

Sets and costumes for *Bruto II* by Vittorio Alfieri, 1969

Directed by Gualtiero Rizzi, produced by the Teatro Stabile, Turin.

First performance: Turin, Teatro Gobetti, 13, 14 and 16 March 1969.

Other performances: Benevagienna (Cuneo), Teatro Romano, 31 August 1969; Turin, Teatro Carignano, 8 January 1970.

“The stage is made up of four concentric frames (linear, white, chalky), which step back in space at short and equal intervals. The floor, the sides and the ceiling of the stage, simulated by the regular succession of frames, are not visible.

The lights are diffused and homogeneous, and they don't create strong shadows; the area around the stage is steeped in darkness.

The actors, moving against flat backdrops with no perspective (within a rigid, artificial perspective), strike static poses. The costumes, which are all white, just like the entire stage, are designed to resemble ones from Alfieri's time (Directoire, Empire). The Lictors, who emerge from the darkness of the theatre but never actually enter the stage space, wear the same costume as Caesar (but all black), just as the People, who climb up from the pit, wear the same costume as Brutus (but made out of the same fabric as the orchestra seats). Often only the heads of the characters or the top halves of their bodies emerge from the second and third frames. The actors move from one section to another (through a narrow opening that interrupts the lower side of all the frames), not stiffly and without hesitation, but rather quickly, as if, for just an instant, while moving they were no longer those characters.

The lights go on in the hall: Caesar, seated at the centre of the first section, looks out at the orchestra. With their backs to the audience, Antony, Cicero, Brutus, Cassius, and a Cimbrian all stand before him, motionless against the first frame, arranged symmetrically like statues in a temple. From this point on, none of the characters, even when they aren't doing anything, ever leave the stage” (G. Paolini, “Note per le scene e i costumi”, 1969, revised version of the English translation published in L. Cherubini, “Giulio Paolini / Spettacoli teatrali”, in *Sipario. Balla, De Chirico, Savinio, Picasso, Paolini, Cucchi*, exhibition catalogue, Rivoli, Castello di Rivoli Museo d'Arte Contemporanea [Milan: Edizioni Charta, 1997], p. 255).





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