

PRESS RELEASE
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17 / 18

A NEW BEGINNING

A first season inspired by music and spirituality for
Ivan Cavallari, the new Artistic Director of Les Grands Ballets





MONTREAL, February 15, 2017 – Ivan Cavallari, Les Grands Ballets’ new Artistic Director, is unveiling a 2017-2018 season inspired by music and spirituality that focuses on young choreographers and creations from the world over.

“This season will mark a new beginning in several ways: Les Grands Ballets will move into Édifice Wilder Espace Danse, in the heart of the Quartier des spectacles, and I will take my first steps as Artistic Director of the company in the beautiful city of Montreal. It will be a new beginning for the audience too, thanks to a program that speaks to my heart and soul. I will be delighted to have Montrealers “in my company” this season and I look forward to sharing with them all, along with our passionate dancers, pure moments of emotion.” — Ivan Cavallari

In addition to the *Stabat Mater* double bill, which opens the season in October and pairs Romanian choreographer Edward Clug’s interpretation of Pergolesi’s *Stabat Mater* with German choreographer Uwe Scholz’s take on Beethoven’s Symphony No. 7, Les Grands Ballets will be presenting no fewer than **three original creations** this year. They are *The Firebird* from American choreographer Bridget Breiner and *The Rite of Spring* from France’s Étienne Béchar, sharing the spotlight in a double bill, and *Vendetta – Storie di Mafia*, from Belgian-Colombian choreographer Annabelle Lopez Ochoa.

Also new this year: **A gala dedicated to love and celebrating the marriage of song and dance** will end the season on a high note, bringing Les Grands Ballets together with the stars of some of the world’s most prestigious companies. *Soirée des étoiles: Dance Me to the End of Love* will honour Leonard Cohen, the great Montrealer who, before he passed away last year, sang of love as only he knew how.

Putting music front and centre, our 2017-2018 season also showcases the **Les Grands Ballets Orchestra, with four of our seven programs featuring live music.**

“The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeing new sights, but in looking with new eyes.”
— Marcel Proust

IVAN CAVALLARI'S PICKS

Photo: Sasha Onyshchenko / Kravetz Photographics • Danseuse / Dancer: Vanesa GarciaRibada Montoya



OCTOBER 2017: THE APOTHEOSIS OF THE DANCE WITH *STABAT MATER*

This spiritual, mesmerizing double bill features the company's dancers in two major musical works performed by Les Grands Ballets Orchestra. Romanian choreographer Edward Clug, an emerging talent in European dance, engages a resolutely modern dialogue with Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater*, a masterpiece of the Italian Baroque. For Clug, the tremendously expressive score conveys life and hope.

Uwe Scholz (1958-2004), an exceptionally talented German choreographer who passed away far too young, left behind a rich legacy. The evening's second work, Beethoven's *Symphony No. 7*, described by Richard Wagner as "the apotheosis of the dance," is one of his masterworks. With its remarkable musicality, this ballet on pointe, as finely cut as a diamond, leaves no one indifferent. It makes for a memorable evening of music and dance.

October 11-28 / Théâtre Misonneuve, Place des Arts

Choreography: Edward Clug and Uwe Scholz

Music: Giovanni Battista Pergolesi and Ludwig van Beethoven

With solo voices and Les Grands Ballets Orchestra

Photo: Sasha Onyshchenko / Kravetz Photographics • Danseur / Dancer: Jérémy Galdeano



MARCH 2018: FIRE AND REBIRTH WITH *THE RITE OF SPRING*

At the invitation of Les Grands Ballets, two young 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.

Étienne Béchard, formerly of the prestigious Bédart 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!**

March 15-24 / Théâtre Misonneuve, Place des Arts

Choreography: Bridget Breiner and Étienne Béchar

Music: Igor Stravinsky

With Les Grands Ballets Orchestra

IVAN CAVALLARI'S PICKS

Photo: Sasha Onyshchenko / Kravetz Photographics • Danseur / Dancer: Hervé Courtain



MAY 2018: IMPULSE AND PASSION WITH *VENDETTA – STORIE DI MAFIA*

After a 12-year career as a dancer, Belgian-Colombian choreographer **Annabelle Lopez Ochoa** is equally at home in dance, theatre, opera and musicals and now pursues collaborative projects all across the globe. More than 40 companies have sought her out, including none other than the New York City Ballet, in 2016.

With this new narrative ballet created specifically for the dancers of Les Grands Ballets, she enters the all-powerful world of the mafia, the perfect setting for an exploration of the human psyche and its violent impulses: **passion, lust, anger, greed, jealousy and frustration**. Along with the beauty and power of movement, this performance teems with intriguing characters, storylines and dramatic twists, delivering more than a few surprises along the way. A definite must-see!

May 24-31 / June 1-2 / Théâtre Maisonneuve, Place des Arts

Choreography: Annabelle Lopez Ochoa
Various Musical Pieces

Photo: Sasha Onyshchenko / Kravetz Photographics • Danseuse / Dancer: Anya Nesvitaylo



JUNE 2018: PRESTIGE WITH *SOIRÉE DES ÉTOILES: DANCE ME TO THE END OF LOVE*

A veritable constellation of stars is set to shine down on Montreal! Dedicated to the theme of love and celebrating the marriage of dance and music, **this gala will bring the stars of some of the world's most reputed companies together with Les Grands Ballets**. At the summit of their art, the dancers' performances are full of emotion, gallantry and grace. The evening will also pay **tribute to Leonard Cohen**, a legendary Montrealer who passed away last fall and who sang of love like no one else.

June 7-9 / Salle Wilfrid-Pelletier, Place des Arts

With the participation of world-renowned dancers and Les Grands Ballets
Various Musical Pieces

GUEST COMPANIES

Photo: Souheil Michael Khoury • Danseurs / Dancers: Oleg Gabyshev & Lyubov Andreyeva



FEBRUARY 2018: SPIRITUAL MASTERPIECES WITH THE DOUBLE BILL *REQUIEM* PERFORMED BY THE EIFMAN BALLET OF ST. PETERSBURG

Following the success of our 2015 production of *Anna Karenina*, Les Grands Ballets will be playing host in February to the **Eifman Ballet of St. Petersburg** with its **double bill, *Requiem***. The performance features two masterpieces of the spiritual repertoire: the literary monument from the great poet **Anna Akhmatova**, which is set to **Shostakovich's String Quartet No. 8** and tells the poignant story of the victims of Stalin's repression, and **Mozart's unfinished *Requiem***, a majestic work in which listeners seem to hear the “**breath of eternity.**”

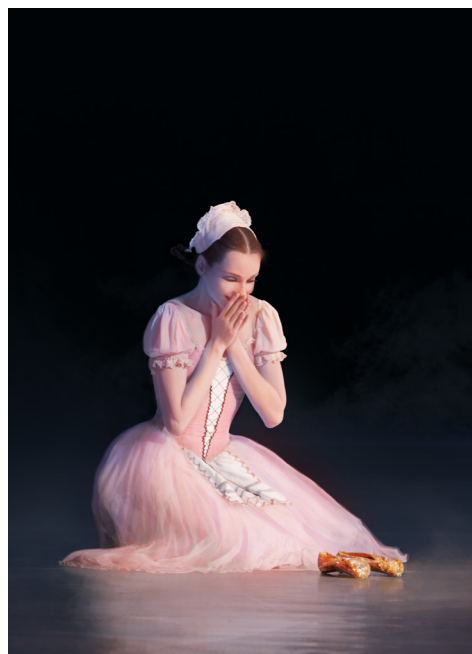
February 21-25 / Salle Wilfrid-Pelletier, Place des Arts

Choreography: Boris Eifman

Music: Dmitri Shostakovich and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

With solo voices, choir and Les Grands Ballets Orchestra

Photo: Oлександр Пушков • Danseuse / Dancer: Tefiana Lozova • ReTouches: Damian Siqueiros



MAY 2018: AN ENCHANTING CLASSIC WITH *CINDERELLA* PERFORMED BY THE NATIONAL BALLET OF UKRAINE

In May, the **National Ballet of Ukraine** will treat Montreal audiences to *Cinderella*, a fixture of the classical repertoire. This lavish production, true to the purest ballet traditions, will delight **the whole family.**

May 2-6 / Salle Wilfrid-Pelletier, Place des Arts

Choreography: Victor Lytvynov

Music: Sergueï Prokofiev

THE NUTCRACKER FOR THE HOLIDAYS

Photo: Sasha Onyshchenko / Kravtitz Photographics • Danseur / Dancer: Jean-Sébastien Couture



DECEMBER 2017: PURE ENJOYMENT WITH *THE NUTCRACKER*

The Nutcracker, the most exquisite of ballets, is back for a **55th year!** Featuring choreography by **Fernand Nault** and music by Tchaikovsky interpreted live by the Grands Ballets Orchestra, the classic is sure to delight young and old and make the holidays sparkle with two hours of sheer magic.

December 14-30 / Salle Wilfrid-Pelletier, Place des Arts

Choreography: Fernand Nault

Music: Piotr Ilitch Tchaikovsky

With Les Grands Ballets Orchestra

NEW ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

IVAN CAVALLARI

LES GRANDS BALLETS' ARTISTIC DIRECTOR AS OF THE 2017-2018 SEASON

Born in Bolzano, Italy, in 1964, Ivan Cavallari received his initial training at the Teatro alla Scala Ballet School in Milan. His teachers rewarded his talent with a scholarship to the Bolshoi 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 and 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 will take over as Artistic Director of Les Grands Ballets with the 2017-2018 season.

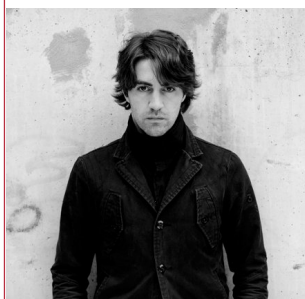


Photo: Sasha Onyshchenko / Kravetz Photographics

NEW FACES

EDWARD CLUG

CHOREOGRAPHER FOR *STABAT MATER*



Edward Clug decided to enroll at dance school to escape the repressive communist regime of Ceau escu. In 1991, Clug completed his ballet studies at the National Ballet School in Cluj-Napoca, Romania. In the same year, he was engaged as a soloist at the Slovene National Theatre (SNG) in Maribor, where he produced his first choreography. In 2003, he became artistic director of the theatre's ballet troupe, leading the company in new and original directions. As a choreographer he received international acclaim with *Radio and Juliet* (2005). Clug succeeded in putting the Maribor Ballet ensemble on the international dancing map by participating in large theatre festivals, such as Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival (USA), The Stars of the White Nights Festival at the Mariinski Theatre in St. Petersburg, the Arts Festival in Singapore and the Seoul International Dance Festival in Korea.

In addition to Maribor Ballet, Clug has been repeatedly invited to create new works for the Stuttgart Ballet, Zurich Ballet, Royal Ballet of Flanders and other companies around the world. In 2014, the magazine *Tanz* acknowledged him as one of the most promising figures for the future of choreography.

BRIDGET BREINER

CHOREOGRAPHER FOR *THE FIREBIRD*



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

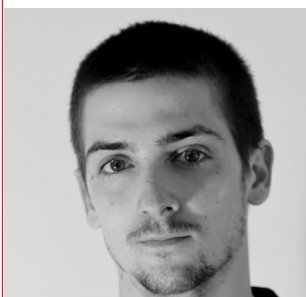
Breiner grew up in Columbus, Ohio, where she received her early dance training at the BalletMet Dance Academy. She completed her training at the Heinz-Bosl-Stiftung foundation in Munich and subsequently joined the Bavarian State Ballet in 1992 under the direction of Konstanze Vernon. In 1996, she joined 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. Her dramatic stage presence has inspired a wide range of leading choreographers to create roles for her, including Christian Spuck, Douglas Lee, Kevin O'Day, Mauro Bigonzetti, Cathy Marston and David Dawson.

In 2005, Breiner made her choreographic debut in the Stuttgart-based Noverre Society's prestigious «Young Choreographers» event, and her work thereafter quickly gained acclaim. In 2016 Breiner was invited to the Ruhrfestspiele Recklinghausen, one of Europe's oldest theatre festivals. Her creation there—*Prospero's Island* (Prosperos Insel), a retelling of Shakespeare's *The Tempest*—was immediately taken into the company's repertoire. In 2017, she is creating her first full-length symphonic ballet, *The Vital Unrest*, which includes Camille Saint-Saëns' Third Symphony and a newly commissioned work by Latvian composer Georgs Pelecis.

NEW FACES

ÉTIENNE BÉCHARD

CHOREOGRAPHER FOR *THE RITE OF SPRING*



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 of age he joined the Rudra Béjart School, and two years later joined the Béjart Ballet Lausanne. There, he acquired the discipline and rigour that have been his hallmarks ever since. 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 our contemporary neuroses 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, to create *Cupidon s'en fout*, his first experience with a large company (30 dancers). In 2017, he is again presenting *Post Anima*, this time with the 15 dancers of the Konzert Theater Bern, under the direction of Estefania Miranda.

ANNABELLE LOPEZ OCHOA

CHOREOGRAPHER FOR *VENDETTA – STORIE DI MAFIA*



Annabelle Lopez Ochoa has created works for more than 40 companies worldwide. After training at the Royal Ballet School of Flanders in Belgium, she danced professionally for 12 years, including as a soloist at Scapino Ballet, before focusing her energy solely on choreography. In 2003 the newspaper NRC called her a “rising star of the Dutch dance scene,” and in 2007 she was invited to participate in The New York City Ballet’s prestigious New York Choreographic Institute.

Annabelle has choreographed for the NYC Ballet, Atlanta Ballet, Ballet Hispanico, Ballet Nacional de Cuba, Cincinnati Ballet, Ballet Austin, Compañía Nacional de Danza, Dutch National Ballet, English National Ballet, Finnish National Ballet, Royal Ballet of Flanders, Joffrey Ballet, Pacific Northwest Ballet, West Australian Ballet, Pennsylvania Ballet, Scottish Ballet, Ballet Nacional Chileno, Danza Contemporanea de Cuba and Washington Ballet, among other companies.

Her work has received many honours. *Broken Wings*, created for English National Ballet, was named one of 2016’s best premieres by Dance Europe and other newspapers and has been nominated for a Critics’ Circle National Dance Award; *Sombrerísimo* received Cuba’s Villanueva Award in 2015; *A Streetcar Named Desire* won the Best Choreography (Classical) award from the Critics’ Circle National Dance Awards and was nominated for an Olivier Award in 2012; and *Replay* won first prize at the Choreographers Competition in Bornem, Belgium, in 2002.



A NEW HOME

Just over 60 years ago, a young ballerina, the daughter of Russian emigrants, left her home in Berlin to settle in Montreal with a dream of teaching and sharing her love of dance. In 1957, Ludmilla (or “Mrs. Chiriaeff,” as she is now referred to) founded Les Grands Ballets Canadiens, the very first professional ballet company in Quebec.

Today, true to its history but with its sights set firmly on the future, Les Grands Ballets embraces a vision of society that is both inspired and generous.

The month of June will see us move to our new home at 1435 De Bleury St. in the heart of the Montreal’s Quartier des spectacles, along with Tangente, the École de danse contemporaine de Montréal and Agora de la danse.

A modern structure with world-class facilities, Édifice Wilder Espace Dance has already been covered by the French dailies **Le Monde** and **Le Figaro**. **The centre will reinforce the reputation of Montreal and Quebec as global hubs of dance creation and innovation.**

Les Grands Ballets alone will occupy 80,000 sq. ft. in the building, which houses four new studios, rest and fitness areas geared to dancers’ needs, extra space for production work like costume-making, and a creation studio accessible to other members of the dance and performing arts community as well as the private sector. The Grands Ballets café and restaurant will start operations soon after the centre opens.

Special “lounge evenings” will be held all season long in partnership with students from the McGill Not-For-Profit Consulting collective. And beginning in fall 2017, Les Grands Ballets will also start offering recreation and wellness courses to give Montrealers a chance to experience dance in all its forms.

The heart of Montréal beats to the rhythm of dance, sparked by Les Grands Ballets’ passion to move the world, differently.



NEW BRANDING

To complement its move to Édifice Wilder Espace Dance and help open an exciting new chapter in its history, Les Grands Ballets has decided to take its branding to a whole new level. From now on, the company branding will centre on the slogan

GB Moving the world. Differently.

All Grands Ballets activities will support the new branding, which is meant to be holistic, diverse, dynamic and inclusive while preserving all the qualities that make the company so unique. The goal is to help the public differentiate the array of Grands Ballets-related projects, which will continue to gravitate around and support the company's core creative activities.

DANCE THERAPY SERVICES

This season, the Grands Ballets' **National Centre for Dance Therapy (NCDT)** will start delivering services to the general public.

Drawing on the **23 research and clinical projects it has carried out in partnership with some 50 institutions**, the NCDT is now able to offer its growing range of services to anyone in need. Its plans include expanding its **adapted dance** services, which have already made substantial contributions to the **well-being** of some 350 people with impairments, especially through dance training for individuals with Down Syndrome, Parkinson's Disease or an autism spectrum disorder.



Photo: Damien Siqueiros - Zelaproduction

STRENGTHENING ARTISTIC TIES WITH THE ÉCOLE SUPÉRIEURE DE BALLET DU QUÉBEC

As soon as he arrived in Montreal, Ivan Cavallari announced his intention to forge closer artistic ties between **Les Grands Ballets and the ESBQ**. The company is pleased to announce that several collaborative initiatives will be taken with Anik Bissonnette and her school, starting in the 2017-2018 season, to ensure a ready supply of **locally sourced talent**.

“Working hand in hand with Ivan and Les Grands Ballets makes good sense to me. Given my long love story (18 years and counting!) with Les Grands Ballets, it goes without saying that I am extremely pleased with this announcement. Working together, we can better prepare the next generation of dancers and continue to inspire young people here and elsewhere.” — **Anik Bissonnette, Co-CEO and Artistic and Pedagogical Director of the ESBQ**

GENEROUS DONORS

Having already given over 32,350 sick and underprivileged children a chance to take part in educational workshops and attend a free performance of *The Nutcracker*, the **Nutcracker Fund for Children** is continuing its work to make ballet accessible to as many people as possible, particularly by organizing benefit events.

The **annual Benefit Gala**, one of the top charitable events on the Montreal social calendar, will take place this year on May 13, 2017.

Over 500 donors will also be attending the traditional **Benefit Brunch** on December 17, 2017 at Place des Arts, while the **Jeunes Gouverneurs**, a committee of young professionals working to educate the next generation about philanthropy, will hold several events throughout the season where participants can network in a relaxed social ambiance.

The Nutcracker Market

The 8th edition of the Nutcracker Market, whose exhibitors donate 10% of their sales to the Nutcracker Fund for Children, will take place from November 30 to December 10 at the Palais des congrès de Montréal.



Photo: Adrienne Surprenant • Atelier du Fonds Casse-Noisette



Photo: Sasha Onyshchenko / Kravetz Photographics • Marché Casse-Noisette

***Je me pointe!* Program**

To make it easier for people aged 30 or under to attend outstanding performances at reduced prices, Les Grands Ballets created the Je me pointe! card. For the exceptional price of \$15, the card provides a 40% discount on selected performances. Les Grands Ballets also offers a 40% reduction on all regularly priced tickets for children 12 and under.

Be First in Line to Reserve Your Seats!

Want one of the best seats in the house at up to 50% off? Learn about our packages by calling (514) 849-0269, or visit grandsballets.com. Our website also includes information on performances, the company and our dancers.

Partners

Les Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montréal is supported by the Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec, Canada Council for the Arts and Conseil des arts de Montréal.

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