

PRESS RELEASE
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60
YEARS

LES
GRANDS BALLETS
GRADIMIR PANKOV ARTISTIC DIRECTOR



IN PARIS, LES GRANDS BALLETS CANADIENS DE MONTRÉAL INNOVATES

MARCH 9 TO 17

French premiere of
La Jeune Fille et la Mort
at the Théâtre National de la
danse Chaillot

MARCH 15

Day of Reflection on Arts in Health Care
Presented by Les Grands Ballets'
National Centre for Dance Therapy
At the Canadian Cultural Centre

Montréal, March 2, 2017 – The countdown has begun for **Les Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montréal (GBCM)**, currently hard at work getting ready for its **Paris** run. Nine years after the smash success of Ohad Naharin's *Minus One* at the famous Les étés de la danse festival, the company is once again heading to the City of Light to perform its contemporary ballet ***La Jeune Fille et la Mort***, by **Stephan Thoss**. The production will be presented at the **Théâtre National de la danse Chaillot from March 9 to 17, 2017 (8 performances)**. GBCM's highly anticipated return to the French capital is part of the celebrations surrounding the 60th anniversary of the ballet company and the 150th anniversary of Canada's Confederation; it also marks **Gradimir Pankov's last tour as GBCM's Artistic Director**.

As part of its campaign to raise funds for this landmark tour, Les Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montréal is also organizing an **opening night gala** to be held on **March 9, 2017** at the Théâtre National de la danse Chaillot, with His Excellency **Lawrence Cannon**, Canadian Ambassador to France, serving as honorary chairman, and Mr. **Ghislain Richter**, Vice President of Accuracy, and Mr. **Jean-Pascal Simard**, Public Relations Director, France at Vermilion Energy Paris, serving as Co-Directors. The opening night of ***La Jeune Fille et la Mort*** at Théâtre National de la danse Chaillot will also **pay tribute to Gradimir Pankov** and provide an opportunity to thank him before his peers, friends and colleagues for everything he has done for the world of dance.





LE BALLET

La Jeune Fille et la Mort, created by Stephan Thoss for Les Grands Ballets, was a great success when it was staged in Montréal in 2015. The choreographer drew his inspiration from the fine balance between life and death, youth and old age:

“Although it may seem simple, we can live our lives free of anguish only if we see death as an integral

part of life rather than as some dark and gloomy fate that awaits us at the end of our lives. Death doesn’t care if we fear it or not. My new ballet says “yes” to both life and death. But the time has not yet come to die, but to live passionately, to love and to dance, sometimes with death, sometimes without it.” – Stephan Thoss

A work that is perfectly paired with compositions by artists ranging from Philip Glass and Schubert to Nick Cave, Trent Reznor and Atticus Ross. Moving and mysterious.

DAY OF REFLECTION ON ARTS IN HEALTH CARE

In cooperation with the **Canadian Cultural Centre of Paris**, GBCM’s **National Centre for Dance Therapy (NCDT)** will hold a **Day of Reflection on Arts in Health Care** on **March 15** to get people talking about best practices in combining the arts and healthcare and ways to encourage the transfer of knowledge. The daylong workshop will bring together **French and Canadian stakeholders** from research and academia, art therapists, artists and representatives of political circles. This major event is supported by the **Canadian Commission for UNESCO**, which will be represented by Executive Committee member Ms. Nadia Duguay:

“In these times of social and political uncertainty, we must focus on practices that re-engage the world and provide opportunities to take a second look at how we view the world. The time has come for cross-border dialogue and open discussions that transcend the traditional boundaries between fields: the Day of Reflection on Arts in Health Care in Paris is a first step in that direction.”



At the **First National Symposium for Dance and Well-Being**, held last November in **Toronto**, GBCM decided to sit down with the many stakeholders (artists, cultural mediators, art therapists, instructors, academics, researchers, public policy-makers, healthcare organizations, cultural organizations and community organizations) who believed in the benefits of dance as a means of tackling serious health issues. That event, the first of its kind, was a huge success.





By teaming international instructors (from Canada, the United States, Germany and France), researchers in a variety of fields (dance, dance therapy, neurology, neuropsychology, criminology, psychology, physical rehabilitation, occupational therapy, public health, sociology and child psychiatry) with dance therapists, GBCM has been able to launch over 24 pilot and research projects in dance therapy, along with dance courses geared to clients with complex health problems (eating disorders, ageing disorders, Down's syndrome, learning disorders, mental health issues for inmates, Parkinson's disease, multiple sclerosis, etc.). These projects got off the ground with help from over 50 partners from the academic, medical and psychosocial communities.

It is that expertise that the NCDT wants to share with its French partners, at the same time as it works with them to explore the **possibility of implementing best practices in healthcare and the arts to assist society's most vulnerable members**. In this way, the NCDT hopes to standardize global standards and practices in dance therapy through **France-Canada partnerships**.

“This very first NCDT event in Paris comes in the wake of the great success that the Centre has enjoyed since it was created four years ago. We are delighted to be able to share the results of our research and speak about other major initiatives that share the aim of improving the well-being of people with health problems. These are tangible examples that demonstrate, once again, that the importance of dance goes far beyond the cultural arena.”

— **Alain Dancyger, Executive Director, Les Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montréal**

“We are very proud to have brought together health and dance professionals, researchers from a wide array of disciplines and representatives from French and Québec cultural organizations to work towards the same objective: advancing research into dance as a means of achieving well-being.”

— **Christian Sénéchal, Director, National Centre for Dance Therapy**

Despite its relatively recent launch and the number of research projects still under development, the National Centre for Dance Therapy is already a reference for **organizations around the world**. Christian Sénéchal, Director of the NCDT, has been invited to present the Centre at various events in Canada, the U.S. and Europe.



ABOUT LES GRANDS BALLETS CANADIENS DE MONTRÉAL

Ever since Ludmilla Chiriaeff founded the company in 1957, Les Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montréal has been communicating its passion for dance and firing the imagination of audiences worldwide. This widely acclaimed company is devoted to developing ballet in all its forms, while remaining faithful to the spirit of classical ballet. Les Grands Ballets has lit up stages around the world, particularly since the appointment of Gradimir Pankov as Artistic Director in 1999. The company's reputation has been reinforced by many international successes over the past few years: Oman (2012), China (2011), the Middle East (2009), North America and Europe (Madrid, Berlin, Munich and three weeks at Les Étés de la danse in Paris). A leader among Montreal's cultural institutions, the company now presents works by up-and-coming artists—Christian Spuck, Stephan Thoss, Stijn Celis, Didy Veldman—and renowned choreographers such as Jiří Kylián, Mats Ek and Ohad Naharin.

The company is also strongly committed to the local community. Since 1997, The Nutcracker Fund for Children has given thousands of children from disadvantaged communities an unforgettable holiday season, with educational workshops and a free performance of *The Nutcracker*. In 2010, Les Grands Ballets launched The Nutcracker Market—Montreal's first non-profit Christmas market—to raise money for the Fund. Les Grands Ballets is currently preparing a number of large-scale projects like the National Centre for Dance Therapy. The company will also be relocating in 2016 to its new premises, the Espace Danse, in the heart of Montreal's Quartier des spectacles, a unique creative crossroads. All of these initiatives have one goal: **Moving the world. Differently.**

The Day of Reflection on Arts in Health Care is made possible with the support of the Canadian Cultural Centre, Délégation générale du Québec à Montréal, Entreprendre pour Aider and Aube Conseil.

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