



History of the Company

An internationally renowned repertory company, BJM has continued to grow with all the energy and spirit of exploration for which it has been known since its birth in 1972. Renowned for its radiant, expressive style, BJM presents dance that is based on classical technique while promoting exceptional voices of contemporary dance. Thanks to the commitment of Geneviève Salbaing and co-founders Eva von Gencsy and Eddy Toussaint, the company's energized dance full of brio and vitality has blazed a remarkable trail ever since. With Louis Robitaille as artistic director since 1998, BJM continues to strike a resounding chord with contemporary audiences. Over four decades the Ballets Jazz de Montréal has presented more than 2000 performances in 800 towns and cities in 65 countries, to a total audience of more than 2 million.

Allowing the full expression of each dancer's identity is crucial to BJM's distinctive style. These high level, eclectic artists perfectly represent the company's spirit. Thanks to their unique personalities and the quality of their performances, they invariably captivate audiences and critics across the world. By promoting our core values such as openness and community, Louis Robitaille has transformed BJM into a genuine research laboratory. The dancers are given the opportunity to develop alongside internationally renowned creators who are regularly invited to share their innovative ideas in the form of creative residencies. BJM's successes stem from an exceptional chemistry where every creation is the result of a unique and energizing meeting between choreographer and dancer.

Louis Robitaille has introduced works by such international choreographers as Mia Michaels, Trey McIntyre, Patrick Delcroix, Rodrigo Pederneiras, Mauro Bigonzetti, Annabelle Lopez Ochoa, Cayetano Soto, and Barak Marshall. The artistic director has been particularly concerned, though, to nurture and encourage Canadian creativity—choreographers, composers and designers such as Crystal Pite, Azure Barton and more recently, from the West Coast, Chinese-born Wen Wei Wang. With such prestigious names gracing its repertoire, BJM offers a mutually enhancing experience based on both openness and stylistic diversity.

Faced with the tensions and uncertainties in today's world, BJM has chosen to remain faithful to an aesthetic form of dance which can also have an uplifting effect on the soul. This has earned it the title « feel good company », often employed by both the public and the media. Making a conscious effort to remain accessible, BJM brings to stage creations which speak to both neophytes and informed audiences.

Louis Robitaille – Artistic Director

Two events have had a decisive influence on my professional career: my discovery of Maurice Béjart's *Messe pour un temps présent* and my encounter with Les Ballets Jazz de Montréal in 1972. Working for Les Grands Ballets Canadiens shaped my artistic itinerary. I have very fond memories of the many inspiring and exceptional encounters I had there. Choreographers such as James Kudelka, Nacho Duato, Jiří Kylián, Hans Van Manen or Edouard Lock inspired me to seek through perseverance and true effort the satisfaction of a job well done. The many people I've met along the way, whether they were choreographers, managers or creators, helped me articulate a personal approach to performance and dance which continues to guide me to this day. The projects I carried out afterwards with Bande-à-Part – which later became Danse-Théâtre de Montréal – paved the way for new challenges and new responsibilities. I learned how to engender and uphold an artistic vision, while also managing resources.

The transition from dancing to directing the artistic activities of a company was one of the biggest challenges I have had to face. While the dancer has to focus on his own career, the artistic director must learn how to develop and nurture such qualities as empathy, respect and altruism.

Today, at BJM, I look to the future; continually repositioning the company, while also innovating and acquiring new knowledge. Our raison d'être is to generate a unique encounter with the public. Through BJM, I want to embellish everyday life, bring happiness where it is most needed. When we feel a certain magic at the end of a performance, I know that this kind of encounter has truly taken place. Louis Robitaille

BIOGRAPHIES OF THE CHOREOGRAPHERS

CAYETANO SOTO

Cayetano Soto was born in Spain in 1975. He started his dance education in his hometown Barcelona at the Instituto del Teatro and continued his studies at the Royal Conservatorium in The Hague. After receiving his degree, Cayetano Soto danced with IT Dansa in Barcelona before joining the Ballet Theater Munich a year later. There he created several successful ballets for the company.

Cayetano Soto has gone on to create "Quotidiano" for the Festival Internazionale di Danza in Venice, Italy and "24FPS" for the Royal Ballet of Flanders which won the Hapag Lloyd prize in April 2006. His first full evening ballet was a new "A Midsummer Night's Dream" which was premiered in July 2006 in Lübeck and in November 2006 in Schwerin. In spring 2007 he created "Dependent behaviour" for the Ballet of the Staatstheater Braunschweig and in July he was invited to make a piece at the Northwest Pacific Dance Project in Portland, Oregon: "Not yet" was so successful, that it immediately entered the repertory of the company.

In fall 2007 his piece M/C about the relationship of Marilyn Monroe and Truman Capote was premiered with the Royal Ballet of Flanders. In spring 2008 he created "Two at a time", a piece about doubles, for Stuttgart ballet and in summer "last but not least" for the Northwest Pacific Dance Project. In July his new work "Canela fina" was premiered with the Ballet da Cidade in Sao Paulo. This piece was co-produced with Liceu in Barcelona, where it had its European premiere in September 2008. In October he made a choreography with four dancers in the church of St. Egidien in Nürnberg, dancing Mozart's mass in c-minor with live orchestra. In 2009 he created "Zero in on" for Augsburg Ballet, staged his very first choreography "Fugaz" in Aspen Santa Fe Ballet, staged M/C in Dortmund and created a new full evening version of "Carmen" for Dortmund Ballet.

Due to the success in Dortmund, Brno in Czech Republic decided to stage his "Carmen" in 2010. Soto's first new creation in 2010 was "Kiss me goodnight" for Introdans in Arnhem, followed by a solo for first soloist of Bavarian State Ballet Munich Lisa-Maree Cullum which was created to present the new collection of the label Talbot Runhof at the fashion week in Paris. In May 2010, for Companhia nacional de Bailado in Lisboa, he created "Sacre du printemps". Cayetano Soto is based in Munich.

BARAK MARSHALL

Born and raised in Los Angeles, California, Barak is the son of acclaimed dancer, choreographer and musician Margalit Oved. Barak fast established himself as one of Israeli dance's most innovative and unique voices. His first work, Aunt Leah, won first prize in the Shades of Dance Competition and his third work, Emma Goldman's Wedding, represented Israel in the 1998 Bagnolet International Competition where it won first prize, the Adami Award, the Bonnie Byrd Award for New Choreography and the Audience Award.

His company went on to tour extensively throughout Europe, including performances in Berlin, Lyon and Paris. In 1999, Barak was invited by Ohad Naharin to become the Batsheva Dance Company's first-ever house choreographer. Barak is also a singer and has performed as a soloist with Yo-Yo Ma and the Silk Road Project, the Yuval Ron Ensemble and the Los Angeles Jewish Symphony. Barak studied social theory and philosophy at Harvard University. He is a guest lecturer at UCLA's Department of World Arts and Cultures. Barak recently received the prestigious Creative Capital Grant for his new music production, Symphony of Tin Cans, with Margalit Oved and the Balkan Beat Box. His work Monger was premiered in October 2008 and toured throughout Israel, Europe, Asia and the United States. His latest work, Rooster, premiered at the Israeli Opera House in November 2009. He presented Rooster on June 2011 at the Berlizo Opera House and Monger on July 2011 at Campo Santo during the Estivales de Perpignan at the Montpellier Danse Festival 2011. Barak currently divides his time between Tel Aviv and Los Angeles.

WEN WEI WANG

Wen Wei Wang began dancing at an early age in China, where he was born and raised. He trained and danced professionally with the Langzhou Song and Dance Company. In 1991, he came to Canada and joined the Judith Marcuse Dance Company after which he danced with Ballet British Columbia for seven years. Since 2003, he has served as Artistic Director of Wen Wei Dance. Wen Wei is the recipient of many awards such as the 2000 Clifford E. Lee Choreographic Award and the 2006 Isadora Award for Excellence in Choreography (Unbound). In addition to his works for Wen Wei Dance, he has choreographed for the Alberta Ballet, Ballet Jorgen, Dancers Dancing, North West Dance Projects in Portland and, most recently, Vancouver Opera's production of Nixon in China.

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BIOGRAPHIES OF THE DANCERS

Christina Bodie

Originally from Edmonton, Alberta, Christina studied in the professional division of the Royal Winnipeg Ballet School. She later went on to study at The Juilliard School, from which she graduated in 2005. Before joining BJM in 2007, Christina danced for the prestigious Koresh Dance Company in Philadelphia, where she had the opportunity to work with choreographers such as Robert Battle, Donald Byrd and Ronen Koresh.

Antonios Bougiouris

Tony attended The Juilliard School in New York City and received his Bachelors of Fine Arts. While at Juilliard, Anthony performed the works of Robert Battle, Ohad Naharin, Paul Taylor, David Parsons, Hans Van Manen, Adam Hougland, Eric Hampton, and Jose Limon. In April 2002, Anthony joined Les Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montreal. There, as a demi-soloist, he had the opportunity to perform soloist roles in the works of world renowned choreographers such as Jiri Kylian, Mats Ek, Kim Brandstrup, Fernand Nault, Stijn Celis, Ohad Naharin, Shen Wei, Mauro Bigonzetti, Didi Veldman, and George Balanchine. In August 2008, Anthony joined Aterballetto in Reggio Emilia, Italy where he worked with Mauro Bigonzetti and in July 2009 became a member of BJM.

Céline Cassone

Born in France, Céline began studying dance as a child at the Conservatoire National de Danse d'Avignon. In 1993, she joined the Deutsch Oper Berlin for one year and then, the following season, the Badisches Staatstheater Karlsruhe for four years. She then enrolled in the Béjart Ballet Lausanne, under the direction of Maurice Béjart, where she performed many solo roles. It was also as a soloist that she joined, in 1999, the Ballet du Grand Théâtre de Genève. Céline has had the opportunity to take part in many innovative contemporary productions while also working with internationally renowned choreographers. She performed in several international galas and was the recipient, in 2006, of the « Étoile de Ballet 2000 » dance award. Deciding to acquire the freedom to accept a variety of new challenges, Céline became an independent artist in 2008. She was part of Morphoses, Christopher Wheeldon's company, and she worked with choreographer Benjamin Millepied. She joined BJM in 2008 as a dancer and since 2009, she is also Artistic Coordinator.

Christian Denice

Christian Denice received his dance training at Bobbie's School of Performing Arts in Thousand Oaks, California. His film credits include *A Time for Dancing*, Disney's *High School Musical 2*, and MTV's *The American Mall*. Christian has danced for Odyssey Dance Theater in Salt Lake City, UT, and then for River North Dance Chicago in Chicago, IL under the direction of Frank Chaves where he has performed original works by renowned choreographers including Sidra Bell, Robert Battle, Lauri Stallings, and Sherry Zunker, as well as having the opportunity to co-choreograph the work for the company in 2011. Christian has the privilege of teaching and choreographing throughout the country, most recently setting an original work on Odyssey Dance Theater at the beginning of the year. Christian was named one of the top ten male dancers of 2010 by *Time Out Chicago* and received recognition as a notable Chicago dancer of 2010 by *the Chicago Tribune*. In the past year, Christian has danced for Company E in Washington, DC, Greensboro Ballet in Greensboro, North Carolina and Montgomery Ballet in Montgomery, Alabama. Christian began working with BJM in 2012.

Kevin Delaney

Kevin started dancing at the age of 7 at the Larkin School of Dance in Minnesota. In 2004, he joined Odyssey Dance Theatre performing works by Mia Michaels, Liz Imperio, and Dee Caspary. Kevin then moved on to join Company C Contemporary Ballet in 2005 having the opportunity to perform works by luminaries such as Twyla Tharp, Paul Taylor, Antony Tudor, and Amy Seiwert. Kevin is a dancer for BJM since 2010.

Alyssa Desmarais

Born in Cowansville, Quebec, Alyssa left home at the age of twelve to study dance at the École supérieure de ballet contemporain de Montréal. This five year training allowed her to enroll in the Jeune Ballet du Québec in 2006. This company gave her the opportunity to work with renowned choreographers such as Mario Radacovsky, Hélène Blackburn and Shawn

Hounsell, as well as taking part in international tours. Her three years with the Jeune Ballet du Québec enabled her also to acquire vast amounts of experience as well as completing her contemporary dance training. Alyssa joined BJM in 2009.

Youri de Wilde

Québec native Youri began his training as a classical ballet dancer at the age of nine at the École Supérieure de Danse de Québec. In 1993, he joined Le Jeune Ballet du Québec and, the following season, Les Grands Ballets Canadiens. He was invited by DancEast, in New Brunswick, to perform in its production of *The Nutcracker* and has danced in several Opéra de Montréal productions, as well as in a creation by Benjamin Hatcher presented at Tangente before joining BJM in 1998.

Alfredo García González

Born in Cuba, Alfredo started dancing at the age of ten at the EVA Paulita Concepcion School, after which he joined the company Escuela Nacional de Arte (ENA). He then joined the company Conjunto Folklorico Nacional of Cuba for two years and later moved to Zurich, where he continued his training at Performance Year. Alfredo has danced for the companies Stadttheater Augsburg, Staatstheater Braunschweig and Staatstheater Saarbruecken, all based in Germany. He has worked alongside renowned choreographers Marguerite Donlon, Kurt Jooss, Jochen Heckmann, Mirko Guido, Teresa Rotemberg, Eva-Maria Lerchenberg-Thöny, Ismael Ivo and Carolyn Carlson. This is Alfredo's first year with BJM.

Alexandra Gherchman

Alexandra was born in Russia and moved to Israel when she was 11 years old, where she started her dance training at the Ballet School Bat-Dor. In 2000, Gherchman moved to the United States and performed with MOMIX, Notario Dance Company, Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company, Koresh Dance Company and Ballet Hispanico. She had privilege of working with choreographers such as Donald Byrd, Milton Myers, Robert Battle, Itzik Galili and Graciela Daniele. Alexandra joined BJM in 2009.

Alexander Hille

Born in Minnesota, Alexander Hille graduated from the Saint Paul Conservatory for Performing Artists in 2007. He entered the Juilliard School in 2009 and the following year performed at Springboard Danse Montréal. In 2009, he took part in the Juilliard School's European tour, appearing at the Théâtre de Caen, the Glass Factory and the Conservatoire de Paris. Alexander is also a choreographer, with the following works to his credit: *Kyrie* (2007), *That Which is Now* (2008) and *Flyhi* (2010). On two occasions, in 2005 and 2007, he was a finalist for the Youth America Grand Prix. He joined Les Ballets Jazz de Montréal in the spring of 2011.