

HAMLET



"...sarà una commedia
a inchiodargli la coscienza sulla sedia."

W. SHAKESPEARE

TRADUZIONE, REGIA E INTERPRETAZIONE DI LUIGI CERRI

Collaborazione artistica di Adèle Frantz e Chloé Latour

Produzione : Compagnia Avanti, Canopée, Città di Nanterre, Teatro Manhattan

www.compagniecanopee.com / www.compagnieavanti.fr

HAMLET

Translated into italian, directed and performed by **LUIGI CERRI**

Stage direction in co-operation with **ADELE FRANTZ** and **CHLOÉ LATOUR**

Costume and props **TIFENN DESCHAMPS**

Musical arrangements **LUIGI CERRI**

Stage lighting **CYRIL GERVASONI-WOLOSZYN**

Play in italian

Production

Compagnie Avanti, Compagnie Canopée, Ville de Nanterre, Teatro Manhattan



HAMLET ON STAGE

The most famous play in the world, an inextricable maze of themes, Hamlet has become the symbol of theatre, a "reflection" on theatre itself.

When you decide to stage Hamlet, you can't be exhaustive, you need to choose a point of view. Most of times, movie or theatre productions fall in one of the two following categories: either they perform the whole text, and try to respect the traditional aesthetics; or they totally deconstruct the plot, using the text as the inspiring material for an original show.

In the former case the performance lasts four hours, drowning the audience in its tangle of themes and sub-themes; in the latter, we are more likely to enjoy the director's work than Shakespeare's masterpiece.

I wanted to follow a third path. A path that would allow me to respect the text, the spirit of the drama, and yet to pick an angle, transposing the action into a particular time-space dimension.

In my version, Hamlet is alone on stage. He's haunted. I actually take very seriously the appearance of his fathers' ghost. What if Hamlet was surrounded by ghosts? What if Hamlet wasn't really able to draw the line between reality and imagination?

The danish prince can't trust anybody, not even his own eyes, his own ears. That's what his famous doubt is about: am I living in the real world? How can I have an impact on this world if my reality is so unstable? What kind of voices should I listen to?

I think of Hamlet as a deceased himself: trapped in a limbo of semi-consciousness, a prisoner in a kind of dark basement, tormented by hostile presences, by voices, memories, nightmares. I imagine him playing the plot that drove him into the abysses, swayed by the "whirlwind of passions", yet unravelling with precision the story of his own destruction.

Luigi Cerri



DIRECTOR'S NOTES

Hamlet's tragedy is existential, political. His struggle and his weakness are our own: our conscience is too loud, our reality too unstable.

My generation was unable to claim for justice; our fathers left to us a crumbling empire, that we couldn't manage to rebuild because we missed a clear plan. We are still hesitating, asking questions to ourselves. That made us careful, sensitive. Like Hamlet, we are better at playing and meditating than at fighting wars: "The play's the thing wherein I'll catch the conscience of the king".

The plot hatched by the voices around him is like an invisible cobweb. Hamlet's mind's not lucid enough to grasp it. He's too naive to play the political game.

Though, Hamlet is not just an artist. He's not humble enough. He thinks of himself as a hero, he must rescue the universe: "The time is out of joint; O curs'd spite, That ever I was born to set it right!"

In his attempt to strike the criminal, Hamlet goes astray. He kills by accident Polonius, he gets his friends Rosencrantz and Guildenstern executed, he unintentionally strikes Laertes to death.

All these tragic mistakes remind us the dangers of blind violence. If our arrows hit the target, we wouldn't waste time and energy fighting people unrelated to our cause. If our rage could be rightly addressed, we wouldn't become "monsters", terrorists. And that's what Hamlet turns out to be.

THE FORMAT

This show stages one actor playing the role of Hamlet, interacting only with recorded voices: the King, the Queen, the Ghost, Ophelia, Polonius, Laertes, Rosencrantz, Guildenstern, a captain, an undertaker.

The set is a plain space, lightened by three hanging light-bulbs. Three stools make up the stage design; on the ground some scattered papers, a book, a pen, a portrait, a bag.

This simplicity, inheritance of Peter Brook's work, is needed to emphasize the universality of the theme. This space could be anywhere: a theatre, the cellar of your house, or the *huis clos* of Sartre's "No exit".

At the beginning of the show Hamlet is lying lifeless on the three stools. He is poorly dressed: a large gray sweater that reminds an untidy teenager wearing an armor. His face is yellowish, grayish: this make up not only contributes to pull the performance out of realism, but also gives an impression of sickness, of decomposition.

As the plays proceeds, Hamlet alternates moments of waking and sleeping, awareness and oblivion. His movements are unpredictable: he walks slowly, intensely, like a butoh performer, then he dances madly; he bursts with energy, and suddenly collapses.

It's only at the end, after his encounter with the undertaker, that Hamlet seems to approach enlightenment. He gets "detached". He's ready to die.



THE SOUND

The soundscape is an essential and central element of this production. As the show begins, the soundtrack is launched by the technician, who will never have to stop it. Like a river flowing, the sound proceeds and drives Hamlet throughout the scenes, until the end.

Three sorts of sounds are mixed together: the voices of the characters (played by the performer, recorded and slightly edited with a software), the noises (such as the ocean, the fireplace, dogs barking, flies, an earthquake, sword swishes, etc), the music.

Among the music tracks, many styles are represented: themes from Bach, Mozart, Schubert, as well as from Hitchcock's "Vertigo", not excluding some popular Italian tunes (Mina, F. De André); the Ghost theme is one of Aphex Twin's electronic ambient works, while Philip Glass's hypnotizing loops of "Orion" contribute to create a whirling atmosphere. This variety of musical worlds withdraws the performance from a pre-ordered scheme, not only surprising the audience, but also suggesting the transversality of this classic tragedy.

The show is conceived as a jubilation of words, music, sound effects. The goal is not to impress the audience with technicalities, but to stimulate their ears. To envelop them in a sonic pool, in the inner world of Hamlet, and leave the rest free to be imagined.

This symphony of verses is like a musical score: the performer must say his lines at the right moment, at the right pace. His constrained freedom reminds the condition of Hamlet himself.



THE TEXT

The translation follows the original text with regard to the architecture of scenes, condensing the plot to the scenes with Hamlet. The fourth and fifth act, when the intrigue tends to stray from the main theme, are subject to larger cuts.

I decided to translate the original text into Italian, my mother-tongue. The translation aims at reproducing the rhythm of Shakespeare's language, and tends to privilege dense, bodily sounds, over the literal transposition of original expressions. I also tried to refresh the translation of very famous monologues, such as *"to be or not to be"*, and let contemporary ears discover their meaning beyond the well-known formula.

The sound of Italian seems to me very appropriate to translate Shakespeare: the musicality of Italian allows the performer to "dance" over words, which resound like whiplashes. The flexible syntax of Italian, and its richness of popular expressions, facilitate the juxtaposition of different levels of language.

This contrast of styles occasions several comic situations. I colored the characters with different accents: the King Claudius speaks the polished bureaucratic Italian of the corridors of power; Polonius has a clear Neapolitan accent, suggesting a talkative and gossipy personality; Guildenstern and Rosencrantz are Milanese well-educated boys, whereas the undertaker is a bold and friendly worker from Romagna.

TECHNICAL SPECS

RUNNING TIME OF THE SHOW

1 hour and 12 minutes

STAGE DIMENSIONS

- Width: 4 metres at least
- Depth: 3 metres at least
- Height under pipes : 4 metres at least

LIGHTS

- 6 plano convexe (PC) 1kW
 - 4 profile spots
 - 3 PC 650W
 - 3 cables for the light-bulbs long enough to reach the ceiling
- Lighting design adaptable to the equipment of the venue.

SOUND

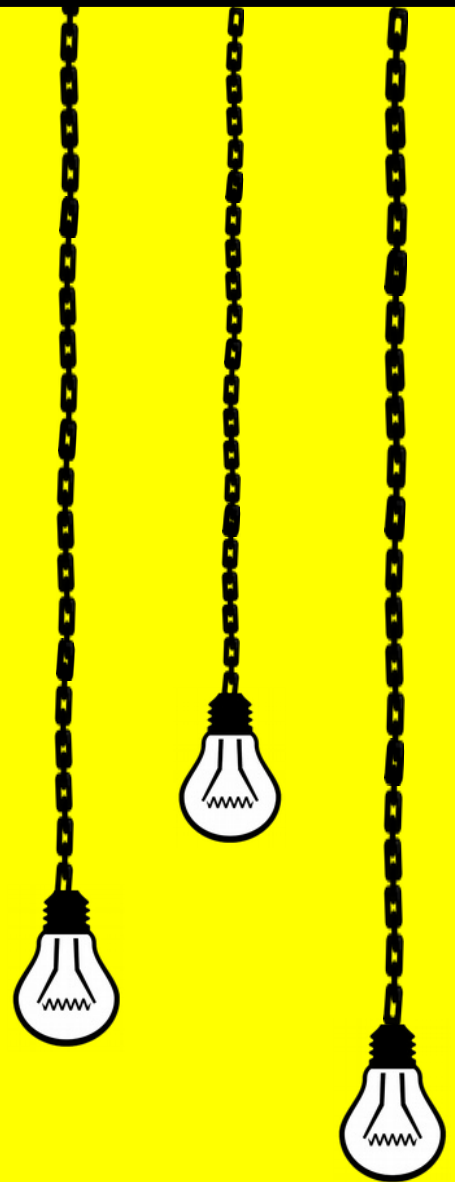
- System of diffusion / amplifiers
- 2 Returns stage
- Soundtrack played from CD or media player.

VIDEO

1 video projector for subtitles (to be projected on the back wall)

BUMP IN AND REHEARSAL

- Stage set up : 30 minutes
- Sound : 1 technician, 4 hours
- Light : 2 technicians, 4 hours
- Video : 1 technician, 4 hours
- 4 hours for rehearsal



LUIGI CERRI



Artistic director of Companies Avanti and Canopée, Luigi Cerri was born in Lecco (Italy) in 1975, and grew up in Rome. Actor, author and director, he also has a Ph.D. in Economics.

In 2002 he moves to Paris (France), where he enters the International School of Theatre Jacques Lecoq. He carries on his formation by working on voice: he follows Nadine George's workshop *Voice & Shakespearean text for Professional Actor*, and takes lyric singing lessons with Julia Sloman.

In 2006 he writes and performs *Romulus & Remus*, a solo play. The myth of the two twins fighting each other for the very first throne of Rome is here revisited and played in a comedy-style. The actor animates this story of brotherhood, of love and hate, of power and destiny, by means of his body and his voice.

He also writes and directs the award-winning play *Blé et Fer - les véritables aventures de Robinson Crusoe*. The Robinson Crusoe of this play is a kind of cruel Don Quixote. He feels like a tragic hero, he thinks he bears the burdens of the whole of mankind.

For the company Opéra de Poche, he directs and adapts *Don Giovanni*, by W.A. Mozart, for 4 singers and a piano. Later, he directs with the same team *Orphée* by Gluck.

In 2012 he performs in *Othello*, that he translated and adapted as a solo performance. This show is currently being performed in international festivals: France, Italy, Armenia, South Korea, Russia, Croatia...

Recently, he participates in "*Gaïa Global Circus*", an art and science project by Bruno Latour on global warming. This play has been performed in Europe (France, Germany, Switzerland, United Kingdom) as well as in America (USA, Canada).

In 2016 he wrote another text on these topics, "*La Catastrophe. Et alors?*", a conference-performance in which he interprets a wide arrays of points of view on climate change and environmental crisis. He's also the author and actor in "*Cabaret de la Crise*", a humorous show on economic and social issues.

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COMPANY CANOPEE



Canopée : layer of vegetation between the soil and the sky, upper floor of the forest.

One of the richest places on earth in terms of life; a densely inhabited network where every living creature is unique and contributes to the survival of the ties woven by the ensemble.

Since its creation in 2012, the company aims at proposing shows at the same time compelling and accessible. Based in Nanterre, in the outskirts of Paris, we strive for opening up poetic spaces, creating ties with people, through meetings, workshops, shows, conferences and debates.

Luigi Cerri and Adèle Frantz, authors, directors and actors, co-direct the company Canopée. For us, the actor's work is always at the centre and at the origin of the creative process. Our shows often involve narration, where the expression is first of all physical. Our theatre is colored with many influences, from Italian *Commedia dell'Arte* to Asian traditional performing arts.

Our future projects include writing new plays and working on classical drama. The possibility of playing in different languages (French, English, Italian), and the mobility of our sets will allow us to perform our productions in multiple and stimulating frameworks.

Shows currently being performed:

Othello by W. Shakespeare, directed and performed by L. Cerri

Que votre barbe est bleue, written, directed and performed by Adèle Frantz, Diana Trujillo and Giorgia Ciampi ;

Cabaret de la Crise ; texts by L. Cerri / directed and performed by L. Cerri & A. Frantz.

Le joueur de flûte ; written and directed by L. Cerri / performed by A. Frantz.

La Catastrophe. Et alors? written, directed and performed by L. Cerri.

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