

# The Gazette

Samedi, 05 septembre 2009

dance, tv

THE GAZETTE • montrealgazette.com • SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 5, 2009



Choreographer Karel Williams holds Bryna Pascoe during a rehearsal Monday for Atelier Chorégraphique, a free show presented by the dancers of Les Grands Ballets Canadiens.

PHOTOS: MARIE-FRANCE COALLIER, THE GAZETTE

## Dancers turn choreographers

Les Grands Ballets dancers' Atelier Chorégraphique is splendid – and free

VICTOR SWOBODA  
SPECIAL TO THE GAZETTE

The dancers of Les Grands Ballets Canadiens just can't seem to dance enough. Already this year, they've toured Europe, the United States and the Mideast, as well as presented a winter season at home. After a short time off, they returned to the studio a few weeks ago to start rehearsing Jean-Christophe Maillot's *Romeo and Juliet*, the first show of their fall season that begins in October. But beyond their assigned company duties, the dancers are simultaneously preparing their own unique show for three free performances next week.

It's the Atelier Chorégraphique (Choreographic Workshop), a splendid showcase for the company's dancers who want to choreograph their own works and have them interpreted by their colleagues. Originally begun nearly two decades ago, the show has been staged in one form or another almost annually under the name *À Suivre*.

Past programs are replete with the names of dancers who've gone on to choreographic careers. The 1998 edition featured the work of Shawn Hounsell and Louis-Martin Charest. In 2002, the show gave Montreal an early look at Victor Quijada's exceptional talent. In 2003 (a gala fundraising event for cancer), Mario Radacovsky's work was on the bill. Two years ago, the show featured a work by Jean-Sebastien Couture, who last year was one of four impressive finalists in Les Grands' nationwide young choreographers' competition.

Whereas the show was once held outside the city core at the Maison de la Culture Frontenac, now it's seen at the Cinquième Salle of Place des Arts. Frontenac is a fine, well-equipped theatre, but holding the show on the central downtown stage where distinguished dance companies perform gives the event added cachet.



Emma Garau (left) and Kenji Matsuyama Ribeiro rehearse Monday.

In a nice gesture, the province-run Cinquième Salle is rented out for the non-profit show for a symbolic fee of \$1. In another nice gesture, Les Grands has provided a small budget to pay for stage accessories, commemorative T-shirts, newspaper ads and technicians' fees.

Ten choreographers are presenting works.

"First-time choreographers might do something on a three- or four-minute song. Those who have choreographic experience can make longer works. But we try not to have limitations. We want to have the most freedom for creating because the works are very, very personal," said veteran company dancer Marisa Pauloni in an interview as she prepared to rehearse her trio late one recent afternoon following a company rehearsal.

Under Pauloni's eye, newly promoted soloist Lénia Guégan linked and unlinked arms and legs with Marcin Kaczorowski in choreography that fused classical ballet with classical Argentine tango. Accompanying them was Argentina's great Osvaldo Pugliese tango orchestra. Another duet followed, this time with Guégan partnered with Dario Giuseppe Dinuzzi performing to the voice of Mercedes Sosa. The song

was a setting of a farewell poem by the pioneer Argentine women's rights activist and journalist Alfonsina Storni, who committed suicide by drowning.

"She discovers a peacefulness, a liberation from the past. That's what I try to represent," said Pauloni, a tango aficionado (her parents are Argentinian) who also presented a tango-inspired work at the 2005 Atelier Chorégraphique.

Atelier Chorégraphique will be Montrealers' first chance to see the company's seven newly hired dancers (11 dancers departed from the company this year, including first soloist Mariko Kida, who had been regularly cast in leading roles). The new recruits are an international bunch: Mathieu Rouvière (France), André Silva (Brazil), Ye Li and Xuan Cheng (China), Kenji Matsuyama Ribeiro (Portugal), Bryna Catherine Pascoe (United States), and Emma Garau Cima (Spain).

Atelier Chorégraphique, Thursday to Saturday, Sept. 10-12 at 8 p.m. in the Cinquième Salle of Place des Arts. Free tickets are available at the Place des Arts box office or can be reserved at [www.pda.qc.ca](http://www.pda.qc.ca) For information, call 514-842-2112.