

D&D AWARDS 2022



La Scala Theatre Ballet in Wayne McGregor's "LORE" (© Brescia-Amisano)

The 2022 list of winning shows, choreographers and dancers seen on stage in Italy and recognition of Italian talent abroad, awarded by our jury of dance critics.



BALLET COMPANY PRODUCTION
LORE

Chor. Wayne McGregor
La Scala Theatre Ballet

CONTEMPORARY PRODUCTION
**ACT II & III OR THE UNEXPECTED
RETURN OF HEAVEN AND EARTH**

Chor. Emanuel Gat
Emanuel Gat Dance

SPECIAL PROJECT
THE RITE OF SPRING

Chor. Pina Bausch
Pina Bausch Foundation - École des
Sables-Sadler's Wells

CHOREOGRAPHER
MARCOS MORAU

DANCER-CHOREOGRAPHER
EX-AEQUO

BORIS CHARMATZ *Somnole*
EZIO SCHIAVULLI *Heres: nel nome
del figlio*

DANCER
SERGIO BERNAL
MARTA CIAPPINA

NEWCOMER DANCER
AGNESE TRIPPA
IAN J. SANFORD

NEWCOMER CHOREOGRAPHER
ADRIANO BOLOGNINO

ITALIAN PRODUCTION
BALLADE

Chor. Enrico Morelli, Mauro
Bigonzetti
MM Contemporary Dance Company

ITALIAN DANCER ABROAD
ALESSANDRO FROLA
EMILY CASTELLI

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT
OHAD NAHARIN

BEST ENSEMBLE PRODUCTION

LORE

A polycentric physical language that paints a stunning portrait of contemporary life, without verging into the didactic, features in *LORE*, Wayne McGregor's reimagining of *Les Noces* by Bronislava Nijinska (1923). His powerful new work was made with La Scala Theatre Ballet company, as part of a Stravinsky evening. The evening opened with McGregor's restaging of his version of *The Rite of Spring*, titled *AfteRite*, which he created with Alessandra Ferri for American Ballet Theatre in 2018. Koen Kessels



© Brescia-Amisano

conducted the *LORE* score for four pianos, percussion, choir and solo singers. The music pierces through to the audience, while deliberately jumpy footage of industrial landscapes and giant satellite dishes are projected onto the backdrop. The ballet technique unfolds voraciously quickly, adopting a contemporary language with spiralling lines that break up the harmony. The dancers of La Scala Theatre Ballet made this style their own, in a myriad of simultaneous rituals featuring a dazzling gender fluidity. This production inherits the Ballets Russes' legacy, with the rich interplay between the arts; at the same time, it resonates with contemporary society, with all its hopes and tragedies. Dramaturgy by Uzma Hameed, film design by Ravi Deprees, sets and costumes by Vicki Mortimer.



© Julia Gat

CONTEMPORARY PRODUCTION

ACT II & III

Emanuel Gat is a supreme musical connoisseur, devouring every genre from pop to classic, rock to salsa. In his latest work, he tackled opera for the first time, transforming Puccini's arias from *Tosca* into dance. More specifically, he chose act two and three of the opera, in *Act II&III or the Unexpected Return of Heaven and Earth* (created in 2021, presented in Italy at the Bolzano Danza Festival 2022). Steering clear of a didactic approach, the choreography absorbs the narrative construct of the story, and translates it into a tornado of movements echoed by the music. They inject the story with 'other' undertones, with an astoundingly

theatrical range of movements and concrete gestures. In a distillation of physical and emotional energy, just the bodies of the eleven incredible performers 'tell us' everything about the characters, their motivating sentiments, and their actions. They reveal layers of meaning and new moods in which the various destinies of Puccini's opera play out.

SPECIAL PROJECT

THE RITE OF SPRING

When Pina Bausch started developing her masterful version of Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring* in 1975, could she already have had African performers in mind? One thinks that might be the case, having seen this unparalleled work presented in Italy at the Festival dei Due Mondi; the Pina Bausch Foundation, École des Sables and Sadler's Wells co-production featured a cast of mainly Senegalese dancers. The violent, aggressive gestures of the men and the agonised movements of the women are so realistic that one almost forgets the European version by Tanztheater Wuppertal. The strongest leitmotif in the piece are the arms: one stretched up, the other along the body in a slight curve. They are a distinguishing sign that returns throughout the show, as do the diagonal movements of the male dancers as they cross the stage in unison. Stravinsky takes us through the various moments of a ritual that culminates in



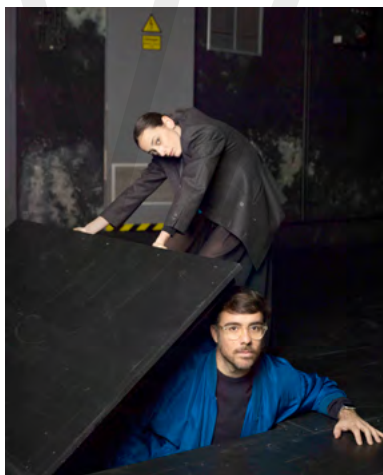
© Maarten Van Abeele

the death of the Chosen One: a human sacrifice to ensure that the spring returns, the sun shines and the winter darkness disappears. This work continues to captivate, and these new bodies bring it to life with rare-found emphasis.

CHOREOGRAPHER

MARCOS MORAU

Our choreographer of the year, for the shows he presented in Italy with his La Veronal company (*Opening Night*, at RomaEuropa and Vie Festival); as a guest at Gauthier Dance in *The Seven Sins* (at the Biennale Danza in Venice and Bolzano Danza), and creator of *Oskana* for Kakai Dantza (Equilibrio Festival). Marcos Morau also wowed us with two international full-length offerings: *La Belle au bois dormant*, created for the Lyon Opera Ballet and *Nachträume (Night Dreams)* for Ballett Zürich, confirming his status as one of the top talents on the international choreography scene.



© Albert Pons

His shows develop his original ideas on the complexity of contemporary life using images, impressions, and powerful references taken from cinema, painting and literature. His performers' nervous, jumpy dance, including stumbling, abrupt spinning and movements so loose-limbed as to seem unnatural, is swathed in a mysterious, dreamlike atmosphere that reflects the instability and turmoil of our time. Morau constructs a visionary, evocative world, drawing on surrealist imagery, the films of Buñuel

and Cassavetes, and traditional Basque dance and music. His sophisticated taste and close attention to images are a direct result of his eclectic background in photography, movement and theatre, which he studied in Valencia, Barcelona and New York.

DANCER

SERGIO BERNAL

Sergio Bernal Alonso's versatility and charisma make him an alchemic blend of technique and expressive potency. Born in Madrid in 1990, Bernal's training revolved around flamenco, sevillana and ballet at the city's Royal Conservatory of Dance. He then became Principal Dancer at the Compañía de Rafael Aguilar and later at the Ballet Nacional de España. After a series of collaborations with the Nuevo Ballet Espanol and artists such as Gomez, Najarro and Saura, in 2017 he founded his own Sergio Bernal Dance Company. As a guest at international galas, and a fixture at Daniele Cipriani's *Les Étoiles* galas in Italy, not to mention starring in his own dedicated evenings, Sergio Bernal sweeps the public into the *duende* with his *zapateado*, but is equally beguiling in a classical setting – enchanting in Balanchine's *Apollo* – and in firmly contemporary contortions, such as the eloquent solo *The Swan*, created for him by Ricardo Cué. His refined performances display a style that is magnetic, elegant, vigorous, and utterly inimitable.



© Raoul Iacometti

DANCER

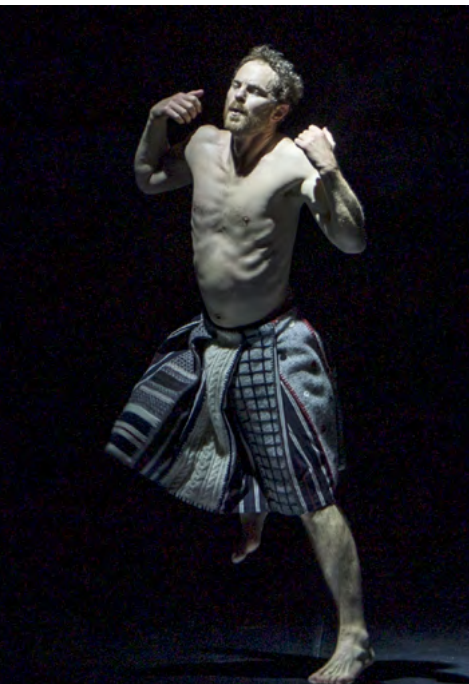
MARTA CIAPPINA

An impactful presence in the creative dialogue between performer and creator: Marta Ciappina, who trained in New York at the Trisha Brown Studio and at Movement Research, is an Italian dancer with a special touch. In her approach, the performer's personality morphs to reflect the choreographer's style without ever losing its individuality of expression. In 2022, two solo works were created with her: *Op. 22 No.2*, by Alessandro Sciarroni, and *Gli anni* by Marco D'Agostin. The former, seen at Bolzano Danza Festival, takes the *Dying Swan* from



© Andrea Macchia

1905 and moulds it into a brand new, contradictory female figure. The latter, which Danza&Danza reviewed at Cango, Virgilio Sieni's space in Florence, expresses a tale of joy and pain in which traces of Ciappina's personal life are interwoven with a broader narrative; a montage inspired by Nobel-prizewinning author Annie Ernaux's novel *The Years* helps tell the story. Another notable performance was *Quel che resta*, Simona Bertozzi's duet for her and Ciappina, at the Danae Festival in Milan: a dazzling sequence of individual reverberations within a journey made in unison.



© Lorenza Daverio

**DANCER-CHOREOGRAPHER
EX-AEQUO**

**BORIS
CHARMATZ**
Somnole

He is currently the new director at Tanztheater Wuppertal Pina Bausch, having toured the world with his ensemble projects, from Tate Modern in London to MOMA in New York. But he's also a stunning dancer/dancemaker: Boris Charmatz, born in France in 1973, presented his *Somnole* in Italy. We saw it at the Triennale in Milan, as part of the 2022 FOG festival. His solo describes being between sleep and wakefulness as a creative state, fragile yet powerful as it throws open windows onto memory and desire, freedom and the emotional cataloguing of memories. Sixty minutes with live whistling throughout, for a flow of sound that also plays on circular breathing, interacting with the multiple waves of the dance. Bare-chested and clad in a pleated skirt scattered with zodiac signs, Charmatz explores – often with his eyes closed – the inner world of falling asleep. His whistling resembles a hiss, a tremor, a quotation, a scream. With remarkable stamina he glides between musical fragments ranging from Bach

to Gershwin's *Summertime*, Mozart's *Marriage of Figaro* and Morricone film scores, ending with the hypnotic *Lascia che io pianga* from *Rinaldo* by Handel. It's an utterly absorbing piece that displays unpredictable originality in both its choreography and performance.

**DANCER-CHOREOGRAPHER
EX-AEQUO**

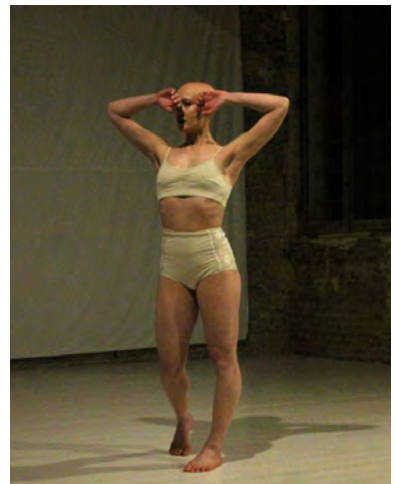
EZIO SCHIAVULLI
*Heres: nel
nome del figlio*

Embodying an idea generated by one's own mind, through a lucid, poetic storytelling that oscillates between autobiography and universal meaning: after years spent creating for other bodies, the Puglian choreographer Ezio Schiavulli returned to the stage in 2022 to perform his *Heres: nel nome del figlio*. The work, which had its Italian premiere at the Milanoltre festival, is a performed analysis of the relationship between fathers and sons. It uses the meeting/clash between dance and music as the driver for a physical score with shifting nuances,



© Patrick Lambin

in which psycho-analytical references to various Greek myths lie beneath the surface. In a constant dialogue with two drums (an instrument played by his own father), Schiavulli expresses the burning desire to rediscover his parent, but also the need for self-affirmation. An earth-shaking performance featuring masterful dramaturgy.



NEWCOMER DANCER

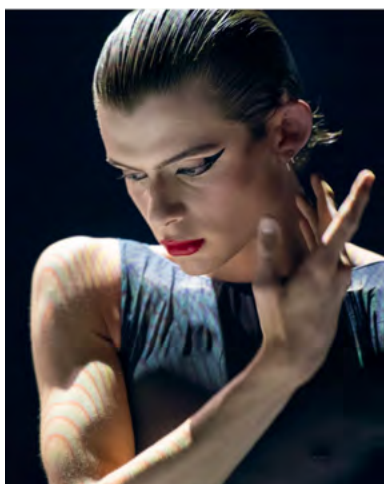
AGNESE TRIPPA

A strong presence. The physicality and never-banal intensity of Agnese Trippa's performances are symbolic of a skilled body, but also reveal her refined efforts to perfect movements and develop her intelligent, profoundly interiorised style of expression. Her training began at the Balletto di Toscana academy, directed by Cristina Bozzolini, and continued under the guidance of Michele Pogliani, with the MP3 Project course. She discovered a new level of awareness in her performances through prestigious collaborations with Emir Kusturica and Nicola Zorzi, Abbondanza/Bertoni, La Fura dels Baus, Regina Van Berkel and Ariella Vidach. Meanwhile, she was formally brought into the fold of the MP3 Dance Project company, and given lead roles. As part of *Relative Calm*, which opened in 2022, Robert Wilson and Lucinda Childs chose her to star in their new work *Pulcinella Suite*, in which Agnese Trippa reigns supreme at centre stage, with her innate spirituality and regal elegance.

NEWCOMER DANCER

IAN J. SANFORD

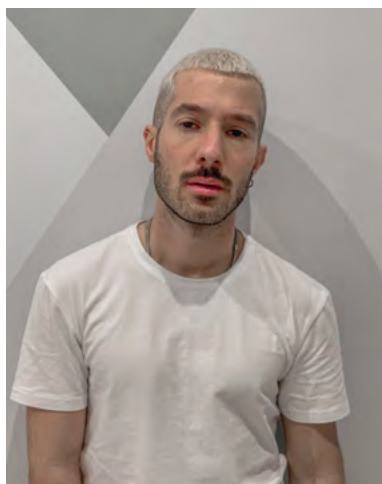
Ian J. Sanford, aged 22, is the youngest dancer in Richard Siegal's Ballet of Difference. He displays a stunning, boyish quality of movement, darting restlessly even on pointe. We saw him perform at the Equilibrio Festival in Rome, as part of the three-



title programme that Siegal presented at the Auditorium Parco della Musica. His mercurial presence is remarkable for its fluidity, in a dance that goes beyond binary gender with an elusive, quicksilver quality that was particularly memorable in the luminescent *All for One (aka SPIRAL)*. Born in Maryland, Ian J. Sanford graduated with a BFA from the prestigious Juilliard School of New York. In the course of his academic training, he danced choreographies by Balanchine, José Limón, Martha Graham, Crystal Pite, Marco Goecke to name a few. He joined Richard Siegal's company in 2021.

NEWCOMER CHOREOGRAPHER ADRIANO BOLOGNINO

Twenty-six-year-old Bolognino recently broke onto the dance scene for his remarkable aesthetic and compositional technique. He has built up significant creative experience in a brief space of time, considering his young age: from winning the Prospettiva Danza award at the Biennale Danza College Coreografi, with a work commissioned by Marie Chouinard for her Biennale Danza, to his creations for various Italian companies including COB - Compagnia Opus Ballet; from his recent production for his own company, *Rua da saudade* (co-produced by Torinodanza Festival, Aperto Festival and Orsolina 28), along with other projects he is working on. This Neapolitan-born choreographer is gradually defining his own personal,



original stylistic approach. He stands out for the instinctive force of his choreography method, featuring swift gestures that require close study and precision. Gifted with a sensibility for dramaturgy and a creative perfectionism that encompasses a love of fashion and colour, his elegant, rigorous style is already clear, and make him a more-than-promising choreographer.

ITALIAN PRODUCTION BALLADE

Over the years, Michele Merola has used his intelligence and artistic/managerial skills to give his company great chances to explore a varied, original repertoire. In 2022, the MM Contemporary Dance Company developed a broad-ranging diptych created on its dancers, consisting

of *Elegia* by Enrico Morelli and *Ballade* by Mauro Bigonzetti. The two forty-minute pieces were created for an evening in which each member of the company is highlighted through a deliberate chorality, achieved through a 'social' retelling of two historical periods: the post-pandemic now, pervaded by the quest for self-care and care for others, in Morelli; and the carefree early 1980s as narrated by Pier Vittorio Tondelli, in Bigonzetti's piece. This is the first time the famous choreographer has created a piece especially for Merola's fantastic company. The double bill is brimming with hope, melancholy reminiscences and generational thrust. The elegant, delicate *Elegia* is set to Chopin and electronic music by Giuseppe Villarosa; the picture is completed by contrast with the vitality, energy, sensuality and humour of the collective existence that ripple through Bigonzetti's inspired work, with a fun musical montage from the period in which it is set.

ITALIAN DANCER ABROAD ALESSANDRO FROLA

Frola's dance career began at a very young age, starting out as the star of the Italian production of *Billy Elliot*, which he danced for more than a hundred performances. He's an outgoing, cheerful character, and was born into the profession, as all of his family are



© Tiziano Ghidorsi



© Kiran West

dancers too. Alessandro Frola already has remarkable experience under his belt. He has won several awards and study bursaries (including ABT and Royal Ballet), and has performed in Europe, Mexico and the US. His talent and tenacity led him to the Hamburg Ballet School in 2017, and a year later to the company directed by John Neumeier. In 2021, we enjoyed seeing him in Italy in the *Peter and Igor* duet, created by Neumeier in Hamburg and performed as part of the tribute evening *Stravinsky's love*. In this virtuoso piece, with jumps and rapid unisons, Frola displayed wonderful naturalness and a solid academic technique. This year, he has danced several principal roles with the Hamburg Ballet which showcased his sharp technique and acting flair, as the Prince in *Sleeping Beauty*, in *Cinderella* partnered with Madoka Sugai at the *Nijinsky Gala*, and as Endymion in *Sylvia*.

ITALIAN DANCER ABROAD
EMILY CASTELLI

Emily Castelli was born in Palermo in 1996. After her initial training at a contemporary dance school and a campus with Malou Airaud, she moved to Germany to attend the Folkwang Tanzstudio in Essen. There, in 2016 she gained her Dance Bachelor of Arts, having studied under Lutz Förster, Malou Airaud, Stephan Brinkmann and Rodolpho Leoni, among others. For two years she worked at the Folkwang Tanzstudio, dancing in choreographies by Michael Vandervende, Henrietta



© Gadi Dagon

Horn, David Hernandez and Reinhold Hoffmann. For a couple of years she has been guest dancer at the Tanztheater Wuppertal Pina Bausch company; during this time she has already performed in *Orpheus und Eurydike*, *Schiff*, *Blaubart* and *Kontakt*, the latter on a lengthy tour last season. Her in-depth knowledge of the Jooss-Leeder technique, and her deep-seated empathy for the Pina Bausch world of Tanztheater, whose spirit and style she shares, have allowed her to distinguish herself within the company. She has already been studying *Das Frühlingsoper (Le Sacre du Printemps)*, *Vollmond* and *Café Müller*, with a view to reprising them.

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT

OHAD NAHARIN

He's in a class of his own, having created an artistic ecosystem that has been in evolution for more than fifty years. Having been artistic director of Batsheva Dance Company for twenty years, and now its "house choreographer" in Tel Aviv, Ohad Naharin has found the key to draw out what it means to be human, through movement and choreography, thus raising its status to a core cultural value within the community. He invented his own language of movement, Gaga, for professionals and amateurs alike, which is now known and practised the world over. In doing so he opened up new horizons for human expression, bridging the gap between intimate sensibilities and the world. His artistic research has been untiring, prolific, seminal for generations



© Gadi Dagon

of dancers and dancemakers. Having turned seventy in June 2022, Naharin has lost none of his boyish attitude; he is always ready to amaze us, unwilling to provide explanations as to the titles and messages of his works, and against any sort of rationalisation. As spectators, required to 'enter' the flow of sensations elicited by his dance, we enjoy the truthfulness of the bodies, which the choreographer sculpts until they themselves become unique specimens within an organic space-time discourse. His body of work is a legacy for the world. It was enriched in 2022 by his new creation for Batsheva, *MOMO*. In Italy, "Mr Gaga's" brilliance shone bright at Orsolina28 last July, in the sublime *2019*, a piece dedicated to his father; the work was presented in *The Eye*, the space he designed within the art foundation's estate in Monferrato. •