

# O vertigo

More than twenty years have passed since O Vertigo's dazzling beginnings in 1984, with pieces such as *Crash Landing* (1984), *Up the Wall* (1985) and *Timber* (1986). With Ginette Laurin, the company's founder, artistic director and choreographer, vertigo becomes inevitable. With her characteristic bold steps, pushing the dancers' bodies to the limit in constant imbalance, she makes masterful use of fear and our attraction to the void. In 1986, she received the prestigious J.A. Chalmers Award and rapidly gained international acclaim. O Vertigo has performed in Quebec and in the rest of Canada, the United States, Europe, Brazil, Mexico, Israel, China and Japan.

After *Olé* (1984) and *Full House* (1987), two pieces showing the same vision and humour, Ginette Laurin, inspired by Cervantes' novel, created a spirited *Don Quixote* with a flamenco flavour. In *Chagall* (1989), the aerial couples invented by the Russian painter come to life in a dreamlike atmosphere where moments of gentle fluidity alternate with daring leaps. These works were an immediate success and led to numerous international tours for the company. "In addition to the astounding virtuosity of her dancers (...), the pieces are models of artistic integration—lighting and sets are essential to the choreography," wrote dance critic Anna Kisselgoff for *The New York Times*.

With *Train d'enfer* (*Broken Wings*, 1990), Ginette Laurin began a deeper exploration of drama and emotion, particularly evident in *La Chambre blanche* (1992), in which dancers trapped in a confined space confront one another and escape into a tumult of dreams and imagination. For this outstanding work, O Vertigo and Ginette Laurin were awarded the 1992 Grand Prix du Conseil des arts de la Communauté urbaine de Montréal (CACUM) and the Dora Mavor Moore Award in Toronto.

Created in 1994, *Déluge* bewitched audiences at the Festival de Châteauvallon in France, the Festival Internacional Cervantino in Mexico, the Festival Dancin' City in Copenhagen, the Festival Roma per la Danza and the Wiener Festwochen in Vienna, among other venues. Jocelyn Pook's beautiful musical score is still making many adepts. The work also inspired *La Nuit du déluge* by filmmaker Bernar Hébert.

1997 was marked by a new award, the Émergence Prize granted to UQAM graduates, and a new challenge: *La Bête* (*The Beast Within*), which Ginette Laurin created based on characters imagined by her performers. The resulting work was extravagant and theatrical, the image of O Vertigo's dancers, who are always deeply involved in the creative process. "Fearless, tireless and multiskilled, they embody an ideal of late 20th century prowess..." (*Los Angeles Times*).

The choreographer is fascinated by polarities and dualities. By way of contrast, she created *En Dedans* (1997), a more formal piece, characterized by subtlety and luminous sensuality. Critically acclaimed, *En Dedans* won O Vertigo the Recognition Prize in the dance category at the 1998 Grand Prix du CACUM.

*La Vie qui bat* followed in 1999, choreographed to Steve Reich's famous composition, *Drumming*. The musicians of the Société de musique contemporaine du Québec ensemble and the dancers of O Vertigo joined together on stage in a triumphant 15th anniversary event. In August 2000, the company performed at Central Park Summer Stage in New York City in a U.S. premiere.

In 2001, O Vertigo presented the premiere of *Luna* at the Luzernertheater in Switzerland. This piece, with its moonlike, crystalline atmosphere, distills the imagination by means of ellipses and optical effects to reveal the hidden face of the dance. From 2001 to 2003, *Luna* was performed around the world in front of more than 30,000 spectators. Created in 2004 on the occasion of O Vertigo's 20th anniversary, *Passare* explores the theme of the traces left by human beings in time and space. In a veritable cartography of the intimate, Ginette Laurin is intent on revealing the very essence of being.

That same year, Ginette Laurin created *The Resonance of the Double* at the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal. This series of six installations incorporating dance, performance, video projections, and photographs, was emblematic of a new multidisciplinary avenue for the choreographer. The inauguration of the Creation Centre at Place des Arts in 2005 has reaffirmed this approach and has given Ginette Laurin a new creative impetus, allowing her to reach into unexplored territory. Specifically, since 2002, she has collaborated in the creation of several films with director Oana Suteu. Their film *Wire Frame* (2005), a television adaptation of the dance work *Passare*, won Best Canadian Work at the 2006 International Festival of Films on Art in Montreal.

In *ANGELs* (2006), the choreographer scrutinizes the distinctive personalities of the dancers, imbuing the work with a luminous, intimate quality. *étude #3 pour cordes et poulies*, which premiered in Montreal in March 2007 at Théâtre Maisonneuve, Place des Arts, evokes states of the disarticulation of being, and proposes a voyage into the convolutions of the human soul.

In 2008, Ginette Laurin proposed the re-creation of one of her most important works, *La Chambre Blanche* (1992), which is also the subject of a film that she directed. After the resounding success of three European tours and three weeks of shows in Montreal, *La Chambre Blanche* will be presented at the Festival de Marseille in June 2009.