

VINCENT WARREN HAS PASSED AWAY



Montréal, October 26, 2017 – It is with great sadness that Les Grands Ballets learned this morning of the passing of Vincent Warren (1938–2017), a legendary company dancer from 1961 to 1979, teacher and dance historian and the former curator of the Library of Dance.

“Vincent Warren helped shape the world of Quebec dance, not only with his immense talent, but also with his big heart and his love for his art,” noted Alain Dancyger, Executive Director of Les Grands Ballets. “His many accomplishments as a Grands Ballets principal dancer, teacher and curator are remarkable. He was instrumental in immortalizing the key events that marked Quebec’s history, just as he marked the history of Les Grands Ballets in turn.”

A native of Jacksonville, Florida and an American Ballet Theatre scholarship winner at age 17, Vincent was dancing for the Metropolitan Opera Ballet in New York City when he met Ludmilla Chiriaeff in the early 1960s and received an invitation to join her newly founded company, Les Grands Ballets Canadiens. It was the beginning of a long and fruitful collaboration that lasted until 1979, when Vincent retired after years of interpreting the great roles of the classical repertoire and more contemporary works, such as those by George Balanchine, Maurice Béjart and John Butler and Les Grands Ballets choreographers Ludmilla Chiriaeff, Fernand Nault and Brian Macdonald. For his farewell performance (1979), the latter dedicated the solo *Adieu* Robert Schumann to none other than Vincent.

As a dancer, Vincent embodied an ideal of beauty, charisma, expressivity and sensitivity. The humanity, generosity and richness of this great artist and exceptional human being came across in his dance. Throughout his career, he was a sought-after partner for principal dancers like Annette av Paul and Ghislaine Thesmar, not to mention Margaret Mercier, with whom he performed in the experimental short film *Pas de deux* (1968) by animated filmmaker Norman MacLaren. A lover of art in all its forms and avant-garde choreography since his experiences at Judson Church, he also danced for Françoise Riopelle and Jeanne Renaud as part of the Groupe de danse moderne de Montréal and later collaborated with the Groupe de la Place Royale for many years alongside Jeanne Renaud and Peter Boneham.

Following his career as a dancer, Vincent threw his energies into teaching at the École Supérieure de ballet du Québec and became a sought-after speaker at educational institutions in Canada, the U.S. and even India. For many years, from 1992 to the early 2000s, he hosted the Grands Ballets’ encounters with the public prior to the company’s performances at Place des Arts. He also remained very involved in the company, especially in the Former Dancers of Les Grands Ballets Association.

His interest in the history of dance and insatiable intellectual curiosity were driving forces behind the growth of the Library of Dance, of which he was the curator from 1979 to 2007 and which now bears his name.

Numerous awards and distinctions have marked Vincent Warren’s career, including the Queen Elizabeth Jubilee Medal (1975), the Government of Canada’s Dance in Canada Service Award (1984), the Government of Quebec’s Prix Denise-Pelletier (1992), the Order of Canada (2004) and, last spring, the Ordre des arts et des lettres du Québec (2017).



With his passing, we are losing a large piece of Les Grands Ballets’ history and of the company’s past as well. Goodbye, Vincent, and thank you!

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