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## Love's faithful

BY MARIA DOLORES PESCE

The theatre of Marco Martinelli and Ermanna Montanari, and that of the Albe in their shared pulsation, sometimes seems like a ship passing before an unknown continent, the world that surrounds but does not belong to us, in search of an inlet, a river mouth, even a hazardous strait, in order to penetrate that continent and, with an adventurous crew, reveal that world. *Love's faithful* too, a dramaturgical polyptych written by Marco Martinelli, devised and directed as usual with Ermanna Montanari, appears as an exploration among the shadows, a north-west passage towards the unknown that reveals itself as the thick fog of a distant dawn in 1321 penetrates the cracks of the world, reveals itself through the name of a poet, the poet Dante Alighieri who, malarial and close to the death he had so often lyrically prefigured, retraces the times and rhythms of an existence always shared with us.

An exploration and therefore a discovery, the one discovery, beyond and through the impervious passage of death, that engine which drives all and illuminates every mystery, love with its faithful who, here and now, still seek to redeem the world, to overturn the state of things that governs us, today as yesterday, that love which liberates from violence and, as the playwright puts it, saves "this flower bed that makes us so fierce".

At bottom it is another piece of the earth turned over "to plant the apple tree even if war breaks out tomorrow". *Love's faithful* therefore takes its place in the journey through Dante, begun in 2017 with the *Inferno* and scheduled to continue with the other two parts of the *Comedy*. So along the familiar lines of the courses plotted by Martinelli, Montanari and the Albe, it stands as a sort of brief open commentary, linked to the main voyage.

A polyptych in seven panels, as we said, it speaks in seven different voices, all contained within the acting wisdom of an Ermanna Montanari who – it's now a commonplace to say so – is outstanding in transfiguring the word by making it pass through her body in such a way that it occupies the entire stage, building spaces and meanings, distilling them from a writing that retains their sounds by exalting their signifying capacity, while young Simone Marzocchi on stage with his trumpet underscores the sometimes unpredictable tonal passages and leaps.

An Ermanna Montanari, among other things, magically immersed in sudden flashes of light that cross the dark depths of the set in a pursuit of angelic Giotto figures, almost open glances, between wonder and anguish, at the contemporary inferno.

A very fine show, enriched by the music of Luigi Ceccarelli and the magical shadows of Anoush Castiglioni, which construct and fill the stage, paradoxically by "illuminating" it: two of the wise folk who, as Martinelli writes, were instrumental to the definitive formation of the play.

The others: sound engineer Marco Olivieri, light designer Enrico Isola, and lights/video technician Fagio. Shadow technician Alessandro Pippo Bonoli, lights assistant Luca Pagliano.