

The Gazette

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Les Grands favour European steps for 2010-11 season

Program includes German creators, *Moulin Rouge*

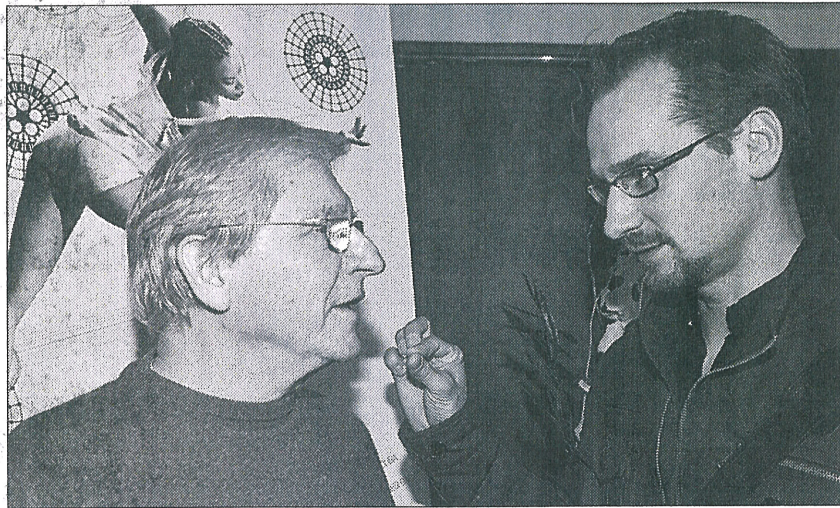
VICTOR SWOBODA
SPECIAL TO THE GAZETTE

The 2010-11 season of Les Grands Ballets Canadiens again has a European flavour, with heady perfume and spice added by two guest companies: the Royal Winnipeg Ballet and, for the first time in Canada, the full Cuban National Ballet.

Les Grands' artistic director, Gradimir Pankov, favours choreographers with sharply creative edges, so he's invited three German iconoclasts to stage works.

"It's a young generation to inspire my dancers," Pankov said at a news conference yesterday in Montreal to unveil the season.

Comic satire underlies *Leonce and Lena* by Christian Spuck, about a couple who defy social convention. The



DAVE SIDAWAY THE GAZETTE

Artistic director Gradimir Pankov (left) talks to German choreographer Christian Spuck at Goethe-Institut, where they unveiled Les Grands Ballets Canadiens' next season yesterday.

theme is from a play by Georg Büchner, author of *Woyzeck*. Spuck – resident choreographer at Stuttgart Ballet – has created for New York City Ballet, among others. His 2008 ballet opens Les Grands' season in October.

Spuck's compatriots Marco Goecke – another Stuttgart Ballet resident choreographer – and Stephan Thoss provide a double bill in May 2011. Known for his unique, unusual visions, Goecke has created works for Nederlands Dans

Theater and other major European troupes. For Les Grands, he plans a still-unnamed half-hour piece to pop music. Thoss will stage *Searching for Home*, his probing-for-identity work from 2008, to Philip Glass's music.

A more conventional work is *Moulin Rouge*, in April 2011. To celebrate the Royal Winnipeg Ballet's 70th anniversary last year, Canadian choreographer Jordan Morris turned to colourful dance-hall costumes and sets, hummable Johann Strauss tunes and a young romantic couple. Toulouse-Lautrec and the can-can danced in toe shoes are the cherries on top.

For brilliant classical artistry, the ticket is the Cuban National Ballet dancing *Giselle* in February. Its virtuoso stars are capable of deeply felt, distinctly individual interpretations of this romantic classic. The corps de ballet is a marvel.

In March 2011, Les Grands will restage two Mauro Bigonzetti works, *Four Seasons* and *Cantata* – a double bill that has been a hit at home and on tour.

For more information on Les Grands Ballets Canadiens' next season, see the website www.grandsballets.com or call 514-849-0269.