

NEWS

For immediate release

**MATS EK'S *SLEEPING BEAUTY* BROUGHT TO LIFE BY
LES GRANDS BALLETS CANADIENS DE MONTRÉAL
AN EYE-OPENER OF A SHOW!**



Ballet Culberg - photo: Lesley Leslie-Sprinks

**“Those who see this *Sleeping Beauty* will never forget it.”
(THE GAZETTE, MONTRÉAL)**

Montréal, January 28, 2009 – With the coming of summer, *Sleeping Beauty* will awaken once again, thanks to Les Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montréal. Swedish choreographer Mats Ek's radical remake of a great ballet classic is subversive, comical and troubled: an adult fairytale that's nothing less than astonishing. Get set for an eye-opening evening to the music of Tchaikovsky at **Théâtre Maisonneuve of Place des Arts** on **May 7, 8, 9, 14, 15 and 16, 2009, at 8 p.m.** The show is presented by the Mouvement des caisses Desjardins.

Danger: mined zone

Ek says, “A fairytale is like a pretty little cottage with a sign on the door saying ‘Danger: land mines!’ All fairytales have something in common: princesses, witches, kings and queens, Good and Evil. But each one also has something unique about it, since inexplicable things happen. In *Sleeping Beauty*, for me, this mysterious moment is the actual prick of the thorn, with the sleep that follows. What does this mean, and what is going on? I have a storytelling urge. The act of rereading myths, legends and fairytales, discovering their obvious aspects, taking them apart, sabotaging and recreating them—which is to say, taking them seriously—is to my mind one of great significance.”

A stunningly contemporary reading

Ek's *Sleeping Beauty*, a ballet for 20 dancers with set design by Peder Freij, is a liberal adaptation of Charles Perrault's fairytale and Marius Petipa's 1890 ballet. A modern-day saga about the quest for (and fear of) the unknown, *Sleeping Beauty* introduces an Aurora unlike any other. A rebellious teenage runaway, she goes from the arms of one suitor to another before falling for Carabosse, who sweeps her into an artificial paradise. Enter the Prince, who is everything *but* charming ... Laced with Mr. Ek's trademark black humour, this knockout rereading uses classical pointe work to tell a resolutely up-to-the-minute story. “What dancing! Full and generous, dizzyingly powerful, this is ballet that breaches tradition with rich humour.” (*Le Devoir*)



Mats Ek

Born in 1945 in the city of Malmö, Ek is the son of renowned Swedish choreographer Birgit Cullberg, who founded Cullberg Ballet in 1967, and actor Anders Ek. He debuted as a dancer in Stockholm in 1973 and began working as a choreographer in 1976. His earliest ballets, including *Soweto* and *The House of Bernarda Alba* (based on the novel by Federico García Lorca), brought him international recognition. His renown increased with his subsequent remakes of classical works for Cullberg Ballet, particularly *Giselle* (1982), *The Rite of Spring* (1984), *Swan Lake* (1987) and *Carmen* (1992), which were adapted to the screen by Swedish television. A leading contemporary choreographer, he was the Cullberg's artistic director from 1985 to 1993. Since then, he has been in constant demand by the biggest dance companies in the world, including Hamburg Ballet, Nederlands Dans Theater, Ballet de l'Opéra de Lyon and Ballet de l'Opéra de Paris.

Showered with acclaim

Created for Hamburg Ballet in 1996, when it was unanimously hailed by critics and audiences alike, *Sleeping Beauty* made its Swedish première in Stockholm the following year with dancers from Cullberg Ballet. After Cullberg staged the work in Montréal to great acclaim in 2001, it was acquired by Les Grands Ballets, which is presenting it for the first time. "Mats Ek's melding of acting, mime and dance is brilliant." (*The Ottawa Citizen*). "Mats Ek's sensual and violent dance is so, so worth the trip." (*Voir*) "How can you not be carried away by Mats Ek's magnificently twisted gestural language—he who has so radically reworked countless classics by giving them a frenetic, unbridled energy?" (*La Presse*)

***Sleeping Beauty* by Mats Ek**

Les Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montréal

May 7, 8, 9, 14, 15 and 16, 2009, at 8 p.m.

Théâtre Maisonneuve, Place des Arts

Box Office: **514-842-2112 / www.pda.qc.ca**

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

DON'T MISS OUT!

For information on subscription rates, group packages and their many associated advantages, call 514-849-0269 read the season's brochure at www.grandsballets.com, where you'll also find information on shows, the company and its dancers.

Les Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montréal would like to thank Cinémas Guzzo, the season's sponsor, Mouvement des caisses Desjardins, title sponsor, and Kinatex Sports Physio, evening sponsor for May 14, 2009.

Les Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montréal acknowledges the financial support of the **Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec**, the **Canada Council for the Arts**, and the **Conseil des arts de Montréal**.

– 30 –

Information: Isabelle Gagnon, Press Officer
(514) 849-8681, ext. 230
igagnon@grandsballets.com

Francine Arsenault, Direction, Communications
(514) 849-8681, ext. 227
farsenault@grandsballets.com

www.grandsballets.com