

AWARDS 2023



Dewey Dell in "Sacre du Printemps" (© Andrea Macchia)

The awards assigned by the magazine's dance critics to shows, choreographers, dancers, projects, seen in 2023 on Italian stages and recognition of Italian talents abroad.



LIST OF WINNERS

BALLET COMPANY PRODUCTION

COPPÉLIA

Chor. Alexei Ratmansky
La Scala Theatre Ballet

CONTEMPORARY PRODUCTION

INTO THE HAIRY

Chor. Sharon Eyal and Gai Behar
L-E-V

DANCERS

LUISA IELUZZI

Étoile – San Carlo Theatre Ballet

VICTOR CAIXETA

Principal dancer – Dutch National Ballet

MAUD DE LA PURIFICATION

Zappalà Danza Company

PEOPLE OF THE YEAR

NICOLETTA MANNI

Étoile – La Scala Theatre Ballet

NEWCOMER DANCERS

CAMILLA CERULLI

Soloist – La Scala Theatre Ballet

SIMONE AGRÒ

Soloist – Rome Opera Theatre Ballet

CHOREOGRAPHER

SHARON FRIDMAN

NEWCOMER CHOREOGRAPHER

ROBERTO TEDESCO

ITALIAN PRODUCTION

LE SACRE DU PRINTEMPS

Dewey Dell

ITALIAN DANCERS ABROAD

GIADA ROSSI

Lead Principal dancer – Compañía Nacional de Danza

RACHELE BURIASSI

Principal dancer – Les Grands Ballets Canadiens

FRANCESCO RESCH

Les Ballets de Monte-Carlo

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT

CAROLYN CARLSON

SPECIAL PROJECT

DANCE WELL



© Brescia-Amisano/Teatro alla Scala

BALLET COMPANY PRODUCTION
COPPÉLIA

Not only is Alexei Ratmansky a master of the nineteenth-century classical repertoire, but he is also one of the pre-eminent choreographers of our time. His artistic calibre shines in his brand new *Coppélia*, the opening production for La Scala's 2023-24 ballet season. The plot follows the original from 1870, which was created by Arthur Saint-Léon in Paris to Léo Delibes' exciting score. But Ratmansky's choreography presents a wonderful blend of the technical virtuosity of the classical style, and the body's spontaneous, natural ability to tell a story while dancing; it is remarkable for its freshness, speed and innovative writing. Ratmansky has fun pushing ballet technique to mingle with surprising expressive emphases of movement, and the results are extremely entertaining. Lastly, Jérôme Kaplan's sets and costume designs contribute to the image of a ballet that's bursting with life, with colours and settings inspired by Ukrainian folk culture: a homage to Ratmansky, who was among the first artists to publicly disassociate himself from Putin's war. Combining past repertoire with present creativity, this sparkling production gets our Award.

CONTEMPORARY PRODUCTION
INTO THE HAIRY

Into the Hairy is the latest powerful creation by Sharon Eyal and her partner Gai Behar for their company L-E-V, founded a decade ago in Israel and now resident in France. A more intimate, less explosive piece than the Israeli choreographer's previous offerings, *Into the Hairy* was created on the original score by Koreless, a young Welsh electronic composer and musician; his engaging music alternates sophisticated melodies with post-dubstep rhythms. Against this vibrating wall of sound, Eyal's bodies abandon the obsessive behaviours of the past, wandering into a deeply

poetic style. All seven are on stage throughout, in the darkness, wearing ripped black lace bodysuits (by Maria Grazia Chiuri-Dior), creating a gothic scene of writhing bodies, zoomorphous at times, plucked from the innermost monsters lurking in the human soul. It is a death ritual, slow, incessant, hypnotic and mesmerising, and painfully relevant today. Eyal lays bare the psyche in a surreal atmosphere, tapping into the sensible world.

DANCERS
LUISA IELUZZI

Volcanic and explosive, in 2023 the Teatro di San Carlo's Étoile Luisa Ieluzzi has shown her remarkable versatility: she has taken on both contemporary works, such as the pas de deux *Aria*



© Luciano Romano



© Andrea Veroni

Suspended by Mauro de Candia, and pieces from the classical repertoire that have allowed her to shine like the sun on the Neapolitan stage. From Michel Fokine's *Les Sylphides* to the Hungarian act of Petipa's *Raymonda*, impeccable in the lead part, through to her fiery Kitri in the Nureyev *Don Quixote*, Ieluzzi has always stood out for her precise execution and acting skills, interpreting a diverse range of challenging parts with her own personal nuances and considerable pathos.

DANCERS

VICTOR CAIXETA

Caixeta's lithe body and rugged, muscular technique have been moulded by his many, significant experiences with Hans van Manen, Twyla Tharp, Wayne McGregor, Nacho Duato, Marco Goecke, but also by performing in the traditional grand classical repertoire. A versatile dancer in a long-lined body, he was remarkable in the role of Solor in the new production of Pech's *La Bayadère* at the Rome Opera Ballet, alongside Maia Makhateli. Born in Brazil, he joined the Staatliche Ballettschule in Berlin, before moving to the Mariinsky at the age of just eighteen. With the Dutch National Ballet since the Russia-Ukraine



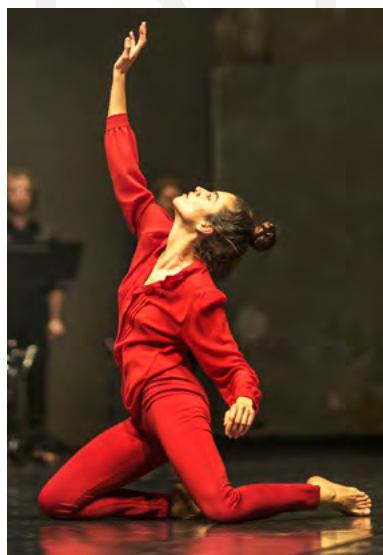
© Fabrizio Sansoni

war broke out, he became Principal there last season. His impressive technical skill, quality of interpretation, care and control in his tours, jumps and aplomb, not to mention his ability as a porteur, make young Victor Caixeta an eclectic dancer of rare elegance.

DANCERS

MAUD DE LA PURIFICATION

Having trained at the École National of Marseille and in Toulouse, followed by a series of important experiences including at the Ballet National de Marseille and at Nederlands Dans Theater, she has been with the Compagnia Zappalà Danza since 2011, dancing in almost all the productions to date. As assistant to the Catania-based choreographer and teacher MoDem, in recent years she has developed her own choreography career, including the creation *Siamo* for CZD2. This year, she returned to dance after maternity leave, with *Oratorio per*



© Franziska Strauss

Eva, a 2014 show that Zappalà created on Maud herself. The piece has now been revived and reworked, adding a further "ten bodies in transit"; these are characters selected from the audience. An intense, mature performer who embodies the biblical figure of Eve, the first woman and mother of humanity, Maud is the woman of today in a first

person "account" that reflects the still unresolved [female] condition of everyday violence.

PEOPLE OF THE YEAR

NICOLETTA MANNI

In 2023, Manni was made Étoile at La Scala: this prestigious appointment, extremely rare at the Milanese company, was bestowed onstage at the end of a magnetic performance of *Oregon*. It's been a year full of success and happy events, both on a personal



© Brescia-Amisano/Teatro alla Scala

and artistic level. A year that has confirmed this thirty-two-year-old artist's versatility as a performer, and her astounding technical solidity. We saw her in each of the theatre's 2023 productions: she was incisive in David Dawson's *Anima Animus*, sensitive in Philippe Kratz's *Solitude Sometimes*, sharp in William Forsythe's *The Barre Project*; she was a radiant Medora in *Le Corsaire* by Manuel Legris, and a passionate Juliet in MacMillan's *Romeo and Juliet*; versatile in the dual role of Odette-Odile in the Nureyev *Swan Lake*, a moving, distraught

Tatiana in *Onegin* and a spirited Swanilda in Alexei Ratmansky's brand new production of *Coppélia*. It's a golden year, crowned by the publication of her memoir *La gioia di danzare* ('The Joy of Dancing') in which she also discusses her fruitful partnership with Timofej Andrijashenko, Principal at La Scala, who became her husband in 2023.

NEWCOMER DANCERS

CAMILLA CERULLI

Born in 1999, she is among the most intriguing Soloists in La Scala Theatre Ballet's current lineup. She graduated from La Scala Theatre Ballet Academy, which she joined in 2015 having spent the first few years at the National Dance Academy in Rome. Having been noticed as a student, Cerulli opened the 2017 Gala Evening of the D&D



© Brescia-Amisano/Teatro alla Scala

Awards at the Carignano Theatre in Turin, with the pas de deux from *Le Corsaire*. She joined La Scala Ballet upon graduating, and danced various roles in works by Balanchine, Ratmansky, Nureyev, and McGregor. After being promoted to Soloist in 2022, in 2023 she demonstrated her impeccable technique and sunny stage presence in various titles, starting with the Philippe Kratz creation *Solitude Sometimes*; but above all, she was splendid as Gulnare in Manuel Legris' *Le Corsaire*. She was also excellent in *Blake Works V* by William Forsythe. The year ended with a major recognition: for his brand new *Coppélia*, Alexei Ratmansky chose her for the lead part of Swanilda; she was the only soloist to be given the role that season, alongside the Étoile Manni and the Principals Martina Arduino and Alice Mariani.

NEWCOMER DANCERS

SIMONE AGRÒ

In the past year, he has danced Colas in *La Fille mal gardée*, the chief fakir and the Golden Idol in *La Bayadère*, Basilio in *Don Quixote*, all productions in the Rome Opera Ballet season. He is a soloist at the company and it is where he grew artistically as a very young student, at the theatre's



© Fabrizio Sansoni/Opera Roma

own prestigious school. Through his visible, unwavering commitment to technique, virtuosity and interpretation, Simone Agrò has won over audiences with his delicate yet effective stage presence, while maturing with each new role: an ironic but technically appealing Basilio; solemn as the Golden Idol in a luminescent, sculpted body, mastering the grands jetés, tours and exotic geometric lines; and conveying the enchanting simplicity of Colas the peasant, in the insidious challenges of Ashton's choreography. This award recognises the growth and development of an artist of whom we have great expectations.

CHOREOGRAPHER

SHARON FRIDMAN

2023 was a golden year for Sharon Fridman, the Israeli choreographer who has long been based in Spain and is now "Artist in Residence" at the Francisco Rabal Theatre in Madrid.



He produced a number of successful projects through the year, starting with *EUROPA*, created for his own company; and the commission for the ten dancers of the Bielefeld Theatre company directed by Felix Landerer in Germany, *Jerusalem*, in which Fridman – starting from the premise that "each movement is a form of death" – unfolds a choreography of bodies interweaving and dissolving in slowly changing forms. He came to Italy with *Go Figure*, which had its world premiere at the Oriente Occidente Dance Festival; here, his research and INA practice, based on gravity, balance and contact, reached heights of creativity. The duet was created with and for Tomer Navot, a dancer with Vertigo Dance Company, and Shmuel Dvir Cohen, a dancer with a neurological syndrome that affects his muscle control. Fridman created an incredibly beautiful dance, in which the diversity of the bodies is cancelled out as they 'lose themselves' in each other through the choreography. The voyage into form starts on the inside: the exterior image is beautiful because it is necessary, meaningful. Also in Italy, Fridman remounted his historic *Hasta donde?*, adapting it for six dancers of the Naturalis Labor company directed by Luciano Padovani: *Hasta quando?* was the impactful result.

NEWCOMER CHOREOGRAPHER

ROBERTO TEDESCO

From the ranks of Aterballetto, where he trained and matured by dancing works by great choreographers in various styles, he

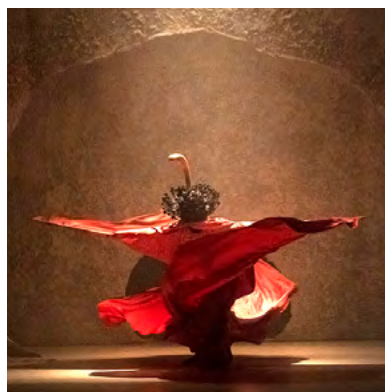
is now a freelance choreographer. He has long since developed an idiosyncratic creative research, aiming for a language that highlights the body's movement through space; his solid, rigorous gaze, signs and imagination, and his intelligent, many-layered, polymorphous choreographic expertise are clear



to see. His growth can be seen in recent and less recent creations, some abroad; they include *Punch 24* for MM Contemporary Dance Company, *Ad Eva*, *Standpoints* for the triple bill *Callas, Callas, Callas* by COB Opus Ballet, *Decisione consapevole* and *Simbiosi*. He won the SupportER grant from the Anticorpi XL network; was selected for the "Vetrina Giovane Danza D'autore" and Open Studios by the last NID-Italian Dance Platform. He can now look forward to a busy creative year for new projects, and this award recognises his talent, placing him among the most promising emerging choreographers on the Italian scene.

ITALIAN PRODUCTION LE SACRE DU PRINTEMPS

Dewey Dell's rewriting of the *Rite of Spring* is both modern and at the same time, full of archaic resonances. It celebrates the principle of metamorphosis as the driving force of the cosmos. Citing Loïe Fuller's



© Andrea Macchia

serpentine dances, with a clever use of masks and disguises, Vito Matera, Teodora, Agata and Demetrio Castellucci have created a powerful, hypnotic show that is just as enchanting as the phantasmagorical *féeries* of George Méliès films. The fast-paced sequence of interactions and collisions between animal forms and human shapes conveys the sense of the fight for survival and the cyclical nature of life; it evokes the principles of Samsāra and of Nietzsche's eternal recurrence. The show updates the original *Rite*, by skilfully pairing the archaeology of images with contemporary imagery.

ITALIAN DANCERS ABROAD GIADA ROSSI

A versatile dancer who combines elegant, solid technique with a lyrical yet contemporary temperament, Giada Rossi joined the Compañía Nacional de Danza in Madrid in 2015. Promoted to Soloist in the 2019-20 season,

© Rolando Paolo Guerzoni



she moved up the ranks to Principal Dancer in 2022, becoming Lead Principal Dancer in November 2023. Born in Fiesole, after her early studies in Florence she won a bursary from the Fondazione Pierino Ambrosoli and went on to study at the Conservatoire National de Paris, before graduating from the Royal Ballet Upper School in London in 2009. Before joining the Compañía Nacional de Danza she danced at the Ballet de Bordeaux, the Leipzig Ballet and the Birmingham Royal Ballet. Her repertoire includes the lead roles in *Raymonda*, *Don Quixote*, *Sleeping Beauty*, *Nutcracker* alongside titles by Robbins, Forsythe and many others. In early 2023 she stepped into the limelight with her acclaimed, lively performances in the parts of Alice, Snow White and Belle in *A Thousand Tales*, a fairytale ballet by Francesco Ventriglia set to music by the Ukrainian Alexei Shor, staged at the Dubai Opera. In Italy, at the Teatro Comunale in Modena, she danced with Sergio Bernal in *Rodin*, a fascinating homage to the great French sculptor; the performance confirmed her reputation as a dancer with admirable presence, and a sensitive partner, particularly in the pas de deux *The Kiss*.

ITALIAN DANCERS ABROAD RACHELE BURIASSI

Rachele Buriassi draws out the dramatic, artistic elements of dance, as she harmoniously combines crystal-clear technique, verve and elegance. Principal dancer at Les Grands Ballets Canadiens in Montreal



since 2020, she switches between ballet and contemporary with superb ease. Having trained at the École Supérieure de Danse Rosella Hightower and the John Cranko Schule, at just 18 she joined the Stuttgart Ballet where she was soon promoted to Principal Dancer, before moving to the Boston Ballet from 2015 to 2019. In 2012, Edouard Lock cast her in the lead role of his dance film *Écho*, and her personality has inspired renowned choreographers to create on her, including Christian Spuck, Marco Goecke, Mauro Bigonzetti and Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui. In 2023, she gave a sparkling performance at the *Les Étoiles* Gala and in the *Soirée Rachmaninoff* curated by Daniele Cipriani in Nervi, and at the Ravenna Festival, where she danced Uwe Scholz's *Sonata* and *Trio*. It's been a great year for Buriassi, performing in a series of full-evening titles with the Canadian company, including *The Sleeping Beauty*, *La Dame aux camélias*, *The Nutcracker* and *Cinderella*.

ITALIAN DANCERS ABROAD

FRANCESCO RESCH

His stage presence is enhanced by an imposing physique, a blend of power, expressivity and dramatic intensity; then there is his love of Russian ballet, which he cultivated by studying videos of the Bolshoi stars Vasiliev and Mukhamedov. At 23, Bolzano-born Francesco Resch has been driven by his determination; after training at the Vienna State Opera Ballet Academy, he moved to the court of Boris Eifman in St.



© Alice Blangero

Petersburg in 2018. The following year he joined Les Ballets de Monte-Carlo where, under the guidance of Bernice Coppieters, he absorbed the director Maillot's classical vocabulary, updated by a contemporary syntax. Maillot cast him in the role of Oberon in *Le Songe* and Loup in *Œil pour Œil*. In May he gave a notable performance as Le Roi in *LAC* at La Fenice in Venice, and as *Romeo* in Maillot's iconic remake of *Roméo et Juliette*; he danced the romantic hero in the company's 2022 world tour, and then in November at the Teatro Grande in Brescia, paired with the guest star Olga Smirnova. Intensely dynamic, authentic and passionate.

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT

CAROLYN CARLSON

Dancer, choreographer, pedagogue, poet, painter, visionary artist: with her oeuvre and her personality Carolyn Carlson has shaped the evolution of contemporary dance ever since the fabulous, revolutionary 1960s, having trained young dancers all over Europe, collaborating with musicians and composers who created original scores for her shows, and choreographing around a hundred creations for ensembles and soloists, not to mention her poetry books and drawings. Born in California in 1943, but of Finnish descent, she was a key figure at the Alwin Nikolais Company from 1965 to 1971; she later developed her own, extraordinarily unique style. After moving to France in 1971, she was given the very special title of *Étoile chorégraphe* at the Paris Opera, tasked with guiding the Groupe de Recherches Théâtrales de l'Opéra de Paris. In the early 1980s, her knack for drawing out creativity from young talents led her to Italy, where she headed the Teatrodanza La Fenice Carolyn Carlson. She would later return to Venice in the late 1990s as director of the Biennale Danza and founded the Accademia Isola Danza in the city. She has created works for the Finnish Ballet, the Cullberg Ballet and the Paris Opera (*Signes*), while

© Laurent Paillier



her milestone titles remain *Blue Lady*, *Steppe*, *Maa*, *Writings on Water*, *Inanna*, and the recent *The Tree*. In 2019, she was elected a member of the Académie des Beaux-Arts in France.

SPECIAL PROJECT

DANCE WELL

For ten years now, the Dance Well project for research and movement, devised and promoted by the municipality of Bassano del Grappa through its Centro per la Scena Contemporanea, has been promoting dance in museum spaces and non-conventional artistic settings and urban spaces. It is directed mainly, although not exclusively, at people living with Parkinson's disease. A network of collaborations has developed over the years, taking the project across Italy and Europe, and engaging various dancers and choreographers, who work with companies and communities formed spontaneously in the regions. The sterling work done by Dance Well combines artistic research with a commitment to social issues, helping to improve quality of life. Each year, the artistic director of Festival Operaestate commissions new works from different choreographers for the Dance Well Dancers group.

