

2016 TOUR

LES GRANDS BALLETS OFF TO CUBA



Photo: John Hall – Dancers: Jeremy Raïa, Karell Williams and Marcin Kaczorowski

Montreal, October 27, 2016—Les Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montréal will depart for Cuba on October 30, at the personal invitation of Cuba's first lady of ballet, Alicia Alonso. The company will perform Ohad Naharin's *Black Milk* on November 1 and 2 at the Teatro Nacional, and on November 3 at the Gran Teatro, as part of the International Ballet Festival of Havana.

A "prima ballerina assoluta" and General Director of the Cuban National Ballet, Alicia Alonso is the foremost figure in Latin American classical ballet, not to mention one of the greatest dancers of the 20th century. In 2002 she was designated UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador for the promotion of classical dance. In return for the many invitations her company has received to perform in Montreal, she personally invited Les Grands Ballets to take part in the biannual festival she organizes in Havana, now in its 25th edition.

Black Milk was performed for the first time in 1985 by the Israeli troupe Kibbutz Dance Company. In 2002 it was incorporated into *Minus One*, a contemporary piece created by Ohad Naharin for Les Grands Ballets. The beauty of *Black Milk* stems from the alchemy and energy of its five dancers. This complex choreography, at once powerful and highly demanding, will be performed in Havana by Marcin Kaczorowski, Jeremy Raïa, Andrew Wright, Jeremy Rivera and Hervé Courtain.

CLOSE TIES

For **Alain Dancyger**, Executive Director of Les Grands Ballets, the tour will allow the company to "continue to build and reinforce its ties with the Cuban National Ballet and, by extension, bilateral agreements between our two nations". **Christine St-Pierre**, Quebec Minister of International Relations and La Francophonie, declared

that she was "extremely pleased that a delegation of Quebec's most talented dancers were taking part in this year's prestigious artistic gathering, which offers enthusiasts of dance, art and culture a unique opportunity for exchanges and sharing". For the Minister, "this tour by Les Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montréal is perfectly in tune with the approach of the Quebec government in its development of new cooperative initiatives with Cuba."

HISTORY

Since Ludmilla Chiriaeff founded the company in 1957, Les Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montréal has perpetuated a tradition of excellence, expertise and quality. This high-calibre creation company is among the most prestigious in Canada, reflecting ballet's tremendous diversity and vitality. Creation remains the cornerstone of its mission. Under the enlightened auspices of Gradimir Pankov, the company's Artistic Director since 2000, Les Grands Ballets has featured some of the leading figures of international ballet. The company also manages several fundraising projects, including the Nutcracker Market and the annual Benefit Gala, as well as the National Centre for Dance Therapy. Embodying such values as openness, creativity, innovation and risk-taking, the company today has a vision that is both broad and holistic, one that assigns dance a role well beyond the parameters of culture.

Black Milk

By **Ohad Naharin**

Music by Paul Smadbeck

November 1 and 2 at 5 p.m. at the **Salle Covarrubias** of the **Teatro Nacional**
November 3 at 8:30 p.m. at the **Salle Garcia Lorca** of the **Gran Teatro de la Habana**

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Information:

Sheila Skaiem, Public Relations Manager

+1 514 849-8691, ext. 239

sskaiem@grandsballets.com

