

Sets for *Laborintus II* by Luciano Berio, 1971

Directed by Carlo Quartucci, text by Edoardo Sanguineti, music by Luciano Berio, film clips by Giorgio Bergami, produced by the Teatro Comunale dell'Opera, Genoa.

Performances: Genoa, Teatro Margherita, 30 March, 1 and 4 April 1971 (conductor Marcello Panni).

“It is the performance of a concert by Berio. The orchestra is on stage, the backdrop is a film screen on which the film of a theatre piece, shot by Quartucci in the country, is projected.¹ A plaster rectangle on the grass marks off a virtual space, typical of Paolini’s work and reminiscent of his first squaring off of a canvas (*Disegno geometrico*, 1960). The rectangle is none other than the artist’s sheet of drawing paper, the page of the score for the musician.

‘Moreover, many things coincide: the fortuitous nature of the presences (the actors who will not repeat themselves); the theatrical action that is performed (exists) on an artistic level only as pure intentionality (attempt is the only acceptable ‘form’ here); the place of isolation marked by the white perimeter, like the theatre (place) of a possible linguistic path, the total absence of a relationship and of an interlocutor, which only the photographic shot tends to recreate; the purely conceptual dimension of the entire operation’.²

Theatre, cinema, music and art merge into a comprehensive performance. Paolini arranges the trunks of costumes on stage so that they are visible. The public finds it difficult to distinguish the actor from the musician both of whom, dressed in everyday clothes, roam about like a crowd mixed into the all-encompassing nature of the stage. They dress and apply their make-up on stage instead of in their dressing rooms. The set design in this case shatters the divisions between preordained places. At the same time the artist analyses the elements of the performance in the same way that he has investigated the basic elements of painting: canvas, stretcher, paint. All of Paolini’s theatrical interventions during this period tend to expose the mechanisms of staging in a sort of transparency-operation. It is the revelation of what goes on backstage that is analogous to the presentation of the overturned canvas in so many of his works” (L. Cherubini, in *Sipario. Balla, De Chirico, Savinio, Picasso, Paolini, Cucchi*, exhibition catalogue, Rivoli, Castello di Rivoli Museo d’Arte Contemporanea [Milan: Edizioni Charta, 1997], p. 259, revised translation).



¹ In alcune scene compare il volto di Marcello Panni, concertatore e direttore d'orchestra dello spettacolo medesimo.

² E. Fadini, C. Quartucci, *Viaggio nel Camion dentro l'avanguardia*, Torino, 1976, pp. 182-183.



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