Peer Review: Sarah Lewis interviews Claudio Sodi

Writer Sarah Lewis interviews producer Claudio Sodi about surrounding yourself with good people, not giving up, and being responsible for your own well being.

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As told to Sarah Lewis, 1135 words.

Tags: Theater, Curation, Beginnings, Collaboration, Production, Adversity, Inspiration.

Read: Claudio Sodi interviews Sarah Lewis

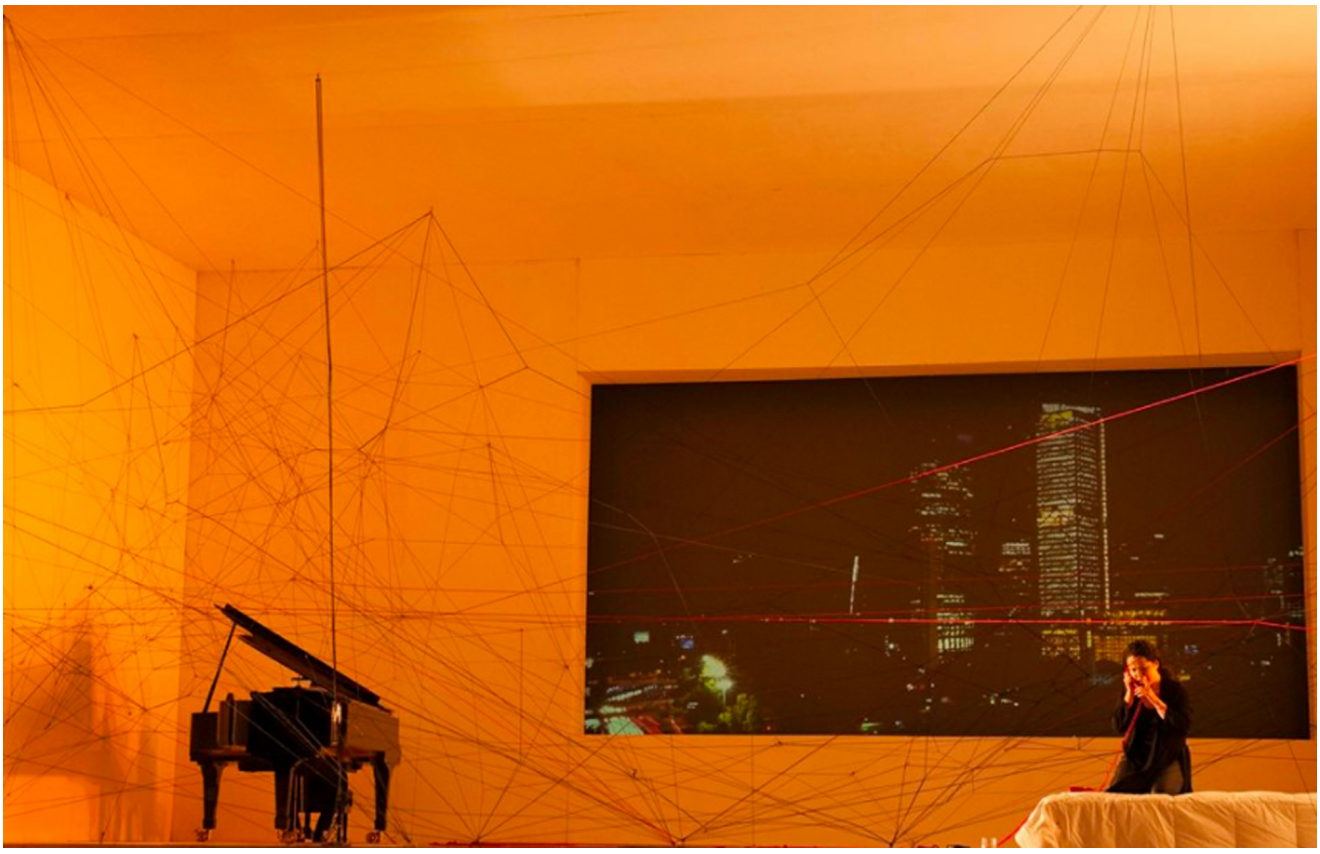
You have so many different projects going all the time. You're a theater producer, a business owner… every time I talk with you I feel like a new endeavor has popped up. Have you always been this way?

No, I haven't been. It's really an acquired quality, one that's developed after training. It has to do with the people you start spending time with—the people you build relationships with, in different capacities. Everyone brings something different to the table, new ideas and perspectives. What better way to enjoy life than to collaborate and build off of each other…

Squash 73, for example. It started as a space to have rehearsals for our productions and for our offices. Slowly the space began to have a life of its own, and there was no point in trying to control it. It just grew, and keeps growing. I guess I've realized that you have to learn how to handle and live with change, and to enjoy the way things are always evolving.

Do you think that it's better to allow things to unfold before you, or do you try to help craft the evolution?

Some projects need structure. Theater follows a script; building a hotel follows blueprints. In whatever project, though, things are always changing. You can try to manipulate the path, and hope that you're following the right one, but ultimately you're just on the ride and steering it the best you can—bumps, roadblocks, and all. You have to believe that eventually you'll get to where you're going.



Have you had moments where you've wanted to give up, to slow down, or to do something completely different? How do you push past those moments?

We're all always having these types of moments. I think it's a good thing to always be questioning what you're doing, because otherwise you enter into a comfort zone and stop evolving.

I really like to take it in, feel it out, and then go past it. I have no idea how I do it. I suppose that's one of the good things about having partners and associates and people who work alongside you, because you can't just stop. Sure, you can stop for two or three days, feel depressed, and say, "Oh come on, I don't want to do these things anymore! Enough!" But then you have people that are working for you, or who are working with you, who you are responsible to in many ways. So you just have to keep working. And, of course, while we all love our work and are responsible people, *we are all also responsible for ourselves*. To this point, I take vacations. It sounds simple, but they're really necessary to keep going.

We're all responsible for ourselves, yeah. It's really easy to be caught up in everything that's swirling around us, and if we don't stop we can get very dizzy and that doesn't serve anyone.

Right. And understanding this is a learned skill. Individually we're always like, "No, I cannot give myself any down time because my life is about being creative, and it's not just a job but my life." But you have to know that you *can* let things go.

Unless you're in a critical moment in a specific project or something, nothing *really* bad is going to happen if you step back for a moment. A project can rest, or a project can be without you sometimes—especially when you partner up and have a circle of people around you who you trust, and who are also working on the project.

You want to be involved and you want to be all in, but if you're not present with yourself, checking in, then you're likely not actually making responsible decisions. When you're not thinking clearly, you're probably not honoring the project the way that it should be honored. To realize that sometimes means fucking up—losing time, money, and energy. But you just have to step back and say, "Okay, we fucked up with this, but we solved it this way or that other way." So yeah, it's a practice. You have to understand your errors, see why you failed, and then keep going.

It's about learning to ask for help too, right? We may be able to carry a lot of weight, but our arms get tired. Our minds get tired. It's nice to be able to set that down and let someone pick it up for a little bit.

Totally. A good collaborator is necessary, and it takes time to develop those kinds of trusting relationships. Again, it's about learning it's okay to loosen the grip a bit. It's easier to go into battle with others by your side, with more weapons to respond to a crisis than just if you were going in by yourself. You have to be surrounded by people that like what you're doing, what they're doing, and what you're doing together as a group.

What do you hope people take away from any of the work you've put out into the world?

Just a happy moment in their lives, nothing else. I should probably go high and say cultural change or something, but I don't know… I think if you are happy, then positive change in your life will come along, all on its own. We're all fucked up in this life, in one way or another. Especially with our governments—yours and mine. So, if my work helps you get a little escape in between this rush of life that we're having from media and from everything else, then I've succeeded. When you're in Squash 73 or seeing a play, you're just one person having an experience with another person. You don't have anything between you, and you can have this experience that makes life a bit better, a little bit easier.

I think it also has to do with enlightenment, and providing some sort of greater understanding. I'd like to help others find a bit of peace or a bit of themselves in a moment in life. To help others relate to the world, and to be present.

Claudio Sodi recommends:

READ

The Rings of Saturn - Sebald
Walden - Thoreau

LISTEN TO

Joan Baez sings to Bob Dylan
Agustín Lara
Mercedes Nasta

GO

On a last minute nature trip, anywhere

Name
Claudio Sodi

Vocation
Producer, Director