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'Being Leonardo': Massimiliano Finazzer Flory Brings Italian Genius to Moscow

By Maria Michela D'Alessandro

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Theater-lovers will have a treat on Saturday when the famous Italian actor, playwright and theater director Massimiliano Finazzer Flory brings Leonardo da Vinci back to life.

On Saturday Italian actor, playwright and theater director Massimiliano Finazzer Flory will bring Leonardo da Vinci back to life in his unique production "Being Leonardo da Vinci. An Impossible Interview."

The ambitious play features Flory dressed in period clothes, wearing cosmetics to reconstruct da Vinci's physical appearance and answering questions from an interviewer in Renaissance Italian. Muscovites will see the embodiment of da Vinci onstage, discussing his views on his life, art and philosophy as if he had opened a door from the 1400s to the modern world. "Being Leonardo da Vinci. An Impossible Interview" is at its heart a philosophical dialogue, and the play involved Flory becoming like the actor both physically and psychologically.

But how did Flory recreate an interview with a genius who has been dead for nearly five

centuries? "The theater is the place where memory and imagination provide the truth of culture," the Italian actor said in an interview with The Moscow Times. "To understand the language of Leonardo it is first necessary know about his story, his life, passions, feelings, doubts, interests and suffering. At that point the language becomes an illustration of his psyche. I came to Leonardo through Stanislavsky's acting method. The language of the 1400s became mine," he continued.

"Being Leonardo da Vinci. An Impossible Interview" has been on tour in several countries since its opening in 2012. The production will run until 2019, the year that marks the 500th anniversary of Leonardo's death. "My work will continue to travel the world as an ambassador for the necessary dialogue between art and science, which is decisive for the future of mankind and the environment," Flory said.

The Italian theatre director aims to come back to Russia every year to feed the strategic cultural relationship the country has with Italy. He believes strongly in the Russian audience's appreciation of culture, and the ability of art to transcend geographical boundaries.

Flory's unique theatrical biography continues to seduce audiences across the world, and there is no doubt that the production will be as beguiling here in Moscow as it has proven elsewhere. The performance, in Italian with Russian subtitles, which also features Inna Bazhenova, is supported by the Italian Cultural Institute in Moscow.

Na Strastnom Theater. 8A, Strastnoi Bulvar. Metro Chekhovskaya. nastrastnom.ru. *Sat., March 19 at 7 p.m.*

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