THE DUMB WAITER

By Harold Pinter
Translation by: Alessandra Serra
Directed by Salvatore Tramacere
Cast: Maria Rosaria Ponzetta, Fabrizio Pugliese, Fabrizio Saccomanno
Scenes, light design by Lucio Diana and Salvatore Tramacere
Staging by Mario Daniele
Technicians: Mario Daniele, Angelo Piccinni
Thanks to: Antonio Santagata

At the end of 2008 Harold Pinter dies. Only a few years before, in 2005, Pinter had chosen not to receive the Nobel Prize, and he sent these words: 'There are no hard distinctions between what is real and what is unreal, nor between what is true and what is false. A thing is not necessarily either true or false; it can be both true and false.'

I believe that these assertions still make sense and do still apply to the exploration of reality through art. So as a writer I stand by them but as a citizen I cannot. As a citizen I must ask: What is true? What is false?

Political theatre but without any slogan, without proclamations, continuously in search of situations and dialogues able to put the audience in symbiosis with the characters. Pinter himself said:

"Political theatre presents an entirely different set of problems. Sermonising has to be avoided at all cost. Objectivity is essential. The characters must be allowed to breathe their own air. The author cannot confine and constrict them to satisfy his own taste or disposition or prejudice”.

Here's how the meaningful settings of Pinter’s poetry are born: closed rooms, claustrophobic places, maybe even the living-room of an upper middle-class house, but always settings where the characters are surrounded by metaphores of the violence connected to power, by a vast tapestry of lies which his characters and we ourselves, as the audience, feed on.

The Dumb Waiter, written by H. Pinter in 1957, takes part to the first period of his carrier as a play writer. A period in which many of his works are metaphor of the violence mechanism: an underground, intangible mechanism, which shows itself and its oppressive fury with abrupt outbursts. Absurd theatre or noir theatre?

In the prologue, the first scene is a metallic, abstract place, clean and at the same time made symbolically dirty. It is inhabited by two women, abstract doubles of the male protagonists (Ben and Gus). They create an enigma of strength and fragility, cruelty and fine comicity. The waiting, the boredom, the inquiring chains become movement, body which dances in a musical noir whirl. Then they disappear, as if absorbed by the scene. The audience has now a new place in front of him; more realistic this time, and yet, of a realism which contains all of the absurdity of Pinter’s text.

In a narrow room, where Ben and Gus are waiting for the commandment of a criminal action, meaningless order, their waiting is filled by dialogues in their dialect languages: Ben, Calabrian, is a hard essential person who desperately seeks an order that never comes; Gus, from Salento, a silly and tormented man, whose questions are echoed in the prolongation of vowels; this wait, filled by words, carries the violence in a contracted and trim dialogue, built on rhythms where the silences signify as the speeches.

Questions which echo goes among the basement walls: “who will be the next?”

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To be performed at TEATRO INDIA Rome (May 2008) and FABBRICA EUROPA Festival, Florence (May 2008)