

THE CLASS

A docupuppets for puppets and humans

Winner of in-Box 2019

Selection L'Italia dei Visionari – Kilowatt Festival 2019

Winner of the interregional residencies competition CURA 2018

Finalist Teatri del Sacro 2017

Finalist Tuttoteatro.com Award to scenic arts Dante Cappelletti 2018

First national debut: Romaeuropa Festival October 2018



a show by **Fabiana Iacozzilli** | CrAnPi

collaborating with the dramatization **Marta Meneghetti Giada Parlanti Emanuele Silvestri**

artistic collaboration **Lorenzo Letizia Tiziana Tomasulo Lafabbrica**

performer **Michela Aiello Andrei Balan Antonia D'Amore Francesco Meloni Marta Meneghetti**

scenes and puppets **Fiammetta Mandich**

lights **Raffaella Vitiello**

sound **Hubert Westkemper**

sound technician **Jacopo Ruben Dell'Abate**

assistant directors **Francesco Meloni Silvia Corona Arianna Cremona**

set photography **Tiziana Tomasulo e Valeria Tomasulo**

consultant **Piergiorgio Solvi**

special thanks to **Giorgio Testa**

communication and press office **Antonino Pirillo**

production **Antonino Pirillo Giorgio Andriani**

co-production **CrAnPi Lafabbrica Teatro Vascello Carrozzerie** | n.o.t | with the support of

Residenza IDRA and **Teatro Cantiere Florida/Elsinor** as part of the project **CURA 2018** |

and of **Nuovo Cinema Palazzo** | and the support of **Periferie Artistiche Centro di Residenza Multidisciplinare della Regione Lazio**

A special thanks to my classmates

For information concerning distribution:

CrAnPi: Antonino Pirillo mob + 39 347 8312141, Giorgio Andriani mob + 39 338 4349819,
email spettacoli@cranpi.com



From 1983 to 1988 myself and other thirty souls were primary school pupils in a class of an Institute run by nuns which is now a holiday home. The Institute had the name Sisters of Charity. Our only teacher, also a sister of charity, was Sister Lidia and she died over twenty years ago. It has never been easy for me to talk about the years spent in this Institute and the strict education we were subjected to. Thirty later I decided I would create a show based on those memories and I started to search for my ex classmates, believing it was essential to recreate that "community" with which I had shared such experience. To begin to put together the

pieces of the "history" I interviewed them, asking very simple questions such as "What was Sister Lidia like?"; "What do you remember about her?"; "Do you remember what happened in class?"; "Were you happy when she died?".

While I was working on the interviews Fiammetta Mandich created some puppets in the image of my classmates, so they could interpret the episodes we had lived from six until ten years old.

From what had arisen during this first phase the show began to take shape: a docupuppets involving both puppets and people, but also a collective ritual somewhere in between *The Dead Class* by Kantor and *The cannibals* by Tabori where the adult re-reads his memories of a childhood spent in fear of being punished, interpreted by puppets in the hands of a mysterious ex-machine. These memories/pieces of wood, children reduced to marionettes, stooges of lifeless youth, impotent and manipulated like objects, move without feeling on old wooden boards which bring back memories of school desks, butchers' chopping boards or the operating table of a past experiment. Silence all around. Only the sound of pencils writing and schoolmates breathing. And also the sound of chalk being used up in writing dictations on the blackboard. Parents are absent. No trace of them. The parents have only been drawn on the corpse of a blackboard but then soon after erased. In the silence of their footsteps, these small wooden bodies move in a Sister Lidia-World where even God lowers his gaze when He sees her. Sister Lidia, the only real life presence, the living figure of a man or woman in the middle of all these objects, escapes the sight of puppets and audience. We can hear her footsteps, see her hands, make out some features in the darkness, even smell the whiff of her cigar. We are aware she frightens us, that deep down, in the deepest depth of each of us, audience puppet performer technician board or classmate, she is the generator of fear.

In this reflection concerning the deep meaning of memory, in this research for gone-by fragments of memory, my classmates helped me find a direction and eventually to understand the character of the work. The class found its true meaning at the moment when I gave up on what I had originally wanted to say and I started listening to the subject I was researching. At this point a question arose, the question to which the show itself tries to answer "What are we going to do with the pain?"; "what are human beings able to become starting from their own pain?"



For information concerning distribution:

CrAnPi: Antonino Pirillo mob + 39 347 8312141, Giorgio Andriani mob + 39 338 4349819,
email spettacoli@cranpi.com

From the emptiness emerged the memory of a scene where Sister Lidia entrusts me to direct a short scene which was part of a Mother's day performance. And she decides, perhaps, together with me my vocation. Therefore The Class is a show that wanted to speak about ABUSE OF POWER but instead speaks about VOCATIONS. Hers and mine. A show in which everyone is right: both those who say that nobody heals from their childhood and those who say that it all depends on what we do with our childhood.

Fabiana Iacozzilli, director-playwright who carries out research based on scenic drama and on the expressive potential of the role of the performer. Since 2013 she has collaborated with CrAnPi and with Teatro Vascello in Rome and from 2017 with Carrozzerie N.O.T. In 2002 she qualified as a director from the Academy "Centro Internazionale La Cometa" where she studied, among others, with N Karpov, N Zsvereva, A Woodhouse. From 2003 to 2008 she was assistant director to P. Sepe and assistant to Luca Ronconi. In 2008 she founded the company Lafabbrica becoming the artistic director. In 2011 she was selected to participate in the DIRECTOR LAB, an international project organized by the LINCOLN CENTER (Metropolitan of New York). In the same year she became a member of the LINCOLN CENTER DIRECTORS LAB. Among her shows "Aspettando Nil (Waiting for Nil)" for which she won the Undergroundzero Festival of New York; "La trilogia dell'attesa (The trilogy of waiting)" winner of the Play Festival (Atir and Piccolo Teatro di Milano- Teatro d'Europa) "Da soli non si è cattivi (Alone, you are not wicked)" Three one act plays from short stories by T. Tomasulo and "The class- a docupuppets for marionettes and actors/people" winner of the inter-regional residence competition CURA and which has its international debut in the Romaeuropa Festival 2018.

CrAnPi deals with theatre production, promotion and communication. Among its important recent activities are the running of the Theatre Library in Quarticciolo, Rome; the organization and communication of "Sound Visual Landscapes", winner project of the competition Mibac "Open Space to Culture"; the organization of the workshop/show Alzheimer mon amour, run by Veronica Cruciani, John Cascone/MK and Riccardo Fazi/Muta Imago in collaboration with Teatro di Roma; the production of the shows: "Accabadora" from the novel by Michela Murgia/dramatization Carlotta Corradi, with Anna Della Rosa directed by Veronica Cruciani, and "The Class- a docupuppets for marionettes and people" by Fabiana Iacozzilli; promotion in Italian theatres of the book "New Theatre Made in Italy" by Valentina Valentini; the communication and promotion of international contemporary dance companies Spellbound Contemporary Ballet(IT) Roy Assaf (IL) Linga Company (CH) and the communication of "Fuori Programma- International Dance Festival" with the artistic direction of Valentina Marini



For information concerning distribution:

CrAnPi: Antonino Pirillo mob + 39 347 8312141, Giorgio Andriani mob + 39 338 4349819,
email spettacoli@cranpi.com

WHAT THEY SAY ABOUT US:

The fantastic show "The Class, a docupuppets for marionettes and people" by Fabiana Iacozzilli with hypnotic installation and puppets by Fiammetta Mandich and five puppeteers and/or performers is a rare work which explores the pre-adolescent experiences of life between six and ten years old of the creator which took place between 1983 and 1988. In turn it regenerated in me the visions, poetry, wonder and fascination of two very different works. An intrinsic theme to this phantasmatic diary on the study of childhood is to quote Iacozzilli herself the theme of reliving the extraordinary work "The dead class" by Tadeusz Kantor which with its school desks and the chalky protagonists (there between life and death) I saw in 1978, during its third year. However the stunning puppet theatre of today takes me back to the microscopic handmade figures of the legendary "Snow White" of the Teatro del Carretto, a miniature three dimensional narrative by Cipriani-Gregori which I came across 35 years ago.

Rodolfo Giammarco, La Repubblica

At first one has the impression of a perfect, intelligent game which appears to proceed only along a path of anecdotes, evoking a time when the term school was designed to indicate a discipline sometimes on the border of sadism. Therefore one smiles sympathising with those wide open eyed children, unable even to kick a football, standing still in a corner during a rare trip to the garden where a branch shakes in the wind, held by the arm of a puppeteer in a moment of extraordinary bravura. With the unfolding of the action, however we discover that this is not all, and the rest, I believe should not be revealed.

Antonio Audino, Il Sole 24 ORE.

A show, we could say unique in the Italian scene, which connects with the experimentalism that has always been part of the European puppet theatre.

Mario Bianchi, Krapp's Last Post.

The scene, desks that move choreographically, and a blackboard, and these wide and fearful eyed puppets (recently awarded with the "In-box" prize in Siena) are already themselves a work of art, likewise the movements the actor-helpers in black perform dancing around tiny school bags, micro pens and minute pairs of spectacles. Kantor's lesson is brought into play, already from the title and above all when towards the end, the director herself appears from the audience and with some miming causes shivers and compassion. The puppet interacts with the person trying to find salvation and comfort from the hitting and the derision, he asks for a little love. "The Class" is rightly so the truly sensational theatre event of the year.

Tommaso Chimenti recensito.net

In "The Class" put on stage by the Roman director F. Iacozzilli the necessity to come to terms with that past is evident. Iacozzilli has dipped profoundly into her own childhood biography disinterring facts and people of thirty years ago; she opens a little door behind which a mysterious cavern was hidden, that room full of childhood and memories cherished by Kantor. She immersed herself in a third dimension, infantile, coming up with a touching and sincere story, giving life to a show which already in its first showing is a small work of art. A precious step in a career lasting over decades, a rare wonder in the national theatre panorama and above all in Rome for the use she makes of puppet theatre.

Andrea Pocosgnich, teatrocritica.ne

There is something turbid as well as curious in those voices, in those puppets, in their narration, something theatrically interesting. In fact, after being a finalist in the Teatri del Sacro 2017 and in Premio Tuttoteatro.com Cappelletti 2017, "The Class" was the winner also in the selection In.box- Network which supports newly emerging Italian theatre groups. 2019.

Roberto Canziani, robertocanziani.eu/quantescene

Small puppets, partly moved as in Bunraku theatre, are the protagonists of "The Class", the puppeteers are visible and have various roles, also giving help and emotional bonding with those creatures who are synthesis ,

For information concerning distribution:

CrAnPi: Antonino Pirillo mob + 39 347 8312141, Giorgio Andriani mob + 39 338 4349819,

email spettacoli@cranpi.com

stylisations of real people, not without reason we read in the poster "with special thanks to my classmates". The only character played by an actor, but who we only just catch glimpses of, with nervous hands, the teacher-

nun, reason for terror in the children. Used to great effect are the mobile scenery, the lights, the multiple layered emotional and refined ambiguity: the last scene – the wind which pushes away both physically and metaphorically the puppets and their desks- is born from a suggestion by the Sister who faced with a doubt concerning the end of year recital says to the child "Close your eyes and think of something wonderful".

Valeria Ottolenghi, Gazzetta di Parma

The show advances along the fine line of recollection and documentation: one hears off-stage voices, interviews between the director and those who are presumably her ex school mates. They remember, they laugh, they condemn, they elaborate or they try again to process the traumas undergone during childhood. On stage, meanwhile, typical moments of the daily life of the class are evoked and relived: classwork or tests, thoughts, breaktime which is spent statically in a corner of the playground watching a ball without touching it. Terror reigns over everything and everybody in a dark, suffocating atmosphere in which the spectator is also involved, claustrophobically captured. It is a descent into the abyss, which the honest and clean, playful innocence of the marionettes visually counteracts. Very painful.

Andrea Porcheddu, glistatigenerali.com

The space is brought to life by actors who competently manipulate a puppet-like character, a potential alter ego of Fabiana Iacozzilli, her parents and her schoolmates other puppets. The ghost of Fabiana's memories, that has contributed to her inflexibility in her professional sphere and to her vocation as a director who does not forgive even the tiniest imperfection, is called Sister Lidia. She is the teacher whose horrible image is reconstructed by the off-stage voices of Fabiana's classmates as they recall her manner of approach always on the opaque boundary of physical and psychological abuse. It is difficult to keep a distance from this show. It takes us back in time, to the reasons for our uncertainties, which are often the origin of an untiring tenacity. The dramatic form and the use of lighting, which envelops characters and objects in flashes of feeble intensity, reproduce the heaping together of memories. A fragmentary memory, interspersed by noises, grumbling, and of course the traumatic sound of the bell, thanks to the admirable work of Hubert Westkemper with the sound environment.

Renata Savo, Hystrio

Visibly maneuvered by capable and careful hands, the five puppets created by Fiammetta Manich tell us the story of the wicked Sister Lidia, the violent teacher who really existed in the primary school the director attended. A real nightmare for whole generations of pupils who passed under her severe conduct. In this theatrical box where everything, every move, every minimum gesture, every breath held for amazement or fear resonates due to the acoustic environment created by Hubert Westkemper and the microphones scattered between the objects, Iacozzilli reconstructs on double tracks the scheme of memories buried thirty years before. In fact while we watch the puppet-children succumb, trembling, to the aggressive teaching of their educator, the recorded voices of the classmates interviewed by the artist-director herself surprisingly bring back, between anger and laughter, truths buried in oblivion.

Valentina De Simone, chefempochefa.repubblica.it

A touching, disturbing and entertaining immersion into this world of puppets that seem to come to life, whose gaze seems to transform, where the fears of childhood come to surface- they become alive, tangible- we are able to touch them and suddenly.... we become children again.

Scatolaemozionale.blogspot.com

The voices of classmates, witnesses who recall episodes and painful sensations burned into their memory, even after years have gone by since they were children, speak about a nun-teacher frustrated and frustrating who also whips, of those who attended certain institutes and also the survival methods put into action by that complex organism which is "The class".

Laura Vincenzi, bassanonet.it

For information concerning distribution:

CrAnPi: Antonino Pirillo mob + 39 347 8312141, Giorgio Andriani mob + 39 338 4349819,
email spettacoli@cranpi.com

CrAnPi

spettacoli

Sister Lidia was fat, wicked and with a moustache, but a few pupils are even willing to save her integrity, others no bringing back to mind the undeserved derision and the slaps of one who was their former teacher. Deep down, strangely enough, they all wanted to be loved by that strict teacher, Iacozzilli included, so with the refusal of that love the only alternative was to hate her. However judgement is suspended, that "hairy" Sister

Lidia who Iacozzilli confesses has stayed wedged in her heart, after all she somehow ties in with the strings of her dolls, those dolls who have spoken to her since childhood and who now recite on stage, perhaps thanks to the aggressive and smelly nun who once pushed her into writing her first school play. A unique show, moving, entertaining, carefully thought out in every detail, in particular the soundtrack by Hubert Westkemper who magically envelops the audience detaching them from external reality and leaving them to navigate in the vivid dream of Iacozzilli.

Fabiana Dentinelli, fermataspettacolo.it

"The Class" is a show steeped in truth: just like the choice of not covering the stage installations, also the performers are free to manoeuvre the puppets without hiding themselves from the audience and moving on stage to set up the place and arrange the objects, also the director herself doesn't hesitate to talk about her own truth. She tries to open that famous drawer and in doing so she puts herself out there completely. She does so by rebuilding her past, coming to terms with it. Telling explicitly about herself, both by the use of her puppet/herself as a child, and also by using strong and touching words offstage. Lastly, getting involved also physically: all of a sudden, during the show, from darkness she appears resolutely on stage to take part in the scene and to dress up her babies with hats and scarves. She nurtures her children, she protects them, and protects herself, from winter. It's the symbolic rebirth, an answer to the pain, the point of arrival of a journey deep within herself. Theatre saves her, the same theatre she discovered thanks to an unexpected suggestion from Sister Lidia who during her school years pushed her to her first directorial role: one's own personal secret to research and follow in order to become oneself

Michela Staderini, saltinaria.it

In this machinic hyper-production that the director's childhood seems to regurgitate on stage, the impressive set designs constantly change the perspectives and balances of the small protagonists. A game made of precise dimensions immersed in a constant instability, a space of distorted sounds that vortically break up the proportions in the same way memory itself does, like the imprint of our age getting father and farther away.

Federico Betta, altroquotidiano.it

Although having an autobiographical inspiration, The Class becomes of collective interest because it tells about the need to take care of who we were and how a redemption could be possible today. The same as the director herself does when she appears on stage to protect her puppets from the cold: that cathartic gesture and concern that nobody ever had in the past is worth more than all of the pain experienced and this is only made possible thanks to the theatre. The Class, therefore, tells about the importance to preserve the memory of the past, the good and the bad, the bad, that in spite of everything, shapes our personality, in the same way as good does. After all Iacozzilli's first show came to life thanks to Sister Lidia, who one day had asked to the future director the question that every artist should answer: " Fabiana, have you got a secret?".

Sarah Curati, paperstreet

Marvellous, beautifully made, with technique and professionalism, artistic. A thrilling across-the-board entertainment that, following principles now forgotten by us adults, could actually fascinate children, if anything suggesting them to rebel themselves, whenever the situation on stage somewhat recalls what they could experience and undergo in life.

Luigi Scardigli, megliomeno

What should we do with our memories? This is the question the theatrical action wants to answer, made of slow and pinocchio-esque snapshots of memory, dotted with interviews to classmates and biographical insertions. Indeed the scene is suspended in an abstract aura: the puppets seem pieces of open flesh on an

For information concerning distribution:

CrAnPi: Antonino Pirillo mob + 39 347 8312141, Giorgio Andriani mob + 39 338 4349819,
email spettacoli@cranpi.com

CrAnPi
spettacoli

autopsic table, inside an abiding darkness crossed by light, by terroristic messages engraved on the blackboard, by orthopedic treatments between the chair and the desk similar to elaborate systems of torture.

Vincenzo Carboni, persinsala.it

For information concerning distribution:

CrAnPi: Antonino Pirillo mob + 39 347 8312141, Giorgio Andriani mob + 39 338 4349819,
email spettacoli@cranpi.com