



ACCIDENTAL DEATH OF AN ANARCHIST

Dario Fo — A brief history

- Born 1926, one year after Mussolini's assumption of power, in the village of San Giano, near Lake Maggiore, Northern Italy. The nearest city is Milan.
- His father was a man of the Resistance and young Dario had experience of helping his father assist escaped political prisoners flee Italy.
- Fo studied architecture in Milan, and storytelling from the fishermen of Lake Maggiore, whose distinctive dialect was a huge influence on him.
- Initially attracted to the theatre as a designer, Fo began performing in radio sketches at the age of 26, where he created the character of a sympathetic simpleton who bungled the telling of well known stories from established culture – eg: in the bible story of Cain and Abel, Cain is presented as sympathetic because Abel was such an insufferable goodie-goodie.
- 1953 – Created a review *Il ditto nell'occhio*, which presented at the Piccolo Teatro in Milan. Influenced by Lecoq.
- 1954 – Met Franca Rame, and their long marriage and creative collaboration began in the same year. After breaking onto TV in a song and sketch show, Fo and Rame formed their first Theatre Co in 1959 which, until 1968, worked the commercial theatre circuit.
- The political climate of 1968 made Fo's position in the commercial theatre untenable and he fell foul of the censor more than once – particularly in his criticism of capitalism and America.
- Fo moved out of the commercial theatre and formed a new company to perform in factories, workers clubs and Communist Party centres.
- Fo worked under the auspices of the Communist party and in 1969 *Mistero Buffo* was first performed. However, he was never a member of the Communist Party and in 1970 his political differences forced him to break away to form another company – *La Comune*. Such was the popularity of Fo and Rame that even without the guaranteed bums-on-seats provided by the Communist Party, they very quickly established a whole new audience.
- Dec 1970 – First performance of 'Accidental Death of an Anarchist' in an abandoned workshop in Milan. Marks the beginning of Fo's most distinctive period of work.
- Throughout the period 1970-81 Fo was highly politicized, drawing from documentary evidence relating to political issues and current affairs. The influence of Brecht is very strong. Plays include: *Can't Pay, Won't Pay; Trumpets and Raspberries*. Also during this time Fo and Rame created an organization to support Italian political prisoners, which set the authorities even more firmly against them.
- 1997 – Dario Fo is awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature

