



ARTS & CULTURE

In Italy, Dancing Helps During Lockdown

April 11, 2021

Much of Italy is still in a coronavirus **lockdown**.

So live music, theatrical performances and movies continue to be banned. And many sporting activities are limited.

However, in an industrial area just outside of Rome, competitive ballroom dancing is alive and well. With certain health and safety measures, it just looks a little different.

Face coverings or social distancing are usually not part of the ballroom dancing experience. But they are now. And they do not stop partners of every age from dancing **gracefully** across the floor.

At the New Dancing Days center, dance partners are getting ready for the Italian Championship in Rimini in July. The government considers this activity a national interest. So, the dancers are permitted to keep training. In Italy, other federally recognized competitive athletes are able to keep training even during the latest virus-related bans.

“Yes, we can do it. Here we can keep on dancing,” said Raffaella Serafini. At the age of 45, Serafini has competed in ballroom dancing for a long time, 35 years. She is the owner of New Dancing Days.

The dance center has mirrors on the walls and multi-colored lights. Partners wear face coverings during **warm-ups** and breaks. They can remove them while performing traditional ballroom or Latin dances. But most dancers keep them on anyway.

“It’s something beautiful for us because we’re older, but we can still put ourselves in play,” said 70-year-old Franco Cauli. He is training with his 74-year-old partner for a competition at the end of April.

Cauli said he felt safe with the health measures taken by the dance center. Other dancers, he said, followed the measures seriously and obey them.

The Italian Dance Sport Federation has ruled that 34 dancers are permitted to train in a place the size of New Dancing Days. Currently all 34 dancers at the center, aged nine to 76, train up to five days a week.

From a viewing area above the dance floor, Serafini observes her dancers and shouts directions to them. If she sees something wrong, she will stop the music, go down to the dance floor and show the correct way to do a step, **pose**, or turn.

“The school is my great **pride**,” she said. “When I see them on the dance floor, it is like I am there.”

I’m Anna Matteo.

Alessandra Tarantino reported this story for the Associated Press. Anna Matteo adapted it for VOA Learning English. Hai Do was the editor.

Words in This Story

lockdown *-n.* the confinement of people to a restricted area for a temporary period as a security measure

gracefully *-adv.* moving in a smooth and attractive way

warm-up *-n.* the act or an instance of preparing for a performance or a more strenuous activity

pose *-n.* to hold or cause to hold a special position of the body

pride *-n.* a feeling that you respect yourself and deserve to be respected by other people
