

The Department of French & Italian presents a PhD Dissertation Defense

# Nicolò Salmaso

## The Myth of Raffaella Carrà: Female Stardom in Post-1968 Italy

10:00 am, Thursday, July 11, 2024, on Zoom, in English

For more information, please contact Prof. Ryan at [ryanm@indiana.edu](mailto:ryanm@indiana.edu)

The unexpected death of show-woman Raffaella Carrà (1943-2021) has led Italian public opinion to reconsider and re-evaluate, in a more positive light, her contributions, not only to television and music, but also to Italian society at large. This dissertation endeavors to show how Carrà has been posthumously identified as the leader of a “soft revolution.” This revolution gradually broke and, in some cases,

subverted patriarchal paradigms of femininity and womanhood to establish new voices and models for different types of audiences in Italy, Spain, and Latin America. In particular, I aim to demonstrate how, through a deep understanding of the socio-political dynamics of her times, Carrà reinterpreted and revised her career in performance, dance, and music. Through an in-depth analysis of some of her most



successful television shows (in addition to other relevant TV appearances, music recordings, commercials, newspaper and magazine articles, etc.), I will show how Carrà’s stardom encouraged unprecedented and compelling embodiments of femininity as well as acceptance by more traditional audiences, still heavily influenced by the Roman Catholic Church. I contextualize my study according to specific ideologies regarding second-wave feminism, the post-1968 sexual revolution, and the years of lead/terrorism in order to critically explore how Carrà’s career kept pace with her society for almost five decades. I ask how and why her success was sustainable across this significant span of time. Finally, I examine the way she prompted transformative discussions about public perceptions and media representations of aging women in show business during the last years of her life.

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