



Commedia dell'Arte

Teatro Paravento Locarno
P.O. Box 615
David M. Zurbuchen
Miguel Á. Cienfuegos
CH-6601 Locarno
Tel./Fax: +41-91-751 93 53
info@teatro-paravento.ch
www.teatro-paravento.ch

Hunger and love have no spatial or temporal limits nor are they affected by social differences, but the former of these two universal themes plays no role in modern consumer society. Contemporary humour has exorcised the figure of the man who is starving, whose sole problem is that of obtaining enough food to survive. Even in those parts of the world where hunger is an everyday tragic experience, drama exorcises the man who is starving and does not

let him become the main character. And yet there were periods when even those who were not affected by hunger were impressed by the creative spirit of an empty stomach: imagination and inventiveness were the indispensable ingredients for concocting the tall tales and frauds necessary to get food.

The play presented by Teatro Paravento, with a text written by Luisella Sala and directed by Alessandro Marchetti, is based on a plot from the early sixteenth century, a time when extravagance and misery rubbed shoulders with each other and theft was a capital offence. In Venice, which is mentioned only once in the play and which is not identified by the scenery (it might be Dakar), Arlecchino and Brighella are engaged in grim competition: which one has been without food the longest? Arlecchino wins for one day. Hunger produces its devastating effects: delirium and death, which dissolve into a nightmare.

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Then there is the meeting with Colombina; the lies of Brighella, the love at first sight of Colombina for Arlecchino and, finally, fraud. But the nicest thing about the farce is that the fraud is not planned in advance. The fact is that Pantalone, who is hopelessly senile, continually prevents Arlecchino from explaining the situation. This is the point which attracts tension and charges the atmosphere of the comedy.

This mixture of sentimentalism and imagination is the basis of an infinite number of jokes. But there is the danger of the whole play being dragged down, as if by an undertow, by the comic effects pursued as an end in themselves. The Teatro Paravento, in this play directed by Alessandro Marchetti, has worked “against the tide”. All efforts at achieving comic effects are subordinated to the “truth” of the message, nothing is taken for granted. The elegance and refinement of the laws of the theatre “dell’Arte” are rigorously respected with the consequence that the comic character of the whole performance is highlighted in an extraordinary way. Finding creativity in poverty, understanding the casual connection that links these two themes of human life, showing love striking like a thunderbolt but also as a deep feeling full of sympathy and compassion: these are some of the possible readings of “The Cases of Hunger and Love” in the splendid and elegant, hilarious and pathetic language that is used in the “Commedia dell’Arte”.

Vittore Nason





Production

Text by **Luisella Sala**

Directed by **Alessandro Marchetti**

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|-------------------|---------------------------------|
| Harlequin | Miguel Ángel Cienfuegos |
| Brighella | David Matthäus Zurbuchen |
| Columbine | Luisa Ferroni |
| Pantaloone | Andrea Noce Nosedà |
| The young marquis | Clotilde Pichonnaz |
| The Fortune | Luisa Ferroni |
| Pulcinella | Clotilde Pichonnaz |

Length **75 minutes. Without a break**

Tours

Switzerland, Germany, France, Italy, Austria, Croatia, Spain, Chile, Greece, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Turkey, Russia, Japan, Brazil, United Emirate Arabia, Israel, Palestine.

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