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Editors: Images are available upon request.

**Back by popular demand Ballets Jazz de Montréal brings three premieres
To NextMove Dance at the Prince Theater
February 15-18**

(Philadelphia, PA) Recognized worldwide for its classically-trained virtuoso dancers, internationally award-winning choreographers and world-class commissions, Ballets Jazz de Montréal (BJM), under the direction of Louis Robitaille, performs three Philadelphia premieres, February 15-18, at the Prince Theater, 1412 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, PA. The program celebrates the company's 45th Anniversary with an exclusive creation *Dance Me* based on the life of Montréal singer, songwriter and poet Leonard Cohen.

Performances take place Thursday, February 15 at 7:30pm; Friday, February 16 at 8:00pm; Saturday, February 17 at 2:00pm and 8:00 pm; and Sunday, February 18 at 3pm. Tickets are \$20-\$62 and can be purchased in person at the Prince Theater Box Office, by phone 215-422-4580 or online <http://princetheater.org/next-move>.

The program opens with *Casualties of Memory*, a riveting powerful 35-minute work choreographed by Israeli choreographer Itzik Galili. Set to darbuka percussion music played by Les Frères Grand, the dance explodes traditional societal notions of Western patriarchy. Galili creates a sensual environment where man and woman are not separate beings. This full company work emphasizes gender equality as reflected in the lifts, falls, catches and unique blend of ethnic and contemporary dance movement.

In contrast to *Causalities*, Galili's *O Balcao de Amor* is a joyous, quirky, comedic 25-minute ensemble piece inspired by Galili's trip to Cuba. Set to the infectious music by Perez Prado, dancers portray different characters- the playboy, the top model, the nerd and the Miami gangster and is filled with absurdity and eye-catching moments. *O Balcao* features a duet by BJM star dancer Celine Cassone and Alexander Hille showcasing her six o'clock extensions, artistry and sublime flexibility. Galili notes, "Sometimes as grown-ups, we encounter seemingly trivial details that bring us back to our youth and its hopes. Perez Prado's music gives me a deep sense of simple joy. It makes me happy to see what it awakens in the younger generation: joy, laughs, but also a profound smile."

BJM program's features an excerpts of its newest full-length multi-media creation *Dance Me* celebrating the company's 45th Anniversary. *Dance Me* is a portrait of Montréal's poet, singer and songwriter Leonard Cohen conceived by Artistic Director Louis Robitaille. Randy Swartz, NextMove Dance's Artistic Director notes, "We are thrilled Mr. Robitaille has agreed to present an excerpt of this exclusive presentation for Philadelphia audiences."

In addition to the performances, BJM will be offering two outreach activities. BJM will conduct a master class on Friday, February 16 at 1pm, Koresh Dance Center, 2002 Rittenhouse Street and two post-performance chats that will take place after Friday's 8pm and Saturday's 2pm performances.

About Ballets Jazz de Montréal

Emerging from a collaboration between Geneviève Salbaing, Eva Von Gency and Eddy Toussaint in 1972, BJM – Les Ballets Jazz de Montréal – is a repertory company that creates, produces and presents contemporary dance performances based on the technique, rigor and aesthetics of classical ballet. Its work consistently appears on local, national and international stages.

The company offers its artists high-level professional ballet training and gives internationally renowned choreographers the freedom to develop their artistic process in keeping with BJM's identity. In doing so, the company is able to create an exclusive repertoire that is accessible to all. As a leading ambassador of Quebec, BJM is synonymous with flawless execution. Its distinctive style is at once artistic, sexy, explosive, original and accessible. Since being named artistic director in 1998, Louis Robitaille has reoriented the company toward audiences open to new choreographic forms. He has linked BJM with rising names in the world of contemporary dance, such as Crystal Pite, Aszure Barton and others. The company also regularly collaborates with internationally renowned choreographers, including Mauro Bigonzetti, Andonis Foniadakis, Itzik Galili, Annabelle Lopez Ochoa, Barak Marshall, Benjamin Millepied, Rodrigo Pederneiras, Ihsan Rustem and Cayetano Soto. In recent years, the company's artistic direction has favored multidisciplinary creations that blend ballet with other artistic disciplines such as theatre, video and music.

Having presented more than 2,000 performances for over 2 million fans in 67 countries, BJM is a true ambassador of Canadian dance and artistic vitality across the globe. In 2016, BJM and its artistic director were awarded the Rideau Hommage prize in recognition of the company's reputation and continued presence on the Québec stage.

Major funding for the 2017/18 season of NextMove Dance is provided by William Penn Foundation. Additional funding is received through a grant from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, a state agency funded by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency.

NextMove Dance

Artistic Director Randy Swartz created the first annual dance series in Philadelphia at the Walnut Street Theatre in 1970. In 1983, he launched the Dance Celebration series at the Annenberg Center for a 32-year run and initiated a new annual series at the Prince Theater in October 2015. Dance Affiliates, renamed NextMove Dance, is recognized as one of the nation's finest dance presenters. Known internationally for award-winning presentations for almost four decades, NextMove Dance provides a wealth of opportunities for the Delaware Valley community to interact with the artists through talk-backs, master classes, artistic collaborations, workshops, children's programs and much more. Visit www.nextmovedance.org

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