



THE UNIVERSITY MUSICAL SOCIETY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

presents

Ballet Eddy Toussaint de Montréal

EDDY TOUSSAINT

Founder and Artistic Director

Jean-Marc Lebeau, *Assistant Artistic Director*

Camilla Malashenko, *Ballet Mistress*

Kathryn Greenaway, *Rehearsal Mistress*

Eléonora Matilevskaya, *Piano Accompanist*

Principal Dancers

Anik Bissonnette

Louis Robitaille

Susan Bennet

Jean-Hugues Rochette

Brigitte Valette

Denis Dulude

Soloists

Sophie Bissonnette

Kathryn Greenaway

Mario Thibodeau

The Company

Yvon Brault

Nathalie Grosshenny

Miguel Rodrigue

France Deslauriers

Natasha Herman

Alexandre Seillier

Dominique Dulude

Gaétan Laroche

Michel Sigouin

Marc Forest

Sylvie Oleachea

Anne Sprincis

Renée Hébert, *Administrative Director*

Josée Kleinbaum, *General Stage Manager*

Christian Thibault, *Director of Operations*

Guy Savard, *Tour Director*

Suzanne Dugas, *Administrative Assistant*

Peter Georgiev, *Technical Director*

Monday Evening, July 8, 1985, at 8:00

Power Center for the Performing Arts

Ann Arbor, Michigan

The Ballet Eddy Toussaint de Montréal wishes to acknowledge The Quebec Ministry of Cultural Affairs for its constant support, the Quebec Ministries of Communications and International Affairs, and The Montreal Urban Community Arts Council.

MISSA CREOLE

(1980)

"An homage to my origins."

Eddy Toussaint

Choreography: Eddy Toussaint

Set design: Hugo Wuethrich

Music: Los Calchakis

Costumes: Sylvain Labelle

Denis Dulude

Brigitte Valette

and The Company

Pause

A SIMPLE MOMENT

(1979)

Choreography: Eddy Toussaint

Music: Tomaso Albinoni

Costumes: Sylvain Labelle

Anik Bissonnette

Louis Robitaille

This pas de deux was created especially for Anik Bissonnette and Louis Robitaille and was part of the selection of works which they performed at the First International Ballet Competition in Helsinki a year ago this month. For this performance they proudly brought back to their artistic director, Eddy Toussaint, the gold medal for best contemporary choreography.

I N T E R M I S S I O N

SOUVENANCE

(1982)

Choreography: Eddy Toussaint

Music: Diane Juster

Costumes: Sylvain Labelle

Sophie Bissonnette

Denis Dulude

Mario Thibodeau

This pas de trois was created by Eddy Toussaint on the original score of the Quebec composer Diane Juster.

Pause

CANTATES
(1978)

Choreography: Eddy Toussaint *Music:* J. S. Bach
Costumes: Sylvain Labelle

Jean-Hugues Rochette Denis Dulude

Yvon Brault Marc Forest Gaétan Laroche
Miguel Rodrigue Michel Sigouin Mario Thibodeau

“I have always been fascinated by the religious music of Bach. His cantatas are masterpieces. Motivated by this marvelous music and by the modern movement that it inspired in me, I wanted to bring them together. . .”

Eddy Toussaint

I N T E R M I S S I O N

CONCERTO EN MOUVEMENT
(1984)

Choreography: Eddy Toussaint **Music:* Max Bruch
Set design: Hugo Wuethrich *Costumes:* Sylvain Labelle

First movement
Louis Robitaille
and The Company

Second movement

Anik Bissonnette Louis Robitaille

Denis Dulude Sophie Bissonnette France Deslauriers
Sylvie Oleacheia Anne Sprincis Brigitte Valette

Third movement

Anik Bissonnette Louis Robitaille Denis Dulude
and The Company

About the Artists

Eddy Toussaint, founder and artistic director of the company which bears his name, was born in Haiti thirty-nine years ago. He started his classical training at the age of six at the Academie de Ballet of Port-au-Prince with Lavinia Williams, a black American dancer who was associated with dancers such as Catherine Dunham and Alvin Ailey. Through these classes, which he and his siblings had been obliged to study as part of their early education, Toussaint acquired his great love of dance. After arriving in Montreal with his family, he found, much to his surprise, that ballet was considered to be a woman's art, without a place in it for men. After taking a few classes with Les Grands Ballets, he put dance aside until he was at Montreal's University of Quebec, where he specialized in physical education. By this time he had gathered a little group of university students into an informal amateur company. With rekindled enthusiasm, Toussaint joined a group headed by Eva von Genscy, which expanded in 1972 to become Les Ballets Jazz. In 1974 he formed his own company, Ballet Eddy Toussaint de Montréal, with the aim of developing dancers who would be very versatile, technically strong, capable of acting and performing in jazz rhythms — in short, artists geared to a new form of expression which he called the "danse."

To achieve his aims, Eddy Toussaint founded his own dance school as well, offering training in classical, jazz, and modern ballet. Most of his company's dancers are products of this school, which now has over 400 students and provides an important financial base for the company. Like Louis Robitaille, a product of the school and now the company's leading male dancer, many agree that "dancing for Eddy" is like no other experience.

In 1983 Toussaint was honored as a Great Montrealer, one of a small group of notables singled out for their personal contributions to the city. Another honor came from last summer's First International Ballet Competition in Helsinki, when Anik Bissonnette and Louis Robitaille returned to Canada with a gold medal for best contemporary choreography, performing Toussaint's *A Simple Moment* to music by Albinoni. He has created a diversified seventy-piece repertoire for his dancers, which includes works by Oscar Araiz, Salvatore Aiello, Domy Reiter-Soffer, and, most recently Vassili Sulich, but two-thirds of the ballets are by Toussaint. Although he seems to prefer making pas de deux, which are often sandwiched into dramatic pieces of social comment, Toussaint has also made comic ballets, has celebrated his Haitian heritage with *Missa Creole*, and incorporated French-Canadian folk legends such as *Alexis le trotteur* into his creations. Several of his ballets, including *Alexis le trotteur*, have been filmed for television. With his reputation now soundly established, Toussaint has his ballets appearing in the repertoires of other companies on the American continent and in Europe.

In Montreal, the heart of French-speaking Quebec, Ballet Eddy Toussaint de Montréal is unofficially known as the province's cultural ambassador. Like other Canadian dance companies that use French as a primary language, its ties have been more trans-Atlantic than trans-American. The company has often appeared abroad, representing Quebec itself as much as Canada. The company is, however, gaining an expanded international reputation. The Ballet has performed for more than two million spectators, encompassing twelve regular seasons at Place des Arts in Montreal, ten Quebec tours, four tours across Canada, four tours in Central and South America, and one European tour. The Ballet has made many guest performances for French opera houses and festivals, made numerous national and internationally televised performances, and performed at several official theater inaugurations throughout the western world. Toussaint and his dancers have recently completed a feature-length film, *Night Magic*, written by Canadian poet Leonard Cohen, with composer Lewis Furey.

In 1985, the company has performed at the prestigious Sadler's Wells Theatre in London, the Theatre de Paris in France, and very recently had its first major United States engagement at the Spoleto Festival in Charleston, South Carolina. Next fall the Ballet launches its 1985-86 season with a two-month tour through the United States, culminating in a week of performances in New York City. Beyond that, tours of Europe, Asia, and South America are planned for upcoming seasons. Eddy Toussaint, with his dauntless "Latin" spirit and his belief in his dancers and works, will be bringing his "new fresh air of dance" to dance aficionados around the world.

Tomorrow Night

These same artists will perform the following program in this auditorium at 8:00:

Alexis le trotteur (1978)

Cantates (repeated)

Souvenance (repeated)

Facades (1982)

Tickets available at Power Center box office, open 11 a.m. until concert time.