

POLLICINO

(LITTLE TOM THUMB)

Pollicino offers to children the opportunity to face the feeling of fear.

As a matter of fact, the history of Pollicino (*Little Tom Thumb* or *Hop O' My Thumb* in the English version) is a “dark tale”: “*How can you sleep? Maybe it's the fear but... I can't!*,” says Pollicino to his elder brothers.

The protagonist of the story is small or the smallest, but his fear – big – doesn't take over. On the contrary, what enables him to overcome his life's tribulations is his curiosity, and his brave desire to know reality: also in its most cruel aspects.

It is curiosity that drives Pollicino to scrutinize what his parents say, allowing him to be able to immediately perceive danger and to study strategies to cope with it.

From his father's hut to the Ogre's house, through the dangers of a dark wood, Pollicino starts his journey through life towards different woods and different houses... Pollicino does not come back home: he continues his travel in the company of his brothers.

Moreover, it is important to notice that, while it is certainly true that Pollicino is the only one in his family who can think, it is also true that he is not lonely in his separation from home. The presence of his brothers is warm in the dark and cold of the night. Even in the hardest times, there is always someone to play with, to quarrel with and to face the unknown.

The actor-narrator who experiences and tells the story, at the same time plays in the show. He evokes pictures and sometimes addresses the public directly. His narrating style and relationship with the little spectators is often ironic; he smiles and is funny and, at times, he uses a folksy-style with frequent references to the popular culture of the Romagna Region (where the acting company has its roots). The stage elements and its general design provide an interesting and original example of “Narration Theatre with Objects”: a successful endeavour of the historic collaboration between Claudio Casadio and Marcello Chiarenza (known and appreciated all over Europe for his sculptures in “Poor Art” created in wood, fire and...light!).

The play may start a thorough examination of some important issues. The classic fairy-tale structure represents one of its most interesting elements such as the roles of the protagonist, of the wood as a happening space, the house of the parents and the one of the Ogre, the *topos* of abandonment and the one of cannibalism, the final catharsis and the happy ending. Very interesting is also the resulting psychological involvement of the children, their reactions to the story, and to the experience of the protagonists and their ability to “save themselves”.

...Dedicated to all the “Pollicinos” (*Little Tom Thumbs*) that sometimes wander thoughtlessly through woods of life. Even those devastated by the bombs...