

## PASSING OF LAWRENCE RHODES

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Montreal, March 29, 2019 – It was with enormous sadness that Les Grands Ballets learned last night of the death of **Lawrence Rhodes (1939-2019), artistic director of the company from 1989 to 1999.**

A native of Mount Hope, West Virginia, he danced with several companies (including Ballet russe de Monte-Carlo, Robert Joffrey Ballet, Harkness Ballet, Het National Ballet and Pennsylvania Ballet). He could be seen dancing with Les Grands Ballets in 1977,

before his appointment as artistic director in 1989, a position he filled for ten years. His desire at the time was to “combine the classical-ballet tradition with the renewal of choreographic language.”<sup>1</sup>

Under his direction, Les Grands Ballets opened up to new esthetic streams, for the first time inviting to the company some of the greatest choreographers of the day: Jiří Kylián, Ohad Naharin, William Forsythe and Montrealer Édouard Lock, among them.

“Larry was generous and fair,” remembers Pierre Lapointe, principal ballet master at Les Grands Ballets since 1989. “He had a teaching and dance style that allowed for great freedom. His favorite sentence was ‘Just do it.’”

From 2002 to 2017, Lawrence Rhodes served as artistic director of the Dance Division at New York’s prestigious Juilliard School.

Les Grands Ballets wishes to offer its sincere condolences to Lawrence Rhodes’s relatives, friends and collaborators, as well as to the entire dance community, who are losing in him a dancer, an artistic director and a teacher who left his mark on his time.

With his leaving, a page in Grands Ballets history is turning as well. Thank you for everything, Mr. Rhodes!

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<sup>1</sup>La Presse, February 14, 1999, p. A14; March 4, 1999, p. D5