

## **Dancing on the Thread of Time**

Interview with Michele Abbondanza and Antonella Bertoni

***Romanzo d'infanzia* was first presented more than 20 years ago. Have the script, the directing or the design changed in that time?**

The elements of the show—the script, directing, choreography and design—haven't changed in 20 years. However, theatre is a living art form, and *Romanzo d'infanzia* is constantly being transformed by the gaze of all the young people attending the show.

**What's it like for the actors to play the same characters for 20 years?**

When we first staged the show with Letizia and Bruno, none of us had yet had children, nor had we lost loved ones. In performing the show for 20 years, as our life baggage accumulated, we renewed and refreshed the show so that it stayed timely. Over and above the visual and design elements (sets, costumes, etc.), theatre reinvents itself through the actors' bodies.

**The show has toured extensively around the world. Has it received the same response everywhere? Are young audiences the same no matter where they live?**

The language of the body is universal, it's understood everywhere on the planet, as are the play's themes—growth, separation, flight, death, rebirth. That's probably why the show has stood the test of time so well: no matter where it's performed, no matter the age of the audience, it always prompts the same reaction. *Romanzo d'infanzia* has a universal theme. When the house lights go down and the play is about to start, we are wrapped in darkness, and in that moment just before the story begins, there is no separation between performers and audience; we are beyond the time of people and things. We've established a connection, a relationship based on listening, and we forget where we are.

**Are today's young audiences different from those of 20 years ago?**

Of course today's young people are different, but their hearts beat the same, their amazement, their fears, hopes and dreams are the same. It's all about the need to connect and the desire to play: that's why the story of Nina and Tommaso appeals to the hearts and souls of young men

and women in the making, far from cellphones, teachers and schedules, just as much today as it did 20 years ago.