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PROFILE

Project title

Liberate Rame! The feminist practices of performance-maker and activist Franca Rame.

Supervisors

Dr Tom Cornford and Dr Diana Damian Martin

Profile

I am a PhD Candidate at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, a visiting lecturer, a theatre director and jazz musician.

My research focuses around the theatre work of Italian theatre practitioner Franca Rame, that I have known personally and who has influenced my work as a practitioner because of her revolutionary theatre and activist practice. My project aims to be a practical and theoretical feminist intervention on her work through the lens of intersectional critical thinking, in particular contemporary feminism and social reproduction theory. I am also interested in the way Rame and her partner Dario Fo used live music in their theatre and how they applied improvisation techniques in their theatre making.

I have a BA (hons) in Foreign Languages and Literature (University of Cagliari), and an MA (Distinction) in Theatre Directing and Theatre Arts from Goldsmiths College, University of London. Since 2003 I have been working as a visiting lecturer and freelance director in UK universities such as the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, East15 Acting School, University of Essex, Kingston University, Bucks New University, and UCL. In my work as an educator and facilitator, I teach variously on theatre directing, acting, devising and physical theatre, improvisation techniques, voice, and contextual studies. Additionally, I give regularly theatre and vocal master-classes and workshops on jazz singing, performance techniques, stage presence, and vocal improvisation.

I am the founder and the Artistic Director of Theatralia, an international collective of performers and artists who combine literature, physical theatre, performance art, and inventive digital art with live music. Since 2006 Theatralia productions have been sponsored by the Arts Council England. Productions include **Monk Misterioso. A Journey into the Silence of Thelonious Monk** (www.monkmisterioso.com), **Credevo Che** (A performance about domestic violence that toured in Italy 2019), **Italy VS England**, **U238**, and **Not in My Name**.

I have worked, studied or collaborated with international theatre practitioners such as Franca Rame, Dario Fo, Stefano Benni, Odin Teatret, Eugenio Barba, Roberta Carreri, Julia Varley, Marco Paolini, Marcello Magni (Complicité), Augusto Boal, Adrian Jackson, Judith Malina, Frank Millward (Lumiere and Son), Mei Bao Jiu (Beijing Opera).

I am also a jazz vocalist, lyricist, and vocal improviser. My performance on stage is a mixture of jazz and theatre, inspired by my academic background and the culture of my native Sardinia. I use texts, poems, masks and red noses, and I often collaborate with multimedia artists, dancers and actors. I have toured and collaborated with the top jazz artists, including Orphy Robinson, Rowland Sutherland, Paolo Fresu, Cleveland Watkiss, Jackie Walduck, Laura Cole, Tori Handsley, Nana Simopoulos, Byron Wallen, Jean Toussaint, Evan Parker, Guy Barker, and the London Improvisers Orchestra. I performed at many jazz festivals in the UK, Germany, Italy, Jordan, Qatar, Morocco, Thailand, and Croatia amongst others.

In 2010 I founded the Filomena Campus Quartet and we released our CD **Jester of Jazz**. Franca Rame wrote a quote for the album cover and edited one of the songs, Queen of Clowns. I perform regularly at London jazz venues such as the PizzaExpress Jazz Club Soho, Ronnie Scott's, Jazz Live at the Crypt and the Vortex. My Quartet has two more jazz/theatre projects: **Queen Mab**, and **Italy VS England**, written with renowned Italian writer Stefano Benni, who worked extensively with Fo and Rame.

In 2014 I recorded the album **Scaramouche** with guitarist Giorgio Serci, featuring legendary jazz master Kenny Wheeler. Scaramouche was a character from Commedia dell'Arte who was an actor, singer and guitar player. I discovered this character thanks to my late friend and theatre academic Dr. Steve Knapper, to whom the song Scaramouche is dedicated.

In 2013 I launched my annual Theatralia Jazz Festival (www.theatraliajazzfestival.com) in which I seek to unite Italian and UK jazz musicians and artists. I have a radio show on London One Radio where I interview artists and present the London jazz and theatre scene.

Abstract

This research investigates how the work and legacy of Italian performance-maker, political activist, and archivist Franca Rame (1929-2013) contribute to create contemporary feminist performance-making practice. The title reflects my argument that, together with the need for liberation from forms of patriarchal memorialisation, Rame provides us with numerous, critical, and creative tools for feminist liberatory projects. To identify these tools, I investigate Rame's representations of women in dialogue with Italian multiple feminisms and I develop a new account of her work with equal attention to script and performance, and through a feminist analysis of the material held at Rame's archive in Italy. I position her work within a complex genealogy of feminist and leftist political activism, in order to identify and contextualise her practice as both a solo and collaborative woman artist, while I generate oral histories to investigate her development of collective techniques for theatre-making practice. This research follows these threads together, investigating the intersections between feminisms and Rame's modes and forms of work, drawing on methodologies from feminist praxis, feminist performance studies, performance-making analysis, and activist political theatre. Alongside this, a practice research project unfolds as a way of embodying the research in two specific interventions, which are a performance and a series of workshops which will be presented in dialogue with the written thesis. These interventions propose feminist modes to create contemporary activist performance rooted in Rame's practice and help to disseminate my findings inside and outside academia.

Practice

Directing:

- **Credevo che/ I Believed**, (On domestic violence), Italian Tour 2019 /20
- **Theatralia Jazz Festival**, London/Italy, 2013/2020 www.theatraliajazzfestival.com
- **Monk Misterioso, A Journey into the Silence of Thelonious Monk**, Theatralia, ACE UK Tour 2017 (www.monkmisterioso.com)
- **Some afternoons never seem to end**, Institute of Cultural Inquiry, Berlin, 2014.
- **La Topastra**, a monologue by Stefano Benni, Italian Cultural Institute, London 2014
- **Italy VS England**, Theatralia, by Stefano Benni, Cagliari & London 2013
- **Dot Dot Dot**, a multimedia devised adaptation of 'A Woman Alone' by Franca Rame & Dario Fo, Clifftown Theatre, University of Essex, 2012.
- **Third Interlude**, Multimedia & improvisation, Performance Art Event, London Riverside Studios, 2009
- **Misterioso**, Riverside Studios London 2009, Assembly Queen's Hall Edinburgh 2008
- **U-238 (Depleted Uranium)**, Theatralia, by Marco Paolini, Camden People's Theatre, June 2006
- **Not in My Name**, Theatralia, Camden People Theatre, Oct 12th -30th 2005
- **4.48 Psychosis** by Sarah Kane, Amersham, Feb 2005
- **Human Interlude**, performance art and free improvised music, London, 2003
- **Crave** by Sarah Kane, George Wood Theatre, London, May-June 2002
- **A Game of Chess**, Teatro Nanni Loy, Cagliari, June 2001
- **Die Ausnahme und die Regel** by Brecht, Teatro Mensana, Cagliari, Oct 2000
- **The Summoning of Everyman**, Cagliari and Macomer, 1999
- **El Retablo De Las Maravillas** by Cervantes, University of Cagliari, 1998
- **Recital**, with American poet Jack Hirschman, Spazio Fornace, Cagliari, 1998
- **Sguardo Occidentale**, assistant director with Akroama Theatre Company and the Beijing Opera, Teatro delle Saline, Cagliari, 1997

Conference Presentations / Papers

- Webinar Presentation of the LAHP CDA research project 'Liberate Rame' (RCSSD) at the Italian Cultural Institute London, with Tom Cornford, Joseph Farrell, Marisa Pizza. Oct 2020.
- Presentation of the Franca Rame project at: Hope in Action. Theatre-Women-Will. Transit Festival, Odin Teatret, Holstebro, Denmark, June 2019.
- *Remembering Franca Rame and Dario Fo*. A performance/Presentation by Filomena Campus, MusaLAB Museum Archive Laboratory Franca Rame Dario Fo, Verona, Italy, 2019.
- Dario Fo and Franca Rame. *Theatre, Politics, Life*. A talk with author Joseph Farrell moderated by Filomena Campus. MusaLAB, Verona, 2019.
- *Thelonious Monk Modernist Pioneer*, organized by Culture&, with Filomena Campus, Candace Allen, Errol Francis, British Library, London, 2017
- *Monk's Moods: Jazz and Mental Health*, organized by Theatralia with MIND, JazzFM, Culture&, feat. Margaret Busby, Errol Francis, Kevin LeGendre, Kings Place, London, 2017
- *To Franca. A tribute to Franca Rame*, Italian Cultural Institute, London and Berlin 2013.
- *The theatre of Marco Paolini*, international conference organized by Theatralia, Jole Film and University College London, June 2006.
- *The role and the language of theatre explored through theatre practice and academic research*, Quaderni Italy/England, 2004.
- Presented papers at the International Conference Britishness in Sardinia, Cagliari, April 2004: *The theatre of Sarah Kane, Analysis of Crave and 4.48 Psychosis*. Devising and Physical theatre: directing *Not In My Name*.

Teaching

Present: Visiting lecturer at Royal Central School of Speech and Drama (MA/MFA Advanced Theatre Practice), at the London Performing Academy of Music.

Previously:

- MA/MFA Theatre Directing Course Coordinator and Lecturer + Teaching and Directing BA Physical Theatre, BA Acting, and BA World Performance at the University Of Essex, East15 Acting School.
- Lecturer of Live Art, Kingston University,
- Lecturer (Directing, Performance Analysis, Devising and Physical Theatre, Collaborative Theatre, Developments in Tragedy, Theatres of Resistance, Skills for Actors and Directors) at Buckinghamshire New University.
- Visiting lecturer at UCL and at the University of Cagliari.