

No anorexia emergency, La Scala ballerinas claim

February 8 2012

The ballet company at Milan's famous La Scala opera house fought back Wednesday, after one of their leading dancers was fired for giving interviews in which she said the industry has an anorexia problem.

The dance corps said in a statement that it was "flabbergasted and embittered" over Maria Francesca Garritano's [allegations](#) that [eating disorders](#) are rife and anorexia affects as many as one in five [dancers](#).

"There is no anorexia emergency, and whoever is part of our world knows that well," said the company, which has been in the spotlight since Garritano began to speak openly about the problem, after writing a book about it in 2010.

The blonde ballerina, 33, was fired last month after ignoring La Scala's warnings to stop making statements that damaged its reputation.

In the interviews, Garritano had said she suffered from anorexia when she was younger, and saw her weight plummet to 43 kilos.

"For eighteen months I did not have my period. Lots of dancers I know cannot conceive because of the problems they had with [anorexia](#)," she told reporters.

"I know dancers who would compete against each other to see how little they could eat," she added.

The ballet company said that while it was surprised by La Scala's decision to fire Garritano, it felt it necessary to publicly refute her allegations.

"We do not feel that we can support a campaign against the theatre, and the world of dance in general, which we do not agree with and which makes us feel victimised," it said.

"To read certain newspapers -- and even some internal union statements -- it seems that there is one courageous heroine who is fighting alone against a hellish place where many girls suffer in silence. This is not true," it added.

La Scala theatre's spokesman told AFP: "Garritano is describing a personal affair which she lived through 15 years ago, which in no way reflects the situation at the theatre today."

"Management at the dance corps completely changed six years ago," he said.

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