



Associazione Culturale Teatro ricerche

6th International Theatre and Drama Education Conference

Athens 27, 28, 29, 30 March 2008

Title of the workshop:

"Devil masks between the sacred and the secular

From the Mime to the Clown to the Commedia dell'Arte"

Facilitator

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Workshop description

The general aim of this workshop is to transmit the knowledge of the tradition of the propitiatory rites (the Calendimaggio, the Carnival, the Lent ...) in the European culture.

The theoretical and practical course (literary, poetic and theatrical) will be developed through a theatre activity in which the psychophysical action of the participants will be the main part.

The participants will work at the same time on the technique of the Mime, the Clown and the Commedia dell'Arte, using music and dance too, to acquire the knowledge and the consciousness of the tradition element, and afterwards to turn the contents in an innovative scenic action.

The main purpose of this workshop will be to transfer to the participants a possible methodology for the creation of a performance in which the different languages talk among them, trying to find a right expressive balance between the style (the different techniques: Mime, Clown, Commedia dell'Arte) and the content (the Calendimaggio, the Carnival, the Lent... the tradition).

Study program

Theory

- The propitiatory rite in the european culture
- The Calendimaggio
- The Carnival and the Lent
- The processions
- The opera singing
- The dance
- The music
- The narration
- The drama.

Practice

- Basic technique on the mime art
- The White Clown and the Augustus Clown:
 - the character
 - the costume
 - the make-up
- Expressive technique of the Commedia dell'Arte
 - use of the mask
 - the posture
 - the voice (the peculiarity of the voice and the singing)
 - the dance
 - the music.

Target group

Teachers, students, actors, artists, cultural/social operators, with a basic knowledge on movement techniques or others techniques about body movement applied to the theatre activity.

This workshop will follow the same study technique put to practice by the actors of the company Teatro ricerche for the creation of the performance "Hellequin et Dame Luque", silent plot among Mime, Clown and Commedia dell'Arte, proposed with the workshop for the 2008 Conference (duration: 50 minutes, 2 actors, Mario Gallo and Rosalba Battaglia):

The performance

"Hellequin et Dame Luque – le nozze di Arlecchino"

The *canovaccio* of **Hellequin et Dame Luque – le nozze di Arlecchino** – (the wedding of Harlequin) in a contemporary key, is inspired, in particular, by a tale of the French literature of the XIII century inherent to the nuptial rituals, in which Harlequin marries an old witch and harlot, Dame Luque.

Through the improvisation of the actors the sequences of the *canovaccio* attempt to recreate the tradition, the poetry and the magic, of a play titled "**Jeu de la feuillée**", written by Adam de la Halle (poet, jester, musician) in 1276. The latter would have been written in occasion of the *Calendimaggio* (Festival of Spring or Mayday) or any another festival celebrating the beginning of a cycle having an equal propitiatory character.

The play is concerned with a banquet of fairies prepared under a green gazebo typical of the Breton tradition. Suddenly, the sound of bells is heard, it announces the approaching of the band of Harlequin, and now all the characters on stage would like, for fear, to run home. Croquesot arrives, the courier-jester (first servant of king Harlequin), and then fairy Morgana appears followed by the other two fairies, Arsilla, good and beneficial, and Malgoria, bad and mischievous. Croquesot brings to the queen of the fairies a love message from King Harlequin, and the fairy instructs the servant to greet his master: during this prophetic night the rendezvous of the two characters takes place in the underworld, from this union, abundant crops and luck for the community will be assured.

The development of the subject of this story departs, as a pretext, from the tradition in order to re-compose an ironic 'study' of love relationships that are intended not only as a two player game between demoniac masks, but also as a conflict internal to the game of the man-woman combination. These games of opposites, attractions, relaxations, malice and dirt generate the atavistic quarrel inevitable for the survival of one's own individuality.

The mixture of languages that interact on stage, between silence and noise, determine the company's continuous search and experimentation of those forms and contents that more than others are coherent with the evolution and innovation of contemporary *Commedia dell'arte*.