

T E A T R O V A L D O C A

C A I N

director *Cesare Ronconi*
text *Mariangela Gualtieri*



with
Danio Manfredini
Raffaella Giordano
Mariangela Gualtieri
Leonardo Delogu
and with
Susanna Dimitri, Giacomo Garaffoni,
Sara Leghissa, Isabella Macchi,
Silvia Mai, Daria Menichetti, Mila Vanzini
live music
percussions *Enrico Malatesta*
electronics *Alice Berni*

This *Cain* is one of the impressive frescoes by *Cesare Ronconi* and the *Teatro Valdoca*; it is impressive not only because of its excellence and of the people involved, but because of its subtlety, enthusiasm, time of study and work spent around the figure of Cain.

The audience will be faced with a non-narrative, visionary staging where *the dream* seems to be the most appropriate background for this page from the Book of Genesis.

The central character is the disturbing, fascinating first human being in the world, who not only kills his brother, but also builds the first city and sets in motion the technological progress which would continue to this day.

The text, written by *Mariangela Gualtieri* for these actors during rehearsals, presents a Cain who looks very much like us, men and women of this day and age: we are alone like he is, we destroy life inside and outside of us, we have no neighbourly idea, and we are also as active as he is, remote from any celestial topic. *Cesare Ronconi* has called on his most trusted staff.

Danio Manfredini was given the arduous task of depicting Cain, removing him from the merely violent stereotype, outlining all human nuances, while at the same time revealing the impossibility of representing this icon in a realistic way.

It is a sculpted Cain, inspired by the work of Georg Baselitz, often wandering on the treacherous edge of the stage, as if to mark the threshold between an exciting and bloodthirsty past on the one hand, and the audience with its silent faces on the other: this is the realised and surprising future of Cain.

His power and hubris are excited by an *Illusionist Lucifer*, a seducer of infants who sometimes takes on the violent role of a younger double of Cain. He is played by *Leonardo Delogu*, a young actor who has grown in this Company and has now almost achieved good expressive maturity.

The totally suave *Angel* is played by *Raffaella Giordano*, with her touch, her mastery in combining lightness and restlessness, flight and abyss, madness and insight. *Mariangela Gualtieri* will be the voice of the Angel; she will also appear on stage as an old demented and visionary woman.

A great and multi-faceted element is the *Chorus*, often led by the assistant director *Serenella Martufi*, which consists of seven young actors-dancers: *Susanna Dimitri*, *Giacomo Garaffoni*, *Sara Leghissa*, *Isabella Macchi*, *Silvia Mai*, *Daria Menichetti*, *Mila Vanzini*.

From the Choir there emerges every now and again the silent and helpless figure of *Abele*, showing various faces and types of victim. The Chorus shows the contradicting characters of people worldwide: violent, compassionate, wise, petty, etc., like the first seedling of a humanity in progress.

The rhythmic texture of the whole show is entrusted to a *Percussionist* who is half-hidden backstage, almost giving this performance the appearance of a great *live* concert: it is *Enrico Malatesta* who together with the composer *Alice Berni* and with *Luca Fusconi* as sound director, every night writes the stage sound anew.

This Cain reveals the gravity of our time; there is also, however, an upturned perspective which suggests seeing humans as having just left prehistory and being now ready for full humanity. “*Safe journey. Easy climb. Good walk / earthling. This is where humans begin./ Do not fear; you start here. You are the first / of an infinity. Like all those who will follow, you bear the promise / and carry the weight of everyone. You are the origin / of humanity. It will produce immense work./...*” These words, spoken by the Angel to this first born on earth, sound like a wish for each and every one of us.

stage's notes

*We are such stuff
as dreams are made on,
and our little life
is rounded with a sleep.*

(Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, Act IV scene I)

This “oracle-like” staging of Cain is the central event in my artistic production over the past two years. It is a journey in the shadow and darkness, inside the beautiful cell which the work of several years has built, one brick after the other, one work after the other. My shadow and that of my staff is projected on the walls of the prison, with the strength of rupestral engravings and hieroglyphics.

It is necessary not be scared of their apparent incoherence; on the contrary there is an intrinsic coherence which slowly emerges, as at the end of a “delirium” during the shift from dream to reality, in that ambiguously conscious space. It is a representation of things and words, possibly something is also revealed about the destiny of the audience; it certainly touches on human hypersensitivity and the ensuing silent complicity. In order to see it all, you need to close your eyes and enter the global stage appearance, without fear of being swallowed up. I am immensely grateful to all those, to the many, who are helping us make it come true.

Cesare Ronconi

the text

From the author's introduction to Cain, published in 2011 in the Einaudi theatre collection.

The section in Genesis regarding Cain is ever-changing, mysterious, full of silences, subtle in suggesting possible doubles: agriculture and shepherding, nomadic and sedentary life, action contemplation, city and desert, rational and animal elements; in short it is full of captivating themes. I have kept a certain distance from the biblical text, remote from any exegetic attempt; I was more attracted by the silence which towers over the figure of Cain and by the power of this icon: he is all alone in a blinding desert, resolute, with the killing of a brother on his shoulders, the curse of the earth, the remoteness from the face of divinity. And then he starts, with the building of the first city, the black technological arts – blackened mainly by losing the ethical values which have not followed a huge technological development. What is striking is that the first city was built by someone who killed his brother, a runaway, godless individual. Maybe the author of Genesis felt the threat of taking action, reasoning and wishing. The threat of intelligence. But also the strength of this energy which characterises us: it is not a degeneration; it is a supply of energy. This is how we are made, with this irrepressible drive to act, with this inner turmoil.

He is so much like us, Cain: it almost seemed to me that, before us, it would have been impossible to fully understand him. We are as alone as he is; we destroy life inside and outside of us; we have no neighbourly idea, and we are also as active as he is, remote from any celestial topic, forever devoted to earthliness. Sometimes, when faced with the elements in the story of this first born which do not add up, I have thought that maybe love is the stuff we are made on, to the extent that if we are not loved we become deformed.

(...) I have not understood much of this vastness, in spite of the enthusiasm and dedication with which I have tried to dive into this sea, which is so dark, exciting, dangerous. The impression now is that I barely managed to get my feet wet. I will return there, possibly.

The enigma of evil, the *misterium iniquitatis*, is a backdrop which we cannot avoid exploring, even though we are not capable of holding our breath for as long as it would require. This is my first attempt, still affected by the shadows I have tried to cross, impressed by the reluctance of this subject to say a final word. This will never be spoken, fortunately. Nobody owns it to the full: those who believed they owned it, have all too often sowed pain. I could do nothing more than stammer.

Mariangela Gualtieri

credits

lights and stage *Cesare Ronconi*
assistant director *Serenella Martufi*
costumes *Daniela Fabbri, Sofia Vannini*
sound and sound effects *Luca Fusconi*
musical composition *Alice Berni, Enrico Malatesta*
sculptures *Erich Turrone, Verter Turrone*
stage props *il laboratorio dell'imperfetto*
wood constructions *Maurizio Bertoni*
sound equipment *Antonio De Luca*
light equipment *Stephan Duve*
stagehand *Stefano Cortesi*
stage photos *Rolando Paolo Guerzoni*
graphic project *Capoversi*
organization *Elisa De Carli*
administration *Morena Cecchetti*
administrative consulting *Cronopios*
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