

## Interview with IL MOSAICO's artistic director/choreographer Silvia Illari

By Zahira Mous



Il Mosaico in 'Sand'

In March of this year (2022), the AmsterDance competition could finally take place again after a three-year pandemic hiatus during which theaters and dance schools were closed for multiple prolonged periods. A school that specifically stood out this year was the Italian group Il Mosaico.

Il Mosaico's dancers excelled with strong artistic concepts, surprising choreographic moments and emotionally touching music choices. Their choreography *Sand* was selected for the Critic's Prize because of the piece's well-executed balance between an apocalyptic feeling and establishing a sense of hope. The dancers showed well-developed partnering skills, excellent contemporary modern dance technique, interesting group compositions, and captivating theatrical facial expressions.

In the category of emerging choreographers Il Mosaico won with two more pieces, created by choreographer Silvia Illari. In this category, the third prize went to their piece *Quadro Barocco*, a comical dance to baroque music with fitting style costumes, smeared red lipstick on the faces, and again a special talent that this group possesses: theatrical expression. The first prize for choreography went to their piece *Human Rights*, during which the declaration of human rights was spoken. The dancers wore medical masks; an image that has become very familiar to all of us in the past couple of years. It is clear that Illari doesn't shy away from making a statement.

Let's get to know Il Mosaico and artistic director and choreographer Silvia Illari.

**Describe your overall experience at the AmsterDans competition.**

"I've been waiting for a long time for an experience of dance outside of Italy, to exchange teaching methods, which are fundamental for personal growth and research, and also for the continuous evolution of the contemporary dance language. The competition was a wonderful and intense experience as well as professionally interesting. It was great to share our affinity for dance with other schools."

**What were your expectations prior to participating in AmsterDans?**

"We wanted to compare our work with those of others, and to be able to acknowledge if the artistic road I've chosen is appropriate on a European level."

**What was your reaction when you won the Critic's Prize?**

"We were really happy about it. Most of all we were satisfied that the vision we had on the harmony between choreographic composition, dancers' movements and the music itself was appreciated by a highly qualified jury. We are also glad that our message was so well received."

**Did you expect to receive as many awards as you won that day? How did this make the dancers feel?**

"It was a surprise to receive all those prizes, especially in a European contest. All of the dancers were so glad and satisfied with what they accomplished."

Dancer Rebecca Beneditti says, "There have been other choreographies worthy of merit too. We brought home a great sense of satisfaction. It is precisely from this type of experience that you are able to learn and know your strengths and weaknesses, but above all you understand how to improve in order to be able to achieve better and better results by hard work and commitment."

**What did the dancers learn from participating in the AmsterDans competition?**

"AmsterDans is a serious and professional contest and it demonstrated that nothing can happen without hard work and consistent study."

Dancer Rebecca Beneditti adds, "The experience of AmsterDans was from every point of view one of the best I have ever had in my entire life. It is a different vision of dance than in Italy, I would say almost better. From the very large theater equipped with every possible and imaginable comfort for dancers who have to endure a great load of work and stress, to the very kind staff who knew how to put us at ease and even bring us a smile despite the anxiety that we felt in 90% of our bodies. The level was very high, probably the highest-level competition we have entered."

**How have your accomplishments and your experience at AmsterDance changed or influenced the dancers' work currently? What are the changes that you see in them?**

"The dancers have a lot of enthusiasm, energy and willingness to work and undertake new projects, especially abroad."

**Is there anything you'd do differently next time?**

"Actually no; for sure all of this stimulates us more to continue developing our choreographic compositions."

**What are your school's plans for the next dance season?**

"To increase the students' training schedule, to form a modern dance academy company, and to work on new projects and productions, such as working with a live orchestra, and to collaborate with other European dance academies."

**Is there anything else you'd like to add?**

"This experience in Amsterdam gave me even more motivation to relate with the reality of professional dance outside of the Italian one, which is what I have known at this point. I'd really like to work in the European scene, both with choreographic production and highly skilled dance professionals as we are already doing in Italy, to improve my work, and to fuel my creativity."

Dancer Gloria Malfasi shares, "It was a very stimulating experience to deal with high-level dancers. I also appreciated the respect for each other and receiving and giving compliments. There was a very warm atmosphere and the staff were also understanding and willing to help us in the placement of stage costumes for any quick changes. The competent and professional jury has also donated various scholarships that, in my view, can help to look into the career of a dancer. I carry with me a memory full of emotions. Becoming part of a context like this was an opportunity to see the results of the various years of study, commitment, and hard work of all of us."

If you want to know more about this talented dance group, you can visit their website: [www.mosaicodancearts.it](http://www.mosaicodancearts.it) and follow them on Instagram @mosaico.dance.arts.school