

PLATERO AND I

THEATRE WORKSHOP FOR YOUNG PARTICIPANTS

Who is Platero?

Platero is a donkey who lives with Mr. Don Juan in Andalusia, the hottest and wildest region in Spain. It is quite simple to imagine Platero's life full of hardships and difficulties, employed as all donkeys, carrying all kinds of load along impassable roads, suffering the harassment of some rude yokel. But Platero, although we cannot say with certainty, is a happy donkey, and it seems that he lives a good life. Platero is lucky, his owner Don Juan, can be considered his friend. Don Juan loves him, takes care of him, and sometimes, he talks with him. It is not that Platero lays down in bed or has breakfast on a table, as those pigs described in that famous English tale. Platero works and fatigues. But the bearing loads are always well balanced so as not to weigh on him too much. Platero walks on the narrow and tangled streets. But all the paths are in nature, they are real small adventures that always lead to a familiar place, or maybe a new one to be discovered along with his faithful companion Don Juan. And as a reward Platero will always find some fresh vegetables to restore himself.

Let's read what Don Juan wrote:

We understand each other. I let him go at his fancy, and he always takes me where I want to go. Platero knows that on reaching the Corona pine I like to get close to its trunk and touch it, and to look up at the sky through its enormous, light-filtered top; he knows that the narrow path that leads between grassplots to the Old Fountain delights me; that it is high festival for me to watch the river from the pine hill, which, like a sorceress, brings classic scenes before me.

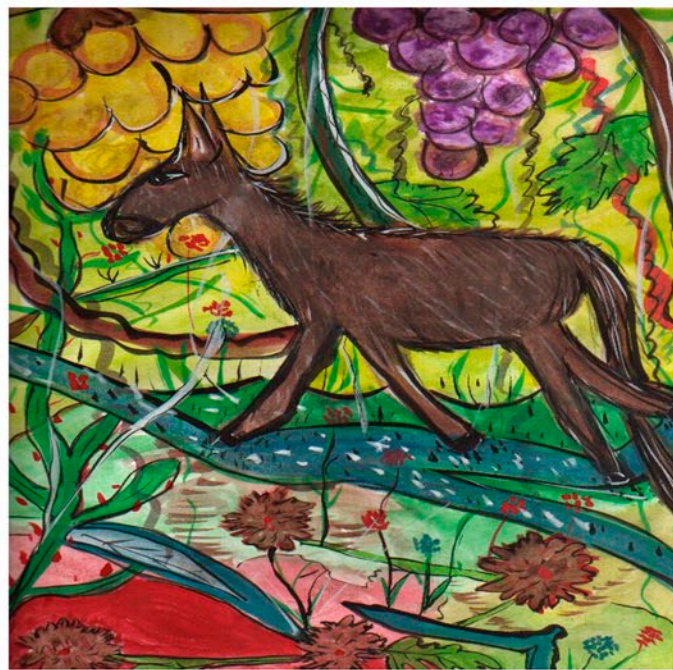
NOTES FOR THE ORGANIZERS:

"Platero and I" is a theater workshop addressed to children and teenagers of elementary and secondary schools. The sources of inspiration that characterize the content, objectives and methods of this recreational and educational proposal come from the research around the text of Juan Ramon Jimenez "Platero y yo", as well as from the homonymous composition for guitar classic by Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco. The current results of this research are, first, the play "Platé ... The Mediterranean Utopia" produced in collaboration with the State Theatre for Young Spectators of Khabarovsk (Russia) and the presented theater workshop "Platero and I". The performance proposal, and the pedagogical proposal, which are complementary, can be done also separately.

The above mentioned sources tell us, through the poetic register and the musical score: daily events, set in a rural village in Andalusia, animated by the Spanish poet and his donkey Platero. Those who have had the opportunity to read it will agree that, at a first reading, the short text written by Jimenez may appear harmless and uneventful; but in reality, is able to revel, coming back on the meanings and images, as each poem requires, deepest levels, reaching central themes in the existence and formation of the individuals.

During the process of creating the performance it was possible to highlight, selecting the most significant parts of the work, the following issues:

- The sense of the time: time of nature (seasons, day and night) and the time of the human (youth / old age, the calendar and its series of liturgical celebrations)
- The relationship between the individual and the group, in particular, the positive revaluation of the solitude as an antidote to the forced standardization of the peer group and of society, as well as, the meeting, without prejudices, with the people and with often marginalized communities, as old persons, foreigners and alleged insane
- The harmonic meeting with nature: the co-existence and the respect of the flora and the fauna, the ability to grasp the genius loci of one place, the ability to contemplate and be integrated into natural landscape, all the experiences of life in small villages
- The necessity of the poetry as an active method to look outside of us, as the reunification with the simplicity (simplicity understood in the sense of natural, beautiful and important)
- Educating towards the simplicity: Starting from the homonymous thesis in Comparative Education written by Andrea Benaglio for the Faculty of Education at the University of Bergamo, an open research topic that can be integrated with special educational programs pursued by the realities which will host our work.



When the first lights of the morning appear, Platero wakes up and waits for his friend Don Juan, curious to find out what will happen. If it rains he will get wet a while or he will stay in the barn. If the heat will invade the sunny places, he will rest in the shadow of a large tree; and when the night comes, or when the lightning and the thunders breaks the peaceful sky, Platero and Don Juan will think to the other, and both will not be afraid. Don Juan is also fortunate to have Platero as a friend, because it is always important to have a friend, and a dog, a cat, or in this case a donkey. Don Juan also is lucky because Platero brings him around, but mostly because it is thanks to Platero that Don Juan started to write poems.

Even us, the actors of AteliercuncheoN researchtheatre company, when meeting with Don Juan and his donkey Platero, learned a lot. The words that seemed complicated became clearer, and took a more orderly place in our imagination. Step by step, nature, that is all around us, like animals, plants and landscapes, but also ourselves with our body, is mixed with time. Time which is not only the one we see on the watch, but also something between day and night, something that always turns spring to winter. All these things together can explain what another relevant word as "existence" is: a little bit of the whole of nature and time. Then we understand that we exist, we live and we grow old. Many things happen during life, and people has invested many celebrations to remember. On the calendar, there is a saint every day, plus all those others who are not mentioned in it.

In everything we do, Platero and Don Juan have given us wise advices: It is always better to take a picture of a flower than to tear it, we can also describe the flower and then see if we can find it in a catalog. Platero and Don Juan also told us that friendship is important, and that we can offer it to all those who we like and with whom we feel well. That even if sometimes we want to be alone or with our grandparents, we can do it, without thinking we are strange because we are not always with our friends. Thanks to Don Juan and Platero we have also understood to wonder about things and to remember another ones. But, the most valuable we have learned: is that poetry is not only where there is a rhyme or a difficult word. Poetry is everywhere, even when you are not writing. When we realize that something is simple and important, or when we look with simplicity something beautiful and harmonious, there we have, perhaps, found it.



We will operate through the following ways:

- Listening to some histories included in the text
- Listening to musical-textual work of M. Castelnuovo-Tedesco
- Overview of some fragments of the play "Platé ... The Mediterranean Utopia"
- Theatre exercises, done in a group or individually, in the form of a game
- Vocal, group and individual, exercises (songs, voices of the characters ...)
- Interactive participation in the performance "Platé...The Mediterranean Utopia" after a period of preparation.

ORGANIZATIONAL DETAILS:

The workshop can be organized flexibly in relation to needs and possibilities of the hosting reality. It can be conducted in accordance with regular weekly meetings for a long time, or on concentrating full-Immersion of varying duration. The daily time commitment can be also modulated in different ways essentially from an hour a day up to five hours a day. Different groups of children and young people can join the activities in different working sessions during the day. Optimally the workshop could be accompanied by the full vision of the performance. It is also possible, as mentioned in the list of modalities, to schedule a specific time dedicated to the experimental integration of the workshop participants in the performance. The staff of AteliercuncheoN engaged in the conduct of the laboratory will consist of a minimum of two to a maximum of four operators, including the classical guitar player.



The theater workshop "Platero and I" reflects and takes advantage of this mentioned research and thoughts in a more interactive way. Tries to unravel these contents to the participants. In addition, during the workshop practice, and not necessarily referring to the abovementioned topics, will come out all the potentiality of improving relation and development of the individual, inherent in the practice of the theater group.

The practical laboratory is oriented to the following objectives:

- To introduce the participants to the narrative and poetic event
- To develop the listening skills of the participants
- To promote the listening of the live music
- To introduce the participants in a creative corporality
- To promote the group relationship
- To increase the awareness of the individual
- To orient the participants in a culture of respect (animalist, environmental, social, and intercultural).

On the practical side, the workshop will seek to merge these contents and objectives, in relation to the different group participants. The staff of AteliercuncheoN, proposes a diversified and multidisciplinary program based on the age and the specific needs of the audience working group, balancing the contact with the sources, with active games or exercise.



For more information about AteliercuncheoNresearchtheatre and to discuss the possible programming of "Platero and I" theater workshop for young participants, refer to the following contacts:
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