

# LES GRANDS

BALLETS CANADIENS DE MONTRÉAL

GRADIMIR PANKOV, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

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+ 1 514 849-8681



Dancers: BBCM / Photo: John Hall

## **CITIES VISITED SINCE 2000**

Vancouver, St-Louis, Ottawa, Sao Paulo, Munich, New York, Mexico, Fort Lauderdale, Madrid Jacob's Pillow, Berlin, Toronto, Pittsburg, Philadelphia, Houston, Reggio Emilia, Detroit, Minneapolis  
Los Angeles... and soon... Paris!



Photo: John Hall

## GRADIMIR PANKOV ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

“Gradimir Pankov’s revolution at Les Grands Ballets canadiens de Montréal continues, with breathtaking results.”

*John Rockwell, The New York Times*

Macedonia native Gradimir Pankov has been in love with dance for 50 years. He began his career as a brilliant dancer in the former Yugoslavia and in Germany, before successively taking over the artistic direction of Nederlands Dans Theater II (the Netherlands), the National Ballet of Finland (Helsinki), the Cullberg Ballet (Sweden), and Ballet du Grand Théâtre de Genève (Switzerland). He has also served as a guest instructor with the most prestigious ballet companies in the world: the Paris Opera Ballet, the Lyon Opera Ballet, Nederlands Dans Theater, the Cullberg Ballet, the Gulbenkian Ballet, and the American Ballet Theatre. On his road to success, he met and made lasting friendships with what are today’s leading ballet figures, including Jiří Kylián, Mats Ek, Ohad Naharin, and rising stars like Didy Veldman and Stijn Celis.

A man of passion and openness, Pankov is passionate about all forms of expression. Undaunted by challenges, he aspires to make Les Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montréal into a company that stands out both in the world of ballet and that of culture in general.

Since his arrival, he has breathed new life into the Montréal company and fuelled the desire to excel through his programming choices, disciplined thinking, and deep understanding of the artists and designers he works with. Pankov is a complete professional driven to imbue the company with the distinct character of the city he adopted in 2000 and where he intends to remain for some time to come.



## LES GRANDS BALLETS CANADIENS DE MONTRÉAL

**Les Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montréal** is dedicated to bringing ballet in all its forms to audiences everywhere. Since Gradimir Pankov took the helm as artistic director in 2000, the company has continually stimulated, amazed and moved audiences with its deep passion for dance. Utterly devoted to his art, Pankov has focused his energies on staging original works. In just a few years he has commissioned memorable, eloquent ballets like *The Queen of Spades*, *Noces*, *Cinderella (The Lost Shoe)*, *TooT*, and *Four Seasons*.

This 2007-2008 season marks the 51th anniversary of Les Grands Ballets. Since its founding by Ludmilla Chiriaeff in 1957, the company has presented a wide variety of ballets ranging from the great classics to groundbreaking 20th century works by Balanchine, Jooss, Nijinsky, and many others. It has fostered the emergence of artists who went on to international renown, like Fernand Nault, James Kudelka, Édouard Lock and Ginette Laurin. Les Grands Ballets also stands out for presenting the works of up-and-coming choreographers like Kim Brandstrup, Stijn Celis and Didy Veldman. As well, the company has collaborated with today's top choreographers, including Jiří Kylián, Mats Ek, Nacho Duato and Ohad Naharin. They all love working with Les Grands Ballets, thanks to the talent and calibre of the company's dancers.

Each year, in addition to the productions by Les Grands Ballets, audiences can enjoy performances by guest companies that are among the best on international scene today. Visiting companies included Houston Ballet, Royal Winnipeg Ballet, Alvin Ailey® American Dance Theater, Sweden's Cullberg Ballet, Spain's Compañía Nacional de Danza, Poland's Warsaw Ballet, Taiwan's Cloud Gate Dance Theatre, Shen Wei Dance Arts from New York City, and Ballet de l'Opéra de Lyon, to name but a few.

Dance knows no boundaries. That's why Les Grands Ballets also tours the world. Public and critical acclaim in Germany, Spain, Italy, Mexico and United States have bolstered its international profile.



Dancers: Isabelle Paquette, Andrey Leonovitch  
Photo: Serguei Endinian



Dancers: OBCM / Photo: Serguei Endinian



Dancers: Isabelle Paquette, Mariusz Ostrowski / Photo: John Hall

## CINDERELLA (THE LOST SHOE...)

### STIJN CELIS

Music: **Prokofiev, The Baxters**

Production: Les Grands Ballets  
Canadiens de Montréal

World premiere:  
October 18, 2007 (2nd version)

Number of dancers: 27

Length: 80 min. (plus intermission)

Unlike other Romantic ballets, *Cinderella* has had very few adaptations. But throughout all the transformations that have occurred from version to version (364 in total from the original Chinese tale up to Charles Perrault's), and century to century, a recurring vision remains: that of the archetypal woman waiting to blossom—caught, on the one hand, between obedience, prohibitions and the forces that have shaped her since childhood, and drawn, on the other hand, to the realization of her full potential, which takes place before the eyes of readers and viewers alike. In all of these versions, *Cinderella* is a woman in the process of becoming one.

With his deeply transfiguring vision of *Cinderella*, Stijn Celis fits well into this thousand-year-old tradition. The slipper constitutes the key symbol of this transformation, as well as of the love it brings to the prince, giving him comfort and providing his life with meaning. With its staging, Mr. Celis' version explores the relationships between the characters in depth: a complex and spurned young woman, a deceased mother who can transmit her womanly secrets to her daughter only through their respective unconscious minds, a godmother who becomes an inner protective voice, a prince who is a prisoner of his privileged social position and who must learn to overcome his class habits, a cruel stepmother who is a rival, half-sisters who are indeed "not real girls," which means that they no longer possess the secrets of "true" femininity. And what does it mean, moreover, to be a real girl? And how does one finally manage to see one's true face, above and beyond the hand one has been dealt in life, which one has not chosen but which one must learn to play to the best of one's ability.

Stijn Celis has not shirked from asking such existential questions. Indeed, he has made them the basis of his choreography.



Dancers: GBCM / Photo: Roland Lorente

Dancers: GBCM / Photo: Roland Lorente

Dancers: GBCM / Photo: Roland Lorente

## THE QUEEN OF SPADES

*The Queen of Spades* is the captivating tale of the destructive love and passion for gambling that inexorably lead Hermann, the main character, to his tragic fate.

The work portrays man's void attempt and ultimate inability to control his own destiny in a world that's at once romantic, somber, and mystical. *The Queen of Spades* exalts these artistic values, the cornerstone of the ballet, and invites spectators to voyage between fantasy and reality.

*The Queen of Spades* is a three-act ballet on point. The design of the set and the 68 costumes lend the work a contemporary, universal appeal. As part of the stage set, backdrops are projected one after the other onto three adjustable multimedia panels. Brandstrup cleverly uses these visual elements as an extension of the dancers' body language and a means of projecting the protagonists' emotions on screen.

"*Queen of Spades* a ballet diamond"

"*The Queen of Spades* won a screaming whistling standing ovation at its world premiere. This was well deserved, for *Queen* is a finely danced harmony of classical, modern and folk dances styles bound in a rampaging flow of movement that drives the complex narrative with never a dull moment. It's a jewel in the crown of Les Grands..."

*Linde Howe-Beck, The Gazette*

"Les Grands has always been a company of enormous energy, and the dancers attack this piece with gusto"

*Paula Citron, The Globe and Mail*

"This balletified *Queen of Spades* deals all right cards."

"The choreography is a clever mix of styles."

*Michael Crabb, The National Post*

### KIM BRANDSTRUP

Music: **Gabriel Thibaud**  
(adaptation and original music  
from Tchaikovsky's opera)

Production: Les Grands Ballets  
Canadiens de Montréal

World premiere: October 18, 2001

Number of dancers: 28

Length: 80 min. (plus intermission)



## MINUS ONE

### OHAD NAHARIN

Music: **Traditional to popular songs, baroque music, ethnic rhythms and original compositions**

Production: Les Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montréal

World premiere: May 30, 2002

Number of dancers: 29  
Length: 85 min. (without intermission)

*The illusion of beauty / and a fine line that separates madness from sanity / the panic behind the laughter / and the coexistence of fatigue and elegance... these words open Ohad Naharin's *Minus One*, one of the most innovative pieces from the repertory of Les Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montréal.*

This complex and finely chiselled work owes its quality to the alchemy with which every element is suffused. Starting with excerpts from seven different pieces (*Zachacha, Sabotage Baby, Black Milk, Passomezzo, Anaphaza, Queens of Golub et Mabul*), Mr. Naharin has succeeded in creating a single work, unique and whole, that at no point feels like an arbitrary collage. Choreographic patchwork is a perilous exercise, but the choreographer has carried it off with flair. At the finale, he pays a magnificent tribute to dance and above all to dancers themselves, with the company's performers speaking in voice-over throughout the piece, telling their own stories and talking about their relationships with dance.

*Minus One* gives Les Grands Ballets' dancers a chance to demonstrate the full diversity of their talents. This work is one of the company's largest worldwide successes to date.

"More audiences might appreciate contemporary dance if more contemporary dance was as engaging as Ohad Naharin's *Minus One*."

*Molly Glentzer, Houston Chronicle*

"These works are indeed so energised and so physically alluring, that one can't help but enjoy them. Les Grands ballets is without doubt a quality company, abundantly energetic and well-rehearsed... Their collective work also paid excellent dividends in the celebrated chair dance... delivered here with detonating power and to near perfection."

*Bruce Michelson, Dance Europe*

"Once again, très bien. Les Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montréal breathes new vitality into the retread ideas of *Minus One*".

*Laura Bleiberg, The Orange County Register*



Dancers: GBCM / Photo: Serguei Endinian

Dancer: Sarah Gibson / Photo: Serguei Endinian

## KAAMOS - ARBOS - NEW CREATION

During his time as artistic director of Le Ballet du Grand Théâtre de Genève, Gradimir Pankov was one of the first to recognize the immense talent of Ohad Naharin and commission original works by the young Israeli choreographer. Naharin has since come into his own as a leading light of contemporary dance, as resident choreographer of the celebrated Batsheva Dance Company, among other roles.

Naharin responded to Pankov's invitation in memorable fashion with his 2002 creation *Minus One*. After its world premiere in Montréal, the ballet became a mainstay of Les Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montréal's repertoire.

The fruitful collaboration between the choreographer and Les GBCM continues with a solid program anchored by the diptych of *Arbos* and *Kaamos*. In the choreographer's view, notions of pleasure and sensuality are central to these two pieces, even though they were created five years apart, complement each other like a pair of twins: "they are similar in physicality, but at the same time very different in personality."

In addition to this collage of works, in April 2008 Les GBCM will present the world premiere of a new choreography by Naharin, created especially for the company's dancers. Acclaimed for his challenging of dance conventions with physically superb works enriched by a natural musicality, Ohad Naharin promises to once again astound Montréal audiences with this trio of stunningly original, masterfully realized works.

"La densité, voire la gravité constituent, avec une forte charge émotive, la teneur de cette première partie bicéphale." (*Kaamos - Arbos*)

*Aline Apostolska, La Presse*

"*Arbos* touche au sublime sans être dépourvu d'humour et de lucidité. C'est là toute l'intelligence de Naharin, qui sait jouer de contrastes et de revirements."

*Frédérique Doyon, Le Devoir*

### OHAD NAHARIN

#### KAAMOS

Music: **Ivry Lيدر**

World premiere by Nederlands Dans Theater

Premiere by Les Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montréal:

May 26, 2005

Number of dancers: 10

Length: 15 min.

#### ARBOS

Music: **Arvo Pärt**

World premiere by Sydney Dance Company

Premiere by Les Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montréal:

May 26, 2005

Number of dancers: 9

Length: 25 min.

#### NEW CREATION (2008)

World premiere by Les Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montréal:  
April 3, 2008

Dancers: CBCM / Photo: Serguei Endinlian



Dancer: Mariusz Ostrowski / Photo: Serguei Endinlian



Dancers: Marie-Eve Lapointe, Hervé Courtain / Photo: Serguei Endinlian

# TOOT

## DIDY VELDMAN

Music: **Shostakovich (Jazz Suite No. 2) and Balanescu Quartet**

Production: Les Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montréal

World premiere: March 10, 2005

Number of dancers: 15  
Length: 45 min.

*TooT*, by Dutch dancer-choreographer Didy Veldman, follows eight men and seven women cavorting in brilliantly imaginative vignettes.

*TooT* is a revelation, an entertaining and powerful statement on the conflict between conformity and individualism. Didy Veldman sets the work to Shostakovich's raucous *Jazz Suite No. 2*, but she also intersperses darker, more soulful music by the Balanescu Quartet. *TooT* is brilliantly imaginative in both theatrical context and richness of movement. Six curved, mirrored 'boxes' suggest a circus ring, reinforced by the dancers' white, clown-like faces and antics that include a water gun fight and a solo by a woman dressed in a cloud of red balloons. The dancers fling themselves into falls and fluid acrobatic phrases that flow with the work's shifting tone as the hilarious water-gun fight eerily morphs from play into a macabre revolt.

"*TooT* meaning the sound of a horn, a sound which shocks you out of your current state to make you aware of a new situation, a new layer of conscience."

Didy Veldman

"*TooT*... is a cross between an old-time Fellini film and the trendy deft Cirque du Soleil... Veldman clearly knows how to make things happen and allows free rein to her imagination and ideas... In *Noces*, the emphasis is on artificiality and pounding coercion, the dictates of society and biology that ensure survival of the species. It is harsh, animalistic and fatalistic... Overall, it's a visually stunning, strenuously adventurous evening. Let's call it bracing, a bracing change and something to brace for — a brave new world."

Allison Tracy, *The Berkshire Eagle*

"Les Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montréal is worth catching if it comes to your city, especially with this program."

Allan Ulrich, *Voice of Dance*

Dancers: GBCM / Photo: Roland Lorente

Dancers: Anik Bissonnette, Marcin Kaczorowski / Photo: Serguei Endhian

Dancers: GBCM / Photo: Roland Lorente

## NOCES

*Noces*, by Belgian choreographer and set-designer Stijn Celis, features 24 dancers who strut, pose, and challenge each other at a Balkan peasant wedding – the dancing is raw, and deliriously intense.

*Noces* is a radically expressionistic celebration ritual set to Igor Stravinsky's riveting, barbaric 1923 score. Stijn Celis follows the original scenario, familiar from Bronislava Nijinska's original choreography, of a Russian peasant wedding. Two dozen dancers, divided into sharply opposing forces, male and female, brutally challenge each other. They move with disjointed angularity and stiff precision through arresting patterns, connecting and disconnecting without emotion. This is not so much mating as war. The men wear black suits, the women caps with pigtail-like ribbons, bodices and bunched white tulle skirts. The women dance with the men seated ominously on their benches at the side; then roles reverse. *Noces* looks like Balkan folk dancing, hinting at the delirious intensity of Serbian brass-band wedding music. The dancing is raw, sometimes almost obscene: in the way the women gather up their tulle and bear down on the men or how bodies are twisted and stretched violently in space.

"If the other repertory Mr. Pankov has cultivated in Montreal is anywhere as good as this (*TooT* and *Noces*), we should see more of it – and these compelling dancers – as soon as possible."

*John Rockwell, The New York Times*

"Celis, Stravinsky and the Canadians generated an irresistible force field on the stage."

*Lewis Segal, Los Angeles Times*

### STIJN CELIS

Music: **Stravinsky: Anthem / Les Noces**

Production: Les Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montréal

World premiere:  
September 26, 2002

Number of dancers: 24  
Length: 25 min.

Dancers: Mariko Kida, Jérémy Galdeano  
Photo: Robert Elcheverry

Dancers: Robin Mathes, Jean-Sébastien Couture  
Photo: Robert Elcheverry

Dancers: GBCM / Photo: Robert Elcheverry

## FOUR SEASONS

### MAURO BIGONZETTI

Music: **Vivaldi**

Production: Les Grands Ballets  
Canadiens de Montréal

World premiere: May 24, 2007

Number of dancers: 27

Length: 42 min.

"If it had ever crossed my mind, in the past, to make a choreography on Vivaldi's *Four Seasons*, I would have thought that I had gotten crazy: it is undoubtedly one of the most known and executed scores in the world. I have never imagined to work on such a widely known and used music.

Nevertheless, here I am today, taking on this challenge whose grandeur lies in the possibility to express – once again – something different, new, despite the familiarity of this work known to all. After so many centuries, these notes can still stir the heart of human beings. I believe that something extremely abstract but rich in tangible elements will come out of this piece. I would like to let the inner seasons of men flow, its moods, its changes, that sense of history which is deeply held inside of us, the reminiscence of emotions and their perpetual alternation, the universality of being men and women, in spite of the deep differences that strain and give form to our existence.

The four seasons become infinite in the human being. Is that not nature? "

Mauro Bigonzetti

"Le chorégraphe a osé l'impossible: créer un ballet sur *Les Quatre saisons* mille fois entendues de Vivaldi. Avec l'orchestre de chambre des GBC, il relève habilement le défi en inventant un univers à part entière avec sa danse tantôt déliée, tantôt tordue, qui tire le maximum des danseurs de la compagnie."

Frédérique Doyon, *Le Devoir*

"La version de Bigonzetti est un joyau de grâce, ciselé dans un mélange d'extrême difficulté chorégraphique, de rapidité d'exécution vertigineuse et d'attention à chaque détail... C'est étonnant et remarquable."

Aline Apostolska, *La Presse*



Dancers: GBCM / Photo: Robert Etchevery

## CANTATA

"*Cantata* is a choreography bursting with the typical vibrant colors of the South. Its passionate and visceral gestures evoke a Mediterranean and wild type of beauty. An instinctual and vital dance explores the various facets of the relationship between man and woman: seduction, passion, quarrels, jealousy. *Cantata* pays homage to the Italian culture and musical tradition, a popular one in the highest sense of the term. It includes Italian music of the eighteenth and nineteenth century from lullabies to Salentine *pizziche* and Neapolitan serenades. In this ballet, created after my encounter with a group of musicians from Naples and Puglia, dance and music strongly intermingle."

Mauro Bigonzetti

"Cette pièce est inoubliable! Un concentré de l'énergie chtonienne et passionnelle des *mammas* du sud de l'Italie, un tremblement du Vésuve, c'est dire! Le tout sur une musique qui constitue en soi un événement émotif... On sort de cette pièce heureux, en pensant... *la vita e bella!*"

Aline Apostolska, *La Presse*

"Hymne à la rude beauté méditerranéenne, à la culture italienne et à sa tradition musicale et populaire, *Cantata*, de facture pourtant très contemporaine, ressemble à une fête de village. L'énergie brute et rebelle, les passions - et les ego - enflammées y coulent à flots; au grand bonheur du public. *Viva Italia!*"

Frédérique Doyon, *Le Devoir*

"Bigonzetti is a passionate, flamboyant choreographer, and Les Grands is clearly born to dance his work."

Linde Howe-Beck, *Dance International*

### MAURO BIGONZETTI

Music: **Original and traditional music from southern Italy arranged by Gruppo Musicale Assurd**

World premiere by Ballet Gulbenkian (2001)

Performed by Aterballetto (2002)

Premiere by Les Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montréal: May 24, 2007

Number of dancers: 17

Length: 39 min.

Dancer: Mariko Kida / Photo: John Hall

Dancers: Alison McCreary, Jeremy Raja  
Photo: Serguei Endlian

Dancers: GBCM / Photo: Pascale Simard

## FORGOTTEN LAND - SIX DANCES - BELLA FIGURA

### JIŘÍ KYLIÁN FORGOTTEN LAND

Music: **Britten**

World premiere by Stuttgart Ballet  
(1981)

Premiere by Les Grands Ballets  
Canadiens de Montréal:  
March 30, 2006

Number of dancers: 12  
Length: 26 min.

### SIX DANCES

Music: **Mozart**

World premiere by Nederlands  
Dans Theater I (1986)

Premiere by Les Grands Ballets  
Canadiens de Montréal:  
March 6, 2003

Number of dancers: 8  
Length: 15 min.

In comparison to Benjamin Britten, Jiří Kylián sees *Sinfonia da Requiem* as a work of a more personal than political character. It is always people who determine the political scene; it is likewise people and nature who always turn the wheel of evolution a little further. Britten was born in East Anglia, where the English coastline is slowly being submerged by the sea.

Together with a painting by Edvard Munch, the image of land being taken over by the sea was the primary inspiration for the choreography of *Forgotten Land*. Land, the basis and centre of human existence, eternally subject to metamorphosis and mutation; lands that have borne the imprints of successive generations from ancient times onward; lands in human memory that had to be forgotten due to political struggle; lands destroyed by nature or human negligence; wishful lands which have emerged only in our dreams; lands of promise and illusion.

“Two centuries separate us from the time Mozart wrote his *German Dances*. A historical period shaped considerably by wars, revolutions and all sorts of social upheavals.

With this in mind I found it impossible to simply create different dance numbers reflecting merely the humor and musical brilliance of the composer. Instead, I have set six seemingly non-sensical acts which obviously ignore their surroundings. They are dwarfed in face of the ever present troubled world which most of us for some unspecified reason carry in our souls.

Although the entertaining quality of Mozart's *Sechs Tänze* enjoys great general popularity, it shouldn't only be regarded as a burlesque. Its humor ought to serve as a vehicle to point towards our relative values. Mozart's ability to react upon difficult circumstances with a self-preserving outburst of non-sensical poetry is well known.”

Jiří Kylián

Dancers: CBCM / Photo: Serguei Endinlian



Dancers: Mariusz Ostrowski, Isabelle Paquette / Photo: Pascale Simard



Dancers: Alisia Pobega, Joëlle Henry / Photo: Serguei Endinlian

## FORGOTTEN LAND - SIX DANCES - BELLA FIGURA

"A journey in time – light and space, addressing the ambiguity of aesthetics – performances and dreams.

Finding beauty in a grimace – in a knot of the mind – or in a physical contortion.

It is like trying to perform a balancing act on the string of your umbilical cord.

When does the performing act start?

When we are born or when the curtain rises?

Does it all end when we walk off the stage – or is there no end to the performance?

What is a masquerade? – The clothes we wear in the street or the stage costume?

Between so-called art and artificiality – between the reality of life or fantasy – this twilight zone creates a tension which is of interest to me.

It is like standing on the edge of a dream. Standing in darkness and staring into a sharp light with closed eyes – doubting every bit of our so-called reality.

The moment in which dream intrudes into our lives and life into our dreams – this is the point of my curiosity.

Simply – a feeling of falling down in a dream and waking up with a broken rib."

Jiří Kylián

"Une pièce métaphysique (*Forgotten Land*) dans laquelle les interprètes excellent dans la charge dramatique..."

*Aline Apostolska, La Presse*

"*Bella Figura*, d'une beauté troublante, profonde et énigmatique, explore l'univers de l'Art et du rêve."

*Frédérique Doyon, Le Devoir*

"En interprétant trois œuvres du chorégraphe tchèque, Les Grands Ballets nous ont présenté hier une soirée magnifique, composée de pièces aux vastes registres et dansées par des interprètes en pleine maîtrise de leur art."

*Daphnée Bédard, Le Soleil, Québec*

### JIŘÍ KYLIÁN

#### BELLA FIGURA

Music: **Lukas Foss, Pergolesi, Marcello, Vivaldi, Torelli**

World premiere by Nederlands Dans Theater I (1995)

Premiere by Les Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montréal: March 6, 2003

Number of dancers: 9  
Length: 30 min.



## TENDER HOOKS - SOLO FOR TWO - APPARTEMENT

### DIDY VELDMAN

#### TENDER HOOKS

Music: **Philip Feeney**

World premiere by Ballet  
Gulbenkian (2003)

Premiere by Les Grands Ballets  
Canadiens de Montréal:  
May 25, 2006

Number of dancers: 9  
Length: 25 min.

"I was interested in creating a work about the atmosphere of communication. The void you are sometimes left in when you feel you are trying to communicate but are not necessarily succeeding. Moments of true understanding are so rare in our society, we often live alongside each other in our busy modern life of today. Our happiness depends a lot on communication but we find it hard to connect. With this work I wanted to explore the different ways of connecting within a group, in relationship or alone."

Didy Veldman

"*Tender Hooks* is an urban and a physical work, spiced with creative hints."

Stéphanie Brody, *La Presse*

### MATS EK

#### SOLO FOR TWO

Music: **Arvo Pärt**

World premiere by Cullberg Ballet  
(1996)

Premiere by Les Grands Ballets  
Canadiens de Montréal:  
May 15, 2003

Number of dancers: 2  
Length: 23 min.

Originally, under the title of *Smoke*, this ballet was created for the Swedish Television. In the autumn of 1996 it was awarded an Emmy (the television equivalent of the cinema's Oscar). "A chamber piece, wistfully blue, that winds its way into the recesses of the viewer's mind" wrote the Swedish newspaper Svenska Dagbladet of the TV ballet. The stage version, entitled *Solo for Two*, has been adapted and revamped by Mats Ek for the Cullberg Ballet.

*Solo for Two* is a melancholy love duet to music by the Estonian composer Arvo Pärt. The two characters, the man and the woman, are each other's reflections. Peder Freij, the visual artist, designed the decor and costumes.

"*Solo for Two* is simply one of the most beautiful and strange dances imaginable."

Janet Anderson, *Philadelphia City Paper*



Dancers: GBCM / Photo: Serguei Erdimian



Dancers: Geneviève Guérard, Jesus Corrales  
Photo: John Hall



Dancers: GBCM / Photo: John Hall

## TENDER HOOKS - SOLO FOR TWO - APPARTEMENT

“*Appartement*... the place in which we pass our lives, in close contact with ourselves and with others, the place in which our daily drama unfolds.  
But *Appartement* also signifies ‘separation’ and isolation. A place in which we can be both together and apart at the same time.  
The title of the ballet attempts to give shape to different images and actions which do not tell a story but which relate to this key-word.”

Mats Ek

“Mats Ek has brought to the stage eleven uninterrupted scenes constructed around the “icons” of our daily lives (stove, armchair, carpet, bidet, vacuum cleaner, lamp, door,...), setting to dance our relations with these objects like so many rites of the commonplace that at the same time reveal our relations with others.”

“Judging by their passionate abandon on opening night at Théâtre Maisonneuve, Les Grand’s dancers loved Ek’s work. That’s what happens when performing artists feel they’ve risen to major challenges. Artistic director Gradimir Pankov has consistently added repertory that excites his dancers in ways that come across strongly on stage.”

*Victor Swoboda, The Gazette*

“C’est avec un immense bonheur que nous pouvons revoir *Solo for Two*, sans conteste un des bijoux du répertoire actuel des Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montréal.”

*Stéphanie Brody, La Presse*

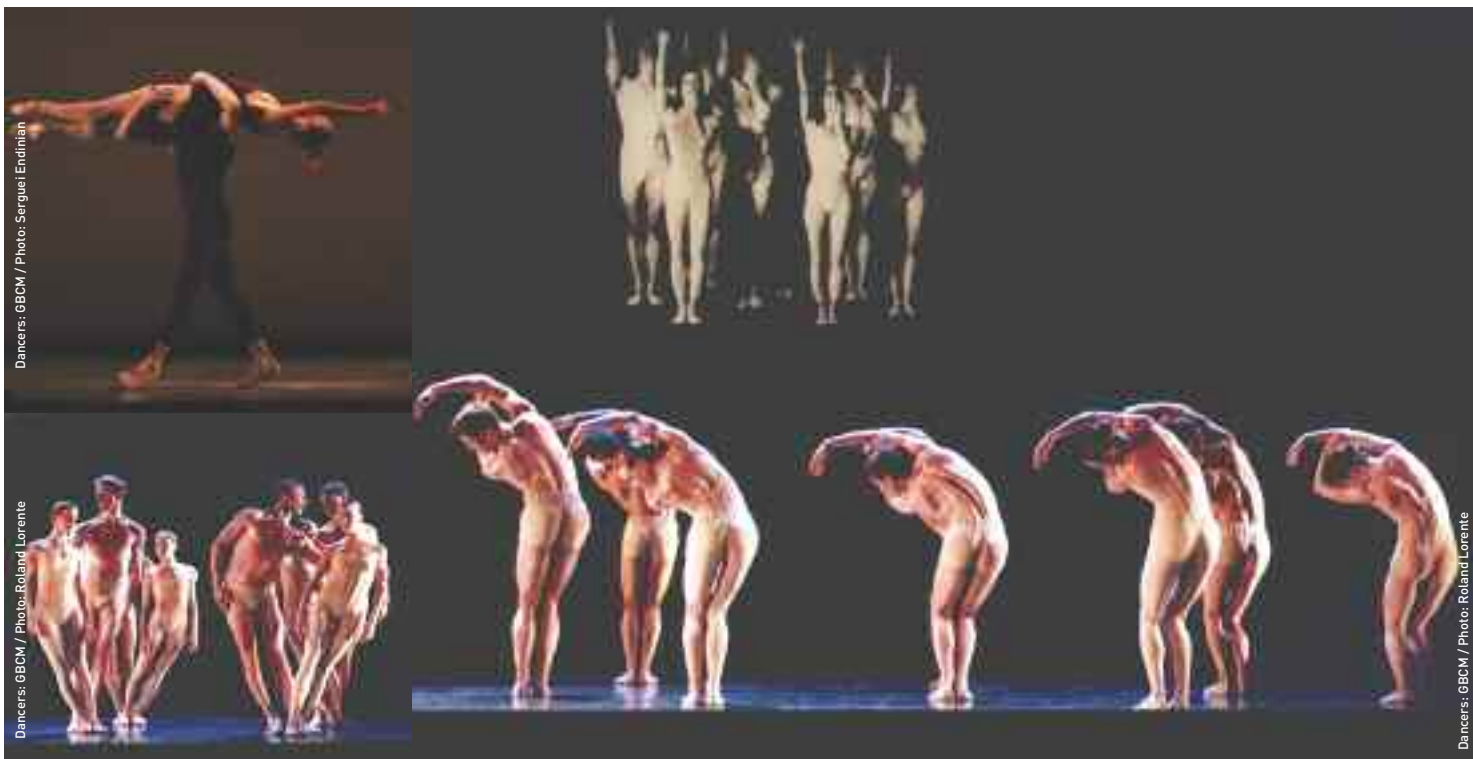
### MATS EK APPARTEMENT

Music: **Fleshquartet**

World premiere by Ballet de l’Opéra national de Paris (2000)

Premiere by Les Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montréal:  
May 15, 2003

Number of dancers: 12  
Length: 48 min.



## WITHOUT WORDS - POLYPHONIA - RE-, II

### NACHO DUATO

#### WITHOUT WORDS

Music: **Schubert**

World premiere by American Ballet Theater (1998)

Premiere by Les Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montréal: May 11, 2000

Number of dancers: 8  
Length: 21 min.

The piece, *Without Words*, by Nacho Duato refers to Schubert's song scores which are instrumental music, music without words. Misha Maisky, along with pianist Daria Horova, transcribed and recorded the composition's voices for cello. As in the songs, the choreographer strips the dancing of any evident romantic atmosphere. Duato shows a universal vital cycle in all its spontaneity free of unnecessary alignments and ornaments.

"The dancers give it all they've got, performing better than I've ever seen them."

*Linde Howe-Beck, The Gazette*

### CHRISTOPHER WHEELDON

#### POLYPHONIA

Music: **Ligeti**

World premiere by New York City Ballet (2001)

Montreal premiere by Les Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montréal: May 20, 2004

Number of dancers: 24  
Length: 27 min.

Polyphonia, a piece that choreographer Christopher Wheeldon has himself described as "Romantic with a touch of humour," was created in 2001 for the New York City Ballet. Set to ten different works for piano by Hungarian composer Györgi Ligeti, it shifts, over the course of ten short tableaux, from the bold, neoclassical angularity of Balanchine through dynamic duos, a dreamlike waltz and a delicate solo suffused with melancholy, culminating in the intense embrace of a man and woman. As Debra Craine puts it in the Times of London, "Polyphonia, set to piano music by Gyorgy Ligeti, is a series of dance cameos marked by beauty and strangeness. We are introduced to four couples who then break up into solos and duets. The choreography is intense, sensual and daring."

"...*Polyphonia* fait littéralement éclore la musique de György Ligeti... Comme chez Balanchine, de petits détails dans les gestes... donnent une personnalité à la chorégraphie. Mais c'est encore une fois les duos et les figures superbes auxquelles ils donnent lieu qui subjuguent."

*Frédérique Doyon, Le Devoir*



Dancers: GBCM / Photo: John Hall

## WITHOUT WORDS - POLYPHONIA - RE-, II

Inspired by a voyage to Tibet, Shen Wei created *Re-, I* for Shen Wei Dance Arts at the 2006 American Dance Festival. Echoing this work, *Re-, II* stems from impressions the choreographer took away from a recent visit to Angkor Wat, the largest and most harmonious of the temples in Angkor, Cambodia. Jungle sounds recorded by Shen Wei himself, together with the traditional Cambodian music of Moon Band, a local group of disabled artists, form part of the soundscape of the piece; additional music is supplied by composer John Tavener. That reflects the rich architectural elements of the site.

*Re-, II* is a work for 16 dancers created by Shen Wei specifically for Les Grands Ballets.

“Avec *Re-, II*, on n’est pas loin du chef-d’œuvre. Cette pièce promet de constituer un des hauts faits de la troupe.”

*Aline Apostolska, La Presse*

### **SHEN WEI**

RE-, II

Music: **John Tavener and  
Cambodian traditional music**

Production: Les Grands Ballets  
Canadiens de Montréal

World premiere: March 15, 2007

Number of dancers: 16

Length: 32 min.



Dancers: GBCM / Photo: John Hall

## CONTACTS

### TOURING CONTACT

**Corinne Jozsef**

Director of Touring and  
Guest Companies

**Les Grands Ballets  
Canadiens de Montréal**

4816, rue Rivard  
Montréal (Québec)  
Canada H2J 2N6

Telephone: +1 514 849-8681,  
ext. 257

Fax: +1 514 849-0098

[cjozsef@grandsballets.com](mailto:cjozsef@grandsballets.com)

### AGENTS

**Ilter Ibrahimof (UNITED STATES, GREECE, TURKEY)**

**Sunny Artist Management (SAM)**

315 Bleecker St., Suite 130

New York

NY 10014 USA

Telephone: +1 646 201 9481

Fax: +1 646 827 3879

[ilter@sunnyartistmanagement.com](mailto:ilter@sunnyartistmanagement.com)

**Lily Sarfati (FRANCE & BENELUX)**

**Sarfati Art International**

21, rue Le Pelletier

75 009 Paris, France

Telephone: +33 1 47 70 89 27

Fax: +33 1 42 47 15 01

[lsarfati@productions-sarfati.com](mailto:lsarfati@productions-sarfati.com)

**Roberta Righi (ITALY)**

**International Music**

Via delle Mondine, 6

41 012 Carpi – Modena, Italie

Telephone: +39 059 644 688

Fax: +39 059 645 163

[roberta@international-music.it](mailto:roberta@international-music.it)

# PROGRAMS AVAILABLE FOR TOURING

<b>CINDERELLA (THE LOST SHOE)</b> .....	Stijn Celis
<b>MINUS ONE *</b> .....	Ohad Naharin
<b>THE QUEEN OF SPADES</b> .....	Kim Brandstrup
<b>TOOT AND NOCES</b>	
TOOT* .....	Didy Veldman
NOCES* .....	Stijn Celis
<b>ITALIAN EVENING</b>	
FOUR SEASONS, CANTATA .....	Mauro Bigonzetti
<b>KYLIAN EVENING</b>	
FORGOTTEN LAND, BELLA FIGURA, SIX DANCES .....	Jiří Kylián
<b>MATS EK EVENING</b>	
TENDER HOOKS .....	Didy Veldman
SOLO FOR TWO, APPARTEMENT .....	Mats Ek
<b>NAHARIN EVENING</b>	
KAAMOS-ARBOS, NEW CREATION .....	Ohad Naharin
<b>MIXED PROGRAM</b>	
WITHOUT WORDS * .....	Nacho Duato
POLYPHONIA .....	Christopher Wheeldon
RE-,II .....	Shen Wei
Also available on demand:	
JARDI TANCAT .....	Nacho Duato
THE NUTCRACKER* .....	Fernand Nault
PERPETUUM .....	Ohad Naharin

\* Technical Specifications available on the website: [www.grandsballets.com](http://www.grandsballets.com)

The company tours with approximately 50 people, including: Artistic Director, 2 Ballet Masters, 35 dancers, Artistic Coordinator, Technical Director, Stage Manager, Lighting Designer, Technical Assistant, Wardrobe, 6 IATSE technicians, Touring Manager, Pianist, Physiotherapist.

Note: 100 staff members tour with *The Nutcracker* and more than 80 extra children/adolescents, are needed in each city where the production is being presented.