

CATHARINA VON SIENA



LENZ FONDAZIONE

# CATHARINA VON SIENA

## CHEMICAL OPERA

from Jakob Michael Reinhold Lenz

Rewrite, imagourgy

**Francesco Ptitto**

Composition, installation, shells

**Maria Federica Maestri**

Music

**Andrea Azzali, Adriano Engelbrecht**

Actress

**Sandra Soncini**

Performers

**Carlotta Spaggiari, Tiziana Cappella**

Technical care

**Alice Scartapacchio, Giulia Mangini**

Project care

**Elena Sorbi**

Organization

**Iaria Stocchi**

Press Office, communication

**Elisa Barbieri**

Promotion, graphic care

**Alessandro Conti**

Production **Lenz Fondazione**

*Duration 75 minuts*



# “ATOMIC” COMPOSITION O F H U M A N M A T T E R

Already staged by the ensemble in three different versions in 1987, 2000 and 2004, it is an unfinished drama that is truly significant in the artistic journey of Maria Federica Maestri and Francesco Pititto, because in the adolescent fury of the first apparitions, in the suffering of youthful visions, and in the mystical ecstasy of maturity, the poetic ages of Lenz Fondazione are reflected in an authentic portrait.

In the 2022 version, the protagonist remains Sandra Soncini - 'extreme interpreter' of the work -, accompanied by performers Carlotta Spaggiari and Tiziana Cappella, while the sound design by Andrea Azzali reworks the music of the previous version created together with Adriano Engelbrecht.

In Lenz's mystical theatre, the reference to the Saint of Siena is purely imaginary: from the initial tragedy of a painter, Catharina von Siena becomes the struggle of a saint who fights temptations with penitence and the injustices of the world with prayer. The new version artistically translates the intensity of St. Catherine's spiritual praxis, transforming it into a mystical reverberation of the liberation and affirmation of the contemporary, undisciplined, irregular and marginal body.

In the dramaturgical invention, Catherine sinks into a distorted biographical landscape, where together with some figures taken from the hagiography of the saint, other unexpected ones appear, such as that of Correggio, who lived centuries later, in an exhilarating mixture of literary inaccuracies and historical misunderstandings typical of German Romanticism and Lenz's imaginative writing.

In the installation made up of ten stacked basins in which the chromatic word of the double face of Jesus - a very young Christ in the Temple (1513) and a Head of Christ crowned with thorns (1521) - flows, the time of mystical action is sculpted: Catherine is the phenomenon of God, the traces of his presence are engraved in her.

Holy action and divine contemplation are accomplished in twelve trials, each revealing the matter and space of epiphany.

The play is a succession of arduous sanctifying practices that lead Catherine to beatitude. The heavenly bride, a penitent lamb, becomes breath, saliva, Jesus' ointment in the full fulfilment of the scourge.

Catherine's body, nourished only by the host and blood, asks with a sharp voice to belong to the unclean of excess and to return to the extra-world of her childish nature. Blessed because without food, blessed because quenched by her own spit, blessed because dirty and without dignity.

Catherine drowns in the realm of youths with bruised and swollen veins, of queens with protruding bones, of schoolgirls of eternal regurgitation.

Little Catherine wants to die. She wants to die in the theatre. And the theatre must die in Catherine, becoming itself cold, mute and rigid.

Her resurrection is in the truth of the body, without identity, without will, without need, free to be God's red strawberry.



# IMAGOTURGY OF THE SAINT, THE PAINTER AND THE STRAWBERRY

notes by Francesco Pititto

Already in *Catharina von Siena*'s first version in 1987, the stage space contained images. They were live filmed sequences of *Café Müller* by Pina Bausch, a visual representation of the choreographic Passion of dance and theatre that opened up a new perspective of language and artistic research. The irreducible sanctity of Catherine and the irreducible creative ethics of Pina.

Then, in 2003, for the first version of *Life is a Dream* by Calderón de la Barca, the pictorial image, in particular Antonello da Messina's *Pieta - Christ in Pieta* and an *Angel* - filmed in the Prado, imposed itself as a decisive aesthetic/aesthetic element of the dramaturgy.

A transfiguration in the female body became the refraction of the painting, composed from life and then reconverted into an image. At that time I invented the neologism 'imagoturgy', the image was living writing, as much as the body of the actor/actress on stage.

Antonello's *Pietà* and the *Pietà* of the Theatre, beauty and harshness, humanity and animality of the senses, of reason and reasonlessness.

The figure of Christ, his face-body and the angel would assist us in different creative ages and poetic quests.







# OROGRAPHY

## LENZ BY LENZ

It is a three-year project that confirms the fertile topicality of J.M.R. Lenz's visions through the original dramaturgical and imagoturgical re-editions of four works: *Catharina von Siena*, *Shakespears Geist*, *The Soldiers* and the novella *Lenz* that Georg Büchner wrote inspired by Lenz's life.

Jakob Michael Reinhold Lenz, who lived in the second half of the 18th century, is a nomadic and restless author, at times touched by psychic turmoil, a romantic enlightenment for Georg Büchner and a modern virtue for Bertolt Brecht.

He anticipated, with the pre-Marxist social sensibility of his dramas, the great themes of the 20th century: anti-militarism, social injustice, violence against women, and criticism of patriarchy and dominant male power.

It was under the sign of his anti-rhetorical philosophy of the crisis of Western man that Maestri and Pititto founded Lenz Rifrazioni, an artistic, visual and performance training in 1985.

# CATHARINA VON

## **PROVA N. 1**

*SPEGNI LA FIAMMA  
DELLA VANITÀ*

SCENA: FESTA DI COMPLEANNO  
SPAZIO EPIFANICO: BILANCIA  
MATERIA: Fieno  
AZIONE: SOLLEVAMENTO  
CONTEMPLAZIONE: FATICA  
**PROVA: EVIDENZA PESO IN KG**

## **PROVA N. 3**

*IMPARA LA PAZIENZA  
DELL'ATTESA*

SCENA: ARRIVA UNA CARROZZA  
SPAZIO EPIFANICO: CARRELLO  
CONTEMPLAZIONE: ATTESA  
DELL'AVVENTO  
**PROVA: RESPIRO AFFANNO**

## **PROVA N. 5**

*COME SCORRE  
PER LE VENE INFUOCATE*

SCENA: ENTRA VESTITA CON  
TRASCURATEZZA  
SPAZIO EPIFANICO: CAMERETTA  
MATERIA: COTONE IDROFILO  
AZIONE: PULIZIA  
CONTEMPLAZIONE: SUONO  
**PROVA: TRACCE DI SPORCO**

## **PROVA N. 2**

*SII DEBOLE*

SCENA: CAMERA  
SPAZIO EPIFANICO: LETTINO  
MATERIA: CORPO  
AZIONE: SOTTRAZIONE  
CONTEMPLAZIONE:  
IMMAGINE DELLA RELIQUIA  
**PROVA: RISPECCHIAMENTO  
DEL CRANIO**

## **PROVA N. 4**

*ABBANDONA  
GLI AFFETTI TERRENI*

SCENA: IN UN ALTRO LUOGO  
SPAZIO EPIFANICO: DUE CORPI  
MATERIA: INCHIOSTRO  
AZIONE: TIMBRATURA  
CONTEMPLAZIONE: NOME DI GESÙ  
**PROVA: BACIO DI FIDANZAMENTO**

## **PROVA N. 6**

*SPEGNI LA SETE  
DEL DESIDERIO TERRENO*

SCENA: UN BOSCO DI ABETI  
SPAZIO EPIFANICO: RADURA  
MATERIA: LIQUIDI COLORATI  
AZIONE: VERSAMENTO/SPUTO  
CONTEMPLAZIONE: COLORE/DOLORE  
**PROVA: TRACCE SUL PAVIMENTO**



## **PROVA N. 7**

*RAFFREDDA L'ESALTAZIONE  
DELLA PASSIONE*

SCENA: INCENDIO NEL VILLAGGIO  
SPAZIO EPIFANICO:  
TAVOLINO SERVANT  
MATERIA: LATTE E BURRO  
AZIONE: LENIRE/NUTRIRE  
CONTEMPLAZIONE: VITTIME  
**PROVA: RIEMPIMENTO  
DELLA BOCCA**



# SIENA N. 1 2 P R O V E

## **PROVA N. 8**

*LA SANTITÀ IO LA VEDO*

SCENA: VERSO LA CAVERNA

SPAZIO EPIFANICO: BARELLA A  
ROTELLE

MATERIA: CARTA DI RISO

AZIONE: MASTICAZIONE

CARTA E VINO

CONTEMPLAZIONE: OSTENSIONE

OSTIA

**PROVA: BOLO**

## **PROVA N. 11**

*SII L'AGNELLO*

*DEL GREGGE DIVINO*

SCENA: UN BOSCO DI BETULLE

SPAZIO EPIFANICO: CAVERNA

MATERIA: PELO

AZIONE: SCIVOLAMENTO

CONTEMPLAZIONE:

PASCOLO CELESTE

**PROVA:**

**APPARIZIONE DELL'AGNELLO**

## **PROVA N. 12**

*SII BEATA*

SCENA: PRATI DELLA GIOIA

SPAZIO EPIFANICO: VASSOIO

MATERIA: FRAGOLA

AZIONE: OFFERTA FRUTTI

CONTEMPLAZIONE:

ANNULLAMENTO

**PROVA: ESTASI**

## **PROVA N. 9**

*ABITA NEL CORPO*

*E NEL SANGUE DIVINO*

SCENA: DENTRO LA CAVERNA

CON IL FLAGELLO

SPAZIO EPIFANICO: LETTINO

GINECOLOGICO

MATERIA: EMOGLOBINA

AZIONE: ALLARGARE LE GAMBE

CONTEMPLAZIONE:

VOLTO DI CRISTO

**PROVA: TRACCE RESIDUE**

## **PROVA N. 10**

*SII LA LUCE DI DIO*

SCENA: INTERNO

SPAZIO EPIFANICO: VASCA

MATERIA: OLIO

AZIONE: IMMERSIONE

CONTEMPLAZIONE: CORPO UNTO

**PROVA: LUCENTEZZA**



# ABOUT LIGHT AND ITS DESIGN

notes by Alice Scartapacchio

The ritual sacrifice in ancient Greece included, indispensably, the agonised screaming of the *ololyge* (women) as the culmination of the second phase: ritual death. Catherine of Siena also sacrifices herself and performs her own ritual.

She launches her own scream, articulating it in twelve rehearsals/sequences to dissect her blind self-denial. From the attempt to give substance to this scream comes Catharina von Siena's luminous drawing, with the intention of finding the voice, the ritual scream of light.

Inspired, in the first instance, by the assumption of French philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty that it is painting that illustrates the *enigma of the body*, drawing on a layer of *brute sense*, on our *primordial historicity*, we sought in light that revelatory quality capable of highlighting *the state of a continuous astonishment, Being that which is never completely*.

Real and virtual merge in an overlay of image/light and colour matter, so that mystical ecstasy and pictorial ecstasy contribute to the creation of a luminous form that must become body, first flesh and then colour, in order to illuminate the *phenomenon*.

The intertwining of the colour of Correggio's frescoes and the aseptic whiteness of the hospital furnishings helps to create that chiasmatic structure that, aiming to produce an overcoming of the subject/object paradigm, requires an abdication of the self in a perfect mirroring of the saint.





# PRESS REFRACTIONS

Mario De Santis, Huffington Post

«In Pititto and Maestri's version, Catharina affirms her identity, her desires, in an itinerary of fusion with the divine, as a rebellion against human needs and constraints, in twelve scenes, most often monologues, each symbolised by a washbasin from which gushes coloured or putrid water that Catharina drinks. Her torments of resistance and impetus are within an aseptic space of hospital containment. Also central are both the strength of the magnetic presence of the actresses and the music (by Andra Azzali and Adriano Engelrecht) as well as the projected images that create an iconic dimension of Lenz's scenic language. Allusions to the painter Correggio, who painted the 'mystical marriage' of St. Catharina, appear. Catharina is thus also confronted with her own historical imago, eluding all representation.»

Michele Pascarella, Gagarin Orbite Cultural

«It is a sort of total work of art à la Wagner, this Catharina by Lenz, in which many arts interpenetrate to elide each other and allow something third to emerge, we might say with Grotowski, neither personal nor historical but transcendent, an adjective which, it is perhaps worth remembering, in its etymology refers to physically climbing over an obstacle. It seems to be possible to summarise that the many elements that in concert make up the scene, this scene, are understood by Maestri as a springboard (Grotowski, again) to lean towards an elsewhere (holy? sanctified?) that makes the theatrical fact and its own ritual origin coincide in the sign, salvific and vertiginous, of mystery. The washbasins lined up on stage contain, in purity, the basic colours that will make up Pititto's liquefied imagoturgies, as if the sacred faces could not persist in the presence of the all-too-human human that happens in front of them: whether they are births or gasps, invocations or exhortations, it makes little difference, it is always a matter of a kicking, inconsolated humanity, the one that Lenz celebrates and (rap)presents.»





Valeria Ottolenghi, Gazzetta di Parma

«Once again an arduous undertaking, extreme, excellent Sandra Soncini, here flanked with accurate precision and sensitivity by Carlotta Spaggiari and Tiziana Cappella, between dance and the physicality of pain, she Catharina between ecstatic visions, self-abandonment and a sensuality that leaves all modesty vanishing, the desire to belong to God in a powerful, inalienable tension towards the invisible, in the mystery the loss of all boundaries, between suffering deprivation and the desire to show oneself, reveal oneself, give oneself.»

Maria Dolores Pesce, Rumorscena

«[...] Just as the protagonist's body strips itself of its clothes (its roles in the world) to wait to be picked like a strawberry by what or whoever is on the other side of the border, so the theatre strips itself of itself, because in order to rise again, it is first necessary to die. In all this, the dramaturgical word of Francesco Pititto's refined text, always very lyrical but never emphatic, gathers, brings together and sews up the edges of two worlds that travel parallel without ever meeting, the physics of substances and the metaphysics of the mind or soul, and helps us to see into the darkness that we are and in which we are. It is Lenz (J.M.R.), the madness of those who fight injustice and clichés, oppositions and inequalities beyond politics. A performance, like all those of the Lenz Foundation, profound and also disturbing, that points out paths, asks many questions but suggests very few answers, a theatre that expresses a need, a need for authenticity, a need for truth and that seeks, not knowing them, the objects and bodies that these truths can express. As usual, it goes deep and makes no concessions, neither to itself nor to others.»

## LENZ FONDAZIONE

I progetti di creazione performativa contemporanea di Lenz sono il risultato artistico di un approfondito lavoro di ricerca visiva, filmica, spaziale, drammaturgica e sonora. In una convergenza estetica tra fedeltà esegetica alla parola del testo, radicalità visiva della creazione filmica, originalità ed estremismo concettuale dell'installazione artistica, l'opera di Lenz riscrive in segniche visionarie tensioni filosofiche e inquietudini estetiche della contemporaneità.



Immagini di Maria Federica Maestri | Elisa Morabito

CON IL SOSTEGNO DI: MIC MINISTERO DELLA CULTURA, REGIONE EMILIA-ROMAGNA, COMUNE DI PARMA, AUSL PARMA DAI SM-DP, UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI PARMA, FONDAZIONE MONTEPARMA, FONDAZIONE CARIPARMA

DIREZIONE ARTISTICA  
MARIA FEDERICA MAESTRI + FRANCESCO PITITTO

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