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Place des Arts

PRESS KIT

PPS DANSE



BAGNE RECRÉATION

Jeff Hall + Pierre-Paul Savoie

21. 22. 23. 24. 28. 29. 30. 31 octobre 2015

Place des Arts, Cinquième Salle

Tour : December 8-9, 2015, Grand Théâtre de Québec
January 14, 2016, Théâtre de la ville, Longueuil
January 16, 2016, Théâtre La Rubrique, Saguenay
April 30, 2016, Salle Edwin-Bélanger, Montmagny

PPS Danse is marking its 25th anniversary with the re-creation of *Bagne*, with a new version of an acrobatic dance-theatre piece on the fierce yet tender relations between two convicts on a quest for love and liberty. An enclosed enclave that is pulsing and poignant, it reflects the cruelty of the world and our own rigid psychological imprisonment.

CREDITS

Concept, Staging and Choreography : Jeff Hall, Pierre-Paul Savoie

Dancers : Lael Stellick, Milan Panet-Gigon

Music and Sound Design : Bernard Falaise

Scenography : Bernard Lagacé

Lights : Marc Parent

Costumes Design : Linda Brunelle

Dramaturge : Guy Cools

ABOUT BAGNE RECRÉATION

In an imposing metal structure that resulted in a prestigious Bessie Award in New York for set designer Bernard Lagacé, two men oscillate between rage and despair. How does one cope with enforced proximity in a violent world? How do men create a semblance of the freedom they aspire to? Like two lions in a cage, they maintain vigilant watch on each other, confront each other. Their movement is fraught with tension; the clash of their bodies fierce. Restless and on edge, they hang from the bars of the cell, swinging from the bars in an acrobatic dance that is almost circus-like. Fortunately, they are sometimes able to find small comfort in the shared tenderness and sensuality of furtive embraces.

Twenty-two years after *Bagne* creation, which had been replayed in 1998 in a version for women interpreted by Sarah Williams and Carole Courtois, the choreographers Jeff Hall and Pierre-Paul Savoie have completely reworked this piece, a landmark in the history of Quebec choreography. They anchor their dance-theatre in the reality of our times by entrusting the performance to two very intense young dancers, Lael Staellick and Milan Panet-Gigon (from time to time replaced by Jonathan Fortin), and by drawing inspiration from images such as those from Abu Ghraib prison.

Performed live onstage, the new soundscape by Bernard Falaise reinforces the feeling of urgency so prevalent in the original and the enclosed space is pulsing and poignant.

PIERRE-PAUL SAVOIE – CHOREOGRAPHER

A Quebec choreographer, dancer and director, Pierre-Paul Savoie founded the company PPS Danse in 1989. Renowned for his multidisciplinary pieces full of powerful images and distinctive themes, he has worked in theatre, cinema and television, often collaborating with major theatres, circus groups and musical institutions.

FROM THEATRE TO DANCE

In 1975 Pierre-Paul Savoie began studies at the National Theatre School of Canada, where he cultivated the theatricality that would mark his works. It was there that he took his first dance class, and thus found his true calling. He then studied acrobatics at the National Circus School in Montreal before enrolling in the dance program at Concordia University.

DECISIVE ENCOUNTER

It was at university that Pierre-Paul Savoie met Jeff Hall. They shared a sense of humour and a taste for risk, and would work as dance partners for the next 15 years. Created while they were still students, *Duodénum* proved to be a dazzling launch, establishing their reputation on the Quebec and Canadian dance scene in 1986. Ten years later they won the Jacqueline Lemieux Award for *Bagne*, a piece seared into the memory and the history of Quebec dance. In the 1980s and '90s he went on to a number of exceptional collaborations with other artists.

CITIZEN ARTIST

The year 1999 was a turning point in the career of Pierre-Paul Savoie. Taking to heart his new position as president of the Regroupement québécois de la danse (RQD), he became fully committed to defending the cause of dance, retiring temporarily as a performer in order to play the role assigned to him by his community. He was president for five years, and under his leadership progress was made on many important matters, such as increased funding for the performing arts and better working conditions.

In 2004 he was acclaimed for his contributions toward promoting contemporary dance with the Prix Attitude awarded by ROSEQ (Réseau de diffuseurs de l'Est du Québec). In 2008 he received the Hommage RIDEAU award for his role in nurturing the development of dance in Quebec.

MATURE ARTIST

When Pierre-Paul Savoie decided to seek out Canadian choreographers working abroad for a 2007 series entitled Diasporama, that receptiveness to the outside world became a distinguishing feature of his company PPS Danse. After creating a dance adaptation of *Contes pour enfants pas sages* by Jacques Prévert and presenting a tribute to Lhasa De Sela entitled de Danse Lhasa Danse, Pierre- Paul Savoie further pursued his artistic exploration in a reworking of *Les chaises* by Eugène Ionesco, adapted for children by Lise Vaillancourt.

By venturing into performances for young audiences, Pierre-Paul Savoie has strikingly asserted the importance of encounters as integral to his artistic vision – encounters with artistic languages, materials and audiences.

JEFF HALL – CHOREOGRAPHER

Jeff Hall has been a performing stage artists, dancer, actor, choreographer and circus director known for blending his spectacular athleticism with his artistic eclecticism, inventively blending humor, dialogue and physical performance together for the past 25 years.

He has earned a wealth of knowledge in various artistic domains, creating a rich palate of work for the smallest black box theatres to the world's largest stages, exploring Dance, Film, Theatre and the Circus Arts, be it as a performer, choreographer, writer or director.

He obtained his Bachelor's degree in Contemporary Dance at Concordia University, worked with many independent Montreal choreographers, as well as touring with Quebec's biggest International companies. He also collaborated for more than a decade on creations with his artistic partner Pierre-Paul Savoie gaining international recognition in his own right as a choreographer and director of innovative physical theatre.

His eclectic style of creations has gained him a reputation as a theatre director and choreographer working on the essence of the situation, inspired by set design and architectural structure. Never shying away he has worked with the unique attributes of every performers, be it dancers, children, actors, athletes and acrobatic circus performers.

Since the past few years, Jeff worked in close collaboration with creators and directors of the most upcoming actors of Quebec, which allowed him to develop his own skills as a creator and director. Jeff assisted Gilles Maheu during the creation of his last show with Carbone 14, *La bibliothèque*, and he directed the production's repeat in 2005. The well renowned Robert Lepage invited him in his team as his assistant for the repeat of *La Trilogie des dragons* in June 2003. Meanwhile, he helped Marie Brassard in the staging of her new production, *La noirceur*. In fall 2004, he joined the National Institute of Image and Sound (INIS) where he completed a film management program.

His most recent choreographies were for the Cirque du Soleil shows, *ZAiA* and *TOTEM*. His latest were high commercial successes - *DEV DAN*, a permanent show in Bali since 2011. In 2012, Jeff is back on stage for the first time in ten years with his own choreography *Falling*. Not long after, he wrote and directed *Circo Jumbo* in 2013, which was created in Chile and presented to 350,000 people in Chile and Peru. In 2014, another *Circo Jumbo* creation was presented before 500,000 people in 120 venues in Peru, Chile and Colombia.

Jeff Hall was the recipient of the Canadian Choreographic Award Jacqueline Lemieux with Pierre-Paul Savoie in 1996. In 2012, he founded Hall Way Productions, a non-profit organization, to produce and distribute his own personal creations.

In July 2014, he wrote and directed *Harricana - The show*, an outdoor and interdisciplinary generation blockbuster for 55 artists, celebrating the 100th anniversary of the town of Amos in Abitibi (Quebec) that was presented before 20,000 spectators.

PPS – THE COMPANY CELEBRATES ITS 25TH BIRTHDAY !

Openness, creativity, humanism, sharing and commitment are qualities that drive the company's activities. These values not only inspire the creation of original choreographic works, but also PPS Danse's efforts to democratize contemporary dance, to bring it to a wider audience.

Since its founding in 1989 by choreographer, dancer and stage director Pierre-Paul Savoie, PPS Danse has pursued a mission to create and stage choreographic works in the dance-theatre genre. Through the years, PPS Danse has added cultural initiatives to its activities, maintaining its position as a pillar in Quebec's dance community by investing in three major areas: the young audience, the general public and cultural initiatives.

The company has given over 650 performances, presenting some 20 works in a dozen countries in North America, Latin America and Europe. Regardless of the area of creation, each work is marked by interdisciplinarity in form and humanity in content.

The company's artistic approach emphasizes the principle of encounter: the meeting of artists, shared themes and artistic languages, a meeting of works, communities, and different audiences. PPS Danse explores areas of encounter that both diverge and converge, albeit towards a common goal: to have young and adult audiences discover and cultivate an interest in dance.

Theatricality is also a rich component of the choreographic effort. The body gives expression to the choreographic vocabulary, as gestural adjunct to the drama and narrative, through expressivity, communicability and humanity.

Cultural initiatives are central to the artistic creation so vital to the company. Each work is a pretext to meet with people, to interconnect and adapt to the contexts of life of different audiences. The company seeks to awaken the audience's interest and curiosity about contemporary dance, to provide understanding, a critical perception and an affinity for this artistic form of expression. It does this through performances, workshops, conferences and discussion forums led by Pierre-Paul Savoie and his team at schools, community centres and professional milieus, initiatives that serve to forge invaluable partnerships.

BIOGRAPHIES OF THE DANCERS

Lael Stellick

Lael has been performing in Montreal for many years as a performer, actor and dancer as well as developing as a choreographer. He pursued his dream of being an actor after graduating from John Abbott College Theater Program while being in various films, music videos and theater pieces.

Lael started to develop his theatrical physicality, which led him to study at the Concordia University Dance Program. Since then Lael has pursued his dance career and has worked for numerous choreographers and companies such as PPS Danse, Parts+Labour Danse, Sasha Kleinplatz, Lara Kramer, Marie Beland, and Virginie Brunelle to name a few. Lael has been choreographing recently while collaborating with various artists on projects Division (2011) and Breakaway (2012) and is currently developing two other collaboration projects for 2016-17, Moving Picture with CHA Design Collective and La Valse Masculine with Simon-Xavier Lefebvre as well as slowly developing his passion project Waiting for the near future.

Milan Panet-Gigon

Milan Panet-Gigon discovers urban dance when he is a teenager, then he focuses on the fusion of different styles including contemporary dance. Graduating from the Concordia University Dance Program, Milan collaborates with several artists, including Dave St-Pierre and Sasha Kleinplatz. He is member of the Society dance Parts + Labour.

PRESS QUOTES OF THE FIRST EDITION OF *BAGNE*

« Un must et ce, que vous aimez la danse, le théâtre, la vie... Une oeuvre universelle, qui pourrait être présentée absolument partout et toucher à peu près tout le monde. Chapeau. » - *La Presse*, Montréal

“Exciting, emotionally charged duet... These two performers represent any intimate relationship; their prison is also the emotional cage people erect to protect themselves from others. They prove that movement in any style has the kind of gut wrenching impact no other art form can match.” - Georgia Straight, *Vancouver*

“The movement is brilliantly conceived... [they] perform with a fascinating range of always subtle passions. *Bagne* is a beautiful show.... emotional dynamite presented without words. One of the most exhilarating evenings of theater in a long time.” - The Star Tribune, *Minneapolis*

“Savoie and Hall's *Bagne* is a fully realized idea, a rounded whole; the parts are all essential components that complement each other. The show is a must-see.” – The Gazette, *Montreal*

« C'est un spectacle, de par sa nature sociale et par son message humaniste, tout à fait exceptionnel. » - *Le Devoir*, Montréal à propos de *Bagne* version féminine

*This press kit consists of material provided by the company
and by research conducted by the Danse Danse team.*