numerous TV and film appearances including *Spooks*, *Piece of Cake*, *He Kills Coppers*, *Murder City*, *Mad Dogs*; ITV, *Wings*, *Vanity Fair*, *Any Human Heart*, *Casualty* 1909. Theatre includes leading roles at the Royal National Theatre, most recently he appeared in *The Riots* at the Tricycle Theatre, London.

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