

## **Sonata for solo actress**

Sonia Bergamasco meets Anna Karenina. Tells her story. Listens to her. Experiences her. Plays her. She plays Tchaikovsky. Then, from the darkness, struck by a beam of light, an arm emerges. Very pale. The fragment of a woman. It was a fragment of Pushkin that gave Tolstoy the idea for *Anna Karenina*. In that fragment, there was a woman, and in the background, the St. Petersburg aristocracy. Follow Tolstoy's creative path over the five years it took him to draft the novel: this is what Emanuele Trevi, who wrote the text with Ms. Bergamasco, wanted to do.

Beginning in 1873, Tolstoy's plans for the book follow one after the other. He discusses it with his wife, writes sketches, outlines, notes: at first, Anna is an ugly middle class woman, fat and badly dressed; then, between uncertainties, suspensions, rejections, cancellations and impulses, he makes his way towards the real Anna, the definitive one, the energetic, passionate, vital woman of the restless charm and magnetic gaze, with a captivating inner energy and the desperate will to live out her love against all odds.

The tale of this gestation, as traced by Trevi, results in Anna's words: her very last words, before committing suicide. Open rehearsals in unhappiness. The piano is always there, helping give the right tone to the story, the appropriate modulation to her outcry, the exasperated spasm of passion. It becomes the body of the beloved, a symbol of desperation, the coffin for her ultimate goal. The magical lighting by Cesare Accetta, an undisputed master, interacts with the actress, inventing glimpses, drawing profiles, accompanying movements, underscoring tremors, caressing moments of abandon, enhancing rebellion.

And Ms. Bergamasco is there with Tolstoy, his conscience, his plans, his creative itinerary, his wife Sofia, and above all, with Anna. It is a shattering crescendo: Ms. Bergamasco looks into the mirror of the soul, writhing in the vacuum, invoking tenderness, noting the failure of affection, exploding in livid hatred, deaf to the world around her that witnesses without understanding. And she ends up in the coffin-piano cabinet, which is now permanently out-of-tune.

**Franco Malcovati - Hystrio 2/2012**