

At the InScena! Festival, Lady Mary is Happy: Happy Mary, No More in Pain

lavocedineويورك.com/en/arts/2018/04/17/at-the-inscena-festival-lady-mary-is-happy-happy-mary-no-more-in-pain



The winner of the fifth edition of I Teatri del Sacro Festival, Happy Mary shows a new strong, brave Lady Mary and capable of happiness. Lorenza Pieri, one of the authors, tells us about this new story that will make you think, but also laugh, but always in a respectful way.

Happy Mary (a QL3 production) is an irreverent show, but respectful of sacredness, comical but touching and, as the creator and author Lorenza Pieri says, “it celebrated women and their redemption strength through a new way of telling the story of Mary.” Laura Magni plays Chiara in her one woman show, the main character of the show: a former actress has to interpret the role of Mary during an Easter procession and starts to question Mary’s figure. And she will do this through a dialogue with her religious grandmother, the accounts of a variety of characters from the gospels, childhood memories, and political claims. Roberta Lena, Laura Magni, and Lorenza Pieri worked on the drama and Roberta Lena directed the show.

How was this project born?

The project was the result of a human and artistic partnership: Laura Magni, Happy Mary’s actress, and I have been friends for more than 20 years. When she suggested to send my application to the **Teatri del Sacro**, I was studying – by chance – folk processions (characteristic of only a few religions) in which a moment that is not narrated in the Gospels

is re-enacted: the moment in which Mary meets the Risen Jesus. The intensity of those performances raised a series of questions on Mary and why certain aspects of her story were highlighted while others were completely overshadowed and how her story was created throughout the centuries. Laura really liked the idea of trying to tell an alternative version of Mary through a show. We got Roberta Lena, who is another friend of mine who is a great director, involved and together we created Happy Mary's show.

What are the strong points of the show? Why should people go watch it?

The show gives a new reading of a universal story and allows the audience to wonder on many topics, such as the female models that patriarchy imposed for century, the relationship between different generations, maternity, the body, the sense of what's sacred, the impossibility of not feeling pain in Mary's story. I think you should see also because Laura Magni's performance is extraordinary. In just one hour on the stage, she introduces us to eight different characters, she brings us through different time periods, she tells a story from many different point of views; it's a show that enriches. And not only is it touching, but you'll also laugh a lot.



Laura Magni in a scene from Happy Mary – Photo by Silvia Varrani.

What does it mean to you to perform in New York?

Performing in New York is a dream I've never even dared to dream while I was writing Happy Mary. It's an opportunity that without the Festival InScena! I would have never had, no doubt.

Happy Mary; Why is Lady Mary happy?

Because Lady Mary, like any other woman, can be anything, even happy. Lady Mary can't be happy because she has the most painful experience in the world: the murder of a son. But in her story, there is much more, like the unique privilege of knowing that he has resurrected: we decided to talk about this aspect, besides the parts that have been cut from her story – which remains the story of a very strong, brave woman who is capable of doing anything, even to being happy – to give space to her pain.

How can you talk about Lady Mary in such an irreverent way but at the same time so respectful, without ever crossing the limits of religious orthodoxy?

We always kept in mind we were **dealing with a sacred icon**, maybe the most untouchable of Christianity. But we work in a way that everything that was questioned never pertained to Lady Mary herself, but only the way her story was told and transformed by a certain kind of Catholicism in the past two centuries. Each controversial or irreverent aspect of the show concerns the woman's misery who finds herself playing the role of Mary in a procession and everything that, to her, is contending with her story, which is never changed or devaluated. On the contrary, her story is enriched with female strength, joy, and courage, that are there indeed when one looks at the "Marianology," but that lack in the popular Vulgate, in the representation of the Virgin as the mother in pain, constantly suffering, crying tears of blood for the evil of the world. With Happy Mary, you will laugh a lot, but not in an offensive way towards Christians. We laugh with Chiara and at Chiara, the main character of the stage, of her interior conflicts and her confrontations with her grandmother, her mom, the dogma, the roles, and her world expectations. We performed on religious and secular stages; each time the audience was very happy.

Happy Mary will be on stage at the Berniw Wohl Center on May 18th at 8p.m. and at The Brick Theater on May 20th at 4p.m.

For more information: [InScena!](#)

Translated by Giulia Casati.