



Theorem: A celebration of Pier Paolo Pasolini's Life

Natasha Lardera (October 29, 2015)



On the occasion of the 40th anniversary of Pier Paolo Pasolini's death, Kairos Italy Theater, Casa Italiana Theater Company in Residence, presents a celebration of his life in New York and of his influence over the work of future generations.

On November 2, 1975 Italian film director, writer and highly controversial figure, Pier Paolo Pasolini, was found dead on a beach. His body had been run over several times by Pasolini's own car at the seaside in Ostia. His death has been a mystery for the last 40 years. As new theories continue to surface, there are those whose mission is to celebrate the great man's work and life.

On the occasion of the 40th anniversary of Pier Paolo Pasolini's death, Kairos Italy Theater, Casa Italiana's Theater Company in Residence, is going to present a celebration of the director's life in New York and of his influence over the work of future generations.

The evening's program features a reading, conceived by actor and director Marco Calvani, on a conversation between journalist Oriana Fallaci and Pasolini when he had travelled to New York to present one of his films at the New York Film Festival. The scene is set in 1966 when journalist and author Oriana Fallaci, who was at that time living in Manhattan, invited Pasolini out for drinks and a



conversation.

"Both her and her publishers were eager to discover what the impressions of this devoted communist would be upon his first visit to the fatherland of capitalism." The reading is followed by an installation of images and poetry coordinated by Laura Caparrotti, Kairos' artistic director, and poet Dave Johnson.

The presentation features members of KIT together with young New York poets. While KIT's actors read Pasolini's poems, the young poets will present poems written by themselves inspired by Pasolini. "The way Roma's rich, complex art and culture continues to inform New York, Pasolini's passionate and raw Roma poems inspire young New York poets to grapple with the new Caput Mundi they sometimes love, sometimes loathe, but call their concrete home," poet Dave Johnson told i-Italy when asked to comment on the poetry program.

We also chatted with Laura Caparrotti, who told us that "November 2 is the day in which Pasolini died, 40 years ago. It seems natural to me to celebrate his life exactly on the same day in which he was taken away from us. I didn't want to have a post mortem celebration, I really wanted to talk about his life. We are in New York, he came to NY many times... so it is almost like NY celebrates its relationship with him."

And how was this relationship like? "As far as I know he loved it in a way and he was very critical in another. When he was here, he went looking for the 'ragazzi di strada' in NY, the street kids. I am told that he was going to Harlem and in other places where life was hard."

In 1969 Pasolini presented at the New York Film Festival, *Teorema*. At the Venice Film Festival *Teorema* won the International Catholic Jury grand award. But with the disapproval of the Vatican, which attacked the award in an official statement. In the film "The Visitor" is a mysterious stranger who insinuates himself into the home of a wealthy Milanese family, "where he exerts a curious, sensual spirituality over everyone in the household."

Laura Caparrotti continues, "A NYTimes review by Vincent Caney says: "Teorema" is a highly personal, open-ended movie, and one that is much more interesting to me than Pasolini's earlier "Accattone" and "The Gospel According to St. Matthew." Not the least mysterious thing about it is why the Roman Catholic Church's film reviewing body, the Office Catholique International du Cinéma, originally saw fit to give it a prize, which it later regretted. "Teorema" is a religious film, but I think it would take a very hip Jesuit to convert it into a testament to contemporary Roman Catholic dogma."

Is Pasolini's work dated or still contemporary? Is it universal or just Italian, if not Roman? "It is absolutely universal, especially his writing. So universal and so contemporary. It is scary how much his words say about today's world! Pasolini is loved now in America, as much as he was loved back then. I mentioned the ragazzi di strada in NY. Pasolini was looking for them. Well, with the poetry program to be presented on November 2, I wanted to do something different on Pasolini with the young poets, the new ragazzi di strada. With my great collaborator, Dave Johnson, who teaches poetry to young and sometime troubled kids, I was able to create a dialogue between Pasolini then and the young NY poets of now."

Casa Italiana will present another event on Pasolini on November 14 as part of a two-day conference conceived by Ara H. Merjian and Gerhard Wolf on the 40th anniversary of Pasolini's death.

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