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"The Disconcert for Oz" of Fanny & Alexander is a world apart

by *Renato Nicolini*

The group "Fanny & Alexander" was founded in Ravenna in 1992 by Chiara Lagani, actress and dramatist, and by Luigi de Angelis, director. The name is already peculiar: taken from the film of Ingmar Bergman, of author, but filmed for the television and about the role of mass-media in our time. "Disconcert for Oz" opens a new cycle of plays of the F&A, derived from "the Wizard of Oz" of Frank L. Baum and from the film with Judy Garland, that Victor Fleming derived from the book in 1939, which will conclude in 2010 at RomaEuropa Festival. For the spectators of "Disconcert of Oz" are available places in the parterre, but also four lines of beds on the stage, where they are also part of the scene. They have taken off some lines of stall. These uncomfortable beds aren't either of Brecht or of psychoanalysis. They hint at the minimum equipment of survive of who is enclosed, in a stadium to protect himself from a hurricane or in a controlled camp, because he is a political prisoner or a clandestine immigrant. We are in a different situation, in comparison to the avant-gardes of the Sixties and Seventies. In that period the companies were asked to do something, to participate at the taking of the Winter Palace. Nowadays we are asked to remain – perfect mirror of the present time - passive.

The beginning of the play is unexpected and dazzling. In a niche on the background of the scene appears a little Hitler on his knees, perfect duplicate, but alive, of the *Him* of the artist Maurizio Cattelan. "Him" - as directing an orchestra (which plays from the balcony of the theatre) - will act in English all the sound track – effects comprised – of the film of Fleming. In 1939, the year of this coloured and childish film, many times shown by surprise in the Roman film clubs, is the time of Hitler, when Hitler fascinated Chamberlain, who defined him in a speech at the Chamber of Commons "a man on whom is possible to trust, when he gives his word". Is this the hurricane that falls on the spectators. And conceptually on the actors, that feign surprised in the condition of who is acting the last play of the "Fanny & Alexander", *Amore* taken from a text of Tommaso Landolfi.

Francesca Mazza is still Lucrezia of *Mar delle Blatte*, but in the mean time – together with the violinist Nicoletta Bassetti and with the soprano Annalisa Bartolini – the Witch of the West. Fiorenza Menni is the Gurù of *La pietra lunare* and the Witch of South - together with the soprano Milena Arskova and with the oboist Maria Chiara Braccalenti. Chiara Lagani is the "woman P" of *La piccola Apocalisse*, is the Witch of the North, together with the pianist Janinka Nevceva and the soprano Desanka Pop Georgievska. The game of the superimpositions isn't mechanical, but it avails of surprising coincidences (an example for all: the woman P of Landolfi dies in a puddle and the Witch of West dies because the water destroys her) between the texts of Landolfi and the "score" of the *Wizard of Oz*. The effect of total theatre (of our times) is reached by the luminous scenography – nearly six hundreds of fluorescent neons which compose an organ with pipes of light – inspired to the art of Dan Flavin and James Turrel, and, specially, through the reference at the execution of the musical score (from the *Butterfly* to the *Pygmalion* composed at four hands by H. Coignet and by the important illuminist thinker J.J. Rousseau) at the *Européras* of the spectacular John Cage. The negative freedom intended as freedom to stop the execution theorized by Cage, and the will of project, capable to commit itself up to foretell the 2010: are the antidotes suggested by Fanny & Alexander universe of concentration from which the play starts.