

Karen Kain
Artistic Director

#18

60
years

The National Ballet of Canada's Winter Season Features Three Full-Length Ballets

Evan McKie, Zdenek Konvalina, Bridgett Zehr and
Matjash Mrozewski Guest

La Fille mal gardée is Dedicated to Alexander Grant

January 18, 2012... **Karen Kain**, Artistic Director of The National Ballet Canada, today announced that the 60th anniversary celebrations continue this Winter Season with four guest artists. **Evan McKie**, Principal Dancer with Stuttgart Ballet, will perform the role of Prince Florimund in *The Sleeping Beauty*. Mr. McKie was born in Toronto and trained at Canada's National Ballet School, the Kirov Academy of Ballet and John Cranko School. He has received critical acclaim for many roles, including Hamlet, Onegin, Siegfried in *Swan Lake* and Prince Florimund in *The Sleeping Beauty*, among others. This will be Mr. McKie's first performance in his hometown since graduating from Canada's National Ballet School.

Former Principal Dancers and current Guest Artists **Zdenek Konvalina** and **Bridgett Zehr** will return to dance the roles of Prince Florimund and Princess Aurora in *The Sleeping Beauty*. Currently, Mr. Konvalina and Ms. Zehr are Principal Dancers with English National Ballet.

Former Soloist **Matjash Mrozewski** will dance the role of Widow Simone in *La Fille mal gardée*. Mr. Mrozewski is a Toronto-based freelance choreographer who has created works for The Royal Ballet, San Francisco Ballet, Royal Danish Ballet, The National Ballet of Canada and Stuttgart Ballet, among others.

The three full-length ballets featured in the Winter Season each hold a unique place in the company's rich history. The season opens with **Sir Frederick Ashton's** enduring *La Fille mal gardée*, February 29 – March 4, 2012. Ashton's *La Fille mal gardée*, one of the oldest, yet most beloved, of all narrative ballets, was brought into the National Ballet's repertoire in 1976 by then Artistic Director **Alexander Grant**. The first of 47 ballets generously gifted to the National Ballet by The Volunteer Committee, *La Fille mal gardée* is dedicated to the memory of Mr. Grant who died in London, England on September 30, 2011 at the age of 86. A celebrated dancer, ballet master and director, Mr. Grant was a member of the Royal Ballet for 30 years and created more than 20 roles in the works of Sir Frederick Ashton.

The Sleeping Beauty is a ballet that epitomizes, perhaps better than any other, the meaning of classical ballet. **Rudolf Nureyev's** 1966 adaptation of the ballet was immediately recognized as a landmark interpretation and when he set the work on the National Ballet in 1972, it became one of the most significant milestones in the company's history. *The Sleeping Beauty* runs March 10 – 18, 2012.

John Neumeier's moving and astonishing adaptation of Anton Chekhov's great play *The Seagull* bears all the hallmarks of his aesthetic and provides a perfect vehicle for his distinctive dramatic and choreographic gifts. Mr. Neumeier set his first work for the National Ballet, *Don Juan* with Rudolf Nureyev in the title role, in 1972 and in 1993, he created *Now and Then* for Karen Kain. The company's close association with this gifted choreographer culminated with the North American premiere of *The Seagull* in 2008 which was received to great critical acclaim and this compelling work concludes the Winter Season March 21 – 25, 2012.

The 2011/12 Season is presented by CTV and The Globe and Mail.

Celebrating 60 Years of Partnership with The Volunteer Committee, The National Ballet of Canada.

La Fille mal gardée is a gift from THE VOLUNTEER COMMITTEE, THE NATIONAL BALLET OF CANADA.

Performance Sponsor: CTV (March 4 at 2:00 pm).

World MasterCard presents *The Sleeping Beauty*.

The Sleeping Beauty is made possible by generous contributions from Margaret & Jim Fleck, The Catherine & Maxwell Meighen Foundation, Sandra & Jim Pitblado, Gretchen Ross and Nancy Pencer & Michael Benjamin.

Performance Sponsors: CTV (March 14 at 7:30 pm), Air Canada (March 15 at 7:30 pm), VIA Rail (March 16 at 7:30 pm).

The Seagull is generously supported in part by an anonymous friend of the ballet.

Evan McKie's appearance is made possible by a generous donation from The Frank Gerstein Charitable Foundation.

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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