



FRANCIS THE HOLY JESTER

by Dario Fo

FRANCIS THE HOLY JESTER

A theatrical monologue by Dario Fo dedicated to Saint Francis of Assisi, on the centenary of the Nobel Prize laureate's birth and the eighth centenary of the Saint's death (2026).

Directed and performed by **Christian Poggioni**

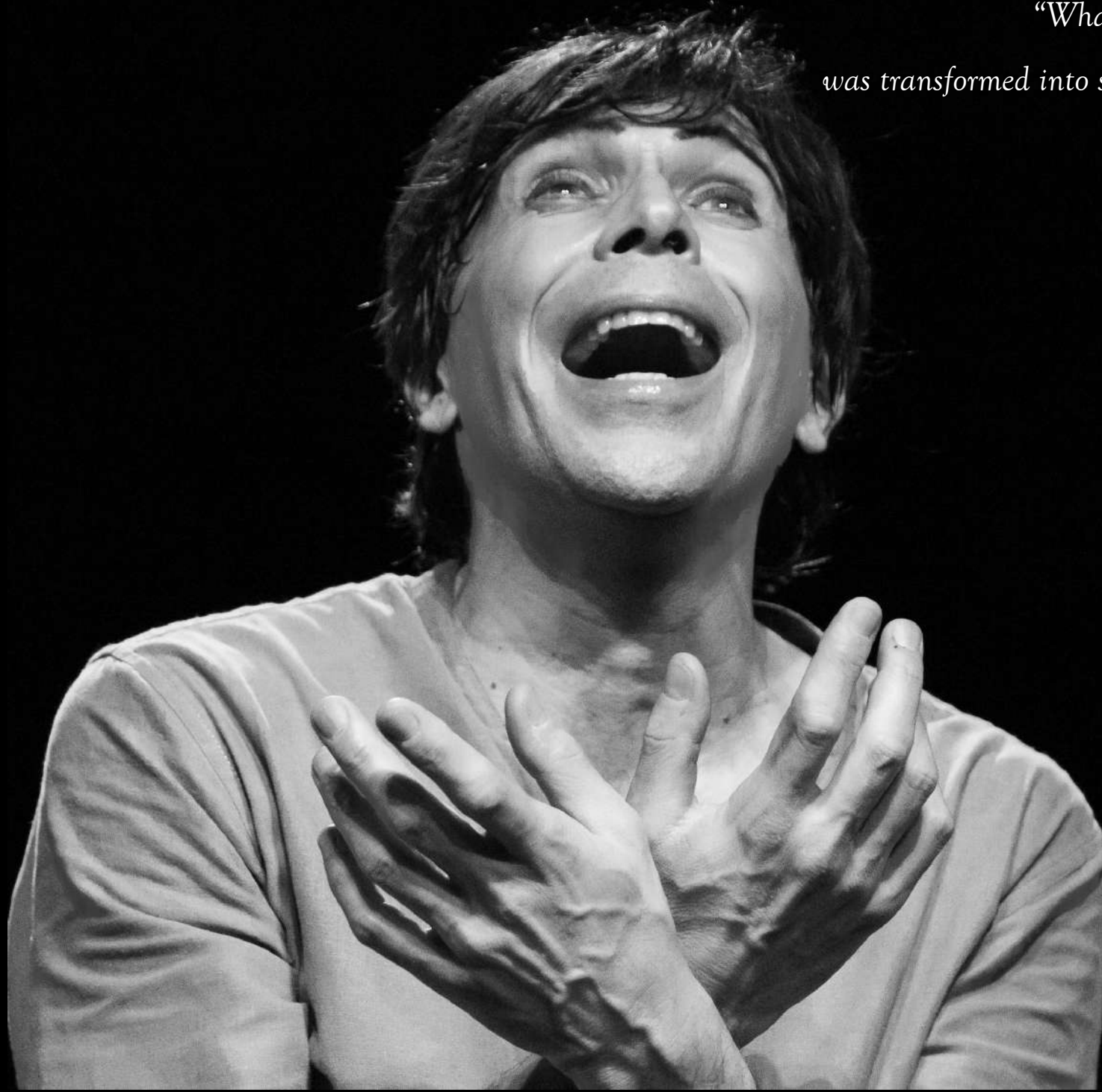
In the aftermath of being awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature, Dario Fo wrote a new text in his distinctive jester-like style, dedicated to Saint Francis, a figure universally recognized – not only by Christians – as a messenger of peace, dialogue among cultures and religions, and harmony between humanity and nature.

The performance weaves together historical sources on the life of the Saint with popular traditions and legends: the Wolf of Gubbio, the Sermon to the Birds, the meeting with Pope Innocent III, the composition of the Canticle of the Creatures, and other memorable episodes. What emerges is a joyful, light, and spiritual – yet deeply human – portrait of the humble man who declared “I am the jester in the service of God.”

Christian Poggioni, already acclaimed for a successful production based on *Mistero Buffo (Comical Mystery Play)*, has received official authorization from Dario Fo's heirs to perform this work.

Info +39 329 3022179 – c.poggioni@gmail.com – www.christianpoggioni.it

*“What once seemed bitter to me,
was transformed into sweetness of soul and body”*



Context and Anniversaries

The year 2026 marks a double anniversary: the centenary of the birth of Dario Fo and the eight-hundredth anniversary of the death of Saint Francis of Assisi.

Dario Fo (1926 – 2016)

One of the greatest Italian playwrights, actors, and directors of the twentieth century. Awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1997, he was celebrated by the Swedish Academy for having “revived the tradition of the medieval jesters, scourging power and restoring dignity to the oppressed.”

He revolutionized the scene through biting satire and visionary irony, and a unique language. From *Comical Mystery Play* to *Francis the holy jester*, his works continue to entertain while provoking reflection and challenging consciences.

Saint Francis of Assisi (1181 – 1226)

Patron Saint of Italy and founder of the Franciscan Order, he is one of the most revered spiritual figures in history. Born into a wealthy merchant family, he soon renounced a life of comfort to embrace poverty and devote himself to love for God, for others, and for creation. His radical adherence to the Gospel, grounded in humility and joy, made him a universal symbol of peace and fraternity, inspiring believers and non-believers alike. He is also the author of the *Canticle of the Creatures*, one of the earliest poetic texts written in the vernacular in Italian literature.



CHRISTIAN POGGIONI

He graduated in acting under Giorgio Strehler at the prestigious Piccolo Teatro School in Milan, earned a degree with highest honors from the University of Milan, and completed a master's degree in directing with top marks at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles.

He has performed in productions directed by internationally renowned directors such as Giorgio Strehler, Peter Stein, Massimo Castri, and Antonio Calenda, taking part in national and European tours. He served as assistant director at the Kaye Playhouse in New York. He has appeared in television, film, and radio productions in Italy and Switzerland.

He has produced, directed, and performed in works by classical and contemporary authors, ranging from Sophocles to Samuel Beckett, from Shakespeare to Dario Fo, from Plato to Éric-Emmanuel Schmitt, from Charles Dickens to Anton Chekhov, and many others.

He is an acting teacher and director at the School of Advanced Training at the Catholic University of Milan.

www.christianpoggioni.it



Teatro del Tempo Applausi e commozione per «Lu santo jullare» Francesco, il santo rivoluzionario

» La storia del Poverello di Assisi ha avuto da sempre un impatto rivoluzionario nella nostra civiltà. San Francesco, con la sua scelta di interpretare alla lettera il messaggio di Cristo e di predicare la povertà, rappresentò una novità assoluta per la sua epoca, in cui la Chiesa, al contrario, aumentava la sua ricchezza e sfidava il potere dell'Imperatore. Fu poi una storia rivoluzionaria nell'arte, quando Giotto nella basilica di Assisi rappresentò la vita di San Francesco, inaugurando così la pittura moderna.

Nella serata di sabato questa storia è stata rappresentata nella nostra città, al piccolo Teatro del Tempo. Christian Poggioni, attore e regista allievo di Giorgio



Christian Poggioni

L'attore e regista ha interpretato «Lu santo jullare Francesco».

Strehler, ha interpretato «Lu santo jullare Francesco» di Dario Fo e Franca Rame. Il soggetto, scritto da Fo subito dopo il conferimento del premio Nobel per la letteratura, offre al pubblico un ritratto di San Francesco inedito rispetto alle tradizionali biografie, che mette in luce proprio il suo essere rivoluzionario. Il Santo di Assisi viene rappresentato come un uomo del popolo, giocondo, e spontaneo. L'interpretazione di Poggioni ha reso perfettamente l'intenzione di Fo, quella di rappresentare la netta contrapposizione tra il carattere di Francesco, umile, giullaresco e interprete sincero del messaggio di Cristo, rispetto a quello del Papa Innocenzo III, allegoria di una Chiesa austera e ipocrita.

La performance è stata spezzettata da alcuni intermezzi in cui Poggioni ha raccontato lo stile, le idee e l'approccio di Dario Fo alla storia di San Francesco. «Attraverso la tecnica del Grammelot, caratterizzato dalla combinazione di parole provenienti da dialetti diversi, Fo riesce ad evocare in modo estremamente coinvolgente e realistico la figura di Francesco». Il pubblico ha risposto con applausi e commozione come quando, alla fine, il personaggio di Francesco si congeda dalla vita nella piccola chiesa della Porziuncola, intonando il Cantico delle creature e accogliendo serenamente la «sorella morte».

Andrea Grassi

© RIPRODUZIONE RISERVATA