

Antonio Baroni

Casablanca Therapy

Is it true? She just wants to be touched so badly. What do you get if you put four women who keep undressing themselves and doing humiliating things for love on a stage? A surreal workshop called Casablanca Therapy. A sequence of cheesy pop songs reflect the dissatisfaction and the neurotic need of attention of one/four/every woman (and man) from the opposite (and same) sex.

That's Love, the one with capital L. That's the love of the movies, the love of books, the love that causes you to feel butterflies in your stomach, and transforms your eyes into heart-shaped mirrors; making you cry all night whilst listening to Burt Bacharach, throw parties just to dance yourself to death, and not think about all the Gustavs (and Jans, and Janas, and Marys and Johns) in the world that didn't want you, or at least, not as badly as you were wanting them. Because you were not just wanting, you were craving.

Casablanca Therapy is not a performance about the positive power of love, but is not anti-love either. It's group psychotherapy, it's air travel with no emergency exits, it's a Rick's Café, where, in the end, everybody gets their visas to leave Morocco for other shores. All this just to make us realize how ridiculously society wants us to behave when we assume we are "in love". Romantic songs, clichés, promises of eternal devotion don't prove anything, don't make our feelings deeper, but they can turn out to be dangerous, driving our expectations too high. Like a Sleeping Beauty disappointed by the kiss of Prince (not so) Charming, because things weren't supposed to be like that, we risk being perpetually disappointed by the sugary sweet pre-packaged dream that will never be our relationship. After all, as one of the women on stage points out, it's not about make-up, hair, legs, mouths, but something else, between our legs.

The performance grows interactive in a climax which culminates with the invitation to the audience to physically join the actresses on stage and follow instructions on their laptops telling us how to touch them, their reactions being tender, hilarious or both.