

October 2005

danny grossman dance matters

A Season of Change

After 28 years of boundary-breaking modern dance creation and performance, The Danny Grossman Dance Company will begin transitioning into an institute for the promotion, licensing and teaching of Grossman choreography. The metamorphosis, taking place over the next three years, will enable the company to evolve from a production-based dance company, to a dance institute, designed to propagate Grossman choreography internationally. "For a long time, it was important for the company to be creating new work. As I mature, I see that some of the history of modern dance in Canada is at stake of being lost. New work is crucial. This does not mean that old choreography should be tossed aside and forgotten," says Danny Grossman. *Greatest Hits, Volume I*, will be the first of a multi-year performance cycle of Grossman classics, carefully remounted, then documented and archived for the future. In summer 2006, the first preserved and documented Grossman dances

will become available to be licensed and taught to dance companies, dance professionals and students worldwide.

Dance heritage issues have long been at the core of the company's values and activities. This season, The Danny Grossman Dance Company continues its leadership role, advocating for Canadian dance legacy, by hosting a two-day national conference, *Endangered Dance: A Dance Preservation Forum*, held January 19-20, 2006 in Toronto. *Endangered Dance: A Dance Preservation Forum* is designed to draw attention to the critical and urgent need to protect Canada's diminishing dance heritage. It will help lay the groundwork for the development of a national dance heritage strategy.

The 28th performance season of The Danny Grossman Dance Company, promises to be a spectacular one of change and action – keeping watch on the past, while having an eye for the future.

Adopt A Dance

The Danny Grossman Dance Company is pleased to launch Adopt A Dance, a campaign designed to support the preservation of Grossman repertoire. Works featured at the Premiere Dance Theatre this year are slated to become part of an active collection of choreographies, available for remount and performance. "To have my choreography outlive me is both extraordinary and infuriating, all at once," says Danny Grossman. Creating one's legacy is no easy task, but the company is looking forward to being on the leading edge of preservation in this country. Preservation begins with Grossman favourites *Higher*, *La Valse*, and *Curious Schools of Theatrical Dancing: Part I*. Adopt A Dance will support the process of making a thorough record of these choreographic jewels, allowing the works to be performed for generations to come.

Support history in the making. Contribute to Adopt A Dance today and help build a rich dance legacy for Grossman classics.

top of page, The Danny Grossman Dance Company in La Valse (1987) Photograph by Cylla von Tiedemann

The Danny Grossman Dance Company gratefully acknowledges support from the following funders.

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A Message from Danny Grossman

32 years ago, I came to Canada to make a dance. It was a resounding success. For almost 30 years, I have been generously supported with public funds. With this I have created a strong body of work. Now at age 63, my question is, what shall become of these dances I have made?

The act of preserving a dance is expensive and time consuming. When a dance is completed, there is no written score. With the financial situation as it is in our community, preservation is not usually an option. For inspiration, we need only look to our neighbours to the south who are frantically running to record works of their pioneering artists before their demise.

Modern dance was born in the US and Germany in the early days of the twentieth century. It was a rebellion against antiquated values that negated the modern landscape and psyche. In the 1930s, great revolutionary works existed and modern dance was standing side by side with the world's great dance forms. Ultimately this movement migrated to Canada. Holding this progressive banner, strong willed individuals created their own legacies. Sadly, these people are dead or no longer at the helm of companies they once created. Their dances are not being seen and are certainly not adequately documented. I believe this is a tragic situation.

Modern dance, though young, has a proud and fierce history. If the artform is to be strong, new creations should be seen along side classics that have withstood the test of time. I saw many of the great works of the first 40 years of modern dance. This was the foundation upon which I built my own repertoire. Aspiring artists should have the same opportunity. Fearless young choreographers will emerge to make works of universal importance. Audiences will be re-awakened to the power of the artform. My forebearers gave me all the strength I needed for my life's work. I intend to leave something behind to inspire future generations.



Danny Grossman, Photograph by Cylla von Tiedemann

Danny Grossman

TO Live, and Dancing, With Culture



An angel graces the Toronto sky during Studio Festi's *Of Angels and Light*.

In celebration of the 40th anniversary of Nathan Phillips Square on 17 September, the City of Toronto invited Studio Festi from Italy to mount the on-site spectacle *Of Angels and Light*. The performance was choreographed on local dance artists, and Danny Grossman Dance Company member Mairéad Filgate was there. The show brought together all different types of dancers and audience members, displaying Toronto's diversity. Mairéad was thrilled to participate in this huge undertaking, and was energized by the experience of an open air, interactive performance.

The City of Toronto launched its *Live With Culture* campaign 3 October, in celebration of the vibrant local arts community. The Danny Grossman Dance Company is featured in an exhibition of stunning dance photographs by Cylla von Tiedemann. The photographs are on display during October at TTC Eglinton Station. This is a *TO Live With Culture 05/06* signature event. Mayor David Miller says, "A creative culture is a cornerstone of a great city. Toronto has always fostered this kind of culture, and the time has never been better for us to enjoy the benefits." Take advantage of Toronto's amazing arts scene today, and check out a show or go to a museum. Get in touch with your city councillor, and let local politicians know you value the arts. They need to hear this initiative is important and appreciated.

Do you remember this piece?

La Valse, first performed in 1987, depicts the glaring dichotomy between the social classes. Mr. Grossman's commentary remains as relevant and pointed as ever. He has been called "a master at bringing the human spirit to the stage." The oppressed, *pictured right*, and their silent suffering, continue to shed light on human tragedy, as revealed in recent world events. The piece will be performed at the Premiere Dance Theatre in January 2006.



Pamela Grundy, Eddie Kastrau, and Randy Glynn in *La Valse* (1987), Photograph by Cylla von Tiedemann

20 Years of Brilliance!

Congratulations to Eddie Kastrau on the occasion of his 20th season as a Danny Grossman Dance Company member

"Steady Eddie – His intelligence, physical talent and extraordinary work ethic enabled Eddie to transform himself into a dancer of magnificent strengths. Staying in the business for 20 years is a small miracle on its own. Staying with one company for 20 years allows him entrance to a very elite club within Canadian modern dance. But the fact that he has emerged from this 20 year (and counting) career as a healthy, balanced person and citizen of the world makes him truly exceptional." -Pam Grundy

"He's a real jewel in the Toronto dance scene." -Larry Gradus

"Eddie is one of my favourite dancers in the whole of Canada. For these 20 years, he has brought an added element of poetry and refinement to Danny's already very dynamic and muscular style. He's a treasure. I'm so glad you are celebrating him. Bravo Eddie!"

-Patricia Beatty

"Congratulations on 20 years of sharing your great dancing spirit with us." -Claudia Moore

"I can honestly say that I have never seen Eddie Kastrau give a bad performance." -Paula Citron

"It takes imagination, inspiration, courage, and more than a small amount of lunacy to survive and succeed in a lengthy modern dance career in Canada! Your gifts to dance both on stage and off are generous and meaningful." -Suzette Sherman

"Thank you Eddie for 20 years of artistry, eloquence, and beauty. You are always a joy." -Barbara Grant

"Thank you Eddie for running out front, staying there, and for your commitment to dance." -Michelle Silagy

"Celebrating a 20th anniversary in any context is a milestone to be proud of. To do so in contemporary dance, with one company, is an extremely rare achievement that begs our thanks and heartfelt congratulations. Bravo." -Michael Trent

"Eddie has danced 36 of the 42 Grossman works created, appearing as an original cast member in 18 of these. Bravo." -Dizzy

"Eddie is one of the really good guys in dance. He has always worked at growing and changing and honouring the art form. He has been a loyal and constant support to his mentor, and he and Danny have produced great work through their collaboration. Every time that I have had the opportunity of working with Eddie, it has been warmly rewarding as his humanity is always present. Eddie is one of the good guys, one of the best." -David Earle

"You are an amazing dance partner, an amazing dancer and performer. Eddie, congratulations...and the journey is not over yet!" -Dee-Dee MacArthur

"congrats buddy, on not just hanging in there.....20 years and still breakin' it down..... that deserves the order of canada i would say.....glad i got a chance to dance with you!" -Graham McKelvie

"Congratulations to the Silver Bullet, the Incredible Hulk!" -Trish Armstrong

"In these more recent years of Eddie's impressive 20, we have been blessed with his good humour, quiet leadership, everlasting gusto, and, last but not least, his most expressive and incredible performances."

-Mairéad Filgate & Meredith Thompson

"You are SO wonderful. I've enjoyed every experience I've ever had watching AND working with you! Congratulations on your two decades with Danny, and may the Force continue to be with you, far into the future-----." -Terrill Maguire

Dancer Answers

The second of a series featuring Danny Grossman Dance Company members

Eddie Kastrau

An eye for detail and a meticulous memory can serve a person very well in life. When talking to dancer Eddie Kastrau, it is clear he has put these attributes to excellent use. His résumé might reveal this best: trained as an electrical engineer, creator of an archival software program, IT specialist for endless not-for-profit organizations, brilliant storyteller, *Danny Grossman Dance company member, celebrating his 20th season with the company.*

One of Eddie's greatest memories is his audition for Danny. In 1986, Eddie was dancing in a jazz company, peeking in on Robert Desrosiers' rehearsals in a nearby dance studio, and training with Milton Meyers.

The Grossman audition notice went up, and Meyers quickly told Eddie, "Get rid of your leg warmers, and for God's sake, let them see your ankles." What he was really saying was, "*Audition and you're in.*" Following

two gruelling days, after which walking down stairs was no longer an option for his leg muscles, Eddie Kastrau officially became a member of the Danny Grossman Dance Company. Something clicked from the first day. The movement vocabulary suits Eddie. "I look more like a soccer player than a dancer," Eddie says. With pieces like *National Spirit* and *Higher*, it's no wonder he has sustained clear health throughout his 20-year span. He's made for this type of work. More importantly, he values the Grossman vision. "No one else was tackling political issues quite like Danny," he explains. Eddie holds admiration for Danny's belief that art can affect change.

This coming season, Eddie is looking forward to performing *Higher*, with fellow company member Mairéad Filgate. The work is part of *Greatest Hits, Volume I*, a retrospective look at Grossman classics. Eddie believes pieces from the past should remain relevant today. "If I could teach repertoire full time, I'd be there," he says smiling. It's no wonder that Eddie enjoys teaching repertoire. Here's hoping his eye for detail and incredible memory continue to bring Grossman classics to life for years to come!



The Danny Grossman Dance Company

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Performed by Mairéad Filgate, Eddie Kastrau, and Meredith Thompson

Words on the history and creation of *Triptych* by Danny Grossman

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Eddie Kastrau, Bohdan Romaniw and Judith Miller in *Triptych* (1976) Photograph by Deborah Samuels

Greatest Hits, Volume I

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3rd Floor, Queen's Quay Terminal
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