Ballets Jazz Montréal

Dance Me-Music by Leonard Cohen

Nov 5 / Cobb Great Hall

The performance runs 80 minutes with no intermission.

Scan for the most up-to-date & complete information or visit program.whartoncenter.com

Credits

Ideation Louis Robitaille
Stage Direction Eric Jean
Choreography Andonis Foniadakis, Annabelle Lopez Ochoa, Ihsan Rustem
Music Direction Martin Léon
Sound Design Alexis Dumais
Set and Prop Design Pierre-Etienne Locas
Set Technical Direction Alexandre Brunet
Lighting Design and Production Cédric Delorme-Bouchard, Simon Beetschen
Video Design HUB Studio - Gonzalo Soldi, Thomas Payette, Jeremy Fassio.
Costume Design Philippe Dubuc
Costume Production Anne-Marie Veevaete
Assistance Stage Direction Elsa Posnic
Sound Engineer Guy Fortin
Technical Director Marco Vargas Navarro
Head Carpenter Daniel Ranger
Head of Sound Maxime Lambert (US tour)
Head of Lighting Claude Plante
Head of Video Roderic Dyon

Artists Zoey Anderson, Troy Atamanuk, Gustavo Barros, Marcel, Cavaliere, Millie Brinck-Dubuc, Kyle Davis, Jasmine Heart Cruz, Shanna Irwin Calderon, Zack Preece, Willem Sadler, Madeleine Salhany, Ryan Sherk, Rhapsody Stiggers and Silje Vereide

Vocalist (*So Long, Marianne*): Zoey Anderson
Vocalists (*Hallelujah*): Ryan Sherk and Zoey Anderson

DANCE ME – MUSIC BY LEONARD COHEN

Dance Me – Music by Leonard Cohen is an exclusive creation inspired by the rich and profound work of Montréal-based poet, artist and songwriter, Leonard Cohen.

Approved by Cohen during his lifetime, this riveting homage to the famed artist evokes the grand cycles of existence, as described in Cohen's deeply reflective music and poems.

Three internationally renowned choreographers were entrusted with putting movement to Cohen's legendary songs: Andonis Foniadakis, Annabelle Lopez Ochoa and Ihsan Rustem. Their powerful and profound choreographic world reflective of Cohen's singular work is brought to life by Ballets Jazz Montréal's 14 artists and the strong, bold staging of Eric Jean.

Surrounded by a team of celebrated designers, *Dance Me* combines scenic, visual, musical, dramaturgical, and choreographic writing to pay tribute to Montréal's greatest ambassador. Dance, music, lighting,

scenography, and videography all come together in this unforgettable show.

Songs in the show include (in program order):

- *Here It Is* (2001)
- *Lover, Lover, Lover* (1974)
- *Dance Me to the End of Love* (Live in London, 2009)
- *Boogie Street* (Live in London, 2009)
- *Steer Your Way* (2016)
- *Everybody Knows* (2001)
- *Tower of Song* (1988)
- *So Long, Marianne* (1967)
- *A Thousand Kisses Deep* (poem)
- *Suzanne* (1967)
- *Famous Blue Raincoat* (1971)
- *Nevermind* (2014)
- *First We Take Manhattan* (1988)
- *It Seemed the Better Way* (2016)
- *Hallelujah* (1984)
- *String Reprise / Treaty* (2016)

Ballets Jazz Montréal would like to thank the Marjorie and Gerald Bronfman Foundation for the support given to the creation of the show.

Dance Me was supported by the CCOV - Centre de Création O Vertigo.

Artistic and Executive Director Alexandra Damiani
Rehearsal Director and Artistic Coordinator Stéphanie Dalphond
Principal Artist Yosmell Calderon Mejias
Artists Zoey Anderson, Troy Atamanuk, Gustavo Barros, Millie Brinck-Dubuc, Kyle Davis, Jasmine Heart Cruz, Shanna Irwin Calderon, Zack Preece, Willem Sadler, Madeleine Salhany, and Silje Vereide
Intern Rhapsody Stiggers
Guest Artists Marcel Cavaliere and Ryan Sherk

Technical Director Marco Vargas Navarro
Head Carpenter Chantel Deguise
Head of Sound Maxime Lambert
Head of Lighting Claude Plante
Head of Video Roderic Dyon

Deputy Executive Director, Development and Partnerships Catherine Cardinal
Assistant to the Artistic and Executive Director Camille Fabre
Tour Manager Louis Morisset
Booking Representation Margaret Selby, Selby Artists Management

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President Anie Perreault

Treasurer Valérie Bergeron
Secretary Brigitte Nepveu
Administrators Karine Fortin, Dave Giguère, Marie-Yseult Laurin, Tammy Peddle, John Bargelletti, Marie-Hélène Sirois, Terry Kyle Lapierre, Marie-Ève Breton

Public Partners

CALQ Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec
Conseil des Arts du Canada
Canada Council for the Arts
CONSEIL DES ARTS DE MONTRÉAL

Partners

POWER CORPORATION OF CANADA
Fondation Azrieli Foundation
FONDATION J. ARMAND BOMBARDIER
KINATEX ROCKLAND

Follow us

Website: www.bjmdanse.ca
Facebook: /BalletsJazzMontreal
Instagram: /balletsjazzmontreal
LinkedIn: /Ballets Jazz Montreal
X: @bjmdanse

About Ballets Jazz Montréal

Founded in 1972 by Geneviève Salbaing, Eva Von Gencsy, and Eddy Toussaint, Ballets Jazz Montréal is a contemporary dance repertory company which, under the general and artistic direction of Alexandra Damiani, creates, produces, and performs on local, national, and international stages.

Among the artistic directors of the company who have greatly marked its evolution, company founder Geneviève Salbaing, driven by her visceral love of dance, led Ballets Jazz Montréal with passion and determination for over 20 years. Upon his appointment as artistic director in 1998, Louis Robitaille, reoriented the company towards an audience curious to discover new choreographic forms. In June 2021, Alexandra Damiani took over the artistic direction of Ballets Jazz Montréal and will carry out the company's mission and vision into the future.

The company recruits internationally renowned choreographers to develop their own research in line with its identity and generates a repertoire that is both exclusive to the company and accessible to all audiences. The company’s impressive roster of talented and influential choreographers includes Crystal Pite, Aszure Barton, Mauro Bigonzetti, Andonis Foniadakis, Itzik Galili, Annabelle Lopez Ochoa, Barak Marshall, Benjamin

Millepied, Ihsan Rustem, Anne Plamondon, and Juliano Nunes, to name a few. As an ambassador of Quebec dance to the world, Ballets Jazz Montréal offers an artistic product that is explosive, original, accessible, and noted for its performance's excellence.

All of Ballet Jazz's work brings an element of humanity, fearlessness, and emotion in addition to the highly technical skill that each dance requires. Additionally, each piece is nuanced, multilayered and often multidisciplinary—combining other artistic disciplines such as theater, video, and music. With accessibility and quality as key values, the company successfully integrates pleasure and humanity into their strong, expressive, and demanding pieces. Moreover, the distinct personalities and high caliber of its performers further add to the quality that is expected from the company and play a key role in maintaining the company's reputation and influence in the dance world.

Through their productions, performances, and educational activities, Ballets Jazz Montréal encourages discovery, stimulates imagination, and shares their passion for this discipline to all its audiences—both local and abroad. With more than 3,250 performances in 60 countries and an audience of nearly 3 million, Ballets Jazz Montréal is considered one of the world's leading ambassadors of Quebec dance and artistic vitality.

In 2016, the Prix Rideau Hommage was awarded to the company and its artistic director at the time, Louis Robitaille, in recognition of BJM's impact and continued presence on Quebec stages.

In 2020, the company received the Prix de la danse de Montréal for the category of international dissemination presented by CINARS.

In 2022, the company celebrated 50 years of creating, exploring, and connecting with its audiences.

Biographies

ALEXANDRA DAMIANI (GENERAL AND ARTISTIC DIRECTOR) (she/her)

Appointed Artistic Director of Ballets Jazz Montréal the spring of 2021, then General and Artistic Director in 2025, Alexandra Damiani has been a major player in the dance community for over two decades. During her 10 years with New York's Cedar Lake Contemporary Ballet (2005-2015), first as Ballet Mistress and then as Artistic Director, Damiani had the opportunity to work with and present a wide selection of contemporary dance choreographic languages by such internationally renowned choreographers as Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui, Crystal Pite and Hofesh Schecter. She also showcased the

company in major cities and international festivals, including at the Lyon Biennale in France and Sadler's Wells in London.

Originally from France, Damiani is a multidisciplinary artist who has been lending her expertise to the world of film, television, and advertising for many years. Her credits include playing the ballet mistress in Darren Aronofsky's cult film, *Black Swan*, and working alongside Tanisha Scott on Cardi B's performance for the 2019 BET Awards. She is also passionate about training the young dancers of tomorrow and has excellent connections with highly regarded institutions like Jacob's Pillow and The Juilliard School.

Damiani trained in classical dance at the Geneva Dance Center, and later in the French capital with teachers from the Paris Opera Ballet. After winning the Bayonne competition in France, she received a scholarship to the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater in the US. She began her career as a dancer-performer in New York where she danced as a soloist with Donald Byrd/The Group and with the company Complexions, directed by Dwight Rhoden and Desmond Richardson. Her career continued in Montréal with the RUBBERBANDance Company and later with Ballets Jazz Montréal, under the direction of Louis Robitaille (2002-2005).

STÉPHANIE DALPHOND (REHEARSAL DIRECTOR & ARTISTIC COORDINATOR) (she/her)

Born in Montréal, Stéphanie Dalphond trained at École Supérieure de Danse du Québec and at the Paris Opera School. At the age of 16, she joined Les Grands Ballets Canadiens. She danced with the company for 6 years before becoming a ballet mistress for a year. Yearning to dance again, Stéphanie went to Europe to pursue her career where she danced with Kevin O'Day in Mannheim and Serge Campardon with Compagnie Nomades. She finished her career of 20 years with world-renowned Nacho Duato's Compañia Nacional de Danza. She is a certified ballet teacher and has been teaching at various professional institutions such as École Supérieure de Ballet du Québec, Cas Public and Ballets Jazz Montréal. She joined the company as rehearsal director for the season 2024-2025, before also taking on the role of Artistic Coordinator for the 2025–2026 season.

ERIC JEAN (STAGE DIRECTOR) (he/him)

Eric Jean is a stage director and creator recognized for his distinctive artistic approach, which he describes as "living writing"—a collaborative creative process grounded in improvisation, close work with playwrights, and exploration of the scenic environment. His work is marked by a sustained commitment to contemporary

dramaturgy, emerging artists, and cross-disciplinary dialogue.

In 2004, he was appointed Artistic and General Director of Théâtre de Quat'Sous, where he led the institution through a period of significant success and artistic vitality. His tenure is noted for its strong focus on artistic emergence and diversity, as well as for establishing a major programming platform presenting works by other companies and artists from dance, music, and poetry. He also contributed to the reconstruction of the theatre in collaboration with architect firm FABG.

After stepping down from Quat'Sous in 2016 to devote more time to creation, he developed an acclaimed practice in both theatre and dance, including large-scale productions such as Dance Me for Ballets Jazz Montréal and Vanishing Mélodies, both of which were widely presented.

From 2021 to 2025, he served as Director of Programming (theatre, dance, circus, and youth programming) and Artistic Director at Théâtre de la Ville in Longueuil. In parallel, he was appointed Artistic Director and Co-General Director of the company Les 2 Mondes in 2023. Since 2025, he has continued his collaboration with Théâtre de la Ville as Theatre Commissioner and Artistic Development lead, while maintaining an active career as a stage director and creator.

ANDONIS FONIADAKIS (CHOREOGRAPHER) (he/him)

Andonis Foniadakis grew up in city of Ierapetra, in the south part of the island of Crete, in Greece. He began his dance training with Niki Papadaki at the local dance school, in his hometown. From 1990 to 1992, he studied at the State Dance School of Athens and before his graduation he received the prestigious Maria Callas scholarship to continue his studies in Rudra Bejart Lausanne, in Switzerland until 1994.

As a dancer Andonis has collaborated with Bejart Ballet Lausanne (1994-1996) under the direction of Maurice Bejart, Lyon Opera Ballet (1996-2002) under the direction of Yorgos Loukos, Saburo Teshigawara / Karas Co. (2004) under the direction of Saburo Teshigawara, as well as, with his own dance company "Apotosoma-Andonis Foniadakis". During the years of his professional engagement with these companies he has performed choreographic works of Maguy Marin, Jiri Kilian, William Forsythe, Dominique Boivin, Nacho Duato, Mats Ek, Maurice Bejart, Ohad Naharin, Frederic Flamand, Bill T Jones, Herve Robbe, Tero Saarinen, Lionel Hoche, Joachim Schlomer, John Jasperse, Saburo Teshigawara etc.

As a freelance choreographer he has collaborated with The Royal New Zealand Ballet, Geneva Ballet (Switzerland), Lyon Opera Ballet (France), Bern Ballet

(Switzerland), Ballet de Lorraine (France) Luzern Ballet (Switzerland) Gauthier Dance Company (Germany), Martha Graham Dance Company (USA) Cedar Lake Contemporary Ballet (USA), Aterballetto (Italy), Ballet du Rhin (France), Sydney Dance Company (Australia), Florence Ballet (Italy), National Dance Company of Wales (England), Dansgroep Amsterdam (Netherlands), Cia Sociedade Masculina Brazil Bale da Cidade of Sao Paulo (Brazil), Helsinki Dance Company (Finland), National Ballet of Greece, National Theater of Northern Greece, Greek National Theater (Greece), Codarts (Netherlands), Benjamin Millepied Dance Company (USA), Washington Ballet (USA), Bejart Ballet Lausanne (Switzerland), Ballet Junior Geneva (Switzerland), Hellenic Dance Company (Greece), CNSMD Lyon (France), Copenhagen International Dance Festival (Denmark).

He has been director of the Greek National Ballet for the season 2016- 2017 and has programmed the seasons 2016-17 and 2017-18. He is currently the resident choreographer of the Greek National Ballet.
Foniadakis has been commissioned to choreograph for 3 operas: The Theatre des Champs Elysees - *Castor et Pollux*, Opera National du Rhin - *Les boreades* by Rameau GRAME, Lyon - *Il canto della pelle* by Claudio Ambrosini.

He has collaborated as moving coordinator for the film NOAH by Darren Aronofsky. In 2012 he received the Danza and Danza Award for the "Best Choreographer 2012" in Italy, for the creation *Les Noces* in Maggio Danza - Florence Ballet.

As well he has collaborated with Palais de Tokyo as Choreographic Curator for the exhibition *Prec(ar)ious Collectives* that took place in Athens Greece as parallel event of the Documenta 14, in 2017. In addition to creating and performing, Andonis is teaching seminars based on his personal dance technique. He has been teaching in the State Dance School of Greece, DAN.C.CE studios and Baile de Barrio in Athens, DOCK11 in Berlin, CND and CNSMD in Lyon, Dansgroep, as well as at Henny Jurriens, in Amsterdam, the Netherlands.

ANNABELLE LOPEZ OCHOA (CHOREOGRAPHER)
(she/her)

Colombian-Belgian Annabelle Lopez Ochoa (b.1973) completed her dance education at the Royal Ballet School of Flanders in Belgium. In 2003, after a 12-year dance career, where she danced as a soloist with the Scapino Ballet, she decided to focus her energy solely on choreography. In that same year, she was hailed "rising star of the Dutch dance scene" (NRC newspaper) and only 7 years later the Temecula Performing Arts Examiner

wrote: “Ochoa is truly a masterful choreographer with an edge for what dance can and should be in this constantly changing industry”.

Annabelle is an award-winning and sought-after choreographer who has created works for more than 40 companies around the world such as the Scapino Ballet Rotterdam, Dutch National Ballet, Djazzex, Ballet de Genève, Royal Ballet of Flanders, Gothenburg Ballet, Pennsylvania Ballet, BalletX, Ballets Jazz Montréal, Luna Negra Dance Theater, Ballet National de Marseille, Saarbrucken Ballet, Jacoby & Pronk, Chemnitzer Ballet, Ballet Hispanico, Morphoses Wheeldon Company, Whim W’Him, IncolBallet de Colombia, Finnish National Ballet, Compania Nacional de Danza Madrid, Pacific Northwest Ballet, Scottish Ballet, The Washington Ballet, Ballet Nacional Dominicano, Ballet Saarbrucken, Augsburg Ballet, Ballet Austin, Atlanta Ballet, Grand Rapids Ballet, Ballet Moscow, Ballet Nacional de Cuba, West Australian Ballet, Danza Contemporanea de Cuba, Ballet Nacional Chileno, Ballet Staatstheater am Gartnerplatz Munchen, Ballet Manila, Daniil Simkin Intensio Project, Cincinnati Ballet, Silicon Valley Ballet, Joffrey Ballet, English National Ballet, Ballet Black, and New York City Ballet.

Ms. Lopez Ochoa is a versatile choreographer who also creates for theatre, opera, musical theatre, and fashion events, such as the celebrated Dutch fashion designers Viktor & Rolf’s project in the Van Gogh Museum.

She belongs to the theatre-dance collective “De Fantasten” for whom she successfully co-directed five full-length productions that have been performed in numerous theaters and festivals throughout the Netherlands.

In 2009, she created *Zip Zap Zoom* for BJM, which was included in the “10 best dance moments of the year” by the Pittsburgh Gazette, The Boston Globe and the Montréal Gazette and was cited as one of the 10 best dance highlights of the year in San Diego and Chicago. Her work has received numerous awards. In 2016, *Broken Wings*, created for the English National Ballet was nominated for a National UK Dance Award in the category of Best Classical Premiere. In 2015, *Sombrerisimo*, created for Ballet Hispanico, was given the Villanueva Award in Cuba. In 2012, *A Streetcar Named Desire* was nominated for the prestigious Olivier Award (UK), named Best Classical Choreography by the Circle of Critics of the National Dance Award (UK), and was awarded Best Dance Production 2012 by the South-Bank Sky Arts Awards. In 2007, Annabelle was elected to participate in the New York City Ballet Choreographic Institute. In 2002, Replay received first prize the audience prize at the Borne Choreographers Competition, and in 2001, *Clair/Obscur* received third prize at the Hannover Choreographic Competition.

IHSAN RUSTEM (CHOREOGRAPHER) (he/him)

British-Swiss choreographer, Ihsan Rustem was born in London, where he trained at the Rambert School of Ballet and Contemporary Dance. Ihsan is the Artistic Director of the Swiss dance company Cie. La Ronde, founded in 2020 with choreographer Cathy Marston, and the Resident Choreographer of the NW Dance Project in Portland, Oregon, where he has created 12 works to date. His other collaborations include Nederlands Dans Theater 2, Ballets Jazz Montréal, São Paulo City Ballet, Chilean National Ballet, Moscow Ballet, Hubbard Street Dance Chicago 2, Istanbul State Ballet MDT, Tanz Luzerner Theater, Bern Ballet, Konzert Theater St. Gallen, Whim W'Him Seattle, Ballare Carmel, Ballett Augsburg, Thüringer Staatsballett, Staatstheater Braunschweig, Tanztheater, Kazan State Opera and Ballet, Koblenz Ballet, Ballet Regensburg, Würzburg Ballet, Siberian State Ballet, Salt Contemporary Dance USA, Arts Umbrella Dance Company Vancouver, Moving Arts Cincinnati, National Youth Dance Company, Palucca Hochschule Dresden, Codarts, ZHdK, Tanzwerk101, Taipei National University of the Arts, and the Rambert School. He is also one of the featured choreographers on the popular Russian television show *The Bolshoi Ballet*. The Nederlands Dans Theater included Ihsan Rustem in its "Choreographers of Tomorrow" program for the 2018–2019 season.

His work for the NW Dance Project has received numerous awards. *State of Matter* won the Sadler's Wells Global Dance Contest in 2012, as well as the Audience Award at the 25th International Choreographic Competition in Hanover, and *Carmen* received the 2017 Dance Magazine Readers' Choice Award for Best Collaboration. Rustem was also the 2014 recipient of the Hubbard Street Dance Chicago International Commissioning Project.

Rustem is the former director of the Ballettschule Luzern and, in 2021, joined the jury of the prestigious Prix de Lausanne.

From 2000 to 2014, Ihsan Rustem danced with Ballet Theater Munich, Introdans, Bern Ballet, Tanz Luzerner Theater, and Adventures in Motion Pictures. He performed roles in creations by Wayne McGregor, Hofesh Shechter, Alexander Ekman, Matthew Bourne, Stijn Celis, Patrick Delcroix, Cayetano Soto, Felix Landerer, and Cathy Marston. He has also worked with choreographers such as Mats Ek, Jiri Kylián, Paul Lightfoot & Sol Leon, Hans van Manen, and William Forsythe, among others. He currently lives in Zurich, Switzerland.

LEONARD COHEN

Leonard Norman Cohen, poet, novelist, singer, songwriter (born 21 September 1934 in Montréal, QC; died 7 November 2016 in Los Angeles, California). Leonard Cohen was one of the most iconic Canadian artists of the 20th century. A sage, mystic, bohemian, and romantic, he built an acclaimed body of literary work and a revered career in pop music. In his poetry, novels, and music, he constantly probed the human condition, exploring themes of love, loss, death, and his commitment to his art. As a poetic and unlikely pop star, his narrow-ranged, gruff voice, which deepened and darkened with age, and his reliance on simple, singsong melodies were complimented by the intense imagery and depth of his lyrics. A Companion of the Order of Canada, he was inducted into the Canadian Music Hall of Fame, the Canadian Songwriters Hall of Fame, the US Songwriters Hall of Fame, the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, and the Folk Music Walk of Fame. He also received the Glenn Gould Prize, the Prince of Asturias Award for Literature, eight Juno Awards, a Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award, and numerous other honours.