

NEWS

For immediate release

BEAUTY ACCORDING TO KYLIÁN

A Jirí Kylián triple bill, performed by
Les Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montréal



Photo: Pascale Simard

“Sensuality, intimacy, interiority, a play on appearances, a subtle, intelligent lampooning of conventional views and esthetics.
[...] Kylián’s daring choreography is full of unexpected finds that leave one speechless.”
La Presse

Montréal, March 11, 2009 – In the spring of 2010, Les Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montréal will present an exceptional evening devoted to Jirí Kylián, one of Europe’s most celebrated choreographers, known for his masterful juxtaposition of modern and classical dance. On the program: *Symphony of Psalms*, *Bella Figura* and *Sechs Tänze (Six Dances)*, three major works that have featured in the Les Grands Ballets repertoire since 2003. Mysticism, fantasy, burlesque — get set for three fascinating facets of one of today’s most talented choreographers, **March 18, 19, 20, 25, 26 and 27, 2010**, at Théâtre Maisonneuve of Place des Arts. Make a date with great art!

Kylián to the power of three

One of Kylián’s own favourites is *Symphony of Psalms* (1978) — a work for 16 dancers that, set to Igor Stravinsky’s choral symphony of the same name, “brings together dance and the divine.” Perpetually onstage and accompanied by a choir, the dancers surge and retreat, becoming one with the music. The work is a celebration of human spirituality, translated into fluid movement by Kylián, whose dancers express pain and suffering, but also hope and tenderness, in impassioned duets and ensembles. The choreographer’s geometric bias is accentuated by the vertical patchwork of Oriental carpets that form the backdrop.

“My idea wasn’t religious, in the strict sense of the word, but rather my reading attempts to follow the musical structure, evocative of ritual, whose rhythms channel a flood of emotion and pathos,” Kylián says. Stravinsky’s powerful score, based on the Psalms of David, was commissioned by the Boston Symphony Orchestra to mark its 50th anniversary in 1930.



An intoxicating blend of dream and reality, the visible and the invisible, supreme harmony and sublime beauty, *Bella Figura* (1995) is a series of Baroque duets, trios and quartets for nine dancers. Set to 17th- and 18th-century compositions by Giovanni Pergolesi, Antonio Vivaldi, Lukas Foss, Alessandro Marcello and Giuseppe Torelli, *Bella Figura* explores the esthetic ambiguity of theatrical representation.

"Where does performance begin?" Kylián asks rhetorically. "At birth, or when the curtain raises? When does it end — when you walk offstage? What is masquerade: the clothes worn to go out or the costume worn onstage? Where is the division between art and artifice, reality and imagination? I seek the moment where dreams intrude into life, and vice-versa." **"Pure bliss."** (*La Presse*)

The evening ends with the delightfully absurd *Sechs Tänze* (1986). Based on Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's *Six German Dances*, this work for eight dancers is bewigged entertainment full of self-deprecating humour that culminates in sheer buffoonery. In the face of conflict and unrest, Kylián's virtuosic burlesque is, as it were, the last refuge of the doomed. **"This short piece has entertained audiences for close to 20 years. [...] Les Grands presents it as an exquisite balance between control and frivolity. Audiences can't seem to get enough, calling the dancers back for repeat encores."** *The Gazette* (Les Étés de la danse)

Jirí Kylián

Creator of some 100 works, Kylián is one of the most noteworthy choreographers in dance today. A humanist whose inventiveness knows no bounds, he skilfully unveils the paradoxes and fragility of the soul, questioning the times in which we live. Born in Prague in 1947, Kylián studied dance at Prague Conservatory before going on to train at Royal Ballet School in London. It was there that he met John Cranko, a key figure in modern dance, who asked him to join Stuttgart Ballet. Kylián left Germany in 1975 to become Artistic Director of Nederlands Dans Theater, a position he held until 1999. In 1978, his breakthrough piece *Sinfonietta* put Nederlands Dans Theater on the map. *Symphony of Psalms*, his second major work of the same period, further enhanced the company's reputation.

Kylián has created some 60 works for Nederlands Dans Theater, which under his leadership has become a byword for originality. In founding two other troupes to complement NDT I (the primary troupe), he developed the company's unique present-day structure. Kylián stepped down as Artistic Director in 1999, but has maintained a vital relationship with the company, serving as artistic advisor and resident choreographer. His works have been performed by more than 80 dance schools and companies around the world. In November 2008, Kylián created *Gods and Dogs* for NDT II, marking his 100th choreography. For me, an ideal world would be the union of humanity and intellectuality," he says. This is a choreography's highest attainment."

***Symphony of Psalms, Bella Figura, Sechs Tänze* by Jirí Kylián**
Performed by Les Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montréal
March 18, 19, 20, 25, 26 and 27, 2010, at 8 p.m.
Théâtre Maisonneuve, Place des Arts

Pre-show talks will take place from 7 to 7:30 p.m. at Théâtre Maisonneuve prior to each performance.

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Individual tickets go on sale on July 6 at Place des Arts, **514 842-2112 / www.laplacedesarts.com**.

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