

NEWS

For immediate release

LES GRANDS BALLETS CANADIENS DE MONTRÉAL AT JACOB'S PILLOW FESTIVAL THIS SUMMER



Photo: Robert Etcheverry

Montréal, June 26, 2009 — Just back from an exceptional tour of the Middle East and Europe, Les Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montréal will visit the **Jacob's Pillow** international dance festival in Massachusetts from **July 29 to August 2, 2009**. The company will present an Italian program this year at Ted Shawn Theatre, showcasing the work of choreographer Mauro Bigonzetti with the American première of *Four Seasons* and *Cantata*.

Les Grands Ballets is proud to be invited once again to this event, a springboard for creation, education and preservation in dance. Gradimir Pankov, Artistic Director of Les Grands Ballets, describes Jacob's Pillow as a "prestigious venue for dance companies from all over the world, as well as a major source, and resource, for the education of young dancers and developing choreographers."

Since its founding, Les Grands Ballets has performed nine times at Jacob's Pillow, the first being in 1959 with Ludmilla Chiriaeff's *Étude* and *Farces* as well as Eric Hyrst's *Labyrinthe*, *Sea Gallows* and *Première classique*; then again in 1960, 1967, 1970, 1982, and 1994. More recently, in 2004, the company performed *Solo for Two* by Mats Ek, *Six Dances* by Jiří Kylián and *Without Words* by Nacho Duato; and in 2005, *TooT* by Didy Veldman and *Noces* by Stijn Celis.



JACOB'S PILLOW FESTIVAL

Created in 1933 by dancer and choreographer Ted Shawn, a pioneer of modern dance, the Jacob's Pillow festival is the world's top international dance festival. All the biggest names in American dance have performed there, including Martha Graham and Mark Morris, and so have foreign companies such as Royal Danish Ballet and Nederlands Dans Theater. This year, Jacob's Pillow pays tribute to choreographer Merce Cunningham, a major figure in contemporary dance, on the occasion of his 90th birthday. Over the years, the festival has become an international institution that features the widest range of dance styles in the United States.

FOUR SEASONS AND CANTATA

The company will give six performances of *Four Seasons* and *Cantata* at the Jacob's Pillow festival. With *Four Seasons*, a ballet for 26 dancers choreographed in 2007 for Les Grands Ballets and set to the widely known music of Antonio Vivaldi, Bigonzetti has carried off the challenge of expressing something different through pieces that have been interpreted thousands of times, bringing forth "people's internal seasons, our states of mind and our changes of mind." "... a graceful jewel carved of extreme choreographic difficulty, dizzying performance speed, and fine attention to every detail... It's stunning and remarkable." – *La Presse*

Cantata, commissioned by Ballet Gulbenkian in 2001 and added to Les Grands Ballets' repertoire in 2007, is "an homage to Italian culture and its musical tradition, popular in the most noble sense of the word." Set to popular Neapolitan music performed live by the singers of **Gruppo Musicale Assurd**, *Cantata* uses instinctive, vital dance to explore the multiple facets of relations between men and women, from seduction to jealousy. "A hymn to rugged Mediterranean beauty, Italian culture and its musical and popular tradition" – *Le Devoir*. July 29, 30 and 31, and August 1 and 2, at 8 p.m., and also at 4 p.m. on August 1.

DANCE TALK

Gradimir Pankov and his wife, Margret Kaufmann, ballet mistress and Assistant to the Artistic Director of Les Grands Ballets, will give a dance talk on **July 29** about their personal and professional collaboration as well as the prestigious history of Les Grands Ballets at the Jacob's Pillow festival.

NEXT STOP, NEW YORK

Lastly, the company will soon be travelling once again to the United States for the **Fall for Dance** festival in New York City on **September 24 and 25**, where it will perform *Noces* by Stijn Celis.

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