

ROBERTO COCCONI

Founder and Co-Artistic Director of Arearea

TRAINING EXPERIENCE

From a very young age he began studying artistic gymnastics, from which emerged his predilection for acrobatics and floor exercise, and he took part in Triveneto and Italian championships. In 1979 he began studying contemporary dance with Elsa Piperno, "a pioneer of contemporary dance in Italy," and Joseph Fontano, at the Compagnia Teatrodanza Contemporanea in Rome.

In the early 1980s he continued his training in contemporary technique in Venice with dancer and choreographer Carolyn Carlson and with dancers Larrio Ekson and Jorma Uotinen, and in New York with Ruth Currier, principal dancer of the José Limón company.

During the same years he had his first experiences in physical theatre and clowning, taking part with the Compagnia Teatro all'aria, directed by Claudio de Maglio, in the Venice Biennale Teatro (1980 and 1981) and the InTeatro festival in Poverigi (1981–1982).

WORK EXPERIENCE

In 1982 he joined Carolyn Carlson's Teatro Danza La Fenice company at the Gran Teatro La Fenice in Venice. With this company he danced in the shows Chalkwork – L'Orso e la Luna (choreographed by Carolyn Carlson; touring Italy, France, and Sweden), Underwood (choreographed by Carolyn Carlson; touring Italy and the United States), and Anonuumit (choreographed by Jorma Uotinen). In 1985 he danced in The Tremendous Good Four and the Very Bad Two by Renato De Maria, part of the RAI program Obladi Obladà by Paolo Giaccio and Romano Frassa, hosted by Serena Dandini (15 episodes – Rai Uno). After the Compagnia Teatro e Danza La Fenice disbanded in 1984, he co-founded, in Turin, together with Michele Abbondanza, Francesca Bertolli, Roberto Castello, Raffaella Giordano, and Giorgio Rossi, the company Sosta Palmizi, "the most significant of the very first contemporary dance groups in Italy" (Eugenia Casini Ropa, "Storia della danza," DAMS – University of Bologna, 2007).

In 1985 he danced in Il Cortile, Sosta Palmizi's first collective creation (co-produced with the Cantiere Internazionale d'Arte di Montepulciano). The show won the UBU Prize in Milan (1985) for best Italian dance-theatre production, the Opera Prima Prize in Narni (TR) (1985), and the Danza & Danza magazine prize (1985).

That same year he danced in Auf dem Gebirge hat man ein Geschrei gehört, by Pina Bausch's Tanztheater Wuppertal, during the German choreographer's anthological presentation in Venice (1985). With Sosta Palmizi he danced in Tufo (1986), the company's second collective creation (co-produced with the Inteatro Festival in Poverigi, AN), and in Morgana (1988), a piece for three dancers which he authored (co-produced with the Cantiere Internazionale di Montepulciano and the Festival di Villa Medici in Rome).

He performed as a dancer in numerous opera productions, including: Parsifal by Richard Wagner, directed by Pier Luigi Pizzi with choreography by Richard Caceres (La Fenice, 1983); Orfeo ed Euridice by Christoph Willibald Gluck, directed by Alberto Fassini with choreography by Jorma Uotinen (La Fenice, 1984); Paride ed Elena by Christoph Willibald Gluck, choreographed by Silvana Barbarini (Teatro Olimpico di Vicenza, 1988); and Rosamunde by Franz Schubert, directed by Lorenza Codignola with choreography by Raffaella Giordano (La Fenice, 1989). In 1987 he danced with the Alef company of Orvieto, directed by Rossella Fiumi. In 1995 he appeared as a dancer in Bernardo Bertolucci's film Io Ballo da Sola (Stealing Beauty).

After Sosta Palmizi disbanded, he founded Compagnia Arearea in 1993.

CHOREOGRAPHIC EXPERIENCE

Among Cocconi's most significant works:

- P.E.E.P. Ovest, a video-dance piece (in collaboration with the Language and Audiovisual Center of the University of Udine), which received a special mention at Coreografo Elettronico (Naples) in 1994 for the most successful video relationship between place and choreography;
- Q.Q. (1998), a choreographic work conceived in dual form as both a live show and a video-dance piece;
- VENTI (1988), a choreographic show with music by the Friulian ethno-rock group FLK;
- the trilogy for urban spaces, commissioned by the Comune di Udine, comprising Le Mura (1999), I Numeri (2000), and La Terra (2001);
- Le Ultime Cose (2001), with live music by jazz composer U.T. Gandhi (with the support of CSS Teatro Stabile di Innovazione del FVG);
- About Blank (2013);
- Le Quattro Stagioni – Primavera e Autunno (2016, co-produced with Mittelfest);
- Le Quattro Stagioni – From Summer to Autumn, co-created with Marta Bevilacqua and selected for the 2017 NID Platform;
- Il Caos e la Farfalla (2017, co-produced with Mittelfest and Il Rossetti Teatro Stabile del Friuli Venezia Giulia).

With Luca Zampar he created:

- Box_two (2008), a choreographic installation for two dancers;
- Ballata (2009), a show loosely based on the stories of Corto Maltese;
- Indefinito (2009), a multimedia performance with artist Elisabetta Novello;
- Hominilupus (2011), a choreographic work for four dancers;
- Sursum Corda (2017) and Ciò che resta del fuoco (2018), multimedia performances with artist Elisabetta Novello;
- the trilogy on the music of protest: Noi siamo il tricheco (2020), Cosmic Dancer (2021), and About Punk (2022);
- Scarti_pezzi non conformi (2023).

He co-authored, together with Marta Bevilacqua, the company's most recent production for its thirtieth anniversary, BO.LE.RO (2023).

Among his most recent choreographies: Messaggeri (2025), a co-production with Mittelfest in collaboration with visual artist Elisabetta Novello and the Coro Polifonico di Ruda; 8_otto archi, otto corpi (2026), soon to premiere at Mittelfest, a co-production with the Fondazione Luigi Bon for 8 dancers and 8 cellos.

MISSION

Cocconi's artistic career is paired with a mission to foster the growth of new choreographic perspectives, to nurture professional figures capable of creating events that emphasize the

importance of a culture of gesture, and to ensure the continuity of the Arearea project through ever-new approaches to talent scouting. Technique and a taste for abstraction that moves audiences are the driving forces behind his creations, built on an exclusive trust in the moving body. For Cocconi, dance is group dance. His need to surround himself with professionals across different disciplines gives the company's core ensemble new challenges to face, creation after creation.