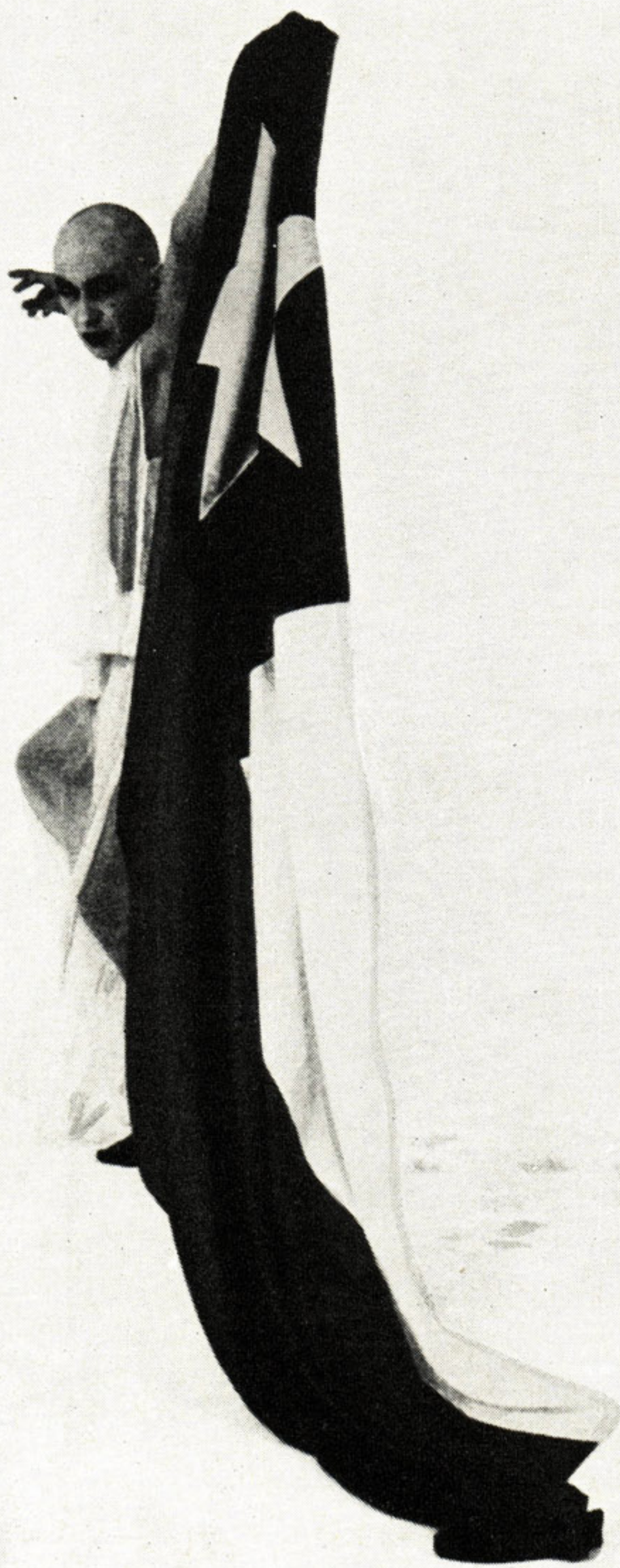


ESMERALDA by FRANCISCO COPELLO



EDIMBURGH FRINGE FESTIVAL
AUGUST 21st - 29th - 31st, 1979

ESMERALDA

Performed by FRANCISCO COPELLO

Electronic music by GIULIANO PALMIERI

Piano music composed
and played by MARLENE ZEIRO
GIULIANO PALMIERI

Esmeralda, corvette of the newly born Chilean navy, gets into history on May 21st, a hundred years ago, sinking in the Iquique harbour, during the Pacific War. The ship captain, Arturo Pratt, succeeds in boarding the enemy's frigate "Huascar" before Esmeralda sinks in the ocean; there he gets killed.

His gesture makes him a popular and symbolic hero of a war that Chile was fighting just to expand his dominium to north territories rich in minerals.

The performance of Copello starts with an audiovisive documentation of the artist's work during the last ten years.

Afterwards he gets on with a dance which is "the expression of the heroic strength of this pantomime based on the Chilean flag stained with blood; here body and flag produce and give way to various feelings and emotions held by a desperate human condition". In Esmeralda, repression, love-hate, and liberation give a grotesque portrait of human condition.

The gesture, full of significance, irony, and pathos, is freely expressed as a trait-d'union between different theatre disciplines and actual reality expressed by a whole of movements and performance.



BIOGRAPHY

Francisco Copello, born in Chile, performer, print-maker, and coreographer worked for many years in New York and Italy.

He began his research of pantomime art and dancing towards the end of the 60es in the U.S.A. with Laura Dean, Ivonne Rainer, Twayla Tharp, Bob Wilson and Fernando Torm.

He received a grant from the Creative Artist Programs Service and the prize Nicolas Copérnico in 1972.

In Italy Copello has been working as "interpreter" for various photographers, among which Giovanna dal Magro, Maurizio Buscarino, Giuseppe Pino, Silvio Wolf, Elisabeth Jauch, Walter Biggi; as a "performer" he was the author of the following performances: "David" at the Fabbrica di Comunicazione (Milan, 1977), "Por la razón o la fuerza" at the Atelier di Teatro (Bergamo, 1977), "Arauco" (Genoa, 1977), "Omaggio a Neruda" (Padua and Genoa, 1978), "Anatomia della Pelle" at the Fine Arts Ligustica Academy (Genoa, 1979), "Estrella Reina Mártir" (Genoa and Bologna, 1979), and "Esmeralda" at the III Settimana Internazionale della Performance: "The New Dance" (Bologna, 1979).

His works as etcher are collected in several museum and art collections, among which are the Museum of Modern Art, New York, The Congress Library, Washington, D.C., the New York Public Library and the Bibliothèque National of Paris.

THE WORK OF THE "INTERPRETER"

..... It is rather important to know, in my opinion, and apart from other considerations, that it is a particular form of expression the one Francisco Copello has been displaying for years and that it could be related to artist performances though the connections with the most traditional forms of expression such as dancing and mimic art.

Copello is anyway the coreographer of himself and all his "actions" are the symbolic and metaphoric expression of an event, often the story of his own country, Chile.

Working on this ambiguous surface Copello finds out how to realize himself, through the movement and dramatisation of gestures.

A. Altamira

EVOLUTION OF GESTURE

I have never quite understood why nobody can try or want to put dance, obviously classical dance, in crisis. Since a century ago, or maybe more, we still have to stand, perhaps as "artwork pieces", boring and creeping gestures, moonlight choreographies and love stories that no longer belong to us, almost as if body were something by itself, without time or history, without an internal psychobiological process, even perhaps without a moral decay

Perhaps many people still like this visual immobility, this dusty landscape that nothing suggests other than "revivals" and therefore it never puts in crisis; probably it makes it difficult for people to go forward into present, without any sustains, and with all the fragile background they possess.

Why then shouldn't we pretend an evolution, a change in this direction?.....

Beyond all answers that would nothing but lead us too far, it seems to me anyway that once again it is healthy to meet characters who in their everyday work try to get nearer to the historical process for better understanding the distance that keeps us apart, anxiety that joins us.

One of such characters is Francisco Copello who, together with few others, allows gestures to mark contemporary traits along paths that we all must follow if, at night, we want to reach our "resting place".

Luciano Inga-Pin

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