

PICCOLA COMPAGNIA DELLA MAGNOLIA
FAIRY TALE
PRESS REVIEW

SPETTACOLI NEWS

SANDRO AVANZO

July 4, 2022

National Premiere

Campania Teatro Festival

Double Pier Paolo Pasolini, double debut

Double PPP in a single evening. The Campania Teatro Festival continues in its tributes to Pasolini's artistic versatility and combines (on different stages) the highly acclaimed duo Elio Germano-Theo Teardo **and the independent group Piccola Compagnia della Magnolia**. The former in the sound theatricalisation of *Il sogno di una cosa*, considered Pasolini's debut novel in 1949-50, although later published after *Ragazzi di vita*. The actor stands next to the musician - both motionless in the usual frontal position with which they remain on stage in each of their performances - and reads the stories of three twenty-year-old Friulian men in the post-war months. Black hunger and poverty throughout the country. They are united by a common passion for accordion, balera and wine, as well as a strong communist ideal. They emigrate clandestinely to Yugoslavia as if to a promised land, but they return discouraged and humiliated, they engage in occupation struggles in the manor houses, they yearn for an improvement in working and social conditions, but it is the death of one of them from a work-related illness that puts an end to that friendship and to the most impetuous and sensual age of life.

The assemblage of the excerpts from Pasolini's pages chosen to give dramaturgical continuity to the narrative is undoubtedly the most appreciable aspect of the entire performance. Because even the intelligent music and material sonorities with which Teardo intervenes live from his console (the real recorded whirlpools of the waters of the Tagliamento, the songs of the birds...) are not enough to transfigure the scenic event into something more than a visualisation of an audiobook (however high-class acting), nor is it enough to hammer a scenographic series of terracotta bells on sight.

The dream of a thing

by and with Elio Germano and Teho Teardo (homage to Pasolini) in repetition in Milan, Bagni Misteriosi of Teatro Franco Parenti, 5 July 2022 h 21:15

FAIRY TALE, a surprise

The real surprise comes instead from the Chinese boxes of which FAIRY TALE by the Piccola Compagnia della Magnolia is composed, inspired by Pasolini's *Calderòn*, itself inspired by *La vita è sogno*. That Fabrizio Sinisi, who was commissioned to write the text, was an admirer of the Friulian author had been evident for some time (one only has to reread the first episode of his *Guerra Santa* to grasp homages and models). But director Giorgia Cerruti's awareness in managing the juxtapositions between prose, original video projections, quotation sequences from *Che cosa sono le nuvole?* (What are clouds?) and (perhaps one should not anticipate) probable (?) biographical elements of the performers is pleasantly unexpected. Two actors, alone on stage, a She G. and a He D., reasoning and debating about women's dreams. Who from time to time dreams herself as Pocahontas, who however becomes the little mermaid Ariel or a Parisian character in 1793, or in Boone County in 1856, all women subjected to acts of violence. The characters in the various dreams also interact and tell each other stories, and the spectator finds himself as if inside the labyrinth of mirrors in an amusement park in search of a way out or understanding. If one then adds the (dis)appearance of a mysterious little girl, one can understand how difficult it seems to untangle this Gordian knot. In reality, the knot must not be untied, if one does not want to lose the pleasure of the connections between reality and metaphor, between everyday life and life on and for the stage. The actors? A pleasure to hear them live and see them reproduced on the screen.

DRAMMA.IT
PAOLO RANDAZZO
NOVEMBER 3, 2022
Regional Premiere Teatro Basilica, Roma
Stagione Across universe

To seek the real in the real, to guess the filigree of reality by observing it with a political gaze and studying it above all where its cracks are most evident, where the gashes are deepest, where the wounds are still able to tell us how it was that we got hurt. This is how one could summarise the task of the best theatre, and this is what we came to think when we saw FAIRY TALE, the latest show by Piccola Compagnia della Magnolia, which was repeated last Saturday 22 October in Rome, on the stage of Teatro Basilica. The text, interesting, full of meaning, magmatic, is by Fabrizio Sinisi and was commissioned by the company asking for inspiration from the poetic and political world of Pasolini. The direction and the overall concept are by Giorgia Cerruti, on stage there is Cerruti herself with Davide Giglio (and it is a striking and visibly close-knit artistic couple), the video part is by Giulio Cavallini. The idea is basically this: in a bourgeois couple, she is in the grip of a deep depression, resulting in total and painful amnesia, he is at her side actively and responsibly on a path of healing. A path of healing that cannot stop only at the exploration, however painful, of her personal vicissitude, but must also cross more or less distant and bloody moments, contexts and episodes of human history that, in some mysterious way (the dream, the ecstatic tale, the therapeutic anamnesis), are found to have had, or may have had and perhaps still have an impact on the life of that woman and on that of us all. Clearly, in this adventurous opening up to the world and history, Pasolini's magisterium is revealed to a great extent. Here is that the state of prostration in which she finds herself explodes, here is that the bourgeois interior, very simple, elegant, but also structurally asphyxiated, explodes: the outcome is a theatrical narrative that is embodied and grafted onto paths that touch on the most disparate areas of the globe and the most diverse historical moments, including 17th-century Venice, the bloody colonisation of North America by Europeans and to the detriment of the natives, London in the time of King James, scorching Paris in the years of the revolution and other bloody chronotopes of human affairs. But what is the real context of this explosion that affects this woman together with her man? What is the place where what is forgotten in the bowels of history can be recognised in its effective political operation? The theatre is this place, and the black fable that has innervated it for millennia (power that does not conquer death or even love) makes it cathartic and politically salvific. Here is the crux of the matter: no disease, no depression, no amnesia can find a solution and a proper cure if it is not also addressed in the broad and deep historical-political context that generated it. The performance that Cerruti has created is powerful, visionary, complex, and it is in this complexity that its greatest fragility perhaps lies: the magmatic and multi-layered presence of motifs, stories and reflections covers, weakens and sometimes makes the central dramaturgical line barely perceptible. A separate mention should be made of the method used for the construction of the video segments: these are constructions that deepen the dreamlike, magmatic, desiring, irrational part of what is proposed by Sinisi's text; not scenography, not commentary, not explanation and not even parallel narration, but visual and connotative research, which disorients the spectator and widens and enriches the semantic boundaries of what happens on stage.

LA STAMPA (national page)
MASOLINO D'AMICO
August 4, 2022
Regional *Premiere*
Rassegna "Ti Racconto alla Luna"

BETWEEN HUSBAND AND WIFE PUT ON A PASOLINIAN "FAIRY TALE"

It is circulating in summer squares waiting to make its city debut *FAIRY TALE*, the latest work by the Piccola Compagnia della Magnolia. It was written by Fabrizio Sinisi and commissioned by the two performers, also a couple in life: Davide Giglio and Giorgia Cerruti, the latter also director. Locked in a room, a husband and wife are engaged in a sort of operation to recover her memory. The woman, in a nightgown like a patient, is often stretched out on a chaise longue, while the man goes out, does the shopping, brings her the Puzzle Week and tries to urge her to come out of her torpor to tell her dreams. We thus hear the stories, always only sketched out, of three females variously victims of male bullying or otherwise - one in America at the dawn of colonisation, one in France during the Revolution, one in 19th-century England. These trips, which the man follows with delicate patience, culminate in a final and liberating one, when the two find the strength together to recall the real tragic episode experienced by the couple and at the origin of her crisis.

Dedicated to the memory of Pasolini, Sinisi's work is reminiscent of the Friulian poet's dramaturgy for a visionarity that disdains too many explanations and also for the incisiveness of the dialogue. The script includes a large background screen on which images are projected during her dreams/stories that have no obvious relationship with what is being heard: thus while we hear of the redskin in love with the conquering white man, we see a messy party in a dry swimming pool. Shreds of memory or irrelevant fantasies mingle, obstructing the rational process; but given the subtlety of the writing, this addition to the performance may seem superfluous if not downright misleading, and one suspects that the work would work even better if left to the word without additions. In any case, the actors' performance is admirable, he a patient and courageous sidekick, she very convincing in the bewilderments of a person who is split and somewhat intrigued by what is happening to her.

QUARTA PARETE
FAUSTO NICOLINI
OCTOBER 23, 2022
Regional Premiere Teatro Basilica, Roma
Stagione Across universe

Spelled 'fairytale', read 'nightmare'. It is G.'s trip down memory lane.

Spelled “Fairy Tale”, it reads “nightmare”. But it is a fascinating nightmare that has its own motivations and justifications. G and D, the two characters of this chamber tragedy, as it has been called, live locked in a room: together they form a couple, and for more than an hour they seem to be perpetually tuning their instruments for a duet that they will only manage to play in the last five minutes of the performance, when finally in the labyrinth of the drama everything unravels and becomes clear. Before this happens we spectators struggle to follow the harmony of the story (because, in fact, there is none), often getting lost in the meanders of the rain of notes falling haphazardly. Suddenly, however, we realise that the author, Fabrizio Sinisi, is skilfully leading us along a tortuous path in G's memory: a disjointed memory, all to be reconstructed.

From the page of notes written for the performance by Giorgia Cerruti, the text's creator, director and actress (very good), it is clear that the tragedy is taken from a true story, as is often said in cinematographic language; and perhaps this is the reason why her acting contains a truth that immediately claws the listener. "The subject," the note continues, "is a free reference to Pier Paolo Pasolini's 'Calderòn', which is inspired by the seventeenth-century Spanish playwright's 'Life is a Dream'. Yet, beyond the reference to man's need to dream, no other comparisons can be ventured. FAIRY TALE enjoys its own mature and profound dramaturgical independence.

While G is the one who, having lost her memory, is searching for herself and her past, D, i.e. he (the convincing Davide Giglio), is a character with a dual personality. The first theatrical: the bourgeois and affectionate husband who tries to heal his wife's mind wounded by trauma, and therefore gives her flowers, helps her remember, gently and patiently stimulates her, even singing her a beautiful song. The second metatheatrical: an authentic executioner, a sort of Cotrone (Pirandello's last protagonist), who has no qualms about showing his woman's intimate tragedy in front of the audience, exploiting this tragedy and her vagueness to scrape together some money. In short, D deals with the other side of prostitution, and impudently admits it: 'We go through the stages of our pain in public'. He, the husband who, as a bourgeois, is all grimaces and moine, is ready to transform himself into a pimp, declaring moreover that all that confusion that G had experienced 'was not a dream, but another life'. More than Freud, more than Pasolini or Calderon, there is always him in the theatre, the usual Pirandello who places fiction in front of the mirror where reality is reflected. Yes, because there is also a strong suspicion that the entire tragedy of G was caused, in another life, precisely by the slimy D, the petty bourgeois who in a dream presents himself as the king of the beautiful fairy tale.

On stage, the protagonists retrace the fairy tales of their own pain, through the images projected on a screen. They are the dreamed visions of G's mental bewilderment, so it is obvious that they are not very explanatory and not at all clarifying, as well as flat and 'mechanical'. Since the acting of the two protagonists, on the other hand, is vivid, tenacious, believable and highly involving, those images, placed in the background, become superfluous because the audience follows the emotions directly from the actors and not from the projections. Thus, a phenomenon occurs contrary to what was perhaps the director's intention. And since emotions and applause are not lacking, we hope that the show can be repeated in Rome in 'future... six letters!', says G. when he begins to realise that the past does not return.

PAC
LEONARDO DEL FANTI
AUGUST 26, 2022
Regional *Premiere*
Operaestate festival

... we are instead witnessing in this edition another fairy tale, in another performance. Ideally inspired by Pier Paolo Pasolini's *Calderòn*, FAIRY TALE is a 'contemporary chamber tragedy' that aims to investigate the enigma of violence in human and personal history. Forced into a cramped space, the decayed bourgeois couple D. and G. rework and transform the pain of loss through three dreams set in 1617 London, 1793 Paris and 1856 Boone County.

Stories of love, violence and abuse of power masterfully shape the political act that the Piccola Compagnia della Magnolia, on an original text by Fabrizio Sinisi, wants to transmute, investigating the repressed, what is too true to be accepted. And so it is that, starting from the simple image of a man and a woman forced into a room in front of a screen as big as the entire wall, Giorgia Cerruti and Davide Giglio march powerfully towards the decolonisation of thought, explicitly denouncing the banality of a pusillanimous small businessman who forces the woman to sell herself for the survival of the family, only to then idolise her in the madness of the violence he has forced her to endure: "I would do it if I could". Who is the victim and who the perpetrator of the story is not for us to know. The woman, force of nature, benign and malevolent, generous in giving and wise in taking away, thus becomes a metaphor for a world torn apart by globalisation and pierced by a thousand gazes that plunder the material in which one would like to embody the dream of love. A black fable that deserves to be seen on stage, the pitiless place of reality.

KRAPP'S LAST POST
DAVIDE SANNIA
AUGUST 22, 2022
Regional Premiere
Festival Asti Teatro

A tale of vulnerability by Piccola Compagnia della Magnolia

THE FIRST PART OF A TRILOGY WHICH VERSED THE TEXT COLLABORATION BETWEEN GIORGIA CERRUTI, DAVIDE GIGLIO, FABRIZIO SINISI
THE PERFORMANCE WILL BE ON STAGE ON 26 AUGUST, FOR OPERAESTATE FESTIVAL

They play at home Giorgia Cerruti and Davide Giglio of Piccola Compagnia della Magnolia presenting in Asti, their home town, FAIRY TALE, their latest theatrical effort here in its regional premiere. The show, part of the AstiTeatro44 programme, is staged at Spazio Kor.

The scene, rather bare, presents us with an ordinary room of an ordinary house. He and she, imprisoned in a "delirium in two" of Ionesque memory, are already there, on stage, before the beginning.

They cannot, will not, cannot get out. In the background, a large wall becomes a screen for the projections that agitate this torment. A 'contemporary chamber tragedy' where the adjective 'chamber' hides a disturbing truth that, little by little, unfolds and comes to life.

The 'weight' of the two performers is apparently unbalanced. He, the director of this game of massacre, is the bearer of the reality of the facts, of that truth that she has lost in the folds of life. The sceptre of his power, which he constantly waves, is a remote control through which he operates the dream, the memory of what once was. A cruel presenter, with his memory intact, forces his consort to dream in order to relive history. And he does so by addressing the audience directly, to entertain, to amuse. It is the tamer who stirs his fair, proud too of his sadism.

Enclosed in their domestic space, the two performers relive the "fairy tales" of their tragic existence on a daily basis, that which has indelibly marked and wounded them. The reference to Pasolini's *Calderòn*, to whom the performance is ideally dedicated, is inevitable. The osmosis between theatre, the seat of the real, the repetitive, the boring, and cinema, the magic portal of dreams, is very clear and lapidary, unfortunately to the detriment of the former. While on the stage almost nothing happens, on the screen three different moments take shape in which the lives of the couple intercept that of everyone. In each one we find at the centre a violence, a trauma, a prevarication of the powerful over the powerless, of the masculine over the feminine, and each time the protagonists experience in their own skin some pivotal episodes of human history.

The space-temporal changes are absurd, unexpected, surprising. From early 17th-century London to Molière's Paris to mid-19th-century Boone County. Alongside Cerruti and Giglio appear some well-known faces from Turin theatre such as Michele Di Mauro, a long-standing friend of Magnolia, but also Ulla Alasjarvi, the latter starring in a touching personification of France, wrapped in a tricolour drape on a station platform.

Fabrizio Sinisi, who wrote the text of the play, sews a tailor-made dramaturgical outfit onto the bodies of the two lead actors and respects their objectives. The production is the first part of "Vulnerable Project", which envisages a trilogy on the very theme of vulnerability by the company with texts by Sinisi.

The Piccola Compagnia della Magnolia's research thus arrives at a political act that, by showing the tragic existence of the two young lovers, actually wants to turn the lights on the sense of what is right in contemporary society. And to do so, it questions itself in the first person, providing the dramaturgy with numerous explicit and recognisable autobiographical contents. A contribution that enriches the staging even more, adding memories to the memory.