

"For stony limits cannot hold love out" (Romeo, II, 2)
Romeo and Juliet die to generate the modern man and woman. Their story, which is possibly true, was narrated by Luigi da Porta (1524), Bandello (1554), Arthur Brooke (1562), and Paynter (1567), before it was made eternal in the tragedy by w. Shakespeare in 1597. More than just a story of young lovers, it deals with the mingling of love and freedom, to which the hostile Verona of the XIV century surrenders.

Celebrating Romeo and Juliet means not only to recall them: it also means to proclaim the ethical challenge of our own passion.

"Then I defy you, stars" (Romeo, V, 1)

It is convenient to proclaim this challenge in the street as well. The heterogeneity of its public is the same as that found in the courtyards of the inns for whom Shakespeare wrote: students, courtesans, poets, travellers, drunkards, gamblers, prostitutes, tramps, etc. Flowing naturally between prose and poetry, Shakespeare's writings were performed in the bare space of the English Elizabethan Theatre of the XVI and XVII centuries. It was a true circus ring which those courtyards inspired. The informal and unpredictable openness of the street remakes that atmosphere in which the vital, dramatic, dynamic and pedagogical extent of the Shakespearean drama used to burst.

"Gallop apace, you fiery-footed steeds" (Juliet, III, 2)

Such origin suggested both that we recover some popular culture elements in the stage setting and properties like the "espadas de São Jorge", the stickers, the "ramo de arruda", the circus and the soundtrack, and introduce the omniscient image of the narrator conducting the play, whose script is based on Guimarães Rosa's works. Inspired by the peculiar simplicity of the houses in the interior, the whitewash visually integrates the ground, the car, the make up and the costume, and from it the same transcendence and universality attained by the baroque in Minas Gerais come out. Moreover, the circensian technique builds the danger and the fast precipitation of this tragedy, by elaborating, on stage, the ambivalence of anguish and pleasure, of the loving energy, of aggression and of passion, concentrated on the strength of the Shakespearean text. The virtuosity required from the actors' bodies is equivalent to the rhetorical virtuosity, and allows the text to have the acrobatic and vibrating pronunciation with which the words of the classical

translation by Pennaforte convert themselves into action, acquire a non-rational, alive and unpredictable sense, to burst among the audience.

"Lovers can see to do their amorous rites by their own beauties" (Juliet, III, 2)

This "camal inauguration" of the word is followed by the regeneration of the story of this couple, which gives a non-conventional and contextualized sense to it, and is capable of revitalizing the Shakespearean truths, and of finding, in the street, the celebrating and collective origin of the rite and space of drama: magic circle, the ceremonial site of metamorphosis and power where life concentrates itself and releases the eternal within fugacity. The uninterrupted, kaleidoscopic and diverse structure of Shakespeare's drama demands the conception of a stage capable of breaking and restoring itself fast, counting on the help of the mental flexibility aroused from the audience. The unstable, mannerist playful atmosphere contributes to that, with its predominance of inversions, contrasts, ambiguities, discontinuities, irregularities, atonalities, anachronisms and the non-sense of the scenic solutions. Such aspects reissue the tragic cosmic vision of the lacerated XVI century hero, who was banned from the world and had to save himself in the white solitude of his destiny of love and death. The whitewash, the wood shaving crosses in the rusty tins and the figurative bodies on the ground, accomplish death in life, bony blush whitewashing love on the face of mortals.

"For exile hath more terror in his look much more than death" (Romeo, III, 3)

In such deprivation, the hero finds his infinite individual freedom and makes the cosmic infinity his accomplice. And this redeeming complicity is emphasized by the usage of telluric and celestial elements like the script of the Narrator, the music, the circle of time, which determines the scenic area, and the mythical treatment, of the couple, which associates them with the stars. The advent of this cosmic force in the performance was achieved by the open air rehearsals in Morro Vermelho (July, 1992). Then, when for the first time the umbrella came down in circles, by the hand of the narrator, in order to hide the kiss in the scene of the wedding, one saw it as being heaven that bent itself upon the dry land to tenderly relieve it of the stored dust.

The dust on the land and on us alike. We have set up "Romeo and Juliet" to produce this cleaning and this renewal on ourselves.

