



Le Belle Bandiere



portrait by Davide Reviati

NON SENTIRE IL MALE **dedicato a Eleonora Duse** **NOT TO FEEL THE PAIN** **in memory of Eleonora Duse**

conceived, directed and performed by Elena Bucci

lighting designer Maurizio Viani

light board operator Loredana Oddone

sound engineer Raffaele Bassetti

assistant stage manager Gaetano Colella

road manager Nicoletta Fabbri

co-produced by Nuova Scena Saccisica, Padua

supported by Emilia Romagna Region, Province of Ravenna, Municipality of Russi

Eleonora Duse was born in 1858 and died in 1924. She was an Italian actress, manager and director. Her unconventional life and acting revolutionized the theatrical scene of her time. She hated biographies, autobiographies and celebrations. What remains is a certain amount of professional and personal correspondence, and some indirect testimonials. I think she was a great woman.

There comes a time in one's life when craft, technique and hard work prove to be insufficient, and you ask yourself up to where they can take you, and what stands beyond. That was my rumination when I realized that I had been accompanied by Eleonora Duse's ideas and views for my whole theatre life.

I have been working on this performance for several years, in which I was accompanied by intimate colleagues and precious scholars: it changed with me, along the time and locations, from an abandoned country palace near my birthplace, to the places where Eleonora lived and acted.

Here she comes, just been refused by Gabriele d'Annunzio for a role in *La Figlia di Iorio*, taking the script and interpreting all the characters under Matilda Serao's insane and insistent eye. Performing on stage was probably what helped Duse heal the wounds inflicted by life, free herself and look beyond theatre with all its sets, costumes and roles, everything she deeply loved and at the same time hated. She may have dreamed of creating a place for theatre - as other arts tried to do in that time - where it could get rid of bodies and voices, free from the impending destruction of the *hic* and *nunc* of live performance.

This work is based on letters, notes and memories of those who surrounded her. I chose them relying only on my inner feel, trying to understand Eleonora better and to treat her with an utmost respect. It goes without saying that when you try to speak of what you really love, you speak about yourself as well. I wanted to avoid clichés, stereotypes, false aesthetics to approach her courage and absolute freedom.

While I was learning to understand theatre, I discovered different sides of Eleonora's personality, from her mystery, turning her into a *medium* between the living and the dead, to her comicality and political activity, all of which unite in the whirlpool of her revolutionary energy.

Still, the profound lesson I drew, is the unattainable nature of one's essence, and the never-ending story of all lives.

Elena Bucci

Elena Bucci and Le Belle Bandiere

The theatre company Le Belle Bandiere has been set up in 1992 by actors Elena Bucci and Marco Sgrosso, previously performing in the Teatro di Leo (1985-2001), an historic ensemble directed by actor and playwright Leo de Berardinis.

Alongside original writing, multi-disciplined staging, educational projects and events, Le Belle Bandiere are especially acknowledged for their contemporary approach to classics, thanks to a theatrical language which can set them in tune with today's sensibility.

Among recent productions are: Goldoni's *Le Smanie per la Villeggiatura* (Pining for Vacation) awarded with "Premio Eti" for best production; Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, co-produced by the Centro Teatrale Bresciano, Brescia's permanent theatre, that continued to support the company for Ibsen's *Hedda Gabler*, Pinter's *L'Amante* (The Lover), Goldoni's *La Locandiera* (The Mistress of the Inn), Sophocles' *Antigo*, Cechov's *Svenimenti* (Fainting). Prato's Teatro Metastasio produced their adaptation of Bertolt Brecht's *Santa Giovanna dei Macelli* (Saint Joan of the Stockyards), The Teatro Stabile of Naples produced Bucci's original play *Regina la paura*.

Elena Bucci, author of numerous original dramas, won the "Premio UBU" as best actor in *Le regine* (The Queens) and *Riccardo III* (Richard III), both directed by Claudio Morganti. Le Belle Bandiere were rewarded with the "Altre Muse" award by the theatre magazine "Hystrio". Le Belle Bandiere are supported by the Municipality of Russi (Ravenna) – where are their offices and rehearsal base – and by Emilia Romagna Region.

