

NEWS

For immediate release

LES GRANDS BALLETS

GRADIMIR PANKOV ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

The Nutcracker by Fernand Nault **STARRY-EYED IN THE LANDS OF SWEETS AND SNOW**

Montreal, November 14, 2011 – What child who has seen *The Nutcracker* has not been dazzled by this marvellous journey to the Land of Sweets and the Land of Snow? Now in its 48th year, this enchanting work will be presented **from December 10-30, 2011** at the **Salle Wilfrid-Pelletier of Place des Arts**. With the enthusiastic contributions of some 300 artisans and collaborators, **Les Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montréal** will perform Fernand Nault's timeless adaptation of the popular Hoffmann tale. In what has become a joyous family tradition, they will dance to the music of Tchaikovsky, performed by **Les Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montréal Orchestra** under the baton of **Allan Lewis**. A cluster of activities have been organized around this unforgettable production, which, over the years, has brightened the holidays of over two million people.

A dream world

On Christmas Eve, the entire family gathers to celebrate at the home of little Clara. Her godfather, Herr Drosselmeyer, gives her a beautiful wooden nutcracker, which her brother Fritz breaks in a fit of jealousy. Fortunately, her godfather, who is also a bit of a magician, is able to repair it.

During the night, after everyone has gone to bed, Clara returns to the parlour to check on her beloved nutcracker. Suddenly, mice and rats invade the room and begin to battle with an army of tin soldiers. Clara is now in danger. Her nutcracker comes to life and flies to her rescue, transforming into a prince charming. He leads her to the Land of Snow, then to the Land of Sweets, where she has a magical adventure with the Sugar Plum Fairy and her Cavalier.

A child's world

Created in 1964 for Les Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montréal, this adaptation of the Hoffman tale by Quebec dancer and choreographer **Fernand Nault** (1920-2006) is among the most beautiful in existence. Some **one hundred dancers** perform this piece with sumptuous sets designed by Peter Horne, scintillating costumes by François Barbeau, and lighting by Nicholas Cernovitch. Every year, more than **600 children** audition for parts, and some one hundred are chosen for the roles of Mice, Rats, Cotton-Candy Angels, Reindeer, Sheep, Matriochkas, Orientals, Children at the Party and, of course, Fritz and Clara.



Photo : Damian Siqueiros - Dancer : Sam Colbey



Fernand Nault, winner of the Médaille des Grands Artisans de la Révolution tranquille

In celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Ministère de la Culture, des Communications et de la Condition féminine, the Médaille des Grands Artisans de la Révolution Tranquille was awarded to 50 artists and artisans who, among other things, took part in the emancipation of Quebec culture—both nationally and internationally—in the 1960s. Les Grands Ballets are proud to announce that Fernand Nault is a recipient of this prestigious award, and we would like to acknowledge his great contribution to our company's success.

Mouse of the Day

One hour before each performance, actor Jacques Piperni will give a **reading of Hoffmann's tale** to children, after which the **Mouse of the Day** will be randomly selected. The lucky winner will then dress up as a mouse and appear on stage in the first act, before returning to his or her seat during intermission to watch the rest of the show.

A world of activities

For its second edition, the **Nutcracker Market** will be held at the Palais des congrès de Montréal. All profits will be donated to **The Nutcracker Fund**, which will allow 2,800 schoolchildren from disadvantaged communities in Greater Montreal to attend a performance of Fernand Nault's ballet this year. At the same time, educational and artistic workshops are conducted in some 83 classrooms from **40 Montreal schools**. Visual art works created by the students will be exhibited at the **Piano nobile** of Salle Wilfrid-Pelletier and literary works will be bound in a book.

***The Nutcracker* by Fernand Nault**

with Les Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montréal Orchestra, conducted by Allan Lewis
Music by Tchaïkovsky

**December 10 (m+e), 11 (m), 17 (m+e), 18 (m), 20 (e), 21 (e),
22 (e), 23 (e), 26 (e), 27 (m), 28 (m), 29 (m) et 30 (m)**
Salle Wilfrid-Pelletier, Place des Arts

Readings

Readings will take place in the theatre one hour prior to each performance.

Sponsors and partners

Les Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montréal would like to thank its season sponsor, **Cinémas Guzzo**, as well as **Radio-Canada**, its season partner, and the **Bank TD Group**, official sponsor of *The Nutcracker*, for their generous support. In addition, the company is grateful to **Great-West Life, London Life and Canada Life**, sponsors of the educational matinées, **Rio Tinto Alcan**, matinée sponsor of December 18, and **Groupe Investors Financial Services**, partner of *The Nutcracker* ballet.

Finally, the company would like to thank **Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec, Canada Council for the Arts** and **Conseil des arts de Montréal** for their financial support.



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