

Montreal will host the first *International Symposium for Dance and Well-Being*

May 24 to 26, 2018

***Forty international specialists gathering in Montreal,
an initiative of the Grands Ballets Canadiens' National Centre for Dance Therapy***

Montreal, February 20, 2018 – This coming May 24 to 26, Montreal will be hosting the first edition of the International Symposium for Dance and Well-Being. Over three days, some 40 specialists will share their knowledge on realities, trends and issues relating dance and movement to health and well-being.



Open to researchers, to professionals and to a public curious to learn more about it, the event will offer lectures, panel discussions and workshops at the Édifice Wilder Espace Danse, bringing together recognized national and international authorities in the spheres of dance, medicine, academic research and cutting-edge therapeutic approaches.

“Montreal is well on the way to becoming a renowned centre for innovation in dance therapy and in adapted dance,” explains Christian Sénéchal, the director of the National Centre for Dance Therapy (NCDT), who also took part in drafting the programming for the event. **“In holding this first international symposium, we’re seeking to create a space where lecturers, panelists and moderators will contribute to the evolution of rigorous and tested approaches and methods.”**

For professionals and students in the fields of dance and health care, these three days will provide an opportunity to discover and deepen varied approaches, in addition to exchanging ideas with peers from here and elsewhere.

Launched by the Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montréal in 2013, the Centre, devoted to dance therapy and to adapted dance, is unique in the world. It is distinguished by a global approach, one that unites experts from a number of sectors of activity. Teachers and professionals trained by the NCDT offer a wide range of activities designed for and adapted to clientele with special needs, in particular seniors, people with Parkinson's disease, stroke, Down's syndrome (trisomy 21), autism and intellectual disabilities.

“The International Symposium, the first of its kind, is the logical next step in the Centre’s development, in the diverse and inclusive mission of the Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montréal, and as a follow-up to the Canadian symposium we organized in Toronto in the autumn of 2016,” points out Alain Dancyger, executive director of the Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montréal. **“It positions Montreal at the heart of a circuit of rare major international events that bring together specialists and leading figures recognized for their significant contribution. We’re especially proud of initiating an event destined to further scientific research and to identify ground-breaking therapeutic practices. Moreover, this is an opportunity to add to Montreal’s celebrity as a focal point for culture, knowledge and science.”**

Programming and themes

The forty or so experts participating in the Symposium were chosen following an international call for proposals, which were assessed by an independent selection committee. Hailing from Canada, the United States, France, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Belgium and Denmark, they will be tackling the topics of dance and movement according to six themes: new studies in the context of well-being; theoretical and methodological frameworks; tools, protocols and assessments for health research; existing and emerging practices; practical applications and strategies for clinicians, therapists, community dancers and researchers; the promotion of health and well-being; and integration into community, therapeutic and clinical settings.

In the course of these three days, **Katrine Kirk (Denmark)**, ambassador of the World Health Organization, will share her own story to illustrate how classical ballet can help patients take charge of their cancer treatment by focusing on activities that they enjoy. Also, **Madeleine Hackney (U.S.)** will present the results of adapted Argentine Tango, a therapy she designed for people with Parkinson's disease; while **Robyn Flaum Cruz (U.S.)**, dance therapist and professor at Lesley University, will reveal the importance of dance therapy in a perspective of research and mixed methodologies, approaching dance at one and the same time as a means of expression and a key to stimulating and coordinating a body suffering a loss of synchronization.

We should point out the presence of among others Montreal dancer **Luca “Lazylegz” Patuelli**, who suffers from a congenital defect that cost him the use of his legs. He made a name for himself on the international breakdance scene, his career taking him to the set of Ellen DeGeneres's TV show, a collaboration with Kanye West, an acclaimed participation in *So You Think You Can Dance Canada* and a performance at the opening ceremony of the Vancouver Paralympic Games in 2010.

Dancer **David Leventhal (U.S.)** of the Mark Morris Dance Group, meanwhile, in 2001 co-created the Dance for PD® program, today offered in over 100 communities in nine countries, and in which professional dancers, experts in movement, teach thousands of people with Parkinson's disease along with their families and caregivers the art and techniques (balance, motor skill), but above all the pleasure, of dancing.

The author and musician **Philippe Bouteloup (France)**, director of Musique & Santé, is another of the guest specialists. Reaching patients in a hospital setting, his music takes life to the very heart of the institutions concerned. His approach emphasizes respect for patients, making sure that they at all times have full control over the musical intervention.

Symposium: tickets available now

Presented by the National Centre for Dance Therapy of the Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montréal, the First International Symposium for Dance and Well-Being will run from May 24 to 26, 2018, at the Espace danse in Édifice Wilder, located at 1435 Bleury St. in Montreal. Tickets, ranging from \$250 to \$330 for the three days, are available as of now. All details can be found at www.grandsballets.com.

About the National Centre for Dance Therapy

Founded in 2013, the National Centre for Dance Therapy is a division of the Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montréal. Its mission is to promote dance and movement as a springboard to therapy and to well-being. Its interdisciplinary approach enables individuals and communities to benefit from clinical research and from training, as well as from the provision of therapeutic and adapted services, through dance and movement.

The Centre also offers intensive training intended for future care providers, in addition to conducting several research projects in collaboration with academic institutions. Explains Centre director Christian Sénéchal, "Therapy through dance often helps people isolated by their social conditions or the state of their health to better express themselves and to socialize more than they would in traditional forms of physical activity."

Dance/movement therapy first emerged in the United States in the 1940s. It has since been used either as main therapy, as a complement to various medical or psychotherapeutic treatments, or else to foster growth, well-being and the development of creativity.

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OUR SINCERE THANKS

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- The U.S. Department of State
- Dentons
- The Fonds de Recherche du Québec - Société et Culture

Media accreditation (national and international)

To obtain accreditation, journalists or media representatives are invited to get in touch with the press attaché team by Friday, May 18 at 5 p.m. Space is limited.

Dossiers and reference content for media

Access the complete programming, participant photos, articles and video links related to the Symposium, the practice of dance therapy and the activities of the National Centre for Dance Therapy by visiting www.grandsballets.com.

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