

NEWS

For immediate release

THE 53rd SEASON OF LES GRANDS BALLETS CANADIENS DE MONTRÉAL
A SEASON OF FAVOURITES



“A finely tuned instrument for choreographers, this company is a European exception in North America. [...] A young and innovative company. [...] A company on a human scale. Rank, hierarchy—none of this is important. What counts is the desire to be together and serve a work. With an enthusiasm that’s electrifying.”
LE FIGAROSCOPE, PARIS, 2008

Montreal, March 11, 2009—The 2009–2010 season of Les Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montréal marks Gradimir Pankov’s tenth anniversary as Artistic Director. Born in Macedonia, Pankov was at the helm of the Nederlands Dans Theater, the Finnish National Ballet, Ballet Cullberg in Sweden and the Ballet du Grand Théâtre de Genève before taking up post in Montreal. For this anniversary he has chosen to present his **FAVOURITES**, the greatest successes of GBCM shows since his arrival: works that are emotional, delirious, passionate, enticing and decidedly contemporary.

In ten years, **Gradimir Pankov** has got things moving... in a new direction. Day after day until the day of the show, with ever-increasing passion for his dancers. Since his arrival in 1999 he has multiplied the talent and know-how of this company tenfold, giving Montrealers the latest and best in contemporary ballet. Over the seasons he has juxtaposed story ballets, abstract works and pure creation. He has also given GBCM a new international outlook. The company’s reputation for excellence abroad is no accident: witness several recent tours to Europe and the United States, including three weeks in Paris with three different programs in 2008, and a planned series of historical shows in the Middle East next June. The recent creation of a national choreography competition has also exposed and boosted emerging talents, giving young choreographers the chance to work with a professional dance company and a full, high-quality production team.



Photo: John Hall



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Les Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montréal is launching its 53rd season with renewed confidence. It's a season for celebrating and also for showcasing the best pieces Gradimir Pankov has given us over the years. This season will be all about **our up-and-coming talent**, with the GBCM choreography workshop; then it's **time for love** with the epic legend of Verona lovers *Romeo and Juliet*; **time for magic** with the ever-popular *Nutcracker*; **time for romanticism** with the Guangzhou Ballet's classic *La Sylphide*; **time for beauty in the style of Kylián** with *Symphony of Psalms*, *Bella Figura*, and *Sechs Tänze (Six Dances)*, three contrasting selections; and lastly, **time for the sheer joy of dancing** with *Minus One* by Ohad Naharin, an outrageous choreographic patchwork that blows away audiences and critics everywhere it goes and has achieved cult status.

Gradimir Pankov views the presentation of these major works, which Les Grands has either acquired or commissioned, and which have been critically acclaimed while helping put the company on the map, as a way of bringing them to maturity and extending their life. It's also a chance to reinterpret the works, gaining a new appreciation of all the richness and subtlety they contain. One of the ways he will do this is by using a different cast for each.

By remounting these works, we hope to breathe new life into Les Grands and show off our repertoire to an even greater audience. The best experiences are the ones we share, so we invite you to share this one with us!

THE GBCM CHOREOGRAPHY WORKSHOP

September 10, 11 and 12, 2009
Cinquième Salle, Place des Arts

For this fifth choreography workshop, the company dancers invite the public to watch their creations. This very popular event will feature many innovative and original choreographic works on a variety of themes. Not to be missed. Free admission.

TILL DEATH DO US PART

***Romeo and Juliet* by Jean-Christophe Maillot**

Ballet in three acts, based on the work by William Shakespeare
Music by Serge Prokofiev
With Les Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montréal Orchestra
October 15, 16, 17, 22, 24, 29 and 30, 2009
Théâtre Maisonneuve, Place des Arts

With *Romeo and Juliet*, French choreographer Jean-Christophe Maillot, well known for giving a fresh feel to the Ballets de Monte-Carlo as its Artistic Director since 1993, brings us one of his most emblematic works. Directly inspired by the musical structure of Sergei Prokofiev's piece, which plays out like a film score, Maillot's re-reading of the Verona lovers' tragedy spotlights the duality and ambiguity of adolescence, with characters torn between contradictory impulses — tenderness and violence, fear and anger. With bewitching charm, *Romeo and Juliet* returns to the very essence of Shakespearean inspiration, on a transparent, luminous set designed by sculptural artist Ernest Pignon-Ernest that reflects the fragility of youth. Love at first sight, a first encounter that ends with a kiss, and the wheel of fortune begins its inexorable turn. Ardour and languor, youthful escape and loving tenderness, the beating of hearts and the trembling of bodies... A blend of the modern and the classic, this is an unusually limpid work, imbued with nuance and subtlety and superbly danced. Back by popular demand!





ETERNAL CLASSIC

***The Nutcracker* by Fernand Nault**

Music by Peter Tchaikovsky

With the Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montréal Orchestra

December 12–30, 2009

Salle Wilfrid-Pelletier, Place des Arts

Succumb to the charms of *The Nutcracker*. Let yourself float away on a magical voyage full of surprises in the Land of the Sugar Plum Fairy and the Kingdom of Sweets. Meet Clara, Fritz, a throng of youngsters, the Sugar Plum Fairy, her Prince, and the King of Sweets! Sumptuous sets, gorgeous costumes, fairy-tale colours and lights... *The Nutcracker* will fill your senses. Since 1964, this marvellous ballet—choreographed by the late Fernand Nault, adapted from E.T.A. Hoffmann's tale and set to music by Tchaikovsky—has never lost its hold on people's imaginations. Fantastic entertainment for the whole family, *The Nutcracker* will warm your heart as it has done with all of its audiences for 46 years.

ROMANTIC BALLET PAR EXCELLENCE

***LA SYLPHIDE* de Pierre Lacotte d'après Filippo Taglioni**

GUANGZHOU BALLET TROUPE, COMPANY PRESENTED BY LES GRANDS BALLETS

Music by Jean-Madeleine Schneitzhøffer

February 18, 19 and 20, 2010

Salle Wilfrid-Pelletier, Place des Arts

Under the aegis of its Artistic Director, renowned dancer Zhang Dandan, Guangzhou Ballet Troupe, China's youngest ballet company, has earned an enviable reputation through its impressive collaborations with the China National Opera House and by the richness of its repertoire, where Eastern classics stand next to original ballets inspired by Chinese culture. The troupe will be visiting Montréal to perform *La Sylphide*, a quintessential romantic work. A legendary oeuvre in romantic ballet, created for Opéra de Paris in 1832 by Filippo Taglioni, *La Sylphide* enchanted kings, queens, czars and emperors throughout the first half of the 19th century. Choreographer Lacotte was determined to bring it back to life in keeping with its archival records. On the eve of his wedding, a young Scotsman, James, falls for a sylph, a supernatural creature that he pursues through a mysterious forest. A tale of impossible love, this absolute masterpiece of inventiveness and sensitivity embodies the pinnacle of elegance in ballet, with its evanescent ballerinas floating across the stage in diaphanous costumes. A memorable evening, redolent with the beauty of great art.

BEAUTY ACCORDING TO KYLIÁN

SYMPHONY OF PSALMS

Music by Igor Stravinsky, *Symphony of Psalms*, "composed for the glory of God"; based on Psalms 39, 40 and 150

BELLA FIGURA

Music by Lukas Foss, G.B. Pergolesi, Alessandro Marcello, Antonio Vivaldi and Giuseppe Torelli

Sechs Tänze (Six Dances)

Music by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart: *Sechs Deutsche Tänze (Six German Dances)*, KV 571

by Jirí Kylián

March 18, 19, 20, 25, 26 and 27, 2010

Théâtre Maisonneuve, Place des Arts

Jirí Kylián times three! Kylián is an essential figure of the modern dance world. His name has gone hand-in-hand with that of the Nederlands Dans Theater for three decades. This master of the neo-classic, described as a humanist, knows better than any other how to unveil the paradoxes and vulnerability of the human spirit. Choreographer of some 100 works, he seduces audiences with the beauty, emotion and humour of a world where inventiveness knows no limits. This three-act performance features exceptional works by Kylián restaged with flair by Les Grands Ballets. First, *Symphony of Psalms*, set to the music of Stravinsky, is a ritual celebrating the spirituality of being, a dance to the glory of humanity and love. Next, *Bella Figura*, a voyage through time, space and light, plays with the aesthetic ambiguity of theatrical performance through a suite of baroque tableaux caught between dream and reality. And lastly, *Sechs Deutsche Tänze* bewigged entertainment filled with self-mockery in which waves of burlesque duos and trios play out sequences inspired by Mozart's *Six German Dances*. Absolutely irresistible.





Photo: John Hall

ADRENALINE RUSH

***Minus One* by Ohad Naharin**

Traditional and popular music, ethnic rhythms and original compositions

May 6, 7, 8, 13, 14 and 15, 2010

Théâtre Maisonneuve, Place des Arts

Ohad Naharin—gifted artist and Artistic Director of the Batsheva Dance Company since 1990—impresses at every turn. Solicited by the best ballet companies, this Israeli choreographer, who says he does dance for the 95% of people who aren't interested in it, is in a class of his own when it comes to creating shocking, jubilant works peppered with sly winks and surprise effects. "Dance is, for me, a way of thinking about the world I live in. My history—my past, my culture, my origins, my wanderlust—forms the foundation of my approach. I want my experience to meet the different experience of each audience member... for the walls to crumble away in a mutual questioning, for the duration of a performance," Naharin explains. He comes to us once again with *Minus One*, one of les Grands Ballets' international successes, an anthology made up of works in seven parts that blows away audiences and critics everywhere it goes. Sublime images, comic scenes, a palette of emotions and styles, powerful dance that ranges from the wildest extravagance to lyricism and introspection, *Minus One* magnifies the singularity of each dancer, each an original variation. Moving, hypnotic, astounding, *Minus One* is a celebration.

A COMPANY ON THE MOVE

Les Grands Ballets Canadiens—a company known for creativity and with a strong repertoire reflecting all the new trends in ballet, a first-flight ambassador for Canada through its tours and reciprocal agreements with international dance companies, a breeding-ground for new talent, a great institution offering educational activities for the community. Join the movement...and subscribe to Les Grands' blockbuster season!

You can find out about our subscription options, group packages and the benefits they offer, by calling us at **514 849-0269**.

MORE WAYS TO ENJOY LES GRANDS BEYOND THE STAGE

At Les Grands Ballets, we're happy to share experiences that enhance your theatre-going activities. If you haven't already visited our **newly redesigned website**, be among the first to discover new videos, exclusive interviews and previews showcasing the work of Les Grands, all at **www.grandsballets.com**. While you're there, why not sign up for your **E-Newsletter** to ensure you stay connected with the company. To further enrich your experience, join us for **pre-show talks**, 7:00 p.m.-7:30 p.m., where dancers, choreographers and guests offer an insider's view one hour prior to each show.

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