

**NEWS**

For immediate release

## TILL DEATH DO US PART

Les Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montréal performs  
Jean-Christophe Maillot's *Romeo and Juliet*



Photo: John Hall

**“A pure, luminous ballet, swept along by the excitement  
of first love and the inexorable hand of fate.”**

*La Presse*

**Montréal, September 15, 2009** — Les Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montréal kicks off its 53rd season with the legendary lovers of Verona and their enduring passion. The coming season will pay tribute to Les Grands Ballets' greatest successes since Artistic Director Gradimir Pankov took the helm of the company 10 years ago. Based on the eponymous play by William Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, a three-act ballet by Jean-Christophe Maillot, starts things off on **October 15, 16, 17, 22, 24, 29 and 30, 2009**, at Théâtre Maisonneuve of Place des Arts. Sergei Prokofiev's rousing score will be interpreted by Les Grands Ballets Orchestra under Conductor Allan Lewis. Love is in the air!

### **The heart's impulses**

Love at first sight, a first encounter that ends with a kiss, and the wheel of fortune begins its inexorable turn: in this compelling drama, the game of passion is played out to the full. Directly inspired by Prokofiev's score, which reads like a screenplay, Maillot's retelling of Shakespeare's tragic tale downplays the traditional enmity between the clans. Rather, it spotlights the duality and ambiguity of adolescence, torn between contradictory impulses: tenderness and violence, fear and pride. The fragility of youth — a time when feelings, passions and ideals can have unforeseen and even fatal consequences — is echoed in artist Ernest Pignon-Ernest's transparent, luminous set, which stands in fitting contrast to the complex drama of the doomed lovers.



Staged by Les Grands Ballets for the first time in 2004, then revived in 2006, *Romeo and Juliet* met with public and critical acclaim. "An ode to the idealism of youth, whatever the era" (*Le Devoir*). "A work of extraordinary modernity" (*Voir*). "This *Romeo and Juliet* is certainly one of Les Grands Ballets' better acquisitions" (*La Presse*). "Without a doubt, one of the year's best dance shows" (*The Gazette*). The production's contemporary, elegant stage design and dramatic lighting are credited to Dominique Drillot, its fluid choreography to Maillot. Classical yet modern, ardent and sensual, all interspersed with a post-classical style, *Romeo and Juliet* is masterfully interpreted by Les Grands Ballets' dancers.

### **Jean-Christophe Maillot**

Born in 1960, Jean-Christophe Maillot spent a number of years as Director of Ballet du Grand Théâtre de Tours before being appointed Artistic Director of Ballets de Monte-Carlo in 1993. His arrival gave new impetus to the troupe of 50 dancers, today known for its maturity and excellence. Maillot's personal artistic quest has resulted in a choreographic vocabulary broad enough to handle the great classics as well as more abstract, modern works. Created for Ballets de Monte-Carlo in 1996, *Romeo and Juliet* is one of his masterworks, and has been performed by six companies around the world.

### **Cast**

Dancers **Xuan Cheng** and **Callye A. Robinson** will share the role of Juliet, and the role of Romeo will be shared by **Hervé Courtain** and **Jeremy Raia**.

***Romeo and Juliet*** by Jean-Christophe Maillot  
Performed by Les Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montréal  
A three-act ballet based on the play by William Shakespeare  
Music by Sergei Prokofiev  
With Les Grands Ballets Orchestra  
October 15, 16, 17, 22, 24, 29 and 30, 2009 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.**

### **DON'T MISS OUT: SUBSCRIBE TODAY!**

For more information on subscribing to Les Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montréal, group rates and the many associated advantages, call **514-849-0269**, consult the seasonal brochure or visit **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, **Air Canada**, associated sponsor, and **The Gazette**, media partner and evening sponsor for October 30.

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