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Touch Of Tuscany To Be Screened In Snug Harbor

By: NY1 News

Staten Island will connect with its very distant roots when the Snug Harbor Cultural Center hosts film screenings from the International Film Festival of Florence this weekend. NY1's Jon Weinstein filed the following report.

Snug Harbor Cultural Center already has a Tuscan villa, an emerging Tuscan garden and a proposed Tuscan vineyard. Coming this weekend, it will hold its first Tuscan documentary film festival.

"The Festival dei Popoli is an international documentary film festival that was established in Florence 49 years ago," said Francesco Fadda of the Fitzgerald Foundation of Florence, which sponsored the festival and brought many of the films. "The decision of bringing it here to Snug Harbor Cultural Center is to present it to a New York audience," Fadda said.

The International Film Festival of Florence, also known as the Festival dei Popoli, will feature ten films over the course of three days at the VMH Playhouse. The festival's promoters say the films were chosen very carefully to provide the maximum education and entertainment value to spectators.

"We focused mainly on two guidelines, one is Tuscany, the Tuscan region and the city of Florence where we come from," said Giorgio Bonsanti, president of the film festival. "The other one is for us to choose films relating to New York, the place where we are now."

This is the first time the Festival Dei Popoli will sponsor a set of viewings outside of Italy. Organizers say there's a good reason they chose Staten Island.

"The connection starts really very far away in the past when [explorer Giovanni da] Verrazzano, who was from Chianti in Tuscany, landed on the Bay of New York for the first time in 1524," Fadda said. "So 500 years later we are bringing some documentaries that were done in Tuscan, in Florence."

The festival will run this Thursday through Saturday, while a Tuscan crafts fair is also on display.

On Saturday night, the festival concludes with an open air screening on the Neptune Stage.

"This is going to be an extraordinary festival and we are so proud to bring this to Snug Harbor and Staten Island," said Snug Harbor President and CEO Frances X. Paulo Huber.

For more information on obtaining free tickets, email info@thefgf.org or call (718) 425-3509.

- *Jon Weinstein*

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