

Alltid Densamme

Mara Galassi and Deda Cristina Colonna present 'Alltid densamme', a new performance portraying Christina of Sweden, seen as one of the most charismatic women of seventeenthcentury Europe, still considered an icon of female history. Along the same lines of 'Voluptas Dolendi – I gesti del Caravaggio', the new programme features Mara Galassi on the double harp and Deda Cristina Colonna acting and dancing, this time with Vincenzo Raponi performing live lighting design, and costumes by Monica Iacuzzo.



The show comes in the form of a monologue in music and tells the troubled life of Christina, who ascended the throne at the age of only six years, following the untimely death of her father Gustav Adolf. A complex and unconventional character since her childhood, she was less than 30 years old when she refused to marry, abdicated, converted to Roman Catholicism and left Sweden. While giving up the crown, she never abandoned her royal status and lived the second part of her life in Rome, where she was one of the main protagonists of the artistic and political scene.

'Alltid densamme' ('Always the same') was the motto of the Order of the Amaranth, founded by the young queen at the Stockholm court in 1653, whose members swore always to remain faithful to their ideals, never marrying; hence the nickname "Amaranta" that Christina chose for herself. She masterfully managed her public image and expressed her identity as a sovereign, as a woman and as a person, choosing under which light to appear on various occasions. Consequently, in this show the lighting design is realised with the

physical presence of the lighting designer on stage, interacting with the other performers, all three of them representing Christina at the same time. In addition to traditional projectors, Vincenzo Raponi uses torches, candles, mirrors, LED strips and even his own hands to shed light on various facets of Christina's complex and fascinating character. This choice also represents an aspect of the underlying research process, in which a possible portrait appears progressively, as various moments of her personal history are revealed.

The performance lasts about 75 minutes and combines music, acting, gesture and baroque dance; it begins with Christina on her deathbed and moves in a flashback of touching intensity through her adult life and up to her childhood memories, ending with the announcement of her passing away, shouted in tears by Decio Azzolino, the Cardinal who was the greatest comfort and companion of her life.

The text by Deda Cristina Colonna is elaborated from original documents, including Christina's autobiography, her epistolary with Cardinals Azzolino and Mazarino, her correspondence with her father and mother, the 'Avvisi di Roma' and other original sources, selected with the collaboration of Camilla Kandare Ph.D., historian and Christina scholar, chair of Christina-Akademien in Stockholm.

The piece is acted in English, with short fragments in Italian, French, German and Swedish. It can also be performed in Italian, with projected overtitles.

Mara Galassi plays music by composers who were active at Christina's court, expressively participating in portraying the sovereign's human complexity: Lahaey / Philippe de la Hire (?), Jacques Arcadelt (1504 - 1568), Bernardo Pasquini (1637 - 1710), Arcangelo Corelli (1653 - 1713) and others.

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