

COMPAGNIA PIPPO DELBONO

LA GIOIA – *Joy*

Conceived and directed by Pippo Delbono



EMILIA ROMAGNA
TEATRO FONDAZIONE

PRESS EXTRACTS



DEL TEATRO.IT- Maria Grazia Gregori – 13/6/2019

JOY ACCORDING TO PIPPO

Joy, Pippo Delbono's latest creation, is a safe shore for deep sorrows, such as the disappearance of the unforgettable Bobò, as much as it is the unexpected outcome of an act of sharing, of "making" in the sense of being well within the wholesomeness we all belong to and which belongs to each of us.

Too easily said... Joy. This word, chosen by Pippo Delbono as the title of his new, deeply moving creation presented at the Piccolo Teatro Strehler in Milano, takes on a peculiar meaning: it isn't a feeling of happiness, of satisfaction; it is rather brought forth by a feeling of longing and loneliness we never looked for but feel upon ourselves, leaden, hard, bound by all we've had to live through (...). Pepe, with his coming and going in silence, building imaginary worlds, seems to exemplify what I think is the *fil rouge* of the whole work: we must make, build something, never stop, keep going. There's a prize at the end: not only the joy of making but also the joy of touching, or even living, beauty itself. Isn't it so, Pippo? Great success and a standing ovation at the end.

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LA REPUBBLICA.IT – Anna Bandettini – 8/06/2019

PIPPO DELBONO, JOY IS A WONDERFUL THING

Joy has no story to tell, no strict editing either, yet it is a chaste and courageous work, whose resonance reaches well beyond what can actually be seen on stage, as when Pepe Robledo lines up little paper boats upstage while we hear Erri De Luca's *Mare Nostro*, or the "flower prison" caging Pippo in the sweetness of the *finale*. The fragments that make up this work blend in an intense emotion, as in a ceremonial path, not towards death nor towards joy either, rather towards hope in the hard joy we all are waiting for. This emotion binds all the fine performers on stage.

CORRIERE DELLA SERA – Franco Cordelli – 30/5/2019

DELBONO, PRAISE OF FOLLY IN A VORTEX OF EMOTION

"And now Bobò, with his little bird's voice, has flown away". It's Pippo Delbono who's telling his story. Gracefully, with ineffable tenderness, he has woven it into his mercurial, whirling creation, *Joy*. Pippo walks up the bare stage and says, "After Bobò, the show's been born again. It's quite the same and it's completely different."

I went back the following night. I wanted to make sure I'd gotten it right. Bobò could be heard breathing through every word, in every single gesture on stage: the same as when he was alive, and yet so different. There was a wholeness to them, they were lighter now (...)



IL SOLE 24 ORE – Renato Palazzi – 30/6/2019

THE SAD CLOWNS' JOY

Precursor of many anti-interpretation currents, Pippo Delbono persists in destabilizing us with his quest for shadows that grow long, even well after death.

(...) In this new chapter of his long theatrical history, *Joy*, produced by Emilia Romagna Teatro, the sumptuous images he creates are quite alluring. A triumph of beautiful colors, flowers and balloons. Alluring as well is the playfully histrionic tone he uses to address the audience directly, as he introduces one by one his

work companions. These are misleading impressions, though, because he'll never renounce his disrupting anomaly. Pippo remains, in the European panorama, a unique figure. The only one, we could say, who makes theatre by not so much with characters with a personal physiognomy, but rather with pure moods and interior emotional states. What are they, in fact, if not materialized emotions, those sad clowns, those surreal spouses, those vampire widows, those masks whose inner being is crudely laid bare, revealed, nay, screamed out aloud, because past the rousing music, the strobe lights, the overflowing visual images, dominating Delbono's theatre we find first and foremost an existential howl. (...) Then he is once again as we know him, an artist completely exposing himself, exhibiting an exasperated, nearly violent subjectivity, expressing a truth that clings to the skin, that one can refuse but that still touches, and hurts.

SIPARIO - Nicola Arrigoni – 13/06/2019

JOY, A SHOW BY PIPPO DELBONO

Pippo Delbono tells his woes, Bobò's absence and the stories of his actors, of his family/company where marginality, pain, and an obstination to walk on the verge of the abyss accompany each of the artist's creations, each poetical tale made of

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visual images, heart-wrenching music, and a quality of truth even in their simply standing there that can only and always move us to tears. All of this is *Joy*. One follows *Joy* with a choking heart, expecting the upheavals and the iconic, musical upsettings that Delbono's theatre is capable of, and ends up facing a languid, melancholic, intimate ritual instead. (...) Delbono and his poetical figures never desist, never stop looking for a joy that may appease their sorrows. And we, the audience, can only be with Pippo and his company and melt in a moved, grateful applause.

AMADEUS – Emilio Sala – 9/6/19

JOY: PIPPO DELBONO AND THE AESTHETICS OF DIVERSITY

This work uses music as “closed numbers”, in all respects opera material. The most extraordinary of these is the waltz from Khachaturian's *Masquerade*: with strobe lights flashing, and at rock-concert volume, this “number” is enacted by completely “mad” characters, shaking as though possessed as they roam about the stage and then pour onto the audience floor, swerved by the whirling waltz, with a hint of tawdriness, even, and greeted at the end by moved and liberatory applause. (...) This aesthetics of diversity that Delbono employs also uses sound as a mercurial element, apt to open multi-dimensional dramaturgical spaces. (...) Those who've experienced in depth the paroxysmal emotions of opera, its “joy”, the diversity of voice, its phantasmatic nature, know that Delbono's theatre is also, itself, “opera”.

CULTWEEK – Alessandra Moscheri - 7/6/2019

JOY: PIPPO DELBONO'S RITUAL AND CLOWNESQUE JOURNEY

Remembering with a smile and with joy becomes the fil rouge to celebrate and to try to rouse and elicit in the audience the desire for a primary emotion, that could not exist if not in contrast with life's woes (...).

Pippo Delbono's staging has cages, lights, an empty stage, little paper boats, colored clothes and rags, flower sculptures (by Thierry Boutemy), and we see it turn into a sort of ritual (and what is theatre if not a rite born religious and grown political, in its deeper Greek meaning of polis?).

A cathartic journey, with irony here and there, in which the anecdotes and stories of the performers Delbono has met, chosen and saved mix with a tribute to the world of circus, vaudeville and film through the figure of none other than Totò.

IL FATTO QUOTIDIANO – Camilla Tagliabue – 15/03/2019

WHAT A “JOY” DELBONO GIVES US!

Partly revised after Bobò's death, the work is a poetical tribute to the flow of life.

How beautiful, how great is Pippo Delbono's *Joy*: finally, here's a touching, heartening work, that is moving and interesting to us because the first to be touched, heartened, moved and interested is the performer, author and director of the work.

(...) The well-devised script elegantly weaves together parts of the performers' real lives; literature and film, from Erri De Luca to Totò; monstrous parades and circus moments; madhouse nightmares and jail bars from Bacon's paintings; Rimbaud's “blue summer evenings”, love and flesh, exiles and entrancements, private hallucinations and collective flights across “Our Father Sea who art not in Heaven”, cemetery of shipwrecks, its bottom strewn with tattered rags.

LA REPUBBLICA – Robinson - Rodolfo di Giammarco – 10/03/2019

IN PRAISE OF ABSENCE: REMEMBERING SWEET BOBO'

There's a suspension, like the one Fernando Pessoa expresses when he writes: “Dying is simply not being seen anymore.” We feel it when, with participated emotion, we see the partial re-staging and the narrative of memories that Pippo Delbono has breathed into his *Joy*. In this new creation, Bobò, a historical member of the company who died last February, still makes his presence quite distinctly felt. He is evoked, spoken to, made the object of jokes and tributes, and more than once we hear his voice, and his sweet elementary way of expressing himself. It is exceptional, and completely human, that a work on stage may change so radically in such a short time, and how it can maintain the

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radiating soberness of the title while becoming at the same time a sort of actorial *pietas*, the elaboration of loss, and a tribute to who's no longer with us.

IL CORRIERE DELLA SERA – CORRIERE DI BOLOGNA – Massimo Marino – 11/03/2018

EMOTIONAL INTIMATE TIME AMONG FLOWERS AND METAPHYSICAL CLOWNS

The circus is there, and so are the flowers. Metaphysical clowns, dances, and a hundred paper boats. There is a cage, like the one that encloses sometimes bodies and brains, and there is the memory of a Shaman who frees souls through folly. Fellinian parades flash by, and the melancholy of tango; stifled cries from the audience ("Where's joy? Where is it?") and unforgettable moments of theatre, as when the protagonist, Pippo Delbono, after filling the stage with his words and with his actors, who seem to be projections of himself, goes backstage to introduce the little deaf and silent man. Bobò stumbles in, infirm, and Mr. Delbono leads him to sit onstage, among the paper boats. "Bobò has been with us 21 years. He was 47 years in an asylum, where he had been locked in at 16. Now he's 81," says the demiurge. Then the two, with simple, effective, sculpted gestures, double a dialogue from Beckett's *Waiting For Godot*. As suspended, in an infinite intimate time of emotion.

Joy, Pippo Delbono's new work, moves the audience, deeply. He and his diverse company, of "tramps", refugees, exceptions, actors, pulsate with the energy of humanity re-inventing itself. (...)

This work was born of a black hole, of a mental prison cell. Delbono conquers the evening leading us straight to our imagination, our feelings, in an era of shutting close, of letting Narcissus out alone. It opens space for listening, frees our vision, whispers we can let go of fear. It tells us that joy can exist, even in the darkest pits. How badly we need, through all our shipwrecks, to turn our leaden prison bars into flowery festoons. To colour stage and mind with Pierrot's sadness, and with his joy, also; with the juices of the world, its cruelties notwithstanding; with Bobò's speeches, all groans and gulps, verses of pure sound, saying more than all surrounding rhetoric. To be. Here. Now. In sorrow for joy. With a stage that slowly turns into spring, thanks to the floral compositions by Thierry Boutémi, from Belgium, and the unfathomable presence of all the Pippo Delbono's Company actors.

CONTROSCENA - Enrico Fiore - 12/11/2018

PIPPO DELBONO'S JOY, OR: THE VOID AFTER BOBO'

Pippo Delbono's *La Gioia* bears scandal, because it dares to portray on stage a quality of joy that is the exact opposite of the lie shown in advertisements and promoted by consumerism, that joy -- as Pippo writes in a note to the text -- made of "happy families, happy children, happy landscapes. All dead, all fake." It is then easy to understand why this piece is built on contrasts and opposites, from the very beginning sequence (...) Starting from Luigi Pirandello's lines, Delbono tells us of the desperate attempt, forever in vain, of man to constrict life, this flow of unrelated instants of dis-aggregation, into a unique Formula, set and determined, once and forever. Pippo Delbono throughout this work tells us that joy comes first of all from freeing oneself from formulas and, more to the point, from forms. (...)

(...) What is joy, then, to Pippo Delbono? More specifically, what kind of joy is Pippo Delbono describing in this piece? First of all, the joy Pippo Delbono describes in this piece is the one he himself feels as he carries on his journey with the extraordinary companions he once again introduces to us one by one: Nelson Lariccia, with his past as a medicine-ridden homeless man; Ilaria Distante who adores tango; Gianluca Ballaré, a young man with Down syndrome in his flawless imitation of Loretta Goggi, singing *Maledetta Primavera* ... and then Bobò of course, the deaf-and-dumb microcephalic man whom Pippo met in a Neapolitan madhouse and is today the piercing icon not only of Delbono's poetics but, in general, of theatre as a whole, and it has been so for the past two decades at least.

(...) Ten minutes of quivering and affected applause at the end of the show, with all the performers called repeatedly back on stage; besides Pippo Delbono, Bobò, Gianluca Ballaré, Nelson Lariccia and Ilaria Distante there are Dolly Albertin, Margherita Clemente, Simone Goggiano, Mario Intruglio, Gianni Parenti, Pepe Robledo, Zakira Safi e Grazia Spinella.

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IL MANIFESTO – Gianni Manzella – 10/03/2018

IT'S TIME FOR HOPE IN PIPPO DELBONO'S FLOWERED GARDEN

There are still a few black holes, Pippo Delbono tells us as he calls the audience to tread with him and his company a path toward *Joy*, the title to his latest creation. (...) It all begins with a telling theme, *Don't Worry, Be Happy*, and the off-and-on presence of an actor watering an ever-growing garden. This foreshadows the floral explosion that will overtake the stage in the finale, orchestrated by Thierry Boutémy, a Norman-born Belgian resident who calls himself a "fleuriste", but has been an all-around flower artist for the likes of Sofia Coppola and Lady Gaga.

And here he tells us of his madness as the iron bars of a prison cell fall around him from above. It is Pirandello's *Henry IV* that tries to rationalize his madness, but it slips into John Dowland's "Let me live forlorn". Madness as an escape from reality, with the awareness that healing is to realize that one is crazy, and the trouble is with those who do not even recognize their madness. (...) There are stories Delbono tells us, picked up here and there around the world: the old actor in Bali who has played the monkey on the street, masterfully, for seventy years; the childish desire to become a trapeze artist, as a lightbulb swings across the stage; the lumberjack leaving his job because his destiny is to become a shaman. When stage is strewn with paper boats other images flow from memory and at one point rags and tattered clothes form a wide sea: "Our Father Sea who art not in the Heavens" in Erri De Luca's secular prayer. Then it's Totò, and another prayer, the clown's, from *The Most Comical Show On Earth*: "Never leave us without bread or applause..." Then it will be only flowers filling the stage. And even prison bars are made of flowers now, as they encircle Delbono's final cry. This path has reached its temporary conclusion, with a very personal emotional touch. Whichever flower you may be, when the time comes, you shall blossom.