



PALADINS OF FRANCE

SPADA AVETE VOI, SPADA AVETE IO!

Orlando's and other strange paladins' life,
death and misadventures

dedicated to "What the clouds are?" by Pier Paolo Pasolini

by **Francesco Niccolini**
direction **Enzo Toma**
with **Francesco Cortese, Carlo Durante,**
Anna Chiara Ingrosso, Emanuela Picicchio
direction assistant **Valentina Impiglia**
scenes planning **Iole Cilento**
scenes setting **Porziana Catalano, Iole Cilento**
original musics **Pasquale Loperfido**
Carlo Magno's voice **Fabrizio Saccomanno**
Lights design **Angelo Piccinni**
technical management **Mario Daniele, Alessandro Cardinale**

Prize as Best Performance _EOLO AWARDS 2009

Prize as Best Performance_ The Critics' Choice Award 2009

Special prize of the Jury as Best Performance for supporting and developing the traditions

The Great Petrushka, International Puppet Festival 2014_ Ekaterinburg-Russia

Prize as Best Director

Harmony Word puppet Carnival 2014_ Bangkok-Thailand

Childrens' games. War games.

Puppets. Moppets. Old and beautiful things. To be broken in two by sword swings.

Underneath: bodies, metal, love and war. Above: wires, loud voices and a tragic destiny.

Charlemagne and his paladins. When I was a boy I hated those characters, prototypes of conquerors.

Whereas, I loved their portrayal of death tenderly, those marionettes broken into hundred pieces, tied to a torn paper sky.

Twenty years later, when I see men and/or puppets die in battle fields, I understand that everybody deserves compassion and their corpses must be respected.

The tragic- and comic story of Charlemagne's paladins – from Angelique's arrival at court to the massacre at Roncesvalles – tells the beauty and cruelty of life. If great poets and obscure theatre-goers still have pleasure in telling this story even after more than five hundred years, there must be a reason. It seems to be in the small puppet theatre where the great director and poet Pier Paolo Pasolini led some of the most important Italian actors of the Sixties (Totò, Ninetto Davoli, Franco e Ciccio) telling the story of Otello, Iago and Desdemona. With these puppets I would like to recount Rinaldo, Astolfo, Angelica, Bradamante, Fiordiligi, Orlando and the massacre in Roncesvalles at the end, that weird and bloody dump in which all those bodies died and lied abandoned, looking at the sky and asking themselves "What are clouds?"

Francesco Niccolini

Short video: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u99E_mIMNyk

PRESS REVIEW:

[...] A refined and enthralling performance; tragicomic metatheatrical, rich in quotations and purely fluent dialogues". **Valeria Ottolenghi** – Gazzetta di Parma

[...] The actors are very good at alternating the characters [...] all contributes to the creation of a colorful and passionate performance, lived intensely without any pauses [...]" . **Giancarlo Andreoli** - Libertà

[...]Fifty packed minutes that see as protagonists paladins with no fear and flaws, they are funny in their armour and diving suit and funnier is their parlance, a mixture of noble and vulgar drenched in the idioms of our Mezzogiorno (dramaturgy by Niccolini is remarkable) [...] the direction is an off-screen voice echoing into an old cone-shaped loudspeaker, King Charles' voice, that reminds a bit of Stromboli (from Pinocchio), a bit of Big Brother, the expression of a devastating will against which puppet-men can only oppose their daily dignity exercise [...] **Italo Interesse** – QUOTIDIANO di BARI

[...] the nostalgia for a time that has gone is dampen in the present, in the battles to be fought in the farce of fiction and life. The beautiful and poetic text is mounted in a formidable way, beginning from the notable cleverness of the whole cast [...] this is a proposal suitable for every kind of audience and, in it's various stratifications, it can be read both from young and from adult spectators [...] **Nicola Viesti** – HYSTRIO

The performance PALADINS OF FRANCE has been presented in several countries as Poland (Tarnow, Lomza and Poznan), Bangkok- Thailand, Ekaterinburg – Russia, Trabzon- Turkey, Caracas-Venezuela, Beirut-Lebanon, Yaroslav –Russia, Smederevo- Serbia, LUGANO- Switzerland, Ludwigshafen am Rhein-Germany, Manresa- Spain, Tivat – Montenegro, Teheran- Iran.