

The Ninettas for In Scena!

Irene
Turri

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Our video interview with the wonderful cast of *Ninetta and the others* in range of *In Scena!* Theater Festival: Damiana Leone (author, director and performer) and Francesca Reina (performer) reveal us how to embrace the dramatic theme of “women at war”

We met with part of the cast of ***Ninetta and the Others***, winner of Amnesty International's Chimere Award, right next to the Theatre for the New City, were they were going to perform for *In Scena!* Theatre Festival.

Damiana Leone told us, with trembling voice, about how this drama tackles the difficult theme of rape as an instrument of war. Based on the mass rape that happened during WWII, the play is in memory of those women, the “Marocchinate”, represented in the Oscar winning movie *La Ciociara*, and those many others before and after them, raped during the wars all over the world. Always too many, as if raping a woman was a metaphor for raping the land.

The story is based on reality, in fact one of the characters is inspired by Damiana Leone's grand-grandmother life. On the stage three women from Lazio whose lives were punctuated by unaltered, archaic rituals: washing laundry in the river, working the fields, healing sickness with prayer, taking quinine to fend off malaria, waiting for their men to return from war, while writing love letters and thinking of the front lines. In May 1944, they finally heard the news of the end of the war. Thinking they were running towards the returning troops, flower garlands in their hands, they were instead raped by soldiers of the Colonial French army. This was the largest incident of wartime rape in Italian history.

It was a pleasure talk to Damiana and Francesca, two of the actresses of Errare Persona Company, who, with Anna Mingarelli, produced this play: coming from more than one year of research, or I might say a lifelong reasearch, as the tale of that horror is an epic story among the southern Lazio population. It is a fundamental part of the show the *Tell the war project* (***Racconta la Guerra***), that is about to become a festival and docufilm.

“The show – told us Damiana Leone - is dedicated to my grand mother Rachele, who taught me to make pain into love”.

11 maggio 2015, 7.30 pm - Theater for the New City (155 1st Avenue, Manhattan)

12 maggio 2015, 6.00 pm - John Jay College of Criminal Justice Alumni Association (899 10th Avenue, Manhattan)

Errare Persona is an independent theater company that focuses on the dramaturgical enquiry of civic and anthropological theater, and on the union between theater and music. They have collaborated with La Sapienza University of Rome, Cultural Institutes, National Archives, Atcl Lazio. In 2015 they were selected as an *officina culturale* (cultural workshop) initiative by the Region of Lazio.

