

Places Please! Teatro Patologico's Revolutionary Theater in Rome

Alex Catti (December 19, 2016)



An intimate audience gathered at La MaMa theater in Manhattan for an "Italian Miracle" and to welcome Dario D'Ambrosi, a luminary in the world of theater for the disabled and founder of "L'Associazione del Teatro Patologico" (Pathological Theater) in Rome. Since its founding, D'Ambrosi's Pathological Theater has grown into a university-level degree called "Teatro Integrato Dell'Emozione" (Integrated Theater of Emotion) at the University of Studies of Tor Vergata.

La Mama theater recently hosted actor, filmmaker, and founder of [L'Associazione del](#) [2] [Teatro Patologico](#) [3] [Dario D'Ambrosi](#) [4] for a celebration of his previous work and a presentation of his revolutionary project. The evening's event was aptly titled Il miracolo italiano (The Italian Miracle) as the work being presented could only be described as a true miracle. Since 1992 D'Ambrosi's Teatro Patologico (Pathological Theater) has been connecting disabled individuals with the world of theater.



In collaboration with University of Studies of Tor Vergata, Pathological Theater has begun a university-level course for individuals with physical and mental disabilities—[T](#) [5] [eatro Integrato Dell'Emozione](#) [5] (Integrated Theater of Emotion). The audience was treated to video clips, personal accounts, and results of scientific studies that prove just how effective the Integrated Theater of Emotion really is.

Posters were hung around the theater commemorating D'Ambrosi's work, and as a perfect segue from past to present, D'Ambrosi's first film, [Il ronzo delle mosche](#) [6] (The Buzzing of the Flies), was shown to the audience. The film follows a group of doctors in a fictitious future world as they attempt to study the last three “crazy” individuals on the planet and find out why they are different than everyone else. The subjects are observed day and night. At first they live in harmony with each other, but when doctors change the environment, their madness explodes.

Following the film two Italian actors, [Giacomo Rocchini](#) [7] and [Celeste Moratti](#) [8], gave a brief performance that was an homage to both mental illness and to the film. The performance was based on a text written by D'Ambrosi himself; it used limited words and music to captivate the audience. Rocchini and Moratti's acting was accompanied by Francesco Maria Crudele on the drums and Francesco Santalucia on the piano.

The audience was also treated to a documentary—*Miracolo Italiano*—which highlighted Teatro Patologico's work. So what exactly is this Italian Miracle? D'Ambrosi has been working with disabled populations for over two decades. His work began in 1992 with the goal of bringing individuals with cognitive disabilities into the theater to help them find their strengths and empower them. Since 2009 Teatro Patologico has had a stable home on Via Cassia in Rome. In 2016, the university course Integrated Theater of Emotion was established at the University of Studies of Tor Vergata. This course turns social conventions upside down. Disabilities that are seen as obstacles or social anomalies are turned into abilities that contribute to a successful production. Students are taught “[...] that the mechanisms of communication at [their] disposal are countless.” Teachers of this course are not necessarily traditional teachers. Instructors here need to be especially sensitive to the needs of their students, and they must be attentive to the various ways that their students may choose to communicate. The lives of both the students and their families have been truly touched by this program.

To prove just how well Teatro Patologico is achieving its mission, D'Ambrosi provided the audience with an anecdote. The former Italian Minister of Education, [Stefania Giannini](#) [9], had the opportunity to see firsthand the work that Teatro Patologico is doing, and according to D'Ambrosi: “she has become a believer.” Another source of pride and endorsement came for the Pathological Theater when the Secretary of Community and Social Services in Italy, [Laura Cocia](#) [10], was asked at an international FIAT meeting in Dubai to name the most significant entity in Italy right now. Her answer was not FIAT or RAI; it was Teatro Patologico.

In order to learn more about Teatro Patologico, please visit their [official website](#) [3].

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