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Show Guide

East

Off Broadway June 12, 2003

1945: Sa Coia (A Sardinian Tale)

Reviewed By Lisa Jo Sagolla

Powerful acting, keen direction, and a mesmerizing, based-on-true-events storyline drove "1945: Sa Coia," an intense dance-theatre production, performed by Sanza Nemo Collective at Joyce SoHo. Brilliantly conceived, directed, and choreographed by Guido

"1945: Sa Coia (A Sardinian Tale)"

Theater: Joyce SoHo
Location: 155 Mercer St., NYC
Starts: May 22, 2003
Ends: May 25, 2003

Tuveri, the work sets the domestic conflicts raging in a small Sardinian village within the larger political context of the brutalities of the Italian Fascists during World War II. The evils of power are unveiled, as rape and spousal abuse are viewed alongside the burgeoning of the Nazi movement. Then it's hip, hip, hooray for the red, white, and blue as the Yankee liberators arrive; but in the distance lurks the eerie sight of two geishas whose delicate dancing turns grotesque in the wake of atomic clouds.

Video projections of documentary images from wartime Europe and Japan form an engrossing backdrop for the onstage action -- short snappy scenes composed of a minimum of talking and spare, yet eloquent, choreography that strikes at the emotional heart of each piece of the story. The simple act of a woman tying her long hair atop her head becomes an absorbing dance. A straight-backed Nazi soldier positioned in his chair on the sidelines creates a frightening framework for a few frolicsome moments. The multiple layers of the drama are made visible simultaneously in a skillfully staged ensemble sequence with GIs in combat, Fascist troops training, and a poor peasant singing, all at the same time, against an alluring array of vintage photos.

Tuveri displays an acute eye for stage composition and an exquisite sense of theatrical timing. He puts us through an emotionally brutal evening, but gives us the gift of an ending that is, unexpectedly, sweet and loving.

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