

AGM Message

Cornell C. V. Wright, Board Chair

In the past year I have worked closely with The National Ballet of Canada as Chair of the Board of Directors, an experience invested with a sense of shared purpose, accomplishment and confidence in the future. Above all, the achievements of the 2017/18 season reflect a deep commitment from our artists, staff, donors and volunteers to establishing the National Ballet as a site of Canadian cultural excellence at home and on the world stage. Of this we can be proud.

With the 2018 world premiere of *Frame by Frame*, the National Ballet enhanced its reputation for innovation by creating a ballet of international interest with unique relevance for Canada. *Frame by Frame* brought together the remarkable talents of Canada's Robert Lepage and Guillaume Côté, and inspired a new collaboration with The National Film Board of Canada, further integrating the National Ballet into Canada's cultural landscape. *Frame by Frame* brought new audiences to the ballet, inspiring many to see for the first time both the distinct power of ballet and its relatedness to other progressive art forms. It was an historic achievement.

Touring continued to be a vital part of the company's activities last year, with our celebrated performances of John Neumeier's *Nijinsky* in Paris a highpoint. Prestigious touring engagements like this one – as with San Francisco and our London presentation of Robert Binet's *The Dreamers Ever Leave You* – allow us to promote the singular gifts of the National Ballet with fellow artists and audiences internationally, while giving our artists the chance to realize their own professional goals.

The National Ballet also worked diligently in 2017/18 to strengthen our impact and improve accessibility within diverse communities here at home. The full complement of National Ballet outreach initiatives, including our flagship programme YOU dance, reached more than 1.3 million individuals last year through targeted performances, residencies, workshops and livestream technologies. Going forward, we will continue to find new ways of engaging our audiences to ensure the National Ballet is familiar and inspiring to all.

None of these incredible achievements would be possible without our donors. The spirit and dedication with which you get behind Artistic Director Karen Kain and support her vision of excellence are, by now, legendary. On behalf of the entire Board, I extend sincere thanks and admiration for your transformational partnership.