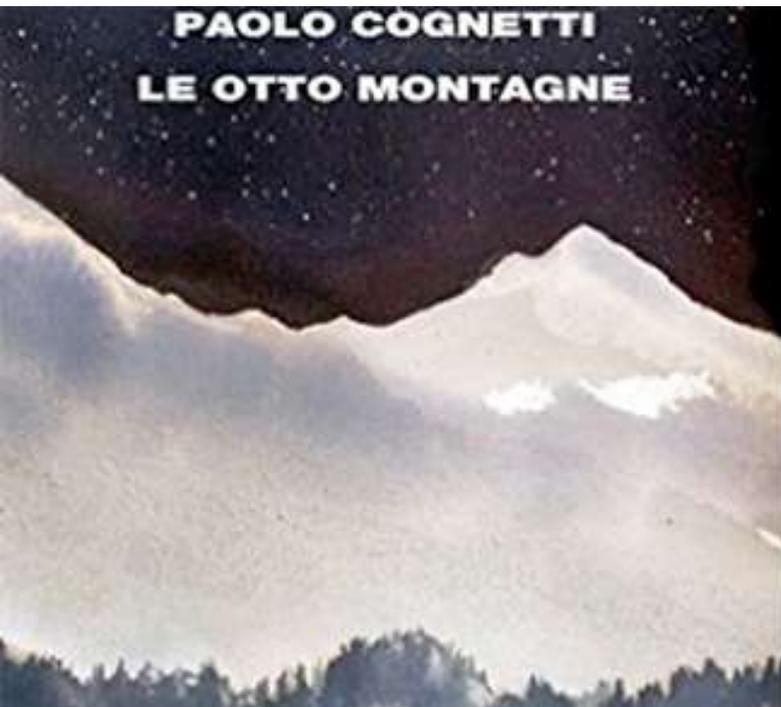


LE OTTO MONTAGNE ("THE EIGHT MOUNTAINS"), A PLAY

"Whatever destiny may be, it resides in the mountains that tower over us"



From **LE OTTO MONTAGNE ("THE EIGHT MOUNTAINS")** a novel by **Paolo Cognetti** – published by Einaudi Editore - Awarded the **2017 Premio Strega** literary award

Script **Francesca Sangalli**

Director **Marta Maria Marangoni**

with **Andrea Lietti, Giuliano Comin**

and with performer **Alice Bossi**

voice over **Arianna Scommegna**

music **Fabio Wolf**

sound installations and actions **Dario Buccino**

dramaturgical consultant **Diego Vincenti**

scenery consultant **Marco Teatro**

stage manager **Ida Treggiari**

production and communications **Dianora Zacchè**

administration **Vittorio Renuzzi**

produced by **Minima Theatralia**

within project **Il bosco segreto di Milano ("Milan's Secret Forest")**, supported by funding from **Fondazione Cariplo**.

Ass. Minima Theatralia

via Ornato 14, 20162 Milano - C.F. 97632730152 - P.IVA 09904330967

Legale rappresentante Marta Maria Marangoni - info@minimatheatralia.it - www.minimatheatralia.it

THE NOVEL

"Since inception, *The Eight Mountains* has been a literary case, as shown by the passionate competition between publishing houses interested in releasing it internationally: the novel has been translated in over 30 countries. Critics have also received Cognetti's book positively: on «la Repubblica», Maurizio Crosetti defined it «**a classic, almost a comet from another time in a universe that sometimes shies away from big issues**»"

"*The Eight Mountains* tells the story of Pietro, a boy from the city, lonesome and a little aloof, and of his relationship with his parents, his friend Bruno and, most of all, with the mountains.

The mountains, with their barren, rough and wild beauty, leave a permanent mark on the soul, an imprint in those who were born there and those who loved it. It becomes a category of the spirit and, even when one leaves it in search of a more convenient elsewhere, one can never really separate oneself from it. A sound, a scent are enough to bring one back to it. This is what happens to the characters in the novel, who cannot get enough of the mountain, who come and go without ever really leaving it.

It is a story about fathers and sons, about the abandonment of civilization, about the freedom of life in the wilderness. I have always cherished the memory of the happiness I experienced in the forests as a child." (Paolo Cognetti).

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

A man tells a story. Another man sits with his back turned, still like mountain to which one goes back to find oneself again, after getting lost travelling around the world. A performer moves around these two figures. A sound blasts: **onstage, a metal plate hanging from a frame** recalls the pouring of water, then turns into ice, then thunder and storm. In addition to setting the sound frame, this scenic element underscores and transforms the description of spaces, symbolically opening a window within dramatic action onto memories, reflections and gestures.

The narrated word intertwines in music with the rumbling metal, then becomes sound and flows seamlessly into the words echoing from the mountains, modulated by Arianna Scommegna's multifaceted voice. The **original soundtrack** interprets the landscape from a sound, visual and poetic standpoint: a mix of music and voices composed by Fabio Wolf e Dario Buccino.

Lighting has an important impact on the setting, since it is also very prominent in the fabric of the novel. Water, ice and rocks are represented onstage through mouldable light pools, using LED lights jointly with pure, real matter, of metal and wood. The audience will find itself facing a setting that takes stock of **installation** experiences, evokes symbolic plans and proceeds by abstractions.



Ass. Minima Theatralia

via Ornato 14, 20162 Milano - C.F. 97632730152 - P.IVA 09904330967

Legale rappresentante Marta Maria Marangoni - info@minimatheatralia.it - www.minimatheatralia.it

To handle ice, a source of light, a catalyst of moments and feelings, and to build a house from it, following a path of cool and warm light that becomes flesh and space. **Light filaments** from a thought to explore become a map of life, flowing like a mountain stream.

Also from a **scenery** standpoint, the use of traditional theatre tools tied to a pre-technology world (the thunder sheet, the slide projector) is thematically linked with the novel. The protagonist Pietro's supposedly advanced and supertechnological world clashes with the civilization of the mountains, where time still beats to the rhythm of harsh seasons and where labour is still tied to the use of tools that are obsolete, but can harmonize with their context. (Marta Marangoni)

THE STAGE ADAPTATION



In addition to containing the narrative plot, the show develops from a core of musical compositions that intertwine, like in a symphony, with the **literary quotes underscoring the novel** (Scott Fitzgerald, Henry David Thoreau, Mark Twain, Murray Bookchin, Primo Levi, Ernest Hemingway, Natalia Ginzburg, Robert Louis Stevenson and many more).

The two cornerstones of the production are **the sound evocation of the mountains**, found in the description of "emotional landscapes" representing the characters' inner life, and **the building of a mountain shelter** called *barma drola*, i.e., "the strange rock", a central

element of the novel that becomes the maniframe of the script, opening the narration to flash-backs and flash-forwards, to thoughts and motions of the soul. In the main scene two men, Pietro and Bruno, build out of the ruins of an old pasture shelter a home, a high-altitude nest that allows them to get back to their roots, to the essential, in search of their own foundational core.

The language of narration matches Pietro's speech, swinging from literature to drama: it takes the shape of a memory at times scattered, of a prose "smudged" by the hesitation of emotions and it meets Bruno, the man from the mountain and his terse presence.

The mountain context is also evoked in general terms: **a symbolic ground that brings feelings and human relationships to the surface**, like Paolo Cognetti intended. *"[The landscape] tells of how that person feels in that moment. [...] Instead of talking about how they feel, I will talk about what the forest, the sky, the mountains are like that day, and from then it will be clear how they feel. That's why the landscape is so prominent."*

The play seeks to bring several of the novel's themes to the surface: **awareness, growth, maturity, life choices, the building of a home, the escape from the superfluous**. The intent is to highlight the symbolic actions of the story's protagonists. To give an abstract form to their relationships and actions, to distil from this

a sort of *mandala*, a buddhist and hindu symbol of the universe, a connection between centre and periphery. A long coming-of-age journey that sees friendship and death intertwine. The most engaging part of the novel reminds us of the love that a father might not be able to express in life. Of how he can only do so with a map, with star coordinates to show us in which corner of the sky his feeling ended up. So the stage will come alive with this: a broken dream, a lonesome man, the cold, the hard work. The challenge to exit the body and to come back to it, to search for the way of transcendence far from the clutter with which we fill our silence. (Francesca Sangalli)

The closeness to Cognetti derives from our being the same age and having shared a similar political and existential experience. **His thoughts and questions are ours, too**, we will try to understand where the steps and the plots of life lead us, how they shape us, what choices they push us to make, which unpredictable horizons they lead us to discover, on whose footsteps they push us to make us overcome our parents. And how, yet again, the memory of them suddenly brings us back, down deep to the origins, to the guts, in the most unforeseen ways.



THE CAST

The three actors onstage act with **different qualities, but linked by the thin plot of the story**, which inexorably tells of the time that has passed and continues to pass as though there were never a present moment.

Pietro, protagonist and narrating voice, author Paolo Cognetti's alter ego, is played by **Andrea Lietti**, a very talented actor, able to drag the audience by breaking all mistrust and building a strong empathic bond with the viewer. He has very large registers, from the comic to the dramatic up to the grotesque with an excellent storytelling capacity.

Giuliano Comin plays **Bruno**, an imposing presence whose meaningful silences reveal a pragmatic nature. His work on the character aims to shift the reflective/intellectual level of his friendship with Piero to more bodily and expressive terms and tends to display feelings and emotions through action before speech.

Performer **Alice Bossi** embodies **the echo of the mountains**, representing **the feminine**, which takes several forms in the novel, is embodied in several figures and consists of abstraction and spirituality. Her gestures infuses in the *mandala* geometry a sort of radiation, a sound wave reflected in movement, which manifests as the echo of the mountains and brings back to us the voices and thoughts of the mother, the lake, Lara and the child, as well as literature and ritual tension. Her presence is fundamental to surface the symbolic plane, the search for the self that is common in the journey of all people, the link between centre and periphery portayed in the *mandala*, the cross-contamination between performance and speech. Thus, freed from the weight of speech, she remains suspended between human and superhuman.

The warm voice of **Arianna Scommegna**, one of the most significant actresses in the national scene, enriches the production with a master's interpretation of the "Echo of the mountain's" character.

WHO WE ARE



Marta Maria Marangoni AND Francesca Sangalli staged "*Epopea dell'irrealità di Niguarda*", inspired by Jodorowski's literary works (Teatro della Cooperativa season 2017/2018) and the monologue "*Aspettando Walter Chiari*", Teatro De Gli Incamminati productions, (deSidera Teatro and Spazio Banterle season 2017/2018), both with music by *Duperdu*.

Fabio Wolf composed original music and songs for *Opera Panica* (directed by Fabio Cherstich 2017) and is one among the authors of the music score to *Stasera si può entrare, fuori* (directed by Andrée Ruth Shammah 2017/18) – produced by Teatro Franco Parenti, Milano.

www.martamarangoni.weebly.com

www.francescasangalli.com

www.duperdu.org

INFO E CONTATTI

Minima Theatralia

www.minimatheatralia.it

Ass. Minima Theatralia

via Ornato 14, 20162 Milano - C.F. 97632730152 - P.IVA 09904330967

Legale rappresentante Marta Maria Marangoni - info@minimatheatralia.it - www.minimatheatralia.it



info@minimatheatralia.it

Mob. +39 347.4890803

Ass. Minima Theatralia

via Ornato 14, 20162 Milano - C.F. 97632730152 - P.IVA 09904330967

Legale rappresentante Marta Maria Marangoni - info@minimatheatralia.it - www.minimatheatralia.it