

PRESS REVIEW – EXTRACTS



HUFFINGTONPOST.IT – Mario De Santis – 28/10/2024

“AWAKENING”: IN PIPPO DELBONO’S THEATRE AUTHENTICITY CHALLENGES FICTION

The show, as happened many other times and more, exposes Pippo Delbono's biography, and then binds extremely private pains together with collective and historical ones. Everything happens on a stage that is empty at first, the artist comes up on an open curtain, sits on an ordinary chair, mic in hand. He begins by speaking ad-lib, then he reads and lets the sheets of paper fall on the ground like grains of sand in an hourglass as if counting the years of his personal war: the death of his mother, depressions, broken loves, but above all Bobò's death, whom he calls a brother, a father, a teacher. (...)

Like in other plays (...) Delbono starts from a state, an existential or psychological condition. This time it is the final season in the theatre of his life, but reversed as if it was a prelude. So he recalls his younger years, with his deep voice, which is exhausted more by tenderness rather than nostalgia. (...)

Delbono does not remain seated, he dances and shakes, partly due to the marks of the recent physical challenges and partly out of theatrical skillfulness, by walking like Bobò used to when he was old. A love act of mimesis. In it there's the will to demonstrate that the rashness of the young and the uncertainty of the old are all steps of the same path toward joy (another of his recurring themes), a path not of triumph but of poverty and precariousness. Unlike happiness, which has a final flavour to it, joy lies in every step: never reached, but occasionally met along the way. A path that has the shape of poetry and dance. (...)

For now, the time of suffering is over, says Delbono, while Giovanni Ricciardi's cello plays in the shadow. Like wise men do, he uses words that are way too simple, if read through the filter of literature : Wake up/ you must smell the red scent of dawn/ Don't be afraid. What matters is not literature, it is the substance that is theatrically incarnate, in a sort of infection of authenticity and vanishing grace, that have made him an internationally acclaimed artist. Delbono is not afraid of what is simple, ridiculous, nor of the human body and of what is unconventionally human. (...)

Delbono aims at performing a theatrical ritual of sharing his melting inner self. (...) “I want people!” is the symbolic cry toward the end and more than the words is the torture that resonates in that cry, a challenge of truth in the house of

fiction. Just like the call to dance in the war. Everything passes through an empathic connection with the audience, in that place where simplicity is reshaped into enlightenment.

DRAMMA.IT – Paolo Randazzo – 25/10/2024

AWAKENING

In the end, in the long streak of his plays, Pippo Delbono has always unfolded his art as an actor, director, performing artist, within the realm of a substantial, powerful and excruciating expression of love for life, in all its shapes and forms. (...) And so it is then that, in the making process of his shows (his second last one being titled *Love and not by chance*), there might be many or very few constructive elements but, until this love for life remains active, warm with emotions and perceivable while he is on stage (despite him being scarred and almost overwhelmed by pain) and he tells his stories, there is no surprise in the audience and critics finding themselves involved and moved and feeling strong and acknowledging the warmth of a long, important and authentic artistic experience. (...)

An empty stage, a chair and the artist who sits and starts narrating his own self: he starts telling his awakening after the pain, the vital and craving joy of his awakening, after seven years, as he calls it himself, of “refrigerator”. A metaphor to tell the hardship of the disease and distress that kept him in check, frozen on the edge of life and of its creative possibilities. An awakening that he wanted to celebrate by recalling some of the milestones of his education and his artistic path (...) accompanied by the cellist Giovanni Ricciardi and by his own company/family. Gestures and symbols, images, words, verses that reveal the calibre and the poetic structure of the show rather than a defined (and probably not even wanted) dramatic plot dimension.

GLI STATI GENERALI – Walter Porcedda – 23/10/2024

PIPPO DELBONO ON STAGE, “AWAKENING” OF AN EAGLE

The years go by and youth will never be back. Like the people who are lost forever. Mother, Bobò, the Afghan man, Pina Bausch. And his last show is for them. A tango danced solo, after years in solitude and anguish, testifies his return to life. (...)

Theatre becomes a journey through memory. It becomes a remedy. It heals from the tribulations and helps in the hour of nightmares. It alleviates the wounds that open again in the moment of recollection. But in order to push onward and beyond one needs to make an extreme effort, and to be born again. However possible, at least. (...)

Pippo Delbono restarts from where he left with his last play “Love”. He addresses the audience in a sweet but determined manner. With a voice that is hoarse and velvety, softly sinuous, stroking even. By making contact with his audience once more, he finds again the thread of a conversation that had never really ended. After all, his whole life, since “The Hour Of The Assassins” in 1987, lies in his shows. He delivers their plots with clear honesty, exposing emotions and feelings like a brother or the dearest of friends might do. (...)

It is a moment of nostalgic poetry, like a breeze that sneaks in on a morning gust through the trees, when the notes played by the cello of the extraordinary soloist Giovanni Ricciardi rise and he gives the appropriate sound to the soul of Pippo Delbono’s words. (...)

One after the other the actors of the company enter and exit. A collection of diversities and colourful clothes, of different theatrical attitudes. Each and everyone presents us with a gesture, a wink, a dance, a smile of complicity. Beloved travel companions of Delbono’s who take part every time in the creation of his shows. Different fragments of the same story. They are Pippo’s crown and hold him delicately, with invisible threads. Pieces of a great open family of wanderers and actors, unique entertainers, satellites of a poetics that has always lived in the world, immersed in its depths. From the whitest light to the blackest darkness.

DRAMAOLIC – Paolo Martini – 23/10/2024

“AWAKENING” BY PIPPO DELBONO AND THE PRESENT CONDITION OF THE GREAT IRREGULARITY, FROM MODENA TO... LAODICEA

The story, which is an homage to his most beloved Bobò - a man who was sectioned in Aversa asylum as a “microcephalic deaf-mute” patient, then a quarter-of-a-century stage and life companion of Pippo’s - makes you laugh sometimes, to the point of bursting even; but if one makes the mistake of letting themselves be dragged into it, even if just for the

universal need of humanity that oozes out Delbono's theatrical tales, it will inevitably end up in a valley of tears. Even putting aside the international mythology that applies to him, starting with the regard paid to him by all the other Irregulars for his ability to charm a Chinese audience, we are talking about an absolute champion of theatre, outside of the box and any "fancy" rule, in fact the epitome of Irregularity.

CORRIERE DEL MEZZOGIORNO – Enrico Fiore – 23/10/2024

THE GHOST OF BOBO'

"Love", Delbono's previous play, ended with a man (the "coryphaeus" who spoke for all of us) who went to lie down under a barren tree that was suddenly covered with flowers and there the man fell asleep; and now the theme is the awakening from a dream that, in the meantime, has turned into a nightmare instilled initially by Covid and then by wars, in Ukraine and Palestine. First of all Pippo wakes up at the sound of the rock bands that he used to love when he was young, Jefferson Airplane with their "Volunteers" and The Who with their "See me, feel me". But within those (nostalgic, as a matter of fact) memories of his young enthusiasms and illusions it is implanted -in a way that is gushing, untameable, and tormenting and comforting at the same time- the recalling of Bobò, the real protagonist of the show. (...) And now the conjuring miracle is performed: the ghost of Bobò, forced out of the depths of death, finds the extreme and deafening truth of his own human body reincarnated in Pippo's, that reawakens only by winning over the fear of "not to be walking like Bobò". (...) Pippo says: "For five years I couldn't even look at one of his pictures. I couldn't listen to people talking about him". Now though, there is the awakening. On the backdrop is being projected a video of one of Bobò's incredible dances. And Pippo, even if thinner and hesitant, displays a new and heartfelt and heartrending strength, because not only can he look at those pictures, but he owns them again and repeats, like in a state of trance, the movements and gestures of Bobò. An emotion is spread out in the air, almost like one of the many notes that emanate from Giovanni Ricciardi's cello.

SPETTACOLO – Antonio "Rigo" Righetti – 21/10/2024

THE "AWAKENING" OF PIPPO DELBONO: STORIES OF LIFE AND THEATRE

Emotions. This is the food that nourishes and pleases. Pure emotions. Reactions made in the face of stern and heavy questions. Pippo Delbono is a man of theatre who lives art to its full, he does it by exposing himself to risks, by risking. He does it by searching for that connection with truth on the boards of every stage in the world where people go to witness a magic that they know to be made up. (...)

The voice, that voice of Pippo Delbono that is a marvellously musical instrument, with that voice that shifts, whispers, sings and stumbles like a footstep, Delbono tells his own truth that touches ours. Above all Pippo Delbono theatre is music, listened and looked at and lived with that idealistic breath of those late 60's and all the 70's, when the change that we thought was possible seemed to be on the verge of happening. (...)

His are songs that go straight to the heart. They make you feel in company, no longer alone, on this Earth, just like pure emotion is the homage paid to Bobò, main actor in Delbono's work, of whom, with that voice, Pippo will recall perfectly the wise and elegant spirit. We are not looking for scenes that will force some stupefied giggle, there is no need for that, there is still the space for those deep and massively heavy questions. A consideration that sometimes is way too human. Pippo's dramatic little footsteps, his way of dancing with his arms and legs while sitting on a chair, a physicality that is evermore interiorised and Pippo's fears that become everyone's. (...)

It is a theatre of love. Love for life and loss of love. It is a theatre that we need more than ever. (...)

In the show you will find your own monsters, your own pain, your own fears, your own music. A theatre that is vital, where there is life, sweat, fear and courage. A theatre that is necessary.

APLAUZE – Alexander Hartmann – June 2024

AWAKENING TO REALITY. A REVOLUTION OF THE SENSES THROUGH DANCE, COLOR, EMPATHY.

On an empty stage, emotions, words, movements, and images arise that gradually generate a very personal story of sadness, pain, alienation, an ongoing war to preserve the physical and psychological integrity of the human being, so fragile. (...)

“The swallow, the blue water and the red flowers” metaphorically introduce the idea of the refuge needed by a mind in turmoil, a soul tormented by questions and torn by sadness and helplessness.

“Is there anyone there? Is there anyone there? Is there anyone here?” asks Pippo Delbono, waiting for answers that do not come, to the audience (...) to whom he speaks openly and bravely about suffering, physical and mental, personal and those in situations of conflict, madness and the patience to endure. Because “everything will pass!” (...) This powerful mix explodes on stage in sounds, lights, colors, words, songs, live music and dance. The vibrations of the dancing bodies whirling like dervishes in a frenetic rhythm and the vibrations of the music convey what the creator's sick body can no longer do. Through art, Pippo Delbono exorcises the demons that give him no peace, gradually creating the context for catharsis: his own and that of those who choose to accompany him on this initiatory journey into the innermost recesses of his soul. (...)

Awakening brings together Delbono's confessions with music, dance and poetry, in a structure that is striking for its alternating moments of presentation of the harsh reality that grips us and moments in which personal experiences explode and flood the room with emotion, in a perfectly calibrated mechanism that generates contradictory feelings, which in turn accompany the audience liberation from daily worries.

ZIARUL METROPOLIS - Monica Andronescu - 22/06/2024

AWAKENING BY PIPPO DELBONO. NOSTALGIA AFTER THE DAWN OF ANOTHER WORLD.

A form of artistic metabolization of pain, sadness, suffering, helplessness, depression, love, Pippo Delbono's visceral, highly personal theatre remains the most powerful cry I have ever heard on stage. Bordering on impudence, the exposure of suffering, as he does, has the sweetness of poison and the force of a volcano that blows you up. (...)

Meeting his world, if one has the courage to go through it, is a journey with no return. To see and hear Delbono in a corner of the stage (...) with his voice melting particles in the air is addictive. (...) As the embodiment of poetry, dressed in a blood-red T-shirt, he busies himself flipping through the pages on which he reads verses that vibrate in the depths of our being, where life, death, fear, love and loneliness meet. His voice fills a sea of sadness and in the waves of music he dances, waving his hands, sitting on a chair. (...) His performances are a journey. One experiences them and takes them with him. (...) They are pieces of flesh and blood that burn, come alive, hurt. (...)

Awakening is a post-pandemic performance by an artist who seeks freedom above all else. It is a performance about the twilight of a world. There is no real “awakening.” It is rather a nostalgia after the dawn of another world.

LITERNET – Doina Giurgiu – June 2024

RAW VIRGIN MELANCHOLY. PIPPO DELBONO AND AWAKENING.

Pippo Delbono is a theatrical creator. He does not go on stage, he is the stage. It is an idea, it is a form, it is a text, it is voice and movement, it is characters and scene. It is his story, told to the audience in all possible forms, it is the story of the audience, of the world, of people. (...)

Awakening, a show that premiered at the Sibiu International Theatre Festival 2024, is a long journey through Delbono's past and the '70s, with their disappearing revolutions, to the present charged with collective pain and personal losses, but without the loss of hope, of one's certainties. There is a tear in the way Delbono looks (and forces the audience to see) back, to the things that are no longer there. It is thrilling to see Delbono (...) with his heart throbbing with a melancholy that is alive, warm, at times cruel, but fresh and firmly gripping the hands of life.