#88 – Giovanni Battista Tiepolo ~ Lady in a Tricorn Hat ~ 1755
Giovanni Battista Tiepolo (1696–1770) was an Italian painter from the Republic of Venice who was arguably the greatest painter of eighteenth-century Europe and the outstanding first master of the Grand Manner. His art celebrates the imagination by transposing the world of ancient history and myth, the scriptures, and sacred legends into a grandiose, even theatrical language.

His art, with its genial departures from convention and its brilliant use of costumed splendor, celebrates the notion of artistic caprice, a sudden, unpredictable change, and fantasy. In his hands, the informal oil sketch was raised to a primary art form, worthy to be collected alongside his finished paintings. He was prolific, and worked not only in Italy, but also in Germany and Spain.

Tiepolo was the youngest of six children born to Domenico Tiepolo, who was a sea captain. While the Tiepolo surname belongs to a patrician family, which means a person of noble or high rank, Giambattista's father did not claim patrician status. The future artist was baptised in his parish church as Giovanni Battista, in honour of his godfather, a Venetian nobleman called Giovanni Battista Dorià. His father Domenico died a year after his birth, leaving the family in difficult financial circumstances.

Giambattista was initially a pupil of Gregorio Lazzarini, and at 19 years of age, completed his first major commission. He left Lazzarini's studio in 1717, and was received into the Fraglia or guild of painters. Tiepolo's first masterpiece was a cycle of enormous canvases painted to decorate a large reception room in the Ca' Dolfin, Venice. They depict ancient battles and triumphs and allowed Tiepolo the opportunity to introduce exotic costumes, ancient sculpture and artifacts, and violent action that seems at times to spill out of the frames and into the room. Originally set into recesses in the wall, the canvases were surrounded with frescoed frames.

In 1719, Tiepolo was married to Maria Cecilia Guardi, who was the sister of two contemporary Venetian painters. Together, Tiepolo and his wife had nine children. Four daughters and three sons survived childhood. Two sons, Domenico and Lorenzo, painted with him as his assistants and achieved some independent recognition. His third son became a priest.

By 1750, Tiepolo's reputation was firmly established throughout Europe, with the help of his friend Francesco Algarotti, an art dealer, critique and collector. That year, at the behest of Prince Bishop Karl, he traveled to Würzburg where he resided for three years and executed ceiling paintings in the palace. Tiepolo returned to Venice in 1753. He was now in demand locally, as well as abroad where he was elected President of the Academy of Padua.

Tiepolo died in 1770, and after his death, the rise of stern Neoclassicism and the post-revolutionary decline of royal absolutism led to the slow decline of the Tiepolo style, but had failed to dent his reputation. While his painting is infused with the Venetian spirit, his luminosity is not seen in the previous masters; however, Tiepolo is considered the last "Olympian" painter of the Venetian Republic. Like Titian before him, Tiepolo was an international star, treasured by royalty far afield for his ability to depict glory in fresco.
#88 – Additional Works by Giovanni Battista Tiepolo
1) **What is the meaning of patrician?**  

a) a person of noble or high rank  
b) a low born person  
c) a slave in ancient times  
d) a middle class politician  

2) **Why do you think Tiepolo was baptised in his parish church as Giovanni Battista?**  

a) in honor of his mother's royal family  
b) in an attempt to legitimize his birth  
c) in honor of his godfather, a Venetian nobleman called Giovanni Battista Dorià  
d) in an attempt to fleece money from the estate of deceased royal family members  

3) **Which statement best describes why Tiepolo traveled to Würzburg where he resided for three years and executed ceiling paintings in the palace?**  

a) the behest of Prince Bishop Karl  
b) the behest of President Washington  
c) the behest of Queen Mary of Scots  
d) the behest of Pope Julius  

4) **Based on the help of his friend, Francesco Algarotti, an art dealer, critique and collector, which of these conclusions is accurate?**  

a) Tiepolo's reputation was firmly established throughout Africa  
b) Tiepolo's reputation was firmly established throughout Asia  
c) Tiepolo's reputation was firmly established throughout South America  
d) Tiepolo's reputation was firmly established throughout Europe  

5) **Which of the following is a reason that while growing up Tiepolo's family was in difficult financial circumstances?**  

a) his mother died a year after his birth  
b) his father died a year after his birth  
c) his father drank away their inheritance  
d) his father gambled away their inheritance