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Italy's Artemis Danza Makes American Debut with TRAVIATA Tonight

Parma-based Artemis Danza, one of the most beloved companies in Italy, makes its United States debut with highly acclaimed production "Traviata" at the Reva and David Logan Center for the Arts, 915 East 60th Street, for one performance tonight, Nov. 14 at 8 p.m. Under the leadership of Monica Casadei, the company's acclaimed adaptation of Giuseppe Verdi's "La Traviata," based on Alexandre Dumas' play "La Dame aux Camélias," is presented as part of a celebration of the bicentenary of Giuseppe Verdi's birth and the year of Italian Culture in the United States. Tickets (\$15) are now on sale. Casadei utilizes the dancer's body as an instrument to translate, enhance, and transform the evocative power of Verdi's opera and music to create a visually striking and highly dramatic production. Employing the vigorous and energetic gestures that typically characterize Casadei's choreographic language, the dancer's body embodies the passion, the distress, and ultimately the tragedy of Violetta's and Alfredo's affair. "The Italian Cultural Institute is very proud to take part in this initiative as a key element of our celebration of the Year of Italian Culture," says Silvio Marchetti, Director of the Italian Cultural Institute of Chicago. "This presentation blends the classic with the contemporary, featuring Verdi's beautiful music and Artemis Danza's stunning choreography, presented in the intimacy of the Logan Center for the Arts, a new space that is already contributing immensely to the cultural vitality of Chicago." Artemis Danza's "Traviata" has received tremendous critical acclaim. "With this production, Monica Casadei brings to life a choreographic journey in which dance and opera perform a duet, resulting in a fluidity of images, unrestrained from every didactic intention, yet bound most tightly to the drama of Violetta," wrote a critic from "Piacenza Sera" in the North of Italy. "La Nazione" in Florence raved "The Dance Company becomes an instrument that translates, enhances, and transforms the power of Verdi's music... Monica Casadei's dancing is, as always, full of strength and energy." Livorno's "Il Tirreno" called the production "a highly evocative and deeply moving show," featuring "a feminine and feminist Traviata." "Traviata" is the first element of a suite of ballets dedicated to the work of great composers, co-produced by Festival Verdi, Parma and inspired by some of the world's most-loved operas. Other works include "Rigoletto," (which debuted at Theatre de Suresnes Jean Vilar, Parigi in 2012) and "La Doppia Notte - Aida e Tristan" which debuted this year to celebrate the bicentenary of Giuseppe Verdi and Richard Wagner.

This visually stunning contemporary dance work will be the Logan Center's first foray into presenting an international Dance Company. "We are excited to collaborate with the Italian Cultural Institute to bring this amazing work to Chicago as part of the Year of Italian Culture," says Leigh Fagin, Assistant Director of Collaborative Programming for the Logan Center. "It is a perfect complement to our celebration of Verdi's work we have been doing this fall."

Italian choreographer Monica Casadei is the artistic director of Artemis Danza. Casadei initially had a competitive career in rhythmic gymnastics then studied classical ballet and modern dance in Italy, London and Paris, where she moved in the late 1980s. In Paris, choreographers Pierre Doussaint and Isabelle Doubouloz fostered her professional growth. Her influences also come from martial arts training she received in Paris when she attended the Académie d'Arts Martiaux et d'Arts Contemporains and attained a rank of 2nd dan in Aikido and a teaching certification at the Académie Autonome d'Aikido Kobayashi Hirokazu. In 1994, Casadei founded the Compagnia Artemis Danza in France and, with the company, she moved back to Italy in 1997. From 1998 to 2007, she was in-residence at the Teatro Due - Teatro Stabile of Parma and Reggio Emilia. She has created more than 30 ballets for Artemis Danza and has also choreographed many theatre and opera performances. "Traviata" is presented by Istituto Italiano di Cultura, with support of Corporate Ambassadors, Eni and Intesa San Paolo, and the Reva and David Logan Center for the Arts.