The Puppet Museum

Inviato da webworks
sabato 28 aprile 2007

Wooden puppets: of 18th century, of 19th century

those made by Benedetto Ravasio,

all set in a toy-theatre.

THE
BERGAMASK PUPPET THEATRE. One of the most characteristic traditions of the Bergamask country is the Puppet Theatre. Some puppeteers still exist in Bergamo even if they're reduced to few. They keep a really ancient form of performance going on with their puppet theatre. The first news in Bergamo dates back to the beginning of the eighteenth century, with the unusual presence of a woman puppeteer.

The strong personality of the character and the cleverness of the puppeteers made him popular. The presence of "Gioppino" is still rooted in this performance and makes up the main component.

The puppet theatre was born in the street and because of a constant contact with people, it's one of the most authentic expressions of the Bergamask soul. The nineteenth century was the golden age of the Bergamask puppeteers who ventured as far as the other Lombard provinces and then followed the emigrants to Switzerland and France.

ARLECCHINO'S HOUSE

According to a credible tradition the origins of Arlecchino are Bergamask. The rude man of the mountains with a harsh dialect is assumed to have descended from the "Brembana Valley" to Venice. From this mountaineer maybe came the immortal mask of this singular character.

The actor-manager Alberto Ganassa is thought to have lived in this building once decorated with remarkable "frescos", now kept somewhere else. He took the mask of Arlecchino everywhere in Italy and in Europe, making it famous.

During the following century it is reported the constant presence of puppeteers in the "Piazza Vecchia", the heart of the ancient Bergamo. Here, next to the masks of the "Commedia dell'Arte", the character "Gioppino" made himself known. He was the expression of the Bergamask people: rough but witty, immediately recognizable for three unmistakable goitres.

The masks of Arlecchino, Brighella and Tartaglia play an important part unlike the puppet-like traditions of other Lombard and Northern areas of Italy.

Their success went on during the first decades of the twentieth century and met a strong competition from the other diverse

amusements. But nowadays in Bergamo the puppets theatre goes on, thanks to the cleverness of the last puppeteers.

The tradition presumes that a fifteenth century building is Arlecchino's house; it is situated in "Brembana Valley", in the ancient "contrada" of Oneta, near S. Giovanni Bianco.

THE PUPPET
MUSEUM

(c/o The Joiner's Museum)

Via Papa Giovanni, 59

24030 Almenno S. Bartolomeo (Bergamo)

- Italy ph.# ++39 35 549198