THE IMPOSSIBLE TEMPEST:

GIORGIO STREHLER OR THE DIRECTOR AS INTERPRETER

by

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During his fifty-year career, the Italian director Giorgio Strehler (1921-1997) staged more plays by Shakespeare than by any other playwright, but only a few of his most recent and successful Shakespearean productions have received international critical attention, and *The Tempest* he directed in 1978 is among them. Thirty years before however, in 1948, he directed a first, completely different production of the same text.

Starting from the theoretical assumption that a theatre performance, as object, exists only in the moment in which it is actually produced, that is, in its reception by the audience, this dissertation has a twofold purpose: to explore the different contexts in which the two productions directed by Strehler were staged, and to underline how, from the beginning of his career he developed a crucial attention for interpretative techniques culminating in the 1978 *Tempest*.

Aside from being based on the same text and from being produced by the same ensemble, the Piccolo Teatro of Milan, though with two radically different acting and technical troupes, the two productions of *The Tempest* directed by Strehler enlighten the variety of dynamics – from historical, political, and
cultural, to more specifically theatrical, technical, and dramaturgical – which interacted within him while he was working at the staging of the play, and emphasizes the centrality of the director in contemporary theatre.

Finally, this dissertation examines how the pragmatic process of rehearsal might modify the director's theoretical approach to a text, and shows how the study of a performance consists not just in the quest for its meaning, but in the investigation of how the text is brought to the stage, to that coalescent point that, in order to materialize, demands active participation and involvement from both interpreters and spectators.
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TGIF (thank God, it’s finished).

In memoriam.
Giacomo Colli (1928-1994), Orazio Costa (1911-1999), and Giorgio Strehler (1921-1997), directors.

For my daughter, Greta.
We are such stuff / As dreams are made on, Prospero says.
That her dreams come true.
NOTE TO TEXT & ABBREVIATIONS

The English translation of all the Italian and French sources is mine.

Italics have been adopted exclusively to quote lines from the text of The Tempest in English or in its Italian translation. Stage directions are in italics as well but in bold style, to differentiate them from the lines of the text.

In a few cases, to clarify the differences between the Italian published translation and the text in performance, the text is reported as published, the words eliminated are strikethrough, and words that did not appear in the published translation are underlined.

Any reference to positions or directions on theatre stage will be given by using the terms ‘stage left’ and ‘stage right’, which denote the sides of the stage that are on the actor's left and right when the actor is facing the audience, while ‘house left’ and ‘house right’ are the reverse, denoting the sides of the stage as viewed by the audience.

approx. = approximately

GJ = Ettore Gaipa Journal of 1978 Tempest rehearsals

HL = house left

HR = house right

SL = stage left

SN = Giorgio Strehler’s Notes on 1978 Tempest

SR = stage right

VS = video segment
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I have seen many shows in my life, some of them memorable, others passable or forgettable. The memorable ones, as the word says, are still alive in my memory, and I could recall them in a way that would be faithful and accurate, but only for me or for whoever listens to me, provided that the listener believes my words. I could support my description with the testimony, written or oral, of the people who have been present at the same shows. I could supplement my review with photos and recordings, video or audio, and eventually make comparisons with other productions of the same text or the same author, if there is a text and an author. I could make reference to other interpretations of the same actor or to other shows staged by the same director. I could remember a few lines, a gesture, a tone of light, a musical rhythm, and some reactions of the public. I could attempt to illustrate, with examples from other forms of art, the states of mind and the emotions, from one side, and the ideas and the interpretations, from the other, that those unforgettable shows have provoked to me. I could, in short, approach those shows anew and try to convey the meaning of a memorable but irreproducible experience.

Because of this irreproducibility – an inevitable consequence of the ephemeral nature of theatre – any attempt to describe it seems like the famous paradox by Zeno, for which Achilles, wrestling with the infinite series of space segments separating him from the turtle, will never succeed in catching it up.
Wanting to remain in the metaphor, I wonder if the logical-philosophical solutions proposed to resolve the paradox are not the complementary plan of those theorists who think that a performance is an object very defined, analyzable and decipherable or, in other words, reachable through other means than simply being present as a spectator. This attitude derives from an error of perspective for which, returning to the paradox, the problem to resolve seems to be only how Achilles succeeds in catching up with the turtle, rather than to question how the turtle was able to cover the distance that separated it from Achilles.

This thesis deals with two radically different productions of the *The Tempest* by William Shakespeare directed by the same director, Giorgio Strehler (1921-1997), with the same company, the Piccolo Teatro of Milan – though with different artistic and technical staff – at a distance of thirty years one from the other, in two theatre spaces with differing characteristics, to put it mildly. In 1948, the year of the first production, I was still not born, but the second one, which I attended January 19, 1984, at the Teatro Lirico of Milan, is among the shows that I consider memorable.

The first chapter of the thesis, though, does not deal directly with the two productions, but discusses the criteria through which it is possible to look at the documentation of a performance and establishes the directions of the research. It is not a question of collecting an endless series of data with the illusion of understanding – or better, comprising, since the Latin root ‘cum-prendere’ means
‘to take together’ – the production under analysis, but of studying the distances covered by the technical and artistic realities of the production from the text to the stage. As a matter of fact, it is in light of these distances that the interpretation of the director, crystallized in an object – the performance – inevitably absent from the present of the person studying it, can reveal traces of the path followed.

The two following chapters deal with the two productions in as much detail as the available documentation allows. From a purely quantitative point of view, and only because there is a video of the show, *The Tempest* staged by Strehler in 1978 is more accessible, but for this very reason the traces left by the director are more complex and numerous. *The Tempest* of 1948, for its part, is revealed against the background of productive circumstances that are more distinct from what the available information may let one suppose, and facilitates the reading of the criteria by which Strehler, since the beginning of his career, carries on in his work.

The fourth and last chapter, finally, by integrating more than simply comparative analysis of the documentation, shows the guidelines of Strehler’s interpretative research that, as the two stagings of *The Tempest* testify, moves in the constant dialectic tension between the reading of the text and the historical reality surrounding and investing the production of it.
CHAPTER 1

THE FLEETING OBJECT OF THE INVESTIGATION

Il teatro non si racconta [Theatre cannot tell its own story].

GIORGIO STREHLER

Thus the memory of experience lived as theatre, once translated into sentences that last, risks becoming petrified into pages that cannot be penetrated.

EUGENIO BARBA

1.1 Detecting theatre within audience reception

In a conversation between a couple of people, if one says, ‘recently I have gone to the theatre,’ it is normal that the other replies by saying: ‘and what have you seen?’ It would be strange if instead the question was ‘and what did you hear?’ Not that the question, by changing the sensory reference, is not acceptable. It was perfectly legitimate at Shakespeare’s time, and today still makes sense if for theatre we mean opera or if it refers to the recorded or to the live transmission by radio of a show, opera or drama. Though in this second case the sentence of the first speaker would probably be expressed in a different way. The question would be instead ambiguous if it refers to a dance show, which in its

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nature is inseparable from the sight of the spectator, unless there is an exclusive interest in the music that accompanies the choreography. In reality, the nature of these simple queries shifts as a result of two factors: the main object of the receptive experience – the fact that different forms of performance induce different experiences, in which seeing prevails over hearing or vice versa – and the cultural and linguistic changes historically undergone by the recipient of the experience – the audience. Today, for example, in North American English the term ‘auditorium’ is broadly utilized to indicate a room, hall, or building used for public gatherings, but the Latin word auditorium, that for the Romans indicated a performing space, derives from audire, ‘to hear.’ Curiously, among the definitions of the English word ‘audience,’ which has a similar root, the Oxford Dictionary suggests also that of a ‘whole group of spectators or viewers of a play,’ where the word ‘spectator’ derives from the Latin spectare, ‘to watch,’ the same etymology of the word ‘spectacle,’ that in Standard English, but with small variations in other languages as well – French spectacle and Italian spettacolo, for example – is used to describe various forms of live shows. As a matter of fact, in French it is common to say ‘J’ai assisté à une pièce de théâtre,’ and similarly in Italian it is possible to say ‘Ho assistito a uno spettacolo teatrale,’ where assistir and assistere mix the meanings of ‘to attend,’ ‘to witness,’ ‘to watch,’ and that of ‘to help’ as well.

However, from a sensorial point of view theatre seems to be the form of performance in which the acts of seeing and hearing are more well-balanced, a
feature that has origin in classical Greek theatre, where, according to Derrick De Kerckhove, there was no space for any other sensory form of participation:

The stage presents a synthesis of one’s visual field; it is an extension or projection of the eye. This aspect is partly indicated by the etymology of theatron, ‘the place to look at,’ also ‘the place from where one looks.’ The classical Greek theatrical setting immobilized spectators for several hours and directed their gazes towards a fixed area which they could not approach by any other means than by seeing and hearing. Other sensory forms of participation in social activity as well as kinetic involvement were frustrated and rechanneled.

Though the etymology of the word theatron gives the act of seeing a sort of priority quality, it should be noticed that the perfect acoustic of the theatre of Epidaurus would not have prevented a blind member of the audience from following the action on stage. Besides, the idea of ‘immobilized spectators,’ which certainly belongs to theatre spaces such as the Greek amphitheatre or the modern proscenium-arch playhouse, when individual seats were introduced, it hardly applies to the audience standing in the pit of theatres such as the Hôtel de Bourgogne (1548), the Elizabethan Globe (1599) or the public opera houses

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4 More than two centuries after the opening of the Hôtel de Bourgogne, the introduction of seats for everyone at the Comédie Française (1782) was publicly criticized by a leading playwright of the day, Louis-Sebastian Mercier, because the spectators would not have been able to move about and socialize. See Edwin Wilson, and Alvin Goldfarb, Living Theatre: A History, 5th ed. (Boston: McGraw Hill, 2008): 308.

5 The debate about the behavior of the Elizabethan audience, is controversial, but whatever was the level of attention, it would be excessive to describe the spectators in the pit as ‘immobilized.’
constructed in Venice by 1641. Even more, it is quite untrue regarding the spectators of commedia dell’arte scenarios improvised in the middle of an Italian market-square during the second half of the sixteenth century or of a modern production such as The Living Theatre’s Paradise Now (1968). The variety of conditions in which the audience can attend a performance, in the end, suggests that seeing and/or hearing are not necessarily the only sensory forms of participation involved in the spectatorial process; they look more like the main means of an experience that from a cognitive point of view is definitely more complex.

The problem is that since it is impossible to separate the single spectator from the audience as a whole, the acts of seeing and/or hearing should be regarded, as is stressed by Patrice Pavis, more as a sort of collective act:

> It is not an easy matter to grasp all the implications of the fact that the spectator cannot be separated as an individual from the audience as a collective agent. Each individual spectator contains within him the ideological and psychological codes of several groups, while, on the other hand, the audience sometimes forms a single entity, a body that reacts en masse.

In this sense, an in-depth psycho-physiological analysis of this collective ‘body’ could be useful, but only in relation to the dynamics by which it has been historically modified, for example by the redefinition of theatre spaces or the

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6 The pit of the public opera houses constructed in Venice by 1641 was “a raucous area where the spectators ate, talked, and moved around” (Wilson and Goldfarb 159).

development of new visual media. Consequently, if language looks, if not inadequate, at least ambiguous in giving a precise and exhaustive definition of the theatre experience, one of the causes can be found in the strong impact that technological and cultural changes had and still have on the interlacing of stimuli affecting the people present at a theatre performance\(^8\). Nevertheless, the idea that the experience of a theatre audience is reducible to the simplest acts of seeing and hearing is a mainstream approach yet, particularly at an educational level.

For example, *Types of Drama*, a standard introduction to drama for undergraduates, balances the options by clearly stating: “A play is written to be seen and to be heard, not just to be read”\(^9\). This statement has its central reference in the written text and its corollary in the idea that when we read “a play it’s not enough mentally to hear the lines. We must try to see the characters, costumed and moving within a specific setting: costumes, sets, and gestures are 

\(^8\) The practical impossibility to separate the single spectator from the whole audience should not conceal the fact that the theatre production offered to the sight of the viewers is not necessarily an immediately shared given. As noted by Rudolf Arnheim, “a difference between passive reception and active perceiving is contained even in elementary visual experience.” See Rudolf Arnheim, *Visual Thinking* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1969): 14. It is known, Arnheim specifies, that the mental image of the outside world differs from the retinal projection, but before being mentally manipulated, this given world is “the scene on which the most characteristic aspect of perception takes place. Through that world roams the glance, directed by attention, focusing the narrow range of sharpest vision now on this, now on that spot, following the flight of a distant sea gull, scanning a tree to explore its shape. This eminently active performance is what is truly meant by visual perception. It may refer to a small part of the visual world or to the whole visual framework of space, in which all presently seen objects have their location. The world emerging from this perceptual exploration is not immediately given. Some of its aspects build up fast, some slowly, and all of them are subject to continued confirmation, reappraisal, change, completion, correction, deepening of understanding” (Arnheim 14-15). I would infer, from these observations, that not all the members of a theatre audience must necessarily have the same visual perception of what is shown on stage. As stressed by Pavis though (see previous page and note), the audience sometimes forms a single body that reacts *en masse*.

parts of the language of drama. When we are in a theater,” on the other hand, “our job is much easier, of course; we have only to pay attention to the performers”\textsuperscript{10}. Now, this simplified approach – in a theatre there could be other visual and auditory stimuli that are not necessarily connected to the performers – probably finds its main reason in the necessity of imposing written drama as the subject of study. However, since the act of reading cannot be accomplished without an act of seeing and, in some way, of hearing in our head, the resemblance between the experience of the audience and that of the reader should not be totally dismissed. When we read a book, observe a painting, watch any kind of performance, to give a few examples, in our head reading techniques are in action as well, but in the specific case of theatre, the reading, “like cinema and television, is a form of collective imagination”\textsuperscript{11}.

When it comes to the factual core of the theatre experience, one of the most recent and extensive discussions of the subject, Susan Bennett’s \textit{Theatre Audiences: A Theory of Production and Reception}, focuses on the acts of seeing and hearing as well, but on the ground of a theory that looks at the performance as the crucial moment of a much more complex cultural phenomenon. The subtitle of Bennett’s work adopts two terms that seem to refer respectively to the process by which the performance is staged and to the response of the audience to the result of that same process, in reality the two expressions apply to both

\textsuperscript{10} Barnet 1.

\textsuperscript{11} De Kerckhove 148.
fields and are a direct consequence of the two frames research model adopted by the author:

The outer frame is concerned with theatre as a cultural construct through the idea of the theatrical event, the selection of material for production, and the audience’s definitions and expectations of a performance. The inner frame contains the event itself and, in particular, the spectator’s experience of a fictional stage world. This frame encompasses production strategies, ideological overcoding, and the material conditions of performance. It is the intersection of these two frames which forms the spectator’s cultural understanding and experience of theatre.¹²

The outer frame of Bennett’s model sees the theatre production as a cultural outcome to which the audience – being part of the social, economic, and historical context in which the production is effectively carried out – directly or indirectly participates even before the actual performance. The inner frame, on the other hand,

is the combination and succession of visual and aural signs which the audience receives and interprets, some fixed but the majority in flux [...]. It is the combination of these signs which permits the audience to posit the existence of a particular fictional world on stage with its own dynamic and governing rules.¹³

The merit of this model is not as much in stressing the active presence of the audience in both frames, as in emphasizing its productive role the moment the

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¹³ Bennett 140.
two frames enter into contact. An interactive relation is established in which a crucial factor comes into play, the social experience of the audience, defined as the ‘horizon of expectations.’

In her theorizations, Bennett initially recognizes being in debt to two spheres of cultural activities. The overall direction of her investigation is established by Bertolt Brecht’s work, which “has shown that the media institutions are always contingent, and has foregrounded the audience as already-always interpellated by ideology.” Reader-response theory, on the other, allows her to focus on the details of the receptive process. The expression ‘horizon of expectations’ is introduced within the discussion of this theory and, specifically, in relation to the aesthetics of reception of Hans Robert Jauss, who rejects the idea of a literary text carrying an objective and timeless meaning, and therefore the concept of a literary history in which literary texts are measured only against other works:

The social function of literature manifests itself in its genuine possibility only where the literary experience of the reader enters into the horizon of expectations of his [sic] lived praxis, preforms his understanding of the world, and thereby also has an effect on his social behaviour.

Jauss’ theory is definitely thought-provoking if the literary text is replaced by a theatre production, which for its nature “is available for its audience only in a

14 Bennett 33.
fixed time period”\textsuperscript{16}. However, the performance cannot happen without a preparation – the production process – and an audience available to witness the result of it, and it is here, according to Bennett, that Jauss’ approach shows some limit. In fact, because of the most various socio-cultural conditions, more horizons of expectations can coexist within the same audience. Later on, Jauss specifies his own formulation by speaking of two horizons of expectation – the literary one suggested by the read text and the social one of the reader. However, Bennett observes that though his “theory of the aesthetic experience is undoubtedly useful in the study of theatre audiences, it nevertheless fails to deal in any depth with the sociological underpinning of that experience”\textsuperscript{17}. To resolve this problem, Bennett returns to the work of Manfred Naumann, who like Jauss sees this bi-directional relationship between text and reader, but who also underlines how the text, before reaching the reader, goes through all sorts of socio-political mediations:

Examples of this mediating function are to be found in publishing houses, bookstores, and libraries, as well as in literary criticism and propaganda, literary instruction in schools, the study of literature, and all other institutions which mediate, materially or ideally, between the work produced and the reader\textsuperscript{18}.

In substance, Bennett suggests, this perspective acknowledges that the spectators are not an abstract entity but a historically determined multi-faceted whole of

\textsuperscript{16} Bennett 67.

\textsuperscript{17} Bennett 51.

experiences that exists even before the actual performance, and to which the final outcome of the theatre production is connected through a web of social, economic and political relations. The concept of ‘horizon of expectations’ highlights the complexity of a process in which the presence of the spectators is indispensable to the theatrical event:

Without an audience willing to attend, a play cannot survive many performances. Indeed, the very public nature of theatre arts stresses the necessity to consider both production and reception as socially and ideologically determined. This could be true for other forms of art as well, but unlike a novel, a poem, or a painting, a theatre performance exists exclusively in the historical time frame of its presentation. It is this impossibility to go back and forth through the pages or to gaze freely around a work of art – a painting, a sculpture – one of the elements characterizing the nature of viewing of theatre audiences. The spectators have to go by the production; nevertheless, it is their reception, their “experience of a fictional stage world” that produces the meaning of it. To further expand this point, Bennett turns her attention to the act and nature of viewing, and looks at

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19 Bennett 55. Apart from Jauss and Naumann, Bennett discusses also the reader-response theories of Norman N. Holland, Stanley Fish, Wolfgang Iser, among others. Nevertheless, in the prosecution of her argument, the horizon of expectations concept seems the one most effectively adopted, and definitely in debit with the discussion of it carried out by Patrice Pavis in his *Languages of the Stage: Essays in the Semiology of the Theatre* (New York: PAJ Publications, 1982): 71-78 in particular.

20 See previous note 12.

21 I deliberately play with the common etymon, here, since both the noun *production* and the verb *produce* come from the Latin *producere*: *pro*– = forward and *ducere* = to lead. The idea is that interpretation is essentially an act of leading forward carried out by the artist, and by the receiver of the act as well.
more recent theoretic approaches, especially theatre semiotics\textsuperscript{22}. By exploring the gathering and the interconnection of signs evident in any performance, semioticians have attacked the traditional text-centered criticism, and “have established the multiplicity of signifying systems involved and the audience’s role of decoding these systems in combination and simultaneously”\textsuperscript{23}. In this perspective, the spectator acquires an active role that counterbalances the conventional one of passive target for the actions produced by the theatre production, and reception assumes the character of a complex operation in which perception, interpretation, aesthetic appreciation, memorization, emotive, and intellectual response interact. Still, from Bennett’s point of view, the acknowledgment of the productive role carried out by the audience risks being limited to an act of detection, whose practical corollary deserves further analysis:

Neither theories of reading nor theatre semiotics, however, goes [sic] far beyond the issues facing an apparently individual subjectivity. Neither takes much notice of reception as a politically implicated act. Indeed, the relationship between production and reception, positioned within and against cultural values, remains largely uninvestigated\textsuperscript{24}.

The idea of theatre “reception as a politically implicated act” is the core of Bennett’s argument, \textit{la raison d’être} of her text, which develops a valuable theoretic approach – aimed at counteracting traditional notions of theatre

\textsuperscript{22} Apart from Patrice Pavis (see previous note 19), also Roland Barthes, Umberto Eco, Keir Elam, Marco De Marinis, Josette Féral, Anne Ubersfeld, among others.

\textsuperscript{23} Bennett 86.

\textsuperscript{24} Bennett 86.
audiences, often based on commercial models – but on the ground of historical premises that are briefly introduced and partially discussed.

1.2 Directing as theatre practice

The reference to a context broader than just that of what is presented on stage gives theatre performance the connotations of a cultural event in which the audience carries out a productive role. In her introduction Bennett seems to have the intention to discuss, at least briefly, how this role has historically changed, but apart from a reference to the active audience participation in classical Greek theatre, any idea regarding theatre audiences which have emerged during the more than two thousand years following is relegated to historical surveys of drama theorists25. Whatever active role the audience had in the past is barely mentioned, and up to the sixteenth century the subject is practically reduced to the following passage:

Medieval and sixteenth-century audiences did not enjoy the power of the Greek audiences, but nevertheless still functioned in an active role. There was a flexibility in the relationship between stage and audience worlds which afforded, in different ways, the participation of those audiences as actors in the drama26.

The seventeenth century is then presented as the period in which, with the development of private theatres, the audience begins to become more passive

25 After Aristotle, the most notable example of such theorists, Bennett reports in the first note of her introduction, are Castelvetro, Lope de Vega, Diderot, and Lessing.

26 Bennett 3.
and socially limited, a tendency that reaches its peak after 1850, when architectural and technical innovations, and the advent of naturalist theatre, reinforce the physical separation between audience and stage. Though not explicitly, Bennett associates the development of the ‘fourth wall’ with an increasingly passive role of the audience, but she is very clear when she indicates the reactions to this trend as the starting point of her investigation:

I propose to work from the emergence in the nineteenth century of the stage director when performance takes up concerns which have dominated theatre in this century: in other words, I start with naturalist theatre and reactions to it.

In almost all these reactions to naturalist theatre, the audience has been acknowledged as a creative aspect of the dramatic process, and the spectator generally confronted, often co-opted, into a more direct role in the theatrical event.

The reassessment of the audience role in connection to the emergence of the director in modern theatre is the point where Bennett shows the limits of her historical perspective, for two reasons.

First of all, the idea that the spectators become more and more passive should not conceal the fact that by increasing the physical separation from the stage, Western theatre renegotiates the physical collocation of the audience and also, most importantly, the way the gaze of the public is directed to the action on

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27 “With the establishment of private theatres in the seventeenth century, however, there is a move towards separation of fictional stage world and audience. Higher admission prices probably limited the social composition of the audience, and with the beginnings of passivity and more elitist audiences came codes and conventions of behaviour” (Bennett 3).

28 Bennett 4.
stage. Bennett, for example, does not mention at all Diderot's theory of the ‘tableau,’ which is one of the first steps towards the definition of the ‘fourth wall’\textsuperscript{29}. On the contrary, in her text she stresses how after 1850 “the footlights first installed in the seventeenth-century private playhouses had become a literal barrier which separated the audience and the stage”\textsuperscript{30}. In reality, Allardyce Nicoll observed, “theatres up to the nineteenth century had the audience almost as brightly lit as – sometimes, perhaps even more brightly lit than – the actors on stage”\textsuperscript{31}. An effective separation between the stage and the audience was realized only with the introduction of gas and electricity, which “could control the lighting of the auditorium as well”\textsuperscript{32}, as happened in 1876, when the Festspielhaus at Bayreuth was opened. Then, from a technical point of view, there is no doubt that Wagner’s invention of the ‘mystic gulf’ introduced the ideal conditions for the final advent of the ‘fourth wall.’ On the other hand, as Nicoll has efficaciously emphasized, in the Festspielhaus “the orchestra pit was abolished; the audience were seated in a vast amphitheatrical array of seats with no marked sub-divisions. Democracy had finally triumphed”\textsuperscript{33}. Paradoxically, what Bennett reads as an increasing form of passivity, can also be read as a


\textsuperscript{30} Bennett 3.


\textsuperscript{32} Nicoll 201.

\textsuperscript{33} Nicoll 201.
movement at the end of which the middle-class of the industrial revolution has established its own theatre space.

Second, as examples of the new attention paid to the audience Bennett mentions the provocative ideas of Futurist Filippo Marinetti and, more extensively, the work of Vsevolod Meyerhold. In particular, she stresses how “today many theatre groups formed and operating in opposition to dominant cultural and political practice would willingly endorse” Meyerhold’s statements that “every production is designed to induce audience participation” and “that the crucial revision of a production is that which is made by the spectator”\textsuperscript{34}. Then Bennett rapidly concludes her discussion with a generic reference to the fact that the rejection of naturalist practice has, in the latter half of the twentieth century, been extended even more.

Now, the absence of a more articulated historical investigation is understandable in a text of which the main aim is to define a non-traditional theatre audience theory and to focus on a more biased subject:

Since the 1960s many theatres have emerged which speak for dominated and generally marginalized peoples, and the proliferation of these groups demands new definitions of theatre and recognition of new non-traditional audiences. Many of these emergent theatres have self-consciously sought the centrality of the spectator as subject of drama, but as a subject who can think and act. That productive and emancipated spectator is my subject\textsuperscript{35}.

\textsuperscript{34} Bennett 7.

\textsuperscript{35} Bennett 1.
Bennett’s references to Marinetti and Meyerhold, in this sense, are cogent when used against naturalist theatre. Moreover, her attack on those forms of British and North American criticism in which, since the 1960s, “discussions of audience reception have remained simple and cursory”36, is supported by a detailed survey of theories of reading and viewing (from Brecht to semiotics and post-structuralism), which reveals how the role of the audience has become central in the contemporary debate about theatre.

Yet, if the introductory claim is “to work from the emergence in the nineteenth century of the stage director”37, a theory designed mainly for the audience of those theatres, from the 1960s on, “which speak from more fragmented and marginalized positions”38, should look at the range of its historical sources with a much broader perspective, the risk being that of producing, in historiographic terms, a short circuit. By acknowledging that “the audience as a creative aspect of the dramatic process”39 is a prerogative of certain reactions to naturalist theatre, Bennett seems to miss a crucial aspect of the introduction of the director in Western theatre. She, for example, never discusses directors, aside form Brecht, such as Stanislavsky or Max Reinhardt. Jacques Copeau, whose name appears only in a quotation from Marvin Carlson where

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36 Bennett 7. She refers to J. L. Styan’s Elements of Drama (1960), Martin Esslin’s An Anatomy of Drama (1976), and Eric Bentley’s The Life of the Drama (1964), among others. In these texts “we get only a sense of a monolithic theatre audience, not of theatre audiences; similarly the theatre equates almost always with the mainstream, and fails to acknowledge a diversity of theatres with quite different practices and objectives” (Bennett 8).

37 See previous note 28.

38 Bennett 9.

39 See previous note 28.
the French director is associated to the “text-centered approach”\textsuperscript{40}, is never mentioned as well. These though, are only a few among the many directors who have marked the history of theatre since the ‘great scandal of naturalism,’ an expression introduced by Fabrizio Cruciani and Clelia Falletti in the introduction to a volume on theatre civilization in the twentieth century:

The great scandal of naturalism, in theatre, marks the end of an hegemony. There is not just one theatre. There is not just one theatre culture, just one universally valid building, just one kind of scene to create the illusion of the action, just one acknowledged and accepted acting convention; there is no more just one audience; there is no more just one kind of drama. Theatre becomes art, becomes culture, becomes productive enterprise; becomes one among the various ‘social’ activities devoted to expressive communication\textsuperscript{41}.

In this context, which Cruciani and Falletti summarize in an extremely detailed historical outline, the director is the instrument through which theatre answers, in the words of Helen Krich Chinoy, to “an appalling absence of homogeneous values in the production itself and in its appeal to the audience”\textsuperscript{42}. Naturalism, in this sense, is the attempt to make a clean sweep of all theatre conventions and to find some kind of homogeneity by staging reality for what it is. The process of

\textsuperscript{40} “Western Europe in the first part of the twentieth century had experienced very little of the sort of radical interpretative freedom represented by Meyerhold for example. The iconoclasm of the futurists and dadaists made little impact on the text-centered approach of Copeau and his followers in France and did not affect the English-language theatre at all.” Marvin Carlson, Theories of the Theatre (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1984): 444, quoted in Bennett 62-63.


fragmentation of the public though, from the crowds of British fairground theatre and music hall to the bourgeois spectators screaming ‘madhouse!’ at the opening of Pirandello’s *Six Characters in Search of an Author* in Rome, in 1921, and beyond, is out of control. Many different kinds of theatre audiences pop up, and if from one side they will be gradually channeled towards the mass market of the film industry, and then, after World War Two, of television, from the other they will survive in a myriad of theories, experiments, art theatres, commercial enterprises, and utopian projects. From Richard Wagner’s *Gesamtkunstwerk* [total artwork] to Erwin Piscator’s political theatre, from Gordon Craig’s idea of directing as aesthetic theory to Reinhardt’s circus theatre, from the first experiments of Popular Theatre in France to the Federal Theatre Project in the United States, the overview is vast, and in many of these instances the director is there
to impose a point of view that would integrate play, production, and spectators. By his interpretation a director would weld a harmonious art and a cohesive audience out of the disturbing diversity increasingly apparent in our urban, industrial, mass society. By his multifarious activities the director would restore the artistic and social unity that has always been the central demand of the collective art of theater.43

When Bennett looks at a post-1960s “non-traditional theatre which has recreated a flexible actor-audience relationship and a participatory spectator/actor”44, she

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43 Chinoy 3-4.

44 Bennett 19.
reacts to a mainstream text-centered theatre dominated by the director, in which “the spectator accepts a passive role and awaits the action which is to be interpreted”⁴⁵. Therefore, the impression is that “the spectator as subject of drama, but as a subject who can think and act”⁴⁶, the productive and emancipated spectator detected in the reactions to naturalism, does not belong to the events tracing the history of Western theatre from around the middle of the nineteenth century on, at least not until the 1960s:

Where audiences are consulted and involved in the structuring of the theatrical event, and are encouraged (at least in the immediate post-production period) to translate their reading of that event into action, then their role no longer maintains the fixity that dominant cultural practice assumes⁴⁷.

The acknowledgment of the audience as a creative aspect of the dramatic process though, which seems to translate in a destabilization of the “dominant cultural practice,” can be found in many pre-1960s theatre events. In 1947, for example, in New York, Julian Beck and Judith Malina founded the Living Theatre, and in their performances, audiences had to “discover that they are no longer the ‘privileged class’ to whom the play is ‘presented’ but are needed by the actors for the very accomplishment of the play”⁴⁸. That same year, in Milan, a manifesto,

⁴⁵ Bennett 204.
⁴⁶ See previous note 35.
⁴⁷ Bennett 207.
which announces the creation of the first Italian public theatre, the Piccolo Teatro [Little Theatre], is all centered on the role of the spectators, on the development of a new public\(^{49}\).

The point, in the end, is that Bennett’s theoretical double frame is a valid tool in analyzing audience reception, but her notion that the spectator’s experience is creatively active, so to speak, only in non-traditional theatre, is misleading. To presuppose a passive role of the audience because “a director’s intervention will inevitably create another horizon of expectations internal to the performance”\(^{50}\), and “will, like the dramatic text, contain receptive strategies”\(^{51}\), fails to acknowledge the function that many directors had in developing the idea of “reception as a politically implicated act.” The lack of recognition is a consequence of an indiscriminate notion of directing as an all-inclusive intellectual process centered on the dramatic text. When used in this sense, as the dominant tendency, the backdrop against which to justify any alternative theatre experience, the notion of directing is useless. A change of perspective is necessary, in which directing, instead of just as a theory is presented rather as what ultimately it is, a theatre practice, or, as stressed by Shomit Mitter and Maria Shevtsova, a plastic art:

> From the early days of Stanislavsky’s ‘method of physical actions’ and Meyerhold’s ‘bio-mechanics’ to Ariane Mnouchkine and Anne

\(^{49}\) See next chapter, paragraph 2.  
\(^{50}\) Bennett 141.  
\(^{51}\) Bennett 141-142.
Bogart’s more recent determination to create performances through workshops rather than from pre-written texts, there has been a strong move to make and view theatre as a plastic rather than intellectual art form. The ability of the theatre to generate a plethora of visual, aural and physical images all at once is a function of its new-found willingness to make action rather than language the medium in which performances are constructed. This move away from the dominance of the word to the primacy of the moving body constitutes the seminal contribution of the art of the director to the theatre in all its multiplicity today.\(^{52}\)

### 1.3 Negotiating meanings

To parallel directing to a plastic art reveals the fundamental paradox of investigating theatre. The fixity of the text-centered approach is replaced by the mobility of the performance – “the primacy of the moving body.” Patrice Pavis though, warns us about the risk of shifting “from one extreme to the other: from philology to scenology”\(^{53}\). Between what he defines as ‘textocentric’ analytical approaches – in which the performance is seen as “an actualization, manifestation, or concretization of elements already contained within the text”\(^{54}\) – and a ‘stage-centered’ point of view – which “denies any casual connection between text and stage by granting mise-en-scène the sovereign power to decide

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52 Shomit Mitter and Maria Shevtsova xviii.


on its aesthetic choices”\textsuperscript{55}, Pavis proposes, in case of theatre productions “in which an understanding of a text can still be discerned”\textsuperscript{56}, a compromise:

Mise-en-scène is not dictated by a reading of the text alone; however, readings do provide practitioners with suggestions for an experimental and progressive placement of enunciatory situations – in other words with a choice of ‘given circumstances’ (Stanislavski), which propose a perspective for an understanding of the text, activate a reading of it, and generate interpretations that a reader undoubtedly would not have foreseen\textsuperscript{57}.

Seen in the perspective of directing as a plastic art, this notion of mise-en-scène activating readings of the text may parallel a theatre production to any other work of art. As already observed though, a theatre performance acquires the quality of object exclusively when the meanings, attributed by the audience reception to the interpretations of the text generated by the director, are produced, that is during the performance itself. The paradox of investigating a theatre production lies therefore in the fact that the object of the investigation is absent as such. It is replaced by a fleeting object retraceable at the intersection, according to the definitions of Bennett’s theoretical model, of an outer frame, “the theatrical event, the selection of material for production, and the audience’s definitions and expectations of a performance”\textsuperscript{58}, and an inner frame that “encompasses production strategies, ideological overcoding, and the material

\textsuperscript{55} Pavis, Analyzing Performance 205.
\textsuperscript{56} Pavis, Analyzing Performance 205.
\textsuperscript{57} Pavis, Analyzing Performance 205.
\textsuperscript{58} See previous note 12.
conditions of performance”\textsuperscript{59}. It is at this intersection that the audience accomplishes its productive role, and the director creates – tries to create, to be more precise – another horizon of expectations. In this sense, when Bennett considers “both production and reception as socially and ideologically determined”\textsuperscript{60}, she is consistent, but the collective act of reception carried out by the spectators can not be simplified into the dualism passive role/active role.

Historically, Pavis remarks, directing begins in the second half of the nineteenth century by approaching text as a material that must be faithfully transmitted. Then, up till 1960, the director has “gradually replaced the author as authority controlling the production of meaning and the stable signification of the text”\textsuperscript{61}. Finally, after 1960, in the times that do not know how to describe themselves other than as ‘postmodern,’ the director is “accused of being the one whose supposed systematicity and authoritarianism are harmful to the productivity of performance. Both stage and text are now no more than open ‘signifying practices’ (which means one can get them to say whatever one wants, and that theory is nothing more than a game)”\textsuperscript{62}. It is at this point legitimate to suppose that by an active and emancipated audience, Bennett intends a postmodern spectator, if such a definition makes sense. The reception is still activated by a process of negotiation with whatever is presented on stage, but

\textsuperscript{59} See previous note 12.
\textsuperscript{60} See previous note 19.
\textsuperscript{61} Pavis, Analyzing Performance 210.
\textsuperscript{62} Pavis, Analyzing Performance 210.
now exclusively the public dictates the terms. Is this apparently liberated audience more active of the one that has attended the performances of the two productions of Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* directed by Giorgio Strehler in 1948 and 1978, which are the subject of the present thesis? Has, in both cases, the director created new horizons of expectations and developed reception strategies so that the audience was just there passively awaiting, to paraphrase Bennett once again, the action that is to be interpreted? Complex questions, to which an examination of the documentation on the productions at issue, even if one document is a faithful video recording of one of them, cannot offer decisive answers.

The concrete presence of a theatre production, aside from the moment in which it is performed, can be detected only in the traces left during the actual phase of preparation, before and during the rehearsals, or when it is over, and starts to fade away in the memory of those who were present – actors, crew, spectators. In this perspective, paradoxically and with a few exceptions, theatre reviews could be more deceptive than useful, for the simple reason that their intent is usually that of judging a production by collocating it into, or outside, a specific horizon of expectations. For the scholar, who in most cases is at a considerable distance from the production he/she wants to investigate, there are

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63 “The alternative is no longer (as it was formerly) between a text having a signified to transmit ‘faithfully’ and a text one can use as building material; neither is it any longer between a *metaphorical* type of mise-en-scène (in which the stage metaphorizes the text’s meaning) and a *scenographic* type (in which the only writing is that of the stage). Instead, the alternative is now between the pretension to control overall meaning and the renunciation of all foreseeable meaning” (Pavis, *Analyzing Performance* 210).
two alternatives. One is to play it safe, and to reassemble, applying one theory or another, the available data in relation to the meanings detectable in the text or, if there is not a written text, in the material presented by the performance. The other is to shift the gaze from performance as fixed object – the final product of what could be described as the director’s putting into practice of a interpretative theory – to performance as object that is constantly moving. In this movement, which means to scrutinize in the data how that interpretative theory has been gradually tested, it might be possible to get a glimpse of the answers to the questions formulated above. Not much differently from the anthropological perspective proposed by Pavis, according to which performance analysis should be approached with a sense of relativity, the crucial point is “to shift our perspective towards the performance, which comes to seem like a ‘foreign body’ (in the positive sense of the word): an-other [sic] ‘way of seeing,’ new and unconventional.” The originality in particular, of this new way of seeing, relies on its investigative method, in which the observer has to look at the performance

64 If the presence of a text is the term of reference that has traditionally received some sort of authority from its philological status, in the second case, the reference is the performance itself, which means that or the scholar has a direct experience of it, or any investigation has first and foremost to discuss the features of the data at hand.

65 “The anthropological approach seems imperative as soon as one is required to express an opinion about a performance that necessarily conveys cultural values other than our own. But it is just as useful for the analysis of our own traditions. Indeed it is neither possible nor desirable to strictly separate performances belonging to the culture(s) of the analyst from performances that are ‘foreign’ to her, or intercultural. The anthropological perspective, close up and distanced at the same time, is the general rule, as is the performance open to cultural pluralism. One should therefore approach and analyze performances with a sense of relativity, adapting or even contradicting the analytical procedures usually used by Western semiology” (Pavis, Analyzing Performance 301).

66 Pavis, Analyzing Performance 301.
from outside, and at the same time to be immersed in it. It means to investigate
the data without pretending that the sum of their meanings – meanings that
come from at least two different sources – ‘reveals’ the object investigated.

As stressed by Ferdinando Taviani in Eugenio Barba’s Dictionary of
Theatre Anthropology, in one entry where he discusses the way in which
performer and spectator look at the performance, the problem “is to determine
up to what point one should attempt to force an accord between the meanings
which something can have for those who have constructed it and the meanings
which it can have for those who are its spectators.” This is why
the director has a double position. On one hand, it can be similar to
the performer’s position, to the position of someone, that is, who
directly influences the actions in the performance; on the other
hand, it can be the position of an ‘influential spectator’ or perhaps
that of a guarantee for the spectators.

Because of this double position, it should be added, only in the director there is
accordance between the performance produced and its reception. The director
produces the performance, but at the same time produces (conceives, imagines,
feels) also an idea, of which he/she is initially the exclusive recipient, of the effect

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67 Theatre anthropology, which is usually related to its initiator Eugenio Barba, should not be
confused, Pavis points out, “with cultural anthropology as applied to theater” (Pavis, Analyzing
Performance 275). Barba’s theatre anthropology focuses on the dynamics – recurring principles
from among Western and Asian acting techniques – that set the performer at the core of what is
the object of the spectator’s attention.

68 Ferdinando Taviani, “Views of the Performer and the Spectator,” in Eugenio Barba, and Nicola
Savarese, A Dictionary of Theatre Anthropology: The Secret Art of the Performer, ed. Richard

69 Taviani 263.
of the performance on the audience. Consequently the struggle, the search for solutions apparently impossible, the constant negotiation that the director carries out between text - and, if necessary, its translation, production team (actors, designers, technicians), space, technical and financial resources, and his/her own expectations. Taviani’s entry focuses on the performer, but when in one of his final considerations says that “in the transition from the performer’s work to the spectator’s understanding there occurs a vicissitude of intentions and senses (senses understood as meanings, but also as what one feels)”\(^{70}\), the point could be validly applied to the director as well.

If through the implementation of the most different interpretative tactics\(^{71}\) the director presents his/her own meanings, and his/her own feelings as well, the range of roles in which the audience could identify is definitely much more articulated than the simple alternative active/passive. Tadeusz Kantor following on stage the action of his production *Wielopole, Wielopole* (1980), for example, is the extreme sign of the director’s feelings. The meanings are his own memories, which he personally puts into practice in front of the audience. Is the audience a passive witness or is the presence of the audience that ignites the memory of the director? And if the latter is the case, how should this presence be evaluated? Politically active? Empathetically participatory? Whatever the answer, Kantor’s

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\(^{70}\) Taviani 266.

\(^{71}\) One of the most recent overviews of directorial approaches is the text quoted in previous note 48, Shomit Mitter, and Maria Shevtsova, eds., *Fifty Key Theatre Directors*. Even more recent, but focused only on Shakespeare, is John Russell Brown, ed. *The Routledge Companion to Directors’ Shakespeare* (London: Routledge, 2008). Both volumes have entries on Giorgio Strehler: the first one by Maria Shevtsova (86-92); the second one by Donald McManus (441-456).
example shows macroscopically how the interpretation of the director consists finally in creating the conditions so that something shows itself. Something that initially belongs exclusively to the director, but that reveals itself only when the performance is produced for/by the audience, where the term ‘produced’ is adopted in its primary meaning of leading forward. As a result, the person mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, who wants to know what the friend has seen at theatre, could more explicitly rephrase the question by saying: ‘and what did it show to your gaze?’ Alternatively, ‘what was produced by your act of seeing?’ From these questions it does not necessarily follow that theatre is a place where something shows itself because someone starts to look attentively at it – particularly if the ‘something,’ for whatever reason, is not appealing – but a practical example will clarify this point.

When we go to a delphinarium, we go to see dolphins performing certain routines. It seems weird to say that we go to the place where dolphins show themselves, but if we think more carefully, it is exactly what these marvelous and intelligent mammals are trained to do. In the minutes preceding the official performance, usually they are lazily swimming in the pool, and we look at them just out of curiosity, but when the trainer arrives and gives the first signal, there is a sharp change. The dolphins suddenly show a totally different level of energy: they swim faster and seem to work in coordination, while the audience closely views their movements. In other words, the performance begins only when the

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72 See previous note 21.
dolphins start to show themselves in a certain specific, trained way and the simple seeing of the spectators becomes a more attentive, concentrated gaze. I use this example as a case limit, because in reality this is what arises from any theatre technique, as long it is able to draw the spectator’s attention, and the reference is not only to acting, but also to visual effects (set, lighting, costumes), musical score, and space arrangement. More precisely, a theatre experience usually begins with some kind of signal, for example the darkening of the house, which invites the spectators to focus their attention. What is interesting in the dolphins’ situation is the visibility of the change of energy, to use Barba’s terminology, from a normal or daily status to a performative or extra-daily one.

The aim of these observations is not finding a definition of what the interpretative work of the theatre director is, but to establish the dynamics that that work carries with it. The alteration of status that occurs on both sides at the moment of the performance indicates that theatre is a place where a unique kind of connection is established between what is shown on one side and the audience on the other. The level of alteration is determined by the interpretative tactics enacted by the director and by the horizon/s of expectations carried on by the spectators. How the two elements negotiate their relationship is one of the leading questions that have characterized Western theatre from the “great scandal of naturalism” on.

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73 See previous note 67.
74 See previous note 41.
In the two chapters that follow, the investigation of the two productions of The Tempest directed by Strehler in 1948 and 1978, will reflect the observations carried out so far by showing that a reconsideration of the distance between the object investigated and the observer determines unexpected results. The limited data on the 1948 production seem to dismiss any chance of capturing its meaning, while the quality and the quantity of data concerning the 1978 one are so overwhelming, that behind every bit of information it is possible to make some sense. The attribution of meanings to the data that are at hand though is just the way to supply to the absence of direct reception, an attitude, as poignantlty stressed by Taviani, that “reinforces the risk of becoming superstitious, of believing that what can be a sign in the spectator’s eyes is not only a sign in his [sic] eyes but a sign in and of itself”75. By reversing this approach, the attempt is to demonstrate that in the case of theatre performance, the equation by which more information equals more knowledge of the object investigated is deceptive. Paradoxically, it is when the data are sparse or insufficient that the observer needs to develop a more signifying attitude, in the attempt to find some sort of coherence in their connection, as in the case of the 1948 production. If instead there is an abundance of information, even the Holy Grail of a video recording of the production, the temptation to explain everything should be cautiously set aside. I can question the meanings of which Strehler has invested the 1978 production of The Tempest, I can examine his

75 Taviani 259.
interpretative tactics, but not with the intent of discovering in their totality, of which in any case I can never be certain, the performance itself. In other words, whatever negotiation Strehler has generated (conceived, imagined, felt) between the text and the audience, I cannot pretend to say, by investigating how an actress was able to fly above a stage in a theatre in Milan, for example, that ‘that’ is the performance. That is simply how Strehler produced his side of the bargain, and even if articles and interviews are there to witness the impression released by the flying actress on the public, the ephemeral nature of the instant in which theatre production and audience reception meet can only be approached, but not grasped. As Strehler himself points out, it is by ensuring a smooth exchange in that ‘instant’ that “lies the extreme difficulty of securing a lasting definition of the perimeters of an interpretation”\textsuperscript{76}, and therefore, I would conclude, I can only take measurements of it, with the awareness that I will never get the final size.

\textsuperscript{76} Giorgio Strehler, “Convocation Address. University of Toronto: 11/22/89,” in Giorgio Strehler, Incontro (Toronto: Italian Cultural Institute, 1989): 62. The original text is in English.
Chapter 2

The 1948 Tempest: a space of wonders

GONZALO All torment, trouble, wonder and amazement
Inhabits here: some heavenly power guide us
Out of this fearful country! [The Tempest, V.i, 104-106]

2.1 Italian theatre before and after the Second World War

The popularity of Shakespeare's The Tempest in Italy – in Italian La tempesta – can be attributed primarily to the musical versions of the text, which followed the adaptation by Dryden and Davenant in 16671. The text of Shakespeare's final play became known from several nineteenth century translations. As a play, however, The Tempest was first staged in Italy in 1948, thanks to a Piccolo Teatro of Milan production by Giorgio Strehler, for the 11th Maggio Musicale Fiorentino. To be more precise, there were already a couple of precedents: in 1921 in Rome, and in the early 1940s in Milan, puppet shows based on the play were mounted, but Strehler's 1948 production was the first truly live theatrical one2.

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1 When later in the text I mention a production for the first time, and unless the Italian and the English title correspond, I indicate the Italian title and I put the English form in brackets, then I adopt only the latter.

2 In her volume Shakespeare Manipulated (Cranbury, NJ: Associated UP, 1996), Susan Young offers a survey of the productions of Shakespeare plays staged by Italian puppet troupes since the nineteenth century. Usually the texts are the same performed by theatre troupes: Hamlet.
The production was an unusual one for the nascent Piccolo Teatro as well as a challenging experiment in style for the 27-year-old Strehler. By examining the originality of the production, and reflecting on the technical solutions it adopted, this chapter seeks to chronicle a theatrical event which was not only unique in the context of Italian theatre, but also represented Strehler's first encounter with the only Shakespeare play (of his numerous Shakespeare productions) that he would return to direct thirty years later, to huge international critical and public success.

The cultural changes in Italy following the end of the Second World War, ratified politically by the creation of the Republic in 1946, found Italian theatre eager for renewal and open to the novelty of both national and foreign dramaturgy. In spite of the cultural restrictions imposed by fascism, Italian theatre had, in the 1920s, already begun a slow process of modernization. But this process had proceeded, so to speak, paradoxically through a climate of compromise between fascist ideals – summed up in a vague idea of theatre for

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Othello, Macbeth, Romeo and Juliet. The Tempest appears the first time in 1921, at the Teatro Odescalchi, in Rome, staged by the Teatro dei Piccoli of Vittorio Podrecca, a puppet troupe that in a few years would start a world tour. Orio Vergani adapted the text. Theatre and silent movie actors gave voice to the characters. The scenery was by Caramba, inspired by the English illustrator Rackham. In 1923 the company also produced an English version of the play with an abbreviated text, the voices of young English amateur actors, arias by Purcell, and musical interludes by Gluck. Most interesting, The Tempest staged by the Latis company at the British Council in Milan, around 1940. The play was performed in English in its entirety. Staff of the council gave voice to the puppets. According to Susan Young, the Latis company was active in Milan from 1939 to 1949, and Giorgio Strehler was a late member of it.

3 The only one that Strehler directed in a completely different way. In Austria, in summer 1973 and in the 1975-76 season, he staged also two productions of Il gioco dei potenti [Power Games], an adaptation of 1,2,3 Henry VI, but these were inspired by the 1964-65 production of the Piccolo (see chapter 4, note 3). Later on, in this chapter, I mention the other Shakespeare plays directed by Strehler (see also chapter 4, note 4).
the masses – and the most enlightened proposals of the catholic and liberal culture. The leftists, including Gramsci, notably, had been totally silenced by the régime.

One of the most important results of this compromise, thanks to the activism of the critic Silvio D'Amico, was the creation of the National Academy of Dramatic Art. The intention was that of creating a school for actors and directors that was able to introduce the interpretive and organizational rigour that was already established in other parts of Europe through the work of Stanislavsky, Copeau, and Reinhardt, inter alia. While in Italy the interpretation of the text and the organization of the troupe were still centered on the capocomico [actor-manager].

2.2 The Piccolo Teatro of Milan

But it was not possible to prepare the ground for a renewal without also renewing the audience, an operation that implied a climate of freedom and tolerance denied by fascism. That is why in the winter of 1947, less than two years from the end of the war, Giorgio Strehler and Paolo Grassi published the ‘Lettera programmatica per il Piccolo Teatro della Città di Milano’ [Mission Statement for the Little Theatre of the City of Milan], by which they announced the birth of the first Italian public theatre. The most revolutionary aspect of this manifesto was the reference to the audience:

In other times and in other forms of social life, the theatre had sought its origins and purpose in the written word: its sources were
the words of its authors. At other times and in other forms the actor prevailed and his/her centre was the stage. We certainly don’t want, merely to make a paradox, to eliminate the image that the writer, with words and stage directions, suggests to future productions, and much less to make the actor only a messenger or an instrument. On the contrary, we ask as much of the writer as of the actor to devote him/herself entirely to his/her endeavor. But we have to avoid this work being arrested in an act of conceit, in which the author is content with his/her words and the actor with his/her gestures: the word is the first and the gesture second in a process that is fully realized only in the presence of spectators, and it is for them to decide whether the theatrical work has life or not. The theatre's centre, therefore, its quiet, intent chorus, must be the spectator⁴.

It would be difficult to understand the operational decisions of the Piccolo Teatro during the first seasons of its activity without correlating the ideal motivations of its founders to the artistic and organizational – and therefore political – needs that they had to face. As Giorgio Guazzotti has observed, the organizational moment, the pursuing of a theatre as a public service, in other words the formation of an audience, was the priority in the first years of the Piccolo⁵. Paolo Grassi, who forfeited a potential career as a director, decided to commit himself totally to this organizational work. Gradually he created the ground upon which Strehler was able to build his image as a director.

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⁴ Apart from Giorgio Strehler and Paolo Grassi, the statement was also signed by Virgilio Tosi e Mario Apollonio, and was originally published in Il Politecnico Jan.-Mar. 1947. It is reprinted in Federica Mazzocchi, and Alberto Bentoglio, eds., Giorgio Strehler e il suo teatro, vol. 1 (Roma: Bulzoni, 1997): 34.

The Piccolo Teatro opened officially in the theatre of Via Rovello, the space granted by the city of Milan, on May 14th 1947 with Maxim Gorky's *L'albergo dei poveri* [The Lower Depths]. During this first season three other plays were produced: *Le notti dell'ira* [Nights of Anger] by Armand Salacrou, *Il mago dei prodigi* [The Wonder-working Magician] by Calderón de la Barca, and *Arlecchino, servitore di due padroni* [The Servant of Two Masters] by Carlo Goldoni. Strehler, who, in his years of apprenticeship had already directed plays by Gorky and Salacrou, authors to whom he turned his attention again due to their strong contemporaneity, and moral commitment, directed all four productions. With the same function of stimulating the audience were presented the two canonical playwrights, Calderón and Goldoni, with their powerful exaltation of theatrical language as a universal human language.

The following season, 1947-48, the Piccolo presented eleven new productions and a remount of *The Servant of Two Masters*, which would become the company's flagship production with several remounts and thousands of performances in and outside Italy. Of the eleven new productions of 1947-48, eight were staged in Milan and three were summer outdoor productions staged in other places. Of these three, Strehler directed two: *The Tempest* in Florence at the Boboli Gardens and T. S. Eliot's *Assassinio nella cattedrale* [Murder in the Cathedral] at the Festival of San Miniato, again in Tuscany. In total, Strehler

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6 In 1945 Strehler directed Salacrou's *Una donna libera* [A Free Woman] with the Maltagliati-Randone-Carraro company, and in 1946 directed Gorky's *Piccoli borghesi* [Philistines] with the Brignone-Randone company.

7 See chapter 4, note 5.
directed six new productions while the others were entrusted to other emerging
directors – Orazio Costa, Gerardo Guerrieri, Mario Landi – and to two
experienced figures of Italian theatre: Guido Salvini and Renato Simoni.

The political culture pursued by the Piccolo as we have seen in the
mission statement was clear. Still, its methods and style had to be tested on stage.
For this reason there was a vast offering of plays, frequently new ones, in the
second season. There was also a diversification of locales and directors, in order
to test whether the Piccolo's novelty could have influence outside Milan's
cultural environment. It was further necessary to determine whether the
presence of other directors was the right approach to follow to enable the
formation of a broader audience instead of relying on the creativity of Strehler
alone. This last point is easily answered if we consider the fact that in the third
season, 1948-49, all of the new productions or revivals were directed by Strehler
with the exception of Filippo [Philip II] by Vittorio Alfieri, directed by Costa.

In the 1947-48 season, along with texts of Luigi Pirandello, Alexander
Ostrowsky, Molière and others, three of Shakespeare plays were particularly
noteworthy: Riccardo II [Richard II] and The Tempest, directed by Strehler, and
Romeo e Giulietta [Romeo and Juliet] directed in the setting of Verona's Roman
Theatre by Renato Simoni⁸, an important theatre critic who was tested during the
thirties and achieved great results as a director, particularly in outdoor stagings.

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⁸ In this occasion, Strehler was Simoni’s assistant director (see chapter 4, note 4).
With Guido Salvini, who in the same season in the venue of Via Rovello directed Jean Anouilh's La selvaggia [The Savage], the Piccolo was able to showcase two significant metteurs-en-scène of the time, who, in the course of the first half of the twentieth century, had in part the merit of introducing the idea of directing in Italy⁹. Salvini, among others, who had begun to direct productions in the twenties, had collaborated with Pirandello's Teatro d'Arte and was among the first to advocate for the creation of stable city theatres in Italy. He was also the first director of the theatre division of the Maggio Musicale Fiorentino, which was begun in 1933. That year he promoted the productions of Jacques Copeau, Il miracolo di Sant'Uliva [The Miracle of Saint Uliva], and of Max Reinhardt, Sogno di una notte di mezz'estate [A Midsummer Night's Dream]. With Reinhardt, Salvini also collaborated on the 1934 production of Il mercante di Venezia [The Merchant of Venice] at the Venice Festival, while Copeau returned to Florence in 1938 to direct Come vi garba [As You Like It].

2.3 Shakespeare in Italy up to 1948

The cultural context of the first production of The Tempest, and the fact that it was staged in the Boboli Gardens, positioned the production in a kind of tradition in Italy of performing Shakespeare plays outdoors – a tradition that continues today and which was in fact established with the open-air Reinhardt

⁹ The French term was used in Italy till when the philologist Bruno Migliorini, in 1932, suggested the Italian word regista [director] to translate the French term régisseur, after that the critic Enrico Rocca had introduced the term regia [directing] in a review about a production directed by Tatiana Pavlova.
and Copeau productions of 1933 and 1938 respectively. In 1948, a couple of months after The Tempest, A Midsummer Night's Dream directed by Alessandro Brissoni was staged at Villa Floridiana in Naples, and the summer of the following year, 1949, Le allegre comari di Windsor [The Merry Wives of Windsor], directed by Alessandro Fersen, was presented at the Teatro al Parco [Theatre Park] of Nervi, near Genova. But this was not news. The Merry Wives of Windsor had first been staged in Italy in 1921, and A Midsummer Night's Dream, as it was called, in 1933, by Reinhardt. In contrast, Strehler brought unknown scripts to the Italian public. As stated, the first Shakespeare play directed by him, Richard II, was staged in Milan in the same season as The Tempest. Three years later, 1951, Re Enrico IV [1 Henry IV] was staged, again outdoors, at Verona's Roman Theatre. But there was not only Strehler. The year following The Tempest another well-known director, Luchino Visconti, mounted the first Italian production of Troilo e Cressida [Troilus and Cressida] also at the Boboli Gardens. The lavish production was one of the most expensive in the history of contemporary Italian theatre.

In considering the production of Shakespeare's plays in Italy, Marvin Carlson's following observation is important: “Despite Shakespeare's fascination with Italy as a locale for his plays, Italian knowledge of the English dramatist developed very slowly”\(^{10}\). The first Italian translation of a Shakespeare play

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appeared in 1756\textsuperscript{11}. During the following decades, other translations were published, but the first noticeable ones appear in the nineteenth century\textsuperscript{12}. However, the work of the English playwright became popular in Italy only in the latter half of the century, due largely to performances by great actors like Ernesto Rossi, Tommaso Salvini, Adelaide Ristori, and Giovanni Emanuel, their fame linked to the great tragic characters, Hamlet, Othello, King Lear, and Lady Macbeth among them. This tradition of performance continued throughout the late nineteenth century into the first part of the twentieth, with Ermete Novelli, Ruggero Ruggeri, Ermete Zacconi, and others. What distinguished the production of Shakespeare's plays in Italy for nearly a century, in other words, was that the entire artistic process, and no less important, the organization of the companies, revolved around the leading actors playing those great roles. From this point of view, The Tempest, with the character of Prospero, would have provided excellent terrain for interpretation by a great actor, but as Anna Anzi has observed, “this negative attitude by the actors was not entirely unjustified, and sprang from the nineteenth-century critical judgment that the work was unstageable and violated verisimilitude with its excess of fantastical elements”\textsuperscript{13}.

\textsuperscript{11} Giulio Cesare [Julius Caesar] translated by Domenico Valentini, professor of Ecclesiastic History at the University of Siena.

\textsuperscript{12} Between 1819 and 1822, Michele Leoni translated all the tragedies, then an Italian version of all Shakespeare plays was published by Carlo Rusconi, in 1839, in prose, and by Giulio Carcano, between 1875 and 1882, in verse.

Aside from the uniqueness of *The Tempest*, it is only after the thirties, and with foreign directors, as we have seen, that in Italy productions approached the Shakespeare plays that demanded a collective interpretation, in the sense that there is not just a great role but several important roles. This collectivity could only be enabled by a new kind of theatre and organizational structure\(^\text{14}\). The Piccolo Teatro offered such a structure: not more a private but a public theatre, under the guide of a capable administrator, caring for the repertory and for the development of the audience. With a director free to plan his dramaturgical choices and to dedicate himself exclusively to the artistic growth of his style, thanks also to the collaboration of set and costume designers, composers, and, obviously, actors, who follow him, improve with him, performance after performance, everything contributed to a collective of energies that was able to stage *The Tempest* in only twenty days.

From the time of the first festival, in 1933, the Maggio Musicale Fiorentino was characterized by the variety of its programme: from opera to dance, from symphonic to chamber music, and also conferences, exhibitions, competitions, and last but not least dramatic theatre, that with the plays already mentioned directed by Reinhardt and Copeau defined itself immediately by the high quality of the productions. Apart from Florence's theatres – Comunale, Pergola, and Verdi – the festival also presented performances in historical sites of the city such as

\(^{14}\) The volume by Leonardo Bragaglia *Shakespeare in Italia* (Roma: Trevi, 1973) is an account of the Italian productions of Shakespeare plays since 1792. If for their cost or other reasons it was difficult to produce certain Shakespeare plays, the fact that in 1973 texts such as *Pericles, King John*, *Cymbeline* had still not been staged in Italy, demonstrates in any case how much Italian theatre persisted in being late.
as the cloisters of Santa Croce and of the Santissima Annunziata, Piazza della Signoria, and the Boboli Gardens. This last place, with its variety of possible locations, became from the beginning one of the spaces preferred for drama productions.

Reinhardt, for his *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in 1933, decided on a simple green space with two huge holm oaks at the sides and a central wide staircase; a simple and natural environment, distinct from those complex scenic constructions for which the German director was famous. Copeau, in 1938, staged *As You Like It* in the court of the Bacchino, at the entrance of Boboli, with a set of medieval inspiration, where the various spaces of the action were simultaneously presented. *The Tempest* directed by Strehler, on the contrary, was characterized by a certain complexity, both as a space and as a set.

It should be noted that with the outdoor productions at Boboli, the Maggio Fiorentino was at least symbolically reviving a theatre tradition that recalled the so-called *teatro di verde* or *di verdura* [garden theatre]. This term, in use since the fifteenth century, originally conveyed the idea of the Italian garden, namely of a space open to the sight, where natural elements, carefully arranged, prevail over the architectural and decorative ones. Later, by specifically using

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16 Maria Ines Aliverti, “*Come vi garba* di William Shakespeare,” in *I grandi spettacoli* 60-63.
some of these spaces as a theatre, in particular during the Renaissance, the
garden theatre became a real outdoor theatre, and had its full formal definition in
the seventeenth century.

Indeed, the Boboli Gardens today include a wide sunken U-shaped space
named the Amphiteatro, situated exactly at the rear of the Palazzo Pitti, the
building to which the gardens are architecturally connected. This space is a chief
feature within the plan of the gardens. It was completed in 1551, but the actual
form was shaped during the transformations in the Baroque era, between 1631
and 1637. During the same years a rectangular piazza with semi-circular corners
was also created in the south-west part of the gardens. The space was nearly
entirely filled by an artificial pool with an island at the centre. This space, known
as Vasca dell'Isola [Basin of the Island] or dei Cigni [of the Swans] or delle Capre
[of the Goats], was the space where Strehler and the set designer Gianni Ratto
decided to stage _The Tempest._

### 2.4 The 1948’s _Tempest_ and its space

Like Reinhardt and Copeau, Ratto and Strehler decided on a space more
suited to the directorial concept. They had collaborated even before the creation
of the Piccolo and until the 1953-54 season Ratto was the set designer of the
majority of the plays directed by Strehler:

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17 For all the information concerning Boboli Gardens I refer to: Marco Chiarini, ed., _Palazzo Pitti. L’arte e la storia_ (Firenze: Nardini, 2000): 244-268.
Because of his background closely linked to the Piccolo Teatro, Ratto was an ideal collaborator of the director. His participation in the daily life of the theatre (he assisted to the choice of the plays and of the actors, and attended rehearsals) helped him to find scenographic solutions more suited to the text, and also more congenial to the interpretation developed by the director.¹⁸

During the same season, for example, Ratto had designed an essentially Elizabethan set for Richard II: “a fixed, polygonal façade faced the audience, with three entries through it at stage level, and three matching entries above, giving on the balconies with slim balusters.”¹⁹ Decorations, as well as costumes designed by Ebe Colciaghi, suggested the medievalism of the play. For The Tempest, the set was conceived in a rather different way, and the particular characteristics of the outdoor space had to be considered.

The stage, or more precisely, the multi-level structure on which the final set was built, was constructed on the island dominated by the Fontana dell’Oceano. The fountain features a statue of the ocean god created by Giambologna, in a high and dominant position. The sculpture, which seems almost to lean on the entire structure hiding the rest of the fountain, is in a frontal position facing north. Around the island, bordered by a series of balustrades, is the artificially constructed basin, encircled by a footpath separated from the water by a barrier. The footpath is accessible from four directions


roughly corresponding to the points of a compass. The island is attached to the mainland by two bridges facing east and west. The entire area was divided in two. The part from where the frontal view of the statue was visible became an amphitheatre with the two bridges that were probably used as entrances and exits from the set, to close the semicircle.

1948 Tempest, the multi-level structure below the set (copyright © Maggio Musicale Archives)

The audience, positioned in the stands constructed in the shelter of high holm oak fences surrounding the basin, was separated from the acting space by the semicircle of water of the basin. Thick jets of water forming a kind of natural curtain then reinforced such separation, from the beginning of the play. With the lowering of the curtain of water, there appeared a deserted, rocky island. Among little meadows made of raffia full of openings and traps (from which appeared
Ariel, Iris, Ceres, the spirits, and nymphs) stairways and statues emerged, and also mountains which fell straight to the water. The bottom of the basin was full of branches of reddish coral. The spaces in the balustrades were filled with lemon plants lit by footlights. At the top of the island sat Giambologna's statue, like a sort of vanishing point, in front of which opened Prospero's cave.

Ettore Gaipa, who for years collaborated with Strehler, played the role of the Nostromo [Boatswain]. He reported a record of that first Tempest in the fall 1977 program for the revival of the 1972-73 production of King Lear, a few months before a new and different production of The Tempest was staged in Milan, directed by Strehler:

There were rocks and grottoes, places which, from left to right were the cave of Prospero and Miranda, the ‘magic shop’, Caliban's lair, etc… The island developed by degrees, from platforms on which alternated – almost in a sort of Medieval Morality play setting – the various scenes: and the convex semicircular shape of the apparatus provided maximum visibility. There were a series of concentric circles or rings, whose lower levels and peripheries were devoted to the scenes between the criminal characters. When each of these characters – or some of them – was showing human kindness, they started to go towards the centre. The ‘way’ followed by Ferdinand, for instance, was suggestive of this path20.

Other accounts by Gaipa, which elaborate the above quotation, have been efficaciously summarized by Anzi:

On the graded semicircular platforms the various scenes unfolded: on the highest part, in front of Giambologna’s statue, Prospero’s cave was constructed. From the top of the cave, during the masque of the fourth act, the gods, nymphs and spirits descended. Lower down, the scenes between the baser or criminal characters were played. Caliban, Stephano and Trinculo acted on the lowest platform, and only approached the high level at the attack on Prospero. Also the survivors of the wreckage slowly ascend to the cave of the magician after torturous journeys. The magic elements dominated: coloured lights and scenic effects accentuated the work's fabulous aspects.

In an anthology of essays about the lyric and prose dramas staged at the Maggio, Pier Marco De Santi, associates Reinhardt, Strehler, and Visconti (in his Troilus and Cressida, directed in 1939) for the use they made of the setting as a spazio di meraviglie [space of wonders]. In effect, as the critic Raul Radice wrote, it is clear that The Tempest of '48 was characterized by being a production “that would have been performable in one of our Renaissance courts.” And Gianni Ratto, wrote another critic, Corrado Pavolini, had imagined the entire ambience with an inspiration taken from Buontalenti, the architect who for almost sixty years through the sixteenth century had devoted himself to the entertainment of the Medici court in Florence.

21 Anzi, Varie e strane forme 135.
24 Corrado Pavolini, “Chiusa del Maggio Fiorentino,” Fiera Letteraria (Roma) 13 June 1948.
Even the public, before the production began, was involved in this experiment in \textit{realismo magico} [magic realism] as Gaipa defined it in his memoirs. After having covered long and silent paths, the audiences, who were escorted by valets in livery of the town council bearing torches, went to sit in the space shaped like an amphitheatre and decorated with damask drapes. With the lowering of the curtain of water, the island appeared, followed by the tempest from which the plot starts. This was created by an actual small ship, loaded with characters and drawn by a steel cable, in the middle of flashes of lightning, mimic movements, and verbal images underlined by the music. At the end of the performance, when the island had to dissolve, fireworks were set off.

But the extravagant appearance of the staging, which some critics, like Silvio D'Amico, admired but judged as a lack of faith in the words of the text, was not an end in itself\textsuperscript{25}. Strehler, we have emphasized at the beginning, was searching for a style, and \textit{The Tempest} offered him the ground on which to amplify, as De Santi observed, those aspects of theatrical language that in the course of the Piccolo's first season were manifested in the outright magic of \textit{The Wonder-working Magician}, and in the rhythm and vitality of \textit{The Servant of Two Masters}:

From the analysis of the scene sketches very detailed watercolours of various colours on thin boards which give a clear idea of the story and from a comparison with the very detailed transparencies of the structure in plan and in elevation these too with the colours

of the scene sketches, and with the pictures of the whole scene (elaborated for the occasion in photomontage, with a phantasmagoric presence of underwater lights and fireworks in the background), it is clear how set designer and director had perfectly understood the definition of the final realization.

1948 Tempest, the photomontage of the whole scene (copyright © Maggio Musicale Archives). Notice the curtain of water, the underwater lights, and the fireworks.

Such harmony of intentions was the result of continued collaboration between Ratto and Strehler, and from Strehler's increasingly refined sensitivity to the visual aspect of the play, a sensitivity which led “to the definition of colors or

the consistency of a background, to the delimiting of a few centimeters of space to enable the free movement of an actor or the determination of a rhythm”\textsuperscript{27}. A similar sensitivity underlay the productions of Reinhardt and Copeau, productions to which \textit{The Tempest} of ’48 can be linked primarily through the choice of having a single space in which the various places of the action are presented. Such a choice, admittedly, was dictated by the conditions of the outdoor staging, which did not allow the same possibilities of scene changing that a conventional theatre would. That notwithstanding, a significant indication remains that the search to which we refer for a space for Shakespeare's texts was also one of a search for an adaptable but not transformable space. Also, from this point of view, there is no contradiction between Ratto's scenography for \textit{Richard II} and for \textit{The Tempest}. The issue, in any case, is to understand how much the tricks of the theatrical convention should remain hidden or not, and why this aspect is tied to one of the fundamental aspects of Strehler's directorial style. The impression is that the scene recalling a Elizabethan context offered a space that only the actor could animate and consequently reveal. Whereas the production of \textit{The Tempest} offered a space, more related to the Baroque idea of theatre, that fed, or better revealed the actor's movement with a corresponding increase of the magic, and, in the final instance, theatrical aspects, of the production.

To conclude these observations about the scenography of \textit{The Tempest} of 1948, it is interesting to note that although the collaboration with Ratto, which

\textsuperscript{27} De Santi, “La Tempesta di William Shakespeare” 208.
included the above mentioned Richard II and, in 1950-51 La dodicesima notte [Twelfth Night], continued until the 1953-54 season for other authors as well, Strehler's study of space in Shakespeare texts corresponded often to a collaboration, even if temporary, with new set designers. The designs of La bisbetica domata [The Taming of the Shrew], in 1948-49, and of Riccardo III [Richard III], in 1949-50, were by Giulio Coltellacci; that of 1 Henry IV, in 1950-51, by Pino Casarini; and those of Macbeth, in 1951-52, and Julius Caesar, in 1953-54, by Piero Zuffi. Later on we find the names of Luciano Damiani for Coriolano [Coriolanus], in 1957-58, and for the new production of The Tempest, in 1977-7828, of Ezio Frigerio for Re Lear [King Lear], in 1972-73, and of Strehler himself for Power Games, an adaptation of 1,2,3 Henry VI, in 1964-6529.

2.5 Technical aspects of the production

Based on the same spirit of harmonizing, the costumes of Ebe Colciaghi were developed. A contemporary of Strehler, she also came from the artistic and cultural environment of Milan, and had also begun her collaboration with the director with whom she worked for several years prior to the birth of the Piccolo. Colciaghi's talent was the ability to create, without pretension to erudition, the features of historic dress and then to simplify this using of decorative details to distinguish character traits, and the evocative use of color, for the ambiance

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28 See chapter 3, note 48.

29 Power Games, often associated with the 1965-66 season, opened on June 21, 1965, in Milan. See previous note 3 and chapter 4, notes 3 and 4.
required by the director and set designer. The result was “a free elaboration of Elizabethan theatre, with regard to the court characters, a revisiting of Goldonian and zanni theatre through the low characters, and an evocation of Botticellian imagery for the mythic characters.” Above all, in designing the character of Ariel, the fantastical nature of the character was explored without restraint, as he evolves from tree/woman, to harpy, to nymph shaped like a sea-horse.

What we have observed about the set design also applies to the costumes: that they were created to achieve the openly magical climate of the production.

And again Anzi’s summary of Gaipa’s accounts helps us understand this:

The costumes, made of felt and fustian cotton in soft shades primarily of pink and pale blue, also contributed to the enchanted quality of the production as a whole. Ferdinand and Miranda were truly the prince and princess of the fable, just as Caliban was the beast of the story, mysterious and primitive, half man, half whale. For this role, Marcello Moretti wore a shiny oilskin jacket reminiscent of fish scales.

Still more interesting is the note of the reviewer Raul Radice, who generously says that it is unfair to complain about some limits of the production, such as the initial simply suggested tempest, with the survivors of the wreckage who “perfectly dry and without a scratch land on the island, with their white

31 De Santi, “La Tempesta di William Shakespeare” 208. Colciaghi’s watercolour samples of the costumes of Ariel, Ceres, Stephano, and Alonso are reproduced in the quoted article.
32 Anzi, Varie e strane forme 136-137.
starched collars, plumed hats, mantles and corsets in delicate colors”³³.

Essentially, the reviewer noticed a lack of verisimilitude in what was the search for a specific stylistic effect. This search, with regard to the set and the costumes, was consistent in the production directed by Strehler, but was supported since the beginning by the choice of a clearly marvelous space. The temptation is to say that the best result of The Tempest of the 1948 was the way in which the space offered by Boboli Gardens was interpreted, by taking advantage of the existing distance between the audience and the stage.

From this point of view, more questionable were the decisions about music and choreography Strehler had to make together with other two collaborators: Fiorenzo Carpi, who also was with the Piccolo since the beginning, and became a decisive figure in the history of Strehler's production scores³⁴, and Rosita Lupi.

By adopting historicist musical solutions, such as English or continental scores of the time of the play, the solution would have been apparently philological. Instead the idea prevailed of elaborating themes and atmospheres from the repertory of the Italian composer Domenico Scarlatti, who composed during the first part of the eighteenth century. These adaptations created also the base for choreographies and songs. Strehler himself recalls the music by Carpi as “rich and definitely oriented towards a cultural direction that today bewilders

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³³ Radice, “Uno Shakespeare un po' papista tra i cattolici in Boboli” ibid.

³⁴ Fiorenzo Carpi (1918-) has composed the music of over one hundred productions directed by Strehler, and can be considered one of his most constant collaborators. See also chapter 3, note 58.
me, but at that moment [1948] it was the answer to a problem: big orchestra and chorus, dances, and notes of a Scarlatti recovered and ‘later than’ the time of the play”\textsuperscript{35}. The music elaborated by Carpi created an atmosphere of powerful suggestion: mysterious chants resounded all over the enchanted island, but certain expressive choices not concerning the pure acting, such as the singing or the movement, were not totally consistent:

In the masque of Act IV, which was realized with a rich choreography, two opera singers, Renata Broilo and Magda Bronzoni [Ceres and Juno], sang accompanied by a chorus of nymphs and harvesters, as well as by a chorus were accompanied Ariel's songs, the words of which were only spoken by the excellent, but out of tune, Lilla Brignone\textsuperscript{36}.

In his review, Silvio D'Amico speaks about the choreography by Rosita Lupi as “sometimes a little melodramatic but other times springing up and we would say supernatural”\textsuperscript{37}, but the fact is that Lilla Brignone, who was practically the leading actress of the Piccolo, by playing Ariel found herself in difficulty with regard to the mimic and choreographic movements. Besides, Strehler had already started to develop a sort of maniacal attention to the mimic and the stage movements of his actors, an aspect of his style that had a first important definition with the staging of The Servant of Two Masters. It must be noted that Caliban was performed by Marcello Moretti, the actor who was also


\textsuperscript{36} Anzi, Varie e strane forme 137.

\textsuperscript{37} D'Amico, “La Tempesta di Shakespeare al Maggio Musicale Fiorentino” ibid.
playing Harlequin, and the interpretative solution for the two clowns, Stephano and Trinculo, was clearly in the direction of Commedia dell'arte. The two actors – Vittorio Caprioli as Trinculo and Antonio Battistella as Stephano – performed with real leather masks and had a great response from the audience, but the reviews, in the face of this explicit reference to Commedia dell'arte, were discordant.

Apart from being the first Italian production, The Tempest at Boboli presented also a new translation, specifically prepared for the Piccolo by Salvatore Quasimodo. Strehler recalls they wanted “a translation useful to the theatre, suitable to be performed. Salvatore Quasimodo did a good translation, with some evident mistakes, but also with some dazzling and genial solutions.” The reviews were generally positive about it. But Stephano and Trinculo parts were adapted to the Venetian and the Neapolitan dialects. Caprioli, playing Trinculo, adapted Quasimodo's text to the Neapolitan by himself.

For importance and quantity of lines, the character most suitable to join translation and interpretation in a single judgment was obviously Prospero. Camillo Pilotto, the actor performing it, was then 59, had considerable stage experience, and was well-known for his concrete, sincere acting, and the variety of the roles performed. Because of this versatility, which differentiated him from the traditional great actors, he was a perfect actor for the theatre ensemble idea pursued by the Piccolo.

38 As we may see in the watercolour sample of Stephano's costume (see previous note 31).
39 Strehler, Inscenare Shakespeare 21.
During that same season at the Piccolo, Pilotto performed also the Duke of York in Richard II, and appeared in other four productions. The following summer, 1949, he was also Falstaff in the above mentioned The Merry Wives of Windsor directed by Fersen, in 1950 was Sir Toby in Twelfth Night directed by Costa, in 1951 was Falstaff again, but directed by Strehler in 1 Henry IV, and in 1952 was Bottom in A Midsummer Night's Dream directed by Brissoni. All were outdoor productions, as well as the Othello directed by Pietro Sharoff in 1933, in the court of the Palazzo Ducale in Venice, where Pilotto performed the leading role. His several Shakespearean interpretations should be mentioned to underline how Italian theatre, thanks also to productions like The Tempest, had at least partially overcome the subjection to the link Shakespeare/great roles/great actors. The reviews about Pilotto were different, sometime even contradictory, but it should be reminded he was the first Prospero on an Italian stage, and the reviewers, apart from knowledge of the text, had no standards to which to compare him.

2.6 Reviews and audience reception

Because of the bad weather that often had jeopardized the rehearsals, the opening planned for Saturday, June 5 was postponed to the following day. The performances continued every night till Sunday, June 13, with the exception of Friday the 11th.
The last days before the opening were marked by a sort of minor ecological crisis. The first night in which lights were rehearsed, an unpleasant chorus of frogs rose from the pool. After various attempts to eliminate the inconvenience, the best solution was to electrify the water surrounding the island. The chorus ended, but some frogs survived for sure, because Raul Radice mentions them as a distracting element in the performance. Acoustic problems were also created by the unusual outdoor space, but in the end the production was a great success, and by the way in which the space was organized, it is conceivable that there was room for a large audience. The Tempest was a novelty, but also, if we consider the uniqueness of the space and of the staging, a practically unrepeatable event. If this was a way of attracting an audience, the question that arises is what place had the entire project in the context of the policy of the Piccolo.

The play, could have been the reason of the choice – a novelty by a great classic author, suited to be staged in a baroque environment – but as Gaipa has stressed, The Tempest at Boboli was the first production of the Piccolo staged out of its own space in Milan. Why such a risky choice? What was the connection with the ideas of the founding manifesto of the Piccolo? With reference to certain passages from it, the production at Boboli looks like an abjuration of those principles: “We refuse the decorations of pure scenography. We refuse the easy

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40 Radice, “Uno Shakespeare un po’ papista tra i cattolici in Boboli” ibid.
endorsement of the fashion. We refuse any concession to the senses of the crowd”\textsuperscript{41}.

Paolo Grassi, who was surely a protagonist in organizing the entire project, knew that the Piccolo needed an artistic recognition that could place the young company in that European tradition in comparison with which Italian theatre lagged behind. Most of all, Grassi wanted to avoid an inward-looking Piccolo, one not limited to the formation of a new audience, but open also to the worldly and \textit{magnifico pubblico} [magnificent audience], as more than one reviewer defined it, of a famous international festival such as the Maggio Musicale Fiorentino. In practical terms, this meant to impose the presence of the Piccolo on the eyes of the State, and therefore on public subsidies.

In the end, the project, overcome by the aesthetic value of the production, was only apparently in contradiction with the founding ideas of the Piccolo. In other words, the artistic result was functional to a certain political and formative path concerning Strehler in particular and the entire creative collective of the Piccolo in general. Later Strehler would declare to have always hated \textit{en plein air} productions, which he considered a misunderstanding, probably because of both their tourist-like motivations and the difficulty of staging them\textsuperscript{42}. He would direct other outdoor productions, but we should look at them, together with all the others, more as moments of a searching process, in which Shakespeare, one of the playwrights more often staged by Strehler, had a determinate function.

\textsuperscript{41} Mission Statement for the Little Theatre of the City of Milan, see previous note 4.  
\textsuperscript{42} Strehler, \textit{Inscenare Shakespeare} 20.
Besides, the search for a cultural identity, as well as that for a style, does not go on only by affirmations, but also by negations, mistakes, and corrections. The production at Boboli, from this point of view, was a confirmation of the artistic potential of the young theatre company in a logistic situation that not necessarily mirrored the ideal motivations of the Piccolo, but that was politically useful. Moreover, from the dramaturgical side, the production had a strong cultural meaning. In the post-war climate, *The Tempest*, with its sense of final reconciliation, was perfect for a metaphorical celebration of recovered social peace. We should remember that the end of the Second World War, less then three years before, was for Italy also the end of a civil war. Strehler, in this sense, by staging an island reminiscent of a sort of Dante-esque Purgatory, offered a correct interpretation of the play. But by stressing the most spectacular or masque aspects, he diminished the social impact of it that however, if we consider that there were only seven performances, was of secondary importance. This did not mean for Strehler to wear out the confrontation with the play. Not in the sense that it were possible to express other more or less abstract interpretative ideas, but that that play, as well as any other play judged culturally valid by Strehler, was able to reconfirm its validity in different ages and contests.

Thirty years later, as a matter of fact, during a tragically crucial period of Italian contemporary history, in which social peace had every day to face the less than charming alternatives offered by the violence of terrorism and the
powerlessness of the political establishment, Strehler would stage *The Tempest* again. This play is, therefore, one of the best examples of Strehler's basic approach to a text. Never by judging it, meaning to use it just as an excuse for preconceived ideas, but by interpreting it with the most scrupulous attention to the social context and to the historic situation: in other words, to the audience to which the play is presented.
CHAPTER 3


PROSPERO  Our revels now are ended. These our actors,
As I foretold you, were all spirits, and
Are melted into air, into thin air:
And, like the baseless fabric of this vision,
The cloud-capp’d towers, the gorgeous palaces,
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve,
And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,
Leave not a rack behind. [The Tempest, IV.i, 148-156]

3.1  Memory and documentation of the production

Thirty years after the open-air production for the Maggio Musicale in Florence, Strehler directed The Tempest a second time. June 28, 1978, on the stage of the Teatro Lirico in Milan, La Tempesta – that is the Italian title\(^1\) – opened at the end of the thirty-second season of the Piccolo Teatro\(^2\). The performance I

\(^1\) As for the 1948 production, and contrary to Italian convention, that apart from the first letter does not capitalize the other words – unless they are proper names – in titles of books, articles, or plays, in the program of the 1978 production the word tempesta was capitalized.

\(^2\) A chronology of all the productions of the Piccolo Teatro, from the opening on May 14, 1947 – technically the 1946-47 season, with Gorky’s The Lower Depths – till the 2000-01 season, when Luca Ronconi was already the new artistic director (since 1998), is in Livia Cavaglieri, ed., Il Piccolo Teatro di Milano (Roma: Bulzoni, 2002): 397-468. Among other information – titles, authors, directors, designers, cast, dates and venues of opening nights, etc. – the chronology specifies also if the production is a new edizione [edition, mise-en-scène] or a ripresa [revival] of a former one; therefore it offers an useful instrument to place the productions directed by Strehler in the context of all the other ones of the Piccolo Teatro. Based on similar criteria is the chronology of the theatre and opera productions directed by Strehler since 1943, when he started his career by directing three of Pirandello’s one-act plays at the Teatro GUF or Casa Littoria in
attended more than five years later, January 19, 1984, in that same theatre, of that same production, is among the shows that I consider memorable. As I said in the Preface, though, the way I could recall what I experienced that night would be faithful and accurate only for me or for whoever listens to me, provided that he/she believes my words. I use the verb experienced on purpose, because any attempt to describe what the video of the production can witness more faithfully than the memory of any spectator, would be superfluous; any effort to fix in words what a picture can show with much more effectiveness, would be superficial; but there is no textual or technological medium that can reproduce the experience of an audience member. Yet, Patrice Pavis observes in his Analyzing Performance, in the section that discusses the conditions of reception, “Although rather difficult to evaluate, the effect produced on a spectator is at the very heart of participation in an event”3.

When it opened at the end of June, after several months of preliminary

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preparation and nearly four months of rehearsals⁴, The Tempest, for which there was great expectation among the critics, received dissenting responses. Apart from Milan – where it was performed till July 4, and then for four months, from October 24 to March 11 of the following year – it was presented only in Florence, from March 17 to April 5, 1979, at the Teatro della Pergola. The reactions of the audience were generally very positive, in particular those of the young generations, yet the production did not receive the recognition that Strehler was expecting. Four years later, November 3, 1983, The Tempest opened the first season of the Théâtre de l'Europe, at the Théâtre Odéon in Paris, and even though it was played in Italian, it was a great success both with audiences and reviewers. That success was then repeated, during the 1983-84 season, in Rome and Milan, with every performance sold out. It is true that during all the summer preceding the opening in Paris, the production had received several adjustments, to the point that Strehler himself spoke of a “new edition”⁵; nevertheless, to

⁴ A first meeting for just the company was held on March 4, 1978, at the historical venue of the Piccolo, the theatre of Via Rovello. Two days later, March 6, at the Teatro Lirico, took place a new meeting, to which also members of the press and Strehler’s admirers were present. According to an interview with Luciano Damiani, set and costume designer of the production, the company included 16 actors, 18 mimes, 7 musicians, and technicians for a total of at least 90 people. Rehearsals lasted 115 days, and were often held from 2 pm till after midnight with no breaks. See Paolo A. Paganini, “Scenografia essenziale (con 4 mila metro di tulle),” La Notte (Milano) 29 June 1978.

⁵ Benoit Isorni, “Tre ore di felicità con la Tempesta,” La Repubblica (Roma) 6-7 Nov. 1983. Still, Cavaglieri and Strehler’s online theatrography (see previous note 2) lists The Tempest of the 1983-84 season, and that of the 1984-85 as well, as revivals. In the 1983-84 season, from November 3 till November 17 the production was at the Théâtre Odéon in Paris, from November 25 till January 8 was at the Teatro Valle in Rome, then again at the Lirico in Milan from January 14 till February 19. In the summer 1984, The Tempest, together with the fifth edition of The Servant of Two Masters, was in the U.S. for the Olympics, first in Los Angeles, from July 7 till July 17, then in New York (SUNY Purchase) from July 25 till July 28. Finally, in the season 1984-85, the production returned to the Lirico in Milan from October 31, and then again at the Teatro della Pergola, a venue of which Strehler was particularly fond, from December 7 till January 2.
explain the success of what "may have been," according to Dennis Kennedy, "the most important Shakespearean production since Brook’s Dream" six, raises necessarily the question of which kind of effect it had on the audience.

In the succeeding pages, this question will not be ignored, but will remain in the background of my observations, with the awareness that the spectator experiences, according to Stanton B. Garner, "the world as it is lived, rather than the world as it is objectified, abstracted, and conceptualized" seven. In line with Garner’s words, Pavis suggests that such ephemeral experience can be investigated by a phenomenological methodology in which

[o]ne can imagine the spectator at the epicenter of a scenic earthquake, endowed with three kinds of vision: psychological, sociological, and anthropological. [...] Each of these perspectives will distinguish certain details more or less clearly, the field of vision becoming increasingly peripheral and global as it gradually encompasses anthropology.

The difficulty of this approach lies in the fact that

spectators are not ‘simply’ intellectuals, cerebral beings, computers with human faces; they are also participants, reactive and affective beings. A performance contains a wide range of stimulations, suggestions, elements intended to keep spectators alert or to move

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6 Dennis Kennedy Looking at Shakespeare, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2001): 304. Kennedy refers to the RSC production of A Midsummer Night’s Dream directed by Peter Brook in 1970, “the most influential Shakespearean production of the postwar period; after Reinhardt’s various mountings of the same play, perhaps the most influential of the century” (Kennedy 183).


8 Pavis, Analyzing Performance 227-228.
them – to make them participate in an event that they do not always face frontally, but that surrounds, seizes, and transports them⁹.

The psychological analysis of the experience of a spectator – myself attending *The Tempest* in January 1984, for example – can still witness, and perhaps explain, some of the “wide range of stimulations, suggestions” produced by a performance; but the sum of the experiences of the spectators who attended that same performance – or other performances of the same production – would not be sufficient to explain the **effect** of the production on the audience as a whole. The sociological perspective, on the other side, by locating the spectator “within a more or less clearly identified audience”¹⁰, contextualizes the **effect** of the production within a web of factors that, as in the case of Susan Bennett’s theory of theatre reception as a politically implicated act discussed in chapter 1, offers a functional analysis of the processes affecting the final outcome of the production. Still, Pavis points out,

> One must beware of a euphoria that tends to create the belief that one day an absolute knowledge of the receiver (or of the mechanisms of reception) will be possible, […] there will always remain some play in the mechanics of reception, certain unforeseeable or indeterminate elements¹¹.

From the psychoanalytic interiority to the sociological exteriority, the process of understanding the **effect** of a performance reminds us of the paradox

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of Zeno mentioned in the Preface. The problem to resolve seems to be how to reach comprehension of a phenomenon “that surrounds, seizes, and transports,” rather than to question how the phenomenon is produced. In the first minutes of The Tempest I attended in January 1984, the impression was of being completely surrounded by the tempest itself, and then of being left, exhausted, on a beach. In the adjective exhausted there is my attempt to describe the ‘effect’ that those first minutes had on me. I do not know if other spectators were going through the same experience. The Lirico, which is now under restoration was a vast, cavernous theatre, with about two thousand seats and poor acoustics. In relation to the stage, I was next to the extreme left side of the audience, several rows away from the action, more towards the back of the theatre than next to the stage. My vision was from a sort of diagonal point of view, definitely not central, and obstructed by hundreds of heads, a very uncomfortable situation for a three-hour performance\(^{12}\). Yet, at the end of V.i, when Prospero freed Ariel, drowned his book, broke his staff, and all the scenery collapsed, just before the beginning of the Epilogue, I felt a lump in my throat and a deep sense of melancholy. I was having the experience of what Pavis indicates as “the most sought-after theatrical pleasure”\(^{13}\), that of a theatre able to “communicate profound emotions...”, words that Pavis, incidentally, quotes from an interview with Giorgio Strehler\(^{14}\).

\(^{12}\) The camera offers a good view of the audience area at the end of the video recording of the 1978 production, while the credits are running.

\(^{13}\) Pavis, Analyzing Performance 243.

The effect that The Tempest had on me would probably acquire another and more exhausting meaning if related to my private life in that particular period, if investigated in the context of the experience of other spectators, if compared to the opinions of the critics, if collocated against the social and political background of that historical moment. The fact is that

[w]hen considered from the point of view of its inscription in cultures, performance is much broader than it appears. It goes far beyond the boundaries of performance considered as a finished, ephemeral, and disposable product. Hence the necessity of resituating performance practices, whether Western mise-en-scènes, theatricalized rituals, or non-European traditional dances, in a wider and reconsidered cultural context. This context involves not only the preparation that precedes the performance and the reactions of its audience afterward; it also includes all of the sociocultural practices that ‘carry’ the performance\textsuperscript{15}.

This is the anthropological perspective suggested by Pavis, not an alternative methodology, but an overall approach by which to focus on theatre “as part of a very broad cultural framework”\textsuperscript{16}. From this point of view, if we have investigated The Tempest of 1948 as a finished product in which some of the elements that will characterize Strehler’s directorial style emerge, together with the cultural project of the first productions of the Piccolo, the 1978 edition will not be investigated in its outcome, but in the process of becoming a product.

With a metaphor, if we compare the two productions to a moving train, we have

\textsuperscript{15} Pavis, Analyzing Performance 277.

\textsuperscript{16} Pavis, Analyzing Performance 278.
been looking at the 1948 production from such a distance that we were able to observe the train in its entirety. Now we will position ourselves much nearer the train; we will lose the sight of it as a whole, but many more details will be revealed. The temptation, since there is a video recording of the most recent production, will be even that of jumping on the train; nevertheless, we will maintain a certain distance, to avoid the risk of being blown away.

This is the case of a recent study by Arthur Horowitz, where he examines six productions of *The Tempest* staged each decade since the Second World War. The first and the fifth of these productions are the ones directed by Strehler; the others are the 1957, 1968, and 1990 ones directed by Peter Brook, and that directed by Yukio Ninagawa in 1988. From the introductory chapter onwards, Horowitz’s attempt to explain the meaning of these productions “in the light of the postmodern postcolonial environment that produced and/or provoked them” is quite explicit. As a consequence, a close reading of the two chapters on the productions directed by Strehler results in a detailed and historically accurate description of them, but “observing how the dynamics that go into directing a production of *The Tempest* turn its director into Prospero’s surrogate within the theatrical exchange” seems to offer just a one-way justification for a series of complex theatrical elements. As a result, the technical

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18 Horowitz 11.

19 Horowitz 12.
process by which these elements are produced is not investigated, and their
efficaciousness is referred solely to the director:

While his 1978 production of *The Tempest* did not attempt a
reflection of the social, economic, or political conditions of the
1970s, it most assuredly was a product of Strehler’s theatrical past
and informed by his experiences – real, imaginary, and theatrical\(^{20}\).

Considering that in 1978 Strehler had already a thirty-year career, with
about one hundred seventy productions in Italy and abroad, it would be a
paradox not to consider his past experiences. Still, his creative personality works
at the centre of complex dynamics, in which “the social, economic, or political
conditions of the 1970s” are not explicitly discussed, as noted by Horowitz, but
are part of the background of a dialectical confrontation among three factors: 1) Strehler’s ideas, developed also in discussions with his collaborators, the
translator Agostino Lombardo, and the Polish critic and scholar Jan Kott; 2) the
technical potentialities of the Piccolo Teatro – actors, designers, technicians, etc.;
3) the audience/s, particularly in the passage from the 1978-79 edition to the one
that opened in Paris on November 1983.

In order to explore the creative processes behind *The Tempest* directed by
Strehler in 1978, the video of the production, recorded during a performance at
the Teatro Lirico, will be used, to use legal language, as an exhibit, but not as a
proof. The video, produced by RAI (Radiotelevisione Italiana), the Italian public
Television and radio service, was broadcast the first time on December 14, 1981.

\(^{20}\) Horowitz 112.
Since Strehler, as mentioned before, speaks of the 1984 The Tempest in Paris as a “new edition,” and not simply as a revival, the video is a recording of the 1978 edition, taken during one of the performances in the period October 24, 1978 > March 11, 1979, with the audience present. Carlo Battistoni – Strehler’s assistant director for the stage production, together with Enrico D’Amato and Walter Pagliaro21 – was the director of the video, as for other previous recordings of Strehler’s productions22. The fidelity of the video to the stage production is therefore beyond dispute, as proved by a statement of Strehler himself in an interview on theatre on television:

I can only speak of renderings23, as for me and Carlo Battistoni, my most sensitive collaborator, the question has always been that of proposing again productions previously created for the stage. The shooting techniques change, but always – in my case – they are taken into the theatre. [...] A theatre production transferred to television [...] has to keep its integrity and should not be falsified24.

The video, in conclusion, is the closest evidence we have of the 1978 Tempest in performance. The value of this source would have obviously been

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21 The name of Walter Pagliaro does not appear in the program of the 1983 revival of the production.

22 William Shakespeare, La tempesta. ¾”, Sony Umatic PAL, color, length: 2h42m. Directed by Carlo Battistoni. Produced by Channel 2 RAI, 1979. Shot at the Teatro Lirico in Milan. A list of video recordings of Strehler’s productions updated to 1984, with details regarding the place, the year, and the director of the recording, the format and the length of the video, and the producer, is in Odette Aslan, ed., Strehler, Les voies de la creation théâtrale 16 (Paris: CNRS, 1989): 380.

23 Strehler uses the term trasposizioni, literally transpositions, but the meaning of the word is better expressed by renderings.

enriched by a parallel analysis of the prompt book of the production, but neither the Archives nor the production sector of the Piccolo Teatro have yet made available any technical documentation concerning the set and the lighting plot of the production\textsuperscript{25}. My attempt to explore the production criteria underlying the performance will therefore refer to other kinds of source: the translation and the documentation regarding the period of preparation and then the rehearsals.

The Italian translation of the 1978 \textit{Tempest} was by Agostino Lombardo\textsuperscript{26}, who based his work on the version of Shakespeare’s text edited by Frank Kermode for the Arden Shakespeare, which is based on that of the 1623 Folio\textsuperscript{27}. Lombardo submitted a first version of the translation to Strehler in fall 1977, and then they started an intense correspondence that resulted in the translation officially adopted for the production. Both versions, the first one and the final one, together with the English text, were published in 2007 in a volume that contains also the correspondence between Lombardo and Strehler\textsuperscript{28}. The recently published final version though, is slightly different from the one that Lombardo

\textsuperscript{25} The Piccolo Teatro is now a Foundation and the administration of the Archives is separated by the production sector. Claudio De Pace, assistant of the light board operator, is now archiving all the set plans and lighting plots of Strehler’s productions, with a detailed description of the materials utilized, of the equipment and the firms producing them, of the intensity and the color of the light. See Francesco Vigna, “Dietro il sipario: il difficile equilibrio tra arte e tecnologia,” in Cavaglieri 95. Since Strehler died in 1997, my opinion is that the release of the prompt books of his productions to the public would probably involve also copyright problems.

\textsuperscript{26} Agostino Lombardo (1927-2005) is considered one of the founders of English and American studies in Italy. Professor emeritus at the University of Rome La Sapienza and member of the Accademia dei Lincei, he has been one of the most important critics and translators of Shakespeare plays. Aside from Strehler, he collaborated also with other directors, Peter Stein among them.


\textsuperscript{28} Rosy Colombo, ed., ‘\textit{La Tempesta’ tradotta e messa in scena 1977-1978} (Roma: Donzelli, 2007). The volume includes also the video of the production in DVD format.
published with the original text in on facing pages, a preface, and notes, in 1984, when he was still alive, and to which I amply refer in the course of the present chapter. However, the minor differences, usually concerning the use of one word instead of another, do not change the fact that the performance text, the one verifiable in the video of the production, presents significant variations and cuts, of which I will give account to a large extent.

The documentation regarding the period of preparation, which is available at the Archives of the Piccolo Teatro, consists of two bound volumes of respectively 174 and 256 pages photocopied that include: Vol. 1, pp. 1-25, a few articles and interviews published before and immediately after the opening of the production, and Strehler’s published articles on the production; Vol. 1, pp.

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130-174, and Vol. 2, pp. 1-256, the written record, in Italian, of the tapes of the conversations, mainly in French, that Strehler and Jan Kott had in the course of 1977; Vol. 1, pp. 26-129, Strehler’s notes preceding the production. Their first date, on page 33, is January 15, 1977, and the last one, on page 118, is December 19 of the same year. In the course of the present chapter I will repeatedly refer to these notes that, aside from some hand corrections or additions, are typewritten, and offer valuable insights on Strehler’s interpretative process.

1992 publication, the text of Strehler’s lecture on Shakespeare had been published in Agostino Lombardo, ed., Shakespeare e Jonson, Il teatro elisabettiano oggi (Roma: Officina Edizioni, 1979), and together with the articles A and G, in Giorgio Strehler, Shakespeare Goldoni Brecht (Piccolo Teatro di Milano – Teatro d’Europa, 1988). The article A and two different versions of the article G are also online at 18 Aug. 2008 http://archivio.piccoleoteatro.org/BL/39. One of these two online versions of the article G was prepared when La Tempesta opened the first season of the Théâtre de l’Europe, at the Théâtre Odéon in Paris, and appears, in English, in the program for the 1984 tour in the United States, in occasion of The Olympic Arts Festival. An English version of the article C, by the title “Notes on the Tempest,” has been published in PAJ 72 (2002): 1-17.

The work of Jan Kott (1914-2001) Szkice o Szekspirze [Sketches on Shakespeare] (Warsaw: PIW, 1961) was well-known in Italy since 1964: Shakespeare nostro contemporaneo, (Milano: Feltrinelli, 1964), the same year of the first English translation: Shakespeare Our Contemporary (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1964). Part of the conversations is published in Griga 91-111. At the meetings were also present Luigi Lunari and Angelo Dallagiacoma. Lunari – playwright, dramaturge, critic, translator, and university teacher – has collaborated with the Piccolo Teatro from 1961 to 1982. Thanks to this experience, in 1991 he published a fictional novel on Strehler and the Piccolo Teatro by the title: Il Maestro e gli altri [The Master and the Others] (Genoa: Costa & Nolan, 1991). Dallagiacoma is a dramaturge known for his Italian translations of Shakespeare’s texts, and together with Lunari translated the King Lear directed by Strehler in 1972-73.

A limited version of these notes, arranged as if were two lectures, one on The Tempest in general and the other on Caliban, are in Griga 73-89. According to Griga, these lectures would have been taken place in November 1977, in front of the entire artistic and technical staff of the production. I have not found evidence of such lectures, but it is contradictory the fact that pages 73-77 (up to ‘elisabettiano.’) reproduce pages 33-37 of the notes, and the date, handwritten, on page 33 of the photocopies, is January 15, 1977, and pages 77-80 (from ‘Si è detto’ and up to ‘palcoscenico.’) reproduce pages 29-31 of the notes, and for them there is no date. Though, it is possible that Strehler took the notes in advance, and then used them for the lectures. A few other pages of Strehler’s notes have been published, in five sections with specific titles, in Colombo, ‘La Tempesta’ tradotta e messa in scena 1977-1978 339-356: 1. Le maschere per i masques [The masks for the masques] (27 Jan. 1977); 2. Idee sui costumi [Ideas on the costumes] (17 Aug. 1977); 3. Primo incontro con Agostino Lombardo [First meeting with Agostino Lombardo] (15 Oct. 1977); 4. La natura nella Tempesta [Nature in the Tempest] (15 Nov. 1977); and 5. Idee sparse [Various ideas] (15 Nov. 1977). The last parts of sections 3. and 5. don’t match the text I checked in the Archives though, and the first meeting in which Strehler and Lombardo discussed The Tempest
The most helpful source for what concerns the rehearsals is a journal edited by Ettore Gaipa, who, a few weeks before the first company meeting, had published the already mentioned record of the 1948 Tempest\textsuperscript{33}. Strehler wanted him involved in the production as a sort of diarist of the rehearsals. The two of them, together with the composer Fiorenzo Carpi\textsuperscript{34} and Gianni Santuccio, who was supposed to play Antonio, like in 1948, but left the company after a few weeks, were the only ones who had been involved in that first production. The journal consists of 146 typewritten pages. The first entry is March 6, 1978\textsuperscript{35}, and the last one, June 28 of the same year, the day of the opening. Memories of other productions, personal memories, comments on trivial rehearsal episodes, references to Aldo Moro\textsuperscript{36} – who was kidnapped by the terrorists of the Red Brigades on March 16, in Rome, and then assassinated on May 9 – and to other daily events, such as the 1978 World Cup of soccer, that played in Argentina, June 1-25, and in which the Italian team was involved, make Gaipa’s journal not easy reading. Frequently he also seems to make more comments on the text than to report the daily work of Strehler and his staff. Nevertheless, I will also refer regularly to this document and its technical information, when relevant.

\textsuperscript{33} A few pages of the journal have been published in Colombo, ‘La Tempesta’ tradotta e messa in scena 1977-1978 357-361. About Gaipa, see also previous note 30.

\textsuperscript{34} See chapter 2, note 34, and further note 58.

\textsuperscript{35} See previous note 5.

\textsuperscript{36} Moro was a major figure of the Christian Democracy, the most powerful Italian political party at that time.
By comparing, scene by scene, the data offered by the video with those from Strehler’s notes, Gaipa’s journal, and Lombardo’s translation, among other sources, and with the support, in a few cases, of pictures and sketches regarding the production, I will attempt to approach the closest possible criteria and the interpretative choices at the origin of the production.

As previously mentioned, when compared with Lombardo’s 1984 published translation, the performance text of La Tempesta directed by Strehler in 1978 presents numerous cuts, changes of words, and variations in the positions of the lines. The lines of the published version though, have no number, and it is therefore extremely difficult to discuss the production without quoting entire lines, or at least the beginning and the end of them. For those who do not read Italian, all the quotes will be followed by references keyed to the English version used by Lombardo, the one edited by Kermode.37 When cuts or changes are so elaborate that it is problematic to refer to the correspondent lines of the English edition, the reference will be followed by the word APPROX. Different criteria will be applied to the stage directions. They do not need to be quoted in Italian – Lombardo translates all of them quite literally – and problems emerge only when Strehler cuts, repositions, or changes the indications of the stage direction. Both lines and stage directions will be in italic, with the latter in bold character. The titles of the following paragraphs, when necessary, will include act and scene number, lines number of the edition by Kermode, and

37 See previous note 27.
length of the correspondent video segment, indicated as VS.

3.2 A tempestuous beginning (I.i, 1-67 – VS 00:04:30)

According to my personal recollection, the production began all of a sudden with the real tempest. The passage from the house lights, with the murmur of the awaiting audience as background, to the performance was unexpected and violent. The sudden darkness, shaken by the sound of thunder and lightning, frightened and confused me to the point that, initially, I thought that there had been a technical breakdown and that the power went off. In reality, little by little, as the introductory stage direction of the first scene – *[On a ship at sea]: a tempestuous noise of thunder and lightning heard,* I distinguished the shade of a seventeenth-century galleon with unfurled sails, surrounded by the fury of a huge stormy sea. It was a strong bluish image, with the galleon surrounded by a flashing light. The ship’s prow was being attacked from two sides by big, blue waves. This initial image, which in the video appears after a minute-and-a-half of the opening credits, is placed at a distance, a kind of long shot, and after thirty seconds, through the video editing, it is replaced by the close-up of the ship’s deck. I don’t recall how the passage from one image to the other occurred during the performance. The veil behind which the outline of
the ship was moving, probably disappeared to make room for what seemed to be the ship’s mainmast. Nothing besides the lower part of the mast was visible, and moved as if there was really a ship at the mercy of the elements – in the video, the effect of the rolling is accentuated by the waving movement of the camera – while the waves seemed to cover the ship and the entire stage. Holding tight on a couple of hanging lines, or trying in vain to keep their balance on the ship’s deck, are seven hooded figures with oilskins: the Master, the Boatswain, and five other Mariners. In the uproar of the storm the first words of the text were hardly discerned. In the video these words are definitely more intelligible, and for about less than three minutes the action proceeds with lines of the Boatswain that are alternated with those of the courtiers. But while the members of the crew, when
in sight, are always shown in their entirety, Alonso, Antonio, Gonzalo, and Sebastian appear only from the head up, or at most they are shown half-length, emerging from the depths of the boat, or extended, surrounded by the waves, with lanterns in hand that shed light on them in a ghostly manner. At the stage direction *Enter Mariners wet*, that follows Boatswain’s 49-50, the Mariners are in reality already on the scene and are swept away by the mainsail suddenly falling from the theatre’s attic. In the following minute, the lines proceed and are concluded with Gonzalo’s *Però avrei preferito una morte asciutta* [66-67]. For a few more seconds only the mainmast is visible, then suddenly is broken and disappears amidst the waves that now cover the entire visible space. In the centre of the action, in a whirlwind, appears Prospero, from the back, as a prelude to scene I.ii of the text.

This spectacular initial sequence lasts almost four and a half minutes, and corresponds to the description that Gaipa makes in his journal, which confirms also my experience as a member of the audience: “It is an image that explodes in the stalls, in full light, i.e. the audience, still distraught and unwarned, suddenly falls into the darkness and the noise of the storm”\(^{38}\). Gaipa talks about this on April 4, the same day in which “the company makes its entrance in the Lirico, after a very long interruption”\(^{39}\). In fact, almost ten days before, on March 25 to be precise – three weeks after the first company meeting – Gaipa announces that “reasons of scenic space, of technical nature – and also the consideration of larger

\(^{38}\) GJ 31.

\(^{39}\) GJ 31.
financial yield! – have led to the transfer of the production from the Piccolo to the Lirico”\textsuperscript{40}. The word Piccolo, in this case, doesn’t refer to the institution, but is used in a familiar way to denote the historic venue of Via Rovello, that in which the Piccolo Teatro officially opened on May 14\textsuperscript{th}, 1947. During the thirty-one past theatrical seasons, the Piccolo Teatro had often used other spaces, and it has been already emphasized, in the previous chapter, how the \textit{Tempesta} produced at Boboli in 1948 was the first example. The Teatro Lirico itself was used for the first time in the 1964-65 season for \textit{Le baruffe chiozzotte} [The Squabbles at Chioggia] by Goldoni and \textit{Power Games}, both directed by Strehler\textsuperscript{41}. Nevertheless, the fact remains that the image of the Piccolo Teatro was always associated with Via Rovello, to the extent that, like in Gaipa, the venue became known as… the Piccolo. In fact, the theatre of Via Rovello, in which I had the opportunity to attend a performance of the fifth edition of \textit{The Servant of Two Masters}, in the early 1980s, had a particular atmosphere, warm and intimate, besides having excellent acoustics. The space assumed its current dimensions following a restructuring that took place in 1952, when the seats in the pit were raised to more than 500, the stage width reached 7.70 meters, the light system was revolutionized, and on the roof were applied holed panels, conceived by the artist Lucio Fontana, in order to improve the acoustics and to guarantee the

\textsuperscript{40} GJ 24.

\textsuperscript{41} Shakespeare’s \textit{Power Games} opened on June 21 and was in the repertory of the Piccolo the following season. See chapter 2, note 27, and chapter 4, note 3. In 1964-65, at the Teatro Lirico, opened also \textit{Il mistero} [Mistery] by Silvio D’Amico, directed by Orazio Costa, and produced by the Piccolo Teatro as well.
ventilation. It was on the stage of Via Rovello that Strehler directed the 1972-73 King Lear, his last Shakespeare production before The Tempest, and it is therefore natural to think of the Piccolo as the ideal space for the island of Prospero.

The change of venue wasn’t a sudden decision. Surely, the financial reasons should not be underestimated. A company of at least ninety people between actors, mimes, musicians, and technicians, and the complex technical and scenographic solutions are synonymous with high costs, and to multiply the number of the spectators who pay the admission fee has its advantages. However, the Lirico also had its disadvantages – e.g. the very bad acoustics – of which, as Gaipa remarks, Strehler was full aware:

Giorgio fears an outward expansion, he fears the traps of an acoustic that is prohibitive; to say the least, he fears an unbalance between poetic values and the suggestion of the spectacle, not because the mis-en-scene would orient itself deliberately towards the last; but because the public instinctively could go in that direction, it wouldn’t catch the more inner aspects, and it would await almost ravenously an ‘escalation’ of effects, favored by the first images, those of the shipwreck, by the visual emotions of the theatrical machine of Damiani, by the illusionism of the moments of theatrical ‘magic’ by now codified.

42 The restructuring was based on the project of the architects Marco Zanuso and Ernesto Rogers. See Cavagliere 91-96.

43 See previous note 4.

44 GJ 24.
This tension between the inner aspects of the text and the suggestions of the theatrical machine returns frequently, and in various forms, in the course of the rehearsals, and the attempt to find an expressive balance can be identified as one of the points on which Streheler focuses his interpretation, as he indicates in his notes of August 17, 1977:

Not everything can be rigorously plausible in *The Tempest*. In *The Tempest* there is the mystery and the enchantment. It is itself the stuff of theatre. But pay attention also to its opposite, i.e. it’s only a fairytale, it’s thus because it has to be. This, too, is theatre: something is done and said in that moment in the theatre, because otherwise theatre cannot be done. It’s the problem of verisimilitude and reality, of plausibility in the wide sense and of reality in naturalistic sense.\(^{45}\)

Since his notes of January 27, 1977, Strehler has no doubt that the initial tempest must appear real, but he also realizes that once finished, it will be revealed to the public as artificial:

The ‘theatricality’, the artificial, the created, the ‘directed by’ is continuous in *The Tempest*. When one thinks that something is ‘true’, there it is that immediately it appears ‘artificial’, created through ‘magic’, i.e. through theatricality or ‘deception’ if one wishes to call it with yet another term. For example, the initial storm […] was ‘true’ or ‘believed to be true’ for the sailors and the nobles of the ship, but it was ‘artificial’ because it was ‘invented’ by Ariel at the behest of Prospero.\(^{46}\)

\(^{45}\) SN 72.

\(^{46}\) SN 41.
After a few months, on July 28, he specifies that the storm,

although a ‘theatrical storm’, i.e. made in the theatre ‘with the
means of the theatre’ (therefore fatally conventional) should not
have ‘at the beginning’ an extremely symbolic appearance, or an
extremely ‘theatrical’ or extremely conventional one. It is a
‘theatrical reconstruction’ of reality. It is a storm with a lot of
‘possible’ and of realistically evocative: sounds, lightings, gestures,
and movements. One could even think of real water and other47.

The initial tempest, then, is plausible, verisimilar, but produced with the
very stuff of theatre, an enchantment that is the result of a complex and refined
combination of audiovisual techniques. Amidst the sources investigated there are
no precise references to how it was conceived, but at least a couple of points of its
gestation seem certain.

In a kind of autobiography, Luciano Damiani48, the set and costume
designer of the production, recalls a visit of Strehler, during 1977, in his office in

47 SN 58.

48 Luciano Damiani (1923-2007) has been the designer responsible for sets and costumes of over forty productions of the Piccolo Teatro, and during the 1980’s, in Rome, has created a theatre, still active, called Teatro dei Documenti. Damiani wrote an autobiographic novel, Tutta la vita e oltre [The whole life and beyond], which is not published. Fragments of this text though, divided into five parts chronologically arranged, and under the title Sipari di autoritratto [Curtains of self-portrait], appear on the website of the Teatro dei Documenti. The third part, in particular, is dedicated to the controversial artistic sodality with Strehler and the Piccolo Teatro, but it’s in the fourth part that Damiani speaks of The Tempest. His memories go alongside a couple of sketches and an image of the production. The text of Damiani, though subjective, is interesting because it highlights how intense and at the same time complex, often difficult, was the relationship between him and Strehler. One has the distinct impression that Damiani never felt sufficiently recognized his creative role – as if Strehler, at times, had almost stolen his ideas – and fought a long battle to have recognized the copyright of his work. A passage from the brief essay introducing the website of the Teatro dei Documenti is quite enlightening: “The artistic sodality with Giorgio Strehler began in 1952. L’anima buona di Sezuan [The Good Person of Setzuan], Vita di Galileo [Galileo] and other texts by Brecht (which before had never been produced in Italy), El Nost Milan [Our Milan] by Bertolazzi, Il giardino dei ciliegi [The Cherry Orchard] by Chekhov, Shakespeare’s The Tempest, and Il campiello [The Little Square] and The Squabbles at
Rome. Strehler, who was accompanied by Agostino Lombardo, examined the sketches for the production, didn’t make any comment, and then, as he was leaving, said: “Probably The Tempest will end up in the Teatro Lirico”\textsuperscript{49}. The episode shows that Strehler thought or even knew a long time before the rehearsals would begin that The Tempest would then be moved from the Piccolo to the Lirico. This does not mean that he wished the change of venue, and various references to the stage of Via Rovello, in his notes, confirm that this was the space that was conceived for the production, by him as well by Damiani. One may only think that Strehler was aware, well before the rehearsals had begun, of the financial reasons, and that only in the face of substantial technical problems he decided to move to the Lirico. On the other hand, in his journal of April 23, Gaipa states that “the move to the Lirico has been for Giorgio a kind of trauma”\textsuperscript{50}.

Before the meeting in Rome, Damiani went to visit Strehler in his villa in Portofino. “During the trip,” writes Damiani, “I sketched a scene with a veil for the sky in the audience, and one for the sea, invading the stage, to lap the edges

\textit{Chioggia} by Goldoni are just some of the productions that rewrite the history of theatre of the second half of the twentieth century. And if there is no doubt that the work at the Piccolo Teatro gives Damiani fame and recognition, it is equally certain that the history of the golden age of the Piccolo is written by Strehler and Damiani. The binomial Damiani-Strehler has been the most fruitful of the twentieth century Italian theatre, because the creative contribution was equal.” Anna Ceravolo, “Luciano Damiani, genio solitario e libero,” Associazione Teatro di Documenti, homepage, 28 June 2008 \url{http://www.teatrodidocumenti.it/index.html}. See also paragraph 1, chapter 4.

\textsuperscript{49} Damiani’s text is in the section \textit{Autoritratto} of the website quoted in the previous note.

\textsuperscript{50} GJ 45.
of Prospero’s island” 51. It is on this occasion that Strehler asks Damiani to prepare the sketches that then he will examine in Rome. The basic idea seems to create as a union between stage and audience in order to make explicit the theatricality of the production. This suggests that the initial tempest, at least

![1978 Tempest, sketch by Luciano Damiani (copyright @ www.teatrodidocumenti.it)](image)

according to Damiani, was to have that symbolic quality, as pointed out above, from which Strehler wanted to keep a distance. This is confirmed by Damiani himself:

When it was decided that The Tempest had to be staged at the Lirico, the veil designed for the Piccolo went into crisis. Faced with the difficulties encountered at the Teatro Lirico, Strehler renounced the veil. I tried, in vain, to explain that the scene without the veil in the house area would have lost all meaning, and it was so. In addition, a moon and a faded sun printed on the backdrop, against my will, transformed Prospero’s island into a gloomy naturalistic postcard. The initial shipwreck, that I conceived with house lights

51 See previous note 48.
on, to make the theatrical fiction a ‘lucid thought’ and listen to the
text, became a film sequence of deafening effects, not a word was
understood, and did overshadow the rest of the show, here and
there animated by Ariel that retained the public’s attention. On
opening night, there was no trace of the device of ‘theatre in the
theatre’\textsuperscript{52}.

Damiani’s comment is nothing short of bitter, and involves not only the
Lirico, but also the entire production the way it was configured. Not only certain
choices are imposed - and by whom if not by Strehler? – but definitions such as
“gloomy naturalistic postcard” or “film sequence” leave no doubts.

Of the initial storm sequence, notes Gaipa on April 28, there had been
three versions. In all three the transition from the long shot of the galleon to the
close-up of the deck of the ship, which in the video appears as a result of the
editing and that I personally do not remember, corresponds to a brief blackout,
but to the two versions that show, though in different ways, a clearer separation
between the crew and the courtiers is finally preferred to the one described by
Gaipa both on April 4 and 28\textsuperscript{53}, and that I remember as a spectator.

From a technical viewpoint, three features combine to compose the
sequence: the visual ones, scenery and lighting; the sound, recorded and live;
and the acting. The scenic area in its basic structures will be discussed more
thoroughly in the next paragraph, but a few details belong only to this first
sequence, which is divided into two parts. In the first one, that of the long shot -

\textsuperscript{52} See previous note 48.

\textsuperscript{53} See GJ 31 and 52-53.
Gaipa calls it prologue one - the silhouette of a seventeenth century galleon is distinguished while shaking behind a gauze, moved by a flywheel, which frames almost the entire proscenium. The hull of the galleon is surrounded by waves that are created by two large sheets of Habotai silk under which operate eighteen mimes. I gather this information from different passages of Gaipa’s journal, but that there are two sheets, and not just one, is evident by the first ninety seconds of the video showing, while the opening credits are running, the preparation of the stage. The mimes unfold two sheets that, while covering almost the entire stage and the corridors beyond the proscenium, seem to leave a central area, a sort of longitudinal corridor, uncovered. The preparation of the stage shows also a movement forward of the main raised platform, the one on which most of the actions of the performance will take place. At the end of I.ii, this platform will uncover that is cut diagonally from downstage right to upstage left, and it is therefore divisible into two triangles. My opinion is that in the second part of the initial sequence - Gaipa calls it prologue two - the two triangles should slightly separate in order to leave open the space necessary to reveal, from beneath the stage, “a sort of swing, with two hatches on the front, on which stands an undulating mainmast”. I didn’t find any other reference to a swing, but if it were above the main platform, it would be noticed. Probably the two triangles of the main platform were separated only by the space sufficient for the mainmast

54 According to Damiani, to create the waves were used at least 4000 square meters of silk. See Paganini, “Scenografia essenziale (con 4 mila metro di tulle)” ibid.
55 GJ 31.
to emerge, and the swing was below the platform, in the area under the stage. This would explain why members of the crew seem to be moving on the raised platform, sometimes disappearing on the sides, while the courtiers emerge from the space left open by the two triangles of the platform. Whether they were standing on a swing or on another platform below the stage, this is difficult to say. At the end of the sequence, after the fall from the theatre’s attic of the mainsail, still a few instants pass, then the mainmast breaks, the waves created by the large sheets increase their presence, and mainmast and mainsail disappear under the stage, giving the image of sinking. The dominant color of prologue one is a dark blue mixed with the light blue of the sheets-sea. At the center, sometimes stricken by thunderbolts, a spot of light against which stands out the silhouette of the galleon. In prologue two the thunderbolt effect continues but the general lighting switches to a grayish blue, with the silhouettes of the members of the crew and the mainmast rather dark, and the ghostly faces of the courtier lit by the lanterns they handle.

Apart from the ninety introductory seconds showing the preparation of the stage, another behind-the-scenes moment, in the video, is the transition from prologue one to prologue two, when for a few seconds the technicians involved in the sequence are visible. In the space behind the backdrop one stage hand walks shaking long strips of tinfoil to create the sound of the rain, another one operates the wind machine, a musician plays a few kettledrums to create rumbling thunder effects, and behind him we see another technician who
provokes lightning flashes with electrical contacts. On May 2, Gaipa’s journal states that prologue two is reaching the most comfortable results. The relationship between voices, lights, sounds and movements is balancing. Tape recordings and amplifiers, which prevail in prologue one, are replaced here by live instruments not amplified, kettledrums, gongs, wind machine and rain effect, metal sheet, etc. [...] The difficult coordination of this orchestra is entrusted to acoustic signals (everything must be done in the dark, with intermittent flashes) and even the technician in charge of the lightning flashes has a headset through which he receives the signals. Six minutes of action take hours and hours, dozens of hours, to achieve a perfect automatism.

In the first part of the tempestuous initial sequence, the sound effects are therefore recorded, while in the second one they are live, as is the rest of the music of the production. This is an important detail. In his journal of June 16, less than two weeks from opening night, Gaipa highlights a discussion between Strehler, the composer Carpi, and Raoul Ceroni, the musical assistant, about where to place the musical instruments on stage or underneath. A week earlier, on June 9, Ceroni had already tried various instruments in various areas of the theatre to check the sound effect. In addition to kettledrums were gongs, drums, and a cello, and some medieval instruments: a psaltery, a rebec, an alto flute, a marine trumpet, a hurdy-gurdy, and an aulos. In the show, most of the music

56 “The musicians,” according to Horowitz, “who manned the percussions and cymbals, as well as the musical conductor, were seen” in this behind-the-scenes sequence. Clearly, Horowitz mistakes the raised arms of the technician provoking the flash of lighting for those of a musical conductor. See Horowitz 101.

57 GJ 63-64.
came from six sources located respectively behind the cyclorama (three), in the left wing (one), and at the front, underneath the stage (two). The intention was to disseminate music in every direction, both towards the house and upwards.

However, the music of the scenes of Caliban and the buffoons came from a sole source in the right wing, with the intention of creating a more direct, concrete, and less mysterious sound. In any case, although very important from the point of view of the interpretation, the problem was not merely a question of positioning the music sources.

It seems that musicians, actors, and technicians were subjected to long walks in the dark, backstage, between the wings, and underneath the stage. This could be one of the technical reasons that led to the change of venue from Via Rovello to the Lirico: the complexity of the initial sequence, which involved over forty people between actors, musicians, and mimes, excluding the numerous technicians and stage hands, moving all over the place. A complexity dictated by the need to produce a storm, in Strehler’s words previously mentioned, “with a lot of ‘possible’ and of realistically evocative.” A conclusion that seems to contradict what is recalled by Jan Kott that “Strehler's first plan was to make the ‘machine’ (the means by which the spectacular opening storm scene was

58 The website of the Piccolo Teatro has dedicated a comprehensive virtual exhibition entitled La Tempesta. Musica da vedere [The Tempest: Music to see] to Carpi and the music for the 1978 Tempest. Especially interesting is a plan of the Lirico indicating the locations of the instruments on stage. The exhibition is located in the section Educational/Mostre virtuali of the website, 23 July 2008 http://www.piccoloteatro.org/teatro_milano.php?ID=692&tab=6&sub_tab=5&title=Educational+-+mostre+virtuali. In addition to the biography of Carpi, the website contains a synopsis of the play and excerpts from Strehler’s notes and Gaipa’s journal. It is also possible to listen to musical and acting pieces of the production. These pieces go together with photographs of the performance and, sometimes, of the original musical scores.
executed) visible. Later he decided not to show it. Only at rehearsal – and this was one of the most beautiful ‘theatrical moments’ – did I see for a fleeting instant the boys and girls carrying the blue sea on their raised arms”\(^{59}\), and we have seen how this decision, criticized by Damiani, has been taken also for reasons conditioned by the new space of the Lirico.

It is interesting though, that the explicit theatricality is back in the video of the production, which shows the preparation of the stage, the technicians at work, and the theatrical machinery. Arthur Horowitz, who in a note says that his description of the production relies only on the video, draws the erroneous conclusion that “in Brechtian fashion no effort was made to conceal the means by which this production was to achieve its theatrical and magical effects”\(^{60}\). In his description of the initial sequence, Horowitz includes the first ninety seconds of the video, but it’s misleading saying that “at the opening of the production, the fourth wall of the theatre was opened bottom to top, rolling up like a giant garage door”\(^{61}\). The fourth wall is in reality the fire curtain, but any preparation of the stage shown in the video was not present in the live show. As I said, the starting point of the production was “unexpected and violent.” It’s also odd that in the same note where he explains that his account is based only on the video, Horowitz quotes Pia Kleber saying quite clearly that the “film tends to belie the


\(^{60}\) Horowitz 101.

\(^{61}\) Horowitz 101. Later on the same page, Horowitz also mistakes the wind machine for the thunder machine.
mechanisms of production, but this time the camera revealed more technical devices than the stage production did”\textsuperscript{62}. In other words, in the initial sequence of the live show, what Horowitz describes as “the production’s extensive metatheatricality”\textsuperscript{63} was not present at all.

The question at this point is why the video, entrusted to Carlo Battistoni, recovered the metatheatrical dimension. A choice wanted by Strehler himself? Maybe, but probably not because he had changed his mind, but because in video, the “realistically evocative” storm produced only by theatrical means simply does not work. Just think of the realistic impact of the filmic tempest of \textit{The Perfect Storm}\textsuperscript{64}, and the theatre storm produced by Strehler is justified, in video, only if shown for what it is: a trick. The video also facilitates the understanding of the lines that, as noted by Damiani, were lost in the uproar created by the sound effects. I personally grasped only a few words, and Gaipa refers more than once to the vocal stress supported by the actors in order to be heard. On April 17, the ones performing the Master and the Boatswain exchanged roles, with the understanding to alternate during the performances, but the Boatswain was then equipped with a wireless microphone. Perhaps it is also because of the vocal stress that a few lines were cut - Boatswain 38-39, Antonio 44-45 approx., Gonzalo 47-48 approx., Gonzalo 57-61 - or redistributed: 55-57, which would be


\textsuperscript{63} Horowitz 190, note 10.

\textsuperscript{64} \textit{The Perfect Storm}, dir. Wolfgang Petersen, Warner Bros., 2000.
only Antonio’s, was divided between him 55 and Sebastian 56-57. Note that in his journal Gaipa speaks of the prologue lasting six minutes, while the length in the video is about four and a half minutes, probably as a result of the cuts – which could have been introduced later – or of a tighter cohesion reached by the entire sequence during the performances preceding the shooting of the video.

3.3 The platform-island

The first stage direction of I.ii indicates [The island. Before Prospero’s Cell]. Enter Prospero and Miranda. From the first lines it is clear that Prospero’s daughter has witnessed the storm unleashed by the magic of her father as well as the sinking of the ship. The text moves the action from the sea to the island, with a change of perspective accentuated by the words of Miranda who, having heard the cries of desperation of those who were on the ship, retraces emotionally what the audience has seen in I.i. In Strehler’s production, rather than a radical scene change from a ship at sea to the part of the island where there is the cave of Prospero, there is a sort of lap dissolve. I.i ends with the image of the mainmast breaking and disappearing between the waves, which cover all the visible space for about ten seconds. Then, at the centre of the action, in a whirl of wind and with his back to the audience appears Prospero. He wears a cloak and holds a magic rod with which he seems to direct the fury of the elements. The lap dissolve is articulated in three moments created by the sheet-sea: 1) the ship dissolves into the sheet-sea; 2) the entire stage becomes a tempestuous sheet-sea;
3) the sheet-sea reveals Prospero, and then gradually calms and retires, revealing the island. The entire sequence takes about eighty seconds, ranging from the last seconds of I.i to almost the entire first long line of Miranda in I.ii. At the words *Povere anime, tutte perdute* [9], in the video, the last strips of the sheet-sea are clearly visible when disappearing into the corridors operated by the mimes. Note that in the video, as for the transition from the long shot of the galleon to the close-up of the deck of the ship, there is a cut when the mainmast breaks and begins to sink. As before, for about ten seconds a couple of stage hands pulling a rope and another technician shaking the metal sheet that creates thunder effects are visible, then Prospero appears. In the live performance, this transition corresponded to another brief blackout during which the platform-island, if my hypothesis that the two triangles that comprise it were separated the space necessary for the mainmast to stick out, is reassembled.

While Miranda pronounces the last words of the first line of I.ii, the island appears, which looks like a simple platform, slightly raised (twenty centimeters or so) and to the eye slightly rectangular, about seven meters by six, perhaps less on the sides. My hypothesis that the front side is about seven meters is because the width of the proscenium of the stage of Via Rovello, as previously noted, is 7.70 meters. The same platform, in the space of the Lirico, finds more space, especially at the sides, and accentuates the idea of the island. We have already pointed out that the first ninety seconds of the video show when the platform is pushed forward to the proscenium edge, freeing the rear corridor, behind which
lies the cyclorama. Two smaller platforms for entrances ad exits are connected to the sides of the main platform. They are of the same height and are flush to the upstage side of the main one, but stop at about half the length of its lateral sides, giving the impression of two bridges that continue in the wings.

1978 Tempest, the beginning of I.ii (copyright @ Piccolo Teatro of Milan Archives)

Gaipa’s journal does not offer precise details on the structure of the scene, although since March 7, the second day of rehearsals, he writes about various aspects of it: some actually will end up in the show, and others not. The corridors within which operate the mimes creating the sea, for example, should be four in front of the proscenium and three behind the platform, but from the video they
are only three and two. Apart from the quantity, there is no doubt that the corridors and the whole area underneath the stage have a crucial importance for the scenic solutions of the production. In the video in fact, but also in the live performance, the rest of the stage seems a flat surface above which lies the main platform, but in reality, it is not at all. It is an open structure, as the video shows for a few seconds, in I.ii, when the camera frames a technician pulling a rope.

This explains Gaipa’s definition of

island-platform-raft divided into two skew movable sections. […]

At the center of the platform are readable the signs of the Zodiac. A dash of sand (made of rice powder) will be inscribed in the zodiac circle. On the ground, a sextant, an armillary sphere, and a shell. In the background, the rock within which there is Prospero’s cave.

The cave is an element that Gaipa mentions more than once in his journal, but of which there is no trace in the production. Strehler himself refers to it several times in its preparatory notes, together with other ideas on the scene space that reveal two specific phases of his interpretive process. The initial phase, strongly creative, as the result of a first reading – it seems more instinctive than rational – and the critical one, in which he challenges dialectically his own ideas, those of his collaborators, his knowledge of Elizabethan theatre, and the resources of the Piccolo Teatro.

At the beginning of his notes, before the ones with the first date – January

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65 Jan Kott confirms that the orchestra was divided in three corridors: “The orchestra pit was divided into three corridors. With its floor shaped into mounds and hollows” (Kott, “Prospero, or the Director” 134).

66 GJ 3.
15, 1977 – Strehler devotes a few intense pages to a detailed description of how he imagines the space and the initial part of the show till the entrance of Ariel in I.ii\textsuperscript{67}. There are elements of this description that really end up in the production, but in general, it could be the outlining of an imaginary third production, in which the theatricality of The Tempest is revealed “as in a beautifully poor, childlike theatre”\textsuperscript{68}. Strehler imagines theatrical effects in which the quality of the materials utilized is as important as the color they have or the sound they make when are used. It is a wonderful, simple theatre, in which even the tiniest detail seems to have importance. Prospero’s island, in this imaginary production, is “the empty theatre with its charms still inactive and with actors, sounds, and voices still silent. All the magic and mysteriousness must be human, produced on stage by the actors, from time to time”\textsuperscript{69}. Among the various elements, the space envisioned by Strehler includes thin walls of rice paper, like big kites, that delimit the bare stage and that at the end, when Prospero breaks his magic rod, will be disassembled; drop-curtain doors, cut in the paper, for entrances and exits; two or three stage-traps that when are closed make an echoing sound and lift a puff of dust; two or three wheeled stairs of different height made of old wood; a few flats, masterly painted with delicate colors, representing a rock, a cave, and some exotic vegetation; sand or wood shaving ready in a corner; and in the back, three papier-mâché spirals – one blue, one blue-green, and one white –

\textsuperscript{67} SN 29-31, also in Griga 77-80.

\textsuperscript{68} SN 29.

\textsuperscript{69} SN 30.
to make the sea, together with a few buckets full of paper and tinfoil confetti, to produce the foam of the waves. Strehler produces also lists of musical instruments and theatre machines, and mentions a couple of wires for Ariel’s flights and a basic lighting set “with no time, no atmosphere.” At the beginning of the show, a white curtain – a simple large sheet – hides the stage. The audience hears voices, actors moving around, sounds, a growing thunder rumbling, then, when the house lights are off, a flashing back-lighting behind the curtain signals the start of the initial tempest, which increases in a crescendo of screams, sounds, and musical effects. A final, very high scream marks the end of the sequence. Gradually the sound of the tempest fades away, replaced by a sweet murmur in which are mixed whispered voices, the sound of little bells, and the music of a viola and a flute. Lightened by a pale blue, the large white sheet drops at the foot of the proscenium, between the stage and the audience. A delicate and clear light goes up and reveals a stage dusted with sand and with a rock in the middle. At the top of the stairs behind the rock, there is an old man with a simple vest and a young, naked girl, with very long hair. They talk while the wind and other soft sounds murmur in the background. At a signal of the old man, Ariel’s wire drops from the theatre’s attic.

For what concerns the second phase of Strehler’s interpretative process, it is obvious that it does not correspond to a precise moment, but is the result of a continuous exploration that, as evidenced by the notes of November 15 and

70 SN 30.
December 18, 1977, summarized below, reaches a level of maturation before being again constantly tested during the rehearsals:

A) The general idea of the set is “a very clear summary (perhaps too much) of resources and techniques that are our own since a long time”\textsuperscript{71}, and Strehler makes explicit reference to the fixed set created by Damiani in 1963 for Brecht’s \textit{Galileo}, where fixed set means a structure that, with minor changes,

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{galileo_1963.png}
\caption{1963 \textit{Galileo} (copyright @ Piccolo Teatro of Milan Archives)}
\end{figure}

visible to the public, suggests different spaces times\textsuperscript{72}.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{71} SN 112.
\item \textsuperscript{72} For a brief and exhaustive description of \textit{Galileo}, which is considered as one of the most important of Strehler’s productions, see Hirst 109-112. With reference to Damiani’s design concept, Hirst quotes the review of \textit{The Times} of May 3, 1963, which in the crucial passage states: “The basic set is the skeleton of a stage such as Galileo’s contemporary, Niccolo Sabbatini, might have used for the display of his ingenious machines, though it is only the traverse curtains here
b) The set is inspired by the great tradition of Italian theatre, although modified. In the initial pages of his notes, Strehler expresses his desire to visit the Farnese theatre, in Parma, and the theatre of Sabbioneta, but not for some kind of philological interest. He is attracted by the quality of the theatrical techniques created by that tradition. An explicit reference is the cieletti [heavens] with an ascending perspective, a scene technique, as well as others mentioned further on in this chapter, described by the Italian architect and set designer Nicola Sabbatini (1574-1654) in his Pratica di Fabricar Scene e Machine ne’ Teatri [Manual for Constructing Theatrical Scenes and machines, 1638]. The cieletti, in Strehler’s Tempest, become shores of the sea to cover the corridors through which move the mimes operating the sheets-sea. Damiani had already used the cieletti for Goldoni’s The Little Square, directed by Strehler in 1975, but in that case, they were suspended from the theatre’s attic, and Strehler calls them arie [airs].

c) The cielo [sky] of The Cherry Orchard, “this time not abstract, but painted like a large sky with blue-golden clouds with the great scenographic

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73 See Barnard Hewitt, The Renaissance Stage. Documents of Serlio, Sabbatini and Furttenbach (Coral Gables: U of Miami P, 1958): 146-147. “Nicola Sabbatini was a native Italian architect and engineer (ingegnero) and his book entitled Pratica di Fabricar Scene e Machine ne’ Teatri (1638) is a standard work on stage practice in the late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century Italian theatre” (Hewitt 37).
painting technique of the Renaissance-1700”. The reference is to the veil created by Damiani for the text of Chekhov directed by Strehler in 1974. As seen in the previous paragraph, the veil-sky is proposed again by Damiani in one of his first sketches for The Tempest, and then, with his disappointment, disappears when the production relocates from the Piccolo to the Lirico.

D) The presence of wood, “another of our themes”, stresses Strehler, who refers to past productions designed by Damiani. This time though, the wood is “isolated in the sea-theatre, and under the veil-sky, to create the mysterious island”, a central wooden platform divided into sections that change inclination and create different situations, as in the end has been realized. Damiani would like to have the level of the platform somewhat higher than the stage, but Strehler notes that would be dangerous because of the distance from the public, though interesting in order to enhance the allegorical dimension of the island. From his initial interpretative idea of a “childlike theatre” to the

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74 SN 112.

75 The 1974 production of The Cherry Orchard, scene and costume design by Luciano Damiani, is considered the second edition of the Chekhov’s text directed by Strehler. He directed the first one in 1955, scene and costume design by Tania Moiseiwitsch.

76 SN 112.

77 The already mentioned Goldoni’s The Little Square, Chekhov’s The Cherry Orchard, and Brecht’s Galileo, for example, but also another Goldoni’s play, The Squabbles at Chioggia, directed by Strehler in 1964. See previous note 48. About the set design criteria introduced by Damiani at the Piccolo see Cavaglieri 93.

78 SN 112.

79 In the set plan by Damiani, “the island was a catafalque three meters high, five or six meters long, and a couple of meters deep, on wheels, with shells set.” Giordano Mancioppi, head carpenter, in Giancarlo Stampilia, Strehler dirige: Le fasi di un allestimento e l’impulso musicale nel teatro (Venezia: Marsilio, 1997): 66. The first time Strehler saw this object on stage, scene, Mancioppi recalls, he discarded it immediately.
description of the platform-island, Strehler refers constantly to the wood as a material, including specific details of the scene, in relation to certain characters, or for other ideas on the set in general, like in the following sequence of short notes:

The scene of wood, the idea of the circle of wood. Or a kind of wooden curve, a curved surface, wood burned and bent.
The wood carried by Caliban, and that of Ferdinand, could be torn from the wood of the stage, in some way. The sound of wood, like that of broken wooden planks.
Trapdoors that open on stage? As holes in the rock.
Wood-rock?
The idea of the Piccolo half destroyed, with the stage exposed while it is cleared.

The theme of the wood also induces Strehler to reflect on the great tradition of Italian theatre revived, with years of delay, in England. In the passage from the Globe to the Blackfriars, Strehler observes, there was “a decrease of the Elizabethan all-inclusiveness. The theatre was no longer circular, or explicitly made of wood, stage and walls. There was the Italian proscenium and the form became rectangular or square, with Italian wings and backdrop.” These observations are important because in Strehler’s interpretative process, the two forms of theatre do not cancel each other out; indeed, they enter into a dialectical rapport where the symbolic efficacy of Elizabethan theatre – “Note the total economy of props in The Tempest. Almost nothing is necessary. A list of

80 SN 85.
81 SN 84.
'objects' would be extremely short”82 writes Strehler – seems to shine on the background of a machinery essentially Baroque.

E) Strehler’s attention to Elizabethan theatre comes in full light in relation to the problem of the rock, the cave of Prospero. The theatre of Shakespeare was made of wood, a wooden O, an island of wood in the city, is therefore clear that “the rock component had to be a painted scenic element […]. The cave was the inner-stage. It could be closed by a curtain with a rock painted on it”83. The cave of Prospero is a key issue in Strehler’s notes, and he makes various hypotheses about it. A movable platform painted with a fake entry, or a curtain, or with a cave in bas-relief. A great piece with an abstract cave, like a sort of sculpture, and as material, pumice or cork. The painted piece of scenery is discarded as too reminiscent of the solutions adopted for Galileo84. Also, Strehler imagines even small rock-elements that can distinguish the various places of the island. But in his notes of March 27, during the days when the entire set is moved from the Piccolo to the Lirico, and the actors take a rest, Gaipa states that of the cave there is no more trace. Technically, since at the end of the initial tempest the platform-island has no particular inclination and is fully flat, one of the hypotheses described above could be implemented, and would have not entailed high costs. The reason for the disappearance of the cave seems therefore to be purely interpretative: "Do not try to explain everything and to be always logical

82 SN 84.
83 SN 84.
84 See previous note 72.
and enlightening”85, writes Strehler. After all, since the beginning of the rehearsals, he had said “that the 'cave' is the stage itself!”86, but Strehler's ideas, in the end, are always to be verified on stage, and he applies this criterion to every aspect of the production87.

F) The problem of the background, “what there is in the back of this theatre-sea-island”88. Strehler thinks of a wall of lime made lighter by a veil. He rejects the idea of a blue sky – introduced for the first time by Damiani in The Squabbles at Chioggia89 – but a wall would still be a fake wall, a sort of white backdrop, as already adopted for Galileo. The final solution seems to go in this direction: a linear white scrim in the back, in reality a cyclorama, and two lateral scrims surrounding the space of the stage, leaving open only two exits next to the two sides of the proscenium. If the lateral scrims were extended up to the proscenium, the entire space would be a closed box, with only the fourth wall open. Thanks to some lateral shots, the structure is clearly visible in the video, particularly in the sequence of the introductory credits and at the end of II.i.

These are the points around which revolves the space of this second Tempest directed by Strehler, although points C) and E) do not appear in the final

85 SN 86.
86 GJ 3.
87 The same criterion applies to the translation. Writes Strehler to Lombardo: “Let be clear that mine are only proposals and that you are the last judge or, better, the second last. The last one being the stage”. Letter n.d. in Colombo, ‘La Tempesta' tradotta e messa in scena 1977-1978 15. The letter was probably written in August 1977.
88 SN 113.
89 See previous note 48.
production. Neither Strehler in his notes nor Gaipa in his journal though, offer specific technical details on the lighting design of the production. With the partial exception of the set that, as previously observed, started to be conceived well before the rehearsal period, and than went through a series of modifications, Strehler worked on the lights of The Tempest, as well as on the music, along with his work with the actors. In his notes, when there is a reference, is to an atmosphere, as when he asks himself what could be the season and the latitude of the island: “Perhaps the stillness of the heat coming from a relentless sun, a trance, an high glow with a few shadows, and the faces damp with a not naturalistic sweat”\textsuperscript{90}. Gaipa too, here and there, mentions effects such as “the magic afternoon light” or “the sunset light”\textsuperscript{91}, but there are no references to how these effects were technically produced, and without the lighting plot of the production is difficult to make any hypothesis\textsuperscript{92}. There are a few points of the work on the lights though, that are peculiar to Strehler’s interpretative criteria. First, it should be noticed that in the production credits there is no mention of a lighting designer. The designer is Strehler himself\textsuperscript{93} who, even without a deep technical knowledge of the lighting instruments, since the beginning of the rehearsals works with the technicians in a non-systematic yet coordinated way.

According to Gerardo Modica, chief lighting technician of the production, as

\textsuperscript{90} SN 109.
\textsuperscript{91} GJ 71 and 131.
\textsuperscript{92} See previous note 25.
\textsuperscript{93} The name of Alberto Savi appears in the video, but he was in charge only of the extra lights required by the cameras.
soon as Streheler is in theatre he wants to see everything that I prepared: he asks for a black-out, and wants to see one by one the instruments that are on. Then he questions me on each one: ‘What is this?’ ‘This is for that thing there.’ ‘No, the position is wrong, lower it and put it there instead.’ He checks everything, the position, the angle, the colors, etc. Since the beginning, therefore, we spend from two to three hours to control everything. Then he establishes a basic cue, which he will use to start to work with the actors. This set is marked, but then we work always on it, almost every time. Often, he changes it many times, to return to the set he saw first. In terms of time, he spends more time with the lights, but is the same kind of work he does with the costumes, the set design, with everything. From that day, he keeps working on the lights – while is working with the actors – uninterruptedly until opening night, always. There is not such a day when the lights are ‘done’.

In this sense, the lights created by Strehler, more than to reach an aesthetic perfection, as another technician, Adriano Todeschini, has observed, are right. They are the right lights to express what he wants from the production. [...] If everything works simultaneously, the light per se is not important, but the light in that way and at that moment, where there is a curtain, a line of the text, a music cue, or a feeling etc. Strehler’s productions have this type of ‘total’ organization, which in the audience becomes an emotional

94 Stampalia, Strehler dirige 132.

95 Todeschini was among the 18 mimes of the 1978 production, but later started to work in the technical staff of the Piccolo, till he became chief lighting technician.
moment, but built on the mechanics of the theatre instrument as a whole, not produced only by the light\textsuperscript{96}.

Consequently, if other functions of the production – a musical cue, for example or a word – are not right \textit{in that way and at that moment}, the corresponding light is not right as well. Aside from this essential idea of the production as a whole, another interesting point emerges from an answer that Damiani, in a brief newspaper interview, gives to the question if for the 1978 \textit{Tempest} new lighting techniques have been adopted: “Well, as diffusion effects and backlights, the lighting set is quite interesting, but in reality is the same that we use since \textbf{Galileo}, with no new equipment”\textsuperscript{97}. Damiani’s reference to \textbf{Galileo} as a sort of originating point for the lighting techniques developed by the Piccolo from 1963 onward parallels Strehler’s idea that the set for \textbf{The Tempest} is a summary of resources and techniques that were established in that 1963 production.

The specifics of the lighting techniques can be summarized in terms of timing, colors, backdrop and, as stressed by Damiani, of backlights and diffusion effects. According to Todeschini, Strehler uses lights effects as well as he uses music, words, or even simple sounds originated by the stage. It’s a “method based on timing. Any effect needs its own timing”\textsuperscript{98}. If necessary, Strehler makes use of sudden black-outs, but he usually prefers slow movements, in which the light fades gradually in or out, and this not only in performance, but during the

\textsuperscript{96} Stampalia, \textit{Strehler dirige} 137-138.

\textsuperscript{97} Paganini, “Scenografia essenziale (con 4 mila metro di tulle)” ibid.

\textsuperscript{98} Stampalia, \textit{Strehler dirige} 145.
rehearsals as well. The transition from I.i to I.ii, from the storm to the light of the island, is a perfect example of these “very slow changes of perception, which create atmosphere, harmony”\(^\text{99}\). Even slower, nearly imperceptible, is the gradual transition of the sun on the cyclorama, which marks the three hours of the action of the play. Strehler’s dislike for abrupt transitions goes with his contempt for colors such as red or yellow, unless they are indispensable for specific situations. In general, he “always works on warm and cold settings: cold (dramatic, nocturnal),” for example the initial storm, “or warm (sunrises, sunsets etc.)”\(^\text{100}\), like the light of the island.

The above-mentioned cyclorama is the backdrop technique favored by Strehler\(^\text{101}\). According to Todeschini, Strehler used to work hours and hours on the backdrops, on the luminous intensity and on the colors: “Strehler always works on soft intensities, he never has backdrops at the highest gradation, unless is a noon situation, [which is not the case in The Tempest]; he really loves the

\(^{99}\) Stampalia, *Strehler dirige* 146.

\(^{100}\) Stampalia, *Strehler dirige* 146.

\(^{101}\) Two important productions in which Strehler adopted the cyclorama in the curved form at 180 degrees are *King Lear*, 1972-73, scene and costume design by Ezio Frigerio, and in the second edition of Brecht’s *The Good Person of Setzuan*, 1980-81, scenes by Paul Bregni and costumes by Luisa Spinatelli. For a detailed description of the cyclorama and its application to the staging of the Brechtian play, see Catherine Douël Dell’Agnola, *Strehler e Brecht - 1981. Studio di regia* (Roma: Bulzoni, 1994): 49-50 and 69-74. The first edition of *The Good Person of Setzuan* was directed by Strehler in 1957-58, scenes by Luciano Damiani and costumes by Ezio Frigerio. The one staged in 1981 was then the second edition at the Piccolo Teatro, but in reality the third one directed by Strehler, the 1977 one at the Schauspielhaus in Hamburg, Germany, scene and costume design by Damiani, being the second. See also chapter 4, note 7.
gradual transition to sunrises, to sunsets, to evenings (he is very realistic after all)"\textsuperscript{102}. To create this softness, light is reflected: there is a cyclorama, or backdrop, in PVC, that is a plastic sheet [but it can be paper, gauze, or tulle as well], then behind it there is another scrim (the ‘bounce’ drop); usually light hits the ‘bounce’ drop [a jute or cotton sheet] and then is reflected on the main backdrop. In this way light is even softer: it is already smooth on the ‘bounce’ drop, but it is even more diffuse by the reflection on the PVC surface\textsuperscript{103}.

The cyclorama of \textit{The Tempest} is visible in the video, in the transition from \hyperlink{f102}{prologue one} to \hyperlink{f103}{prologue two}, when the sequence shows a stage hand waving strips of tinfoil for create the effect of rain. He walks into an area of about one meter wide, between the two scrims. On sides of the technician, on the ground, are also visible sets of floodlights – they seem mainly white and blue, but usually amber too is part of the sets. The floodlights are more numerous on the left side, from the point of view of who’s watching the video, and direct their beams on the ‘bounce’ drop. However, if the diffuse light of the backdrop does not need to be smooth, it is possible to add some direct light, like the sun that gradually follows the actions on the island.

Backlight is another lighting technique particularly favored by Strehler, who, always according to Todeschini, is not an advocate of direct lights:

\textsuperscript{102} Stampalia, \textit{Strehler dirige} 148.

\textsuperscript{103} Stampalia, \textit{Strehler dirige} 149. The technique of the cyclorama is described by Carlo Lia, an electrician who worked with the Piccolo since the beginning of the 1990s. According to Damiani, the backdrop for \textit{The Tempest} was made of paper and tulle. See Paganini, “Scenografia essenziale (con 4 mila metro di tulle)” ibid.
His front lights never reach the highest gradation, not even during the curtain calls. [...] Backlight creates silhouettes, the magic lantern effect, and often Strehler’s backlight is very sharp [Caliban’s silhouette, for example, at the end of II.ii]. The backlight effect can be produced by projectors or just by the backdrop lit behind a shadowed frontal area. [...] Strehler really likes chiaroscuro areas, so that if an actor goes in a shadowed spot, he let the actor go [the example, in this case, is II.i, the exchange of lines between Antonio and Sebastian, when they plan the killing of Alonso].

In this mix of backdrops, backlights, and direct lights, a fundamental technical device is a projector called cappellotto [cap] that, according to Todeschini, has been invented at the Piccolo and it is essential in creating that diffusion effect without which, with an extended use of side backlights, half sides of the actors would be completely black. Usually mounted on a low batten, normally twenty or twenty-two for production, and in three colors – blue, white, and amber, like the backdrop – the cappellotto looks like a big square tin can, opened on one side. It is a box in front of which is possible to insert a filter or a gel, if you wish, and that inside has a normal socket, an E-27 (the same of the home bulbs), so you can use any kind of bulb that works with that socket. [...] Whatever is not perceived as lit but is visible on stage probably is lit by the cappellotto. [...] The cappellotto produces a very soft setting.}

104 Stampalia, Strehler dirige 151-152.
105 Stampalia, Strehler dirige 154-155.
What is mostly interesting, and confirms Damiani’s answer in the interview above mentioned, is that i cappellotti, Gerardo Modica recalls, “were invented for Galileo. Only the Piccolo uses them, and nearly in all the productions directed by Strehler. [...] The light of the cappellotti is very useful because binds everything, cleans defects caused by other projectors etc.”\textsuperscript{106}, in other words is a light that is present, but that does not reveal its source\textsuperscript{107}.

Overall, Strehler’s lights were characterized by what the technicians call pulizia [cleanliness]. Usually he did not use a lot of instruments, and during the initial rehearsals did not necessarily have a precise idea of what he wanted to obtain, but when Strehler found what he thought was right for the scene, the results were always clean and precise to the point that he noticed even ten degrees of difference in the intensity of a projector.

### 3.4 The imaginary space of Prospero’s art (I.ii, 1-186 – VS 00:12:30)

Visually, during the eighty-second sequence by which Strehler resolves the transition from I.i to I.ii, the audience is gradually introduced to the cyclorama brightened by a not overbearing sun at the beginning of its decline towards the evening. From the pervasive blue and the blinding flashes of the storm, the overall color of the scene passes to an atmosphere of rarefied heat,

\textsuperscript{106} Stampalia, Strehler dirige 156.

\textsuperscript{107} “For The Little Square (1975) at the Odéon in Paris,” Modica recalls, “many people came on stage to see which kind of instruments we were using to light the stage. There were 44 cappellotti, 5 Par-64, and that’s all. They were set in a U shape around the stage. After us, in Paris they copied them and they made them; they call them the boîtes, the tin cans” (Stampalia, Strehler dirige 156-157).
reminiscent of the Mediterranean, but without any naturalistic intention.

Miranda, who has entered running from left during the final phase of the storm, is at the feet of her father and pronounces her anguished words on the fate of the ship. Then, while the last strips of the sheet-sea disappear, Prospero pronounces his first line: *Calma. Non aver più paura. / Di’ al tuo cuore pietoso / Che non è stato fatto alcun male* [13-15]. The two characters are at the centre of the circle that represents the Zodiac. If my impression as a spectator, as already mentioned, after the initial storm was that of being left exhausted on a beach, to this effect undoubtedly contributed the progressive vision of the platform-island, in its essential simplicity, and the warmth of the light. Another forty seconds, the time needed by Prospero to reassure his daughter, and the auditory and visual exhaustion caused by the initial tempest gave place to a sort of calm rationality. After the sentences *È tempo invece / Che io ti dica di più. La tua mano mi aiuti / A deporre questo mantello di magia. Così* [22-24], the line of Prospero is interrupted by a stage direction *[Lays down his mantle]*. Strehler extends this action for about eighty seconds, with the background of a music characterized by the voice of a countertenor singing in a falsetto tone. This music will return several times during the performance, and to facilitate the reading I will call it *music of the island*108. Miranda helps her father to fold the magic mantle, a real sheet that is first laid out in its length in full view of the audience, with movements so precise

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108 According to the virtual exhibition entitled *La Tempesta. Musica da vedere* [The Tempest. Music to see], mentioned in the previous note 58, this is the music #2, *Le magie di Prospero* [Prospero’s magic].
as to recall those of a ritual\footnote{\textquoteleft{}Miranda and Prospero folded the magic garment as if it were a flag of state\textquoteright{} (Horowitz 102).}, but also those of a domestic habit. The sequence ends with Miranda laying the mantle in a trapdoor up right, which is opened and slowly shut by her father. Then Prospero starts to tell his daughter about the events that brought them to the island.

After the introductory part, concluded by the action of the mantle, the account of Prospero is the first of the four sections composing I.ii along with those of the appearance of Ariel, the entrance of Caliban, and finally the encounter between Miranda and Ferdinand. The narration proceeds for about ten minutes that, in the video recording, alternate close-ups and long shots showing Prospero who affectionately embraces his daughter. By comparing the video with the text published by Lombardo, a few cuts and a change in the order of the words in a line of Prospero are evident, but the efficacy of this first section of I.ii is not invalidated. Note that at the beginning and at the end of the story, at the lines \textit{Con tale sapienza e misura dell\'Arte} [28] and \textit{...con la mia scienza del futuro} [180], Prospero shows his book-script. Miranda falls asleep during the lines that precede the entrance of Ariel.

April 11, a month after the beginning of the rehearsals – but it should be considered the break of about eight days granted to the actors when the production moved from Via Rovello to the Lirico, where they were admitted on April 4, when the main structure of the set was ready – Gaipa stresses how for
Tino Carraro, playing Prospero, this scene is particularly difficult. Immediately after the powerful image of Prospero magician directing the storm, this is the first scene for Carraro, who then remains continuously on stage for over forty minutes, the duration of I.ii in the video. During this time frame, Carraro moves from the theme orchestra director, according to the definition of Gaipa, to that of the affectionate father. Then the actor has to switch to the story of the events that brought Prospero and Miranda to the island, followed by the relationship, a mix of love and severity, with Ariel. Then he has to change again, to present the violence of the master with Caliban, to conclude with the staging, like an experiment, of the first encounter between Miranda and Ferdinand. This theme of the mutability of Prospero is reflected, Strehler wrote, in the problem of his physical appearance:

If it is too specific, an aspect will ‘always’ replace another aspect.

For example, if Prospero has a Leonardo-like beard, the aspect of ‘god-father’ will always remain in the foreground. If he has the

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110 Tino Carraro (1910-1995) can certainly be considered one of the most emblematic actors of the Piccolo Teatro of Milan, where he started to work since the early fifties. In the productions of the Piccolo, Carraro was able to "fully implement a way of being an actor different from the conventional stars, very attached to the idea of theatre ensemble (perfect for a theatre where the star is the director, with whom he can share his great interpretative skills), but also an idea of actor as craftsman, devoted to an extreme discipline, in which the interior search is never satisfied with himself." Maria Grazia Gregori, "Tino Carraro," in Dizionario dello spettacolo del '900, 7 September 2008 http://www.delteatro.it/dizionario_dello_spettacolo_del_900/c/carraro.php. Among the several roles in which Strehler directed Carraro, it should be mentioned Macheath in the first edition of L'opera da tre soldi [The Threepenny Opera] by Bertolt Brecht e Kurt Weill, 1955-56 (Strehler directed a second edition in 1972-73), and the title role in Shakespeare's Coriolanus, 1957-58. When Strehler, in the season1962-63, offered the title role in Brecht's Galileo to Tino Buazzelli. Carraro left the Piccolo. He returned in the season 1972-73 – after that Strehler too, for a couple of years, had left the Piccolo to direct the company Gruppo Teatro Azione – to play the title role in Shakespeare’s King Lear, that together with Prospero, represent two other top moments of his collaboration with Strehler.
scientist look – John Dee (Gielgud) – he will represent the aspect ‘renaissance-wizard scientist a bit cruel’. If he has very short hair and beard (like Lear), that is ‘tough’, he will always be too much a colonizer.

The final solution is clearly a mix of these three aspects. The difficulty of Lii, which forces Carraro to a continuous change of gear, from the epic style to the psychological, often emerges in rehearsal, during which the actor, who at that time is about 68, is subjected to hours and hours of hard work. April 28, a few sentences of Gaipa’s journal on the first minutes of the scene, although colorful, give an idea of the intensity of the work of Strehler with Carraro:

It is a scene of a few minutes, a concentration of themes for which Tino has to use all the most diverse resources of his art as an actor, and every time he faces it with a mix of hate and love. Tino alternates brilliant moments with the frailty of his physical condition; he soars towards peaks of excellence and falls in desperate depressions. Giorgio is literally on him, he loads him with gestural, timbre, and rhythmic implications; he cleans him from solutions that are easy or too obvious; he spurs him and praises him. When he rehearses this scene and, in general, the entire first act, Tino can be sure that he is not able to leave the stage before six or seven hours! His ‘duel’ with Giorgio has moments of sore and shocking drama, it is a clash of two artists who love each other and fight to the last blood. If Giorgio sometimes gives a break

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111 SN 96. Strehler refers respectively to Leonardo da Vinci and to Prospero performed by John Gielgud in the 1973 production of The Tempest directed by Peter Hall at the National Theatre, in England. Gielgud was dressed to resemble Dr John Dee, the Elizabethan magus and astrologer to Queen Elizabeth. Very short hair and beard was the look of Carraro in the King Lear directed by Strehler in 1972-73.
to others, he never grants it to the actor he loves most\textsuperscript{112}.

May 29, after about another month of rehearsals, Gaipa underlines how precisely in the first section of I.ii, the one with Miranda, Carraro is “literally exploded”\textsuperscript{113}, to the point of receiving a spontaneous applause from anyone who was in the audience during the rehearsal. In a newspaper article dedicated to the rehearsals of the show, published about three weeks before the opening, Carraro stresses that the “three months of rehearsals are much more arduous than the production process of \textit{King Lear}. Moreover, we are all involved in this mechanism inspired by Sabbatini […] the set designer who in 1700 created the ‘theatre machinery all’italiana’”\textsuperscript{114}. Intensity of the rehearsals then, and difficulties arising from the use of a space and special effects, as previously emphasized, inspired by the theatre machinery created by Nicola Sabbatini\textsuperscript{115}.

Neither Carraro nor the journalist who wrote the article realized that the reference to 1700 was wrong, but in relation to this question it is also unclear in Horowitz’s statement that “Giorgio Strehler’s production of \textit{The Tempest} was affected by Serlio’s treatise on sixteenth-century stage architecture”\textsuperscript{116}. It is true that Sebastiano Serlio (1475-1554) in his works presents ideas and drawings on how to apply the principles of perspective to theatre, but he does not refer to

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{112} GJ 54.
\item \textsuperscript{113} GJ 69.
\item \textsuperscript{114} Tiziana Missigoi, “Le onde della \textit{Tempesta} invadono la platea,” \textit{L’Unità} (Milano) 6 June 1978.
\item \textsuperscript{115} See previous note 73.
\item \textsuperscript{116} Horowitz 110.
\end{itemize}
theatre machinery. It is curious though, as noted by Kott, that Prospero’s lines

*The cloud-capped towers, the gorgeous palaces, the solemn temples/* [IV.i, 152-153]

seem to echo the opening passage of Serlio’s *A Treatise of Scenes, or places to play in*, in Book II of his *Architettura*, translated and published for the first time in English in 1611, the same year of the first production of *The Tempest* at Whitehall.

In Sabbatini, on the contrary, there are detailed descriptions of how to resolve technical issues. Aside from the already mentioned ‘How To Make The Heavens In Sections’, the following can be connected to some of the technical solutions adopted by Strehler: ‘How To Stage The Total Destruction Of The Scene’ and ‘How To Open And Close The Stage Traps’. Sabbatini describes also three different methods for creating a sea, and one, the ‘First Method Of Showing A Sea’, inspires the solution of Strehler’s production: “The sheets-sea are made like the first example in Sabbatini, the most simple and primitive.” In reality, Sabbatini says that underneath the sheets, there are ropes at the ends of which there are men who alternately have to tighten and slacken them, the men are therefore not directly below the sheets.

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117 See Jan Kott, ‘*The Tempest*, or Repetition’, in *The Bottom Translation*, ibid.: 100-101, first published in *Mosaic* (1977). Serlio’s opening passage says: “Among all the things that may bee made by mens hands, thereby to yield admiration, pleasure to sight, and to content the fantasies of men; I thinke it is placing of a Scene, as it is shewed to your sight, where a man in a small place may see built by Carpenters or Masons, skillful in perspective worke, great Palaces, large Temples, and divers Houses”, in Sebastiano Serlio, *The Five Books of Architecture. An Unabridged Reprint of the English Edition of 1611* (New York: Dover, 1982): Book II, fol. 24.

118 See previous note 73.

119 Respectively Hewitt 109-111 and 119-122.

120 Hewitt 130-131.

121 SN 105.
Carraro’s statement about the complex theatre mechanisms highlights one of most unique characteristics of the production. Each entrance, exit, change of scene, or special effect, is for the actors a challenge that can be understood only by realizing that the theatre space created by Damiani and Strehler is not only the material frame in which to collocate the show. The baroque machinery is used to surprise or, as already stressed, to signal the passage, in the seventeenth-century England, to a new way of producing theatre, but the theatre space, as emphasized by Pierre Francastel,

it is not only the shell in which to collocate the production, it is the mental frame, the spectator’s projection and recollection of an image that was inside the mind of the author, of the director, and of the actors, and then in that of the audience. As a consequence, it is essentially an imaginary space122.

Francastel’s definition is in line with the aforementioned comment by Strehler that “The ‘theatricality’, the artificial, the created, the ‘directed by’ is continuous in The Tempest”, but even more if this imaginary space is the theme itself of the text, its representation will not be resolved only in visual terms, it will also be composed by words, movements, and sounds. A simple hand gesture of Prospero when he says Padrone di una poverissima grotta [20], for example, and the entire space becomes a full poor cell [20]. It is no coincidence that the language of the text, according to Gaipa, has been another challenge for Carraro-Prospero.

Initially envisaged as a collective work of Strehler and other collaborators,

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as it had been for the 1972-73 *King Lear*\(^{123}\), the translation is then entrusted to Agostino Lombardo\(^{124}\). At the beginning of 1977, in his notes Strehler writes that *The Tempest* needs a translation in verse - for *King Lear* had been used free verse and prose - and, above all, “a stylistic unity, a poetic, vocal, rhythmic, and sonorous ‘literary’ system, a single hand carefully linking all these aspects”\(^{125}\).

The intense exchange of letters between Strehler and Lombardo, which started in 1977 and continued for the entire rehearsal period, witnesses this search for stylistic unity\(^{126}\). On one hand the translation of Lombardo, on the other the constant work of revision, with suggestions, changes, and cuts, proposed by Strehler, who has always admitted to not feeling at ease with the English language. Anna Anzi sums up the technical result:

> For his translation Lombardo preferred not to utilize the iambic pentameter with no rhyme (blank verse) used by Shakespeare and adopted a verse based not on the number of syllables but on that of accents. Variables accents, two to four, depending on the dramatic situation or the nature of the character. A letter of Strehler (August 1977) reveals the efforts made by both he and Lombardo to reach a ‘rhythmic decision’ that was a compromise between the free rhythm chosen by the translator and the ‘verbal idea’ of the show,

\(^{123}\) See previous note 31.

\(^{124}\) See previous note 26.

\(^{125}\) SN 34.

\(^{126}\) See previous note 28.
the ‘personal musicality’ of the director and the performability required by the text on stage\textsuperscript{127}.

Again though, it would be a mistake to look at this search for rhythm, musicality, and performability of the spoken words, as a simple content framed by the theatre space. When Strehler in his notes, with reference to the translation, says that “it is necessary a ‘plastic’ idea of the whole”\textsuperscript{128}, he gives the words the same tridimensional quality attributed to all the other components of the imaginary space perceived by the audience.

\textbf{3.5 Ariel’s wire (I.ii, 187-306 – VS 00:08:15)}

Giulia Lazzarini’s interpretation of Ariel is one of the elements that most characterize Strehler’s production of the 1978 \textit{Tempest}. The first entrance of the character is another unexpected coup de théâtre, like the initial tempest, but from a technical point of view, completely different. If the initial scene struck me for its combination of visual and acoustic elements, in my memory the arrival of Ariel provoked a mixture of amazement and amusement. A character, hanging by a wire and appearing as though falling from the grid is already unusual, and the video recording accentuates that singularity with cuts and various angles.

After the stage direction \textit{[Miranda sleeps]}, on the cue \textit{Avanti, servo, vieni. Avanti! / Eccomi, sono pronto, ora. / Qui vicino, mio Ariel. Vieni! [187-188]}, Prospero, at the center of the circle, raises his arms to the sky and the shot, facing upwards,


\textsuperscript{128} SN 34.
becomes in a certain sense his glance because one sees Ariel appear as she descends from the darkness of the stage’s grid. In the lines that follow, from

Ariel who exclaims, *Ehilà, gran maestro!* [189], to Prospero who concludes, saying, *Ariel, hai eseguito perfettamente / la tua parte* [237-238], the account of the magical tempest, ordered by Prospero and carried out by Ariel, unfolds. As a spectator, the effect was astonishing, and was achieved not only by seeing an actress literally fly in the air, though hanging by a wire – unforgettable the moment in which Ariel is standing in mid-air and seems to be sustained by Prospero’s uplifted arms – but above all by the lightness and by the playfulness of the
character’s movements. One can say that there is no image of the text for which Ariel does not offer the mimic-visual expression. In particular, on the line Non c’era anima / Che non fosse presa dalla mattana / E non facesse / Scene di tragedia [208-210], Ariel drops to the ground like a puppet, to which, when hit by another puppet, the puppeteer releases more string, making it sit on the ground with its head dangling. To underline this moment, in the recording Ariel is framed by the side wing at stage right, where one can also see the technician who controls the wire. While is on the ground on her back, Ariel frolics, emitting sounds while pounding her chest – a sort of kata of the puppets in the paroxysmal moments of their shows – in a manner that cannot but recall Strehler’s Harlequin from The Servant of Two Masters when, at the end of III.iii, he falls into one of his two masters’ travel baskets, and then reappears like a puppet hitting himself and emitting sounds.

After having praised Ariel, Prospero continues with his own lines, saying, Ma c’è altro lavoro [238]. At this point, before Prospero proceeds, Strehler inserts a pause during which Ariel sits on the ground, disheartened by the news of additional work, and Prospero goes upstage right to the trapdoor to get a gnomon that he then inserts vertically in the soil at the center of the zodiac circle, which thus becomes a sundial. In the stage directions for the English text, there

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129 Aurelio Caracci, head-carpenter of the Piccolo Teatro.

130 The gnomon is the pole that, by way of the shadow projected on the surface of the sundial, indicates the hours. A point completely misunderstood by Horowitz in his description of the production: “Prospero then produce a wooden pole from the storage space into which Mirando had packed his mantle. He plunged it into the ground and withdrew a baton from the folds of his cloak, using it to control Ariel and remind her of his great power. Ariel was forced into a position
Isn’t any reference to the gnomon, but the action is perfectly complementary to the textual lines: PROSPERO Che ore sono? ARIEL Metà del giorno è passata. PROSPERO Di due clessidre almeno. / Il tempo tra adesso e le sei / Dev’essere speso da entrambi / Nel modo più proficuo [239-240]. In the action one can also read a sort of signal, as if the real spectacle put on stage by Prospero’s magic began at that moment. In any case, the reference to the time is important because The Tempest is the only work of Shakespeare whose action occurs in real time; in fact, about three hours pass between the first scene of the shipwreck and the comedy’s epilogue. More than once the text stresses that the action takes place between 3 p.m. and 6 p.m., the same time of the performances in the Elizabethan era. When Prospero asks for the time, about three minutes have passed since the entrance of Ariel, and before exiting, the dialogue between the two continues for another four minutes as if this section of I.ii was further divided into two parts: first the narrative of the initial storm, and then the interaction between Prospero and Ariel, who, having carried out her master’s orders, demands freedom. The request, initially delivered by Ariel with a sure vehemence, and underlined by her desire to
remove herself from the wire – a very strong metaphorical action – fades almost immediately faced by Prospero’s imperious reaction. In reality, the confrontation is the pretext for another narrative, in the course of which Prospero reminds Ariel how things were at the time of her liberation from the prison in which the witch Sycorax constrained her. Sycorax then dies and her son Caliban, the only human form that Prospero found upon his arrival on the island, now serves him. Compared to the flying and playful Ariel of the first part of the scene-section, now one sees her huddled on the ground behind the gnomon, frightened by the words of Prospero that, with the magic rod in hand, appears like a strict teacher reproaching a pupil. This part concludes with Ariel who asks forgiveness, and Prospero who promises her freedom in a few days.

With the image of the happy Ariel who again rises in the air and embraces her master with her legs, the playful atmosphere from the first part of the scene-section returns. On the precise line, Diventa una Ninfa del mare: visibile / Solo a te stesso e a me, invisibile / A ogni altra pupilla [301-304], Prospero goes to open a trapdoor upstage left that corresponds with that already used upstage right, and from it brings forth a costume and wig that he gives to Ariel. Ariel’s exit, which in the video is shot from a camera positioned high up on the stage’s grid, with a point of view opposite that of the entrance – in fact, one sees Prospero down below – is underlined by a return of the music of the island, which was introduced during the folding of the mantle. Prospero retrieves the gnomon from the center of the circle, replaces it in the trapdoor upstage right, and then
approaches Miranda, who is still asleep, stretched out in the central upstage area of the circle. Strehler observes, in this passage, the dramaturgical ability of Shakespeare, who during this section of I.ii makes Miranda sleep:

The audience does not know that Ariel is ‘invisible.’ They will know it after she has entered. If Miranda was awake, for the audience it would seem as though she would see Ariel. The understanding of the invisibility was not yet created. Therefore, either Miranda is not there, or she must sleep; that is, not be present. If one compares the imaginary space of the Tempest of 1978 to a Cartesian plane, Miranda, Ferdinando, Alonso and his court, and the fools would be placed on the horizontal line (abscissa), Ariel and Caliban on the perpendicular line (ordinate), with Prospero in the point of origin, that in which the two lines cross. In the course of the event, in effect, the characters positioned on the horizontal axis undergo a change that is a direct consequence of Prospero’s magical actions. Ideally, it is as if they would proceed from the negative to the positive side of the axis, passing through the point of origin in which Prospero is located. Ariel and Caliban, however, are placed respectively on two points of the perpendicular axis. Ariel on the positive side (higher), instrument of Prospero’s magic; Caliban on the negative side (lower), slave to the material necessities of his master. Both rely on Prospero, and both want their freedom back, but while Ariel’s purpose is to get as far as possible away from the point of origin, Caliban moves towards the point of origin with the intent of overtaking it. Beyond the Cartesian

\[133\text{ SN 64.}\]
comparison, the positioning of Ariel and Caliban, above and below Prospero, to clarify, is exactly how it visually occurs in the performance directed by Strehler, and, after the initial tempest, it is one of the performance’s aspects of greatest metaphoric significance. Gaipa writes in his journal:

The steel wire on which Giulia-Ariel will free herself on the island can enchant the audience as a theatrical invention, but in reality it is the sign of her captivity, exactly like the trapdoor from which Caliban exits with firewood. Not by chance does Giorgio specify that Ariel will appear ‘always’ attached to the wire in the scenes with Prospero – apart from those in which she will return from a ‘mission’ ordered by him, for example after the Harpy scene – and, in her first appearance, she will try to detach herself from the wire. In the end it will be Prospero who unhooks her, in the moment in which he will free her. In all of the other scenes – where she is invisible to everyone – Ariel will walk on the ground, mingle with the corporal figures, give rise to misunderstandings and theatrical deceptions with this ambivalence of being invisible for the actors of the play and present for the audience.

An hypothesis on how Strehler arrived at the technical solution of having Ariel tied to a wire that could truly give the impression of flying is linked to Gaipa’s note that harks back to the historic interpretation of the text in the tradition of the English theatre: “In the Edmund Kean’s Tempest of 1857, Ariel appeared in the first scene, the prologue, suspended above the burning ship”.

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134 GJ 13.
135 GJ 30.
In any case, from both Strehler’s note and an interview with Giulia Lazzarini\textsuperscript{136}, who performed as Ariel, one understands that at least initially there were at least two versions of this non-human character. The one Ariel is likened to “Mercury, the divine messenger with winged feet and the caduceus, so dear to Kott”\textsuperscript{137}, and Lazzarini confirms that Damiani, when “began to design the costumes, he imagined and drew Ariel with a corset-breastplate, as if she was a little Mercury”\textsuperscript{138}. The other version is the one closer to the one actually realized: “We tried the breastplate, but Strehler immediately said, ‘No. Try with some veils.’ We even tried a collar that made Ariel look like a clown. It was very reminiscent of the fool in \textit{King Lear}, but Strehler wanted her more evanescent. A nothing. With a white skullcap, all white and light veils that would let air pass and would give the idea of plume in the wind, of infinite lightness. The movements needed to be in slow motion. The idea of NOTHING inspired me”\textsuperscript{139}. In his notes from

\textsuperscript{136} Giulia Lazzarini (1934-) is another emblematic actress of the Piccolo Teatro of Milan. Among the various characters she performed in productions directed by Strehler, and aside from Ariel, probably her most memorable interpretation, she was Polly in the second edition of Brecht’s \textit{The Threepenny Opera}, 1972-73, Varja in the second edition of Chekhov’s \textit{The Cherry Orchard}, 1973-74, Winnie in Samuel Beckett’s \textit{Happy Days}, 1981-82, and when she was 53, an irresistible Clarice, the young lover, in the seventh or ‘farewell edition’ of Goldoni’s \textit{The Servant of Two Masters}, 1986-87.

\textsuperscript{137} SN 65. Strehler refers to Kott’s essay “The Aeneid and The Tempest,” in \textit{The Bottom Translation}, ibid.: 107-132, first published in \textit{Arion} (1976), in which the Polish critic compares in details the mythical god to Ariel: “Gods and their messengers in Homer and Virgil are only seen by the mortals to whom they choose to speak, and they change disguises as Ariel does in \textit{The Tempest}. This epic convention is transformed into the optics of the theater. Ariel, the ‘divine messanger,’ [Mercury] must be at the same time visible and invisible onstage” (Kott, “The Aeneid and The Tempest” 111).


\textsuperscript{139} Anzi, “I voli di Ariele” 211. The reference is obviously to the more than once mentioned 1972-73 production of \textit{King Lear} directed by Strehler. NULLA [NOTHING] is all capitals in the text.
August of 1977, Strehler wrote of Ariel as

a ‘small living cloud’ that descends from above hanging by a
thread like the gauze clouds from the tricks of the baroque theatre,
and on the ground, she rolls, flutters, grows, rises up, and stretches.
Ariel is always moving: whether just barely like a breath of wind,
or more, with larger, broader movements which then, however, are
restraining”\textsuperscript{140}.

As already observed, there is no image from the text for which Ariel does
not offer the mimic-visual expression, and the doubt, perhaps, that precisely for
this reason Ariel could appear as human as the other characters, brings Strehler
to consider that Ariel could wear “a delicate veil-mask, a thin layer of veil with
an expression – not expression, not just neutral, but absolutely enigmatic”\textsuperscript{141}. A
solution to which is then preferred a face completely white, as white are also
hands, arms, the little felt cap for the head, light cotton, elasticized overalls that
cover the corset to which the wire is fastened, and finally the true costume itself,
a very light onion veil\textsuperscript{142}.

From a technical point of view, the creation of the character was full of
difficulties. The research of the steel corset with the joint apt to support Ariel’s
aerial evolutions, and that also guaranteed the terms of safety – from the grid to

\textsuperscript{140}SN 65.

\textsuperscript{141}SN 116.

\textsuperscript{142}Lazzarini needed one hour and the help of two dressers to put on the costume and to
complete the make up. A detailed analysis of all the the technicalities – theatre mechanisms,
choreography of the movements, gestures – required by the staging of Ariel, is in Odette Aslan,
In the same volume, see also Danielle Cohen-Levinas, “Le leitmotiv d’Ariel” (127-129), and
the stage the average height was 15 meters – pushed Lazzarini to considerable physical strain. Because of the corset that constricted, for example, the voice could not rest, and she had to use the falsetto, also because Strehler wanted “to feel the innocence. The voice of a child.” In addition, in all of the situations in which she was hooked to the wire, all of Ariel’s movements relied on a perfect coordination with the manipulator of the wire himself, Aurelio Caracci, head-carpenter of the Piccolo. A particularly tough moment was the transformation of Ariel into Harpy. Because of the tight timing for the costume change, a service hook was devised that brought Lazzarini directly from the dressing room to the grid, where the technician helped her attach the wire’s hook. When on stage but not attached to the wire or involved in actions with other characters, although always invisible to them, with the exception of Prospero or when she appears as Harpy, Ariel also performed the functions of stage hand: he removes the objects from the Zodiac circle, puts away clothes left on the stage, helps Prospero dress, and uses the trapdoors of the island-platform as if they were prop baskets.

The majority of the rehearsals of Ariel were conducted under the guidance of Carlo Battistoni, one of Strehler’s assistants. As Lazzarini herself notes, this was part of Strehler’s work methods; the fact, that is, that assistants concern

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144 Anzi, “I voli di Ariele” 212.

145 At that time, Lazzarini weighed about 45 kilograms.

146 Battistoni, who has been already mentioned as director of the video of the production, was also the husband of Lazzarini.
themselves with a few particular scenes in order to then present them to the master, who refined, changed, suggested, rejected\textsuperscript{147}. More generally, Lazzarini recalls, the whole performance, “was constructed piecemeal; a type of puzzle that he [Strehler] then, little by little, put together”\textsuperscript{148}. Strehler “used to work scene by scene. He rehearsed a piece, and sometimes he would repeat it, two, three, four times ... and then another piece. In the meantime, he wanted that no one lose the desired concentration. He never worked consecutively. The tension was continuously interrupted, and to recover it cost much fatigue”\textsuperscript{149}.

3.6 **Caliban’s darkness** (I.ii, 307-376 – VS 00:07:00)

Miranda’s awakening introduces the third scene-section of I.ii, that of Caliban’s entrance. In the show, during these initial lines, from which we realize that Miranda is afraid of Caliban, from under his coat Prospero removes a leather belt that he holds, we presume, to keep the slave at bay. He then kneels in the central zone downstage in the circle and removes a bit of sand with his hands to then beat with right hand against the earth while he says *Ehi, tu, schiavo! Caliban, tu fango, parla!* [315-316]. Although the set does not present any openings that could make one think of the entrance to a cell, Strehler resolves the problem with a solution that is in its own way more adherent to the text. Caliban’s true

\textsuperscript{147} Battistoni worked on Ariel; Enrico D’Amato with Caliban, Trinculo, and Stephano; Walter Pagliaro with Miranda and Ferdinand; Marise Flach coordinated all the stage movements and all the actions of the mimes for the sea and the masques.

\textsuperscript{148} Anzi, “I voli di Ariele” 210.

\textsuperscript{149} Anzi, “I voli di Ariele” 213.
entrance is preceded by his line [Within] La legna basta, dentro [316]50, where the stage directions are about to indicate the inside of Prospero’s cell. In the translation, the epithet fango [316] pronounced by Prospero would literally stand for mud, but in the English text corresponds to earth [316], in Italian terra; and in fact Caliban exits from the earth. After his voice is heard, Prospero picks up with the line Vieni, fuori, dico! / C’è altro lavoro per te. / Ti muovi, tartaruga? E allora? [317-318], which is followed in the English text by a stage direction that indicates [Re-]enter Ariel like a water-nymph, but the spirit’s new entrance and the brief exchange with Prospero are cut and Prospero continues with Schiavo velenoso, generato dal demonio / In coppia con tua madre scellerata, / Immediatamente fuori! [321-322]. At this point, as already for Ariel’s entrance, for a few seconds the video offers a perspective that differs from what is observed by the theatrical audience. At the place that Prospero has beaten with his hand there is another trap door that, differently from the lateral upstage trap doors, which open with hinges, has a sliding panel that is maneuvered from inside151. For a second, in the long shot, we see the panel lower a bit on the side, and the frame then cuts off above the stage. There is a brief darkness while we hear the sound of the panel that slides open to reveal Prospero, seen from below, with Miranda’s head that leans on one of his shoulders. Caliban slowly emerges from the trap door clinging to the side edges with his hands but from behind and with his head low, and in this manner

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50 So in the published text, but in the video he says Basta la legna, dentro.

151 The structure of this trap reminds Sabbatini’s description of ‘How To Open And Close The Stage Traps’ mentioned in previous paragraph 4.
he gives the impression of a gigantic spider. This impression is accentuated by the actor’s physique, which is completely nude except for a loincloth and has profoundly dark skin. Caliban’s first line outside is delivered between his exit from the trap door and a series of movements that accentuate the impression of an insect. At the end of the action the actor is once again seated on the ground, legs crossed, in front of the trap door and facing the audience, with large and white eyes that stick out from the background of his dark face. We understand from Prospero’s next lines that Caliban has tried to violate Miranda’s honor, and from that moment has lost the sympathy with which the father had treated him, as Miranda herself reasserts with ardor in a long line. While she and her father
remain more or less always in the center of the circle, as the scene continues Caliban moves on the right with animal-like movements. There is even a moment in which he seems to want to attack Prospero, but the sight of first the leather belt and then the magic rod stops him. During his last line – Ti prego, no./ [Aside] Devo ubbidire: la sua Arte / È così potente da piegare Setebos, / Il dio di mia madre, / E farne un suo vassallo [373-376] – the aside finds him bent behind, but with his head to the public, as he closes the trap door. His exit follows Prospero’s line Bene, schiavo! Via di qui! [376], as is indicated by the stage direction. This is another theatrical moment that Strehler takes advantage of as much as possible.
Caliban slowly raises himself to his full height with an almost noble aspect, and it is as if he suddenly presents himself for what he really is, a human being. He then likewise slowly exits walking towards right stage, but not without pausing to cast a final disquieting look – the eyes of the actor, as said above, stick out from his dark face – in the direction of Prospero. Caliban’s entire scene lasts seven minutes.

Strehler discusses Caliban a lot, maybe more than any other character, in the notes of August 6-12 and of November 19-24, 1977. One of the most significant aspects of these notes, which compose a kind of essay152, is Caliban’s representation in respect to Ariel:

Caliban needs to be tied to the earth, like Ariel needs in another way to be tied to the air. Ariel descends from above and rises above

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152 SN 66-68, 88-92, and 97-98. Published also in Griga 80-89 as if they were an overall lesson, see previous note 32.
and can move on the diagonal in one sense or another. Caliban must exit from below, from a trap door that leads to the dark under-stage of the theatre-island and to the cellar-basement of the cave-stage. But Caliban must move and must, at a certain point, be able to free himself. Caliban needs to be able to move on the set, forwards, backwards, and everywhere. It is necessary that Caliban is tied and has mobility at the same time. I think that Caliban is Prospero’s prisoner in the manner of classical prisoners, dragging a chain and moving a weight\textsuperscript{153}.

The chain imagined by Strehler symbolically corresponds to Ariel’s cable and reflects the metaphoric imagine of the Cartesian level mentioned earlier, with Ariel and Caliban arranged on the vertical axis, respectively above and below Prospero, who is situated in the point of origin. The idea of the ball and chain, Gaipa notes on March 22, is gradually abandoned during the rehearsals for various reasons, but two in particular: a limitation of the movements of the character that, although wanted, would excessively condition the actor, and the difficulty of justifying a chain welded or blocked by a padlock. How would Prospero have procured the welding or the padlock? Among the various objects that Gonzalo \textit{Out of his charity} [I.ii, 162] had left for him when he abandoned him on the boat with Miranda were there also instruments to weld or a padlock, which requires a key? It is Strehler who asks these and other questions, as he always did in his rigorous research to justify every particular of the show. But aside from these motives, which are of a more technical nature, there is also a

\textsuperscript{153} SN 67.
reason tied to what is represented by the ball and chain, a literal symbol for prison and for slavery, when instead Caliban, Strehler notes, is “a slave for a moment of the scene [with Prospero and Miranda]; later rebel slave who does not know that he is the slave of others [Stefano and Trinculo], later again a defeated slave [of Prospero], and later free in his solitude on the island abandoned even by Ariel”\(^{154}\). The chain, in other words, would have burdened Caliban’s character with only a political significance and with all of the consequences deriving thereof for a more comprehensive interpretation of the text. On the other hand, Strehler observes, according to critical interpretations of the text like that of W. H. Auden\(^{155}\), “Shakespeare presents Caliban to us as brutal and corrupted, as the most lying slave, /Whom stripes may move, not kindness! [I.ii, 346-347]”\(^{156}\). In reality, all of Caliban’s brutal thoughts are non-existent, thought if anything, desired but never realized:

When does he lie? When is he corrupted? When he gets drunk because he drinks for the first time? […] In general everyone has the mistaken ‘point of view’ of Prospero, who is horrified at seeing his daughter violated, and the mistaken upbringing [of Caliban] when it is natural for Caliban ‘man’ to try to possess the child Miranda who has by now become a woman. The error is still Prospero’s, his unreal forecasts. There is not a line or a verse of the Tempest that shows Caliban as an ‘abject being’, that is as a

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\(^{154}\) SN 66.


\(^{156}\) SN 97.
'monster' perhaps of primitive ferociousness, of innate badness, of baseness. That is the conditioning of the cultured white critic-reader that goes of saying something that almost everyone takes for granted but that textually does not exist. But just for this Caliban must be ‘alien’ in respect to the others. This idea of Caliban as alien is fundamental in the interpretation of Strehler, who during the rehearsals, as Gaipa remembers, passed around Leni Riefenstah’s volume of photographs The People of Kau, “a [Sudanese] tribe that almost has the religion of the make-up”159. Also in this case, however, Strehler’s research was not philological or the attempt to find a realistic image of Caliban that would justify cultural images like the well-noted Of Cannibals by Montaigne. Strehler’s prospect is much different and based, as usual, on an attentive reading of the text, that this thing of darkness I / Acknowledge mine [V.i, 275-276] pronounced by Prospero almost at the end of the text:

If Caliban is black, it is not the ‘negro-ness’ that takes the fundamental role. Not ‘negro,’ but ‘black’. The ‘blackness’ in us. Also in Prospero. Also, probably, in Miranda. Certainly the misunderstanding of the ‘black’ image and of it’s ‘negro’ meaning could exist, and it is here that Giorgio manifests his doubts on the way to offer his Caliban to the public. The ‘color’ must be a transfiguration. It could be a black-blue or a black-red. His mask

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157 SN 97-98.


159 GJ 16.

160 Published in 1580 in his Essais, and translated in English by John Florio: Essays, 1603.
must transcend anthropology. His mother, the witch Sycorax, was certainly not black, she was if anything a tuareg.\textsuperscript{161}

Between 1978, year of the debut, and 1985, year of the final reprisal of the show at the Teatro della Pergola in Firenze, four actors rotated the role of interpreting this Caliban as ‘black’ but not ‘negro’, symbol of a dark side present in all human beings more than the expression of a postcolonial condition.

Michele Placido is the actor who originally played the role and acted in the first reprisal at the Lirico, from June 28–July 4, 1978, but in the video version the actor is Massimo Foschi, who substituted Placido for the 1978-1979 season\textsuperscript{162}. In an interview published in the same volume in which the already-cited interview with Giulia Lazzarini appears, Foschi describes his sense of the character with extreme clarity: “he is different, he is black. Not black like Othello, who in the story must be described with this origin. Caliban must represent something else, also because we are in a dimension of spirits, of metaphors, and not in the real dimension of the Republic of Venice. […] Caliban is, among other things, an ingenuous young person”\textsuperscript{163}. Physically, Foschi underlines, Strehler said that Caliban was very handsome; the others saw him as deformed because he was…

\textsuperscript{161} GJ 14.

\textsuperscript{162} Massimo Foschi (1939-) is a well-known actor and dubber (he is the Italian voice of Star Wars’ Darth Vader). A graduate of the National Academy of Dramatic Art of Rome, where he was a student of Orazio Costa, in 1969 he played the role of Orlando in the acclaimed theatre version of Orlando furioso directed by Luca Ronconi. After Placido, now a very popular television and film actor, and Foschi, in 1983-1984, at the opening in Paris, Caliban was played by Piero Sammataro. Placido picked up the role again for the tour in US in summer 1984, and then Luigi Diberti was the last one in the 1984-1985 season.

different. To realize this dimension of unconscious beauty accompanied by a profound ingenuity – the representation “of a phase in which man had been. It did not matter if this truly happened 12000 years ago. What matter is that now is an interior state”\textsuperscript{164} – Strehler gave Foschi a very precise image, “that of a baby just born, who is in general ugly, wrinkly, and only later will become beautiful”\textsuperscript{165}. Fundamental, in this sense, is the moment in I.ii when before leaving the stage Caliban abandons his animal-like behaviors and erects himself in all of his beauty.

3.7 The love theme of Miranda and Ferdinand (I.ii, 377-504 – VS 00:14:00)

About thirty seconds go by, during which Prospero puts his belt back on, this time over his coat, and is then seen from behind as he embraces Miranda. The music of the island returns and the light changes, turning from the sun’s heat that has until now dominated the scene to an intense blue that absorbs what is already in the corridors and the area around the platforms on stage. A completely enveloping marine atmosphere recreates itself, but unlike the bluish and incandescent atmosphere of the storm, there is now a sense of clearness and tranquility that anticipates Ferdinand’s entrance. This visual effect is joined by the sonorous effect of Ariel’s voice, which mixes with the notes of the island’s music. The original stage direction says \textit{Re-enter Ariel, invisible, playing and singing; [Ferdinand following]}, and is followed by the title \textit{Ariel’s song}. A note

\textsuperscript{164} Miraglia, “Da Aronne a Calibano” 226.

\textsuperscript{165} Miraglia, “Da Aronne a Calibano” 226.
in the text published by Lombardo specifies that to the song “some small changes were made, in the translation, to adapt it to the music composed for Strehler’s production”\textsuperscript{166}. However, a further modification must have been made over the course of the rehearsals, since the text from the video is cut and re-elaborated in respect to the printed version\textsuperscript{167}. Other modifications to the text, although minimal, and some cuts, are apparent by comparing the scene as it published and as it is shot in the video. From my problematic position of spectator, in the change of light and hearing the voice of Ariel, who sings, I remember a moment of difficulty understanding what was happening. The video recording is instead effectively explicit, with a cross-fade that plays on the blue of the light and that of the wall of the anterior corridor (that we define C) in front of the audience, passing from the long shot of Prospero embracing Miranda to Ariel, who, wearing the clothing and the wig of a marine Nymph that he had formerly received from Prospero, enters from the anterior central corridor (that we define B) from stage left. My difficulty in perception is here, given that I found myself diagonally opposite in the audience of the Teatro Lirico. In the video, the camera follows Ariel as she sings and holds her arms raised with the end of a string with an unseen origin in his fist. Ariel proceeds in corridor B, at times disappearing from sight as if immersing in water, to later pass upon arriving in the centre – in perspective we see Prospero and Miranda embracing –

\textsuperscript{166} Shakespeare, \textit{La tempesta}, trans. Lombardo, ibid., 43, note 7.

\textsuperscript{167} The text sung by Lazzarini is: \textit{A queste sabbie dorate vieni, vieni. I dolci spiriti hanno danzato, le mani intrecciate. Con un bacio e un inchino ecco calmate le acque infuriate. A queste sabbie dorate vieni, vieni.}
to the posterior corridor (that we define A), immediately adjacent to the central platform. The level of

1978 *Tempest*, sketch by Luciano Damiani showing the lateral section of the stage (copyright © Piccolo Teatro of Milan Archives). Notice the three frontal corridors, where the mimes move while holding the sheets-sea. The sketch shows also, in front of the *fondale* [backdrop], three corridors in the back, but in the video it seems that there are only two. Definitely, the hanging *velo* [veil] is not in the final production.

corridor A is clearly higher than that of B, since Ariel, after crossing, raises herself and we see her at a level that is intermediate between the main platform, that is now approximately thirty centimeters in height at the back, and corridor B’s lower platform. Standing – though her feet are barely seen since they are hidden by the higher edge of corridor A’s front panel – Ariel pulls the string towards herself little by little, and we finally see first Ferdinand’s arm and then
his entire body emerge from corridor B stage left and, like Ariel, pass to corridor A and then to the central platform. All of the action is choreographed in such a way that Ferdinand effectively resembles a sleeping body that is dragged to the edge of the platform as if it were the seashore. After he gathers the string and finishes the song, Ariel takes off the wig and, using it like the tail of a rooster, imitates a rooster’s movements and emits the classic verse, like from text, turned three quarters towards the cyclorama on stage left. With the wig thrown to stage left as well, a new animal, a dog also from the text, appears, although the dog is expected before the rooster. In the show, however, the two lines referring to the animals are cut, and Ariel produces only sounds and mimicking movements. The sequence, which lasts around three minutes, ends with Ariel crouched to the left of Ferdinand. Prospero and Miranda are still embracing behind, in the inside of the circle. Ferdinand begins to speak while Ariel – who we remember is invisible – emits a melody around him. When she stops, in the video we see her get up and exit house left, but one doesn’t understand if she exits stage right from the wings or returns to the inside of corridor B, the one in the centre, and as a spectator I do not remember. In the video, at the end of Ferdinand’s first line, when he says, Ecco, no, ricomincia [398] and the text again indicates Ariel’s song, the direction once again offers a cross-fade, but with a strange effect of superimposition. In regards to this passage it should be noted that the two songs almost immediately in succession, as Gaipa reports, raise a mysterious question: “Why did Shakespeare adopt this method? Was is simply a way in which to
make Ariel reach the upper stage while the entrance of Prospero and Miranda from behind was being prepared and Ferdinand remained enchanted in the proscenium area?"\textsuperscript{168} In the show, the light, that had once again become solar at the end of the Nymph’s song, returns to the marine atmosphere, and the video, playing on the similarity of the colors, superimposes on the cyclorama the front part of the three corridors visible to the audience: the high parts of A and B, and the entire front of C. This results in an effect from which above Ferdinand, with Prospero and Miranda in the background, Ariel’s head appears, almost superimposed on the sun of the cyclorama. In reality, in the live show Lazzarini has returned to the interior of corridor B, and the audience sees her head come up from there, in the centre. The same fading with overlap, but in the inverse sense, is repeated at the end of the song. The solar light then returns and we see Ariel get back on the stage from corridor B on stage left, which makes it seem as if her exit, mentioned above, but not visible in the video, had also been seen from the other side. The translation for the second song seems rather faithful to the English, but, like the first, during the rehearsals there must have been some changes to make it more suitable for the music\textsuperscript{169}, which has a strong oriental connotation. The final refrain \textit{Din-din!} [406] is repeated by Ariel first vocally,

\textsuperscript{168} GJ 35.

\textsuperscript{169} Since the performance text is different from the printed text, in this case as well I report the words sung by Lazzarini in the video: \textit{In fondo al mare giace tuo padre. A cinque tese dorme laggiù. Già son diventate di corallo le sue ossa. Son perle gli occhi. Nulla del suo corpo è nel fond ova perduto, è la metamorfosi del mare. L’uomo è mutato in qualche cosa di prezioso e strano. Ad ogni ora Le ninfe del mare Una campana Fanno rintoccare. Even the final \textit{burthen Ding-dong}, translated \textit{Din-don!} in the printed text, becomes \textit{Din-din!} in the performance.
then with hand cymbals, while she moves invisibly around Ferdinand. After the new line La canzone ricorda mio padre annegato [408] is delivered, Prospero turns and reveals Ferdinand to his daughter: Spalanca il frangiato / Sipario dei tuoi occhi e dimmi / Cosa vedi laggiù [411-412]. After he exchanges lines with Miranda, Prospero – in a close-up in the video – has an [aside] with Ariel who, after a last strike of the cymbals, seems to exit stage left, while Prospero retreats towards stage right, disappearing from the frame, but remaining on the stage to observe Miranda and Ferdinand’s meeting. The video goes from a long shot to a medium shot and we see the two young people respectively at the two extremes of the central circle – Miranda upstage, and Ferdinand, behind, downstage. With a slow circular movement they near each other until they find themselves at the centre, in front of each other, visible in profile to the audience. After Miranda’s line Meraviglia no, signore, / Fanciulla si, certamente [430-431], in the video there is a long cut from 432 to 443170. From the image of the two young people, who are so close that they almost touch, the video returns to a close-up of Prospero that corresponds to his aside in 441, but the first words are cut171 and the aside starts midway through 443 with Si sono scambiati gli occhi / Al primo sguardo, then the line continues like the text, although the initial Mio is cut: Mio delicato Ariel, sarai

170 In this way are also cut lines 440-441, where Ferdinand mentions the Duke of Milan / And his brave son, a son of which there is no trace in the text, as pointed out by Lombardo: “This is the only time in which a son of the Duke of Milan is mentioned, but this son does not appear in the text, or because of one of the not unusual inconsistencies of Shakespere, or because of some cut made by the author himself” (Shakespeare, La tempesta, trans. Lombardo, Ibid., 51, note 9).

171 Since they refer to the last words of Ferdinand about the Duke of Milan, which have been cut as well. See previous note.
libero per questo [444-445]. Ariel, in fact, is again on stage – perhaps he never
exited at the end of the cymbal playing, and remained to the left, stage point of
view, in the position opposite Prospero’s; we cannot tell in the video and as a
spectator I don’t remember. A brief frame shows her exulting at her master’s line;
then we return to the long shot and the conclusion of Prospero’s line, now
directly [To Ferdinand] Una parola signore. / Temo che ci sia un equivoco. / Una parola
[445-446]. The text and the action continue without cuts until Prospero’s line
beginning halfway through 452. The entire line, with respect to the published
text, presents cuts and small variations, and the result is the following: Calma,
signore. Ancora una parola / [Aside] Sono l’una dell’altro. / Ma corrono un po’ troppo /
E devo ostacolarli. Una vittoria troppo facile / Toglie valore al premio. / [To Ferdinand]
Ancora una parola. Ti ordino di ascoltarmi: / Tu qui usurpi / Il titolo che non hai / E Tu
sei sbarcato su quest’isola / Da spia, per sottrarla a me, / Suo signore [452-459]. During
the line Prospero extracts his magic rod and we see Ariel go to the trap door on
stage left to get a sword with a sheath and bandolier that she goes to put in the
centre, in front of the circle. The following lines, except for some single words, do
not present substantial cuts. Ferdinand draws his sword as in the stage directions
in 469 [He draws, and is charmed from moving], and the strong image is that of
his sword pointed against Prospero’s rod. Miranda implores at her father’s feet,
and Ariel, seated on the ground in the circle – but obviously still invisible to
Ferdinand and Miranda – raises a finger to lower the sword. The shot of both
remains the same, with Ferdinand who seems to little by little lose force, and
Miranda who rises to her feet for the line *I miei sentimenti, allora, / Sono i più umili: non ambisco vedere / Un uomo più bello* [484-486]. During Prospero’s line that follows, the island’s music, heard at other moments, returns. Ariel, now in back of Ferdinand, imitates his slow fall, as if her movement were the medium through which Prospero forced his magic power on the young man. The frame focuses on Ferdinand, on the ground, for his line *È così. / Il mio vigore, come in un sogno…etc.* [488-496]. The last lines find Prospero upstage right with Ariel, and Miranda in the centre with Ferdinand. With the exception of Ariel, who returns inside the circle, they all exit stage right. More than twelve minutes have passed since the beginning of this scene-section, and I.ii would be over, but Strehler offers almost another two minutes of pure theatricality. This task is also completed, and Ariel returns in the circle to put back Prospero’s tools. From the centre, hardly visible to the audience, she raises a sextant, and with a bit of effort puts it back in the trap door stage left, which then remains open. From the area upstage left of the circle she lifts a very light armillary sphere that she also puts back in the trap door. She then goes to take back the sword and sheath abandoned by Ferdinand and repeats the same action. He seems to be about to close the trap door when we see her stop and observe another object that is downhill right of the circle: it is a large shell. She goes to get it but when she is about to put it back with the other objects in the trap door she stops and brings it to her ear. Until now all of the action has taken place in silence, but now a new music pervades the scene, and Ariel’s ecstatic face, almost in close-up, makes it
evident that the music comes from the shell. After she listens to it for a few
seconds, she puts the shell back where it was in the circle, goes to close the trap
doors, and exits stage left. The music lingers on to introduce the change of scene
for II.i. Over forty-six minutes have passed since the beginning of the show.

Miranda, Gaipa writes in his notes on June 2, “is rightly intuited by
Giorgio as lucid, intelligent, solar – of the people as Juliet should be of the
people”172. Strehler, after endless auditions, cast in the role of Miranda a 13-year
old girl, unknown to Italian theatre, named Fabiana Udenio. More than once, in
his journal Gaipa praises the qualities and the commitment of this young actress,
but the reference to Juliet can not avoid a comparison with Olivia Hussey, who at
the age of 15 played Juliet in Franco Zeffirelli’s Romeo and Juliet, winner of two
Oscars in 1969173. In both cases, the age of the actresses corresponded closely to
the age of the characters as conceived by Shakespeare, and Strehler, in his notes,
insists “on the extreme youth of Miranda, in the scene. Almost like a little girl”174.
Massimo Bonetti, a young actor just graduated from the Alessandro Fersen’s
Theatre School in Rome, played Ferdinand. Physically he was perfect, but more
than once Gaipa stresses that he “struggles with notable technical difficulties,
works assiduously on his own vocal and respiratory means, helped by Walter
Pagliaro175 and by Cathy Mattea, a young teacher at the Acting School [of the

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172 GJ 80.
174 SN 102.
175 See previous notes 21 and 147.
Piccolo], who also has a role as mime to the storm in the prologue and to other magic effects”\textsuperscript{176}. After the opening on June 28, however, the technical difficulties of the actor were still present, and Agostino Lombardo, in his letter to Strehler after the first performance, writes that “as for Ferdinand, we all understand the situation, and we hope that time can set it right”\textsuperscript{177}. Lombardo is not explicit, but more than one review confirmed the immaturity of Bonetti, as well as that of Fabiana Udenio, though in her case Lombardo stresses that the problems, particularly at the beginning of I.ii, immediately after the initial storm, were more connected to a question of acoustics: that is, the loudness of the theatrical effects and the bad acoustics of the Teatro Lirico. Moreover, the immaturity, in the case of Miranda, was an aspect of the character that Strehler was looking for. Better to run the risk of having a young girl on the stage, Strehler notes, than that of having a young actress of the stage, used to love, to life, to theatre, that simulates an ‘innocence’ that underneath is not there, a novelty that doesn’t belong to her anymore. Here a kind of psychophysical diary is the only way to give at least the feeling of the relationship to the audience. Miranda must be as fresh and new as possible, at least as much so as our obscene world permits childhood when one becomes an adult!\textsuperscript{178}

Aside from the youth of the characters, Strehler’s concerns about Miranda and Ferdinand seem to focus on the theme of love and how their love begins and

\textsuperscript{176} GJ 35.

\textsuperscript{177} Colombo, ‘La Tempesta’ tradotta e messa in scena 1977-1978 129.

\textsuperscript{178} SN 103.
develops. This aspect will become much clearer in the context of III.i, IV.i, and V.i, though it is interesting to note that the first encounter between the two young characters was initially conceived differently from the final production, and that love, in its mythological conception, was at the centre of this original vision. In fact, at the end of Caliban’s scene-section, Prospero and Miranda, in a kind of scenic fading, should exit from the wing stage right while Ariel and Ferdinand should emerge slowly from the sea, as does later happen. At this point, while Ferdinand reaches the centre of the stage guided by Ariel, Prospero and Miranda should arrive from the audience, with Miranda walking on the waters of the sea, “almost a ‘Birth of Venus’”\textsuperscript{179}. The final solution, as seen, is totally different, with Prospero and Miranda remaining embraced at the centre of the stage. Besides the technical difficulties deriving from Miranda walking on water – the three corridors of the proscenium – the reason for the different solution rests in Strehler’s reading of the text. As Gaipa underlines, it is “a realistic, anti-romantic interpretation of the character. Miranda is the true daughter of Prospero, strong and even choleric – she struggles and she rebels, she takes on her own initiative, she leads and directs, once she loves Ferdinand”\textsuperscript{180}. There is also the question of Prospero, “the character most complex, mysterious, contradictory of all Shakespearian iconography”\textsuperscript{181}, Gaipa writes, repeating Strehler’s reading:

\textsuperscript{179} GJ 36.
\textsuperscript{180} GJ 12.
\textsuperscript{181} GJ 6.
Giorgio immediately exemplifies this assertion taking a look at his relationship with Miranda, the love that he makes grow between her and Ferdinand, and at the contradictions that characterize the diagram of this ‘triangle’, a true triangle in which he, Prospero, in turn takes on the role of father – and of potential lover\textsuperscript{182}.

The image of Prospero embracing Miranda in the centre of the stage – the image that, we cannot forget, follows the exit of Caliban, he who tries to violate Miranda – seems to confirm this double reading.

3.8 The alienation effect of Alonso’s court (II.i, 1-322 – VS 00:23:00)

The change of scene indicated by the stage directions at the beginning of II.i [Another part of the island] is brought about by a simple movement of the platform-island. For the scene that introduces the characters of the court, the upstage right corner rises, thanks to the diagonal cut that goes from the upstage left corner to the corner downstage right, which creates a slight slope. The circle of sand, still in the centre with the shell, becomes partially more visible, and with some imagination we are reminded of a sand dune. In front of the platform, towards stage left, a small shrub rises, which seems to come out from the space between the front edge of the platform and corridor A. I have already underlined the fact that where there are not platforms, the stage is uncovered, but in front it is not as if there is a large space; there is a gap at the most, and the shrub seems almost two-dimensional, since in the previous scene we saw Ariel, and later also Ferdinand, pass from corridor A to the platform-island with ease. The light of the

\textsuperscript{182} GJ 6.
previous scene, although maintaining its solar quality, darkens, while the music
started at the end of I.ii when Ariel held the shell to her ear continues. With a
fade-in, the video passes from a long shot of the entire scene to close-ups of the
characters of the court, who enter from stage left in a single line: Alonso,
Gonzalo, Francisco, Adrian, Sebastian, e Antonio. The stage directions say *Enter
Alonso, Sebastian, Antonio, Gonzalo, Adrian, Francisco, and others*\(^{183}\) but in the
show there are only the named characters. The frame, in reality, facilitates the
vision, in that the theatre audience, as I remember, sees the characters proceed
like dark silhouettes, with their faces difficult to make out. The first four in the
line gather and sit around the raised upstage right corner of the platform, with
King Alonso right in the corner. Antonio and Sebastian instead lie in the area
diagonally opposite, near the shrub. In this way a situation of disconnect
between the two groups is created that is also what characterizes at least the first
part of the scene, with Antonio and Sebastian mockingly commenting on the
other characters’ lines. In the meantime the light returns to full daylight and the
music disappears. Although in the video the camera often moves from the
characters in one group to the other, the theatrical scene does not vary from lines
1-47 of the script, which, besides minimal variations, corresponds to the
published version. With Gonzalo’s line at *Qui fiorisce tutto ciò che è propizio alla
vita* [48] some characters change positions. Gonzalo, with his line, nears himself
to touch the shrub. At the same time Antonio gets up, breaks a branch from the

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\(^{183}\) Probably because of a typo, Adrian’s name does not appear in the English text mirroring the Italian translation, but it is in the English edition edited by Kermode.
shrub as he delivers his line Tutta terra bruciata. [53], and moves to the area upstage left. There are then a few more lines, and then Gonzalo, now standing in the centre of the circle, comments that their clothing, despite having been immersed in the sea, is perfect. Antonio replies with Fa parlare una delle tue tasche, ti darà del bugiardo. [If but one of his pockets could speak, would it not say he lies? 63-64], and extracts some sand from his pocket. For a few seconds the music of the island returns, while in the video we also see Francisco take sand from his pocket, and Sebastian then let it run through his fingers. This is another moment of theatricality that Strehler creates by giving a more material than metaphorical significance to Antonio’s lines. With Gonzalo’s lines A me pare che... etc. [66-69], Adrian and Francisco also change position. Francisco, who was seated to the right of the king, lower because of the platform’s slope, moves further to the left and higher, while Adrian situates himself downstage right, where he briefly exchanges lines with Gonzalo, who is now seated on the ground in the centre of the circle. The Italian text in the video also presents minimal variations from the published text from 48 to 165, but some cuts that make the presence of Sebastian and Antonio less pressing should be underlined. Antonio’s line from 83 is cut, and also those with Sebastiano from 85-89 and 96-97 and from 137-138, which also contain one of Gonzalo’s lines.

After Gonzalo’s line Come quando l’ho indossato al matrimonio di vostra figlia? [101], the attention moves to King Alonso, who until now has almost always remained seated on the ground in his raised corner, with his head hidden in his
ample regal mantle and with his crown on his head, and to Francisco’s long
speech from 110-118. It should be noted that besides King Alonso, with mantle
and crown, all of the other characters, when they enter the stage, wear cloaks and
hats, which they almost immediately remove. We distinguish Antonio, who
toers without a hat, and Gonzalo, who does not remove his hat and wears a
long simar. Dressed in this manner and seated on the ground in the centre of the
circle, he delivers lines 143-164 based on Montaigne’s essay Of Cannibals
interrupted by the sarcastic comments and laughter of Antonio and Sebastian,
both once again lying near the shrub. The first part of the scene is about to
conclude, and about eleven minutes from its beginning have gone by. At this
point, in fact, after Gonzalo’s line Ecco, appunto, appunto. Siccome io al vostro
confronto non sono niente in questo genere di buffonate, potete continuare a ridere di
niente! [172-174]

from 175-180 there should be three lines in the order of
Antonio, Sebastian, and once again Gonzalo, which precede the stage direction
Enter Ariel [invisible] playing solemn music and another of Sebastian’s lines.
Strehler’s choice, which in a way seems to even more justify the text, is instead to
cut these lines and postpone the stage direction. After Gonzalo’s line from 172-
174, the text resumes from 180 to 185 in this manner: ANTONIO Su, su, mio buon
signore, non adiratevi. GONZALO No, no, ve lo garantisco, non sciuperò così la mia

184 See previous paragraph 6, note 160, and Shakespeare, La tempesta, tras. Lombado, ibid., 69,
note 7.

185 In the published text: Appunto. E poiché al vostro confronto io sono niente in questo genere di
buffonate, potete seguitare a ridere di niente!
reputazione. Volete farmi la ninnananna con un paio di risate? ANTONIO Mettetevi a letto e ascoltateci. Notice that Gonzalo’s speech from 182-184 is slightly re-elaborated in the performance text, and the conclusion Sento un gran peso [183-184] is postponed. After 185, while Antonio and Sebastian burst into laughter, Gonzalo, getting up, goes to sit to the right of Alonso, lowered, and here Strehler inserts the stage direction for Ariel’s entrance. The music of the island returns, which everyone suddenly seems to hear, and then the video frames only the central area, empty, in which we see the shell, inside the circle, and the descending border, from stage right to stage left, of the platform. Ariel slowly appears from behind the border and climbs on the platform but remains seated and, taking advantage of the slope, slides to the centre of the circle. From here she throws some sand as if it were magic dust towards Gonzalo, who, before falling asleep, delivers the postponed final sentence of 183-184, Sento un gran peso. The action is repeated, in sequence, for Adrian and Francisco, as the new stage directions require. [All sleep except Alonso, Sebastian, and Antonio.] The entire sequence lasts around seventy seconds. When it seems that Ariel is about to also make Alonso sleep, the latter begins speaking again: Come! Tutti già addormentati… etc. [186-188]. Sebastian and Antonio approach – Ariel, seated in the middle of the circle, is invisible – and invite him to rest. Alonso replies Grazie… che stanchezza incredibile! [193], and suddenly flops down when Ariel makes the same gesture that has already put Gonzalo, Adrian, and Francisco to sleep. The crown falls and, because of the platform’s slope, risks rolling towards
the downstage border, but Sebastian quickly gets it and puts it back in front of the sleeping king. The stage directions in the text indicate that *Alonso sleeps. Exit Ariel*, and it is here that the second part of II.i, in which Antonio convinces Sebastian to assassinate Alonso, begins. In the video we don’t know if Ariel actually leaves the scene, but we see her roll with a somersault downstage left and do not see her for the entire sequence, which lasts about seven minutes. The light returns to the blue tones that were already seen in certain moments of the section with Ferdinand in I.ii, but in this case the color, more than pervading the entire space, seems to surround the platform. The dark masses of the sleeping bodies and the blue-grey of Antonio’s and Sebastian’s costumes create a gloomy, shady atmosphere in which the white of the ermine of the royal mantle, the white of the sand of the circle, inside which we now find Antonio and Sebastian, and the faces of the two actors when they are hit by the backlights, mix. The video, with various frame changes that highlight the most intense moments of dialogue, follows the two characters moment by moment, in a relationship that Strehler develops both vocally and physically with a particular intensity recognizable from the sweat that covers the actors. The performance text, from 194-291, is almost identical to what is published. The only cuts are in the middle of Antonio’s long speech from 241-249: *(L’uomo della luna sarebbe troppo lento)*\(^{186}\) *(The man i’ th’ moon’s too slow, 244)*; and at the end of the dialogue, Sebastian’s line *O, but one word* [291], with the following stage direction *[They talk apart]*.

\(^{186}\) Parentheses are in the Italian translation, not in the original English version.
that is not applied. The action therefore goes directly to the next stage direction
[Re-enter Ariel [invisible], with music and song. While Antonio and Sebastian,
drawing their swords, are about to assassinate Alonso and Gonzalo respectively,
we see Ariel suddenly appear from the left, and a gap in the video accentuates
the unexpectedness of her appearance. We do not know if she stayed on stage
during the entire dialogue between the two conspirators, and I do not remember
as a spectator, but she has a drum in her hand – whose sound we already hear
when Antonio and Sebastian draw their swords – that she beats with a stick
while she speaks, not sings, the line Il mio padrone, con la sua Arte… etc. [292-294].
We hear the music of

1978 Tempest, Antonio and Sebastian are about to assassinate Alonso and Gonzalo (copyright © Piccolo Teatro of Milan Archives)
the island from a distance. The stage direction *Sings in Gonzalo’s ear* follows and we see Ariel crouch down behind Gonzalo, but here too what she sings seems more like a nursery rhyme accompanied by the rhythm of the drum than a song. Lazzarini speaks quickly, and although one recognizes some words from the song in the text, only some can be distinguished with clarity, like the final *Sveglia! Sveglia!* [300]. Antonio’s line at 301 is cut, as well as Gonzalo’s at 304, and besides some minimal variations and minor cuts, the text remains unchanged until the end of the scene. At the reawakening the light has returned to its solar dimension. To the right, towards the raised corner, the King and Gonzalo, both still on the ground, have come together again, and next to them, with their swords drawn, Adrian and Francisco are standing, the first lower to stage right, the second higher to stage left. We see Ariel behind this group. Antonio and Sebastian, still with their swords drawn, are moved as if by a mysterious force towards stage left, in the central circle. Antonio kneels on the ground.

Before Ariel’s final line *Prospero my lord… etc.* [321-322], the exits of the characters begins. The movements are very slow and trance-like, and little by little they get back in a single line with the order of Francisco, Alonso, Gonzalo, Adrian, Sebastian, and Antonio. Except for the King and Gonzalo, the others have their swords drawn, and they leave their hats and their cloaks on the ground. They exit to stage left, where they entered, following the upstage border of the platform, and at a certain point the video frame takes them from the wing and allows us to observe that, besides the upstage right corner that is higher, the
entire stage is in general much more sloped than the front view suggests.\textsuperscript{187} During Alonso and Gonzalo’s last lines, a music restarts that seems to connect again to the theme of the final music in I.ii, after which Ariel had listened to the sound of the shell, but now it is more elaborate and unnerving. The exit lasts about ninety seconds, during which Ariel, in her function as stage hand and with the hat left by Francesco on her head, gathers everything left on the stage (the little drum must be left on the back of the platform). At a certain point she delivers lines 321-322 and then, having packed what she gathers in a bundle, she goes to also get the shell in the inside of the circle and puts it on top. She exits, with a bit of effort because of the weight that she carries, to stage left, where the others exited, but she stays on the downstage edge of the exit platform. The entire scene II.i lasted twenty-three minutes.

On March 24, 1978, after not even three weeks of rehearsals, Gianni Santuccio, the actor who was supposed to play Antonio, Prospero’s brother and usurper of the Duke of Milan, and who had played the role thirty years earlier in the Boboli production, announces his withdrawal.\textsuperscript{188} Stehler substitutes him with a younger actor, Osvaldo Ruggieri, who had originally been given the role of Sebastian. This role passes to a new actor, Luciano Virgilio. Gaipa makes no

\textsuperscript{187} This fact, Gaipa notes on May 4, created many difficulties to the actors, most of all the members of the court and the buffoons. Much less to Prospero, Miranda, and Ferdinand, who were always on stage when the platform-island was flat.

\textsuperscript{188} After the diploma at the National Academy of Dramatic Art of Rome, Gianni Santuccio (1911-1989) had his first success in Piccoli borghesi [Philistines] by Maxim Gorky, directed by Strehler in 1946, one year before the foundation of the Piccolo, of which, during the 1950s, became one of the leading actors together with Lilla Brignone, who in the 1948 Tempest had performed Ariel.
reference to Antonio’s change of age – Santuccio was of Carraro’s generation, just a year younger – but the difference in age that results from the comparison of Antonio-Ruggieri and Prospero-Carraro does not change any of the play’s effects. It should be said, however, that the entire group of characters of Alonso’s court is one of the aspects least highlighted in the numerous reviews of the production, in which the prevailing quotations are about Lazzarini, surely the actress most commended, and about Carraro, besides obviously about Strehler as the director.

The courtiers’ scene was rehearsed on the stage for the first time on April 6. Gaipa doesn’t specify, but it is safe to assume that in the previous weeks this group of actors had also rehearsed elsewhere with one of the assistants. The scene is complex, and beginning with the initial readings, Gaipa underlines, Stehler highlighted the questions that emerge because of the many themes that run through it:

It is a scene that condenses in itself material for an entire drama – and at the same time it is paradigmatic for a ‘human comedy’ or, better, inhuman, of an entire society. There is the debasement of an entire culture arrived at the bottom of formalism. There is courtierism in its entire range from euphuistic ‘nonsense’ to political crime. There is Antonio’s demoniac and the pathetic candor and the cowardly and weak goodness of Gonzalo. And, above all, be he however incapable of redemption, Alonso’s
authentic pain, as he is continually upset by the absurd falsity of what surrounds him\textsuperscript{189}.

On May 29, about a month before the premiere, Gaipa notes how the notable maturity reached by Virgilio’s Sebastian contrasts with the laborious rehearsals of Ruggieri’s Antonio. To excuse Ruggieri, however, is the fact that this was his first experience with Strehler, while Virgilio, a few months earlier, had been the Duke of Albany in the last revival of Piccolo’s \textit{King Lear}. The major difficulty consisted in getting used to what Gaipa defines as

Certain ‘Strehler times,’ during which the discourse must never lose its dialectical color. The ‘seduction scene’ that Antonio practices on Sebastian is born in the clouds of the magic sleep that Ariel has lavished on the Court […] – there is the necessity of rapidity of discourse, of the whisper, of the sudden capacity of conviction\textsuperscript{190}.

As previously observed, the video of the show makes evident the effort sustained by the two actors involved in this ‘seduction scene’, an also physical tension that follows, contrasting dialectically with Gonzalo’s witticisms. Dramaturgically, Gaipa observes, Gonzalo seems to carry out the functions of a fool, a direction that appears to be that followed by Strehler with the light tone of the lines inspired by Montaigne’s essay and, even earlier, with that ironic \textit{but I would fain die a dry death} [I.i, 66-67] that concluded the dramatic scene of the initial tempest.

The entire first scene of Alonso’s court, on the other hand, because of its internal

\textsuperscript{189} GJ 34.

\textsuperscript{190} GJ 70.
delivery of themes, but also because of how it is visibly born in Shakespeare’s text, appears to be based on a brilliant effect of alienation, as Strehler underlines with much emphasis:

The absurdness of a ‘royal court’, dressed regally, lost on a desert island as if everyone ‘were at court.’ The total effect of alienation (one of the most piercing as an example, Brecht would be excited about it!) of these ‘sirs’ alone on the island, dressed as normal and ‘forced’ to live in an extraordinary situation as if it were normal, everyday. This is an aspect that Strehler had also highlighted in the Boboli Tempest, where the court, perfectly dressed, crossed the Vasca dei Cigni in a boat, but just the fact that he noticed, proves that his much emphasized Brecht-like approach is not so much the application of a method as an ability to read the text dialectically in all of its nuances. The attempt to kill the king put to action by Antonio and Sebastiano happens “on a desert island, after having shipwrecked and having practically no hope of being saved! As if it took place in a desert.” The dynamics of the relationship between power and counter-power are therefore exposed on the backdrop of an unusual situation – “A representation that

191 SN 69-70.
192 See previous paragraph 4, chapter 2.
193 In his monograph on Strehler, David Hirst, at the end of the chapter titled ‘Brecht stopped at Milan,’ writes: “Again we come face to face with that trio of dramatists most close to Strehler: Goldoni, Shakespeare, Brecht. And whilst there are complex themes and dramatic features subtly uniting the three, it is Brecht who most fully characterizes and defines the network of interrelated motifs which bind them inexorably together in the Strehler canon” (Hirst 116). See also paragraph 1, chapter 4.
194 SN 70.
alienates,” Brecht writes, “is one which allows us to recognize its subject, but at the same time makes it seem unfamiliar”\textsuperscript{195} – made even more absurd by the fact that the character’s costumes are, after a shipwreck, as new. But is it also here, Strehler adds, “that theatrically something ‘plausible’, that is realistic, can happen”\textsuperscript{196}, as later effectively proceeds in the show. On June 1, in fact, Gaipa notes that the beginning of this first scene of the shipwrecked, which was happening with all of the characters already on the platform, is completely changed by Strehler, who makes Alonso and his court enter “while a desert-like light raises, and the small tree, on which the little leaf of Gonzalo will turn green, grows up”\textsuperscript{197}. This initial march, and even more the slow final exit that retraces the trajectory in the inverse sense – “The shipwrecked begin to walk along the beach, looking for something, shelter, a place, water, and walking they begin to ‘part’ at least partially from their role-costumes”\textsuperscript{198} – offers the audience a realistic plausibility, marked by the gradual abandonment of their clothes, that magnifies the alienation effect and symbolically signals the beginning of a process of change that at the end of the show will show itself in all of its inescapable circularity.


\textsuperscript{196} SN 70.

\textsuperscript{197} GJ 79.

\textsuperscript{198} SN 70.
3.9 The tragic farce of Trinculo and Stephano (II.ii, 1-178 – VS 00:19:00)

The video, after the finale of the previous scene, with the characters’ exit framed by the wings stage left, returns to a long central shot. The light does not seem to change but the solar dimension has a more whitish, less warm quality. In a little less than two minutes, while the music started at the end of II.i continues, the scenic situation returns to what was seen at the beginning, completely flat, but then changes again to show, as in the Arden/Kermode stage direction, [Another part of the Island.] While before the upstage right corner had raised, pivoting on the central diagonal that goes from the upstage left corner to the downstage right corner, now it is the diagonal that is raised. The posterior upstage side of the platform does not move, nor does the downstage right corner, and as a consequence the triangle formed by the side stage left, the diagonal, and the front downstage side is what slides slightly backward with an ascending movement, while the shrub from II.i disappears. When the movement ends, the opposite triangle has almost completely disappeared from view, and the final result is that of a little hill. Half of the central circle is visible on the crest of the hill and its peak is upstage left. The scenic action continues, following the next stage direction Enter Caliban with a burthen of wood. A noise of thunder heard. Caliban enters from stage right and drags on his shoulders a long and heavy trunk, which he drops with angry gestures just as the side platform connects with the central platform. At almost the same moment we hear the rumble of thunder, and Caliban, scared, goes to hide towards stage left, behind the crest of
the hill, where he is not visible to the audience. At this point the video changes frame with a close-up of Caliban’s hand, which pops out from behind the hill. Here Strehler makes a very strong and precise decision, which helps justify later situations in the scene. Caliban reappears with a stick with bells attached in his hand, wearing a kind of coat-animal skin that covers his head and bust and reaches the ground like a wide and long tail. He turns again towards the sky from which the thunder had come, and, decked out in this manner, his dark figure recalls that of a primitive witch doctor potently outlined against the sun of the cyclorama. After a second of hesitation he jumps inside the visible part of the central circle and drags the stick on the ground, drawing a new circle in the sand.

1978 *Tempest*, Caliban’s magic spell in II.ii (copyright © Piccolo Teatro of Milan Archives).
Almost two minutes have gone by since the beginning of the scene change, when Caliban begins the line *Tutte le infezioni che il sole succhia... etc.* [1-14]. The first part of the line, until *Ma io debbo maledire* [4], is recited like a kind of magic spell, and Caliban then bends down, and after having covered his face with sand from the circle – the ‘black’ turns ‘white’ and the middle of his face, thanks to make-up, is already covered with white sand – he begins a kind of rhythmic movement that has all the characteristics of a primitive dance to the sound of drum music. The line continues with the dance more or less until *Fiammeggiando nel buio* [6]. At this point a new rumble of thunder stops Caliban, who throws himself, scared, to the ground – the Italian translation presents some variations, for which it is very difficult to correspond the words to the line numbers in Kermode’s version, and it seems as if there is a brief cut – he then gets up again and throws the stick behind the crest of the hill, despairing because of the tortures imposed on him by Prospero. With his ...*E mi fanno impazzire* [14], the stage direction *Enter Trinculo* is carried out with a true theatrical clash of cymbals, with Trinculo who appears from behind the hill, at half bust, like a puppet. Caliban, believing that Trinculo is a spirit sent by Prospero, gets even more scared and goes to crouch in the centre, inside corridor A, which, as seen before, is a level only a little lower than the stage – as if it were an advanced proscenium¹⁹⁹ – for which the actor is still fully visible to the audience. With Trinculo’s entrance, it becomes at this point very difficult to precisely follow the

¹⁹⁹ See sketch of the lateral section of the stage in previous paragraph 7.
text. As Lombardo specifies in his notes, the “translation is literal but with some expressions and cadences that are Neapolitan for Trinculo and Venetian for Stephano, and that allow the actors to develop the Strehlerian interpretation of the two characters, inspired by the tradition that wants the two derived from the Commedia dell’arte”\textsuperscript{200}. Trinculo, in fact, wears Pulcinella’s white suit with a red cloak and a black mask that covers his eyes and speaks with a strong Neapolitan accent accented by true expressions from that dialect. Many variations with regards to the published text derive from this and almost make it seem as if the actor, although with his part memorized, also re-elaborates it in the moment, relying above all on a physical score of continual gestures and lazzis. Throughout the long line 18-41, Trinculo speaks to the clouds and then, shaken by the rumble of the thunder – in the line the stage direction \textit{[Thunder]} is inserted, which repeats itself three more times –

he runs to hide under Caliban’s body, not before having played a little bit trivially and committed some rudeness against the indefinable creature that he later calls \textit{un isolano fulminato} [an islander, that hath lately suffered by a thunderbolt 36-37], a living phenomenon, a monster that he would be happy to bring to Milan and offer to a simple audience as a strong part of his playbill. With his red cloak he again hints at the mimicry of a bullfight and proposes other sapid jokes before getting under Caliban, around the lines \textit{Quando cadi in disgrazia, ti trovi dentro al letto una strana compagnia!} [misery acquaints a man with strange bed-fellows 39-40]\textsuperscript{201}.

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{200} Shakespeare, \textit{La tempesta}, trans. Lombardo, ibid., 89, note 1.
\end{flushright}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{201} Griga 57-58.
\end{flushright}
It is at this part of the scene that the skin worn by Caliban is justified by the text, when Trinculo says that …*le pinne sembrano braccia! [his fins like arms* 33-34 approx.] and raises the arms of the skin to later, following more thunder, go hide under Caliban, who reacts, or, better, does not react and instead allows himself to be treated like a dead body.

The stage direction *Enter Stephano, singing: [a bottle in his hand]* is signaled by a blow of cymbals as well and by the sudden appearance of the character from corridor B. Also in this case the actor wears a black mask that covers his eyes and a white costume – traditionally the zanni’s costumes are white – but his hat with a feather and the horizontal green stripes of his jacket, besides his cloak of the same color, make us think of a cross between the Capitano and Brighella, especially since the cadence of his speech is Venetian. Stephano sings with a happy music in the background and proceeds to corridor B, towards stage left, at times disappearing and reappearing as Ariel-marine Nymph did in I.ii, when she dragged Ferdinand. At the end of the corridor he then disappears again only to reappear at the extreme stage left of corridor A, which is at a higher level. From this position he continues to sing with the bottle in his hand\(^{202}\). Stephano interrupts the song a few times to drink, then, moving to the top of the hill, observes the strange four-legged figure created by Caliban and Trinculo, at the downstage centre of the platform, move forward and backward.

From Caliban’s line *Non tormentarmi – ahì! [57]* onward it is once again difficult to

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\(^{202}\) The text of the song was re-elaborated for the production by Strehler himself and is quoted by Lombardo in a note. See Shakespeare, *La tempesta*, trans. Lombardo, ibid., 91, note 2.
follow the performance text. Caliban’s lines from 81-83 are cut, and Stephano nears him to make him drink from the bottle. The lines that follow, in which Stephano discovers Trinculo hidden under Caliban, present dialectal variations and interjections, true verbal lazzis that are not found in the Shakespearean text. Stephano’s line, for example, …magna assai mal chi a la tavola del diavol vuol mangiare! [98-100], substitutes a Venetian proverb for the proverb suggested by the text line I have no long spoon [100]. Another examples is, after Trinculo’s line O Stefano, due Napoletani salvati dale acque! [O / Stephano, two Neapolitans scap’d! 113-114], Stephano’s reply Ma mi veramente son Veneto, that precedes 115 and is completely added to the original text.

Stephano and Trinculo’s happiness at being found inspires them to dance a tarantella, which Trinculo accompanies with a small drum that he receives from the stage left – in the video, however, we do not see how this happens. At the end of 115 …sono debole di stomaco, delivered in dialect, Stephano flops to the ground, head downwards, beyond the upper stage left border of the hill, as if to vomit, and Trinculo, the tarantella finished and the drum thrown to stage left, lies down next to him with his face up, at the highest point. In the meantime we see Caliban still lying in the middle in corridor A, but face up, and therefore with the skin under him. The actor raises himself and does a somersault before standing up and appearing again only with the loincloth. The lines about the

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203 See Shakespeare, La tempesta, trans. Lombardo, ibid., 95, note 3, and also Shakespeare’s Comedy of Errors, He must have a long spoon that must eat with the devil, [IV.iii]. The Venetian proverb, in English, sounds something like: …eat very badly who wants to eat at the devil’s table.

204 In reality, I’m Venetian.
power of the alcohol follow, and Caliban, who moves like a drunk, convinces himself that Stephano is a god fallen from the moon\textsuperscript{205}. Stephano once again gives him a drink while Trinculo, now in corridor A, rolls about in laughter and directs his lines directly at the audience. Trinculo, Stephano, and once again Trinculo’s lines from 154-159 are cut. Caliban is seated at the centre of the circle of sand and speaks and moves like a child who is describing a marvelous world. Stephano, on the right, entrusts Trinculo, who is now standing on the left, with the bottle. Caliban stands, a large, dark figure outlined against the cyclorama, and from the border of the hill, with his shoulders to the audience and his arms raised and wide open, instead of singing drunkenly, as in the stage directions after 177 [\textit{Sings drunkenly}], he delivers the words like a kind of declaration:

\begin{quote}
Addio, padrone, addio! Caliban ha un nuovo padrone, e tu vai a cercarti un un uomo nuovo [Farewell, master, farewell! Caliban has a new master, get a new man 178-185 approx.], then laughs and turns staggering. Trinculo’s line at 179 and Stephano’s final line at 188 follow, and Caliban then restarts a verse of the song that in the text he should sing drunk, ‘Ban, ‘Ban, Cacaliban [184] – the rest of the song is cut – and he starts a kind of animal-like dance in which Stephano and Trinculo are also involved with notes that mix the primitive drum heard at the beginning of the scene with the comic flute from Stephano’s song. Trinculo, with the bottle in hand, gathers the skin left by Caliban, who gets his medicine man stick yelling \textit{Libertà! Felicità! Libertà!} [Freedom, high-day! \ldots etc. 186-187]. The three,
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{205} In the production, though, the textual references to the \textit{dog} and the \textit{bush} [141] of the mythical man of the moon are cut. Lombardo explains the meaning of these symbols in Shakespeare, \textit{La tempesta}, trans. Lombardo, ibid., 97, note 4.
still dancing, are arriving in the area behind the hill, the upstage part of the platform, when with a musical crescendo that recalls the comedy-like music from *The Servant of Two Masters*, the scene concludes with a black-out. It lasted nineteen minutes, and thus the first part of the show was nearly an hour and thirty minutes.

1978 *Tempest*, Stephano, Caliban, and Trinculo at the end of II.ii (copyright © Piccolo Teatro of Milan Archives)

Gaipa writes in his notes on June 7 that the only common elements in the two productions of the *Tempest* directed by Strehler “rest with Trinculo and Stephano’s interpretation as zanni”\(^\text{206}\), a point of view shared by Lombardo, according to whom this connection was also proof of Strehler’s interest, since the

\(^{206}\text{GJ 89.}\)
beginning of his theatre activity, in the metatheatrical\textsuperscript{207}. The alienation effect created by the first scene of Alonso’s court, for example, as previously discussed, seems to be present in both the editions, but it is undeniable that this intuition of the Commedia dell’arte, as Strehler himself describes it, was more explicit and evident. “I guessed,” Strehler writes, “especially since Croce was behind it, but there were also many others, so why then Croce himself? Because there was the direct ‘derivation’ from Commedia dell’arte”\textsuperscript{208}. Strehler makes reference to Benedetto Croce’s essay “Shakespeare, Napoli, e la Commedia napoletana dell’arte,” published in 1919\textsuperscript{209}, in which the Italian philosopher and critic discusses the resonance of the names ‘Napoli’ [Naples] and ‘napoletano’ [Neapolitan] in Shakespeare’s texts, particularly in \textit{The Tempest}. Croce takes as a cue Ferdinando Neri’s essay \textit{Scenari delle Maschere in Arcadia}, published in 1913, which is about some of Basilio Locatelli’s scenarios\textsuperscript{210}, and a scenario, discovered by Croce, called \textit{Arcadia incantata} [Arcadia Enchanted]\textsuperscript{211}. According

\begin{footnotesize}

\textsuperscript{208} SN 36. See previous paragraph 5, chapter 2.

\textsuperscript{209} The first time the article appeared in the journal \textit{La critica}, then in other collections of works by Croce. I refer to Benedetto Croce, “Shakespeare, Napoli, e la Commedia napoletana dell’arte,” in \textit{Nuovi saggi sulla letteratura italiana del ’600} (Napoli: Bibliopolis, 2003): 279-292.

\textsuperscript{210} Ferdinando Neri, \textit{Scenari delle Maschere in Arcadia} (Città di Castello: Lapi, 1913). The two volumes including the 103 scenarios by Basilio Locatelli, \textit{Della scena de’ soggetti comici di B.L.R. Parte prima}, Roma 1618, and \textit{Della scena de’ soggetti comici et tragici di B.L.R. Parte seconda}, Roma 1622, are kept at Casanatense Library in Rome [Ms. 1211-12] and are the oldest extant manuscript collection of scenarios. In his volume, Neri publishes and discusses four scenarios included in the second volume: \textit{La pazzia di Filandro} (#4), \textit{Il gran mago} (#21), \textit{La nave} (#26), and \textit{Le tre satiri} (#28).

\textsuperscript{211} \textit{Arcadia Enchanted} is the first scenario of the second of the two volumes including the compilation of scenarios known as Casamarcciano. See \textit{The Commedia dell’Arte in Naples: A Bilingual Edition of the 176 Casamarciano Scenarios}, ed. and trans. by Francesco Cotticelli, Anne Goodrich Heck, and Thomas F. Heck, 2 vols. (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press Inc., 2001).
\end{footnotesize}
to Neri, the themes of the tempest, the shipwreck, of the magician who at the end of the spells breaks his wand, of the wild earth populated by spirits, of the “two groups of characters, the nobles and the plebeians, the first turned to ambition and love (with the final wedding), the second to brutal enjoyment and kept in humiliation”\textsuperscript{212}, are present in different forms in all of the scenarios he discusses and are akin to those in \textit{The Tempest}. Croce does not only confirm Neri’s hypothesis, but also sustains the Neapolitaness of the name ‘Trinculo,’ – from \textit{tringole}, which in Neopolitan dialect means \textit{frippery, trinkets, rubbish} – gives birth to the conjecture that

the Italian comedy that in a more or less indirect way came to Shakespeare’s notice, and that he bore in mind or that he remembered while composing \textit{The Tempest}, maybe it was a comedy or a scenario elaborated by Neapolitan comedians, with comic Neapolitan parts\textsuperscript{213}.

Trinculo, in other words, could have been one of the many clownish names, “often formed from mere analogies or phonic bizarreries”\textsuperscript{214}, of the Neapolitan actors who crossed Europe of the time: “Coviello, Pascariello, Policinella, Cola, Maramao, Ciccio Sgarra, Meo Squaquara, Spaccastrummolo, etc.”\textsuperscript{215}. Also the name ‘Stefano’ [Stephano], according to Croce, probably comes from a comic type, in that it is equivalent to a slang expression that means ‘belly, stomach’,

\textsuperscript{212} Neri 33.
\textsuperscript{213} Croce 288.
\textsuperscript{214} Croce 289.
\textsuperscript{215} Croce 289.
from which Neapolitan phrases like) egnersi (riempirsi) lo stefano [to fill the stomach] come. Whether Croce’s conjecture is exact must still be demonstrated, but the Neapolitaness of the name ‘Trinculo’ does not seem to be in doubt. It is possible that ‘Stefano’ as well is Neapolitan. As other support for this hypothesis Croce brings Shakespeare’s actual text, that *O / Stephano, two Neapolitans scap’d!* [113-114],

that in Naples there might have other times been Coviello and Policinella, and elsewhere, in the comedy of northern Italy, Brighella and Arlecchino. With these Italian and Neapolitan zanni, the two Shakespearian characters have in common their carefree and joking manner, and consequently their readiness to make friends with Caliban and their good-humored entertainment making the monster they meet drink, enjoy, and get drunk; *Monsieur Monster* [III.ii, 17], as they call him, laughing at themselves and at him.  

This is the direction that Strehler follows in both the editions of the *Tempest* that he directed, where he takes advantage of the verbal distinctiveness and, as much we can imagine from the text directions, the physical characteristics of the two characters as if they were two zanni representative of the two main veins of the Commedia dell’arte, Venetian and Neapolitan:

I made Stefano Venetian for two reasons: one cultural reason, if in the scene there are indications of the Commedia dell’arte, the Commedia dell’arte had three dialects, if we include the Dottore, who was from Bologna; but the two centers of the Commedia

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216 Croce 291-292.
dell’arte were Naples and Venice, Venice with Arlecchino and Pantalone and Naples with Pulcinella. Trinculo is definitely a Pulcinella, more or less. Dressed as Pulcinella he is, in short, like Pulcinella. Stefano is also Neapolitan: he can be Neapolitan or Venetian. Therefore [in 1948] I made Stefano Venetian, because I thought that if there are the symbols of the Commedia dell’arte it was necessary to show the two sources of the Commedia dell’arte: one Neapolitan and one Venetian, and because it was traditional in the Commedia dell’arte to have different dialects on stage. But there was also a textual reason, since the only word spoken in Italian in the text is coragio, coragio [V.i, 258] and ‘coragio, coragio,’ with only one ‘g,’ can be said only in Venice.217

In some scattered notes for November 15, 1977, Trinculo is definitively a Pulcinella and Stefano a Brighella, and Strehler poses the problem as to whether or not they should have masks and imagines lazzis for their entrances. The question of the masks is the problem that nags him. In the notes from January 27 he had already analyzed various characters in terms of masks. Ariel, for example, does not have a mask but it is as if she continually uses one, and Caliban could use a mask during his ritual, a question that is later resolved with make-up that recalls Kau’s images in Leni Riefenstahl’s photographs.218 In Stefano and Trinculo’s case adopting the leather masks from the Commedia dell’arte would be the most obvious solution, but would make the quote from The Servant of Two Masters immediately come to mind. The final solution, as we have already

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217 This Strehler’s excerpt is from the written record (Vol. 2: 228) of the tapes of the conversations between him and Jan Kott, introduced in previous paragraph 1.

218 See previous paragraph 6, note 158.
seen, was to use costumes explicit enough in terms of reference and very simple
masks – they seem to be made of fabric – that cover only the top part of the face,
in correspondence with the eyes, but not the cheeks and nose like the traditional
Commedia dell’arte masks.

In his notes Gaipa underlines more than once that the scenes with the two
buffoons and with Caliban – II.ii e III.ii – had a long and tiring gestation. Strehler
wanted to avoid in the most absolute manner that lazzi and comedy won the
day, transforming the scene into pure exhibitionism of the actor, and at the same
time he wanted to “create a climate of tragic farce”\textsuperscript{219}. Because he was not
Venetian, the actor playing Stefano, Mimmo Craig, found himself performing in
a language not his own, and this sort of detachment would seem to help him. On
the other hand, Armando Marra, who played the role of Trinculo, was an
authentic Neapolitan, with experience in \textit{sceneggiata}\textsuperscript{220} and with notable miming
skills and the ability to improvise. In any case, both the actors, according to
Gaipa, suffered the precision of movements, of rhythms, and of vocal quality that
made Strehler’s \textit{The Servant of Two Masters} famous throughout the world and
that is also later found in his other shows. The times of the two scenes always
risked expanding beyond every measure – it is not easy to follow the

\textsuperscript{219} GJ 48.

\textsuperscript{220} The \textit{sceneggiata} started shortly after World War I and was extremely popular in the 1920s – it
was performed in the U.S. in areas populated by Italian immigrants - then faded, but has been
enjoying somewhat of a comeback with newer generations of performers since the 1960s. The
\textit{sceneggiata} can be described as ‘a musical soap opera’ and generally revolves around domestic
grief, the agony of leaving home, personal deceit and treachery, betrayal in love, and life in the
world of petty crime. It is always sung and spoken in Neapolitan dialect.
performance text because probably underwent continuous variations following these expansions – and it was one of the aspects that, after the first performances in June, was most revised at the revival of the show for the 1978-79 season\textsuperscript{221}.

3.10 Timing and repetition (III.i, 1-96 – VS 00:07:30)

The second part of the show begins in the dark with a reprise of the music of the island, but almost immediately the same scenic situation as in I.ii with the same solar light appears. The sun, however, though still on the stage left side of the backdrop, is now a bit lower in order to indicate that time has passed. The video does not clarify when and how the platform-island has moved from its final situation in II.ii to this new flat situation, and I don’t remember the curtain, which is not even used at the end of the show, closing. The most likely answer is that the scene change took place in the darkness at the end of II.ii or at the beginning of III.i. The set, in fact, is now empty; the trunk that Caliban dragged at the beginning of II.ii and that remained there until the end of the scene is gone, but we note the central trap door downstage, from which Caliban entered in I.ii, open, with next to it the shell left by Ariel at the end of that same scene. The shell, in reality, is the same that Ariel picked up at the end of II.i, but that scene took place in another part of the island, for which the act of ‘picking it up’ meant that it was another shell. Ferdinand exits from the trap door in a manner similar to Caliban except from the front, and like Caliban he is completely nude except

\textsuperscript{221} When the production opened again, in October, at the Lirico, Marra was still playing Trinculo, but was later substituted by Paolo Falace, who is the actor playing it in the video.
for the trunk hose that covers his intimate parts and his hips. He walks to stage left, and the lateral frame, like that at the end of II.i, shows him going to gather a stump from a heap stacked up at the edge of the lateral platform and then going back to the trap door. Seated on the ground with the trap door in front of him, he begins lines 1-14 and after the first two verses throws the stump through the trap door. As in the whole scene, there are numerous cuts to this lines. Given that there are many more lines in the Italian version than in the English text, by an approximate calculation about thirty verses from the original version are cut, and in a few cases some lines are moved. If we consider that in the Arden version this scene has 96 verses, almost a third of the dialogue is cut. These cuts are not, however, casual. Some of the linguistic figures that disappear are part of a language that is romanticized but for a modern audience distant and artificial. Although the poetic quality of the recitation is undeniable, the scene seems to proceed on the binaries of a psychological naturalism that contrasts with the alienation of the lines of Prospero, who observes the scene of the two young people from the audience point of view. According to Griga, Prospero is in one of the corridors of the proscenium, and as a spectator I have a vague memory of Prospero inside corridor C, which is closest to the audience. In the video, however, it seems strange that Carraro is in one of the corridors, first because we see almost his entire figure, and second because he doesn’t finish his last line.

Among the cuts also the controversial Most busy lest, when I do it [15] about which, Lombardo points out (Shakespeare, La tempesta, trans. Lombardo, ibid., 105, note 1), in the Arden edition there is a long comment. See Shakespeare, The Tempest, ed. Frank Kermode, ibid., 71-73.

See Griga 61.
until after he has walked ahead, towards the camera in the centre, which would have been impeded by the front wall of the corridor. This does not take away from the fact that his lines are really an aside with the audience, underlined, in the television shot, by an alternation of frames of the two young people, long shots which also include Prospero in the visual field, and his close-ups, like the final one, in which he shows the book. Besides this, the entire scene with the young people takes place in the center of the circle. At the end of lines 1-13, Ferdinand goes back through the trap door. The stage direction indicates Enter Miranda; and Prospero [at a distance, unseen], but in the video we do not see Prospero until the verses at 24. The frame, in fact, returns to the stage left side, where there is another stump, and we see Miranda appear on the opposite side, stage right; she then nears the center of the circle and peers into the trap door; we can therefore suppose that Prospero arrived on the platform at the same time as Miranda. Ferdinand leaves the trap door from the front as before, doesn’t see her, and goes to take another stump. The dialogue begins when he returns, first on the ground, when Miranda helps him throw the new stump through the trap door, then standing. When Miranda says E la mia, con dentro il cuore [90], Prospero nears the stage and throws a shell over it\textsuperscript{224}, and this movement also allows us to see that he clearly cannot be inside a corridor. Miranda pauses and then finishes her line before exiting stage right while Ferdinand exits stage left. The entire scene lasted little more than seven minutes.

\textsuperscript{224} “There is the game of the shell that Prospero throws from the audience to interrupt the embrace” (GJ 127). According to Horowitz, “Prospero separated them [Miranda and Ferdinand] by tossing his wedding ring onto the stage” (Horowitz 105).
The initial seconds of III.i, which coincide with the beginning of the second part of the show, give rise to some considerations of the time/s of the show and the idea of repetition. In a note on April 4, 1977, Strehler plans to make the opening of the Tempest at 2:30 pm on a Sunday, traditional day for a matinée, to start at 3:00 pm and finish at 6:00 pm in order to give “the feeling of real time united with theatrical time”\(^{225}\). June 28, 1978, the day of the opening, was in reality a Thursday, and the show then played until July 4, a Tuesday, with only one rest day, which was Sunday. A review of opening night, published the next day, mentions that the real duration of the show was three hours and three minutes, which lengthens to three hours and three quarters due to two intermissions: one at the end of I.ii and one at the end of III.iii\(^{226}\). I do not remember the number of intermissions, but in the video at the beginning of III.i the words ‘second part’ appear on the screen while there is no indication of a ‘third part’ when III.iii moves to IV. It could be that the video was divided into two parts due to the demands of television\(^ {227}\), and that the show was actually divided into three parts with two intermissions, but the fact remains that there are contrasting opinions on the actual running time involving scenic action. The review that is cited above seems to give precise times, and attached to it there is a

\(^{225}\) SN 50.


\(^{227}\) Until the end of the 1970s, beginning of the 1980s, the theatre programs of the Italian public television and radio service (RAI), were usually divided according the original intermissions of the text, during which, sometimes, commercials were broadcasted.
short article\textsuperscript{228} that underlines how \textit{The Tempest} is the only one of Shakespeare’s texts to respect the three Aristotelian unities – although, in my opinion, the unity of space is disputable – and how the starting time, 3:00 p.m., and ending time, 6:00 p.m., which emerge clearly from the lines, are the same as show times in Shakespeare’s day\textsuperscript{229}. Some of Lombardo’s observations in a letter sent to Strehler after the opening of the show though, seem to contradict the article referred to above\textsuperscript{230}. Lombardo says that the first act, besides the notable acoustic problems caused by the Lirico, “could at times be faster, but this is true not so much for this act (which I was really scared about, given the ‘narrative’) as for other parts of the show, which could probably ‘save’ altogether about twenty minutes”\textsuperscript{231}. Further on in the letter, Lombardo complains about the excessive length of the scenes with the buffoons and Caliban\textsuperscript{232}, and in the scene described above, III.i, notes an excessive slowness in the transport of the stumps – and this too could be a good opportunity to save time (and to this end I would like to refer you the observation of a Venetian friend of mine, not at all intellectual, who really enjoyed the show: ‘which other director would succeed, with that heat, with those acoustics, at keeping the

\textsuperscript{228} “L’orologio di Shakespeare” [Shakespeare’s clock], \textit{La Notte} (Milano) 29 June 1978. There is no signature, but the article is probably by Paolo A. Paganini, who wrote the review and also the already mentioned interview to Luciano Damiani – “Scenografia essenziale (con 4 mila metro di tulle)” – published on the same newspaper page.

\textsuperscript{229} See previous note 132.


\textsuperscript{231} Colombo, ‘La Tempesta’ tradotta e messa in scena 1977-1978 128.

\textsuperscript{232} See previous paragraph 9, and the following one, 11.
spectators in the theatre for four hours and making them applaud so much?’) – but that doesn’t take away the fact that everything would benefit from coming as close as possible to the three fateful hours\textsuperscript{233}.

Considering that the evening lasted, according to the review, at least three hours and forty-five minutes – which more or less corresponds to the four hours mentioned by Lombardo’s friend, who perhaps arrived at the theatre a little early – it seems that Lombardo, who suggests to save twenty minutes altogether, talks about three hours including the intermissions, in this case surely not more than one. In effect, calculating the complete duration of the video, about two hours and forty minutes, and an intermission of twenty minutes, the complete duration is three hours, which means that as is suggested by Lombardo and wished for by Strehler, at least twenty minutes were cut from the version of the play shown from June 28 to July 4 1978 for the version shown in October of the same year\textsuperscript{234}.

While in theatre twenty minutes is an eternity, it is definitely possible. On the other hand, already after the rehearsal on June 25, the first rehearsal of the entire play – which Strehler didn’t attend in order to avoid interrupting it – something like this had happened\textsuperscript{235}. The duration, Gaipa notes, had been more than four hours, and the problem was not cutting the text – although cuts to III.i and to the

\textsuperscript{233} Colombo, ‘La Tempesta’ tradotta e messa in scena 1977-1978 130.

\textsuperscript{234} According to Luigi Lunari, the production, when opened again at the Lirico after the summer performances, was thirty-five minutes shorter. See Luigi Lunari, “La tempesta è sempre un ottimo spettacolo,” Avanti! (Roma) 1 Nov. 1978.

\textsuperscript{235} It should be noticed that after June 25 there was not a full run through before opening night. The plane, Gaipa writes, was to rehearse Acts I, II, and III, the 26\textsuperscript{th}, and Acts IV and V the 27\textsuperscript{th}. The 26\textsuperscript{th}, in reality, after many hours spent to fix various technical problems, it was possible to rehearse only up to the end of Act II, which corresponds to the first part of the video recording.
masque of the Harpy in IV.i were later executed – but above all condensing the rhythms, particularly in the court scenes and the buffoon scenes, and making the scene changes and the starts of some scenes more fluid. In this sense the beginning of III.i is exemplary. As in the entrances and exits of Alonso’s court there is slowness, but this is tied to two factors: time, in this case understood as season or climate, and repetition. On December 16, 1977, Strehler writes that if time needs to exist in The Tempest, it certainly finishes towards sunset because it must end with the sunset of the Renaissance, with the twilight of Prospero […]. What season and latitude? Maybe the immobility of an unrelenting sun, rapture, a high radiance with few shadows.

The sun that gradually sets, scene by scene, on the cyclorama, is there to signify the sunset, but because the change is imperceptible and the quality of its light apparently direct, almost without any shadows, the effect is a warm immobility. This is the same climate that can be found in Alonso’s court scenes and that was accentuated, at the end of II.ii, by the gradual loss of costume pieces. Aside from the realistic plausibility, I observed that the slowness of that exit magnifies the alienation effect. In III.i Ferdinand has also lost part of his costume and is semi-nude like Caliban, and like Caliban at the beginning of II.ii he works for Prospero bringing wood into his cave. The slowness, in this case, is not only the expression of physical fatigue but also evidence of an action already seen – the work of the slave-monster – now in an unusual and reverse situation: the young prince

236 SN 109.
bound to physical work. This is therefore another alienation effect, in this case based on the idea of repetition, a critical concept developed by Jan Kott in relation to the *Tempest*\textsuperscript{237}, which Strehler discusses during their conversations, and that he summarizes according to five modalities:

The first is the repetition of the past, history that reveals itself, that repeats itself; it is the history of humanity, of man that reveals itself; the second is the repetition of the theatrical rehearsal, that is the repetition that make things change or not change; the third is the repetition of fundamental Shakespearean themes; the fourth is the repetition of Prospero’s story; the last is the repetition of Homer and Virgil’s themes and situations\textsuperscript{238}.

According to Kott there is also a sixth modality, that of Shakespearean themes in a very precise sense, that is of dialogues and of scenes taken from his other texts, for example Caliban’s lines *Freedom, high-day! high-day, freedom! freedom, / high-day, freedom!* [II.ii, 186-187] which are like Brutus’s *Peace, freedom, and liberty!* in *Julius Caesar* [III.i, 110]. To these modalities, be there five or six, perhaps another should be added. We saw how much Strehler worries about not repeating himself when he thinks about the scenic space. He maintains certain qualities, but when the copy becomes almost an exact reproduction of what was already done he completely avoids it. Despite this, there are the moments already mentioned in Ariel’s scene in I.ii or in II.ii’s finale – the exit of Caliban and the

\textsuperscript{237} I refer to the already mentioned “The Tempest, or Repetition” by Jan Kott, see previous note 117, the Italian translation of which appears also in the 1983-84 program of the production of the Piccolo.

\textsuperscript{238} This excerpt from the tapes of the conversations between Strehler and Jan Kott (see previous note 217) is in Griga 92.
buffoons – in which his own quotation, if not just a repetition, is undeniable. On the other hand, like a game of mirrors, in the 1986-87 edition of The Servant of Two Masters, noted as the ‘farewell edition,’ at a certain point the entire cast of comics is taken by a wind turbine and in the video recording of the show we clearly hear someone yell la tempesta! [the tempest!] and il temporale! [the storm!], with the latter referring to Temporale [The Storm] by August Strindberg, which was directed by Strehler in 1978-79 with Tino Carraro once again as protagonist.

Besides the initial most alienating phase, repetition is also found throughout III.i in the dialogue between Ferdinand and Miranda. Strehler dedicates some pages of his notes to analyzing this scene, and from this emerges the underlying difficulty of relating two young people who fall in love with each other following two different processes. Ferdinand, although sincere, communicates through courteous schemes, that is, the verbal formulas and baroque images of a young, well-raised gentleman. Miranda instead expresses an instinctive sincerity, passionate, that seems to ruin every scheme. The Povera bestiola, sei stata contagiata [Poor worm, thou art infected! 31] said by Prospero in reference to Miranda as he observes the two young people is there, according to Strehler, to demonstrate that the infective illness of love repeats itself once again.
3.11  An island full of noises (III.ii, 1-150 – VS 00:15:00)

The second scene of the third act opens with a stage direction that once again indicates [Another part of the Island.] and then Enter Caliban, Stephano, and Trinculo. The platform changes form and seems to be the same as in II.i, with the upstage right corner high again, but unlike in II.i there is no shrub. With a fade-in the video goes from the close-up of Prospero at the end of III.i to a close-up of the shell inside the central circle. The transition to the long shot reveals Ariel, having probably entered from stage right, collecting the shell as at the end of II.i. At this point there is a new side frame from stage left, which is where Ariel exits while at the same time Caliban, who carries a cask on his shoulders, enters. The music is that of the island and the light is solar, but more blinding. The noise of the cask heavily put down by Caliban in the centre of the circle is like the sound of thunder. Caliban reacts with hysterical laughter and then flops down on the cask. Stefano and Trinculo enter singing from stage left, Stefano with Caliban’s witch doctor stick in his hand and Trinculo with the bottle that was seen before. In terms of the text, the observations made in II.ii also hold here, and there are two precise cuts, one from 16 to 21, which eliminates translation problems tied to wordplay\(^{239}\), and the other from 30 to 32. The first lines are spoken around the cask from which Caliban is chased away with a kick. While Trinculo is seated on the ground in the upstage right corner, Stefano is standing on the cask and Caliban is standing on the ground. Like II.ii, the scene proceeds

\(^{239}\) Lombardo refers to the problem of “at least suggesting the nuance of wordplays connected to standard, run, lie” (Shakespeare, La tempesta, trans. Lombardo, ibid., 113, note 2).
amidst lazzi and the notable physicality of all the characters, Caliban in particular, who begs Stefano to free him from Prospero. After Stefano’s line ending at 39, a stage direction indicates *Enter Ariel, invisible*, and during Caliban’s successive lines we see Ariel enter from stage left and put herself in front of Trinculo, who is now standing in the upstage centre and drinking from the bottle. The game of misunderstandings now begins, which makes Caliban and Stefano believe that it is sometimes Trinculo speaking when in reality it is Ariel. The scene proceeds with the physicality and dynamics of a traditional Commedia dell’arte scene. At line 71 Trinculo puts down the bottle near the cask and situates himself to stage left of the circle. The stage direction at this point, during Stefano’s line at 74, indicates *[Beats him]*, and we see Stefano who is about to beat Trinculo, but in front of him is the invisible Ariel. In this manner the audience sees a classic lazzo with three players – typical also more recently in the tradition of clowns and Chaplin films – in which Stefano seems to be about to hit Ariel, but instead hits Trinculo because Ariel moves away. We notice that Ariel, when she insists on talking with Trinculo’s voice, adopts the Neapolitan cadence of his character in an explicit vocal imitation. Caliban’s long speech from 85-101, without cuts, when he suggests how to kill Prospero and take his daughter from him, sees Caliban kneeling on stage right, and the video emphasizes the moment with a strong close-up. With the attention to detail typical of Strehler, after Stefano’s brief *Ma è proprio un tale splendore?* [101], Caliban, after saying *Sì, signore; farà onore al tuo letto, / Lo garantisco. E figlierà/*
*Una splendida nidiata* [102-103], kneels down, straining from the upstage right corner, to vomit. In the next lines, while Stefano and Caliban plan Prospero’s assassination Ariel is seated upstage center-right, and the line *Lo dirò al mio padrone* [113] is cut, given that it is clear she is listening. Later, when Caliban asks if to have fun they want to sing, at the stage direction *Sings* Stefano and Trinculo start a dissonant and confused chorus to which Caliban reacts with the line *Il motivo era un altro* [122] and then seems to fall asleep in fetal position. The next stage directions indicates *Ariel plays the tune on a tabor and a pipe*, but in the show Ariel only has a drum, the same used at the end of II.i, that she beats to scare Stefano and Trinculo while she croons the motif from Stefano and Trinculo’s refrain. We see Trinculo flopped on the cask, while Stefano is spread out on the ground stage left and Ariel now seated close to him, when Ariel’s voice mixes with the island’s music. Caliban’s long speech from 133-141 is delivered from the ground, as if everything were taking place in an atmosphere between dream and hangover. The scene concludes with all leaving to stage left following Ariel, who beats the drum: first Caliban, who holds the cask and his witch doctor stick, then Stefano, and finally Trinculo with the bottle around his neck. Caliban appears to start dancing again, while Trinculo and Stefano leave on all fours. The comic flute music that was heard in II.ii with Stefano’s first entrance also returns.

In his notes on November 15 1977, thinking about the instruments for the music, Strehler writes that “the Tempest should only be made of human things
that are not mechanical (or at least only imperceptible amplification and background), but even like this it is impure”240. Discussing I.i we already underlined the importance of live music, but for Strehler the accuracy of the sound aspect goes well beyond music in the strict sense. Giulia Lazzarini said that the realization of a Strehler’s shows was always tied to an atmosphere made of lights and of sounds. The sounds for him are decisive, the little noises… not only the music; he has always used little music, he has never wanted a musical comment like a sound track. Music needs to come in at the right moments and above all needs to be part of the script. It needs to underline or subtly highlight the dramatic situation241.

In his notes on August 1, for example, Strehler poses a number of problems regarding the sound passages, vocal and musical, that go from the phase of the initial storm to Ariel’s first entrance, all in I.ii:

The first dialogue between Prospero and Miranda. First of all it starts with the tempest and Prospero then calms it during the first part. Until when and from when? I think from when he says: Calma. Non agitarti più [13-14]. Here he starts with the gestures to calm the tempest, the lightning becomes rarer, the thunder further away in a diminuendo of kettledrums and percussion, the voices more and more lower… until a kind of note kept pppp242… a calm sound from the ‘mysterious’ island of echoes and marine sounds. It remains the problem of the ‘score’, until when the ‘sound of the island’ or the ‘murmur of the island’ should continue. And why it

240 SN 86.

241 Stampalia, Strehler dirige 216.

242 Pppp stands for pianissimo.
disappears. Maybe it is present during all of the dialogue with Miranda? And it helps Miranda’s sleep. But it could also be annoying. And then Ariel enters, without sound? Or with ‘sounds of air,’ that is, ‘sounds of sea and island’ and ‘sounds of air and of invisible’? Everything to be verified on stage. How the scene unwinds.

This was the kind of work that Strehler carried out with Fiorenzo Carpi, the music was born during the rehearsals. From Strehler’s initial ideas, Carpi came up with some atmospheres that he later worked on in a room with a piano on the third floor of the Lirico. Daily meetings at the end of the rehearsals followed, as Gaipa often remembers, in which Strehler acted with the same method he worked on the lights, on the sets, and, to a certain extent, on the actors: he listened, he chose, he rejected, he proposed… In this way it was possible that a theme written for III.iii, for when the table covered in food appears, could then inspire the music in V.i, when Alonso and the court find reason again. This research on the atmosphere, music, and sound that don’t frame the text – Carpi comes to declare that the music approved by Strehler worked because it was more ‘against’ than ‘for’ the text – but are part of the text itself, brought Strehler to concentrate on every aspect of the music, even on the single instruments, almost to the point of substituting himself for the composer. Gaipa writes that Strehler “‘feels’ and ‘guides’ the instruments like he feels and guides the rhythms, tones, colors, and intonations of the actors. […] If he had a better

243 SN 60.

244 See previous chapter 2, note 32, and previous note 58.
mastery of technique he would himself compose the music in his plays!)”\textsuperscript{245}. During the rehearsals he often worked with background music that might sustain the atmosphere that he was looking for – Angelica biltà by Francesco Landini (1325-1397), for example, a two-voice Italian madrigal – and perhaps he mixed them, like the lights, with other music, trying to create new effects. The sound of the show, however, as already suggested, was essential in every aspect, not only strictly musical. A clear example is right at the beginning of III.ii. the noise of the cask dropped by Caliban on the ground that mixes with the sound of the thunder, thunder that was already heard at the beginning of II.ii, when Caliban dropped his trunk on the ground: “It is the theme of the tempest,” Strehler writes, “reprised in a lesser sense with just a rumble or a few rumbles of thunder. The threat of a storm, but this one seems ‘real’ and not invented by Prospero, […] but Caliban thinks that it is like ‘magic’ that is meant to torment him”\textsuperscript{246}. It should be noted that this scene was rehearsed and re-rehearsed under the guidance of Enrico D’Amato because Strehler was never happy with it, and in one rehearsal, Gaipa recalls, a lazzo born by chance was introduced, in which the cask rolled towards the sea, but was later eliminated. Another example of a situation that arose by chance, and once again tied to the sounds of the show – a perfect example of how Strehler took advantage of the unexpected if he could get a precise meaning from it – is the noise that the clip unhooked by Prospero.

\textsuperscript{245} GJ 64-75.

\textsuperscript{246} SN 86.
from Ariel’s corset in V.i makes when he finally liberates her. Ariel’s rope was connected to an elastic system, and because of this, when unhooked the rope quickly re-ascended towards the grid. The first time it was rehearsed the mechanism hit against something metallic and made a very loud noise. Instead of eliminating the noise, Strehler decided that this ‘noise’ was the violent and abrupt hit which the umbilical cord that ties Ariel and Prospero makes when cut, and the noise became ‘sound’ followed by another strong effect, a silence that is like amazement. This sense of the music, of the sound, of the rhythms and of the pauses was so innate in Strehler that one of his assistants, Walter Pagliaro, notes that it gave rise to the spontaneous question of how he did it, given that, as paradoxical as it might seem, he never saw his plays in their entirety, “he never saw one in his entire life”, it seems not even in rehearsal, as we saw with the first dress rehearsal of the show on June 25, which he did not attend.

3.12 Enter several strange Shapes... (III.iii, 1-109 – VS 00:11:00)

The third and last scene of the third act of the text reintroduces the characters of the court. We find them, as the first stage direction indicates, in [Another part of the Island.] This direction is resolved by presenting the central platform in a new form. The upstage right corner remains raised while the triangle formed by the left side, the diagonal, and the front downstage side runs behind with a climbing movement as in II.ii. This results in a gap between the

two triangles that is not visible to the audience but is evident in the video. While the characters of the court enter from stage right, the camera situated stage below – probably the same one used in I.ii for both Ariel’s descent and the opening of the trap door from which Caliban exits – shows the space between the two triangles of the platform that literally opens itself up. In reality, if our interpretation is correct, the opening is dictated by the triangle that runs behind with a climbing movement. From this aperture we see, from below, Alonso, Gonzalo, Francisco, Adrian, Sebastian, and Antonio enter. They walk slowly, as in the exit in II.i, but in a less stylized manner. Alonso, although he still has the crown on his head, heavily drags his royal mantle; Gonzalo, without a hat, drags his own simar; the other four characters all have only a shirt with cloaks, hats, and swords in their hand or over their shoulder. The impression, which is accentuated by echoes and the music of strings, is that they are all tired and hot. The solar light is definitely less hot than in the previous scene. Following a circular movement that also passes through corridor A, Alonso stops on stage left, Gonzalo in the center, is in corridor A – that, it should be recalled, is just below the platform-island – and the other four on stage right. The light is still solar but grayish, as when the excessive heat creates a sort of light fog. At Alonso’s line Sediamoci a riposare [6], the King, Gonzalo, Francisco, and Adrian sit on the ground while Sebastian and Antonio remain tiredly on their feet. At the end of that same line, 10, Alonso takes off his crown and puts it on his mantle on the ground. From here until 52, the line that precedes the Harpy’s entrance, the
text presents numerous cuts amounting to approximately twenty lines. The lines between Antonio and Sebastian from 11 to 17, for example, all spoken aside, are reduced to an even more rapid exchange that takes place while a wind effect begins to rise that introduces the long stage direction *Solemn and strange music; and Prospero on the top (invisible). Enter several strange Shapes, bringing in a banquet; and dance about it with gentle actions of salutations; and inviting the King & c., to eat, they depart.* The light lowers and becomes even cloudier, as if a storm is about to arise, and in effect the initial sound seems like that of a strong wind, with a solemn background music that tends to increase in volume. As a spectator I remember a moment that was hardly visible, not only because of my position, but also because of the quality of the light. In the video we see enter the two sea-sheets of the initial tempest: one from stage left, from the corridor that is posterior to the central platform, and one from stage right that covers the three anterior corridors. Prospero, who stops in the center, in the audience, more or less in the same position as during III.i and seems to direct what is happening, accompanies this second sheet. When the sea-sheets enter, Antonio and Sebastian separate and with their swords drawn situate themselves at the two sides of the central upstage zone – in the video we note that the actor who plays Antonio is forced to jump in order to avoid trampling the veil, which bulges to conceal the banquet – while the music rises in volume, and with effort we hear Alonso and Gonzalo’s lines in 18-19. In the moment in which the posterior sheet reveals the banquet, the music seems to fall in intensity and the dialogue, as said above,
becomes extremely terse because of the numerous cuts. Prospero’s first line in the scene, from 34-36, is also cut, and his first words after Alonso has simply said *Sono ancora pieno di ammirazione* [36] – the rest of the line is cut – are *Aspetta la fine, per applaudire* [Praise in departing, 39], that more than an *aside*, as the stage direction from the text indicates, seems directed at Alonso, who in fact also delivers the next line. This line, in the performance, sounds *Come sono apparse stranamente* [40], which means *They appeared strangely*, and in the text is attributed to Francisco. The original text though, says the opposite, *They vanish’d strangely* [40] – *Come sono sparite stranamente* in the Italian published version – but in the show *several strange Shapes* do not appear; therefore they can not *vanish*, and since Sebastian’s line at 22, the performance text makes reference to a *gioco d’ombre*, literally *a game of shadows*, and not, as in the original text, to *a living drollery* [21] – *fantocci viventi* in the Italian published version. Alonso therefore comments that the *ombre* [*shadows*] have disappeared. When upon Sebastian’s invitation, Alonso, after having put the crown back on his head, finally nears the banquet, helped also by Antonio and Gonzalo, the solemn music returns and we see Prospero from the back give the signal for the Harpy’s entrance. The stage direction after 52 says *Thunder and lightning. Enter Ariel like a Harpy; claps his wings upon the table; and, with a quaint device, the banquet vanishes*. Suddenly the platform once again seems to be at the mercy of the waves. The strobe light goes on and off in the background while Ariel, dressed as a taloned bat with enormous black wings, descends yelling from above amidst the sounds of the
thunder and with two waving sheets at the sides. Once she reaches the ground, with her wings she hides the table, from which all of the food disappears. Ariel then rises above it. In the meantime, since the beginning of this phase of the scene, Adriano and Francisco have exited stage right while Gonzalo has disappeared behind the rise of the triangle stage left, so that only Antonio, Sebastian, and Alonso, to whom the Harpy reminds of their sins, and obviously Prospero, remain in view. Ariel-Harpy’s long lines from 53 to 82 contain a clean cut from 60 to 69 and two other brief cuts from 73-75 and 78-79. At 59 the stage direction that says [Alonso, Sebastian etc. draw their swords] is more or less respected, although only Antonio and Sebastian try to raise their swords while Ariel-Harpy puts herself back in flight for a moment. Her piece concluded, Ariel disappears above amidst cawing cries and the sound of thunder and wind. At the same time a very brief darkness below allows the table to disappear. Prospero continues to direct everything while the initial calm and light return.

Antonio is stage left above with his face covered; Sebastian is stage right below, bent over himself; and Alonso is in the center, seen from the back, bent on his knees. Gonzalo appears from below stage left of the central platform at the point in which it connects to the lateral platform. The show’s action therefore proceeds in a manner substantially different from what is indicated in the text. The stage direction, referring to Ariel, He vanishes in thunder; then, to soft music, enter the Shapes again, and dance, with mocks and mows, and carrying out the table, is only respected in the first and last part. Ariel-Harpy, in fact, as already said,
vanishes above while the table disappears below together with all of the blue sheets. As already explained, there is no trace of the *Shapes*. At this point, however, should be Prospero’s long line from 83-93, in which he praises Ariel’s work, and then his exit, but instead Prospero remains in the audience to observe while the text picks up again with Gonzalo, who calls *Sire* [93]. Alonso’s line from 95-102 follows in which he realizes why he would lose his son; then he goes insane, the crown falls off his head, and he exits on all fours stage left, from behind the rise of the triangle, like the buffoons in III.ii – another repetition. Sebastian and Antonio also lose their temper and leave running stage right, while from the same side Adrian and Francisco re-enter. Gonzalo sends them after Antonio and Sebastian, stage right, while he exits stage left to reach Alonso. The scene would now be over if Strehler hadn’t moved Prospero’s line 83-93 here. In the video we see him walk towards the stage left side of the proscenium while the platform returns to its flat form, and then enter from stage left while Ariel arrives from stage right with the Harpy’s costume and wig in hand. They exchange a handshake to underline the success of the mise en scène. The speech terminated, Prospero exits stage right while Ariel, still on stage, opens the trap door stage left and replaces the Harpy costume, the cloaks and the hats forgotten by the court characters, then the trap door stage right, where she replaces Alonso’s royal mantle and crown. The light lowers and darkens little by little while the music of the island returns. Ariel exits skipping stage left after having
checked that nothing remains on the stage. The scene lasted eleven minutes, and the entire third act of the text, in the show, around thirty-three minutes.

Paradoxically, besides the technical difficulties of coordinating the movements of Ariel-Harpy and the other scenic effects, the major problem of this scene was the position of the three courtiers not struck by madness: Gonzalo, Adrian, and Francisco. A first solution saw them remain immobile with their eyes covered, as if blind at the lightning that precedes the appearance of the Harpy. Another imagined them calmly exiting from the stage before the lightning. The final solution, decided on only a few weeks before opening, sees them isolated on the exit platforms, although in the video they seem to be off stage. Their re-entry, after the exit of the Harpy, is facilitated by the shift of Prospero’s lines 83-93 at the end of the scene. This is not only a dramatic choice. Prospero who gets back on stage and congratulates himself with Ariel, who has in hand her work tools, is an explicit meta-theatrical moment in which the audience has reminded that it is watching a mise en scène. This way of revealing the theater with conventional allusions, Gaipa writes, “is the most complex and neuralgic characteristic”\textsuperscript{249} of the show, it is the \textit{rough magic} that Prospero talks about in V.i, 50, and that will bring Kott, at the end of the production, to talk about the “identification of the director with the character of the drama, of Strehler with Prospero”\textsuperscript{250}. That this was, consciously or unconsciously, Strehler’s interpretive intention, is in my opinion more the reading a posteriori of a show in

\textsuperscript{249} GJ 47.

\textsuperscript{250} Kott, “Prospero, or the Director” 141.
which, as splendid as it was, Kott could not find his idea of a text where
Shakespeare’s “reduction of the golden age to an empty platform lays bare the
illusion of the theater and the illusion of the myth”\textsuperscript{251}. On the contrary, in
Strehler’s interpretation, according to Kott, “the transformation of the wooden
platform into a Paradise Lost is an affirmation of the theater, which recreates
myths”\textsuperscript{252}, and “has almost nothing of the Shakespearean bitterness and
renunciation”\textsuperscript{253}.

Beyond the different interpretive conclusions, the idea that emerges from
the conversations with Kott, according to whom the text presents a sum of
masques, that is of several shows within the show, seems in line with Strehler’s
reading. The prologue is already a masque, the appearance of the food-laden
table is a masque, which is followed by the antimasque of the Harpy.
Ferdinand’s arrival that follows Ariel’s song, concluded by his meeting with
Miranda, could also be a masque. Then there is the authentic masque of fertility
in IV.i and that of the dogs, the antimasque, in V.i. In his notes of January 27 1977
Strehler writes:

The question I ask myself is this; if \textit{The Tempest} is a representation
of Prospero, who ‘invents’ situations, who makes them come alive
or back to life in a different way, then essentially ‘all’ of \textit{The
Tempest} is a kind of ‘theatrical masque’ (that is an intermezzo with
masks) with other masques inside (it is enough to think about the

\textsuperscript{251} Kott, “Prospero, or the Director” 141.
\textsuperscript{252} Kott, “Prospero, or the Director” 141.
\textsuperscript{253} Kott, “Prospero, or the Director” 141.
Neapolitan buffoons, of Pulcinella-Trinculo and of Zanni-Stefano).

Representation within the representation. Directed by Prospero and Ariel, his aid. Everything or almost everything is fake, is represented ‘for a goal’. The goal of the representation is the focal point of *The Tempest*. Why?\(^{254}\)

In the case of the scene with the Harpy, for example, that Strehler discusses at length in his notes of December 19, 1977, the ‘why’ could find an answer in “still ‘believing’ the ‘conjurers’ tricks’ that still exist and still entertain”\(^{255}\). The idea that the banquet appeared from the sea and Ariel-Harpy came from above was fixed in the first weeks of rehearsal. Gaipa talks about it in his notes from March 23, and on April 17 he discusses the banquet trick, a tip-up table that emerges from the posterior corridor hidden by the sheet-sea. The fact that at 21 Sebastian no longer talks of a living drollery but of *un gioco d’ombre* [*a game of shadows*] attributes to the sheet-sea, Gaipa notes on April 24, a very strong interpretive sign:

> It is a new tempest – and Giorgio saw well in creating a precise, constant reference between Prospero’s magic and the sea. This coherence of connection between magic component and agitation of the elements ‘around the island’ brings us to identify the ‘spirits’ [*several strange Shapes*] with the advances of the blue silk waves under which we guess are – and at times catch a glimpse of- the bodies that put them in motion. [...] The shipwrecked characters believe in a game of shadows – they believe that they might have seen human forms – maybe they saw them appear and disappear.

\(^{254}\) SN 41.

\(^{255}\) SN 119.
Not the audience, the audience only sees what remains after the magic. The identification of the *several strange Shapes* with the sea does make it so the audience does not see anything but the sea while the shipwrecked characters think that they have seen shadows. Anna Anzi has dedicated a long and informed essay to the figurative language of *The Tempest*, based on the hypothesis that the first representations of *The Tempest* at the Banqueting House – in November 1611 and February 1613 – had at their disposition a series of elements, from sets to costumes, used in previous masques, or that in any case Shakespeare had experience with them as a spectator. In the case of the *strange Shapes* in III.iii, Anzi hypothesizes that “their monstrous or deformed aspect was obtained by the use of decidedly strange masks or costumes that were apt to deform bodies and also by mime movements or strange dances.” The masks, which appear in drawings by Inigo Jones and are inspired by the masks of Callot, would have been appropriate for realizing the *living drollery* in this scene, as

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256 GJ 46.

257 “At the Banqueting House had been already staged, in previous years (or in the same years 1611 and 1613) various masques that had all scenic elements in common with Shakespeare’s play: grottos, seas, clouds, caves, rocks. For example we can recall that in 1605 was produced The Masque of Blackness, in 1606 Hymenaei, in 1608 The Masque of Beauty, in 1609 The Masque of Queens, in 1611 Oberon, the Fairy Prince and Love Freed from Ignorance and Folly – all by Ben Jonson and Inigo Jones, while in 1610 was presented the very famous Tethys’ Festival by Samuel Daniel. These are among the most well-known masques of that period with scenic elements similar to the ones necessary or, by hypothesis, usable for the staging of *The Tempest* and of all the last Plays [in English, in the text] as well.” Anna Anzi, “Il linguaggio figurativo in *The Tempest*,” in *Varie e strane forme: Shakespeare, il masque e il gusto manieristico* (Milano: Unicopli, 1998): 60. Strehler also, in his notes of December 16, refers to *Hymenaei* as a possible source of inspiration, for Shakespeare, of Ariel.

258 Anzi, “Il linguaggio figurativo in *The Tempest*” 83.
would the costumes, also by Inigo Jones for the *Masque of Oberon* (1611) or his characters of the antimasques. The masks

act in the sphere of that popular theater, kingdom of the mime, of the masquerades, of the dance and of the lazzi – they will enter in the third moment of the ‘show’ [in III.iii] *and dance, with mocks and mows* – which we see in many moments of Shakespearean theater – for example the scene of the comedians in *Hamlet* or the preparation of the spectacle in *Midsummer Night’s Dream* – and, more generally, in sixteenth century European theater.\(^{259}\)

Given that Anzi’s hypothesis is correct, we see that the initial part of the masque in III.iii is interpreted by Strehler in a manner that it completely different and original. Strehler was perfectly aware of the Elizabethan tradition, as we saw in relation to his ideas about scenic space, and it is if anything the antimasque of the dogs in IV.i, as we will see, that goes in this direction. The part with the Harpy, on the contrary, that could also be reproduced according to the popular tradition, that as the medieval morality play, seems to reproduce almost to the letter the reconstruction proposed by John C. Adams in an article on III.iii that reconnects the mechanics of the scene to the one already used “for Jupiter who descends ‘in Thunder and Lighting sitting upon an Eagle’ in the *Cymbeline*”\(^{260}\). Also in this case, however, more than an original creation of Shakespeare Anzi is in favor of a re-visititation of elements from previous masques. Shakespeare’s originality, in this case, consists in upsetting the schemes of the court spectacle “creating a false

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\(^{259}\) Anzi, “Il linguaggio figurativo in *The Tempest*” 84.

antimasque which is not followed by the needed resolving and apologetic masque but by the terrible image of the loss of reason”\textsuperscript{261}, embodied in Strehler’s show by Alonso who leaves the stage on all fours in a large white shirt like a crazy person who escapes from a mental institution.

Also Luigi Lunari, who was present at the conversations between Strehler and Kott, in an essay with the telling title “Appunti per una interpretazione della Tempesta di Strehler”\textsuperscript{262} seems to offer a reading a posteriori of the show. Lunari however, differently from Kott, had collaborated with Strehler since 1961, and knowing well the director’s path, can confirm that “the consequentiality of the discourse that Strehler conducts through his own shows is not of a mathematic nature, but is dialectic; every step forwards – like in history - is logical and necessary only a posteriori”\textsuperscript{263}. \textit{The Tempest}, therefore, as the last part of the artistic path of Strehler\textsuperscript{264}, who does not want to deny the force of a theater made also of magic and illusions and, from this point of view, his interpretation is very much in line with that of Agostino Lombardo. In the

\textsuperscript{261} Anzi, “Il linguaggio figurativo in The Tempest” 91.

\textsuperscript{262} “Appunti per una interpretazione della Tempesta di Strehler” [Notes for an Interpretation of Strehler’s Tempest], 1978, 38 typewritten pages by Luigi Lunari. Excerpts of these notes have been later published in Lingua e Letteratura 3 (Nov. 1984): 48-67, and in Griga 113-119, but any reference in the present work will be from the pages of the text kept in the Archives of the Piccolo Teatro.

\textsuperscript{263} Lunari 1-2.

\textsuperscript{264} Lunari, in his conclusions, supposes that this path has reached such a level of craft and wisdom that \textit{The Tempest} is beyond the idea itself of directing, as if Strehler, objective interpreter of great classics and critical observer of his epoch, felt the need to become author. See Lunari 35-36.
first letter sent to Strehler, at the beginning of the rehearsals for the show,

Lombardo writes:

The Tempest is so arduous because, in the attempt to represent
life’s movement and the way in which we represent life,
Shakespeare takes the theatrical instrument to an extreme limit – to
the limit, that is, in which the theatrical illusion and the reality
identify themselves. That’s why he adopts the unities of time and
place – he who had never before adopted them – in a measure
without precedent.265.

3.13 The masque never realized (IV.i, 1-266 – VS 00:12:00)

The fourth act of the text, although the Arden edition has 266 lines, lasts
only twelve minutes in the show and it is where Strehler makes one of his most
radical choices by eliminating the nuptial masque. At the beginning of the act the
stage directions indicate [Before Prospero’s Cell], and then Enter Prospero,
Ferdinand, and Miranda. The video, after a brief blackout at the end of III.iii,
opens with the frontal close-up of a lighted projector. Because of the brusque
passage from the music of the island to a celebratory music with songs that is
rhythmic and has Renaissance tones, the impression is that of a clumsy cut. This
passage could correspond to the show’s second intermission, which was
discussed in 3.10, even though it remains unclear what effectively happened on
the stage at the immediate beginning and end of the intermission. I personally do
not remember any curtain, but, if there were two intermissions, at the end of I.ii

the island could change in order to prepare the stage for II.i, the first appearance of the court, which in effect enters with a rising light. Instead, at the end of III.iii, before Prospero re-enters from stage left, we saw the platform-island becoming flat again – the position in which it then remains until the end of the show – and the light falls on the last exit, which is of Ariel, at stage left. In the video, the beginning of the third part of the production – if there was such a division – could therefore be signaled by the fade-out that passes from the close-up of the lighted projector to the flame of a torch that, as the frame, now from the side stage right, reveals, is grasped in Prospero’s right hand. Prospero is revealed from behind, walking, and in his left hand, he carries a bunch of ears of wheat – the symbol of Ceres, who had a role in the masque not produced. Prospero once again wears the white mantle that Miranda had helped fold and put back in the trap door upstage right in I.ii. The ensemble has a clear ritualistic and symbolic character. Ferdinand and Miranda follow Prospero, and they too are dressed as for a ritual: he now wears the prince’s hat, and Miranda has spread some white flowers on her head, maybe a symbol of her purity. Prospero proceeds parallel to the upstage side of the platform-island and then walks around the central circle until he finds himself upstage, in the centre and facing the audience, while Miranda and Ferdinand take their place at the sides of the circle, stage right and stage left respectively, and now face each other. The solar light has returned to a warm atmosphere, although less strong compared to I.ii, and the sun on the cyclorama is clearly lower. The first lines are spoken in this position, then, at 13-
14, Prospero positions himself at Miranda’s back and passes her the torch and the ears of wheat, sweetly pushing her towards Ferdinand. Miranda passes the ears of wheat to Ferdinand. After the admonishment to not break the virginal knot before the wedding is celebrated, we see Prospero once again in the center, but now downstage and from behind with the two young people still on the sides. Ferdinand’s next lines, 23-31, are cut in more places and delivered in a different order: *Il luogo più opportuno, / La tentazione più forte / Non muteranno mai / Il mio onore in lussuria* [26-28] / *Poiché io spero / in giorni tranquilli, / Una bella prole e lunga vita / Con un amore come questo* [23-25][266]. At this point, as if to ratify the end of the ritual, Prospero takes the torch from Miranda and puts it out on the ground with the line *È tua* [*she is thine own*, 32]. Then he takes a part of the ears of wheat from Ferdinand’s hand and gives it to his daughter, and orders both to sit down and converse. At 33 he calls Ariel, who, as in the following stage direction *Enter Ariel*, appears at the center of corridor C with her back to the audience.

Prospero’s and Ariel’s next lines, from 35 to 50, until Ariel’s exit, also present cuts and variations. It should be noted that at 37 the published translation uses *spettacolo* [performance, entertainment] for *trick*, but in performance Prospero uses the more literal version *trucco*, and that at 48 a pause – a close-up of Ariel before her exit – underlines her line *Ma tu mi vuoi bene, padrone?* [*Do you love me, master? no?*]. Ariel having moved to stage right, Prospero returns to the center of the circle to admonish Ferdinand. The last lines, from 56-59, are adapted and

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[266] The cuts are at 25, *the murkiest den*, and from the second part of 26, *to take away*, till 31. The division of the lines is that of the Italian translation.
reduced to only *Bravo, solo occhi e silenzio. / Ariel! In scena! [Well, all eyes and be silent. Ariel! On stage]*].

At this point the stage direction from the text indicates [*Soft music*] and then *Enter Iris*, which would be the beginning of the masque, but there is no trace of the text or the stage directions from 60 to 139. As a spectator, I remember the stage covered by amber sheets and a sweet atmosphere like golden light. In the video, after Prospero invites Ariel to the stage, a fade-out that takes place during a crescendo of cymbals shows Ariel running – probably from stage right to stage left – and dragging a large sheet that goes to cover the entire frame to reveal then, with another fade-out, the entire stage and the anterior corridors covered by amber sheets. Ariel, who had a wig, maybe to represent Ceres, is no longer visible. Music of strings begins – that will return in V.i – and at the center of the stage we see Miranda and Ferdinand, lying on the ground, heads together and feet pointing opposite directions, stage right and stage left respectively. Miranda raises her left arm and Ferdinand his right arm to touch each other. Prospero appears from stage left, in the position in which we already saw him in III.i and III.iii, as if to once again direct what happens in front of the audience’s eyes. There are no words or songs, but only the music that, at a certain point, begins to confuse itself with the primitive music of the drum that was already heard in the first part of II.ii when Caliban, wearing the skin and with the witch doctor stick in hand, attempted his evil spell against Prospero. The music disappears as Prospero brusquely interrupts the vision with the lines *Ma ora via!*
Basta! [142], followed by a re-elaboration of the lines Ma scusatemi – sono turbato… etc. [158-163] in which the lines at Figlio mio… etc. [146-147] are also inserted. All of the amber sheets quickly disappear at the interruption just like the blue sea-sheets had at the beginning of I.ii, and Prospero throws his mantle in corridor C. Ferdinand and Miranda are standing, embracing and scared, and upon Prospero’s invitation they exit stage left. All of their lines are cut. Alone with the stage empty behind him, Prospero turns towards the audience and, leaning on the front wall of corridor C, begins one of the most noted passages of the text, which goes from Il nostro spettacolo è finito… etc. [148] to È circondata da un sonno [158]. The text is complete except for a brief cut at 149 of Come ti avevo detto [As I foretold you], since Ferdinand is no more there. In the video, the passage ends with a close-up of Prospero, a pause, and then the line Vieni rapido come il pensiero, Ariel! [164], following which Ariel appears behind Prospero from corridor C. At this point the line at 166 is extended to recuperate parts of 139-142 Dobbiamo prepararci ad affrontare… Caliban… etc. [I had forgot that foul conspiracy… etc.]. Ariel exults – her reference to Ceres is cut – and gives Prospero’s mantle back to him, then passes in corridor B to corridor A and finally to the platform during the long passage 171-184. The frame focuses on Ariel at the center of the circle and we see Prospero, back from the audience, enter stage left, as at the end of III.iii. When he orders Ariel to pull out La roba del teatro [The trumpery, 186], she opens the trap door upstage right, takes out Alonso’s royal mantle and crown, and then goes down into the trap door, closing it behind her as from the stage
direction at 187 Exit. At Prospero’s line Ben fatto, uccellino mio… etc. [184] it should be noted that Ariel, seated on the ground, creates the chirp of a little bird with a bird call. After the line from 188-193 – partially revised – that Prospero concludes exiting stage left, Ariel reappears from the trap door stage left and takes out some of the clothing left behind by the court characters in III.iii, a scepter and another small, unidentified object. The stage direction, in this case, says [Re-]enter Ariel, loaded with glistering apparel, etc. then a brief line of Prospero, then again [Prospero and Ariel remain, invisible] followed by Enter Caliban, Stephano, and Trinculo, all wet. In reality Prospero, as we saw, has exited, and Ariel, after she has finished with the clothing, also exits stage right while the primitive music returns.

Caliban, Stefano and Trinculo arrive from the audience – the video frames them in a close-up. Caliban with his stick and Trinculo’s red cloak, the other two with large knives in hand. The exchange of lines 196-206 is cut. First Caliban and then the others pass from the audience to the stage, literally lifting the curtain that covers the front part of corridor C\textsuperscript{267}. It should be noted that the sun has nearly reached the point at which the upstage line of the platform-island, visually, seems to connect to the backdrop, though we know that the posterior corridors separate the two. As in the previous scenes of Caliban and the buffoons, the performance text presents notable variations from the published text. It begins the part of the scene in which Stephano and Trinculo adorn

\textsuperscript{267} By ‘curtain,’ I mean the cieletti [heavens] mentioned in previous paragraph 3.
themselves with the clothing of the court – at a certain point Stephano has the royal mantle on his shoulders and the crown on his head268 – while Caliban would like to proceed with the murder of Prospero and, infuriated, breaks his stick and throws it stage left. At the center, on his knees, Caliban is submersed in the clothing that Stephano and Trinculo throw over him at lines 250-254, and then the stage directions say *A noise of hunters heard. Enter divers Spirits, in shape of dogs and hounds, hunting them about; Prospero and Ariel setting them on*. As in the scene of the Harpy, we see the blue sheets invade the anterior corridors from stage left and the posterior corridor from stage right. The *Spirits* are therefore once again identified with the sea. From stage left, this time on stage, Prospero enters screaming, while we hear the sound of French horns. There is a period of darkness while the sounds and cries continue. When the light returns, Ariel drops from the grid attached to her wire and with a trumpet – “like the archangel Gabriel”269, or like the seventh trumpet of Revelation 11:15-19? – and Caliban and the buffoons are the prey of three monstrous mastiffs. The blue sheets wave convulsively, and then disappear as usual in the corridors, also making disappear Caliban, the buffoons, the dogs, and the clothing, with the exception of what seems like a hat, on the right, as we note later on. Ariel’s two

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268 “Strehler wanted to repeat in buffo the symbols of usurpation and regicide. But in Shakespeare’s histories, or even his comedies, a royal crown has never rested on the head of a clown. In the Shakespearean scenario, only glistening rags were hung out on the line by Ariel” (Kott, “Prospero, or the Director” 139).

269 GJ 84.
brief lines are cut, and Prospero’s final line at 262-266 is combined with the first of V.i.

In a brief interview published in November 1978, while the performances of The Tempest were taking place, Strehler replied to the final question on what did not fully satisfy him in his production: “Everything, in particular the resolution of the masques. I confess to still not having found the exact correspondent to what I had in mind”270. That ‘everything’, that is, the dissatisfaction with everything, synthesizes Strehler’s approach to his shows, which never represented the conclusion of a process, but the verification, with the audience, of a work that because of its intricate nature constantly changes: “… from Boboli to today, in thirty years, from one Tempest to another, everything has changed, or almost. It will also change tomorrow. It will always change. We will always make mistakes”271. To deduce from these affirmations that the choice to eliminate the nuptial masque in IV.i was due to the fear of making mistakes would, however, be wrong. The problem for Strehler is always finding the adequate interpretation of his reading of the text. In Gaipa’s notes there are many references to to the discussions and the attempts to realize the nuptial masque. On March 20, for example, Strehler speaks of “a ‘primavera’ [spring], Botticelli plus theatre, fine and enhanced colors, a vision of rays, a solemn, tragic, severe music”272. March 23, remembering The Tempest of 1948,

271 Rota, “Strehler e i critici” ibid.
272 GJ 28-29.
Gaipa underlines that, in a scenic form that was all together traditional, there had been “a futurological intuition, as much as there was Baroque music and Baroque theater”\textsuperscript{273}. In 1948, in fact, Carpi’s source of inspiration was the music of Domenico Scarlatti (1685-1757)\textsuperscript{274} and now the reference is Claudio Monteverdi (1567-1643), while Elizabethan music “was not appropriate then and is not appropriate today more than ever”\textsuperscript{275}. In the 1948 production, Prospero evoked the vision of a happy future epoch to later stop it and destroy it, already portending its precariousness. For the new production as well, Gaipa writes, the nuptial masque

should be above all ‘music’. The Baroque opera, inserted in the technique of Bunraku’s Japanese marionettes. We saw a long documentary on these marionettes and the impression was mind-blowing. Giorgio has decided to enter in contact with some Japanese experts, he doesn’t hesitate at the prospect of engaging an ‘authentic’ troupe – because any imitation would not be sustainable. Therefore, the technique of Bunraku, but, at the same time, the images will be Baroque, Neoclassical, Spanish. The three goddesses as cathedral ex-votos\textsuperscript{276}.

On April 17, turning back to Kott’s idea, discussed in the preceding paragraph, according to which the text can be read as a sum of masques, Strehler puts forward “the ‘historic’ acceptance that Shakespeare made of the ‘new

\textsuperscript{273} GJ 20.

\textsuperscript{274} See previous paragraph 5, chapter 2.

\textsuperscript{275} GJ 60.

\textsuperscript{276} GJ 20.
theater’ of Inigo Jones and Ben Jonson, to conclude, in any case, after having demonstrated that he was able to express himself ‘also’ in this way, with a rejection of the novelty”277. This rejection, however, does not come to light until the nuptial masque. Until this moment, the initial tempest, the banquet, and the Harpy were examples of his art:

> It is in the clash with a diverse reality – Caliban’s conspiracy is material evidence of it – that [Shakespeare] rejects not only the new forms, but also theater in general. It is his resignation. His art will not be able to change the world or men. And the world and men are perishable like the images and the spectacles that he created, made of the nature of dreams, and their lives are rounded with a sleep278.

If Strehler’s reading described by Gaipa is brought to its extreme consequence, the rejection of the new forms, that theatrically coincides with the interruption of the masque, is the prelude to the antimasque of the dogs, an interpretive idea that also coincides with that of Anna Anzi, according to whom something happens in The Tempest that never happens in the traditional masque. In Shakespeare’s text the masque is interrupted and turned upside down, and according to Anzi follows a real and true descent towards the abyss: “It opens with the divinity, descends to the nymphs and harvesters that dance in graceful dance (IV.i stage direction after 138), and sinks in the mud in which Trinculo,

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277 GJ 43.

278 GJ 43.
Stefano, and Caliban are pushed by the spirits in the form of dogs”\(^{279}\). There is no doubt that the nuptial masque is the masque par excellence of *The Tempest*, the really celebratory one, and therefore it is also true that it is a moment, one could say, with a very high level of theatricality. Depending on the reading one does of it, however, the general interpretation of the text can orient itself in directions that are almost diametrically opposite. For those who sustain the traditional Jonesian structure, that is the masque as an allegory of the royal power that restablizes the order causes by the chaos of the antimasque\(^ {280}\) – that of the Harpy – Strehler’s reading counters with the end of the illusions, of the utopias, and a return to the violence and the precariousness of history – the antimasque of the dogs. In these term though, the reading would be resolved in a form of pessimism not dissimilar to that “Shakespearean bitterness and renunciation”\(^ {281}\) that Kott, as we saw in the previous paragraph, situates in the center of the text. Strehler’s conclusion, as we will see, is radically different and exalts the function of the theater, but for this reason the maximum grade of theatrical illusion required by the nuptial masque proved directly proportional to the technical difficulties of its staging.


\(^{281}\) See previous note 253.
Until June 17, when Strehler announces the drastic cut of the masque – as we already said, in the production there is no trace of the text or stage directions from 60 to 139 – the central idea of this crucial moment of the show had been the use of Bunraku marionettes to represent the three goddesses. Bunraku is a traditional Japanese theatre form that reached its present characteristics in the 1730s. It usually involves a chanter, a shamisen player, and three puppeteers for each puppet: the chief handler, often dressed in an elaborate, gorgeous costume, and two handlers dressed in black who are assumed to be invisible. The puppets are approximately two-third life-size\(^2\). When Strehler planned to engage an authentic troupe he probably did not realize how much this operation would cost, and from Gaipa’s notes we understand that during the rehearsals the attempt was to create similar marionettes operated by some of the stage hands. On March 19, for example, two stage hands bring “on stage one of the marionettes taken from Bunraku models, white and gold, almost a Baroque, Spanish, or Neapolitan Madonna”\(^3\), but the problem of the layout and of where to put the marionettes remained. Since March 21 they talked of a castle, a garden, a classic landscape, the Olympus. Then, on March 30, “Damiani proposes a perspective of heavens according to the Italian technique, a view of gold clouds in the Bibiena style, with a cave below from which the marionettes could appear while Miranda and Ferdinand lie stretched out on the field of grain, an image of


\(^3\) GJ 62.
the Golden Age”284. This is, more or less, the situation that is rehearsed on June 9. Gaipa dedicates almost two pages full of notes to it, in which he raises the problem of finding an adequate balance, above all in terms of illumination, between the “golden, mysterious, fascinating”285 clouds, the field of grain, realized with amber sheets like the sea-sheets, the platforms of the stage, and the space of the Lirico, that as much as it is immersed in darkness also hangs over the set. It is a matter of amalgamating colors, lights, and materials, and above all the sheet-field of grain creates enormous problems, bulges, and unwanted shadows. They try a descent from above of Ariel, with the only marionette available to represent Iris, while two temporary shapes represent Ceres and Juno inside what Gaipa defines as ‘cave’, although he does not explain exactly what he means by this. Two stage hands also try to operate the marionette from directly inside the ‘cave’. At the same time, they continue to try lightting effects with the music of Monteverdi, Orfeo and the Lamento di Arianna to create the atmosphere.

After more days of rehearsal, on June 17, as already said, Strehler announces that the part of the show with the nuptial masque would be cut. The clouds, field of grain with Ferdinand and Miranda stretched out on stage and then surprised by Prospero, the harmonious music, and a few of Ferdinand’s lines would remain. What makes the most sensation is the abandonment of the

284 GJ 72. The reference is to the architect and theorist of scenography Ferdinando Galli da Bibiena (1657-1743).

285 GJ 96.
idea of the marionettes, which because maneuvered with incredible skill by three puppeteers, have a human quality that is hard to find in other forms of puppet theatre. The most sophisticated theatrical illusion, of a marionette that fades into the human, is perhaps what Strehler was looking for, but as Giulia Lazzarini remembers, “to do what he wanted to do required more time (and lots of money). It would have been beautiful but then Strehler gave up and resolved on simplicity: taking away instead of putting in. A large golden sheet, warm and soft lights. It became a large field of grain, a hope for prosperity. The final choice, however, cost him nights of insomnia”

On June 24, Gaipa’s description of what remains of the masque and of how he presumes it will be staged four days later confirms Lazzarini’s memory:

Luciano Damiani’s golden clouds return to descend on the peace of the field of grain that welcomes Miranda and Ferdinand – a field of grain that Ariel ‘guides’ on the island, with a rainbow cloak that makes allusions to Iris. With the descent of the clouds there is the sounding of what will later be the ‘celestial music’ that returns reason to the courtiers. Ferdinand, surprised by the vision, gets up to almost touch them: *Questa è una visione magicamente armoniosa! / Lasciatemi vivere per sempre in questo paradiso!* [118-122 approx.]

Maybe Prospero, at this point, is already devising his idea of destruction, the destruction of an illusory paradise, but he does not do it yet, he is still too moved by the image of love of the two young people. He orders the clouds to disappear, and as a sort of dawn of the world appears, the young people spread themselves amidst the grain and search for each other with their hands. The

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light grows, the dawn turns to day, the light penetrates them – and from Prospero’s brain Caliban’s insistent rhythm arises – it is now evening. “…no more! [142]” yells Prospero – and his yell is like an abyss. The platform sucks in the field of grain, the young people jump to their feet, Miranda holds Ferdinand close to herself, almost as if to preserve and protect him. Now the island is unmerciful, foreign, terrifying.

In my memory of the show, more than the visual aspect, the stage pervaded by golden lights, the most vivid element is the ‘celestial music.’ I do not remember the clouds, and in effect, there is no trace of them in the video, just as there is no trace of Ferdinand’s line that is an adaptation, with cuts, of his lines 118-120 and 122-123. In the video, as already mentioned, Prospero is always in the same position, between the audience and corridor C, as already seen in III.i and III.iii, to direct the vision that is then interrupted by his Ma ora via! Basta! [avoid; no more! 142]. There is, however, a photo of the stage that shows some dark, golden, and dense clouds in perspective that seem to cover the entire visual of the stage with exception of a space in the center, in which we note the outlines of Miranda, seated on the ground, and Ferdinand, standing, with an arm raised to touch the clouds. As long as this is not a photo taken during the rehearsals, this suggests that the solution of the clouds went ahead for at least the first performances of the show, from June 28 to July 4, and was later abolished during the fall revival, perhaps another element that contributed to the reduction of the show’s duration and which we already discussed. The photo is interesting also because the space

287 GJ 131.
left in the center, where we see Miranda and Ferdinand’s silhouettes, is surrounded by profiles of clouds, and the impression is like that of the entrance to a cave, maybe the cave that Gaipa was talking about.

1978 Tempest, the clouds of the unrealized nuptial masque (copyright © Piccolo Teatro of Milan Archives)

In terms of the antimasque of the dogs, from Gaipa’s few references it seems that it is one of the few parts of the show that did not create big problems. In June 3’s notes a few different solutions are discussed, with the dogs arriving either from the proscenium or from behind, but in the end they are all positioned behind. It is decided to use the sheet-sea of the proscenium to cut off Caliban and the buffoons, and the one in the back to make them disappear below the stage.
On March 26, Gaipa notes, Strehler welds together IV.i and V.i into a single block. There is no solution of continuity between the two parts, both because the original text foresees the end of IV.i by Prospero and Ariel who, immediately after, open V.i, and because the location does not change, the stage directions at the beginning of the two acts being practically identical: [Before Prospero’s Cell] e [Before the Cell of Prospero.] The union of the two acts, from the point of view of the text, is carried out by simply unifying Prospero’s last lines of IV.i – 262-266, only the first two verses, the rest is cut – to the initial lines of V.i, 1-3, and by eliminating the intermediate stage directions. It should be noted, once again, that in the show there are minimal variations of the words, which seem, however, to underline a bigger adherence to the text in respect to Lombardo’s translation, as, for example, the project in 1, that in the published text results in esperimento [experiment] but in the show is progetto. During these connecting lines, Prospero takes off his mantle and puts it back in the trap door upstage right, from which he extracts the gnomon already seen in I.ii, and inserts it vertically at the center of the circle to measure the time at the end of the line Che ore sono? [How’s the day?, 3]. Ariel, who during the episode of the dogs was in the air with her trumpet, is now on the ground at the upstage center, and the trumpet has disappeared, probably taken by a stage hand hidden in the posterior corridor. The sun, as in IV.i, is at the bottom edge of the cyclorama, but its intensity has lessened and the entire atmosphere announces the coming evening.
From the following line until 57 the text is almost completely maintained. Ariel moves a lot, as in I.ii, but more on the ground than in the air, and not randomly. With lines 19-20, when Prospero asks Lo credi, spirito? [Dost thou think so, spirit?, 19] and Ariel responds Io sì, se fossi umano [Mine would, sir, were I human, 20], we see her hover with a lightness, while Prospero suddenly turns to look at her, as if he is surprised by the comment, that there is a very strong impression that the spirit is really made of air, and I also remember this well as a spectator. At this point Prospero throws the gnomon to the ground, delivers the entire long speech 20-32, and then Ariel, as the stage directions indicate, exits, flying above while delivering her line Vado a prenderli, signore [32]. The close-up of the two actors together, Ariel behind Prospero, shows a profound union between the two characters, a mix of understanding and intimacy. Prospero’s next and newly long speech Voi elfi delle colline… etc. [34-57] is a vocal crescendo underlined in the video by the passage from an intense close-up to a shot of his entire figure. At Ma questa rozza magia,… etc. [But this rough magic… etc., 50], Prospero extracts, from the pocket of his vest, his book and magic rod and finishes the line inserting the rod in the book and declaring that he will throw them away, thereby putting an end to his magic art. The final close-up focuses only on the book with the rod while putting Prospero out of focus. With the cut to a long shot, the Solemn music, as from stage directions, begins, the same ‘celestial music’ already heard for the brief effect that substituted the nuptial masque.
In the beginning of V.i there are two moments that are fundamental to Strehler’s interpretive reading. The first is the exchange, from 19-20: 

**PROSPERO**

Lo credi, spirito? / **ARIEL** Io sì, se fossi umano, from which “it really seems like Prospero ‘conquers’ the human, the pity”\(^{288}\). It is the point in which Strehler’s reading clearly disconnects itself from Kott’s pessimistic reading, according to which nothing changes. “Prospero changes. This is certain”\(^{289}\), Strehler writes, and since the dialogue with Miranda in I.ii, his research of revenge proceeds between exhibition of his arts and uncertainties: “We can never know ‘where’ Prospero’s revenge will stop, Prospero’s actions are ‘dangerous’, always at the limits of death and madness”\(^{290}\). The other moment is that *But this rough magic / I here abjure* [50-51], in the long line 34-57. “Why rough?”\(^{291}\), Gaipa asks himself. Because Prospero realizes his own incompletion in this continual creating and destroying of his, in this almost infantile playing with his victims? It seems like a contradiction, considering that with his *rough magic* Prospero will re-establish a certain order, but, Gaipa underlines, it is “this theme of the contradiction that one finds – and deliberately! – in the show”\(^{292}\). The illusions created by Prospero do not change history; they only serve to reveal history for what it is, always

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\(^{288}\) SN 62.  
\(^{289}\) SN 62.  
\(^{290}\) SN 62.  
\(^{291}\) GJ 47.  
\(^{292}\) GJ 47.
equal to itself. In this sense, Shakespeare’s rough magic is nothing other, at least in Strehler’s interpretation, than a summing up of the most differentiated forms of theater, from tragedy to comedy, from fable to pastoral drama, from the realism of the ‘Globe’ to the Baroque deceptions of the ‘Blackfriars’ and to the quotations of a classicism that flows into opera in music and of a Commedia dell’Arte that, historically, first appeared in England in his [Shakespeare’s] times. Could it be possible to nail the audience to the fact that this is the key of the show? 293

After I’ll drown by book [57] and the stage direction Solemn music, the next long and detailed stage directions indicates Here enters Ariel before: then Alonso, with a frantic gesture, attended by Gonzalo; Sebastian and Antonio in like manner, attended by Adrian and Francesco: they all enter the circle which Prospero had made, and there stand charm’d; which Prospero observing, speaks. In the video, we see Ariel and the characters of the court enter from stage right. Prospero is in the center of the circle with Ariel, who positions herself at his shoulders. Downstage left are Sebastian and Antonio. Downstage right are Adrian and Francesco. Upstage right is Alonso, and also upstage, but more towards the central circle, is Gonzalo. While he turns towards the characters that enter, Prospero puts the book and the rod back in the right pocket of his vest. His next long line, from 58 to 87, presents various cuts and variations in the order of the verses. It begins with verse 61, continues with verses 58-60, those from 62 except for 64 are cut, it continues from the second part of 64 until the beginning

293 GJ 48.
of 68, there is another cut from the second part of 68 until the beginning of 79, and it then concludes at 87 with the only cut of the verse at 84. After Prospero’s entrance and line Fermi, siete stregati [61], all of the characters of the court stop as if they are immobilized and then, slowly, go to the ground in various positions. At Ecco l’incantesimo si dissolve… etc. [64] they begin to become conscious again, while Prospero moves around them, revealing Ariel behind him. After the verses, which are adapted, that end the line Ariel, / Metterò la mia veste294, / Apparirò qual ero un tempo, / Il Duca di Milano. / Svelto, spirito, / Tra poco sarai libero [approx. 83-87], Prospero remains at the center of the circle, with his back to the audience, while Ariel goes to the trap door upstage left and takes out Prospero’s ducal mantle, very similar to Alonso’s royal mantle. For a brief moment, the frame shows the entire scene, and while Ariel opens the trap door, the members of the court all draw close to the closest side of the platform with respect to their position, and we see the beginning of the movement that makes them extract the clothes and the caps from the sea-area below the stage, a further underlining that the magic is always tied to the sea-spirits. In one of the first versions, Prospero, already re-dressed as a duke, waited for the reawakening of the courtiers, but now, when Ariel helps Prospero put on the ducal mantle, the characters of the court also begin to put on their clothing. Ariel then returns to take Prospero’s sword and crown, which Prospero then puts on, from the same

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294 In the published text, Prospero says Mi toglierò questa veste, which literally translates I will disace me [85], but in the production Prospero doesn’t undress; he puts the ducal mantle over his vest; therefore the Italian of the production becomes Mi metterò la veste [I will put on the vest], though the vest is in reality a mantle.
trap door. After 87, the stage direction that indicates *Ariel sings and helps to attire him* is therefore partially respected, though the song of the bee from 88-94 is completely cut, substituted by the music of the island. Gaipa hypothesizes that the song of the bee could find a place in the moment of the farewell to Prospero, but this, as we will see, does not happen. This phase of the scene, however, perfectly exemplifies the theme of history repeating itself. Prospero, Gaipa writes,

must once again have recourse to his magic. The court still has stigmas of madness - only the music, spell of air, will be able to give reason back to the demented. And magic will also be the process that bring him recognition from his enemies. A process that crystallizes itself in an image that is once again theatrical. As long as they recognize it, he must wear his ducal clothing. And they must wear the clothing of court. The dressing, now, happens with slow parallel movements. [...] It is the return to the status quo₂⁹⁵.

The interpretation holds, although Strehler, always attentive to the most minimal particulars and always given to justifying even the most insignificant objects, does not explain why Gonzalo, when he abandoned Prospero and Miranda on a boat, leaving them *Some food [...] and some fresh water* [I.ii 160], *Rich garments, linens, stuffs and necessaries* [I.ii 164], and some of Propsero’s *books* [I.ii 166], would have left Prospero also the mantle, the sword, and the ducal crown. Moreover, in the original text Prospero says *Ariel / Fetch me the hat and rapier in my cell* [V.i, 83-84], and there is no other reference to mantles or crowns. In reality, Strehler, in

₂⁹⁵ *GJ* 66-67.
his notes on August 17, discusses this problem, but the solution seems to remain on the page, an interpretive intuition that does not find adequate comparison in the show. These are the notes introduced by the already discussed problem of verisimilitude, in which Strehler develops also a detailed discourse on the plausibility of the objects that Gonzalo would have given Prospero at the moment of abandonment in the middle of the sea. All of Strehler’s reasoning is founded on the fact that the clothing, the books, but also the objects that we see on stage – the armillary sphere, the sextant... – needed to be crammed by Gonzalo into a “little trunk’ given by human mercy to Prospero, in the rotten carcass of a ship, and in which maybe had been put “also something of the Duke, the ducal beret [...] with a stole or something else of power”. From a logical point of view Strehler’s hypothesis is valid and also serves as a starting point for a long discussion on the magic mantle, how it also landed on the island, and on when and why Prospero wears it. More generally, Strehler asks himself how Prospero is dressed, and Miranda by reflex. He hypothesizes boots and a straw hat that show Prosper the colonizer and simple clothing for Miranda, maybe created using a shirt and a vest of her father’s. The solution, which is typical of Strehler, is to reduce, take out, and have both Prospero and Miranda show themselves with simple clothing that seem to be created from rough canvas, maybe that of the sail from the boat in which they were abandoned. The

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296 See previous paragraph 2.
297 SN 72.
298 SN 74.
fact remains that the crown and the ducal mantle do not find a plausible justification. Even provided that the ‘little trunk’ had existed, why should have Gonzalo given Prospero the symbols of his power?

After the dressing, the continuation of the scene, from 95 to 215, presents various cuts, of which some are rather consistent. Of the verses from 95 to 103, only ...so, so, so [96] remains, translated ...già, già, già – with an intense close-up of Prospero. Next Gonzalso speaks from 104-106 while Ariel exits stage left as from the stage directions. The following verses, except for a cut from the second part of 114 to the beginning of 116 and from the second part of 121 to the beginning of 122, are complete, but present a rearrangement of Prospero’s lines 108-110, which precede his line that begins at 120. In all of this phase, in the middle of the circle, the dialogue focuses on Prospero and Alonso, both in their mantles and wearing their crowns. Alonso kneels asking for pardon, and Prospero then kneels and puts his sword on the ground. He then moves downstage left to speak to Sebastiano and Antonio. Until 171 there are no cuts, except for some variations of words and of the second part of verse 167, which makes reference to the inside of the cave. Prospero, in fact, at the end of the line, situates himself at the upstage center and opens his mantle. He concludes with *Rende felice me* [171] and reveals, moving to stage left, Ferdinand and Miranda – having climbed onto the platform from the posterior corridor without being seen – who are playing chess, as required by the stage directions. This scene, like the first encounter between Ferdinand and Miranda, in which Miranda was
supposed to arrive like a Venus from the sea\textsuperscript{299}, and like the dogs’ antimasque, in which the the dogs were also supposed to arrive from the proscenium, was originally conceived to be presented in front, but, Gaipa underlines, “it is the sea below that, in this race to the finish, assumes an ever more preeminent role”\textsuperscript{300}.

On June 19, in fact, the apparition of Miranda and Ferdinand playing chess is moved to the rear, and from the rear, later, Trinculo and Stefano, and therefore Caliban, will also emerge.

The lines in the scene with the chess and the next lines, from 172 to 215, present other cuts, one of which is considerable, from 185 to 199, and once again a variation of the performance text, which recuperates, with respect to the published translation, the original text to the letter. In Miranda’s line from 181-184 the translation is …\textit{e com’è bello/L’uomo}, where \textit{uomo} is for \textit{man}, but in the show she says \textit{umanità}, which corresponds to the orginal \textit{mankind}. Alonso and Ferdinand hug. Prospero takes Miranda by the hand and then the two youths reunite. After 215, at the stage direction [\textit{Re-}enter Ariel, with the Master and Boatswain amazedly following], the Master and the Boatswain enter from upstage left, accompanied by Ariel, who first moves invisible among the courtiers, and then, sitting on the ground, takes the Boatswain by the hand making him move and act like a marionette whose strings she controls. It is the improvised spell of the spirit – she herself says that with the ship and sailors, she improvised: and Prospero

\textsuperscript{299} See previous paragraph 7.

\textsuperscript{300} GJ 110.
comments *Diavolo di uno spirito! [My tricksy spirit!, V.i, 226] – it is like a final brushstroke before the ‘end of the contract’ with the producer [Prospero].*

After 215, until 255, there are more cuts: from 225 to 226, from the second part of 228 to the first part of 240, and some verses between the second part of 247 and the first part of 250. At 251, the *[Aside to Ariel]* with reference to Caliban is later recuperated. Ariel does not exit, as by the stage direction in 253, and after 255, the stage direction *[Re-]enter Ariel, driving Caliban, Stephano, and Trinculo, in their stolen apparel,* sees Ariel go to the upstage edge of the platform, in the center, and literally fish out Stephano and Trinculo from the sea. Ariel disappears in the posterior corridor. Stephano delivers the famous line *Coragio, prode mostro, coragio [257]* and Trinculo, folded on his knees but hidden by his red cloak, moves like a funny dwarf. Caliban appears, as in I.ii, coming out from the back, first his hands, then the rest of his body with his head down. Then he stands in the center, between the two groups of all the other characters to the right and to the left – everyone is on stage at this moment except for Ariel, he delivers his lines 261-263, and covers his genitals with a strong sense of shame.

There are other considerable cuts from 256 to 318, before the epilogue. After Antonio’s line from 265-266, a long cut goes from 267 to 288, but after Alonso in 289, who refers, as from the stage directions, to Caliban, Prospero’s verses from the second part of 274 to the beginning of 276 are recuperated: *Due di questi*

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301 GJ 115.

302 See previous paragraph 9.
individui / Dovete riconoscerli vostri; / Questa cosa del buio / La riconosco mia [Two of these fellows you / Must know and own; this thing of darkness I / Acknowledge mine], to then continue from 290 È deforme nei modi... etc. It should be noted that Prospero is in front of Caliban, who no longer has half of his face covered with white makeup and

‘hides’ behind Prospero’s mantle, like Miranda and Ferdinand a little earlier, and peeps over the shoulders of his master, like Miranda in front of Caliban’s trap door [in I.ii] and like Ariel during the ‘return to reason’ of the courtiers. It is like a body with two heads – Caliban and Prospero. The black and the white. Both subjugated – both won. Caliban by the ‘splendor’ of the master Duke. Prospero by the ‘dark thing’ that he recognizes as his own. Before redescending from the central downstage trap door, Caliban takes Prospero’s sword and the gnomon in hand for a moment: “Two instruments of power – weaponry and science. Caliban gathers the two objects, and throws them away. Ambivalence of submission and refusal.” Then, with a worker’s gesture, with fists closed and united, he opens the trap door and disappears within, almost like a dive with his feet down. Another cut and then Prospero begins lines 300-311. Again a cut from the second part of 302 to the beginning of 306, and then, at the second part of 313, after Alonso’s lines 311-313, a royal court music begins, and after the first part of 316, La flotta reale [Your royal fleet], they all

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303 GJ 90-91.

304 GJ 111. Once again, Horowitz’s reading is wrong and misleading: “Upon emerging from his cavity, Caliban held his wooden spear in his right hand, and a steel sword in his left. He weighed the two objects, seeming to realize the futility of going into battle against a weapon of steel with one fashioned of wood” (Horowitz 109).
exit, stage right and left, except for Prospero. Ariel comes down from above and the music stops, and Prospero embraces her from behind, both their faces seen from the front. With ...*libero agli elementi* [317] Ariel’s face turns to an expression of complete stupor, then with *Addio!* [318] Prospero disconnects the wire, which quickly retracts upwards. For a few seconds Ariel remains almost still, as if she does not know what to do. Prospero advances a few steps, rubbing his eyes and then putting a hand forward: it is clear that Ariel is now invisible even to him. Ariel, in fact, passes under the hand with her head, as if looking for a caress, but does not touch it, and then nears the audience, looks around, passes from one corridor to the other using the high zones, and then comes down from the front wall of corridor C to the audience, not without having waved a brief salute to Prospero. She lowers herself in front of the corridor wall, hesitates for a few moments while the music of the second of Ariel’s songs in I.ii begins again\(^\text{305}\), and then she runs through the center of the audience corridor, with her arms and mouth open, like a scream, while the audience’s applause begins.

Although planned by Strehler since the first rehearsals, as already discussed, the fact that Ariel is tied to the wire only in Prospero’s presence or when Miranda sleeps, and that she can instead move freely on the ground invisible to the other characters, was only decided on June 21, a week before opening night. The same day, other solutions regarding Ariel are fixed. The marionette game with the Boatswain, for example, is reduced with Ariel seated

\(^{305}\) It is the song at 399-405 in I.ii that Gaipa describes as the song of the metamorphosis [*But doth suffer a sea-change*, 403]. See previous paragraph 7.
on the ground, and after numerous variants the entrance from the sea when Ariel pulls Ferdinand with a silver string in I.ii is fixed. This is a solution that seems to contradict the text, given that Ferdinand has already reached the shore at the calming of the tempest, but this restitution to the ground has a dramatic value that is much stronger and is also what will bring him to his discovery of Miranda, who, by reflex, will believe to find herself in front of a spirit, and the spirits, as we have seen, have always arrived from the sea.

The sequence of Ariel’s liberation lasts around two minutes, in which the predominating silence is broken by the sound of the hook knocking against the grid. The moments of silence in the show are not few, understood as verbal silence where only images, light, movement, music or sounds, if there are sounds, dominate. Maybe these silences are the moments where Strehler’s interpretation most expresses itself, transforming, for example, Prospero’s action in I.ii when he takes off the magic mantle, Ariel’s when she puts the objects back at the end of the same scene, or the collective redressing in V.i, into episodes that are not only theatrically fascinating, but also dramatically pregnant with meaning. But the conclusion of the show is still three minutes away, and a silence or a blackout can make the audience applaud prematurely, as effectively happens on opening night306.

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306 As noted by Lombardo, who, in his letter to Strehler of June 30-July 1, refers to the blackout that preceded the collapse of the set. A blackout that later was removed, since it does not appear in the video. See Colombo, ‘La Tempesta’ tradotta e messa in scena 1977-1978 131.
Prospero, left alone, throws his crown, which rolls into corridor A. He then takes off his mantle and throws it to the ground, nears corridor A, and throws the book in the sea there after taking out the magic rod. With a slow and explicit gesture, he breaks it and throws the two pieces to the sides. At this point, the entire scene seems to disassemble. Already on March 31 Gaipa describes a first rehearsal of this finale, which Strehler, we should recall, had envisioned since his notes of January 15, 1977:

“The corridor walls topple over, the two giant lateral wings incline, the beams supporting the veils collapse, the belly of the understage shows its interior.”

The description is similar to that of the June 19 rehearsal, but in the video the entire sequence seems simpler. The intermediate wall of the two posterior corridors rises crosswise. The front walls – the cieletti [heavens] – of corridors A, B, and C fall to the ground and the platform of A, the highest of the three corridors, puts itself crosswise, allowing Prospero to come down as if from a descent to pass to the level of corridor B, and therefore of C, that is that same as the audience. A large blue veil from the scene with the Harpy has also fallen from above, attached to a beam. While Prospero comes down he takes off his vest and then, holding it in his arm with a grand naturalness, recites the epilogue from the same position in which we have seen him, more than once, to direct the events of the play. The text is complete with

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307 Strehler’s manic precision has no limits: “It takes forever,” Gaipa notes, “to find the right rod, that breaks in the right point and with the right sound!” (GJ 118)

308 I refer to the pages of Strehler’s notes discussed in previous paragraph 3 in relation to the initial phase of his interpretative process.

309 GJ 74.
the exception of *Col vostro potere* in 8. At the end, he turns towards the stage and at his gesture all the set is rebuilt like before – a final masque, after all – while Ariel returns from the same central audience corridor from which she had left. As Kott writes, at the end of the show “Prospero-Strehler breaks his magic wand and throws it to the bottom of the sea, knowing that in an instant the stage manager in the orchestra pit will hand him a new conductor’s stick”\(^1\). The video ends with the credits on the images of the long applause from the audience, of the actors who take their call, and then of the 18 mimes who come out of the anterior corridors. In the moment of Prospero’s farewell to Ariel, the sun has reached its lowest limit on the back of the stage and three hours had gone by since the beginning of the show.

![Image](image-url)  

**1978 Tempest**, the disassembled set during the epilogue. The picture does not correspond to the video because Prospero-Carraro has the vest on and he is standing above the corridors area, and not in front of it (copyright © Piccolo Teatro of Milan Archives)

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\(^1\) Kott, “Prospero, or the Director” 141.
CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION

The theatre is a collective quest for knowledge which demands active participation and involvement from both interpreters and spectators\(^1\).

GIORGIO STREHLER

4.1 Strehler before the 1978 Tempest

The 1978 Tempest was Strehler’s last Shakespearean production\(^2\). Aside from the two editions in German of Power Games – the adaptation of 1,2,3 Henry VI first produced by the Piccolo at the end of the 1964-65 season\(^3\), The Tempest was the only Shakespeare’s play that Strehler directed twice, bringing the total of his Shakespearian productions to fourteen\(^4\). Among the approximately over two hundred theatre and opera productions of Strehler’s fifty-year career, only two other authors have a comparable presence: Carlo Goldoni and Bertolt Brecht. By

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\(^1\) Giorgio Strehler, “Convocation Address. University of Toronto: 11/22/89,” in Giorgio Strehler, Incontro (Toronto: Italian Cultural Institute, 1989): 63. The original text is in English.

\(^2\) For what concerns Strehler’s Shakespearean productions, see the end of paragraph 4, chapter 2.

\(^3\) For what concerns Il gioco dei potenti [Power Games], see chapter 2, note 27. Dar Spiel der Mächtigen [Power Games] was first produced in summer 1973 for the Salzburg Festival, and presented in two evenings because of its length. A shorter version was produced in Vienna, at the Burgtheater, in 1975-76.

\(^4\) The total does not include the 1948 production of Romeo ad Juliet at the Roman Theatre in Verona, in which Strehler served as assistant director of Renato Simoni, and two operas by Giuseppe Verdi: Macbeth, 1975-76, and Falstaff, based on The Merry Wives of Windsor, 1980-81, both produced by the Teatro alla Scala in Milan. Notice that at the Scala, in 1970-71, Strehler directed also Verdi’s Simon Boccanegra, an opera that, according to David Hirst, “can with some truth be seen as even more Shakespearian in mood and theme than Othello, Macbeth and Falstaff”, and in which “there are strong echoes of Lear.” David L. Hirst, Giorgio Strehler (Cambridge: Cambridge UP 1993, 2006): 116. The reference is to the King Lear directed by Strehler in 1972-73.
including all the different editions based on texts of these two playwrights with the Shakespearian mises-en-scène, the total of almost fifty productions indicates that about a quarter of Strehler’s directorial work has been based on texts by Shakespeare, Goldoni⁵, and Brecht. According to David Hirst’s monograph, this trio of dramatists is the most close to Strehler, but “whilst there are complex themes and dramatic features subtly uniting the three, it is Brecht who most fully characterizes and defines the network of interrelated motifs which bind them inexorably together in the Strehler canon”⁶. Strehler though, with the exception of the single 1954 performance of The Measures Taken, which was staged with the students of the Theatre School of the Piccolo, and he himself considered a sort of preliminary exercise in epic theatre, approached for the first time a play by Brecht, The Threepenny Opera, only in 1955-56. Then, in the following forty years, he directed another thirteen new productions or editions of Brecht’s plays, two operas based on his texts, and five recitals based on his poems and songs⁷.


⁶ Hirst 116.

⁷ For what concerns Brecht, Strehler directed three editions of The Threepenny Opera (in 1955-56 and 1972-73 at the Piccolo, and in 1986-87 a French co-production by the Théâtre de l’Europe and the Théâtre Musical de Paris-Chatelet), four editions of The Good Person of Setzuan (in 1957-58, 1980-81, and 1995-96 at the Piccolo, and in 1977-78, in German, at the Schauspielhaus in
In the period that goes from the foundation of the Piccolo till the 1955-56 season, nine years, Strehler directed about sixty productions, and among these, seven Goldonis, including the first two editions of The Servant of Two Masters, and eight Shakespeares. Among the latter, it should be noticed that with the exception of The Taming of the Shrew and Twelfth Night – the only comedies by Shakespeare directed by Strehler – five of the other productions had ‘power’ as dominant theme: Richard II, Richard III, 1 Henry IV, Macbeth, and Julius Caesar.

By looking at the story that brought Prospero and Miranda on the island of Caliban and Ariel, the 1948 Tempest could be added to those five as well. After the 1955-56 production of The Threepenny Opera, and before the 1978 Tempest, in a span of twenty-two years Strehler directed only three other plays by Shakespeare, and the ‘power’ theme returns in all of them: Coriolanus in 1957-58, Power Games in 1964-65, and King Lear in 1972-73. If Coriolanus, as amply emphasized by Hirst, “tells us a great deal about his [Strehler’s] approach to

Brecht and the implication of epic theatre”\textsuperscript{8}, it is through \textit{Power Games}, and definitely \textit{King Lear}, that Strehler’s directing style, as pointed out by Donald McManus, “became less and less of a Brechtian alienation device with a political motive and more and more of an aesthetic principle”\textsuperscript{9}. This is a point that must be stressed to prevent the erroneous conclusion of Strehler rigidly applying Brechtian techniques, an aspect acknowledged also by Hirst, when he says that “Strehler has never swerved from his belief that a combination of the techniques of epic theatre and naturalism is basic to a theatre of true dialectic”\textsuperscript{10}.

The staging for the first time in Italy of Shakespeare’s plays such as \textit{The Tempest}, \textit{Richard II}, or \textit{1 Henry IV}, offered Strehler a fertile territory in which to explore the theme of ‘power,’ its ambivalences and contradictions. Brecht’s plays gave him input to further expand this investigation, and Brecht’s technique the tools he needed to refine an acting style – “an amalgamation of techniques which remains to this day his hallmark as a director”\textsuperscript{11} – that he started to develop since the first edition of \textit{The Servant of Two Masters}, in 1947. Strehler was looking for an acting style – “a meticulously researched lyrical realism”\textsuperscript{12} – that from one side could renew the Italian tradition based on great actors and acting clichés, and from the other could restore the values of the Commedia dell’arte technique,

\textsuperscript{8} Hirst 68.


\textsuperscript{10} Hirst 96.

\textsuperscript{11} Hirst 25.

\textsuperscript{12} Hirst 25.
recognized as one of the most important in the creation of the modern European theatre. There was a sort of nationalist intent in doing this, but most of all there was the necessity of delineating a new theatre in which a multifaceted audience, still traumatized by a war that was also a civil war, could find a common ground.

The definition of an acting style not assimilable to the old Italian fashion, and neither to a generic naturalism or to pedantic applications of Brechtian principles, comes into view by noticing how some of the Goldoni plays directed by Strehler, the ones that became icons of the history of the Piccolo Teatro, have always been staged in the proximity of Brechtian or Shakespearian productions, or other important mise-en-scènes, as if the acting style could not survive and improve without a constant testing of its main sources. The ‘Villeggiatura’ trilogy for example, was staged for the first time in 1954-55, the same season in which Strehler directed the first edition of Chekhov’s Il giardino dei ciliegi [The Cherry Orchard], preceding the 1955-56 season, in which were presented first El Nost Milan [Our Milan] by Carlo Bertolazzi – “a powerful realistic evocation of squalid working-class life”13 – and then Brecht’s Threepenny Opera. Strehler later staged new editions, and even more than one in some cases, of all these four productions14. Another example is the 1964-65 season, at the beginning of which Strehler directed The Squabbles at Chioggia, the fights of the lower class, and at the end, Power Games, the battles of the powerful. Both productions had later

13 Hirst 25.

14 The Cherry Orchard was staged again in 1973-74, and Our Milan in 1979-80. For Goldoni’s and Brecht’s plays, see respectively previous notes 5 and 7.
new editions as well\textsuperscript{15}. But the season that in some way legitimates in Strehler’s canon the interconnection of Shakespeare, Brecht, and Goldoni, is the 1972-73 one, when he returned to the Piccolo Teatro, after a few years in which he had worked as a free agent. He had resigned from the Piccolo in the rebellious 1968, when “he was targeted as one of the establishment figures against whom the students voiced their discontent”\textsuperscript{16}, and when he was back he staged, in order, \textit{King Lear}, the second production of \textit{The Threepenny Opera}, and the fifth production of \textit{The Servant of Two Masters}\textsuperscript{17}.

What is striking within choices that are clearly not simply coincidences, and not even the result of pure cultural or marketing imperatives, is Strehler’s coherence, the constant confrontation with the sources of his theatre \textit{Weltanschauung}, in which, aside the themes of ‘power’ or the ‘lower class struggle,’ is possible to observe at least two patterns that are fundamental in the definition of his interpretative practice. One is the above-mentioned definition of an acting style, that precision of movements, of rhythms, and of vocal quality, stressed by Gaipa in his journal of the rehearsals for the 1978 \textit{Tempest}\textsuperscript{18}. The

\textsuperscript{15} \textit{The Squabbles at Chioggia} was staged again in 1992-93 (see previous note 5), and \textit{Power Games} had the two other mentioned editions in Austria (see previous note 3).

\textsuperscript{16} McManus 446.

\textsuperscript{17} According to Lina Cavaglieri’s chronology of the productions of the Piccolo Teatro, the 1972-73 edition of \textit{The Servant of Two Masters} is the fourth one, because she considers the edition for the 1962-63 season, in which Ferruccio Soleri substituted Marcello Moretti in the role of Harlequin, as an updated version of the third edition of 1956-57. Alberto Bentoglio’s chronology of Strehler’s productions in \textit{Invito al teatro di Strehler}, on the contrary, indicates the 1962-63 one as the fourth edition, and therefore the 1972-73 one as the fifth. I personally agree with this second chronology. See chapter 3, note 2, and previous note 5.

\textsuperscript{18} See the end of paragraph 9, chapter 3.
other is the search for an imaginary space that, even if situated in traditional theatres, would be able to break the fourth wall and to reconnect audience and actors. With the Brechtian interpretation of Coriolanus in the second half of the 1950s, this search started to move in a direction that had its turning point in 1962-63 with Brecht’s Galileo, for which Luciano Damiani created a fixed set that, with minor changes visible to the public, suggested different spaces and times. As stressed in his notes, it is to the set for Galileo that Strehler thinks as general idea for the space of the 1978 Tempest\textsuperscript{19}. In between, the world as a kind of Beckettian muddy circus of Power Games and, similarly, King Lear. Such an idea, that of the circus, was already present in the set created by Gianno Ratto, the same designer of the 1948 Tempest, for Carlo Gozzi’s Il corvo [The Crow], directed by Strehler at the beginning of the 1948-49 season. The space of the 1978 Tempest was therefore also a return to the origins of the Piccolo Teatro. The bare platform of the first, 1947 edition of The Servant of Two Masters filtered through thirty years of interpretative search, became a simple – simple only as a very sophisticated machine can be – and malleable structure that Prospero could transform with his magic.

4.2 Theatre is ‘to show’

According to Jan Kott, who was present, during the final rehearsal before the opening night of the 1978 Tempest, Strehler, in front of his actors, a handful

\textsuperscript{19} See point A) in paragraph 3, chapter 3.
of friends, and several critics, shouted: “**Impossibile** [impossible], if I manage to show half of *The Tempest* it will be a **miracolo** [miracle]”\(^{20}\). The quote, if true, offered Kott the cue to develop his already mentioned reading of the production, which identifies Strehler with Prospero\(^{21}\). Which half is Strehler referring to, Kott questions:

> Prospero’s magic or the failure of it? The vanity and the power of an almighty director able to will the elements to obey him, or a bitter renunciation of an Art capable of recreating all the world’s history but having no power to change it?\(^{22}\)

Whatever the answer, which opens the issue of the readings activated by the mise-en-scène\(^{23}\), in Strehler’s quote is the use of the adjective ‘impossible’ that is significant. A few months before the opening of the 1978 *Tempest*, in the fall 1977 program for the revival of the 1972-73 production of *King Lear*, Strehler wrote an article about the upcoming production. In the article, he discusses the reasons that have brought him to direct a new production of the same text staged thirty years before at Boboli:

> Why therefore stage *The Tempest*? I would answer – because we need to challenge the impossible, because is our duty as members of the theatre community (and sometimes as artists), at a certain point of our life and of our knowledge, to face directly the


\(^{21}\) See paragraph 12, chapter 3.

\(^{22}\) Kott, “Prospero, or the Director” 133-134.

\(^{23}\) See paragraph 3, chapter 1.
impossible, even at the risk of being smashed by it – but also for
snatching another tiny piece of truth about the world.\textsuperscript{24}

Strehler speaks in the plural, but he admits of not being sure if the ‘need to
challenge the impossible’ belongs just to a particular turning point of his career,
or is instead some sort of communal quest, where the subject could be the public,
but also the ensemble of the Piccolo Teatro. Later in the article, he also mentions
how the 1976-77 season has been demanding for the Piccolo, with over 400
performances in Italy and other countries, and the 1977-78 one will be even more,
with 500 performances planned, and among them, aside the first ones of \textit{The
Tempest}, the fifth edition of \textit{The Servant of Two Masters}. There is no doubt that
in the idea of challenging the impossible there is the ‘vanity’ of the ‘almighty
director,’ to use Kott’s expressions, but Strehler seems really concerned about the
impact that \textit{The Tempest}, “this extreme query on the destiny of the humanity”\textsuperscript{25},
can have on that “summary of the world that always is the audience”\textsuperscript{26}. Before
the staging of the 1972-73 \textit{King Lear}, he was assailed by the same questions, the
same doubts; nonetheless, he recalls, the “great ‘public meeting’”\textsuperscript{27} between the
production and the spectators revealed how much power was still in the words
of Shakespeare, not in the “magic of the director or in the charm of an actor”\textsuperscript{28}.

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{24} Giorgio Strehler, “È iniziato il lavoro della \textit{Tempesta},” in Giorgio Strehler, “Inscenare
Shakespeare” (Roma: Bulzoni, 1992): 100. See also chapter 3, note 30.
\textsuperscript{25} Strehler, “È iniziato il lavoro della \textit{Tempesta}” 100.
\textsuperscript{26} Strehler, “È iniziato il lavoro della \textit{Tempesta}” 100.
\textsuperscript{27} Strehler, “È iniziato il lavoro della \textit{Tempesta}” 101.
\textsuperscript{28} Strehler, “È iniziato il lavoro della \textit{Tempesta}” 101.
\end{flushleft}
The idea of impossibility, under this light, seems a rhetorical device used by Strehler to describe what, in concrete terms, are the limits against which any theatrical interpreter who does not consider the text as “an excuse for some infamous game”\(^{29}\) aimed to its desecration or demythologization, but as “the only source of theatre”\(^{30}\), has to fight. In the speech at the acceptance of the Honorary Degree in Letters received by the University of Toronto in 1989, an illuminating lecture on the concept of interpretation, Strehler returns more than once to the idea of impossibility:

One can call upon all the disciplines of philology and history, but one will always find that the work of a theatrical interpreter cannot and must not be limited to the reconstruction of the authentic meaning of words and the recovery of codes of a specific period which would in any case be an impossible task\(^{31}\).

And again, later:

The impossibility of ultimately ascertaining what actually constitutes the author’s intention and what constitutes the interpreter’s is crucial; what is approved, permitted and postulated by the text and what isn’t; what originally belongs to the text and what the text has absorbed from posthumous projections, different cultural codes, different existential problems and tendencies, different social and philosophical questions, and the scientific models which belong to its reader\(^{32}\).

\(^{29}\) Strehler, “È iniziato il lavoro della Tempesta” 101.

\(^{30}\) Strehler, “È iniziato il lavoro della Tempesta” 101.

\(^{31}\) Strehler, “Convocation Address” 61.

\(^{32}\) Strehler, “Convocation Address” 61.
On the one side there is the text, whose meaning consists initially in a message that the interpreter sends to himself, and that then “takes shape in an ongoing exchange between the receptivity of the subject-interpreter and the actual availability of the object”\(^{33} \) On the other there is the text filtered, so to speak, by the interpreter, who accomplishes two fundamental activities:

he [sic] is obliged to bring to life the written text – collectively and singularly, verbally, and by means of gestures. He establishes the context which constitutes the theatrical event. […] At the same time, he must create an active, ongoing connection with the spectator, to ensure that his audience is able to accept without effort or distortion the conventions demanded by that given type of theatre. In this ‘without effort and distortion’ lies the extreme difficulty of securing a lasting definition of the perimeters of an interpretation\(^{34} \).

The limits of the interpretation, in the end, consist in the true impossibility of catching the meaning that the author attributed originally to the text. The meaning that the interpreter, by “a passionate, even agonizing, hermeneutic exploration of a body of elements which at first do not appear structured but ultimately reveal themselves, or should reveal themselves, to be predominantly structurable”\(^{35} \), should bring to life, is such that the audience will not

\(^{33}\) Strehler, “Convocation Address” 61.

\(^{34}\) Strehler, “Convocation Address” 62.

\(^{35}\) Strehler, “Convocation Address” 61.
distinguish, in that revelation – the concrete act of ‘producing’ the text\textsuperscript{36}, the intentions of the interpreter from those of the author.

The complexity of the theoretical definitions reflects what, in daily theatre practice, was Strehler’s professional attitude. The inexhaustible search for perfection corresponds to the ‘impossible’ search for the right meaning, which does not necessarily belong to the spoken word, but may depend on the right light, the right movement, the right music, or by the combination of all these factors. In this sense, the idea that in Strehler’s theatre the meaning is exclusively a linguistic factor would be completely deceptive, because in reality the art of interpretation can not be explained, and

is a mysterious thing. This is true for directors and conductors, as well as for musicians, actors, and singers. [...] In some way, the interpreter knows what he/she is doing – but not always. Theatre is made by ratio and emotio, which are not two contrasting elements, but two elements in a dialectical relationship\textsuperscript{37}.

In the dialectical image of rationality and emotion, Strehler echoes his approach to acting, which, according to Hirst, “can be seen as a fusion of the psychological (or naturalistic), the socio-political (or epic) and the poetic (or lyrical)”\textsuperscript{38}, in other words, Stanislavski, Brecht, and Strehler’s sensibility. A musical sensibility, as stressed by Giancarlo Stampalia in his Strehler dirige. Le fasi di un allestimento e

\textsuperscript{36} See chapter 1, note 21.


\textsuperscript{38} Hirst 28.
l’impulso musicale nel teatro [Strehler Directs: The Phases of a Mise-en-scène and the Musical Impulse in Theatre] 39, that translates not only in an exasperated attention towards any change of tone and rhythm of the lines, or of the score, but also in a search of harmony that permeates any other aspect of the production: lighting, space, and timing; “Theatre, in the end, is to show,” says Strehler, “and ‘to show’ is a mysterious summary that should condense everything one knows or presumes to know” 40.

### 4.3 Strehler’s rough magic

In the preface to Stampalia’s volume just mentioned, Robert Wilson writes that lighting is the most important element in theatre. Lighting is like an actor. We communicate with each other mainly through the senses of sight and hearing: what we hear and what we watch. Lighting is what helps us to watch and to hear. Often, what we watch in a theatre is simply decoration for what we hear; on the contrary, what we watch could be important as well as what we hear: images are important. […] Without lighting, there is no space. And without space, there is no timing. Space and time coexist 41.

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39 The volume, already quoted in the course of chapter 3, is composed of many interviews, organized by themes, with actors, technicians, assistant directors, collaborators, and conductors, who have worked with Strehler, who was not a musician, but was famous for his subtle musical ear. Stampalia though, does not emphasize the musical impulse in relation to “the sounds of which music is composed, rather in connection with the temporal organization (exterior, but most of all mental) of the content that the music expresses. This process can be ‘extended’ to other temporal organizations, to forms and structures that are not strictly sonorous. Also human gestures, raising lighting, theatre objects can be musical” (Stampalia, Strehler dirige 19).

40 Interview with Giorgio Strehler in Stampalia, Strehler dirige 24.

41 Stampalia, Strehler dirige 12.
In this outlining of what theatre essentially should be, Bob Wilson assimilates his work to that of Strehler. They both, he says, feel the impulse to empty the stage, to do a lot with little. A single object – a mantle, a gnomon, a shell – in an empty space, will be much more important if instead the space is crowded with objects. The mantle is the magic, the gnomon is the timing, and the shell, its music-sound, is ‘something’ that can not be described in rational terms, but that the audience can hear (conceive, imagine, feel): rationality and emotion. The singularity of these objects absorbs the gaze of the audience that, a few minutes before, has been blown away by the initial tempest. It is as if the world emerging from the perceptual exploration performed by the spectators, differently from the daily visual perception – which builds individually and it is subjected to many variables – is immediately given, or at least, is presented-produced in such a way that the reaction en masse, to use Pavis’ expression, is in some way guided, though the consequence, as argued in chapter 1, is not necessarily that of a passive role of the audience.

Ettore Gaipa, in his journal of the rehearsals for the 1978 Tempest, to summarize Strehler’s interpretative work, his search for solutions that can reach the audience ‘without effort and distortion,’ uses a colorful but meaningful term: ‘scarnificazione’ [fleshing]. Giulia Lazzarini, in the same interview where she

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42 See chapter 1, note 8.
43 See chapter 1, note 7.
44 GJ 24.
describes her work on Ariel in the 1978 Tempest, offers an even more extreme image of Strehler’s interpretation, which also clarifies, in perspective, his approach for the 1948 production, where he was depending on the atmosphere of the pre-existing natural scenery of the gardens that, while charming, gave a single image. There was no alternative. The beautiful realistic setting removed the deep meanings that belong to a text like The Tempest.

On the contrary, I believe that in the new edition Strehler wanted to stage NOTHINGNESS and to leave to the spectator the task of imagining EVERYTHING. What Lazzarini identifies as ‘nothingness’ is similar to Wilson’s idea of emptying the stage. By comparing the final 1978 production to the quantity of details contained in Strehler’s preliminary notes, the impression is really as if he tried to strip off any possible layer of meaning that does not ‘originally belong to the text.’ This ‘impossible,’ but necessary task, as said above, consists initially in a message that the interpreter sends to oneself – what I identified as the first phase of Strehler’s interpretative process, the initial striking image of “a beautifully poor, childlike theatre” – and then “takes shape in an ongoing exchange between” the director-interpreter and the text. Yet at the end of this

45 See chapter 3, note 138.
46 Anzi, “I voli di Ariele” 207-208. NULLA [NOTHINGNESS] and TUTTO [EVERYTHING] are all capital in the text.
47 See paragraph 3, chapter 3.
48 SN 29. See also chapter 3, note 68.
49 See previous note 33.
“passionate, even agonizing, hermeneutic exploration”\textsuperscript{50}, of which chapter 3 has given an account, the question raised by Strehler at the beginning of his 1989 lecture on the concept of interpretation, seems to remain unanswered: “Who is the author of tonight’s performance of \textit{The Tempest}?”\textsuperscript{51}. Just by looking at the number of cuts and changes that Strehler made to the text for the 1978 production, any idea of faithfulness to Shakespeare’s work is arguable. Even so, Strehler concludes his lecture by saying that

the author of William Shakespeare’s \textit{Tempest} tonight is really William Shakespeare, the only matrix of all possible rewritings, author of the highest and most complete metaphor for man’s life and his [sic] theatre, the one who expresses himself with us, within the living texture of the audience, going beyond time and language, transcending them to tell all of us the most profound things about the nature, the essence and the history of mankind\textsuperscript{52}.

The conclusion, with its rhetorical exaltation of Shakespeare’s work, could be easily dismissed as a final showing-off of the ‘almighty director,’ if not for that reference to Shakespeare as ‘the only matrix of all possible rewritings,’ which in the end is, according to Strehler, the work of the interpreters: director and actors, but in many cases the translator as well\textsuperscript{53}. In fact, the painstaking exchange of

\textsuperscript{50} See previous note 35.

\textsuperscript{51} Strehler, “Convocation Address” 58.

\textsuperscript{52} Strehler, “Convocation Address” 64.

\textsuperscript{53} “Language is ideology. Moreover, the language of the translator does not maintain the linguistic rhythm of the original, since it cannot. It cannot realize the same phonetic and accentual structures, because it does not have the same syllabic nature. It has its own. The translator then clearly, becomes an author of the text and, like the original author, elects an implicit audience for his process and retextualization” (Strehler, “Convocation Address” 63).
ideas with Agostino Lombardo, the translator of the 1978 *Tempest*, accomplished another impossible task, since translating is not

a legitimate and artistic activity unless it finds a mysterious and yet close affinity with the reality of the translated text. [...] He [Lombardo] moved beyond impossibility to apprehend a possible tie or link and to build for us and for the audience, our theatrical event, born of the Shakespearian text. \(^{54}\)

The text therefore is still there, the central source of any interpretation, from that of the translator to the one of the director, but its meaning, Strehler points out, is definitely not “the sum of its words, nor is it *interwoven* in each one of them.” \(^{55}\)

This is probably one of the most crucial aspects of Strehler’s approach to theatre interpretation, certainly one of those defining the uniqueness of his work, that in the 1978 *Tempest* found a sort of climactic moment. It emerges from the unspoken text, in those moments, often created by developing simple stage directions or actions implied in Shakespeare’s text. Prospero’s [*Lays down his mantle*], for example, after line 24 in I.ii, about eighty seconds of music and gestures that communicate much more, rationally and emotionally, about the relationship between Prospero and Miranda, than any line of their dialogue.

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\(^{54}\) Strehler, “Convocation Address” 63.

\(^{55}\) Strehler, “Convocation Address” 61. As emphasized by Domenico Pietropaolo, a play is “written to be uttered and acted out on stage, in the context of a multidimensional form of communication, and inside an homogeneous aesthetic and ideological vision, from which it acquires semantic dimensions that can not reveal themselves just in the written text.” Domenico Pietropaolo, “Regia e filologia negli studi teatrali” [Directing and Philology in Theatre Studies], in Luigi Ballerini, Gay Bardin, and Massimo Ciavolella, eds., *La lotta con Proteo, metamorfosi del testo e testualità della critica*, Proceedings of the 16th Congress of the AISLLI, Oct. 6-9, 1997, U of California, Los Angeles, vol. 2 (Firenze: Cadmo, 2000): 1492.
Paragraph 10 of chapter 3 has discussed, in detail, the question of the length of the 1978 *Tempest*. The final production, the one I have also experienced as a spectator, was surely not longer than the two hours and forty minutes of the video version. If nothing else, because in 1948 the nuptial masque was staged and in 1978 was cut, the first production must have been longer, but the question of the length of the 1978 production is relative, because in the end, with the intermission, corresponded to the time indicated by the text. What is indicative, on the contrary, is the total of the time of the unspoken parts. From the first thirty seconds of the initial tempest, till the liberation of Ariel and Prospero’s final renunciation to his powers, at the end of V.i, over twenty-one minutes of Strehler’s 1978 *Tempest* are made of gestures, exits and entrances of characters, unexpected sounds, gradual changes of light, set changes. Just the transition from the end of I.ii to the beginning of II.i, from Ariel clearing the set of any object, to the change of the platform-island, and then the entrance of Alonso’s court, takes two minutes and forty-five seconds. More or less the same amount of time is taken at the end of V.i by the liberation of Ariel and by Prospero throwing his book in the sea and breaking his magic rod. Some of these moments are memorable, but there is still that unanswered question, “Who is the author of tonight’s performance of *The Tempest*?” that at this point returns even more poignantly: Who is the author of those twenty-one minutes of pure theatre?

A superficial analysis could reach the conclusion that Strehler simply added ‘his

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56 The reviews of the 1948 production do not mention the length of the performance.
stuff’ to Shakespeare’s text, but Strehler would reply that that ‘stuff’ is the text, it
is the ‘impossible’ text that results from his interpretative work and that of the
actors:

The interpreters thus rewrite the text. By interpreting the text, they
make critical choices, highlighting some aspects of the text,
dee emphasizing others. By giving life to the text, they all contribute
to the expression of what the text itself does not express. The
theatrical event, because of this, is unique and incapable of
replication\textsuperscript{57}.

The image of ‘rewriting’ the text, obviously, is used only metaphorically, where
‘rewriting’ corresponds to the interpretative process. In the 1978 Tempest, for
example, Strehler decided to cut the nuptial masque in IV.i because the only
interpretation he could conceive as valid, making use of Bunraku marionettes,
was not available, and he could not imagine any other rewriting of the masque.
The visual and musical substitutions he adopted in the end are a very good
example of how even in presence of a personal impasse, the interpreter can still
produce the “text, with its intentionalities and its inevitably large mass of non-
structured residual elements”\textsuperscript{58}, for the other indispensable interpretative agent,
the audience, which ‘reads’ the text in performance,

recognizes the intentional parts, accepts or rejects them, and also
ventures into non-structured areas, giving them a structure and

\textsuperscript{57} Strehler, “Convocation Address” 62-63.

\textsuperscript{58} Strehler, “Convocation Address” 62-63.
participating in that quest of knowledge which is fundamental to the theatrical event\textsuperscript{59}.

When I had the opportunity to visit Boboli Gardens in Florence, and the space that Strehler used for his 1948 Tempest, I could imagine hundreds of spectators sitting in stands built around half of the circular fountain with, at the center, the island where was situated the stage. The research has been crucial in my description of that first edition, and even if the sources were limited, has helped me to formulate an idea of what the production could have been.

When I think of the second production, that I saw in Milan in 1984, I definitely have memories of this or that particular moment, but not so many after all, and the video and the documentation of the production have validly replaced my imagination. Something though, still belongs just to me, to the spectator of that theatrical event. It’s hard to explain it in rational terms, but I know that combines emotions and thoughts, and that has been produced by Strehler’s rough magic.

\textsuperscript{59} Strehler, “Convocation Address” 62-63.


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Theatrography of the Piccolo Teatro. 15 Aug. 2008 <http://archivio.piccoloteatro.org/eurolab/>


