

Carnival breaks through the fog

Venice, Scaparro, La Biennale
1980, 1981, 1982, 2006
from the Historical Archives
of La Biennale di Venezia



La Biennale di Venezia

Archivio Storico
della Biennale
di Venezia

Maurizio Scaparro Biographical notes

Maurizio Scaparro is one of the most internationally renowned Italian theatre directors. His intellectual and creative profile, committed to the themes of *theatre utopia* and *celebration*, ranges from directing Italian and European public institutions to the creation of performances that have remained in the memory and legacy of Italian theatre, from the first play he directed, the “scandalous” *Venexiana* by Sixteenth-century Anonymous rediscovered at the Festival of the Two Worlds in Spoleto in 1965, to the innovative versions of Shakespeare’s *Amleto* (1972) with Pino Micol in the leading role, from *Medea* (1976) by Corrado Alvaro with Irene Papas at the Teatro Olimpico in Vicenza, to Rostand’s *Cyrano* (1977) which toured for five years through Italy and Europe, to an original version of Camus’ *Caligula* (which inaugurated his tenure as director of the Teatro di Roma in 1983) starring Pino Micol, to *Il Fu Mattia Pascal* (1986) adapted for the stage by Tullio Kezich, to Brecht’s *Vita di Galileo*, again with Micol, presented in 1987 at the Maggio Fiorentino and later across Italy, in Moscow and in Berlin.

From 1983 to 1990, Scaparro directed the Teatro di Roma, where he created plays which continue to be performed in Italy and abroad. When his direction of the Teatro di Roma ended in 1989, he produced *Memorie di Adriano*, adapted from the novel by Marguerite Yourcenar, with Giorgio Albertazzi, which premiered at Villa Adriana in Tivoli and was later performed in Rome and many other European cities.

In the early 2000s, he worked on a trilogy about the great Mediterranean myth of Don Giovanni, starting in Rome with *Don Giovanni raccontato e cantato dai Comici dell’Arte*, starring Peppe Barra and Giacinto Palmarini (2001), the following year directing Mozart’s *Don Giovanni* at the Teatro Massimo in Palermo (2002), concluding the trilogy in Spain for the Teatro Classico in Madrid with *Don Juan Tenorio* by José Zorrilla starring Luis Merlo (2003).

From 1982 to the present, Scaparro has directed many important operas, from the world premiere at Teatro alla Scala in Milan of *La Vera Storia* by Luciano Berio with texts by Italo Calvino (1982) to other productions which include, in addition to the above-mentioned *Don Giovanni*, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* by Paisiello, *Così fan tutte* and *Le nozze di Figaro* by Mozart, *La scala di seta* and *L’italiana in Algeri* by Rossini, *La Bohème* by Puccini with sets by Michel Folon, which has been produced in various editions and the recent *Turandot* by Puccini.

On many occasions, from *Don Chisciotte* to the present, Maurizio Scaparro has also worked closely on the creative relationship between the language of film and the language of theatre, making several films freely adapted from his theatrical plays.

For the Napoli Teatro Festival and the opening of the 2011-2012 season of the Teatro La Pergola in Florence, on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of

the Unity of Italy, he staged *Il sogno dei Mille*, freely adapted by Roberto Cavosi from *Les Garibaldiens* by Alexandre Dumas, starring Giuseppe Pambieri, which also marked the conclusion of the project *Italian Theatre in the World*, which he conceived and directed. His first encounter with Samuel Beckett was in 2014, when he directed *Aspettando Godot*, starring Antonio Salines, Luciano Virgilio, Edoardo Siravo and Enrico Bonavera (a production that was highly acclaimed and was performed through 2019). Scaparro was invited by Expo 2015 to direct *La Bottega del Caffè* by Carlo Goldoni, with Pino Micol in the leading role and music by Nicola Piovani.

His many institutional roles include, from 1979 to 1982, director of the Theatre Department of La Biennale di Venezia with the *Carnival of Theatre*; his appointment in 1983 by the French Minister of Culture Jack Lang as *Director adjoint* of the Théâtre de l’Europe in Paris, alongside Giorgio Strehler; and later Artistic Director of the Teatro di Roma from 1983 to 1990. Scaparro was subsequently appointed by the Spanish Government to direct the theatre events of the Seville Expo in 1992; in 1993 he was named Artistic Director of the Teatro Eliseo in Rome through 1999, when he was invited to direct the Théâtre des Italiens in Paris. In 2004 he returned to Italy to direct the Compagnia Italiana and from 2006 to 2009 he was back in Venice to direct the Theatre Department of La Biennale di Venezia with a new *Carnevale del Teatro* dedicated to China.

In 2014, during the Italian Semester of Presidency of the European Union, Maurizio Scaparro was appointed to direct the Italian-French project *Les Liaisons Heureuses*, in collaboration with the Società Dante Alighieri in Paris; the project alternated meetings, film screenings and performances in Paris. In 2016 he developed an important project in collaboration with ONNI and the Fondazione Teatro della Toscana, *Mediterriamo*, which brought together in Florence, the city of Giorgio La Pira, artists, poets, politicians, singers, public and private institutions to assert the human need to express opposition to hate, intolerance, the walls and fences that are again dividing Europe.

Since 2018, in addition to working on the direction of several plays, Scaparro has, as always, turned his attention to young people, to their education and specialisation and for the Fondazione Teatro della Toscana, is dedicating several webinars on the theme of the “language of Theatre” to this age group.

During the pandemic, he continued teaching online, with a cycle of video lectures titled *Il teatro raccontato da Maurizio Scaparro*, again for the Fondazione Teatro della Toscana. During the last months of 2021, he held a master class on Miguel de Cervantes’ *Don Quixote*, for the Università IULM in Milan, reviewing the phases of the multimedia project that took him to America. He is currently working on directing a new play that will be featured on Italian stages beginning in 2022.