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On the Concept of the Face, Regarding the Son of God

Office of Arts + Cultural Programming

PEAK Performances at Montclair State University

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DIALOGUE BETWEEN AN OLD FATHER AND HIS SON

Father **Gianni Plazzi**
Son **Sergio Scarlatella**

SON:All right, Dad.
SON:All right, Dad.
SON:All right, Dad.
FATHER: ...
SON:How're you doing this morning? Sleep OK? Watching something good? What's on TV?
FATHER: ... an... an... animals.
SON: Great! Documentaries are my favorite.What are they? Penguins? Well, I've prepared your sweets...
SON:What a mess! Eh... eh... eh...
SON: OK, then, Dad, I'll be on my way, see you later.What is it, not feeling too good?
FATHER: No, it's just...
SON:You've done one? You've done one? Hey, no problem. If you've done one, I'll change your nappy.
FATHER: ...
SON: Hey, it's no big deal. Dad. Come here and I'll change you.Wait a minute, I'll be right back.
SON: I'm here!... Dad, the slippers!!!! Let's do this, now slip off your bathrobe.
SON: Come on, Dad, take it easy, let's sit you down. I'll get some water. Be right back.
FATHER: Sorry, sorry, I'm sorry, I'm sorry... I'm sorry, it's just that...
SON: Look, there's no need to say sorry, you know. I've told you before. Come on, Dad, up we get...
SON: It's all right, Dad...
FATHER: Sorry.
SON: Shut up and help me change you. Turn around.Wait, I'll lift up your vest. Up, that's it.You don't half stink, you know, Dad.
FATHER: ...
SON: Look, I was just kidding.We all stink when we've done one, you know that. OK, Dad? Is the water too cold?
FATHER: ... no... it's fine
SON: I'll go get a towel.
SON: Come on now, Dad, sit yourself down. This evening Auntie will come to visit us.
SON:Where have you been putting your hands, Dad?
FATHER: ... No!...
SON: Give me your hands then... that's it... we'll clean it all up, Dad, I put your glasses on the table so you'll easily find them.
FATHER: Sorry... I'm sorry... I'm so sorry...
SON: I've told you, stop saying sorry. Gets on my nerves... What are you doing? You crying? Are you crying? What is it, Dad? Pack it in. Just pack it in.
SON: Come on Dad. It's all right... It's all right...
SON:What's up, Dad? Still feeling bad.Aren't you done?
FATHER: No, it's just...
SON:You got diarrhea again? What have you been eating?
FATHER: Sorry, I'm sorry...
SON: Don't worry, Dad... Do you know what we'll do now? I take your wheelchair and we clean everything again. Stand up now...
SON:You dirty, dirty man, Dad! Can't you hold on at all?
FATHER: Sorry, I'm sorry...
SON: Don't say sorry, please, Dad! I can't stand it any more!
FATHER: No, sorry, I'm just...
SON: Maybe you're tired Dad! Shall we go to bed? I'll bring your medicines, I'm coming...
SON: Dad, what's happened to you...What's wrong...What, Dad... Dad... Dad... Dad...
FATHER: Sorry, I'm sorry, I'm so sorry... Forgive me... forgive me... forgive me...

PROGRAM NOTES

On the Concept of the Face, Regarding the Son of God was previously presented in Essen, Germany, and Antwerp, Belgium. It was intended as the first part of a diptych with *The Minister's Black Veil*.

It starts with this. I want to meet Jesus in His most extreme absence.There is no face of Jesus. I can look at paintings and statues. I know of a thousand or more painters from the past who spent half their time trying to reproduce the ineffable, almost invisible grimace of regret that would surface about His lips.And now? Now there is no He.

What makes its way in me more than anything is the will: to put together the will and the face of Jesus. I want to be before the face of Jesus, although what strikes me above all is the first part of that phrase: I want.

—*Romeo Castellucci*

In *On the Concept of the Face*, Romeo Castellucci once again turns to an apical icon of human history.The play takes place in front of a Renaissance painting of Jesus at the moment of the *Ecce homo* (“behold the man,” referring to the moment in the Passion when Jesus is presented to the mocking crowd). In the Renaissance tradition, Christ is depicted looking the spectator in the eyes with a powerful, dramatic, inscrutable expression. In this calculated confusion of gazes touching and crossing, the Face of God’s Son becomes the picture of the man, of a man, or even of the spectator.And so, in the performance, the sight of God becomes a sort of light illuminating a series of human actions that can be good, evil, disgusting, or innocent.

The production does not tell about Jesus, nor about worship; it has no social condemnation and does not seek to be easily provocative. At the same time, Castellucci keeps his distance from both mysticism and debunking because, in the end, it's just the picture of a man.A man who is exposed naked in front of other men who, in turn, are exposed naked by that man.

The performance, from its very title, imposes initials which synthesize the name “Jesus” at the maximum degree; Jesus is a name that is so present for so many millions of people that it can become almost invisible because it is so deeply implicit. It is present beyond conscience and science, beyond feeling and history; it is essentially and radically present, apart from one’s will.

On the Concept of the Face, Regarding the Son of God displays some of Societas theater’s fundamental ideas: religion not as a mystical or theological manifestation but as part of that set of primary images and practices from which the

theater draws.A vocabulary of diffuse symbols and signs that can form the basis for multiple, contradictory, and even embarrassing relationships is launched at the spectator, who becomes the reagent of this universe.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Romeo Castellucci (Concept and Direction) was born in 1960 in Cesena, Italy. He graduated with a degree in painting and scenography from the Academy of Fine Arts in Bologna. In 1981, with Claudia Castellucci and Chiara Guidi, he founded Societas Raffaello Sanzio. Since then he has produced, written, and directed numerous plays and designed scenery, lights, sound, and costumes. He is known all over the world as a creator of theater based on the totality of the arts, aimed at creating an integrated perception; he has also written various essays on the theory of directing plays, which trace the development of his type of theater. His directing is characterized by dramatic lines that are not subject to the primacy of literature but, rather, make of theater a plastic, complex, visually rich art. This has developed a language that can be understood in the same way that music, sculpture, painting, and architecture can be. His plays are regularly produced by the most prestigious theaters and festivals all over the world.

In 2007 the artistic directors of the Festival d’Avignon named Castellucci associate artist for the festival's 62nd season in 2008. There he presented the powerful trilogy *Inferno, Purgatorio, Paradiso*, inspired by Dante’s *Divine Comedy*. In 2010 *Le Monde* named the trilogy the best play and one of the ten most influential cultural events in the world for the decade 2000–2010. In 2012 he completed this project with *The Four Seasons Restaurant*. In 2011 he produced Richard Wagner’s *Parsifal* at Théâtre La Monnaie–De Munt in Brussels.

In 2010 Castellucci started the project that led to *On the Concept of the Face, Regarding the Son of God* and *The Minster’s Black Veil*. *On the Concept of the Face* is his third work to be presented at Montclair State as part of Peak Performances: *Hey Girl!* was performed in 2008 and *Tragedia Endogonia* in 2005.

Castellucci is also the author of various dramaturgical works, including *Il teatro della Societas Raffaello Sanzio* (Ubulibri, Milano, 1992), *Epoepa della Polvere* (Ubulibri, Milano, 2001), *Les Pèlerins de la matière* (Les Solitaires Intempestifs, Besançon, 200), *Epitaph* (Ubulibri, Milano, 2005), *The Theatre of Societas Raffaello Sanzio* (Routledge, London and New York, 2007), and *Itinera* (Trajectoires de la forme, *Tragedia Endogonia*, Arles, Actes Sud, 2008).

Societas Raffaello Sanzio was founded in 1981 by Romeo Castellucci, Chiara Guidi, and Claudia Castellucci, who share an idea of the theater based on a predominantly plastic and sonic dimension. Romeo Castellucci is an author and director; he is also in charge of staging, costumes, and lights, according to a unified principle of dramatic composition, which also includes the graphics for books and programs of the Societas. Chiara Guidi, author and director of a sonic theater, has been in charge of the dramatic rhythm and vocal elements of almost all performances by the Societas. She is interested in an art shared with children and in the 1990s started an experimental Children’s Theatre School. Guidi directs the performances held at Teatro Comandini, an old iron-turning school that in 1989 became the Company’s headquarters. Claudia Castellucci is a teacher, decorator, and author of dramatic and theoretical texts; she has started numerous free research school cycles based on gymnastics and philosophy.

The Societas’s productions have been staged all over the world in major international festivals and theaters: *Santa Sofia* (1986); *La Discesa di Inanna* (1989); *Gilgamesh* (1990); *Amleto* and *La veemente esteriorità della morte di un mollusco* (1992); *Masoch. I trionfi del teatro come potenza passiva, colpa, sconfitta* and *Hänsel e Gretel* (1993); *Buchettino* (1994); *Orestea (una commedia organica?)* (1995); *Giulio Cesare* (1997); *Pelle d’Asino* (1998); *Genesi, from the museum of sleep* and *Voyage au bout de la nuit* (1999); and *Il Combattimento*, with music by Claudio Monteverdi and Scott Gibbons (2000). *Tragedia Endogonia* (2002–2004) is a cycle consisting of eleven episodes named after as many cities; it is a gigantic overview of tragedy in Western reality, a journey through the main cities in Europe, which became the focus of the drama. After this intense joint enterprise, the society members began creating their individual works.

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Awards and Honors

1995 Ubu special prize for resistance, following the exclusion of Societas Raffaello Sanzio from public participation in contemporary theater by the Ministry of Tourism and Entertainment of the Republic of Italy.

1996 Masque d’Or Prize, *Orestea (una commedia organica?)* for best foreign play of the year, Festival Theatre des Ameriques, Montreal, Quebec.

1997 Ubu prize for best play of the year for *Giulio Cesare*.

1998 European Prize for New Theatre to Societas Raffaello Sanzio, Taormina.

1999 Grand Prix de la Critique-Paris to Romeo Castellucci for the scenography of *Genesi, from the museum of sleep*.

2000 Prize for Best International Production to *Genesi, from the museum of sleep* at the Dublin Theatre Festival.

2002 On February 22, Romeo Castellucci received the title “Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres” by the Ministry of Culture of the French Republic in the person of Cathérine Tasca.

2004 Special UBU Prize 2004 to Romeo Castellucci for his work in developing *Tragedia Endogonia*.

2005 Romeo Castellucci was director of the theater section of the Venice Biennale.

2006 Special Ubu prize 2006 to Romeo Castellucci for directing the theater section of the Venice Biennale, with his program *Pompeii:The Novel of Ashes*.

2006 Special “Interdisciplinary” prize assigned June 9th by the University of Bologna to Societas Raffaello Sanzio.

2010 *Le Monde* nominated the cycle of the *Divine Comedy* by Romeo Castellucci as one of the ten most influential cultural events in the world for the decade 2000–2010.

2010 Butaca Prize, Barcelona, Spain, best international play for the cycle of the *Divine Comedy*.

2011 Prix Europe Francophone by the Syndicat de la critique Théâtre, Musique et Danse for Richard Wagner’s *Parsifal* produced at the Théâtre La Monnaie–De Munt/ La Monnaie in Brussels.

Theater

Theater

Theater

Dr. Susan A. Cole, President
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 Jedediah Wheeler, Executive Director, Arts & Cultural Programming

American Premiere!

Societas Raffaello Sanzio
*On the Concept of the Face,
 Regarding the Son of God*

Conceived and Directed by **Romeo Castellucci**
 with **Gianni Plazzi, Sergio Scarlatella**
 and **Dario Boldrini, Vito Matera, Silvano Voltolina**

Music **Scott Gibbons**
 Design of Set Objects **Istvan Zimmermann,**
Giovanna Amoroso
 Collaboration on the Staging **Giacomo Strada**

Sound Technician **Matteo Braglia**
 Lighting Technician **Fabio Berselli**
 Props **Vito Matera**

Management **Gilda Biasini, Benedetta Briglia,**
CoSETTA Nicolini, Valentina Bertolino
 Administration **Michela Medri, Elisa Bruno,**
Simona Barducci
 Economic Consultation **Massimiliano Coli**

Children **Angel David Mincey, McKenna Nowicki,**
Chloe Pemberton, Juan Pablo Romero,
Joshua A. Scordia, Daisy Wheeler

Produced by Societas Raffaello Sanzio. Co-produced by Peak Performances @ Montclair State (NJ), Theater der Welt 2010 (Essen), deSingel International Arts Campus (Antwerp), Théâtre National de Bretagne (Rennes), The National Theatre (Oslo), Barbican London and SPILL Festival of Performance, Chekhov International Theatre Festival (Moscow), Holland Festival (Amsterdam), Athens Festival, GREC Festival de Barcelona, Festival d'Avignon, International Theatre Festival DIALOG Wroclaw, Belgrade International Theatre Festival, Spielzeit Europa I Berliner Festspiele, Théâtre de la Ville (Paris), Romaeuropa Festival, Theatre Festival SPIELART München, Le-Maillon (Strasbourg/Scène Européenne), and Théâtre Auditorium de Poitiers. Produced in collaboration with Centrale Fies/Dro.

The general operation of Societas Raffaello Sanzio is supported by the following Italian institutions: Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali; Regione Emilia Romagna; and Comune di Cesena.

Please be advised: Production contains adult themes and mature content that may be controversial to some.

Duration: 1 hour, no intermission.

In consideration of both audience and performers, please turn off all electronic devices. The taking of photographs or videos and the use of recording equipment are not permitted. No food or drink is permitted inside the theater.

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Montclair State's **Office of Arts & Cultural Programming** (ACP) presents and produces leading artists of the world in dance, music, theater, and opera. Under its signature series Peak Performances, ACP has produced works such as *Zinnias: The Life of Clementine Hunter* by Robert Wilson, Bernice Johnson Reagon, Toshi Reagon, and Jacqueline Woodson; *Dog Days* by David T. Little and Royce Vavrek; Harry Partch's *Oedipus*; and Ridge Theater's *The Difficulty of Crossing a Field* by David Lang. In addition, ACP has commissioned works by Bill T. Jones, Kronos Quartet, Jan Fabre, Liz Lerman, Wayne McGregor, Laurie Anderson, Romeo Castellucci, Richard Alston, Susan Marshall, Fred Hersch, and David Gordon.

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Peak Performances

12/13
 SEASON



Credit: Guido Mencari

American Premiere!
Societas Raffaello Sanzio
*On the Concept of the Face,
 Regarding the Son of God*
February 14-17, 2013
Alexander Kasser Theater
Montclair State University