

Karen Kain
Artistic Director

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The National Ballet of Canada Mourns Alexander Grant Former Artistic Director Dies at 86

October 3, 2011... The National Ballet of Canada mourns the death of **Alexander Grant**, Artistic Director from 1976 to 1983, who passed away on Friday, September 30 in London, England at the age of 86.

“Among the many things Alexander Grant provided this company was the incredible opportunity of working with the great dance master Sir Frederick Ashton during his tenure. It was a direct contact to the British dance tradition continuing the lineage that our founder Celia Franca brought to the company,” said **Karen Kain**, Artistic Director. “He was a charming, humourous and sympathetic person and, on a personal note, had an important effect on my career by persuading me to stay with the National Ballet at a significant point in my life.”

Born in 1925 in Wellington, New Zealand, Mr. Grant was a celebrated dancer, ballet master and director. He was a member of The Royal Ballet for 30 years; he joined the company in 1946 and was promoted to Soloist in 1949. Mr. Grant created more than 20 roles in works by Sir Frederick Ashton and danced in world premieres by such choreographers as John Cranko and Sir Kenneth MacMillan, among others.

Mr. Grant directed The Royal Ballet’s touring company, Ballet for All, from 1971 until 1975 while still performing with the main company.

From 1976 to 1983, Mr. Grant was Artistic Director of The National Ballet of Canada. During his tenure, Mr. Grant brought many important works by Sir Frederick Ashton to the National Ballet, including *The Dream*, *Two Pigeons*, *Monotones*, *Les Patineurs* and *La Fille mal gardée*. He also added works by Jerome Robbins, Glen Tetley, Sir Kenneth MacMillan and Maurice Béjart to the company’s repertoire and encouraged early choreographic works by Ann Ditchburn and James Kudelka.

After leaving the National Ballet in 1983, Mr. Grant worked with English National Ballet as a coach and character dancer and went on to stage works by Sir Frederick Ashton at companies all over the world, including The Royal Ballet, American Ballet Theatre, Bolshoi Ballet, Boston Ballet, The Joffrey Ballet, San Francisco Ballet, Houston Ballet and Stuttgart Ballet.

In recognition of his services to ballet, Queen Elizabeth II made Mr. Grant a Commander of the British Empire. In 2008, The Royal Academy of Dance (RAD) awarded Mr. Grant the Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II Coronation Award. This award is RAD’s highest honour in recognition of outstanding service to dance. Mr. Grant also received the 2009 De Valois Award for Outstanding Achievement in Dance.

[View the National Ballet's online tribute to Alexander Grant >](#)

The National Ballet of Canada gratefully acknowledges the ongoing support of the Canada Council for the Arts; the Ontario Arts Council; the City of Toronto through the Economic Development & Culture Department; the Government of Canada through the Honourable James Moore, Minister, the Department of Canadian Heritage; the Government of Ontario; the Ontario Arts Foundation; the Ontario Trillium Foundation; and the Ontario Cultural Attractions Fund.

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years

Celebrating 60 Glorious Years

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Media are invited to download photos of Alexander Grant at
http://national.ballet.ca/media/Media_Image_Gallery/

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For more information, please contact:

Catherine Chang
Senior Public Relations Manager
416 345 9686 x302
cchang@national.ballet.ca
national.ballet.ca

Christina McGrath
Publicity Coordinator
416 345 9686 x332
cmcgrath@national.ballet.ca
national.ballet.ca