

Spectacle

Dante's Hell: *a Guided Tour*

with: Matteo Belli

text: Dante Alighieri

This journey is undertaken by the actor Matteo Belli through some of the situations of the first of the three parts of the Comedy with the pleasure and emotion due to a personal challenge that can no longer be put off, in an attempt to convey some of the greatest poetry in the history of Italian literature to the modern eye and ear.

The actor recites from memory and respects the musicality of the hendecasyllables in terza rima, but he does not forget that a subject like this is always the site of a demanding yet exciting theatrical 'game' where both speaker and listener allows themselves to undergo a profound transformation that transports them from reading the words on the page all the way to the scene of events that are acted out and interpreted – are, in a word, relived.

What is attempted is, in fact, to offer Dante as the poet of the ultimate representation of a cultural universe that no longer exists yet is nonetheless still alive and responsive to attempts at realistic and 'material' restitution of humanity immortalized in its own forms of exemplary frailty.

This is the key in which episodes of Dante's work are interpreted: the lust and drama of Paola and Francesca's love; the heartbreaking sadness of Pier della Vigna's suicide in the wild and barren brushwood forest; the diabolically wicked yet blackly comic tortures meted out to the barrators in the Comedy's bittersweet verses; Ulysses' 'mad flight' in the suspenseful atmosphere of dark and oppressive Malebolge; Count Ugolino's macabre and tragic end, told in what is perhaps the part of the poem richest in human compassion.

This, then, is a chance to try and find once again the motivations of literature, away from the printed page, in immediate, direct, communication between performer and spectator.

The extracts from the poem are introduced by the performer himself, including, if necessary, in other languages for non-Italian audiences.

- **length:** 60/70 minutes

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