PRESS KIT

TARANTARTE



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FROM TARANTA POWER TO TARANTARTE



"In the late 1990s, following the experiences of the Nuova Compagnia di Canto Popolare and Musicanova, new artists were spreading a style of music capable of reinterpreting the teachings of the great masters of the tradition in a contemporary key", recalls **Eugenio Bennato.** *"When I founded* ***Taranta Power*** *in 1998, I felt the time was ripe to connect this new music with the audience's active response, recreating the interactive dynamic typical audience's active response, recreating the interactive dynamic typical of folk festivals: on one side, rhythm and melody; on the other, the dance of an engaged audience. Thus, the first Taranta school in Italy was born. In Bologna, in 2001, under the auspices of* ***Maristella Martella*** *and* ***Silvia Coarelli****. It was the starting point for a new generation of dancers. The school, today known as Tarantarte, has over time expanded its repertoire through the creation of original choreographic works, always remaining faithful to the stylistic traditions of the ritual taranta. Thanks in part to this journey, Italy is now increasingly present on the international global groove."*



RECENT SHOW AT FES FESTIVAL



In June 2026, the Tarantarte Company was among the headliners of the 29th edition of the **Fes Festival of World Sacred Music** (“Festival des Musiques Sacrées du Monde), in Morocco, one of the most important and long-standing international events dedicated to sacred music and world cultures.

The Salento-based company has presented the show “Taràn, Taranta, Tarantella” by the choreographer, founder, and artistic director Maristella Martella.

A journey through ritual and celebration, collective memory and contemporary dance, the roots of Southern Italy and the Mediterranean influences. Bringing the heritage of Southern Italy to Fes has meant acknowledging what the two shores of the Mediterranean have always shared: a common sensibility toward rhythm as the language of the soul, toward the body in motion as a space of connection between the sacred and the everyday.

This marks a new milestone in Tartantarte’s artistic and cultural journey that keeps intertwining research, creation, education, and international dialogue.

TARÁN, TARANTA, TARANTELLA

Dance: TARANTARTE COMPANY:

Silvia De Ronzo, Antonella Boccadamo, Chiara Fersini, Manuela Rorro, Maristella Martella, Claudia Sarcinella, Antonio Congedo, Mattia Carlucci

Live music: Voice, Tambourine, Flutes CINZIA MARZO

Direction and choreography: MARISTELLA MARTELLA

Video scenic design: Tarantarte

«**Taràn**, **Taranta**, **Tarantella**» is a dance, music, and video stage show, created by **Maristella Martella**, a dancer, choreographer, and founder of the Tarantarte Company. On stage are **8 dancers** from the company performing with live music by **Cinzia Marzo**, in a dialogue between past and present, between the ritual memory of Southern Italy and the language of contemporary dance. The video scenic designs – made using **videomapping techniques** – inhabit the stage space as an additional layer of visual memory.

«**Taràn**, **Taranta**, **Tarantella**» is the show that best represents, today, the years of research carried out by the Tarantarte Company on the dance traditions of southern Italy. The Pizzica and the Tarantella – in their iconographic, therapeutic, and courtship forms – are reinterpreted through contemporary theater and resonate with the expressive forms of the Mediterranean.

The three souls of «Taràn, Taranta, Tarantella»:

Taràn highlights the connections between the ancient (archaeological) and the contemporary.

Taranta evokes the ritual of Tarantism and the symbolic bite of the Tarantula.

Tarantella refers to the ancient and powerful folk dances, both solo and couple, from the southern regions of Italy, particularly Puglia, Campania, Basilicata, and Calabria.

The show was scheduled for the 2025 edition of the Festival La Notte della Taranta in Salento, the 2026 edition of the Fès Festival of World Sacred Music in Morocco, and the 2027 Theater Season of Puglia Culture.



RITUALS

Direction: Christian Angeli & Francesca Turrisi

Texts and choreography: Maristella Martella

Text adaptation: Francesca Turrisi

Lighting design: Tea Primitera

Costumes: Passi di Stelle by Margherita Gubello

Set design: Tina Aretano

Stage photos: Barbara Ledda

Production: Binario Vivo - Teatro Nuovo di Pisa | Tarantarte

RITUALS is a round-trip journey. It's the autobiography of a generation, the middle one, trapped between the liturgy of grandmothers and the rationalism of fathers.

RITUALS is a path of inner awakening that first becomes a story and then a mythopoetic movement. **Maristella Martella** takes us into our collective unconscious showing us the necessity for an entire generation to escape. Escape from one's own history, from one's own ghosts, from a land that feels tight but smells good, and above all from one's cultural heritage, only to find it again, transformed. Because you always leave in order to see yourself return.

RITUALS talks about Maristella, the women in her family, the encounters that have marked her journey, the masters of art and life. An intimate work, where gesture and word return to the same root.



DANZARE IL MITO

Dance: COMPAGNIA TARANTARTE

Silvia De Ronzo, Laura De Ronzo, Manuela Rorro, Giulia Piccinni, Maristella Martella, Claudia Sarcinella

Live music Voice: Chordophone, Drum NINFA GIANNUZZI, Double Bass ANGELO URSO

Text: «L'âme et la danse» taken from The three dialogues by Paul Valéry, Einaudi

Theatrical adaptation: Francesca Turrisi

Narrators/reciter: Manuela Rorro, Daniela Tamborino

Singing: Giulia Piccinni

Recorded music: Taràn Trance III by Antonio Infantino Fraciddre by Officina Zoè Niji by E.P.

Direction and choreography: Maristella Martella

«**Danzare il mito**» is a site-specific performance of dance, music, and theater, based on an original idea by the great scholar and artist Antonio Infantino, with whom the Company collaborated until his passing.

The dancers inhabit and bring to life museum spaces and archaeological sites around the Mediterranean by 'putting into dance and music' some of the works on display.

Feeding this dialogue between the present and antiquity is a remarkably rich iconographic heritage: dancing figures of satyrs, maenads, and bacchantes – found in vase and mural paintings from Attica, Magna Graecia, Etruria, and Rome – kept in museums and archaeological sites across Italy and the Mediterranean, serve as a source of inspiration. These lively and evocative images are still able to communicate and move us today.

The Company turns these ancient depictions into movement, giving contemporary bodies back the gestural vitality that ancient painters captured on ceramics and murals.

«Danzare il Mito» becomes a cultural project that builds our memory, going beyond generations and connecting us to an ancient heritage of which our museums are the keepers.

«Danzare il Mito» was carried out at the archaeological site of Augusta Raurica (Basel), the Roman Colosseum of El Jem (Tunisia), the Temple of Hera in Metaponto (Basilicata), the Castromediano Archaeological Museum in Lecce, and the New Archaeological Museum of Ugento (Le).



ph Raffaele Puce

TARANTA SOLO

Dance: Maristella Martella

Choreography: Katina Genero

The ritualistic and therapeutic origins of the Tarantella inspire a dialogue between the tradition of ancient healing rites and the expressive exploration of contemporary theatrical and choreographic language. Maristella Martella focuses her research on trance and the phenomenon of Salento Tarantism, starting from the study of ritual elements typical of Mediterranean cultures. Taranta is the deus ex machina that moves everything, it's the starting point, it's the whirling movement, the spinning dance.



ph L'Ombre d'un Istant

WORKSHOP OF TARANTELLA

Held by: Maristella Martella

The starting point of the research is a ritual and therapeutic origin of traditional music and dances from Southern Italy, of trance and Tarantism. It is not enough to put on stage the technical virtuosity and choreographic complexity of traditional dances, but it is necessary to analyze their ritual and theatrical expression.

The creative process is triggered by reading and interpreting traditional codes and their transformations. The motivation, the experience and the determination of participants influence the creative process and, as a result, the final creation.

The body is a means by which one creates, it is a mirror of one's own experience but also an expression of what culture, collective memory and social context impress on the modality of movement, postural attitudes and gestures.

Dance is a form of non-verbal language organization, through which symbolic contents pass. In many societies, it is considered the highest form of art. Through dance we have a possibility to re-establish ourselves with our natural movements connected to the cycle of life. The role of expressing disequilibrium is delegated to the dancers.

The dance transmits and reflects the spirit, conflicts and hopes of its own time. It has always accompanied the celebration of important events in community- life: births, marriages, natural events. Dance, an artistic form and collective expression, passes on cultural and social values. The traditional/ethnic dance in particular is an inexhaustible reservoir of experiences and knowledge of the history of a people that it represents.

The contemporary dance-theatrical language offers different possibilities for reading and interpreting traditional codes and their transformations.



WORKSHOP OF TARANTELLA

Methodological indications:

The method is predominantly experiential and deductive. The foundation is therefore the practice which alternates, however, with moments of observation and reflection aimed at deepening for a new practice:

do – deduce – new level of doing

Practical and conscious experience matures through the process of transformation of the movement, in choral improvisation structures.

The training is based on a conscious and profound exercise of one's own energetic body and afterwards the material one. The personal reflection on the movement, matured by Maristella Martella through her work as dancer, choreographer and interpreter of ethno-contemporary dance, flows into it.

The exercise of listening to one's own and others' movement and the intertwining of the motoric geometries, created by dancers, determine a deep immersion in the body itself, as a mirror of a unique experience, bearer of one's own individual and collective history.

Movement is experienced in an incessant transformation – transition of forms, in balance between fullness and emptiness, tension and relaxation, balance and disequilibrium. Processes of transformation of the movement through the guided improvisation of the individual dancers.

The aim of this workshop is to offer different tools to observe, analyze and organize movement in order to proceed towards a choreographic composition.

Workshop addressed to: dancers, actors, musicians.

Number of participants: no limits.

Synthetic program

- Presentation of the educational and artistic path of Maristella Martella
- Presentation of the training method
- Warm-up and dancers' preparation
- Exploration of the basic elements of dance: space, dynamics, relations
- Introduction to ritual dances from Southern Italy (Pizzica and Tarantism, Tarantelle)
- Improvisation and creation of choreographic scores
- Preparation and creation of a final performance

Traditional dance is a source of inspiration for a new expressive language, understood as a process of contamination, that unites Italy and other Mediterranean areas. Choreographic approach to traditional dances facilitates an interaction between different styles, united by a strong contact with the earth that is being stimulated inexorably by dancers' toes, heels and the whole sole of the foot; by a dance inside a circle created by musicians, dancers and bystanders. Knowing a traditional dance is a way to explore the thoughts, the different ways of living, the experiences of a people, through one's own individual experience, one's own present. Hence the idea of exploring the tradition – the inexhaustible reservoir of experience and knowledge – and to mix it with contemporary choreographic and theatrical language in order to understand what it can tell and what it can teach women and men nowadays.

THE COMPANY



THE COMPANY

Tarantarte is a dance company and a school specializing in folk dances from Southern Italy and the Mediterranean, based in Corsano (Le), in the Salento region, with a long-standing presence in Bologna. Its history began in 2001 in Bologna, where **Maristella Martella**, **Eugenio Bennato**, and **Silvia Coarelli** founded **Taranta Power**, the first tarantella school in Italy: a project created to meet the needs of those who – far from Salento – wanted to continue experiencing the music, dance, and folk culture of Southern Italy during those years of great rediscovery.

Today, TarantArte operates throughout Italy and abroad – in Lecce, Bologna, Modena, Naples, Ravenna, Florence, Paris, and Helsinki – and is distinguished by an approach rooted in research, education, and experimentation. Its ongoing collaboration with masters, scholars, and artists such as **Eugenio Bennato**, **Antonio Infantino**, **Giorgio Di Lecce**, **Vincenzo Santoro**, and **Sergio Torsello** has helped develop an original method for studying, teaching, and interpreting the musical, choreographic, and ritual-theatrical aspects of the tarantella, and in particular the tarantella and the ***pizzica pizzica***. Tarantarte is a laboratory of continuous experimentation that spans dance, music, and theater without ever losing its connection to tradition: it is a point of reference in the promotion and dissemination of the choreographic and musical traditions of Salento, and through workshops, performances, training programs, and cultural events, it has created spaces for intergenerational exchange, transforming popular culture into a contemporary language capable of uniting people, experiences, and diverse sensibilities.

In 2009, Maristella Martella founded the Tarantarte Dance Company.

Tarantarte's artistic productions are distinguished by their primary focus on performing in unconventional venues – courtyards, cloisters, amphitheaters, archaeological sites, and Roman and Greek theaters – and by a strong emphasis on live music. Among the most significant venues: the Roman Theater of Augusta Raurica in Basel, the Roman Colosseum of El Jem in Tunisia, the Temple of Hera in Metaponto, the archaeological site of Pompeii, the Castromediano Archaeological Museum in Lecce, the Musée des Confluences in Lyon (France), etc. The repertoire includes Taràn (2009), Passo a Sud (2013), Kore Ensemble (2016), Premesse a Kore (2017), Creta (2018), Veleno (2021), Danzare il Mito (2022), Canti e Incanti (2023), Taràn Taranta Tarantella (2025), and Rituals (2026).

Tarantarte has participated in music and dance festivals in Tunisia, Morocco, Egypt, and France; it has staged some of its performances as part of international collaboration and inclusion projects with refugee women and victims of violence – including Creta at the Cairo Opera House with forty women from South Sudan, Yemen, and Eritrea – ; it has participated in Peter Gabriel's WOMAD in London and in the opening of the Festival de Fès in 2016 and 2024. Since 2019, she has been part of the international network of women artists The Magdalena Project, directed by Julia Varley of the Odin Teatret. She collaborates with the University of Salento and the University of Bologna – Alma Mater Studiorum on courses in Dance Anthropology, History of Popular Traditions, and Cultural Anthropology.

It operates through a dual structure – a Cultural Association (APS) and an Amateur Sports Association (ASD) – with its headquarters at Via Machiavelli, 37 – 73033 Corsano (LE).

MARISTELLA MARTELLA

Maristella Martella



is a dancer, choreographer, and teacher of traditional Southern Italian folk dances, born in 1975 in Salento (Puglia). In 2001, she founded the Taranta Power School in Bologna – the first school in Italy dedicated to pizzica and contemporary tarantella – in collaboration with Eugenio Bennato and Silvia Coarelli, launching a twenty-five-year journey of research, teaching, and experimentation in the musical and dance culture of Southern Italy. In 2009, she founded the Tarantarte Company, which she still directs as a choreographer and director. From 2006 to 2015, she was a solo dancer and choreographer for the La Notte della Taranta Festival, creating the choreography for the final concert in the editions directed by Ambrogio Sparagna, Ludovico Einaudi, Goran Bregović, and Giovanni Sollima. In 2011–2012, she toured with Ludovico Einaudi and the Orchestra Popolare at the Barbican Centre in London and the Auditorium Parco della Musica in Rome.

Choreographer of the theater project Verso Terra, a chi viene dal mare by Mario Perrotta (Ubu Prize 2013, 2015, 2022, and 2025) and of productions by the Alda Fendi Foundation – Esperimenti. Since 2018, she has collaborated with the Castromediano Museum in Lecce on traveling performances inspired by the museum's archaeological collections and in dialogue with contemporary artworks displayed during exhibitions by the museum's guest artists; in December 2025, she directed the company in the performance Danzare il Mito, in dialogue with the works of Michelangelo Pistoletto ("Mar Mediterraneo" and "Labirinno") for the opening of the exhibition Love Difference: In the Labyrinth of Differences.

Since 2019, she has been a member of the international network The Magdalena Project and has been a guest lecturer at the University of Salento and the University of Bologna, leading masterclasses on the Pizzica and Salento Tarantism in the courses on Anthropology of Dance and History of Popular Traditions taught by Prof. Cristiana Natali, and in the course on Cultural Anthropology taught by Prof. Eugenio Imbriani.

The year 2026 marks the 25th anniversary of Maristella Martella and the Taranta Power/Tarantarte School: an anniversary that will be celebrated with a series of events throughout the summer and fall, with the evening event in Fès on June 5 serving as the first and most international of these.

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Scan the QR code to find out more about the shows and watch videos of them

