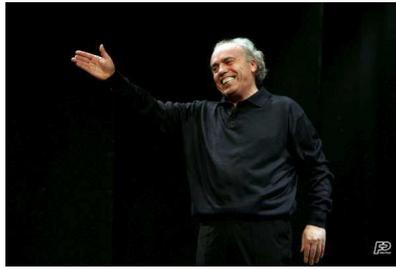


‘Francis the Holy Jester’



by Dario Fo

“Oh, blissful birds, who are free and light, who live without weights, with no burdens to flatten you down, nor power to enslave you!”

Francis the Holy jester is a one man show, a play which relies on the considerable skill of a highly experienced performer and the imagination of the audience. This is a show without props, without scenery and with the simplest of costume where the bond between the audience and the performer, and thus the material and subject is tangible, visceral. A whole range of characters from 13th Century Italy are brought to life before us: Popes and Cardinals, Dukes and Duchesses, soldiers on the battle field, traders in the marketplace and St Francis himself.

The play traces some events from the life of this most colorful and renowned of holy men, his desire to follow the word of God and to communicate this to the people for the good of mankind. It illustrates his commitment to his beliefs, his willingness to sacrifice his well-being and material comfort for the sake of his faith and his readiness to challenge hypocrisy wherever he sees it to expose the truth. This is a play that truly addresses some fundamental questions about how we express our faith and commitment to Christian principles. It has the timelessness of a great story masterfully told and is full of relevance for our lives today.

Fo offers four episodes from St Francis life. One of these reflects and references an actual event when St Francis spoke to over 5,000 people in the main square in Bologna in August 1222. In this address, he used his whole being to express himself and communicate his message. The address was so powerful it caused warring factions to embrace lasting peace for the first time in many years.

The play is funny, uplifting and thought-provoking.

This is an entirely unique and living piece of theatre that interrogates and celebrates our humanity, has the power to reach all of us, theater-lover or no, educated or non-educated, Christian or non-Christian. It will be of interest to historians, theologians, students and teachers of drama, those with a particular interest in the work of Dario Fo or with a general interest in Italian culture and literature, and to anyone who enjoys a good story lovingly crafted and expertly told with insight, vivacity and humor.