



"An artfully evening of extraordinary dancing" by Susan Fulks, Palm Beach Daily News U.S.A.
"If Spellbound were a car, it would be a Ferrari" The Annenberg center of Performing Arts-Philadelphia U.S.A.
"...spellbinding." By Donald Rosenberg, The Plain Dealer , Cleveland U.S.A.
"60 minutes of breath taking art of dance ..." Sabine Rother, Letzte Aktualisierung, Germany
"Astolfi exhilarating choreography is a model of invention" Janet Soares, Ballet Review U.S.A.
"The troupe has an alien beauty to its movement that has become the touchstone of reputable contemporary dance. The performers are magnificent in appearance, and their technique is remarkable." Susan Fulks, Palm Beach Daily News
"Dancers of such chameleon-like suppleness, they were not only spellbinding, but breathtaking."
Marilyn Jackson, The Philadelphia Inquirer

SPELLBOUND 
CONTEMPORARYBALLET

SPELLBOUND CONTEMPORARY BALLET



Spellbound Contemporary Ballet was founded in 1994 by choreographer Mauro Astolfi who was joined two years later by Valentina Marini, and since then the company has enjoyed strong international growth. With an unmistakable style and strong ensemble of dancers considered amongst the best of their generation, Spellbound sits among the best of the seriously competitive Italian companies at an international level, an expression of dance which offers itself to the public with a broad lexicon, constantly experimenting and winning over audiences at the major festivals in Europe, Asia and the Americas. Over the years the company has laid the foundations for a path where the gap between audience, enthusiast and artist has grown progressively smaller. For 20 years it has run seminars and workshops feeding a creative supply chain which has brought to the stage thousands of dancers, as well as the merely curious, and in doing so it has created a genuine training nursery in dialectic rapport with the Company; a process which culminated in the residency at Daf Dance Arts Faculty.

Aside from Astolfi's creations, Spellbound's work includes a series of productions and projects developed through a network of international artists and institutions, such as the recent "La Mode", an installation by Tomoko Mukayama and Tojo Ito which opened the National Taichung Theater in Taiwan in October 2016.

From 2000, productions have been supported by the Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities and Tourism.

MAURO ASTOLFI

Artistic Director



Mauro Astolfi is without doubt one of the most important contemporary choreographers on the European scene. Working as a choreographer and teacher, he has created an original and constantly evolving style and symbolic language from his own personal elaboration of various forms of expressive contemporary movement. After a long stay in America, he established the Spellbound Contemporary Ballet in 1994, company which he runs together with Valentina Marini. Today, the company acts as a channel to express his personal view of today's choreographic language and as an inspiration for many young and emerging choreographers. The company, currently a leader in the international scene, has always combined Astolfi's personal portfolio with the technical excellence of its dancers to create a high profile model that is strongly focused on the quality of productions. The work of Spellbound, as well as being present in various television formats directed by Vittoria Cappelli and Vittoria Ottolenghi ("voices in a midsummer night", "nights of duels and magic", "Emotions") are increasingly in demand in the foreign market and have found success in France, Serbia, Thailand, Spain, Russia, Austria, Belarus, Israel, Sweden, Cyprus, England, Canada, Luxemburg, Switzerland, Corea, Panama, USA, Croatia and Germany.

Astolfi is also working intensively as freelancer:

In 2004 Astolfi was choreographer for Kitonb Extreme theatre and for Theatreschool in Amsterdam in 2005. In 2009, Astolfi choreographed the production of "Libera risonanza" for Balletto di Roma. In 2010 Astolfi was invited to create a new production for Szegedi Kortárs Balett in Hungary and in the same year, choreographed the musical "I promessi Sposi - Opera moderna" with director Michele Guardì.

In 2011 he was invited to Germany by Leipziger Ballet to choreograph an original creation for the INTERSHOP project under the title "Hold me in this storm" which debuted at Leipziger Opera on the 25th March and in Chicago, USA for a new creation for River North Chicago Dance Company "contact me" which debuted on the 10th February in Chicago.

Also in 2011, Astolfi worked with Israeli choreographer Adi Salant, Co/ Director of the Batsheva Dance Company on the "Dance is a cultural bridge between Italy and Israel" project, promoted and sponsored by MIUR (Italian University and Research Ministry) the Flavio Vespasiano Foundation and the municipality of Rieti.

In 2012 he signed a new work "Humanology- Site Specific young project" produced by Festival Oriente Occidente which premiered during the Festival OO at Auditorium Melotti in Rovereto and a new creation for the American dance company Ballet Ex called "Instant God" which premiered in Philadelphia in November of the same year.

In April 2013 he is together with Georg Reischl, Cayetano Soto, Jo Strömbergren one of the choreographers for MINUTEMADE for Gärtnerplatztheater in Monaco-Germany.

In 2015 Astolfi is engaged in Canada to create two new pieces, for Vancouver Arts Umbrella Dance Company and ProarteDanza in Toronto.

In 2016 he is back in Arts Umbrella in Vancouver and in 2017 he is creating a new piece for Theater Magdeburg in Germany and Israel Ballet both premiering in late May.

At the end of 2017 Astolfi is involved in a new creation for the Compania Colombiana de Ballet among the events organized for the Biennale de Danza Contemporanea in Colombia.

As well as being a choreographer, Mauro Astolfi frequently appears as a guest teacher at major dance centres in Tokyo, Paris, London, New York, Zurich, Stockholm, Amsterdam, Los Angeles and numerous establishments in Italy. Since October 2009, he has also been Artistic Director at the modern contemporary department of the DAF centre (Dance and Arts Faculty - international dance and performance arts project) in Rome. In 2016 Astolfi is appointed guest teacher for contemporary dance at the Ballet School of Opera Theater in Roma.

VALENTINA MARINI

Director



Since 1997, after 15 years of dance training, Valentina Marini has worked as cultural manager and artistic curator. From 1996 to 2001 she was the Production Assistant and then Production Manager at "Garda Festival". From 1998 to 2000 in Giardino Giusti founded and directed "Danza d'Estate," a Festival dedicated to contemporary dance and new language in Verona. Marini joined the Spellbound Contemporary Ballet at the very beginning of the project and became Producer in 2000 playing as Director from 2005 leading the company together with Astolfi and helping Spellbound to evolve internationally. In 2002 she created a new agency, "European Dance Alliance", which addresses the needs of teachers and choreographers, and holds workshops for dance schools. EDA supports proposals and interactions between the educational and professional worlds, and offers exchanges and collaborations between companies and artists coming from the most prestigious European ensembles. While at EDA she organized workshops, choreographic competitions, and collaborations with international platforms such as Antixorpi XL, Cross Connection Competition, and Moving Theater Meets Friends. Since 2003 she has written for "Danzasi" magazine, supervising a column dedicated to the international cultural systems with particular emphasis on the dance market. Since 2006 she has collaborated with the activities connected to this magazine (Danzasi International Competition, Meetings, Exhibitions). Since 2006 she has collaborated with the Roman society Laratti srl, realizing numerous projects in the sphere of production. Among these projects are "Tersicore Festival" in the Conciliazione Auditorium, "Awertenze Generali," "Natale Di Roma" 2009 edition, and "Reate Festival" 2009 and 2010 edition. Along with Monica Ratti, Marini coordinated the dance portion for Artistic Director Raffaele Paganini. She and Ratti also coordinated MIUR (Ministry for the University and Research) in partnership with Flavio Vespasiano Establishment of Rieti for the project Danza e/cultura-un ponte tra Italia e Israele, in 2011 in collaboration with Batsheva Dance Company. In 2007 she created "Contemporaneamente a Roma," a platform for new choreographers and a new stage for young authors, which annually hosts twenty emergent Italian choreographers. This project is part of a wider commitment to support contemporary language and expression. Since 2009 she has been the artistic director of the summer dance activities at the Circeo National Park by Litorale spa in collaboration with Latium Region, Sabaudia municipal district and ATCL (Theater Association of the Latium municipal districts). In the last few years Marini has been invited to collaborate on dance projects and advise and organize for international Galas and international tours. She is the dance and foreign relations advisor for "Milano Danza Expo," and for DAF (Dance Arts Faculty) since 2011. In 2015 she plays also as dance consultant for Theater Carcano in Milan, and is artist representative for the Italian market for Shirley Esseboom since 2011 and for Emanuel Gat Dance since 2016.

Since 2016 she is artistic curator of the dance season at Teatro Biblioteca Quarticciolo in Roma and artistic consultant for a new summer dance festival produced by Teatro Vascello in Roma.

Much involved in the cultural politics associations of the country, since 2010 she has been vice-president for AIDAP for AGIS Federdanza, and has been coordinator of the dance associates for the Latium Agis Regional Union.

productions

ROSSINI OVERTURES

Ph Cristiano Castaldi



ROSSINI OUVERTURES

Choreography and Direction Mauro Astolfi

Music Gioachino Rossini

Lighting Design Marco PolICASTRO

Set Concept Mauro Astolfi, Marco PolICASTRO

Set Construction Filippo Mancini/CHIEDISCENA

Costumes making Verdiana Angelucci

Rehearsals Director Alessandra Chirulli

A Spellbound production with the contribution of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and Lazio Region in cooperation with Pesaro Municipality & AMAT

School performance Pre/premiere Roma , Teatro Vascello february 20th, 2017
World Premiere Pesaro, Teatro Rossini, february 25th, 2017

VIDEO LINK:

<https://vimeo.com/207023863>

DUTATA 71'

Rossini Ouvertures celebrates the artistic and human figure of Gioachino Rossini, who will have died 150 years ago in 2018. To mark the occasion, the illustrious composer "will become a testament to Italian beauty throughout the world", as stated by the Mayor of Pesaro, Matteo Ricci, who - with the Italian Minister of Cultural Heritage and Activities and Tourism; the Minister of Education, Universities and Research; President Emeritus Giorgio Napolitano; as well as other distinguished members of the Italian cultural world - will be part of the National Committee to promote the programme of festivities. Over the span of four years, from February 2016 to October 2019, there are no less than 14 Rossinian anniversaries, such as 20 February, the date of the first performance of The Barber of Seville, which took place in 1816 at Teatro Argentina in Rome, or 29 February, the composer's birthday in the leap year of 1792. To honour its illustrious citizen, Pesaro, city of music with its conservatory and historic theatre, will dedicate a rich agenda of artistic, musical and literary events to highlighting the life and accomplishments of the genius composer. Among them is a performance by Spellbound Contemporary Ballet, co-produced by the city of Pesaro and Teatro Rossini.

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

Reading the words of Augusto Benemeglio on the life of Rossini, on that 'organised madness', was, for me, profoundly and absolutely illuminating.

I was sincerely seduced in 24 hours of continuous, repeated listening to the Rossinian world, by such unbridled and intoxicating genius, but one which at the time walked arm in arm with so many black spots, torn apart by a deep melancholy that, through a strong, energetic personality bordering on bipolar, created musical works of eternal, absolute grace.

Trying to touch on all points in a life such as that of Gioachino Rossini would be absolutely impossible, in part because as much as dance can be, and movement is, an aspect of sound - a materialisation of music - what Rossini was able to create in just a few years of his life, I don't believe can ever be represented otherwise in a genuinely sensible manner.

But the extremely contemporary nature of this great artist is so present and vibrant in the life that I live, in the life that I see around me, that I tried to draw closer to the deep relationship between the foreboding, the awareness, the fear of death and the simultaneous ability to generate emotion which is so brilliant, so full of grace, power and gaiety that the end of each piece was the creation of another.

In this performance, I imagined a large wall, the wall of Rossini's memories behind which he hid, archived his food, his wine, the house where he hosted his great friends and fellow composers, but also the everyday people he loved to joke with, play with and share all aspects of his life with. I envisioned this "wall" as a projection of his mind, full of windows, shelves, hiding places - a wall which separated one world from another.

In this space roamed an occupant, an anthropomorphic figure, black, a stain which took on human similitudes, which communicated with him, which crept into his dreams, crawled into his bed and then disappeared, but which was always there as if to mark the short time - but also the lengthy time - spent fighting physical and mental illness of all kinds. This dark figure was the fear of death, his illness, but also perhaps his advisor, paradoxically at times the only constant.

In his long nights, with increasing insomnia, Rossini came to live in two worlds which at times drew closer, almost touching, and only his infinite ability to create, his passion for physical, sensory pleasure, for food, for sex, were able to momentarily anaesthetise what was happening in his body and his mind.

His music was extreme, the mark of a greater force and energy, and I purposely tried to create extreme choreography, loaded with energy, vitality, encounters, seduction, suggestions. I spent a lot of time thinking about how to translate his compositional genius into movement. I didn't feel it was a case of working on abstraction; I sought out and "felt" for how to convey the vibration of his music: I literally let myself be carried away, and it was an entirely unique experience.

As Alessandro Baricco wrote, Rossini's music is truly "organised madness". Intensity, pure chaos, dismay, schizoid escape...but by escaping, he created something that never could be repeated after him.

Mauro Astolfi



From Teatro.gaiaitalia.com by Alessandro Paesano
"A magnificently successful work"

Rossini Overtures is a magnificently successful work supported by exceptional, inventive dancing where Astolfi displays not only fantastic choreography but also exceptional mastery in knowing how to structure the choreography to suit his skilful dancers.

They make Astolfi's difficult, very strenuous and demanding choreography seem easy, speaking the grammar of a new language as if they had always spoken it.

From Teatrocritica.net by Gaia Clotilde Chernetich

"The crescendo of Spellbound Contemporary Ballet: a dance for Rossini " "In Rossini Overtures Astolfi uses the bodies of his expert dancers to give the public that concrete idea of the aura which emanates out of this complex expression of Italian musical genius...Like Rossini, the master of crescendo, this new "overture" by Spellbound could make this beautiful Italian dance company really take off"

From Danceandculture by Monica Ratti

"Gioachino Rossini loved to create works that pleased the public; I think he would have particularly loved this work by Mauro Astolfi celebrating him in dance."

From Paperstreet by Sarah Curati

"What strikes you is the playful intention of the dance and its seductive energy, but, perhaps most of all, its strong theatricality which subtly accentuates the already dizzying expressivity of the dancers whose technical ability is irreproachable. Everyone, therefore, will be Rossini, or "Rossinian" men imposed on moving images: Rossini who gulps down his beloved food, surrounded by women or friends or, at the end, on a bed besieged by the spectres of depression, in a space that is always shimmering under the remarkable lighting design by Marco Policastro which interacts with the theatrical dancing, moving from dreamlike to more realistic scenes."

MYSTERIOUS ENGINE





MYSTERIOUS ENGINE

... or the need for authenticity

Choreography Mauro Astolfi

Music AGF, Rachel's

Lighting Design Marco Policastro

Dancers Caterina Politi, Giuliana Mele, Giacomo Todeschi, Fabio Cavallo

A Spellbound production with the contribution of the Ministry of Heritage and Culture

World Premiere

World Premiere, Roma 4 jan 2017

DURATA 24'

VIDEO LINK:

<https://vimeo.com/217199589>

ME is the first of a new two-part creation exploring the human condition and our lack of freedom. Over time, our purpose as humans becomes impervious and frequently shifts, and as a result of these changes, at a certain point, we lose contact with colours, sounds and words.

We need to use our bodies to recalibrate ourselves, with our own dismantled and disorganized movements, to recreate a navigable and clear way forward. We need to rekindle the condition for an internal freedom and defend it from unfettered instincts, striving to remain in control of our own desires rather than having our lives shaped by them. The ability to make such a choice brings our search for freedom into the real world.

ME focuses its search on the factors which can widen our field of vision to take in everything surrounding us: skin, bones, a beating heart - everything morphs into something other than what it used to be and becomes an incredible driving force which works in an entirely different way. Another small step towards discovering freedom comes in losing one's self in the mystery of how we work, and never taking anything entirely for granted.

THE HESITATION DAY





LENGHT 14'

VIDEO LINK:

<https://vimeo.com/143480005>

THE HESITATION DAY

A Spellbound production with the subsidy of the Ministry of The Heritage and Culture in cooperation with The Egg Albany/NY.

World premiere October 23, 2015-The Egg/Albany, NY

Choreography Mauro Astolfi

Music Norn, Amon Tobin

Dancers Fabio Cavallo, Giacomo Todeschi, Mario Laterza, Giovanni La Rocca

Lighting Design Marco Policastro

Hesitation day is that day in which action, thinking and judgment are temporarily suspended.

A precious moment in which we take a fresh start, we try to remember what we want to accomplish in this world.

In its etymological sense, "hesitate" also means to carry something towards a destination...

The dual and apparently, opposite meaning of the word has been the inspiration of this work... sometimes, despite our inability to decide, our inputs disperse and somehow, someone will receive them in a way or another.

Someone will understand us. To most of the people, we will remain unreadable and hard to follow, to those who will be able to only perceive through this work a permanent movement and not just what starts and ends the action.

Mauro Astolfi



LOST FOR WORDS



LENGHT 63'

VIDEO LINK:

Lost For Words studio I <https://vimeo.com/34442914>
Lost For Words studio II <https://vimeo.com/48217064>
Lost For Words studio III <https://vimeo.com/155444599>

LOST FOR WORDS THE INVASION OF EMPTY WORDS

"Lost For Words" is a Spellbound production in collaboration with Avvertenze Generali 2011, Amat Civitanova Danza 2012, with contribution from the Ministry of Heritage and Cultural Activity and Regione Lazio

*Studio I (20'): Creation for Avvertenze Generali 2011
Premiere 21 July 2011-Bolzano-Avvertenze Generali*

*Studio II (25'): Creation for Amat Civitanova Danza 2012
Premiere 12 July 2012, Civitanova Festival*

*Studio III (23'): Creation for Regione Lazio
Premiere Tuscania, 16 may 2013*

A reworking and new version for the Chutzpah Festival, Vancouver 2016

direction and choreography Mauro Astolfi

*dancers Maria Cossu, Mario Laterza, Giuliana Mele, Alice Colombo, Giovanni La Rocca,,
Giacomo Todeschi, Serena Zaccagnini, Caterina Politi, Fabio Cavallo*

music

Lost For Words studio I : Loscill, HIF Biber

Lost For Words Studio II: B. Frost, D.Bjarnason,

J.Hopkins, A.Ibragimova, A Winged Victory for the Sullen

Lost For Words Studio III : Original Composition by Carlo Alfano

Music by Michal Jacaszek

Light designer Marco Policastro



Ph Cristiano Castaldi



Ph Marco Bravi

"Defeated by an invasion of empty words... At first the body tries to resist, but in the end, it accepts because it sees that there are many others pretending to understand and agree, pretending to understand what they don't know and who aren't listening. Dialectical projects and various slogans which invade language and hamper the mind and work... At this point the body must find the strength and power to free itself from empty words; movement becomes something that helps us mix with other people and discover that behind many of these people, often... there's nothing..

Over three acts the production undergoes a process in the distorted "spoken system" of human relations... a refusal to take a confession, testimony or dialogue seriously or consider it reliable until the final chapter of the trilogy which brings us back to an attempt to recover the power of the word, a possible truth, almost returning to a fundamental teaching by the Egyptian spiritual master Ptahhotep who said..."To be able to be strong, become an artist of the word; because man's strength is in language, and the word is more powerful than any weapon." In this sense, Lost for Words study III does not essentially go against the "spirit" and suggestion of the first two parts, but rather tries to reconnect the word with a pure and direct meaning ... a language which implies no other meaning. A language which, like a pure gesture, brings the discussion back to authentic values."

Mauro Astolfi

"LOST FOR WORDS" WAS THE ONLY EUROPEAN PRODUCTION ALLOTTED AN NDP (NATIONAL DANCE PROJECT) SUBSIDY IN THE UNITED STATES FOR THE SEASON 2012/2013.

SHE IS ON THE GROUND





LENGHT 23'

SHE IS ON THE GROUND

"She is on the ground" is a Spellbound production in collaboration with the Ministry of Heritage and Cultural Activity

World Premiere: The Barclay Theater, Irvine, CA- U.S.A. April 2, 2013

choreography Mauro Astolfi

dancers Maria Cossu, Mario Laterza, Giuliana Mele, Alice Colombo
Giovanni La Rocca, Giacomo Todeschi, Serena Zaccagnini, Caterina Politi, Fabio Cavallo

music Kremerata Baltica - Gidon Kremer

lighting Marco Policastro

She is on the ground arose from an amused reflection of the hard work that men carry out to conquer the female world. Reality teaches us that in most cases, women could almost choose to do absolutely nothing, even perhaps just lying on the floor and awaiting the masculine performance to be made; ridiculous machinations of males convinced of their own weapons of irresistible seduction.

Sometimes these women are complicit in this ritual of courtship, some more generous and tolerant towards the male repertoire than others... but very soon they too become bored and nothing remains but to lie down on the floor to rest.

Mauro Astolfi

SMALL CRIME





LENGTH 9'

VIDEO LINK:

<https://vimeo.com/112372941>

SMALL CRIME RENOUNCING PRIDE CREATES MIRACLES

*A Spellbound production with the contribution by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism,
world premiere A.P.A.P. conference New York/January 2015, City Center*

*choreography Mauro Astolfi
music Jonny Greenwood, Nils Frahm
lighting Marco Policastro
performers Maria Cossu, Giovanni La Rocca*

"Small Crime" it happens by chance, unfortunately it often needs to be masked by interest.. it happens every time you seek, with any amount of force, to enter a person's life...stubbornly attempting to get their attention.

The second small crime, the one which often permanently ruins our lives, is a direct consequence of the first.. which happens when a person who has been rejected at one point in their life, seeks revenge, ignoring and refusing to recognise the same person who was at the center of their thoughts.

In some cases, renouncing pride... creates miracles.



CONTROFASE



LENGHT 9'

VIDEO LINK

<https://vimeo.com/103477354>

CONTROFASE

A Spellbound production with the contribution by the Ministry of Culture and Turism, world premiere Pisa, march 2014

choreography Mauro Astolfi

performers Mario Laterza, Giovanni La Rocca

music Garth Knox & Agnes Vesterman, Nils Frahm

lighting design Marco Policastro

video

<https://vimeo.com/103477354>

“Controfase” is a men creation by Mauro Astolfi originally produced for Spellbound Junior Ensemble, the young team of Spellbound, then setted on the major company for the events celebrating the 20th anniversary of Spellbound in 2014.

The duet is now part of Spellbound repetoire and is one of the projects that strengthen the relationship between the DAF Dance Arts Faculty (from where the best talents are chosen to become part of the junior ensemble) and the professional Company .

THE DIVIDED SELF





LENGHT 13'

VIDEO LINK:

<https://vimeo.com/197816202>

THE DIVIDED SELF

"The Divided Self"

Choreography Mauro Astolfi

Dancers Maria Cossu, Serena Zaccagnini

Music Rival Consoles Oto Hiax Nils Frahm Ólafur Arnalds

A Spellbound production supported by the Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities. Premiered at the Vitebsk Festival of Modern Choreography, November 2015.

THE DIVIDED SELF is a female duet created by Mauro Astolfi originally for Spellbound Junior Ensemble - Tirocinio Professionale DAF, the production company's youth department, and then reworked for the principal company in January 2017. The production is now part of the permanent repertoire and is one of the fortunate projects which have strengthened and supported the artistic relationship between the training provided by the Daf Dance Arts Faculty courses and Spellbound Contemporary Ballet.

"The Divided Self describes degrees of the difficulty and limitation of freedom which inevitably imposes someone else's presence close to us. Everything changes when there don't have to be any explanations for one's own way of being, everything "flows" differently.

Just as it's good to have someone to share with ... it's just as good to hear the silence and transform it into action."

Mauro Astolfi

CARMINA BURANA





LENGHT 60'

VIDEO LINK:

<https://vimeo.com/147005957>

CARMINA BURANA

Produced with contribution from the Ministry of Heritage and Cultural Activity and Entertainment Department of the local Tourist Board in Maiori for great events in the region of Campania

Debut: Maiori-15 September 20 06

Rearranged for Madrid en Danza 2010 new version arranged for Prisma festival de Danza contemporanea, Panama 2014

direction and choreography Mauro Astolfi

dancers Maria Cossu, Mario Laterza, Giuliana Mele, Claudia Mezzolla, Giovanni La Rocca, Giacomo Todeschi, Serena Zaccagnini, Violeta Wulff Mena, Fabio Cavallo

music Aleksandar Sasha Karlic, Carl Orff, A. Vivaldi (from Dixit dominus)

lighting design Marco Policastro

stage design Stefano Mazzola

costumes Sandro Ferrone- Roma, Halfon- Roma

SPELLBOUND 
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One of the most successful production of Spellbound Contemporary Ballet, *Carmina Burana* was performed more than 250 times, also in Austria, Thailand, Panama Germany, Canada, Cyprus, Switzerland, Luxembourg and Spain.

The *Carmina burana* manuscripts were found, many (more than three hundred essays of various types) in a volume in the Benedictine abbey from which they take their name. They trace back to the 13th century, when it was common, travelling in Germany and Saxony, to run into the goliards (hence the traditional Italian name given to university students, have little or nothing to do with their medieval namesakes) or more correctly vagrant clerics; scholars studying traditional Greek and Latin poetry, poets of wine, women, travelling and gaming. Impudent, subversive burlesque poetry: they spoke of daily adventures and joyfully discoursed upon the functions while never looking beyond. Forget the silent language of ratio, forget decorum, they even dared to mock the divine with so-called 'kontrafakurten' i.e. a disguise of religious hymns and secular songs as a parody of gospel, of confessions and litany. Eros, then becomes Thantos, and thus homo faber becomes homo ludens. "Venus me telo vulneravit / aureo, quod cor penetravit"...

"Venus struck me with a golden arrow which pierced my heart": the body (unlike that of the damned in 'Last Judgement' or a medieval painting which does not know the flourishing of resurrection, only release and lust, as in the verses of Ovid, Marziale and Catullo). From this curious mix of courtly elegance and scurrilous plebeian, Mauro Astolfi draws, or rather, freely relies, without any intended philology - upon a choreography that plays between 'depth' and 'excessiveness' (as an artist to whom 'average' rhythm means little or nothing) and employs space almost simply so as to challenge its limits and which is divided into three movements which beat out a liberating crescendo. We pass from a brutal act of aggression (rape?) under the leaden vault of beating rain to a part which is by turns irreverent and grotesque in its allusions to the *Giullarate*, then finally to a culmination of the *incendium cupiditatum*, the unleashing of the passions which unfolds within the tavern (and here, as oft was intended in antiquity, we should read "brothel") a place where the baser instincts may be indulged for a handful of silver... There are two key symbols of this ballet, fallen among an atmosphere which is disquietingly metaphysical: an imposing closet (seen, one would say, from the viewpoint of infancy, which only heightens the mystery) and a table. The former (in which the

dancers' bodies are returned to almost as so many threadbare clothes) represents memories, secrets, "skeletons" hypocritically veiled and hidden away; the latter, a sacrificial altar from the land of *Voluptas*, laden with bodies almost like tempting foods (Gluttony and Lust being cardinal sins born of the same loins)...

'*Carmina burana*', then, as a reckless cry of dissent, confronts "sin" without excessive fear and takes on taboos with the expressed desire to breach them, consciously defying censorship and anathemas, playing cards with the daily game against death. It revitalises the Chaos of Pan through the harmony of Orpheus; accepting reality without spiritualizing it and perhaps even crosses over to "triviality" and the "obscene"... There are no future rewards awaiting, but we are constrained to live in the present, always aware of a divinity of pagan times which promises no punishments or prizes other than those of immediate contingency. It shouts out that there are no gods, but many demons who might possess and invade us, such as Eros, whom according to Plato, is "a great demon" and, as all demons must be, is "somewhere between a god and a mortal".

Riccardo Reim

REVIEWS: WITH SPELLBOUND AUTHORS REALLY "DANCE"

(*Corriere del Mezzogiorno*, March 2007) by Paola De Simone

Featuring a genius for invention and plasticity of contemporary body language and boldness in the dynamic tension between the figures' special-scenic context. Among the most beautiful and intense performances of recent times from the Italian dance world, financed by the state, special attention is merited by the ballet "*Carmina Burana*" with music by Carl Orff, Vivaldi and Caracciolo. The "*Carmina Burana*", according to Astolfi, blends rare visual gestures and feelings of humanity into the restless, dark gothic shadow, ironic and fast on the backdrop of the eighteenth century sound created by Vivaldi. Outstanding performers of virtuoso ability on stage, their twists, impulses, the play with light, metric contrast and ensembles including thousands of combinations of performers carefully balanced between a prestigious container and a medieval "appointed place".



A BEAUTIFUL, STYLISH SPELLBOUND (L'Arena Jult 2007)
The "Carmina Burana" rich in life and tension. Fantastic dancers, full of energy
by Danila Bruna Adami"

...Astolfi has returned with the true meaning of movement, leaving apocalyptic musical tones in the background which he alternates with other scores, making the Carmina a compelling fresco to youth. Without pausing, we see a continuous display of choreography from Mauro Astolfi, full of tension and plasticity, not to mention a group of extraordinary dancers, with perfect form and endless energy who effectively redesign the stage for each sequence. The scenography of Stefano Mazzola, more so than the music, is the crucial element: the central stage is used practically or as a table, and above all the cabinet in which the final act is performed.

CARMINA BURANA (LIVEPOINT July 2007) by Davide Galati

The name is enough to evoke the power and expression found in this collection of poetic and musical documents from the middle ages, anyone who knows or has heard the songs is well aware of the strength, lyricism and poetry that provide a mirror to the time they were composed. Managing to bring it to the stage, making sure that nothing is lost and to add body language to that of music, with dancing doing the talking is not an easy task. However the Spellbound Dance company, under the direction and choreography of Mauro Astolfi, have done this in a surprising and impressive fashion. Debuted on Monday on stage 9 in the picturesque setting of the Old Market Court, The "Carmina Burana" by Astolfi featured nine dancers almost perfect in creating the tension and impact of this ballet. The choreography plays with bodies in such a way to make the tension that troubled the middle ages feel real, which resonates in the music of Carmina, sometimes seeming like the "Crazie del Primavera" by Botticelli, but only for a moment, because the age is not that of the Renaissance. The gestures are restless, full of strength, devoid of sweetness and linearity: it is the gothic that becomes dance. But the body language is contemporary, free, virtuous, and full of impulses and contractions, a contrast that follows the music and becomes a natural extension. Enjoyable and happy moments are not missing, thanks to the music of Vivaldi, but above all the game of the bodies which takes place within the cabinet, bodies in constant motion as if to indicate the magic and mystery of the medieval period, but also its vitality. A show full of feeling, with fine direction and excellent performers.



DANCING GOLIARDS IN THE CABINET
(Corriere della sera, 11 August 2008) by
Valeria Crippa

"...a choreography that challenges the power of the performers, punctuated by twists, holds and impulses, under a lighting display that cut through the story. The action revolves around a dining table that becomes a sacrilegious altar to gluttony and lust. With a final surprise, the dance moves to a cabinet where everything is gathered and the metaphor of the mask and of theatre is hidden.



CARMINA BURANA (TEMPO STRETTO of Messina, July 2007) by Grazia Tardiolo

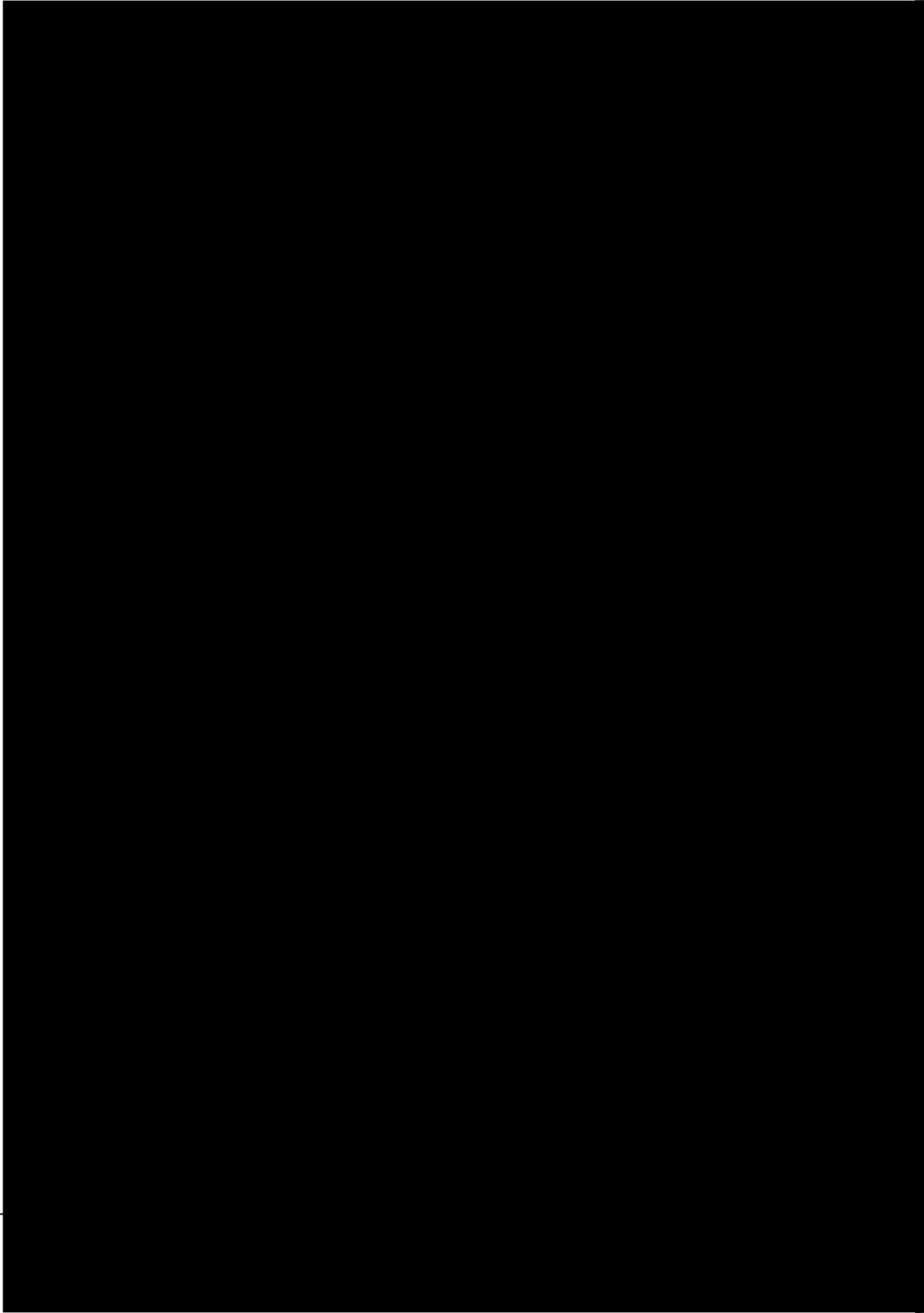
An incredibly disruptive ballet, built of life and rhythm, enraptured a full house at the Nuovo Giardino Corallo last night. The ballet, rearranged according to the direction and choreography of the great Mauro Astolfi, becomes an expression of restless spirits. A contemporary journey, set to the music of Orff, Vivaldi and Caracciolo, the unnerving expression of "vagrant clerics" or "goliards". From the depths of their body poetry, combined with the harmony of motion, translating pleasure and freedom to a universal language. The eight dancers appeared and disappeared behind the doors of a cabinet, embodying the vivacity, verve and grit of a youth eager to break the rigidity of medieval life. It is exactly this strength that is the peak of this impeccable piece by Mauro Astolfi; to make the body a tool for the communication of anxieties and tensions in a time that imprisoned its own supporters.

INTENSE AND GRIPPING "CARMINA BURANA"

(La Cronaca di Cremona, 12 August 2008) by Eleonora Olivi

"..The choreography, headed by a highly refined Spellbound Dance Company was a perfect compendium of "Carmina" with the narrative power of dance, music and verse revealed with a renewed vigour. Through an innovative and contemporary language, a series of scenic images played across large adages and wild excesses which won over the large audience. The music and stage helped to recreate, in a truly incisive manner, an atmosphere that ranged between the sacred and the profane, ancient and contemporary in a distinctly metaphysical dimension, but with very strong colour. Through an incredible pace, that image after image, highlighted the extraordinary interpretative skills on all parts of the company. Bravo!

SPECIAL PROJECTS



PA | ETHOS



PA | ETHOS

choreography Sang Jijia
composer and live music Dickson Dee (CASH)
live video artists Luca Brinchi and Roberta Zanardo / Santasangre
lighting Marco Policastro
costumes Giuseppina Maurizi
choreograph assistants Yanan Yu e Adriana De Santis

Created with:
Maria Cossu, Mario Laterza, Giuliana Mele, Claudia Mezzolla, Giovanni La Rocca, Giacomo Todeschi, Serena Zaccagnini, Violeta Wulff Mena, Fabio Cavallo

World Premiere
may 9th/10th , Teatro Era-Pontedera
Festival Fabbrica Europa

DURATION
First part 20'
Second part 46'

LINK VIDEO: <https://vimeo.com/132799458>

Production
Fabbrica Europa per le arti contemporanee
Fondazione Milano Civica Scuola di Teatro Paolo Grassi
Spellbound Contemporary Ballet
Marche Teatro - Danza alle Muse
Beijing Dance Festival
Guangdong Dance Festival

Partner for the creation residency
Fondazione Teatro della Toscana
Centro per la Sperimentazione e la Ricerca Teatrale di Pontedera

(*) The first part original version comes from "Pathos" music by
Dickson Dee, sponsored and commissioned by Composers and Authors
Society of Hong Kong (CASH)

Technical sponsors
Teatro Greco (E.C.O. Italia)
Cyberaudio
Noise Asia Ltd



PalEthos is made up of two words, Pathos and Ethos, borrowed from Aristotle's Art of Rhetoric. The choreographer Sang Jijia uses them to signify two approaches to the subject discussed. Ethos underlines precision, Pathos evokes passion and feeling. The work is based on Italian plastic art of the classical era and is divided into two parts. The first looks at the rules of social life where interpersonal relations are rigidly distributed. Each movement in space is well measured and carefully executed. In the second, emotions are translated into the physicality of the dancers; taking stage action to its most extreme, they achieve complete transparency of body through which the soul is revealed in its entirety. The poetic art of Sang Jijia, who comes from Tibet, rests on the profundity of Eastern thought and is enriched by the most important experiences of European research in dance and contemporary theatre.

A precise and original meeting between rigour and expressiveness that become the ingredients giving rise to PalEthos.

The project includes the presence of the well-known composer Dickson Dee, and the collaboration of Luca Brinchi and Roberta Zanardo / santasangre, for the virtual set design.

The international project conceived by Fabbrica Europa with the choreographer Sang Jijia is a challenge that calls into play a new way of coproduction on contemporary creation. Those involved are: the Fondazione Milano Civica Scuola di Teatro Paolo Grassi together with a number of important organizations such as Marche Teatro - Danza alle Muse, Beijing Dance Festival, Guangdong Dance Festival.

After the premiere last may during Fabbrica Europa Festival, and after the last choreographic residency with the choreographer the production is settled in the complete version starting from january 2016 (presented in Ravenna, Teatro Alighieri), entirely danced by Spellbound performers.



THE CHOREOGRAPHER

Sang Jijia

Then he went to the Frankfurt Ballet and became a choreographer-assistant for the Forsythe Company where he stayed until 2006. He is currently a resident artist at the Beijing Dance/LDTX. His more famous creations are: Blue in Show Your Colours, 365 Ways of Doing and Undoing Orientalism (co-choreographed with Willy Taso and Xing Liang) and As If To Nothing for the CCDC, Happening Continuous for Movement Fiber, in collaboration with Xing Liang (resident artist at CCDC), Unspeakable and Standing Before Darkness for the Beijing Dance/LDTX and Sticks for the Guangdong Modern Dance Compagny. The works of Sang Jijia have been presented at the Chang Mu Dance Festival in Korea, the Swiss International Dance Festival, the Computer Music Festival, the Taipei Arts Festival, the Holland Dance Festival, the Huayi-Chinese Festival of Arts of Singapore, the Guangdong Modern Dance Festival, the Beijing Modern Dance Festival and the Dance Salad Festival in Houston.

DANCING
PARTNERS



DANCING PARTNERS

AN INTERNATIONAL PROJECT FOR PRACTICE INTERCHANGE AND INTERNATIONAL PROFILING

Dancing Partners is a networking project launched in 2013 by a team of well-established artists of various nationalities to promote contemporary dance. Conceived as a travelling initiative, DP visits each of the countries involved (Spain, Sweden, England and Italy) where, following a temporary residence and exchange and discussion among the artists in the host Company, they plan performance workshops, meetings and debates with the public and the students involved in the project's training activities. DP aims to not only promote the work of the artists involved but also put down strong roots in the areas involved through training both the sector and the public, including outdoor performances in non-conventional locations. Partners include Spellbound Contemporary Ballet (Italia), Thomas Noone Dance (Spain), Norrdans (Sweden) and Company Chameleon (England).

One of DP's fundamental interests is the nature of exchange between artists as well as interaction with the local area. Indeed the various components find themselves working together, involved in projects where the common denominator of sharing a common artistic thought prevails over the behaviour of the individual. From 2018 the four companies will work on the next stage of planning, building a series of international residencies aimed at developing productions and performances from the mix of the four identities, four artistic influences and not least the host country.





LA MODE



LA MODE

Premiere october 2016, TNN Taichung-Taiwan

Concept & artistic direction *Tomoko Mukaiyama*

Choreography *Dunja Jovic* in cooperation with *Spellbound Contemporary Ballet* dancers

Choreographer Assistant *Alessandra Chirulli, Luca Cacitti*

Performers *Tomoko Mukaiyama (piano), Spellbound Contemporary Ballet, Sarah Murphy (dance)*

Music: *Yannis Kyriakides*

Costumes *Slavna Martinovic*

Set design *Toyo Ito & Associates, Architects + Yoko Ando*

Light artist *Tanja Ruehl*

Technical director *Yutaka Endo / LUFTZUG*

Light & sound engineer *LUFTZUG*

Producer *Tomoko Mukaiyama Foundation*

Coproducers *Spellbound Contemporary Ballet (IT), National Taichung Theater (TW)*

Associated coproducers *Dance New Air (JP)*

Partner *Transart Festival (IT)*

Support Fonds Podiumkunsten, Stichting Ammodo

Special thanks to *Multus, BIGI, Ambassade van het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden in Tokyo.*

Speaker system supported by *Taguchi*

LA MODE is the new international co-production involving the Spellbound Contemporary Ballet Company as a protagonist of a creation influenced by different art forms. LA MODE is a performance-installation conceived by the Japanese musician Tomoko Mukaiyama. The production combines, in a unique way, music, visual arts and body language. A group of international highly recognized artists signs this collective work.



Along with Spellbound Contemporary Ballet (production and artistic partner for the project), the team is composed of the Serbian choreographer Dunja Jovic (guest artist at Club Guy and Roni and now freelance choreographer and director), the Cypriot composer Yannis Kyriakides (Gaudeamus Award 2000, Quartz Award, Toonzetters Award, Willem Pijper Award, honorable mention from Prix Ars Electronica 2014, first prize UNESCO) and the architect Toyo Ito.

The latter is considered as one of ten most influential architects in the world, winner of the Pritzker Prize, he designed the Opera House that will host the creation during the opening days of the same Opera in Taichung in October 2016. For the first time, Ito will approach the performing arts field by working as a stage designer on the production itself. Also joining the team are the Yugoslav stylist Slavna Martinovic (Nominee for the best make up in a music video at MVPA of LA, Golden Mimosa for the best costume), the textile designer Yoko Ando, the lighting designer Tanja Ruhl, the guest dancer Sarah Murphy and finally, Tomoko Mukaiyama herself who will play the piano during the performance.

The European premiere of LA MODE was scheduled for September 8 2016 in Bolzano for the Transart Festival. The world premiere, scheduled for 1st and 2nd October, corresponded with the Official Opening of the National Taichung Theater, first Opera House in Taiwan, designed by the architect Toyo Ito. After the opening in Taichung, LA MODE pursued its tournee to the Tokyo's Dance New Air Festival, performing 4 times from 8 to 10 October, 2016.

EDUCATIONAL PROJECTS



EDUCATION

Mauro Astolfi's intensive choreography and teaching work has introduced many dancers to a method and style which encapsulate twenty years' experience and which can now be a "school" for all those who go there.

Through a network of seminars hosted both during tours and outside of the performance calendar, Spellbound puts stylistic research, which forms the basis of the gestural art of choreography, at the centre of a creative laboratory for the new generations of trainees. The teaching route which follows ranges from basic training in the various techniques, through studying the repertoire, to choreographic production as a genuine creative debate where the distinction between the dancers and writers becomes very subtle.

The partnership with DAF Dance Arts Faculty, International Project for Dance and Performing Arts, where Astolfi leads the contemporary section and Valentina Marini is the artistic consultant and manages the international relations department, has over the years allowed us to put down roots and establish a rigorous training project, based in Rome, but reaching across all territories. As part of the dynamic, each week dancers join the teaching cast of the three-year DAF professional development course and the repertoire is handed over to them as part of the teaching material. Other activities include planning open auditions, cultivating a nursery of the best talent through the Spellbound Junior training project, and setting up training workshops on tour. With its training programmes linked to the active European scene, DAF is the channel through which and from which these and other synergies operate, supporting the ongoing development of both professional training and increasing public awareness.

There is an annual "Spellbound Summer Intensive" planned for professional dancers from any country who wish to undertake a residency with the Company to learn the repertoire and take it on stage in a final showcase. This model, focused on continuous and diverse training for both professionals and amateurs, is for Spellbound an integral part of the work method and is also being included in the tournée projects where the Company in residence is sometimes called upon to work with local artistic communities both through training workshops and on productions developed in close partnership with young people in the area.



THE DANCE INDUSTRY

The Dance Industry (TDI) is a partnership between DAF (Dance Arts Faculty), Spellbound Contemporary Ballet and the European Dance Alliance. TDI brings together the experience and knowhow of a group of professionals working in various sectors of the performing arts for over 20 years and extensive knowledge in the fields of training and production. It focuses on internationalisation, aiming to extend into the more fertile European scene and beyond.

TDI's projects are based on a recognisable process of training conscious individuals and indisputable and trustworthy professionalism.

Combining production and setting, training and profession, TDI is a genuine cultural and creative enterprise focusing on projects and productions, but also on the artistic growth of the professionals and on creating a conscious audience.

While established at different times and under different names, this Artistic Partnership shares a bond and a common soul which have made it a melting pot and home for highly recognisable projects and activities. Over the years, it has also supported additional initiatives such as training the general public, promoting collective thinking on contemporary production and opening up new and interesting forms of artistic expression.





SPELLBOUND CONTEMPORARY BALLET
Director **Valentina Marini** - Artistic Director **Mauro Astolfi**

Stage manager - Technical director **Marco Policastro**

Production **Giorgio Andriani**
Administration office **Noemi Massari** - **Letizia Coppotelli**
Choreography assistant **Alessandra Chirulli** - **Adriana De Santis**
Administrative and fiscal consultancy **Studio PMC**

Press Office **Antonino Pirillo**
Graphic design **oOze produzioni**

Associazione Culturale Spell Bound
Via dei Prati Fiscali 215, 00141 Roma - Italia

headquarters c/o Daf Dance Arts Faculty
Via di Pietralata 159/a, 00158 Roma
info@spellboundance.com
www.spellboundance.com



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