

Donde hay música no puede haber cosa mala

(Cervantes, Don Quijote)



RAVENNA FESTIVAL 2025

31 May - 13 July 10 May-2 June | **Romagna in fiore** 12-16 November | **Autumn Trilogy**

Donde hay música no puede haber cosa mala, or 'Where there is music, there can be no evil': these are the words of Sancho Panza, the most popular squire in world literature. These words perfectly reflect the spirit of Ravenna Festival, which has always viewed music and the performing arts as spaces for discussion and dialogue. The quote from *Don Quixote*, chosen as the title of this 36th edition, also provides an opportunity to reflect on courage and how this concept has evolved from epic tradition to Cervantes' knight errant, and on to the modern-day meaning of heroism: civil and moral courage, and the courage to start again, create and hope.

The model of courage inherited from ancient and medieval epics is characterised primarily as a quality displayed on the battlefield. The hero is a virile and fearless warrior whose destiny is fulfilled in either death in battle or victory over the enemy. This model begins to crack with Ariosto, whose knights wrestle with their inner struggles, passions and weaknesses. However, with Cervantes, heroism becomes resistance and loyalty to a dream, as well as to the way the world should and could be rather than the way it is. Madness becomes an act of extreme courage and the ability to conceive and pursue an ideal of justice and beauty.

Now, more than ever, we need to redefine courage as a resource for the oppressed, not the privilege of the oppressor. It is the civil courage of those who fight for justice; of those who choose to create in a society that seems to prefer (self)destruction; of those who continue to hope in the face of suffering. If, as Sancho suggests, music is a remedy against evil, it is because culture and the arts are tools for building connections in an age of division, denial, and forgetfulness. Ravenna Festival is inspired by this contemporary courage – a courage that embraces ideas, empathy and hope rather than swords.

While Riccardo Muti will conduct the Cherubini Orchestra and violinist Giuseppe Gibboni at the opening concert of the Festival on 31 May, this year's Roads of Friendship project invites choirs and choristers from across Italy to Ravenna for two days of lessons and rehearsals with the Maestro, focusing on Verdi's music. Open to the public, the event is part of *Cantare amantis est*, a section of the Festival organised by Anna Leonardi and Michele Marco Rossi.

Alongside the three episodes of *Don Chisciotte ad ardere* by Albe/Ravenna Teatro and Handel's *Orlando* and *Alcina*, which form part of the Autumn Trilogy to be concluded by Handel's *Messiah* (12–16 November), the *Bhagavad Gita* revisited by Grande Teatro di Lido Adriano, Marco Baliani's *Del coraggio silenzioso* and Marco Martinelli's *Lysistrata* from Pompeii will provide food for thought on this year's theme. *Romagna in fiore* (10 May-2 June) will also return to the areas affected by last years' floods, and in four concerts by Palestinian artists, the Ravenna Festival will cross paths with the Festival delle Culture between April and May.

In July, Muti will be at the head of the Cherubini Orchestra in another concert, while Zubin Mehta and Daniel Harding will conduct the Maggio Musicale Fiorentino and the Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, respectively. The Accademia Bizantina and Alessandro Tampieri will devote an entire concert to Vivaldi. Contemporary music will also be represented, with works by Luciano Berio, Heiner Goebbels, and Max Richter. The programme also features tributes to African-American activist Octavius Catto by Uri Caine, to Bob Dylan by Cat Power, to Ennio Morricone by CCN/Aterballetto, and to Pink Floyd. There will be homages to choreographer Micha van Hoecke and jazz musician Joe Zawinul. Guests will include Enrico Rava, Stefano Bollani, Malika Ayane, Alessio Boni, Pietro Fresa, Alexander Gadjiev, Fabrizio Bosso, Carlo Lucarelli, Aldo Cazzullo, Moni Ovadia, Dardust, Arooj Aftab, Lakecia Benjamin...

To celebrate the Jubilee year, the city's churches, including the Byzantine basilicas listed as UNESCO World Heritage Sites, will host performances in honour of Palestrina by the Tallis Scholars and Odhecaton. There will also be a play based on the story of Ruth from the Bible, as well as oratorios by Stradella and Buxtehude. An opera that Gilberto Cappelli dedicated to Anita Garibaldi, the Risorgimento heroine who died at the Fattoria Guiccioli, will be performed there.

The Festival will return to Cervia-Milano Marittima for the poetry and music event *II Trebbo in Musica*, and to the historic setting of the Pavaglione in Lugo and the elegant Palazzo S. Giacomo in Russi. The Cherubini Orchestra will revive its *Music Without Barriers* project, through which its chamber ensembles will perform in old people's homes, hospitals, prisons, charitable institutions, and places of cultural and artistic interest in Ravenna and the surrounding area.



HEROES FOR THE NEW MILLENNIUM

Heroes have existed since ancient times. Chosen by the gods, they embody physical and moral strength, which set them apart from ordinary people. However, their extraordinary destinies often condemn them to tragic loneliness. In the Indian holy text the *Bhagavad Gita*, for example, which was chosen as the starting point for the new project of the Grande Teatro di Lido Adriano, the virtuous warrior Arjuna is urged by his charioteer, an avatar of the god Vishnu, to overcome his doubts and accept his duty to fight. However, for Ariosto, whose *Orlando Furioso* inspired the two Handel operas of the **Autumn Trilogy** (to be staged by Pier Luigi Pizzi and conducted by Ottavio Dantone with the Accademia Bizantina), heroes are not just fearless warriors; they are vulnerable men, sometimes driven to madness by their own passions. While Orlando's madness stems from a love that strips him of his armour and integrity, Don Quixote's folly appears to be the consequence of a philosophical and ethical decision. **Don Chisciotte ad ardere**, a project by Marco Martinelli and Ermanna Montanari of Albe/Ravenna Teatro now in its third and final year, invites us to share the dream of the knight errant. Meanwhile, Marco Baliani's play **Del coraggio silenzioso** invites us to reflect on the unexpected and often hidden value of those who act according to the dictates of their conscience.

When rewriting the notion of courage, the traumas of our times cannot be ignored: this year, the **Voices and Music from Palestine** festival, which is also part of the **Festival delle Culture**, will offer four concerts. Meanwhile, the eco-friendly **Romagna in Fiore** festival will host nine afternoon events celebrating community spirit and resilience in areas devastated by floods in the last two years.

The women of Aristophanes' *Lysistrata*, who engage in a sex strike to rebel against war, are heroines of ideas. The play is the fourth instalment of *Sogno di volare*, a project that breathes new life into the work of the Greek playwright through a collaboration between Ravenna and Pompeii, and Marco Martinelli's workshops with young people from the Naples area. Another heroine is Anita Garibaldi, the indomitable revolutionary companion of Giuseppe Garibaldi, to whom Gilberto Cappelli's opera *Anita* is dedicated. It will be performed at the Fattoria Guiccioli in Mandriole, where Anita died of illness and exhaustion. The theme of civil courage also runs through *The Passion of Octavius Catto* by Uri Caine, dedicated to the African-American activist who was killed by opponents of black suffrage in 1871, and the dance performance *Fragolesangue*, whose title is a nod to Stuart Hagmann's classic film about American counterculture and student protests.

Taking risks is often crucial in the arts, too. Consider Bob Dylan's 'electric breakthrough', which shook the foundations of folk music at his 1966 Royal Albert Hall concert, now revived by **Cat Power**. Or Ennio Morricone's relationship with cinematography, which was sometimes viewed with suspicion and reproach by his 'academic' colleagues: CCN/Aterballetto's **Notte Morricone** is dedicated to him. Artists are often pioneers – the **Duo Aria** and the **Zawinul Legacy Band 3.0** will pay tribute to Luciano Berio and Joe Zawinul respectively (and, by the way, the latter was one of the protagonists of another electric breakthrough in the 1960s: that of Miles Davis). Some artists even create new genres. Pino Daniele, for example, combined blues and jazz with Neapolitan songs, and he will be remembered in **II cielo è pieno di stelle** with Fabrizio Bosso and Julian Oliver Mazzariello.

And in this Jubilee Year, how could we fail to recall examples from the biblical and evangelical traditions? The Crucifixion is an example of self-sacrifice for others, and Dietrich Buxtehude's oratorio *Membra Jesu Nostri*, performed by students from the 'G. Verdi' Conservatoire in Ravenna under the conduction of Antonio Greco, focuses on seven parts of the martyred body of Jesus. The courage of those who 'cry out in the wilderness' is exemplified in Alessandro Stradella's 17th-century oratorio *San Giovanni Battista*, composed for the Jubilee of 1675 and now performed by the Ensemble Mare Nostrum, led by Andrea De Carlo. Meanwhile, **Ruth** the Moabite, a foreigner who took on the suffering of others and teaches us about the courage of inclusion, is the protagonist of the new sacred drama with music by Marianna Acito and a libretto by Francesca Masi.



MUSIC, MUSIC, MUSIC

As Shakespeare wrote in *The Merchant of Venice*, 'The man that hath no music in himself [...] is fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils'; so be wary of those who are 'not moved with concord of sweet sounds'.

Riccardo Muti will once again take the podium for the opening concert this year, conducting his **Luigi Cherubini Youth Orchestra** in Beethoven's *Coriolan* Overture and Seventh Symphony, as well as Mozart's Concerto No. 4 in D major, K. 218, with soloist **Giuseppe Gibboni** (the violinist won the Paganini Prize in 2021, bringing it back to Italy after more than 20 years). During the second Cherubini concert in July, Muti will conduct Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, Mendelssohn's Fourth 'Italian' Symphony, and Verdi's symphony from *I vespri siciliani*.

The symphonic programme also offers the opportunity to welcome two distinguished conductors, **Zubin Mehta** and **Daniel Harding**, back to Ravenna. Mehta will conduct the **Maggio Musicale Fiorentino** orchestra, of which he

is honorary conductor for life, in a programme consisting of Beethoven's Violin Concerto in D major, Op. 61, with **Amira Abouzahra** as the soloist, and Richard Strauss's *Symphonia domestica*. Harding will lead the **Orchestra dell'Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia**, of which he became music director last year, in a programme featuring Mahler's *Blumine* from Symphony No. 1, Wagner's Prelude and *Liebestod* from *Tristan und Isolde*, and Brahms's Symphony No. 2 in D major, Op. 73.

Vivaldi d'amore is the title of a concert dedicated by the **Accademia Bizantina** to the Red Priest's compositions for strings, violin and viola d'amore. **Alessandro Tampieri**, one of the first to join the Accademia Bizantina and now its first violin soloist, will be on stage in the double role of conductor and soloist, who can easily switch from the violin to the viola and the viola d'amore, a wonderful instrument with a soft and charming sound.

The contemporary music programme will be dominated by **Max Richter**'s latest album, *In A Landscape* (Deutsche Grammophon), which is almost an act of protest, setting silence and tranquillity against the widespread violence of our times. Also featured is *Surrogate Cities* by German composer **Heiner Goebbels**, a bold experimenter who mixes classical, jazz, pop and electronic music, incorporating a variety of sounds, noises, improvisations and sampled sounds. For this Ravenna Festival production, Goebbels will curate the *mise en espace*, designing the sets and lighting. This impressive orchestral cycle dedicated to metropolises, with their frenetic rhythms as well as their oases of peace and multiple voices, will be performed by the Cherubini Orchestra, conducted by **Andrea Molino** and featuring soloists **Aurore Ugolin**, **John De Leo**, and **Jack Bruce**, and **Alípio Carvalho Neto** on saxophones.

To celebrate the centenary of Luciano Berio's birth, the **Duo Aria** (Carlo Sampaolesi on accordion and Pietro Elia Barcellona on double bass) will perform his *Sequenza XIVb* and *Sequenza XIII* (Chanson), as well as *In bianco e nero* by Francesca Verunelli—winner of the Silver Lion at the Venice Biennale—exploring Berio's influence on later generations of composers.

One of the highlights of the season is the new generation of pianists. **Alexander Gadjiev**, winner of the 2022 Abbiati Prize for Best Soloist, will perform works by Debussy, Bartók and Mussorgsky. Meanwhile, **Pietro Fresa**, born in 2000, has chosen a programme that opens and closes with variations by Mozart and Brahms, and also includes Chopin's mazurkas, miniature gems of Romantic piano music, and Scriabin's 'Black Mass', which revisits the sonata form in a hallucinatory and modernist key.

Chamber ensembles include the eclectic and award-winning vision string quartet. Their versatility in combining a Grieg quartet with original compositions performed on amplified instruments reflects the fresh cultural vitality of their home city of Berlin. The Cologne-based **Trio Orelon** (named after the Esperanto word for 'ear') will perform three piano trios by Haydn, Anton Arensky, and Beethoven. The **Signum Saxophone Quartet** will perform works transcribed for and by its members, ranging from Grieg and Barber to Gershwin and Piazzolla, as well as a piece the young Vietnamese-American composer Viet Cuong, whose music has been performed by ensembles such as the New York Philharmonic, at venues such as the Lincoln Center and the Carnegie Hall.

Anita, an opera with a libretto by Raffaella Sintoni and Andrea Cappelli and music by Gilberto Cappelli, premiered last year in Spoleto, where it was commissioned by the Teatro Lirico Sperimentale A. Belli. It pays homage to the heroine of two worlds and the cult she inspired, especially in Romagna. Staged in the historical Guiccioli farm, where Anita died in 1849, the opera will be conducted by Marco Angius, with the Orchestra Calamani and the Coro del Teatro Lirico Sperimentale performing. Soprano Chiara Guerra and baritone Alberto Petricca will play the roles of Anita and Giuseppe Garibaldi respectively. The opera pays tribute to a remarkably modern woman and features a score that openly acknowledges its influences from Mahler and the early 20th-century expressionism of Schönberg and Berg.

Alongside the Middle Eastern atmosphere of the Festival delle Culture, the programme features events inspired by various geographical and musical traditions. Examples include music from around the globe arranged by the American composer Fred Sturm to celebrate both differences and similarities. This will be presented by **Marco Albonetti**, **Dane Richeson**, and the **FontanaMix Ensemble** in *Terra Madre (Migrations)*. There will also be the avant-garde folk of the Slovenian trio **Širom**, whose instrumentation includes everyday objects that have been transformed into musical instruments.

The dance programme also features tributes to musical legends, including CCN/Aterballetto's **Notte Morricone**, which features recorded music performed by the Orchestra Cherubini, and **The Wall & Pink Floyd Greatest Hits**, a new co-production with the theatres of Ferrara and Reggio Emilia. The **Orchestra Città di Ferrara**, conducted by **Roberto Molinelli**; the **Accademia Corale 'Vittore Veneziani'**; **Pink Sonic**; and the **MM Contemporary Dance Company**, choreographed by **Michele Merola** and directed by **Manuel Renga**, will join forces to celebrate the legendary band, and in particular their 1979 concept album, *The Wall*. Born out of Roger Waters's anger and frustration, the album was a hymn to tearing down the wall that separates the individual from the world, putting an end to the delirium of alienation and self-referentiality triggered by social pressures.

American singer-songwriter **Cat Power** will recreate Bob Dylan's legendary 1966 concert at the Royal Albert Hall, while the **Zawinul Legacy Band 3.0** will retrace the musical journey of Joe Zawinul, who was a pioneer of fusion and the electric evolution of jazz. On stage with them will be Omar Hakim and Bobby Thomas Jr., former members of Weather Report, the band founded by Zawinul and Wayne Shorter.

Returning to Italy, the Festival presents *Rapsodia fantastica*, a concert featuring video projections where the contemporary music of Giacomo Cuticchio meets the puppet theatre of his father Mimmo. Also performing will be *Vincenzo Capezzuto* and the *Motus Mandolin Trio*, who will retrace the footsteps of Neapolitan song in the 19th century. This story has found a surprising new chapter in the repertoire of Pino Daniele: ten years after his death, *Fabrizio Bosso* and *Julian Oliver Mazzariello* will pay tribute to him with *Il cielo* è *pieno di stelle*, one of the seven events included in the *Trebbo in Musica* series. *Aldo Cazzullo* and *Moni Ovadia* will present *Il romanzo della Bibbia*, accompanied by live music from *Giovanna Famulari*. The series of events combining music and words, now a tradition in Cervia-Milano Marittima, will also include *Mario Tozzi* and jazz musician *Enzo Favata*, who will present a geological-musical exploration of the Mediterranean. Other events include *Dardust's Urban Impressionism*, a new production with *Carlo Lucarelli* exploring the dark side of fairy tales, *La Traviata sono io* with *Alessio Boni* performing a text by *Filippo Arriva*, and Grammy-winning singer *Arooj Aftab* performing songs from her latest album, *Night Reign* — a "nocturnal" record suspended between jazz, Pakistani folk, minimalism, and Sufi philosophy.

The trio of concerts at the Pavaglione in Lugo opens with the Italian premiere of **Uri Caine**'s **The Passion of Octavius Catto**. Considered one of the most "encyclopaedic" jazz musicians of all time, Caine is also an outstanding pianist. He composed this piece for the Philadelphia Orchestra in 2014 in honour of an African-American educator and civil rights activist who was murdered in Philadelphia in 1874. In Lugo, **Barbara Walker**, who gave an extraordinary performance at the premiere, will present it in a chamber version for jazz quintet and solo voice. Next, there will be a performance by **Enrico Rava and Stefano Bollani** (indeed, it was Rava who discovered the talent of the young but already outstanding Bollani). The weekend in Lugo will conclude with a concert by the accomplished singer-songwriter **Malika Ayane**, who will perform with the Orchestra La Corelli in a "symphonic version" for the first time. This concert continues the festival's successful series of collaborations between classical ensembles and pop-rock artists.

A *Spiritual Jazz Night* will take place at the Palazzo San Giacomo in Russi, the former summer residence of the Rasponi family on the banks of the Lamone River. The event will feature saxophonist **Lakecia Benjamin**, who was nominated for five Grammys and performed at President Obama's inauguration, as well as **Hamid Drake**, one of the best jazz percussionists; special guest appearance by saxophonist **James Brandon Lewis**. Also at the Palazzo San Giacomo will be *The Long Irish Night*, curated by Fabio Rinaudo, and taking the audiences on a journey through the Emerald Isle, featuring **Dervish** from County Sligo and three outstanding musicians: **Derek Hickey**, **Mick O'Brien** and **Ciara Ní Bhriain**. Also performing will be **Birkin Tree**, the ambassadors of Irish folk music in Italy.



In his sermon No. 336, 'In Dedicatione Ecclesiae', Saint Augustine of Hippo argued that 'cantare amantis est', meaning 'it belongs to the lover to sing'. For him, singing was a natural manifestation of love, especially spiritual love. This theme was intended to emphasise the importance of singing in the liturgy, not as a mere ornament, but as an integral part – a high form of prayer and a privileged means of spiritual joy – inspiring centuries of reflection and sacred musical practice. This year, **Cantare amantis est** is the title of a special section of the festival curated by **Anna Leonardi** and **Michele Marco Rossi**, who curated the *Call to the Arts* in 2024.

At the heart of the *Cantare amantis est* project is an open call to choirs and choristers of all ages and levels of experience from across Italy to take part in two days of lessons and rehearsals led by **Riccardo Muti**. In an era of acute dialogue deficits, this initiative naturally follows in the footsteps of the *Roads of Friendship* project, which, since 1997, has been fostering fraternity by promoting dialogue through the universal language of music. *Cantare amantis est* views singing as a language of love and peace-building. Indeed, the choir, like the orchestra, perfectly represents society, where harmony stems from the contribution of every voice. Both sessions on 1 and 2 June are open to the public and will feature some of Verdi's most important operatic choruses.

On 2 June, the mural painting **Another Bach in the Wall**, created by artists who participated in the 2024 *Call for the Arts*, will be unveiled. A Jubilee concert featuring the Cherubini Orchestra, conducted by **Hossein Pishkar**, will be held at the Metropolitan Basilica, with Andrea Berardi on the organ. The programme also includes a new commission by composer Leonardo Marino.



Announced by the late Pope Francis, the theme of the Jubilee 2025 is *Pilgrims of Hope*. It is intended to be a year of pilgrimage, reconciliation, and spiritual renewal for millions of Catholics around the world, an invitation to rediscover faith, hope, mercy, and a commitment to justice at a time when the world is facing many challenges. The jubilee will offer opportunities for prayer, forgiveness, and solidarity.

The Festival, always sensitive to the timeless heritage of art and faith enshrined in the city's basilicas, will feature Alessandro Stradella's oratorio *San Giovanni Battista*, composed for the Jubilee Year of 1675 and giving voice to a man who placed his unwavering faith in God. The Ensemble Mare Nostrum will perform it at Sant'Apollinare in Classe, conducted by Andrea De Carlo. Silvia Frigato and Danilo Pastore will star as Salome and John the Baptist respectively, while Masashi Tomosugi will be Herod, with Dorota Szczepanska as Herodias, and Roberto Manuel Zangari as the Court Counsellor. Known as the 'Caravaggio of music' for the adventurous life and violent death he shared with Merisi, Stradella seems to carve his characters in stone, much like the statues that make up the Baroque facade of the Eternal City.

The Festival has also commissioned a new sacred drama based on the biblical story of Ruth for the Basilica of San Giovanni Evangelista: *Rut. Raccolti di speranza*, composed by Marianna Acito to a libretto by Francesca Masi). The text focuses on hope as its central theme and purpose. Laura Zecchini will star as the protagonist, alongside Daniela Pini and Angelo Testori as Naomi and Boaz respectively. Mattia Dattolo will conduct the Ensemble La Corelli and the Gruppo Vocale Heinrich Schütz.

Another intense 17th-century oratorio, *Membra Jesu Nostri* by Dietrich Buxtehude, which focuses on the crucified body of Christ, will be performed in the Basilica of Sant'Agata Maggiore by the **Coro & Ensemble 1685 of the Ravenna's Conservatoire**. The performance will be conducted by **Antonio Greco** and feature a visual project curated by teachers and students of the **Academy of Fine Arts in Ravenna**.

To celebrate the 500th anniversary of Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina's birth and his lasting influence on the history of sacred music, the **Tallis Scholars**, conducted by **Peter Phillips**, will return to the Basilica of San Vitale. Their programme will bring the 16th-century composer into dialogue with Arvo Pärt, now celebrating his 90th birthday. The vocal ensemble **Odhecaton**, which brings together some of the best Italian male voices specialising in Renaissance and pre-classical music, will also perform there, conducted by **Paolo Da Col**. The programme will pair Palestrina's motets with Scarlatti's 'Mass a Palestrina'.

Tallis and Odhecaton will also participate in *In templo Domini*, the traditional series of Sunday liturgies accompanying the Festival's calendar. This year, it will be held in the city's oldest jubilee basilica, Sant'Apollinare in Classe. Tallis and Odhecaton will accompany the Ascension and Pentecost celebrations respectively, while the Heinrich Schütz Vocal Group, conducted by **Roberto Bonato**, will celebrate the Holy Trinity.

Among the celebrants of the solemn liturgies will be **Mons. Massimo Camisasca**, Bishop Emeritus of Reggio Emilia-Guastalla, **Father Mauro-Giuseppe Lepori**, Abbot General of the Cistercian Order, and **Father Gianni Giacomelli** of the Monastery of Fonte Avellana, who will also take part in the series of meetings entitled *Giubileo 2025: la speranza nelle sfide del presente*. The traditional Via Sancti Romualdi meeting will feature **Federico Faggin**, a physicist and inventor, who will discuss the theme of *su Corpo, mente e spirito rivisti* with Alessandro Barban, the former Prior of the Camaldolese Monks.



A FESTIVAL THAT DANCES

This year's summer programme will close on 13 July with the highly anticipated return of **Les étoiles**, a name that has become synonymous with excellence in ballet, cherished by enthusiasts worldwide. The gala, curated by Daniele Cipriani, will feature a blend of classical and modern repertoire, alongside contemporary innovations and works that will be premiered in Italy and around the world. It will be **pour homme**, performed entirely by male principal dancers and soloists from the world's leading companies.

Dance also serves as a means of exploring two twentieth-century musical legacies. The MM Contemporary Dance Company is involved in the new co-production *The Wall & Pink Floyd Greatest Hits*, while the **Centro Coreografico Nazionale/Aterballetto** and **Marcos Morau** – the youngest choreographer to win Spain's National Dance Award – will celebrate Ennio Morricone by interpreting his iconic film compositions. An intricate blend of ballet, cinema and visual arts, *Notte Morricone* will pay tribute to the man and the artist by portraying him in the creative process, to music pre-recorded by the Luigi Cherubini Youth Orchestra. At the Classis Museum, CCN/Aterballetto will present **MicroDanze**, a series of short performances designed for non-theatrical spaces.

The ballet section also includes a tribute to **Micha van Hoecke**, a leading figure in the world of ballet, especially in the 'dance theatre' of the late 20th and early 21st centuries, who loved Ravenna and its festival. Four years after the choreographer's death, his artistic and life partner, **Miki Matsuse**, will revive **La dernière danse?**, which has never been performed in Ravenna before, with the **Balletto di Roma**. This work is central to Micha's career, not only because it marked his success in the 1980s, but also because it takes the audience on a journey through a labyrinth of memories, set to music from the artist's youth. To coincide with this event, the Alighieri Theatre will also host

the **photographic exhibition** La vie d'artiste, which provides a visual portrait of Micha covering everything from his Russian-Belgian family history to his years with Béjart in Brussels and his subsequent career in Belgium and Italy.

Another premiere is *Fragolesangue*, a co-production of Ravenna Festival and Nanou Associazione Culturale ETS, by Monica Francia, Ida Malfatti, and Zoe Francia Lamattina. The name of the production is a nod to the Italian title of Stuart Hagmann's critically acclaimed 1970 Cannes film, The Strawberry Statement, the story of a student's political awakening against the backdrop of American counterculture. With a strong workshop element involving young performers, the production offers a collective experience engaging with narratives from a different poetic and political era, while addressing the bodies, desires, and concerns of the present day.

THE STAGE, THE WORLD'S MIRROR

Almost two and a half thousand years ago, in Aristophanes' play Lysistrata, women engaged in a sex strike to end the war. This idea will now be revived by Marco Martinelli, who returns to Aristophanes after working on The Birds, The Acharnians, and Plutus. Martinelli will once again work with young people from Pompei, Torre del Greco, Castellammare di Stabia and Torre Annunziata to bring this comic play to life. Featuring music by Ambrogio Sparagna, Lysistrata will arrive in Ravenna after its debut at the Archaeological Park of Pompeii, which commissioned the Sogno di volare project combining historical heritage, live entertainment and new generations.

While the Athenian Lysistrata embodies civic and pacifist commitment, the modern hero is inevitably inspired by the exploits of Cervantes' knight-errant. This brings us to the three-year project **Don Chisciotte ad ardere**, which Marco Martinelli and Ermanna Montanari of Albe/Ravenna Teatro, following their acclaimed Dante triptych, have dedicated to a cornerstone of Western literature. With original music by the art-rock group Leda and featuring citizens who responded to a public call, the three parts of the project will be performed at Palazzo Malagola, Palazzo di Teodorico, and Teatro Rasi.

The focus of the Grande Teatro di Lido Adriano, instead, is non-European literature: the sacred Hindu text Bhagavad Gita, in which the warrior Arjuna is about to give in to despair in the face of an impending battle. The text will be reinterpreted by dozens of local young people and adults, with dramaturgy by Tahar Lamri, artistic direction by Luigi Dadina and Lanfranco Vicari (aka Moder), original music by Francesco Giampaoli, and stage direction by Luigi Dadina.

The variations on the theme continue with *Del coraggio silenzioso*, a play by and starring **Marco Baliani**. It is dedicated to a form of heroism that does not require warlike qualities; that does not take centre stage; that does not expect rewards or praise; but that is born of a deeper, sometimes indescribable, human need.

The drama section also includes the premiere of **Ghosts** by **Fanny & Alexander**. Amid dramatic revelations, twists and turns, and undercurrents of subtle anxiety, the world of Edith Wharton, author of the ghost stories that inspired the play, makes us question nostalgia, regret, remorse, fear, and love for the unseen. The show is directed by Luigi Noah De Angelis, who also designed the sets and lighting, and stars Andrea Argentieri and Chiara Lagani, who is also responsible for the dramaturgy, translations and costumes (music by Luigi Ceccarelli).

Nerval Teatro, directed by Maurizio Lupinelli and Elisa Pol, presents Finale di partita, one of the most significant works by Irish playwright Samuel Beckett. Starring Lupinelli alongside Barbara Caviglia and Carlo De Leonardo and Matteo Salza, two performers with disabilities from theatre workshops in Rosignano Marittimo and Ravenna. The performances will be accessible to audiences with sensory disabilities, enabling those who are hearing or visually impaired to enjoy the show too.



AUTUMN TRILOGY

The collaboration between Pier Luigi Pizzi's refined direction and the musical expertise of the Accademia Bizantina and Ottavio Dantone continues with the Autumn Trilogy. Having focused on Monteverdi and Purcell in previous years, the spotlight is on Handel this year, with new productions of **Orlando** (12 and 14 November) and Alcina (13 and 15 November). These will be followed by a performance of Messiah on Sunday, 16 November, conducted by Dantone with the Luigi Cherubini Youth Orchestra and the "Guido Chigi Saracini" Choir of Siena Cathedral, coached by Lorenzo Donati. Entitled L'invisibil fa vedere Amore (Love makes all that we dream of visible), this triptych sees the Alighieri Theatre continue its exploration of the 17th- and early 18th-century operatic repertoire – the so-called 'Baroque' period – featuring exceptional performers and renowned directors.

Both Orlando (1733) and Alcina (1735) belong to an operatic tradition inspired by the characters of chivalric cycles, which also includes works by composers such as Vivaldi and Lully. The characters originate from Ariosto's Orlando furioso, a seminal masterpiece of Renaissance epic poetry with surprisingly modern themes. In the poem, the renowned paladin from the Carolingian cycle goes mad when his love for Princess Angelica remains unrequited. The ambiguity between power and fragility is also reflected in the character of the sorceress Alcina: a deceitful temptress who, like Circe in the Odyssey, can transform men into animals or plants. While these works celebrate passion and its influence on our actions, Messiah (1741), Handel's crowning achievement in the field of oratorio, extols the significance of Christ, who embodied and redeemed passion and humanity.



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