MARCO MARTINELLI & ERMANNA MONTANARI

TEATRO DELLE ALBE

FEDELI D’AMORE (LOVE’S FAITHFUL)

a polyptych in seven panels for Dante Alighieri
by Marco Martinelli

U.S. PREMIERE | PHILADELPHIA DEBUT

DEVISED/DIRECTED BY Marco Martinelli, Ermanna Montanari
ON STAGE Ermanna Montanari, Anusc Castiglioni
MUSIC Luigi Ceccarelli, Mario Marzocchi, Luigi Ceccarelli
TRUMPET Simone Marzocchi
SOUND DIRECTOR Marco Olivieri
SPACE/COSTUMES Ermanna Montanari, Anusc Castiglioni
SHADOWS Anusc Castiglioni
LIGHTING DESIGN Enrico Isola
LIGHTING TECHNICIAN Luca Pagliano
VIDEO TECHNICIAN Fagio
SHADOWS TECHNICIAN Alessandro Pippo Bonoli
RECORDED PERSIAN SETAR Darioush Madani
MUSICAL REALIZATION Edisonstudio Roma

MUSICAL CONSULTANTS Francesco Altilio, Giulio Cintoni, Cristian Maddalena, Mirjana Nardelli, Fabrizio Nastari, Giovanni Tancredi, Andrea Veneri
ICONOGRAPHIC CONSULTANT Alessandro Volpe
DRESSMAKING Laura Graziani Alta Moda
GRAPHICS/SILK-SCREEN PRINTING ON FABRIC La Stamperia laboratorio artistico di A. Mosconi
SCENIC ELEMENTS Teatro delle Albe Technical Team (Alessandro Pippo Bonoli, Fabio Ceroni, Luca Fagioli, Enrico Isola, Dennis Masotti, Danilo Maniscalco, Luca Pagliano)
ORGANIZATION/PROMOTION Silvia Pagliano, Francesca Venturi
PRESS Rosalba Ruggeri

Produced by Teatro delle Albe/Ravenna Teatro in collaboration with Fondazione Campania dei Festival - Napoli Teatro Festival and Ravenna Festival.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 4 @ 7:30 PM
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 5 @ 8 PM

Annenberg Center, Prince Theatre

There will be no intermission.
fedeli d'Amore is a stage poem by Marco Martinelli (published in the U.S by PAJ Publications 2020). Revolving around Dante and our own present times, it is focused on the original vocal research of Ermanna Montanari (this performance earned her seventh Ubu Prize for “Best Italian Actress”) intertwined with the electroacoustic music by Luigi Ceccarelli.

Different voices speak to us in these seven panels: the fog of a dawn in 1321, the demon of the pit where the merchants of death are punished, a donkey that carried the poet on his last journey, the “scolding” imp who incites brawls about money, Italy kicking herself, Alighieri’s daughter Antonia, and “an end that is not an end.”

These countless voices, represented by Montanari’s single voice, speak to us of the refugee, of the poet fled from his own city and now laying on his deathbed exiled in Ravenna, voices that are suspended between the fourteenth century and our own day. In a scene generated by a vocal, sonorous, visual and dramaturgical alchemy able to bind together the psyche and the world, Dante is invoked while embracing a single salvation: Love is what makes us rebel, it is the force that liberates and elevates.

Alchemy

Yesterday, we decided to award ourselves two days of complete silence so as to put some order into the difficult research for our upcoming work: Love’s faithful, what an effort to spring lightly. For months we’ve been poised over this material, consisting of musical pieces and poetry, mostly from Inferno, the work on Dante we did last summer. We decided to close ourselves “to the world”. A hard thing for us who are always likely to say yes, to dialogue, to the surface that is the skin of things, and certainly very substantial, but in these days of concentration, all this noise runs the risk of becoming confusion. Rocklike faith in the reference community gets to be exhausting and we have to separate ourselves from outside. For me it isn’t all that difficult, but for Marco it’s a condition to be declared to the company. Marco has daily liturgies, limpid as Renaissance architecture.

After waking, after dedicating half an hour to his person, the day begins for writing and reading and phoning, whereas for me the morning is all jumbled, when it actually is morning, and which is often midday. It depends on whether I feel like washing or not, having breakfast or not, going for an hour’s walk on the beach or staying in and watching a cop film on Netflix, or... Marco smiles and waits. And then, when I’m ready, we begin.

How in these days to proceed with the devising of Love’s faithful? One begins with the unexpected. This time, we’re really all at sea. The material we’re working on doesn’t satisfy us, seems weak. Maybe it’s only an affection for those dark rhythms that the musicians’ percussions have left in our heads, for those verses of Ugolino that keep running through your mind. We’ve brought in a shadow theatre wizard, Anousc, because it feels essential to work with such a potent filter in order to get a handle on Dante, on La Vita Nuova, on the confraternity of Love’s faithful. But shadow turns out to be an end in itself and we can’t see ourselves in relation to it. The same with Ceccarelli. We’ve got no indications for the music; we don’t have a plausible structure to pitch him so that he can start his journey through sounds. We’re mute. Both of us with our reference instruments.

Marco reading Eliot and Pound, me down on the ground, on a floor covered with sheets and photocopies of images that say nothing to me. We’re in the abyss, a sidereal distance separates us from seeing the work. Calm prevails, there’s faith in the other, in a possible epiphany. I pick up a poem from the floor, copied on a scrap of paper under a crooked drawing of a sail. Dated last January:
Love, today your name
slipped from my lips
as the last stair eludes the foot...
Now the water of life is split
and the whole long climb / must recommence.
I bartered you, love, with words.
Dark honey that smells
inside diaphanous pots
beneath sixteen
hundred years of lava
I shall recognise you by the immortal silence.

The poem is by Cristina Campo. Her crystalline writing, her devotion to the word, urges me to read it to Marco who, like her, is committed to taking account of every word, words of stone that would like to aim at song. The architectonic score of writers’ brains has always fascinated me, and I obediently submit to listening. Writing for them is sacred space. And sometimes words rise up like a dam and break through the toughness of a subject reluctant to make itself visible. As I read aloud, Marco beats out the time on his thigh with a pencil, as he often does, as if he were listening mentally to the harmony of the world, while I stretch out motionless on the cold marble floor. At a certain point of the night, after hours and hours of fruitless hypotheses and shipwrecked ideas, as if at the end of an initiatory ceremony begun in the wake of those amorous lines that Campo had left in the daytime, I happen to say: "Marco, what about the fog speaking? The fog, yes, a figure that takes on a voice, a figure of the world." Marco looks at me, surprised. The fog, right, the fog. The fog that enveloped Ravenna on the night between 13th and 14th of September 1321, when Dante was dying of ague, delirious, surrounded by his dearest, the pupils of the Studio, the lords of the city. And he starts writing. The tap has been turned on.

Ermanna Montanari
Ravenna, March 2018

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Ermanna Montanari, actress, author and set designer, and Marco Martinelli, playwright and director, founded the Teatro delle Albe in 1983 and share its artistic direction.

For her original itinerary of vocal research, Ermanna Montanari has received acknowledgements such as seven Ubu Prizes, Golden Laurel-Mess Festival, Lo straniero Prize “dedicated to the memory of Carmelo Bene,” and the Eleonora Duse Prize. Several books are dedicated to her including Do, undo, do over. Ermanna Montanari in Teatro delle Albe by Laura Mariani (Titivillus); Akousma Figure and voice in the acoustic theatre of Ermanna Montanari (Quodlibet) by Enrico Pitozzi; Cellula. An anatomy of stage space (Quodlibet) by E. Pitozzi and Montanari, and numerous essays. She’s the founder and director of MALAGOLA, an international center for voice studies, with vice-direction by Pitozzi.

Marco Martinelli has been awarded with several prizes including seven Ubu Prizes, Golden Laurel-Mess Festival, the Prize for Career Achievement - Journées Théâtrales de Carthage and best theatre book in France in 2021 for his Aristophane dans les banlieues (Actes Sud). His texts have been published and staged in ten languages and selected by Fabulamundi and Italian and American Playwrights Project. Martinelli has written and directed several films with scripts co-signed with Montanari, including Vita agli arresti di Aung San Suu Kyi (2017), The Sky over Kibera (2019) Er (2020), Ulisse XXVI (2021) and he’s working to a new film based on fedeli d’Amore, in collaboration with the Italian Cultural Institute in Abu Dhabi.