

**TEATRO
TASCABILE
DI BERGAMO**

Accademia delle
Forme Sceniche

ON THE TORTOISE SHELL

Open-air performance of Teatro tascabile di Bergamo

With the participation of Praveen Kumar (India)

I am Harlequin. I came here crossing the sea. I sailed on the shell of this turtle... Don't you see the turtle? Don't you see the shell? And don't you even see the sea?!! But then... don't you see anything at all?! Pretend to see the sea, the shell, the turtle... so at least you'll understand something. It's nice to understand something when you don't understand anything

An insane Harlequin, dead tired, half-western and half-eastern, is looking for his unlikely origins. Some say he was born in Bergamo, others in Paris, others in Venice. But where is his home? After having travelled by sea and by land on the back of a turtle, he fiercely believes he discovered his roots. Is it just a dream?

Rolling waves mix with his heartbeat and the sea's breath... Like a fierce hailstorm of sounds, the music of ritual processions of elephants descends together with the fanfares of curved trumpets and the crackling drums. Then a fabulous oriental procession begins... In the swash of shining silky costumes and ceremonial umbrellas with their ember-like hues, aristocrats and commoners are advance: king and queen, ministers and valets, celestial maidens and dancers wearing their swollen Kathakali costumes – their heads covered by the illustrious wooden crowns with their silver and golden inlays. Before his captive eyes, propitiatory court dances, ritual combats, and sacred ceremonies succeed one another until, in the light of flaming torches, he himself duels in a dancing contest with an irreverent and sly monkey, which eventually turns out to be another Eastern Harlequin

"On the tortoise shell" is a playful hypothesis on the controversial origins of Harlequin, an open-air performance built on the symmetrical exploration between Eastern and Western theatrical traditions: different, sometimes complementary, sometimes opposing ways of thinking, dreaming and practicing theatre.

Exotic masks-actors, on stilts, with golden balls and sticks and holy umbrellas, wearing white, brown or pink masks and half-masks, evoke a sort of journey that starts from strangeness and wonder (the East, exotic in the eyes of the West and vice versa) and arrives at the observation of a professional brotherhood discovered through respect for each other's differences.



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Performers: Tiziana Barbiero, Luigia Calcaterra, Alessia Baldassari, Antonietta Fusco, Divya Hoskere (India), Praveen Kumar (India), Ruben Manenti, Alessandro Rigoletti, Caterina Scotti, Marta Suardi.

Artistic coordination: Tiziana Barbiero, Caterina Scotti.

Lights: Lorenzo Bucci

Sound: Fabio Vignaroli

Photo: Alessandro Brasile, Juan Flores.

Film: Ideartv Bogotà

Duration of the performance: 1h

Year of first performance: 2014 (San José – Costa Rica)



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With the contribution:



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«[...] the Italian masks meet the Indian and Balinese theater, with the use of stilts, masks, costumes and theater-dance sequences of the East. The effect is striking and pulls the applause of the many spectators. But what is important to emphasize is that everything rests on the legitimate stage hypothesis: the composite - but strong - identity of Arlequin justifies any mixing. Or rather, urges the opening of a comparison with different cultures, the discovery of similarities and, who knows, remote common roots... The show is a journey started by the mask with a pied costume to know his peers from other cultures. The trip succeeds, produces consensus and technical exhibition, the directorial sense and quality of execution [...]» P. Nosari, L'ECO DI BERGAMO Italy

«Praveen's nritya carries an 'excellent' tag - excellent adavus, excellent geometry, excellent agility and excellent timing [...] Despite the superlatives, the highlight of the afternoon recital was in the visualisation of the Chidambaram temple [...] He replicated the sculptures [...] he brought alive the setting quietly and effortlessly [...] Praveen needs a pat on the back for this show, for he has risen to be one of our best.» THE HINDU India

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