

"The Betrothed " @ NYU and All Around the US

Alessia Pirolo (June 19, 2011)



Giving an original interpretation of *The Betrothed* by Alessandro Manzoni, one of the most read – and probably most hated – books in the Italian schools, is not easy. Massimiliano Finazzer Flory, author and former Commissioner for Cultural Affairs of the City of Milan, has been able to do it exploring the modernity of this famous love story.



On June 15, at Casa Italiana Zeffirelli-Marimò (NYU) Mr. Finazzo Flory has performed a monologue based on The Betrothed. He was accompanied on stage by Gilda Gelati, prima ballerina of la Scala Theatre Ballet Company of Milan, and Elsa Martignoni, violinist of the Giuseppe Verdi Orchestra of Milan.

The story is well known. In the seventeenth century, in a village on Lake Como, in Northern Italy, Renzo and Lucia, a young couple, are prevented from marrying by the local tyrant, don Rodrigo, who wants the girl for himself. Forced to flee, they will have to overcome many challenges before reaching their happy ending. Of course the novel is about much more than this, though. Mr. Finazzo Flory has selected and performed some of the most moving chapters of the novel, which explore the themes of humility, charity, and death. "I wanted to make of each chapter a unique drama. There are five small tragedies and one final small comedy," says Mr. Finazzo Flory.

On the stage, the actor performed the confrontation between the arrogant don Rodrigo and the heroic Padre Cristoforo. Then, he became the peasant girl Lucia saying farewell to her home, with the same deep sorrow that today immigrants experience. He walked in Milan on the verge of a riot, which - so much as it happens today - was caused by famine and poverty. In the next scene, Mr. Finazzo Flory turned into Renzo witnessing the horror of the plague. He concluded with a smile at the end, after the happy ending end the marriage of Renzo and Lucia.

"It is a universal drama and shows the need to represent humble people in their fight for love and against evil," the director and performer says. He has brought Lucia and Renzo's story to the US as part of the celebration for the 150th anniversary of the Italian Unification. "This story speaks about us, Italians. It says that we are contradictory, and that, at the end of the day, we are able to turn our contradiction into strength." He says.

Mr. Finazzo Flory is performing The Betrothed all around the US.

- Tuesday June 21st 6.30 pm - Auditorium, Embassy of Italy in Washington
3000 Whitehaven, NW - Washington, DC 20008
- Friday June 24th 6 pm - Chicago Cultural Center - Claudia Cassidy Theater
77 East Randolph Street - Chicago, Illinois
- Monday June 27th 7 pm - The Colony Theater
1040 Lincoln Road - Miami Beach, Florida
- Thursday June 30th 7 pm - Fort Mason Center - Cowell Theater
Buchanan Street and Marina Boulevard - San Francisco, CA 94123, California
- Tuesday July 5th 6.30 pm - Sala Rossellini, The Italian Culture Institute
1023 Hilgard Avenue - Los Angeles, California

Performance in Italian, with surtitles in English

Duration: around 70 minutes

All the information about the tour are available on the website

www.finazzoflory.it [2]

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[2] http://www.finazzerflory.it/schede/teatro/promessi%20sposi_150_eng.html