

MEDIA RELEASE
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International Dance Day 2011 A dance of hope and memory by 17 artists

Montréal, April 29, 2011 – On the occasion of International Dance Day, the Regroupement québécois de la danse (RQD) is celebrating the start of Year One of its Master Plan for Professional Dance in Québec, whose official unveiling will take place on June 2 as part of the Festival TransAmériques. 2011 also marks a special version of the RQD's famous Traces chorégraphiques, which — in recognition of all those at the heart of dance, choreography, and the relationship between dance and society — will be presented by the dancers themselves. At lunchtime in Place des Arts' Espace culturel Georges-Emile-Lapalme, 17 professional performers will unfurl a choreographic 'quilt' composed of excerpts from a wide repertoire of Québec-made works, and then invite the public to join the dance. Affixed to the ground, the 240 feet and 4 hands of this collective Trace will be offered to passers-by until May 8: an open invitation to engage directly with select fragments of Québec's dance heritage.

“At a time of great upheaval and repeated calls for democracy, International Dance Day takes on its full meaning. The event celebrates an art form whose universality makes it an extraordinary tool for dialogue and social connection,” said RQD executive director Lorraine Hébert, adding: “Dance is more important than ever in times of turmoil.”

A Trace of memory

The 2011 Traces chorégraphiques, a joint creation by 17 dancers, are a nod to *Pas de danse, pas de vie!*, on hold in this year as efforts focused on producing the Master Plan. The new Traces commemorates works that deeply marked the lives and careers of 17 Québec choreographers — vital elements of a cultural repertoire that must be preserved and sustained.

Breathing fresh life into 17 key choreographic moments, Traces 2011 attests to Québec's rich and diverse heritage of dance research and creation: an asset to be shared with the world and with generations to come.

Contrary to previous years where it was staged on the city's sidewalks, Traces 2011 has moved indoors out of the rain and snow, taking up permanent residence on a site dedicated to cultural dissemination. Thanks to support from Place des Arts — a staunch partner of *Pas de danse, pas de vie!* who today possesses an impressive public space in the Quartier des spectacles — Traces 2011 has acquired something of the status of public art. As a result, it will enjoy a longer lifespan than in the past.

A Trace of hope

Taking place several weeks before the unveiling of the Strategic Plan, Trace 2011 assumes a broadened significance. The work serves as a choreographic gesture of solidarity by 17 dancers on behalf of a community that, resolutely hopeful, has worked together to forge a vision that must be brought to life over the coming decade.

Surrounded by 17 dancers of varying generations and experience, RQD President Marc Boivin, the instigator and host of the exceptional event, took the occasion to deliver his message for International Dance Day. Celebrating dance as an art form of immeasurable possibility, Boivin wrote: “Dance occurs when a gesture breaks through the status quo; when it becomes a conscience, a stance, a heartfelt appeal or a prayer.” Recalling that the act of creation, as a movement of the self toward others, establishes a dialogue between dance and society, on behalf of the RQD he expressed the commitment of the 17 dancers of Traces chorégraphique 2011 to help the world step into the future.

A bouquet of artists for IDD

The RQD salutes Québec’s dancers for their passion and determination, and extends its sincere thanks to the artists and volunteers whose enthusiasm and unwavering commitment made this event possible. Dancers Anik Bissonnette, Nathalie Blanchet, Tom Casey, Mélanie Demers, Mark Eden-Towle, Karla Etienne, Annik Hamel, Sylvain Lafortune, Brianna Lombardo, Victoria May, Pierre-Marc Ouellette, David Rancourt, Esther Rousseau-Morin, Daniel Soulières, Anne Thériault, Lucie Vigneault* and Jamie Wright have been respectively inspired by choreographers Fernand Nault, Sylvain Émard, Roger Sinha, Ginette Laurin, Marie Chouinard, Zab Maboungou, Ahn Ae-Soon, James Kudelka, Mélanie Demers, Louise Bédard, Danièle Desnoyers, Paula de Vasconcelos, Estelle Clareton, Jean-Pierre Perreault, Dave St-Pierre, Tony Chong and Frédérick Gravel. Directed by Marc Boivin, they will perform their various choreographic memories to a musical work by composers Michel F. Côté, Diane Labrosse and Laurent Maslé. A single, unique performance for an exceptional event, created for the joy of bringing together hope and memory for a spin around the floor!

** Lucie Vigneault will be replaced today by Tony Chong.*

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