

SPELLBOUND ASSOCIATION

The **Spellbound Association**, founded in 1994 arose as a body able to welcome organisational and productive projects in the realm of live shows in particular specialising in the dance sector on an international level. The planning, while privileging the production of live shows, from the start maintained a noticeable series of activities connected both to educational ventures and to artistic collaborations in the planning of its projects.

The heart of the artistic production is the Spellbound Contemporary Ballet company with its artistic director Mauro Astolfi and the general director Valentina Marini supported by the Ministry of Culture since 2000 and an important body representing Italy on an international level. Over the years their initiatives have also been made possible by the support of the Regione Lazio, the SIAE (Italian Authors and Publishers' Association) projects "Sillumina, NDP Subsidy in the United States with a tour in the season 2012-13 (the only Italian company to have received it) the first of a long series, and with the contribution of several Embassies and Italian Institutes of Culture that have helped spread the artistic projects in Spain, Germany, Luxemburg, Sweden, Great Britain, France, Switzerland, Russia, Bielorusse, Korea, Tailand, Indonesia, Hong Kong, Azerbaijan, Turkey, Cyprus, Singapore, Georgia, Canada, USA, Panama, Israel, Mexico, China, Japan, Malta, Hungary, Denmark, and Algiers.

The breadth of the Spellbound company's projects over the years can be seen from the full portfolio of Festivals it has participated in. Some examples among the many are Biennale in Venice, Schriectmaker Festival, Houston Dance Salad Festival, Bangkok International Dance and Music festival, Seoul Modafee Festival, Sidance Seoul, International Spring Festival a Tel Aviv, Santa Lucia Festival a Monterrey, Madrid en Danza, Valencia Temporada Festival, Prisma International Dance Festival, Vitebsk International Festival of Modern Choreography, Fabbrica Europa, Oriente Occidente, Invito alla Danza, Milano Oltre, Transart, La Merce, Guangdong Dance Festival, Chutzpah Dance Festival, Tokyo Dance New Air, Biarritz Le temps D'Aimer, City Contemporary Dance Festival, Arcachon Dance Festival, Bangkok Italian Festival, Ankara Music Festival, Tblisi Ballet Festival, Hong Kong City Contemporary Dance Festival e Dance Inversion Festival del Bolshoji in Moscow.

Reknowned as a leader in the international choreographic scene the Association has managed production projects participating in major television productions directed by Vittoria Cappelli and Vittoria Ottolenghi such as "Emotions, tribute to Battisti", broadcast worldwide from Piazza del Plebiscito in Naples, "Night of duels and magic" from Ascoli Piceno as well as the opera "200.com Carmina Burana a project for the city" which received the Opera Award in 2013 and was produced for the 200 years anniversary existence of the Teatro Sociale of Como in collaboration with the Music Academy Giuseppe Verdi in Como, The Choir of the city of Como, The Choir of Voci Bianche (white voices) of the Teatro Sociale di Como, Orchestra 1813, Orchestra A. Vivaldi.

Besides the major contribution of the choreographer Mauro Astolfi, resident creator, Spellbound's activities include a series of online projects with other international artists and institutions, such as the international coproduction "Pa|Ethos" created by the Tibetan choreographer Sang Jijia in collaboration with Fabbrica Europa, Scuole Civiche Paolo Grassi, Marche Teatro, Beijing Dance Festival, "La Mode", an installation created by Tomoko Mukayama and Tojo Ito which inaugurated

the National Taichung Theater in Taiwan in October 2016, the recent coproduction in partnership with Grand Theater de Luxembourg and the European network Dancing Partners.

Besides these the Association has to its credit a list of unique projects produced over the years by various creators who cover a variety of expressive creativity and attract different audiences such as Daniel Ezralow, Sang Jijia, Dunja Jovic, Jean Guillaume Weis, Marcos Morau, Marco Goecke and productions from the associated artists Luca Brinchi, Daniele Spanò, Francesco Sgrò and Irene Russolillo.

Spellbound has been recognised by the Ministry of Culture as a Centre for the Production of Dance since 2022 under the name Orbita |Spellbound, the only one to be supported by the Ministry in Lazio and one of the 8 in the whole country among Centri/Crid e Ccn. Besides being an important entity producing live choreographies the activities of the Centre support and reinforce an organic project of programming for citizens dedicated to contemporary dance which is hosted in Teatro Palladium and Teatro Biblioteca Quarticciolo.

MAURO ASTOLFI

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 and recognized by the Italian Ministry of Culture, 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.

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 and then in Chicago, USA for a new creation for River North Chicago Dance Company "Contact me". 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 MUIR (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 OrienteOccidente 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". In April 2013 he is

ORBITA SPELLBOUND

Centro di Produzione Nazionale della Danza

together with Georg Reischl, Cayetano Soto, Jo Strømgren 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 DanceCompany 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.

Again in 2017 he signed a creation for the Compania Colombiana de Ballet during the Biennial of contemporary dance in Colombia, in 2018 he created for Backhaus Dance Company in the USA and in 2020 was scheduled a new project for Ballet Trier and Ballet Augsburg in Germany. In 2021 he is again involved in a new project in Germany, creating for Giessen Stadttheater while in 2022-23 is involved in two creations in Switzerland in Konzert und Theater St.Gallen and Bern Ballett as well as in a full evening program scheduled in 2024 again for Ballet Augsburg.

As well as being a choreographer, Mauro Astolfi frequently appears as a guest teacher at major dance centres. Since October 2009, he has also been Artistic Director of the D.A.F centre (Dance and Arts Faculty) in Rome. From 2016 to 2018 Astolfi played as guest teacher for contemporary dance at the Opera BalletSchool in Roma.

VALENTINA MARINI

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. From 2022, while the company turned into a Production Center for Dance recognized by the Ministry of Culture, Marini is curating the programming activities of the Dance Center. In 2002 she created a new agency, “European Dance Alliance”, which addresses the needs of teachers and choreographers, and holds workshops for dance schools, supporting proposals and interactions between the educational and professional worlds, and offering exchanges and collaborations between companies and artists coming from the most prestigious European ensembles (in collaboration 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, “Avvertenze 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 Foundation of Rieti for the project Danza e/è cultura-un ponte tra Italia e Israele, in 2011 in collaboration with Batsheva Dance

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Centro di Produzione Nazionale della Danza

Company. Since 2009, the relationship with the Israeli Embassy has given rise to a constant project for the promotion of contemporary Israeli culture in Italy through which she starts collaborations with artists such as Idan Sharabi, Roy Assaf, Adi Boutrous, Ella Rothschild, Nadav Zelner, Adi Salant, Hillel Kogan, Vertigo Dance Company, Gil Kerer, Lior Tavori, Michael Getman, Sharon Fridman, and many others. 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. In 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 for international Galas and international tours. She is dance and foreign relations advisor for “Milano Danza Expo,” from 2011 to 2015. In 2015 she plays also as dance consultant for Theater Carcano in Milan, and is artist representative for the Italian network for Emanuel Gat Dance since 2016.

Since 2016 she is artistic curator of the dance season at Teatro Biblioteca Quarticciolo in Roma, where she assumes the role as Co-Director starting from 2020. In 2017 Marini produced the project InMovimento for Teatro Eliseo in Rome; she is also producer and artistic director of the Festival Fuori Programma in Rome from 2018. From 2011 to 2012 she is coordinator of the dance table at the Regional Union Agis Lazio, since 2010 she is also vice-president of AIDAP within Federdanza AGIS, trade association that embraces the structures producing live performances in the dance sector of which she assumes the Presidency starting from 2019. In 2022 she is called as member of the Ministry of Culture pannel of Dance.