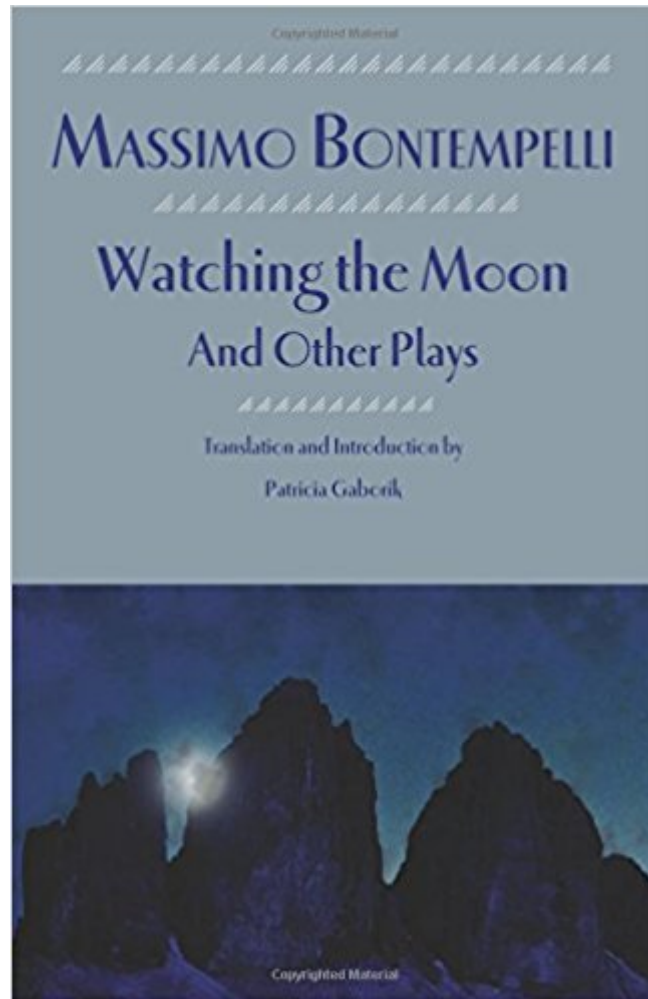


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Watching The Moon And Other Plays (Renaissance & Modern Plays)



Synopsis

Massimo Bontempelli (1878–1960), poet, novelist, playwright and composer, would become one of the literary giants of the twentieth century. The father of magic realism in Italy, he was associated with the futurist avant-garde and then launched his own influential literary movement, Novecento. Editor and creator of various journals, he collaborated with some of the greatest writers of his day, from James Joyce to Luigi Pirandello. Bontempelli was a prominent fascist intellectual and largely for this reason is today a controversial, little studied and seldom translated writer. Patricia Gaborik strikes out at this problem by presenting here an extensive introduction on the thought and legacy of this figure and complete translations of three of his major plays: "Watching the Moon" (1916), "Stormcloud" (1935) and "Cinderella" (1942). Bontempelli's sense of theatricality was unparalleled, his characters are bewitching, and Gaborik's translations privilege both readability and playability, offering these plays the chance for a robust, English-language life not only on page but also on stage. In 1953, Bontempelli was awarded the Strega Prize, Italy's most prestigious literary award. "Watching the Moon" is a densely layered response to the era's avant-gardism, with traces of symbolism, expressionism and futurism. It presents the story of a woman who travels to the literal ends of the earth in an attempt to rescue her (dead) daughter, whom she believes has been kidnapped by the moon. "Stormcloud," where a nimbus is responsible for misery and destruction, points fingers at individual behaviors and especially at personal egotism in the face of love and death. It is a strange and compelling exemplar of magic realism for the stage. "Cinderella," fearless, radical and subversive, adds to Bontempelli's slate of strong and complex female characters, still sometimes a rare commodity on the stage. First English translation. Introduction, notes, select bibliography, illustrated. 198 pages.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

For the English-speaking reader, and probably many Italian readers, an introduction to Massimo Bontempelli is in order. I shan't make that introduction because Patricia Gaborik has done this in a most concise and elegant manner. Fully 30% of this book is taken up with the musings and research done by the translator and it could not be more appropriate or timely. Briefly, if you want to acquaint yourself with the beginnings of futurism, Dadaism, surrealism, or magic realism among other emerging trends of late 19th, early 20th century aestheticism you can not do better than to divest yourself of \$9.99 and get a ringside seat to the movements which have shaped our present day world. Enough said about that, but the three plays which you will read are, not difficult, but a bit awkward if you are not constantly aware that these are plays and as such are meant to be seen and not read. Pirandello, Beckett, to cite two examples have this difficulty. To synopsise these plays would lessen the impact that they have since it is how it is said that is more important e.g. why read any great epic literature that does not overwhelm you with its poetry, if not we can all go back to reading about Greek myths in Bulfinch. So give this tome a chance and what those mad Italian and German theorists were up to and enjoy these brief plays for their playfulness and profundity. P.S. It will serve the reader well, to scope out the offerings from the publisher Italica Press which does have a charming esoteric feel about it.

favorite magical realism author

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