



We're All in the Same Dance: a New Hymn to Life

Natasha Lardera (April 27, 2020)



Consumed by the malaise of this spring's quarantine, violinist, percussionist and composer, Mauro Durante of Canzoniere Grecanico Salentino, gifts the world with a new hymn to life. Music and dance break down the walls of a house in Puglia to cross the globe and bring us together in a shared experience. "We're all in the same dance" is a scream, a jolt, that invites us to heal through the most powerful medicine: unity. This is his story.

The sun is beaming.

Everything is permeated by a strong and vibrant light that seems to be there to protect and encourage us.



The neighbors are on their balconies... some tan, some tend to the flowers, others read or chat with each other. I don't. I'm glad people have rediscovered a sense of community by finding ways to get closer to each other. Some have found purpose in simply creating little performances. But I don't. We, my wife Silvia and I, don't feel the need to.

I've always enjoyed being home. When we are in Lecce, I don't usually go out much as we tour for months during the year. So being home is a special treat. But now, I'm suffocating.

The sun is "burning in the sky, strands of clouds go slowly drifting by" (Simon and Garfunkel), but the real sunshine in our lives is our son Samuele.

He's so happy to have us around 24/7. He's not aware of what's happening outside and he's too young to ask why he hasn't seen his grandparents in a while or why he hasn't played at the park.

On TV they are broadcasting the umpteenth war bulletin. The press coverage is a tragedy within the tragedy. This is bringing me down. I'm feeling a mix of rage, despair and frustration.

It's been a while since I've been able to leave my house to go to the recording studio. I only venture outside for food shopping and throwing the garbage out. The people I see are either the gentle souls who desperately try to make eye contact and smile even behind the mask or the miserable who rush by and furtively judge you for being outside.

The days I was recording my latest project with Justin Adams or writing new songs for Canzoniere Grecanico Salentino seem so far gone.

The sun is radiant.

It all happens in a second. Without even thinking about it, I grab my violin. It's time for my daily practice session, but when I start, instead of the usual warm up I play something else.

I look out the window, yes the sun is there but it's all alone. Nobody is on the streets... or on their balconies. As the first notes come out, I play with an arpeggio that was hiding between my fingers. That was trying to come out from deep inside of me. I don't remember exactly the whole process, I just know that in one take, just one, I record the violin track that's at the soul of "We're All in the Same Dance."

Then I go to Silvia. I ask her to listen to it. I do it every time I create something new. I see the expression on her face change, and I see she's beaming. I tell her about my idea to transform this into something bigger, a video that involves dancers from all over the world. Traditionally, in Southern Italy, music and dance were used to exorcise the poison of the Taranta spider daemon. Now, in the midst of the coronavirus emergency, music becomes a hymn to life and an antidote to the privations of the lockdown. While dancing is our superpower, an invisible thread that pulls us all together.

It's time to test the strength of social media: I ask dancers to film themselves with their smartphones while in quarantine, no matter where they are. In no time, we receive videos from all over Italy and across the world (Spain, France, Switzerland, Australia, the United States, Lithuania and India). They dance in their rooms, in fields, on rooftops, on balconies, on fire escapes and even hanging from the ceiling.

Everywhere. Everybody dances to the same music. "We're all in the same dance."

Gabriele Surdo is the last piece of the puzzle. A really talented director we have worked with years ago during the shooting of Canzoniere Grecanico Salentino's video "Taranta." I'm a bit shy at first as I know I am about to ask him to work, for free nonetheless, on a massive project. The response from the dancers has been enthusiastic to say the least: we have received videos from 150 artists for a total of 12 hours. The video must be 2.30 minutes long.

But I do it. I send him a text. He's busy on other projects and he sounds dubious, but still, he asks me



to send him the music. I think he called me back as soon as he heard it.

A violin, solo, attacks an arpeggio that carries echoes of classical music, taking us into a dark mood, intimate and melancholic. Suddenly, the tambourines burst, playing to Pizzica rhythm. The sound becomes big, tries to break through the walls of its forced intimacy. After the effort, the explosion: the sound breaks out bolder, now unrestrained and fiery.

For the video Gabriele starts from my idea of showing only the dancers' feet and makes it bigger. He asks for more. He asks them to send footage of what they see out of their windows or on their balconies. He asks for objects, animals or even symbols...something personal that represents the difficulty of this time. And he also asks for sunsets: he is looking for a communal light and the light at sunset represents the end of something and the beginning of something new. A new life. For us all.

2.30 minutes; an organic piece of music where bodies, souls and emotions - ours and those of 150 dancers - come together under the same light.

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VIDEO - WE'RE ALL IN THE SAME DANCE

Music written, performed and recorded: Mauro Durante (violin, tamburello, frame drums, strings, moog)

Video direction and editing: Gabriele Surdo

Conception and development: Mauro Durante, Gabriele Surdo, Silvia Perrone

Mixed and mastered: Francesco Aiello

Performers:

Alessandra Bellomo, Alfio Longo, Amabile Bovo, Andrea De Siena. Angela Blaso, Angela Buscicchio, Angela Esposito, Anna Di Matteo, Anna Invidia, Anna Vinci, Annalisa Caputo, Annalisa Rizzo, Archana Kumar, Aurora Lo Bue, Barbara Amalberti, Barbara Migliaccio, Barbara Sabella, Benedetta Spedicato, Carla Trivellato, Carmen Pino, Carolina Cerisola, Chiara Dell'Anna, Chiara Garuglieri, Cristina Frassanito, Dalila Fumarola, Damiano Nicolella, Daniela Errico, Danielle Hartman, Dina Gregory, Eleonora Merisio, Elisa Anzellotti, Emma Ghislanzoni, Erica Occhionero, Fabrizio Ceccarini, Fabrizio Nigro, Federica Carelli, Federica Cicchelli, Federica Madeddu, Filomena Fiordaliso, Floriana Guida, Francesca Corsetti, Francesca Ghione, Francesca Morrone, Francesca Patera, Francesca Vincenti, Fulvia Pirondi, Giacomo Cascione, Giulia Campagna, Giulia Pesole, Giulia Piccinni, Giulia Purcigliotti, Giusy Pede, Giusy Urgesi, Iaria De Angelis, Iaria Specchia, Imani Coppola, Irene Álvarez Blanco, Ismaele Scozzi, Jennifer Jonassen, Jūratė Širvytė-Rukštelė, Lara Einaudi, Laura Esposito, Leonardo Ciccarese, Lisa Pellizzari, Lucia Scarabino, Lucia Taietti, Lucio Pellicciotta, Ludovica Morleo, Maija Garcia, Maria Vittoria Costanzucci, Marilena Menga, Marilisa Satalino, Marzia Delle Fratte, Matthew J. Kulengosky, Mickela Mallozzi, Mirea Scozzi, Moana Casciaro, Monica Zambon, Natalia Pelucchi, Natascia Blasi, Natasha Colangelo, Nella Del Giusto, Noemi Baccaro, Paola Tudino, Paolo Salvatori, Piero Macchia, Roberta Barbiero, Roberta Ingrosso, Rosa Voto Ustrale, Sara Caputo, Sara Lombardi, Serena Pellegrino, Silvia Cagnazzo, Silvia Perrone, Simona Melli, Simona Semente, Simone Guida, Tamara Cadorin, Tiziana De Ruggieri, Valentina Argenti, Valentina Panera, Valentina Trombetti, Valeria Gemma, Valeria Sallustio, Valeria Tirabasso, Valeria Treglia, Vanessa Di Gennaro, Veronica Calati, Veronica Farnocchia, Viola Chicca, Vitalba Tamborrino, Vittoria Jolina Iavicoli.



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