

VareseNews

Dario and Franca: “We have 169 years between us. When shall we start getting old?”

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It was finally **back again in Varese**, and, as expected, it was a success. “After thousands of performances, this play is still more alive than ever.” The “jests” of **Dario Fo and Franca Rame** took shape more than 40 years ago, and since then, “Mistero Buffo” has been performed thousands of times, in numerous theatres throughout the world, without it losing its emotions and passion. And **the tribute that the audience in the sold out theatre in Varese gave** was the confirmation of the vitality of the theatrical experience of the Nobel prize-winner and of his wife.

“We have 169 years between us, but the other morning, Franca looked at me and asked, when shall we start getting old?” the actor said, as he gave her an affectionate hug.

And so, here they are again in Varese, thirty years after their last performance in town of “Mistero Buffo”, and even more years after their youth spent for a certain time in this very province (as Azzate’s municipal tourist board points out on Facebook).

By now, everything has been said and written about “Mistero Buffo”, but whenever it returns to the stage, it deserves a new page, because every time, Dario Fo does something unexpected (from the beginning of the play, when **he invited the audience to come up and sit on stage** to watch the performance), and then because it is the show that, par excellence, **taunts power and the powerful**. And every time, it gives voice and life to those who have seen history pass over their heads, who have often been crushed by it.

And the proof of this is the kick up the behind that in Fo’s theatre Pope **Boniface VIII**,

adorned with rings and a cape, receives from Jesus. This is one of the most famous scenes, with which Fo both desecrates and taunts the hierarchies of the church, avenging the sincere faith and dignity of the oppressed in every time.

On the Varese stage, the two actors brought four monologues, the most renowned “jests” that make up the work. Starting with **Lazarus’s resurrection**, as told through the eyes of a gravedigger and of an ordinary man, waging on the outcome of the miracle.

Immediately after, Franca Rame performed the **birth of the first man**, a woman, Eve, according to the version of the apocryphal Gospels. It is the story of how Eve came before Adam in the creation and how they found love.

The third part was that of **Boniface VIII**, of the encounter between a Church living in the lap of luxury and Jesus carrying the cross. The evening-performance came to an end with Franca Rame’s performance of **Mary mourning her son under the cross**, showing the agony and pain of a mother suffering because of her son’s death, void of sacredness or liturgy, but full of humanity.

It was an intense evening, full of the study and passion with which the two actors have infused their performances over the years. Great pains were taken to guarantee the authenticity, even the language, with **the reconstruction of the people’s dialects**, the Lombard and Venetian that characterised how people spoke at the time of the story, following a thread that unfolded and interwove also with the present. The CEO of Fiat, Sergio Marchionne, Pope Benedict XVI, Silvio Berlusconi, and other figures of current affairs are “indispensable references for our work,” Fo told our newspaper. “They are the key to interpreting many aspects of everyday life, the cunning, the corruption, the dirty tricks and the brawls.”

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