

Q Hydro
Québec
presents

THE RITE OF SPRING

by Étienne Béchar

THE FIREBIRD

by Bridget Breiner

MARCH 15 TO 24, 2018

Théâtre Maisonneuve, Place des Arts



PRESS KIT

#sacreduprintemps

«The circle of light which started with Symphony No. 7 burns even brighter with yet another bill presenting two of Stravinsky's most moving pieces: The Firebird, a commission from American choreographer Bridget Breiner, and The Rite of Spring, a first creation for Les Grands Ballets by French choreographer Etienne Béchard.»

Ivan Cavallari, Artistic Director

SYNOPSIS

At the invitation of Les Grands Ballets, two young European choreographers are following in the footsteps of the greatest choreographers of the 20th and 21st centuries by revisiting two of Stravinsky's legendary compositions for Sergei Diaghilev's Ballets Russes, which took Paris by storm just before the First World War.

Set to a dazzling score inspired by the Russian legend of *The Firebird*, American choreographer Bridget Breiner imagines an ode to hope, to inspiration and to faith in a new world.

Ivan Cavallari, Les Grands Ballets' Artistic Director, follows up with *Presto-Detto*. Set to the score of Vivaldi, this dance unites four dancers, four stories and four ways of expressing the fury of life! Breiner's imagination bursts through once more with *In Honour Of*. Taking inspiration from Georges Pelecis' composition from *In Honour of Henry Purcell*, the evening's final opus traces movements to explore the conflicting forces and willpower necessary for honest creativity, bridging both devotion and inspiration in their dazzling dance for primacy.

To conclude this triple bill, Étienne Béchard, formerly of the prestigious Béjart Ballet Lausanne, takes on *The Rite of Spring*, described by Stravinsky as a "great pagan ritual" echoing the awakening of the forces of nature. Through its unique rhythm, this seminal work of incomparable telluric richness propelled music and dance into the modern age. This feast of sounds and colours is a real breath of fresh air!

Evening Program

THE FIREBIRD
CHOREOGRAPHY
Bridget Breiner
MUSIC
Igor Stravinsky

PRESTO-DETTO
CHOREOGRAPHY
Ivan Cavallari
MUSIC
Various

IN HONOUR OF
CHOREOGRAPHY
Bridget Breiner
MUSIC
Georgs Pelecis

INTERMISSION

THE RITE OF SPRING
CHOREOGRAPHY
Étienne Bécharde
MUSIC
Igor Stravinsky

CONDUCTOR
Jean-François Rivest

DURATION
2 hours and 5 minutes, including a 20 minutes intermission.

Artistic Director Ivan Cavallari



Born in Bolzano, Italy, in 1964, Ivan Cavallari received his initial training at the Teatro alla Scala Ballet School in Milan. His teachers recognized his talent by awarding him a scholarship to the Bolchoi Ballet School in Moscow in 1981, where he continued his training until 1983. From 1984 to 1985, he danced with the Scala Ballet School before joining the Stuttgart Ballet in 1986, where he became a soloist and then principal dancer under the successive directorships of Marcia

Haydée and Reid Anderson. He danced all the leading roles of John Cranko's ballets and regularly staged the latter's works with the Royal Ballet Covent Garden in London, La Scala in Milan, the Czech National Ballet, among many other companies. He also staged numerous works by Uwe Scholz, and choreographed ballets for the Stuttgart Ballet, the State Opera Ballet in Hanover, the Lodz State Opera Ballet in Poland, the Mannheim Ballet, the Vienna State Opera Ballet, and the Staatsgalerie Stuttgart.

From 2007 to 2012, he was the Artistic Director of the West Australian Ballet, the oldest dance company in Australia. In 2013, he was named the Artistic Director of the Ballet de l'Opéra national du Rhin, where he staged such works as Dolly in April 2013, and his own choreographies of Pinocchio in 2014 and The Nutcracker in 2016.

He takes over the helm of Les Grands Ballets as Artistic Director as of the 2017-2018 season.

Choreographer ÉTIENNE BÉCHARD

Étienne Béchard was 10 years old when he discovered dance. After one year of dancing, he received a bursary and began more diligent training under Alexandre Clément and Jean-Gérald Dorseuil. At 16 years old, he joined the Rudra Béjart School, and two years later joined the Béjart Ballet Lausanne. There, he acquired the discipline and rigour that would never leave him. Under the encouraging eye of Maurice Béjart (who gave him many leading roles), he developed his talent as a dancer and choreographer. In 2009, he created the duet *Passager Clandestin*. It



became clear that choreographic creation was his calling and, in 2010, he left the Béjart Ballet Lausanne to fully devote himself to his vocation.

Following his desire for emancipation, Béchard moved to Brussels in 2010 to form his own company, Opinion Public. Since then, his works (*Opinion Public*, *Apart/heid*, *Obsolescence*, *Bob'Art*, *Post Anima* and *Mr. Follower*) have taken the neuroses of our age as raw material, bearing witness to the issues of our time with humour and poetry. In 2016, he was invited to the Ballet of the Opéra National du Rhin, under the direction of Ivan Cavallari, for a first experience with a large company of 30 dancers for the creation of the performance *Cupidon s'en fout*. In 2017, he presented a renewed *Post Anima*, this time with the 15 dancers of the Konzert Theater Bern, under the direction of Estefania Miranda.

Choreographer

BRIDGET BREINER



Bridget Breiner is an award-winning choreographer whose innovative works have blended ballet and opera, European and American sensibilities, and classical and contemporary dance vocabulary. Her most notable work draws on fairy tales, artwork, history and theater, and transforms them into multimedia experiences that expand the conventions of ballet.

She grew up in Columbus, Ohio, where she received her early dance training at the BalletMet Dance Academy. She completed her training at the Heinz-Bosl-Stiftung in Munich and subsequently joined the Bavarian State Ballet in 1992 under the direction of Konstanze Vernon. In 1996 she joined the Stuttgart Ballet under the direction of Reid Anderson and quickly became one of the company's most celebrated dancers, being promoted to Principal in 2001. From 2006 to 2008 she danced with the Semperoper Ballet in Dresden under the direction of Aaron Watkin, and was a regular guest artist with the Stuttgart Ballet until 2011.

In 2011 Ms. Breiner was invited to choreograph and direct *Großstadt-Triptychon*, a collaboration between the opera and dance companies of the Musiktheater im Revier Gelsenkirchen. One year later she was appointed artistic director of that theater's newly formed ballet company Ballett im Revier, a company of 14 international dancers. Her first full-length story ballet for the company – *Ruß - Eine Geschichte von Aschenputtel* (Soot, a retelling of the Cinderella tale) – received Germany's most prestigious theatre award "Der FAUST" for "Best Choreography" in 2013. She followed this success with new choreography for *On the Town*, *Swan Lake*, and *The Tragedies of Othello*. Another dance-opera collaboration, *Charlotte Salomon: Der Tod und die Malerin* (Death and the Painter) with commissioned score by composer Michelle DiBucci, received wide critical acclaim and again brought her the "FAUST" award in 2015.

Composer

IGOR STRAVINSKY

Igor Fiodorovitch Stravinsky (1882-1971) was a Russian modern music composer and conductor. He is considered as one of the most influential composer of the 20th century. His work spreads over nearly 70 years and includes a variety of styles. His most famous works are *The Firebird* (1910), *Petrushka* (1911) and his masterpiece, *The Rite of Spring* (1913)

Igor Fyodorovich Stravinsky was born on June 17 1882 in Lomonosov, Russia, and brought up in Saint Petersburg. His father was Fyodor Stravinsky (1843–1902), a well-known bass singer at the Kiev opera house and the Mariinsky Theatre in St. Petersburg. Stravinsky recalled his schooldays as being lonely, later saying that "I never came across anyone who had any real attraction for me". Stravinsky began piano lessons as a young boy, studying music theory and attempting composition, though he was especially fond of improvisation. Despite his enthusiasm for music, Stravinsky enrolled at the University of Saint Petersburg in 1901 to study law, but he attended fewer than fifty class sessions during his four years of study. In the summer of 1902 Stravinsky stayed with composer Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov and his family in the German city of Heidelberg, where Rimsky-Korsakov, arguably the leading Russian composer at that time, suggested to Stravinsky that he should not enter the Saint Petersburg Conservatoire, but instead study composing by taking private lessons, in large part because of his age. Stravinsky's father died of cancer the same year, and Stravinsky began spending more time on his musical studies than on law.

The immense success of *The Firebird*, which premiered on June 25, 1910, made the composer an instant celebrity. After *The Firebird*, the next two ballets that Stravinsky composed for Diaghilev's troupe marked a change of direction in his musical approach. While *The Firebird* is still well anchored in the post-romantic tradition inherited from, among others, Rimsky-Korsakov, *Petrushka*, created on June 13, 1911, induces an important break. Stravinsky abandons all the warm and "magic" harmony of *The Firebird*, characterized among other things by the abundant use of chromaticism. He now uses "polytonality" and the juxtaposition of rhythmic sequences.

In the *Rite*, Stravinsky deepens the elements already experienced with his first two ballets, namely rhythm and harmony. One is unprecedented in dynamism, while the other is based in part on the use of sound aggregates.

Dancers CASTING

THE FIREBIRD

The Boy

Célestin Boutin

The Firebird

Vanesa G.R. Montoya

The Girl

Anya Nesvitaylo

With

Emily He, Sarah Kingston, Éline Malègue, Yui Sugawara, Kiara Felder, Anna Ishii, Tetyana Martyanova, Andrew Wright, Rubén Julliard, Jean-Sébastien Couture, Marcin Kaczorowski, Stephen Satterfield, Matthew Cluff, Hamilton Nieh, James Lyttle

PRESTO-DETTO

(15, 16, 17, 24) Myriam Simon, Constantine Allen, James Lyttle, Alessio Scognamiglio, André Santos, Marcin Kaczorowski

(22, 23) Mai Kono, Marcin Kaczorowski, James Lyttle, Alessio Scognamiglio, André Santos, Constantine Allen

IN HONOUR OF

(15, 16, 17, 24) Emma Garau Cima, Jérémy Galdeano, Raphaël Bouchard

(22, 23) Myriam Simon, Constantine Allen, Célestin Boutin

THE RITE OF SPRING

Vanesa G.R. Montoya, Emma Garau Cima, Chisato Ide, Vera Kvarcakova, Diana Leon, Raphaël Bouchard, Andrew Wright, Hamilton Nieh, Jérémy Galdeano, Rubén Julliard

With

Kiara Felder, Anna Ishii, Valentine Legat, Esabelle Chen, Eleonore Thomas, Emily He, Sahra Maira, Mai Kono, Tetyana Martyanova, Eline Malègue, Sarah Kingston, Stephen Satterfield, Alessio Scognamiglio, Jean-Sébastien Couture, Hervé Courtain, Chen Sheng, André Santos, Célestin Boutin, Matthew Cluff, Dane Holland



CREDITS

The Firebird

Choreography: **Bridget Breiner**

Set and costume Design: **Juergen Kirner**

Light Design: **Marc Parent**

Assistant to the choreographer: **Sébastien Mari**

Music: **Igor Stravinsky**, Used by arrangement with European American Music Distributors Company, agent canadien et américain pour Universal / MCA Publishing, publisher and copyright owner

Musical Interlude: **Agostino Steffani, Ho Scherzato in Verità**, arrangement by **E. Smith** for 2 voices & Chamber Ensemble

Presto-Detto

Choreography: **Ivan Cavallari**

Lighting: **Marc Parent**

Costumes by: **Marija Djordjevic** – From the Dim Light of Dawn production, choreographer : Ken Ossola – Grands Ballets.

In Honour Of

Choreography: **Bridget Breiner**

Assistant to the choreographer: **Sebastien Mari**

Costume Design: **Thomas Lempertz**

Lighting: **Marc Parent**

Music: **Georgs Pelēcis**, In Honour of Henry Purcell

World Premiere: Avril 2014, Ballett im Revier, Gelsenkirchen

The Rite of Spring

Choreography: **Étienne Béchard**

Set and Costume Design: **Étienne Béchard**

Costume Design Assistants: **Emma Paris, Mélanie Ferrero**

Lighting: **Marc Parent**

Music: **Igor Stravinsky**, Rite of Spring, arranged by **Joseph McPhee**, by arrangement with Boosey & Hawkes, Inc., publisher and copyright owner

World premiere for *The Firebird*, *Presto-Detto* and *The Rite of Spring* in Montreal, on March 15th, 2018.

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