



In Scena! Italian Theatre Festival. A Conversation with Laura Caparotti

Chiara Montalto (May 15, 2015)



A conversation with Laura Caparotti, artistic director of Kairos Italy Theatre and founder of the In Scena! Italian Theatre Festival

Through May 20, the In Scena! Italian Theatre Festival is happening in all five boroughs of New York City. The Festival brings Italian theatre, performed in both English and Italian, to American audiences. It is organized and run by the extraordinary Laura Caparotti, artistic director of Kairos Italy Theatre, and my friend. Recently, Laura and I sat down at Ribalta Pizza to talk theatre, art, and In Scena!.



What first brought you to New York City?

Believe it or not, theater. I didn't come here to do theater, I came here to escape Italian theater. I was very upset about the politics of Italian theater and I decided to spend 9 months in New York, where I had been coming for three summers to study dance and English. It was September 1996. Long time ago...

Tell me about the genesis of Kairos Italy Theatre and In Scena?

Kairos Italy Theater has an Italian passport, at least the name Kairos. In fact, before moving to New York, my very first company in Rome was called Kairos. I loved the name and the idea behind the name: Kairos is a semi-god from Greek mythology. It represents the occasion taken at the right moment. In fact, Kairos has hair only in his forehead and not in the back of his head, because you could grab it only when it arrives and not when it leaves. After many years, Kairos Italy Theater got more and more recognition, and we were the main Italian theater company in New York. At that point, I thought it was time for In Scena! Basically, both ideas come from one single consideration: there is too little Italian theater in New York and Italian theater is so great - everyone should be able to see it.

How do you choose pieces? Are there themes to your choices?

I am mostly interested in social and political work. I love comedies and some of the masterpieces of our literature, like the Decameron. Yet, sometimes the work chooses me. Thanks to collaboration and commissions I have been able to work on Calvino and on Dante, for instance. One of the upcoming projects is about Eduardo Migliaccio known as Farfariello. Even though I know who he was, it's only because I was asked to read some of his sketches for an event that I got thinking and now I am preparing an entire show dedicated to him.

Are the pieces performed in English or Italian?

Always bilingual. Both KIT and In Scena! are always bilingual, it's our mark, basically. I do believe in the strength of original language. Many are afraid that people are not understanding, and I see that they actually understand more.

What can people expect from an In Scena event?

To be amazed... and to see wonderful, and I mean wonderful, theater. And to understand and enjoy even if such theater comes from another country. The groups that will showcase their work at the Festival are not only awarded and all in business for many years, they are also a great taste of what my country creates on stage. Just to show that we are not only pizza, mandolino, spaghetti and... you know what!

Is there an Italian counterpart to In Scena New York concurrently happening in Rome?

I wish! Making theater in Italy is not easy, organizing festivals is even harder. The bureaucracy kills everything... so, no, there is not. In Italy, I am part of KIT Italia and we do organize some collaborative work with Americans and International artists. Right now, for instance, we are trying to bring in 2016 a very successful New York based theater company to Rome and other Italian cities.



What is the typical American response to Italian theatre?

It's great. Very often they have a surprised look in discovering that Italian theater is exportable and good. It's like 'this is Italian, but I get it'. We have found many collaborators from performing. For instance, Bernie Wohl Center, a community center, has In Scena! and KIT every year. They love us and their audience, which is not used to foreign theater, if theater at all, come to many performances. Again, the skeptical ones are usually the theater artistic directors...

Have you noticed any particular universalities in your audiences?

No, I must say that we are having a very variegated audience. Of course, at the beginning they were mostly people interested in Italian culture, but now we have reached out to different kinds of audience... I can say now that we have audiences who love good theater!

Tell me some of the difficulties about performing Italian works in the United States?

It is mostly in the mind of the people and I must say, especially in the ones of the theater directors or owners. Unless they are used to theater from other cultures and other languages, one of the questions I am asked more often is why do I want to do Italian theater in New York... and how people can get these plays. And the question is not about the language, but the culture. I always answer that it is theater, very good theater, translated, adapted and well acted. So, to answer your question, the real challenge is to find theaters not so concentrated only to American and British theater.

What is in store for In Scena and Kairos? What is next?

Relax! Just kidding... KIT has a brand new website. In June we'll be holding audition for the company, then we need to organize 2015-16 as we have already some tours planned. And a longer run for our recent production of the Decameron and the Mandrake Root. And of course, there is my project on Farfariello. For In Scena! I aim to have the calendar ready by December 2015, so we can arrive to May 2016 with many events and collaborations. I have the feeling that I will achieve such dream.

I'm sure of it, Laura! Check out the schedule and information below and see and In Scena! show.

In Scena! Italian Theater Festival NY

8 Full Productions Presented in All 5 Boroughs

May 4 - 20, 2015

Kairos Italy Theater (KIT), the preeminent Italian theater company in New York, presents the third annual IN SCENA! ITALIAN THEATER FESTIVAL NY. This 17-day festival will offer 8 fully-staged productions from Italy, among other events and activities. Shows will be presented in all five



boroughs of New York at venues including The Secret Theater, Theatre For The New City, BAAD, Brooklyn College, John Jay College, and Center of the Arts at College of Staten Island. Each show will have at least two performances, one in Manhattan and one in an outer borough. All are presented in English or with English supertitles. Performances run May 4 - 20, 2015. Tickets for most full productions are \$15 and readings are \$5. An All-Access Pass is available for \$75. For more details and tickets visit www.inscenany.com or call 646-850-7056.

FULL PRODUCTIONS:

Angiulina The Mule

by and starring Rossella Raimondi

When a country girl moves to the city she is cursed to become a mule -- a servant to her depressed husband and an anorexic daughter.

- Thursday, May 7 at 6:00pm at Casa Italiana Zerilli-Marimò at NYU (24 W 12th St, Manhattan).

Broken Dances – in Pasolini's Bubble

by and starring Benedetta Capanna / Excursus Company (Rome/Lazio).

This dance theater piece takes audiences on a stroll through the contradictions of Roman daily life punctuated by the echoes of Pier Paolo Pasolini, one of the greatest poets and intellectuals of contemporary Italy (and to whom In Scena! 2015 is dedicated, on the 40th anniversary of his death). Presented in collaboration with IDaCO NYC, the Italian Dance Connection.

- Monday, May 18 at 8:30pm at BAAD (2474 Westchester Ave, Bronx).

Chez Dimì

by Giuseppe Sinatra / DimiDimitri Company (Novara/Piemonte).

A butler tries to lift the spirits of an old lady on her birthday with sketches, jokes and circus-like stunts. DimiDimitri is a clowning-based theater that has received numerous important Italian and international accolades.

Wednesday, May 13 at 4:00pm at Church of St. John's (300 Bloomfield Street at 3rd St, Hoboken, NJ).

- Thursday, May 14 at 4:00pm at Belmont Library and Enrico Fermi Cultural Center (610 E 186th St, Bronx).



- Friday, May 15 at 7:00pm at Casa Italiana Zerilli-Marimo at NYU (24 W. 12th St, Manhattan).

Cingomma

by and starring Jessica Leonello (Brescia/Lombardia).

This comic monologue tells the stories of migrants returning home to their roots, travelling backwards through the history of Italy and its changing customs. 2012 Petroni Award winner, 2014 Offerta creative/teatrinrete Award winner.

- Thursday, May 7 at 7:30pm at Casa Italiana Zerilli-Marimo at NYU (24 W 12th St, Manhattan).

Ninetta and the Others

by Damiana Leone / Errare Persona Company (Frosinone/Lazio).

This drama tackles the difficult theme of rape as an instrument of war. Based on a mass rape that happened during WWII. Winner of Amnesty International's Chimere Award.

- Monday, May 11 at 7:30pm at Theater for the New City (155 1st Avenue, Manhattan).
- Tuesday, May 12 at 6:00pm at John Jay College of Criminal Justice Alumni Association (524 West 59th Street, Manhattan).

Taddrarite – Bats

by Luana Rondinelli / Accura Teatro Company (Trapani/Sicilia).

Three sisters find the courage – and sarcasm – to talk about incidences of domestic violence. Winner of the 2014 Rome International Fringe Festival Award.

Saturday, May 16 & Sunday, May 17 at 7:30pm at Bernie Wohl Center at Goddard Riverside (647 Columbus Ave, Manhattan).

- Tuesday, May 19 at 7:30pm at Brooklyn College (2900 Bedford Avenue, Brooklyn).
- Wednesday, May 20 at 6:00pm at Italian Cultural Institute (686 Park Avenue, Manhattan).



Viola di Mare

by and starring Isabella Carloni, based on the novel Minchia di re by Giacomo Pilati / Rovine Circolari Company (Ancona/Marche).

Viola di Mare is a salt-water fish that is born female but then turns into a male after laying its eggs. This is the true story of a 19th century girl who dresses like a man to escape her father's fury and the bigotry of her island village.

- May 4 at 7:30pm at Casa Italiana Zerilli-Marimo at NYU (24 W. 12th St, Manhattan).
- Tuesday, May 19 at 7:30pm at Brooklyn College (2900 Bedford Avenue, Brooklyn).

Webulli

by Ermanno Nardi / Elea Teatro and Industria Scenica Company (Milanno/Lombardia).

Bullying on social networks is the subject of this dark comedy that explores the digital exchange of explicit materials.

READINGS:

Le Beatrici

by Stefano Benni. – directed by Margherita Peluso.

A series of monologues that explore our complex and troubled society through the eyes of contemporary women, titled after Dante's muse.

- Saturday, May 9 at 3:30pm The Secret Theater (44-02 23rd Street, Long Island City, Queens).

Giuseppe Musolino: a Drama in Acts

by Giuseppe Morabito – directed by Evan T. Cummings

A very special world premiere of a play discovered by Evan T. Cummings in his attic. The play was written by his great-grandfather, a reporter and writer from Calabria, who often traveled between the US and Italy and was one of the reporters for the trial of legendary folk hero Brigante Musolino.

- Thursday, May 14 at 6:00pm at John Jay College of Criminal Justice Alumni Association (524 West 59 street, Manhattan)



The Alibi of God

by Francesco Randazzo. During a dark night, a priest faces the ghost of a young man whom he loved passionately.

- Monday, May 18 at 6:30pm at BAAD (2474 Westchester Ave, Bronx).

IN SCENA! ITALIAN THEATER FESTIVAL NY was founded in 2013. That year, it was chosen as an official event representing Italian culture in the US under the auspices of the President of the Italian Republic with the Patronage of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Embassy of Italy in Washington, D.C. For more information on IN SCENA! ITALIAN THEATER FESTIVAL NY visit www.inscenany.com.

EVENTS BY DATE:

Thursday, May 14

NeON Center (198 East 161st, Bronx, NY).

noon – Free Verse meets In Scena!

Belmont Library and Enrico Fermi Cultural Center (610 E 186th St, Bronx)

4:00pm – Chez Dimi

John Jay College of Criminal Justice Alumni Association (524 West 59 street, Manhattan)

6:00pm – Giuseppe Musolino: a Drama in Acts

Friday, May 15

Casa Italiana Zerilli-Marimo at NYU (24 W. 12th St, Manhattan).

7:00pm – Chez Dimi

Saturday, May 16 & Sunday, May 17

Bernie Wohl Center at Goddard Riverside (647 Columbus Ave, Manhattan).

7:30pm – Taddrarite-Bats

Monday, May 18

BAAD (2474 Westchester Ave, Bronx).

6:30pm – L'alibi di Dio – the Alibi of God

8:30pm – Broken Dances – In Pasolini's Bubble

Tuesday, May 19



Brooklyn College (2900 Bedford Avenue, Brooklyn).

6:00pm – Taddrarite-Bats

7:30pm – Viola di Mare

Wednesday, May 20

Italian Cultural Institute (686 Park Avenue, Manhattan).

6:00pm – Taddrarite-Bats

Bread, 20 Spring Street, Manhattan

8:00pm – Closing Night.

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