

Panta Rei
Theatre
Collective

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Rocinante! Rocinante!

A Surreal Poetic Tale in Grotesque Style

"Rocinante! Rocinante! Is filled with joy: the joy of play, the joy of spectacle, the joy of the absurd. This company is blessed with a group of actors who relish the irreverent and command the stage with a delightful manic energy. From riotous melee to haunting stillness the piece drags the audience on a rough, earthy, mesmerising journey that trills and provokes. Joyful, joyful, joyful."

Christopher Holt, Lecturer at London Metropolitan University.

Supported by:

Rose Bruford College

London Metropolitan University



1. Introduction

This information pack aims to give you an introduction to our company- Panta Rei Theatre Collective - and our latest work *Rocinante! Rocinante!*

We trust that our promotional video will give you a taste of our work. More information about the show and this film can be found on our website:

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We hope that our artistic vision will trigger your curiosity and captivate your imagination.

1.1 Panta Rei Theatre Collective: Artistic Policy

Panta Rei Theatre is a collective of international artists and researchers interested in promoting interdisciplinary collaborations beyond the realm of performing arts to explore on a deep level issues and topics that are relevant to any individuals regardless of cultural, economical and social backgrounds. We seek to create a theatre, in which space, text, sound, image and each human being is positioned in equal dialogue with one another in the attempt to investigate the meaning of our existence, our fears and failings with irony, humour and compassion.

We believe in the collaborative approach to theatre making and the richness of an ensemble where each individual's uniqueness is recognised and celebrated. Our collective embraces a variety of individual artists and companies who gather for specific projects and then disperse to carry on their independent work.

We believe in an active audience who are physically, emotionally and intellectually engaged, free to interpret in a personal way the theatrical experience through the use of their imagination.



Panta Rei Theatre Collective team at the rehearsals, 2010.
Photograph: Lubos Horvat.

Our training based on a sustained and coherent exploration of a rigorous physical and vocal work, based on a diverse range of cultural experiences and theatre practices.

We have been developing a physical and vocal language that allows us to be fully attuned to the external environment. This is based on a profound, active awareness of the body, the other performers and the space, which can lead to a powerful presence in live performance.

1.2 About the piece

Rocinate! Rocinante! Is an immersive, captivating, visceral and surreal journey into the restless mind of Don Quixote de la Mancha. Through an alternation of highly dynamic physical sequences and poetic intimate moments, the audience will experience Don Quixote's madness and his constant switching between vision of Paradise and Hell, past and present ... dreams and reality.

Taking inspiration from two of the most celebrated and fascinating portrayals of madness - Don Quixote de la Mancha and Hamlet - the piece aims to stimulate a deeper understanding of mental illness and provocatively encourages the audience to consider the limitations of a conventional dualistic interpretation of life and its rigid separation of two opposite poles; reality and illusion, sanity and madness...life and death.

We soon realised that the stage itself is both physically and metaphorically the best place to explore the relationship between illusion and reality or –in other words- fantasy and tangible world. This is the place where suspension of disbelief is the norm and where the illogical becomes logical: fantasy and illusion are vital to the theatre.

The piece is highly physical and suffused with the spectacle and grotesque humour of commedia dell'Arte and Spanish Golden Age integrating masks, elements of clownery and mime. Visually striking *Rocinate! Rocinante!* is both conceptually and aesthetically homage to the work of the great Polish director and visual artist Tadeusz Kantor; the title itself mirrors his famous production *Wielopole! Wielopole!*

Duration of the piece: 1hour and 15minutes.

Language: performed in English, Norwegian, and Spanish.

2. Rocinante! Rocinante! - The plot

It's night. A calm and peaceful night. A night in the life of a man, a night of encounters, laughter and tears. An adventurous night of misunderstanding, surprises, impossible quests, visions and dreams. But also a night of unbearable loss and painful discovery.

We are in a cemetery. Silence reigns in this garden of rest and memory. Everything reminds us of death...yet life is pulsing...it is talking to us ...it's everywhere around us. We are here in a place-in-between illusion and reality waiting for an event, a revelation...an adventure where everything can happen.



Don Quixote and Sancho, Barn Theatre,
Photograph: Lubos Horvat.

Don Quixote arrives in the middle of the night with his horse, Rocinante. His faithful servant Sancho follows him with his Donkey. He has escaped from an asylum. From another place of deep silence - a forced silence. A place where noises and 'unacceptable' sounds are repressed and Madness is imprisoned between thick walls.

Tonight Madness has escaped to speak and tell us a story...even if it means to break a fragile dream forever.

3. Rocinante! Rocinante! - Inspiration and background.

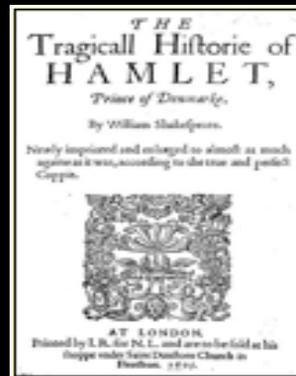
" From the recesses as if from the abyss of Hell,
there started to emerge people
who had died long time ago and
memories and memories of events that,
as a dream, had no explanation,
no beginning, no end, no cause and effect"

- Kantor, *A Journey Through Other Space*

Rocinante! Rocinante! Is the practical outcome of an ongoing research project on theatre, visual art, psychiatry and history.

It was originally performed in January 2009 and aimed to explore the theme of memory in Tadeusz Kantor's work. This fascination for memory and remembrance led to the decision to set the performance in a cemetery: the conventional place of encounter with our dead.

All the other dramaturgical elements stemmed from the chosen space including the two major sources of inspiration: Don Quixote and Hamlet.



Don Quixote de la Mancha by Miguel de Cervantes
and Hamlet by William Shakespeare.

Since the last performance over one year ago the company started to work on a new version of the show stirring away from the topic of memory and remembrance. We got progressively more interested in the mental condition of Don Quixote and his world, his dreams and delusions. In questioning how 'madness' is perceived –and has been perceived throughout history- and how the boundaries between 'madness' and sanity are defined we started expanding our exploration beyond our area of expertise – theatre and performing arts - integrating psychiatry, history of medicine and philosophy.



Hieronymus Boschs. 'The Garden of Earthly Delights and The Ship of Fools'
Visual stimuli utilised for Don Quixote's nightmare and vision of Hell.

Besides taking inspiration from Don Quixote's main characters and Hamlet's gravediggers other important sources of inspiration have been photographs, paintings, postcards, personal and found objects, sound and music originally composed by our sound designer .

Since the early stages Hieronymus Bosch's paintings have been used as visual stimuli to create Don Quixote's nightmares and visions of Hell. This work has been developed through the experimentation with lighting and sound in order to create a visceral and powerful performance able to lead our audiences inside Don Quixote's mind and his hallucinations.

In order to translate this material into a theatrical experience we have been sharing personal stories, photos, dreams and nightmares to achieve a deep understanding of each other and find our own personal language: a language of symbols, illogical association and powerful images.



1.

2.

3.

1 & 2. Magnum Photos: W Eugene Smith and David Seymour.

Visual stimuli utilised during the devising process to create the mourners

3. William Hogarth, A Rake's Progress.

This engraving became the iconic image of the Bedlam Hospital.

4. Rocinante! Rocinante! - Visual Aesthetic

There are few elements that can be considered a 'signature' of the piece: various umbrellas, a white parasol and a series of found objects hanging from the ceiling. These objects include animal skulls, photos, books, domestic tools and music instruments.



Umbrellas and hanging objects. Performance in February 2009.

Old buckets full of water, metal chains, candles, wooden spoons, and marbles will be used throughout the performance to create the soundscape for our cemetery and Don Quixote's visions and hallucinations. We are particularly fascinated by old costumes, found objects and recycled material with their own 'personal stories' and mysterious origins.

The dark moments directly inspired by Hieronymus Bosch's paintings are in strong contrast with colourful and dynamic sequences visually comparable to a circus act or a Commedia dell'Arte's scenario. The natural elements utilised during the performance are fundamental for their symbolic value but also for their strong visual impact: fire, water and air.



The dream of Dulcinea. Holloway Arts Festival, July 2010.
Photograph: Lubos Horvat.

5. Rocinante! Rocinante! - The Importance of the Venue

We strongly believe that any aspect of the performance has equal relevance in the creation of a successful immersive live event: space, text, sound, images, audience and actors are therefore positioned in equal dialogue with one another in the attempt to develop a real 'total theatre' event.



Rose Bruford College Symposium, 2010.
Photograph: Lubos Horvat.

Rocinante! Rocinante! Is designed to be performed in any space both outdoor and indoor. Our aim is to transform each venue in the desired fictional spaces that constitute Don Quixote's world in order to create a unique site-responsive live performance. Each venue will provide new stimuli to transform our set and reconsider the work developed on lighting and sound according to the new environment. Moreover, we strongly believe that the Trinity Buoy Wharf is the most suitable space for our unconventional performance. The vast space of this venue and its location will perfectly correspond with the performance and its 'signature' elements.



The Charlatan. Performance at the Barn Theatre,
Rose Bruford College Symposium, 2010.
Photograph: Lubos Horvat.

6. Event brief

Please note that these details might change as the project develops.

Dates

From the 19th of September till the 3rd of October. We will be doing 5 to 6 shows per week (Thursday to Sunday, plus probably two matinee shows on Saturday and Sunday)

Duration of the piece

One hour and fifteen minutes.

Expected audiences

Approximately 50 per show.

Tickets Price

£10, £8 concessions.

Bar

We would like to sell alcoholic drinks and, therefore, we would require a license.

7. Promotion and PR

Rocinante! Rocinate! Is highly entertaining, accessible and engaging. Thus we are certain that the themes, style and the highly visual nature of the piece will attract audiences interested in interdisciplinary, intercultural and experimental work taking place in unconventional spaces within the circuit of live art, exhibitions and happenings.

The promotion of the show will be heavily web based. Our website and our social network pages will advertise the performance and everything associated with it will be in place a few months prior to the event and linked to all relevant websites. We will work closely with companies such as *Off Westend* and *Arts Desk*.

We are in early stages of researching a professional PR company that would ensure that we have features in as many press publications as possible, both printed and online. Flyers and posters will be distributed across London.

We will also promote our work amongst young adults and students throughout our connections with a wide range of partner institutions in the London area (Rose Bruford College, London Metropolitan University, Goldsmiths University, King's College) as well as promoting the piece with our contacts in our outreach program in schools.

Rocinante!Rocinante! Is performed in 3 different languages, English, Spanish and Norwegian. Hence, we will also promote our work in international cultural institutes such as the Spanish and Norwegian Cultural Institutes and the Cervantes Institute in London.

8. Panta Rei Theatre Collective: History and Members

Since 2008 Panta Rei Theatre Collective has been involved in a variety of projects. These include site-specific events, lecture-demonstrations, live performances and workshops for schools and universities.

In this section you can find a brief overview of their recent projects and some background information about Chiara D'Anna's activity as a freelance practitioner, a tutor and a director.

History

'Masquerade' (2009) A site-specific event at the Italian Cultural Institute (London).

The Italian Institute of Culture was transformed into a Venetian Palace for an entire day to celebrate Carnival 2009. The performance included a variety of simultaneous acts and colourful parades to lead the audience on a journey of images, dance and music.

'Lilith Rain'(2009) A multimedia performance installation at The Place (London).

In July 2009 Panta Rei Theatre Collective collaborated with Chilean artist Liliana Garcia on the production Lilith's Rain. The piece is based on the award winning play Lilith's Trial. It combines physical theatre, film, animation, kinetic poetry, live music and an original soundtrack. Inscribed into the realm of écriture feminine the piece has an evocative, cyclical, non-linear narrative.

'A History of the Piazza through Commedia' (2008) A Performance-presentation on Commedia dell'Arte at the Italian Cultural Institute (London) Organised for the Italian Institute of Culture to investigate the relationship between the Italian language and the Piazza. This performance/presentation aimed to investigate the relationship between Commedia all'Improvisa, mountebanks and the market-place through a reconstruction of the atmosphere of the sixteenth century piazza.

Members of The Panta Rei Theatre Collective:

Director: Chiara D'Anna

Producer: Joanna Buchta

Cast: Juancho Gonzalez, Malcom Holwill, Almudena Segura, Stephanie Thorpe, Jessica Tyler, Tommy Williamson, Jacob Yeo and Anna Zehentbauer

Sound Designer/Composer: Steve Mason

Lighting Designers: Cis O Boyle and Joshua Pharo

Company Coach: Michael Warwick

Visual and Documentation: Lubos Horvat and Scott Robison

The Artistic Director: Chiara D'Anna

Chiara is a physical theatre practitioner and Commedia dell'Arte specialist with international experience as an actor, a director, and a tutor and movement coach.

Between 2005 and 2011 Chiara created and directed seven pieces: *Tabula Rasa*, 2005; *Metthew: 5:10*, 2005; *En Attendant Ubu* 2007; *A History of the Piazza through Commedia*, 2008; *Masquerade*, 2009; *Henry IV*, 2010; *Rocinante Rocinante!*, 2010-11.

She is Associate Artist with Vocal Motion Elastic Theatre and she is currently working on their latest production *Baroque Box* (The Greenwich and Docklands International Festival, 2011) both as leading actress and movement coach. Previous performances include *Baroccata* and *Medusa* (Riverside Studios, 2010 and 2009).

Chiara has taught at some of the UK's top educational institutions including: Central School of Speech and Drama, E15 Acting School, Laban Centre, Young Vic Theatre, Royal Holloway University, Central School of Ballet and Exeter University. She is currently working as Lecturer at Rose Bruford College and collaborating with London Metropolitan University and Goldsmiths University.

She is a founder member of the Quick and the Dead, an international group of actresses engaged since 2005 in a practice-based research project on New Methodologies of Actor Training led by Alison Hodge.

9. Panta Rei Theatre Collective Outreach Programme and Workshops

Panta Rei delivers high quality educational and professional workshops for schools, colleges and theatre practitioners.

Our workshops are open to any actor, student, tutor or practitioner interested in exploring the realm of grotesque and surreal through body, voice and imagination.

We create specific workshops for each production besides offering Physical Theatre and Commedia courses on an ongoing basis sharing our ideas on training and approach to theatre making. Our aim is to tailor our courses to the specific needs of each individual or group.

Don Quixote's World Workshop

The company is currently running a series of workshops for young people in schools and universities across the North London area funded by the Youth in Action Program (EU). The Don Quixote's World is an intercultural and interdisciplinary project to promote cultural diversity and tolerance among young people. Utilising Don Quixote and Hamlet as two emblematic portrayal of madness these workshops aim to challenge discriminatory and racist attitudes and preconceptions surrounding mental illness through artistic and theatrical experimentation.

Commedia Dell'Arte Workshops

The company offer workshops on Commedia dell'Arte. Through the exploration of the half-mask and grotesque characterization these short courses offer the opportunity to discover and expand skills that are fundamental in any performance setting: body and space awareness, physical stamina, economy of gesture and a clear understanding of rhythm, tempo and comic timing.

Physical Theatre Workshops

Our physical theatre workshops are open to anyone interested in expanding their body awareness, stamina and sensitivity towards others and the creative space. Very energetic and engaging the workshop includes individual exercises as well as group and partnership work. Integrating a variety of techniques and methods you will explore movement, gesture and awareness on stage.

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