

# Le fils d'Adrien danse



## **Le fils d'Adrien is one of Quebec's best-known contemporary dance companies, and a pillar of Quebec City's vibrant dance community.**

Its accessible, visually stunning productions appeal to an audience of all ages and backgrounds, tackling universal human concerns with compassion and tenderness. The quality of the company's artistic output was recognized in 2006 with a nomination for the *Prix Ville de Québec*, Quebec City's prestigious Arts and Culture Prize, as well as internationally with a spot on the *Cinars Elite DVD* – as one of Canada's top 30 performing arts companies.

Le fils d'Adrien was established in Montreal in 1999, by Harold Rhéaume. The name honours Rhéaume's father, who did not live to see his son perform. Rhéaume returned to his Quebec City roots in 2000. Working mostly on his own, he created *Écho*, a personal and intimate one-man show that "won the audience over" (*La Presse*). This solo performance toured, stopping in Montreal, Sudbury (Ontario) and Lille (France). At this time also Rhéaume produced his first show for young audiences, with actors Martin Faucher and Daniel Parent. Described as the perfect introduction to dance for young people, *Les Cousins* toured successfully in Quebec, Ontario, Belgium and France.

Three more shows for young audiences followed: *Éclipse* (2000-2001), *L'île aux valises* (2002) and *F.U.L.L.* (2003). Rhéaume didn't abandon his adult audience: the heart-breaking *Morta* (2002) brought tears to the eyes of dance fans on both sides of the Atlantic; *La Presse* likened the experience to being "shot at point-blank range." Next up was *C.O.R.R.*, a sensitive tribute to women that made *ICI Magazine's* top-10 list for 2003.

From 2004 to 2006 Rhéaume co-coordinated *Monday Night Dance (Les Lundis de la danse)*, where local choreographers created original works based on plays currently running at the Théâtre de la Bordée (Quebec City). Rhéaume struck first with a bold rereading of *Les Feluettes*, described as Quebec City's "best show of the year" by Radio-Canada. Then came *CLASH* (2005), a "successful new direction" (*La Presse*). Gutsy and colourful, *CLASH* toured Quebec continuously until 2009, stopped off in England, and garnered acclaim wherever it went.

2007 was a busy year for Le fils d'Adrien. First Rhéaume produced *3 territoires quotidiens*, with *Création Caféine* and *l'Agora de la danse*. Then came *Mechanical Variations*, another co-production (with the *Maison des Arts de Créteil (MAC)* and the *Escapades Festival* in France). In the *Variations*, first seen three years earlier at the Canadian Cultural Centre in Paris, dance and sculptures come together as never before.

The summer of 2008 was momentous for Le fils d'Adrien. *Le fil de l'Histoire*, its production for Quebec City's 400th Anniversary, put dance in the spotlight, at the heart of the city's anniversary celebrations. Over the course of 10 performances 5 000 spectators had the opportunity to "grasp the thread of history," holding onto a long red ribbon alongside the dancers, joining in the production, engendering solemn, emotional moments.

### **An Artist without Borders**

In addition to his own productions, Harold Rhéaume works widely in the other arts, in both an advisory and a creative role. His theatre projects have earned him two nominations at the *Gala des Masques*: for Brigitte Haentjen's *Antigone* in 2003 and Marie-Josée Bastien's *They Shoot Horses, Don't They?* in 2007. Rhéaume's contribution to Quebec City's 400th anniversary was not limited his *fil de l'Histoire*. He worked on two other large

scale collaborative projects: *Le clan des oiseaux*, a family-friendly show with the Quebec Symphony Orchestra (seen in Wendake, Lévis, and at the Grand Théâtre in Quebec City), and *Le chemin qui marche*, a "multidisciplinary rave" under the direction of the esteemed Olivier Dufour.

### **As Seen on TV**

In 2000, Rhéaume choreographed and danced in *L'homme de verre*, a film on Tchaikovsky aired on Radio-Canada, Télé-Québec, CBC, Bravo and ArTV. He also played the role of the famous composer.

In 2003, he presented an excerpt from *Morta* at *Le Plaisir croît avec l'usage* (Télé-Québec). A year later, he created a number for the *Gala de La Presse/Radio-Canada*.

In 2005, he was the focus of a TV documentary in the *Freedom* series on Bravo and ArTV.

### **Connecting with Audiences, Fostering up-and-coming Talent**

Le fils d'Adrien is about much more than putting on shows. The company encourages and supports new talent with short-term apprenticeships, master classes and productions at professional dance schools.

The company never stops seeking out innovative ways to forge relationships with its audience and raise the general level of interest in dance. One example is the pioneering use of focus groups to test its productions before they are released to the public.

Equally groundbreaking is the series called "*Curtain Calls*" (2006), where an excerpt from *CLASH* was shown live as the opening act of a stage play.

You will also find Le fils d'Adrien giving workshops and conferences in schools and businesses, and at other events open to the general public.

### **What's New in 2008-2009?**

**October 2008:** *NU* premieres as part of La Rotonde's 2008 season. The show plays to sold-out houses and leaves audiences thoroughly convinced and deeply touched.

**November 2008:** Rhéaume wins the *Prix du développement culturel* at 2008's Quebec City Gala for Excellence in Culture and the Arts.

**November 2008 and January 2009:** *Mechanical Variations* captures the attention and the hearts of young audiences in Montreal (Les Coups de Théâtre festival) and the Paris region.

**Spring 2009:** *CLASH's* third and final tour of seven cities in the province of Quebec.

# Harold Rhéaume



Photo Brigitte Thériault

**As a kid growing up in suburban Quebec, Harold's nickname is Dennis the Menace.**

Only one thing can make him sit still: a musical on TV, especially one with Fred Astaire (who will heavily influence his subsequent work). Harold's interest in dance comes about just like that: simply and naturally. But the road ahead is full of curves. Only much later, after singing in a choir, managing a credit union and failing several auditions as an actor will he undertake a career in dance. At 20 he enrolls at the Ecole de danse de Québec.

He graduates in 1989, apprentices at Danse Partout (Quebec City), then joins the prestigious Groupe Dance Lab in Ottawa. Working under Peter Bonaham is a crash course in professional creation, performance and choreography. Harold earns his stripes. His first shows are presented at the Canada Dance Festival (Ottawa), the Winnipeg Dance Festival and the New Moves Festival in Glasgow, Scotland. The Ottawa Citizen predicts "(...) his works will become an important contribution to this country's performance arts." Rhéaume has only been out of dance school 3 years.

1993 takes Rhéaume to Montreal, where he dances with panache for Louise Bédard, Danièle Desnoyers, Estelle Claretton, Hélène Blackburn, Isabelle VanGrimde, Daniel Soulières and Sarah Bild. In 1997 *La Presse* gushes: "(...) when he dances, Harold Rhéaume's intensity makes him seem enormous (...) he dances to say something, to move you."

Montreal also gives Rhéaume his big break as an independent choreographer. Lucie Boissinot, known for her work with Jean-Pierre Perreault, commissions him to create *Ses propres ailes*. Rhéaume is now a known commodity. In 1994, he creates *Falaise* for The Dance Collective Company (Winnipeg). The same year, *Fatras* (co-produced with Danse-Cité) makes waves at the Canada Dance Festival (Ottawa), followed by *Troïka* (1996) and *Hybride* (1997) with Tangente (Montreal).

Rhéaume is now recognized as one of the best up-and-coming artists of his generation with the 37th Jacqueline-Lemieux Award from the Canada Council for the Arts. The award recognizes Rhéaume's great promise and the depth with which he treats fundamental human concerns. Another highlight of 1997 is his work with video-artist Katrina McPherson to create *Picture Show* in Scotland.

After 1998's *Fresk* (Agora de la danse, Montreal; Betty Oliphant Theatre, Toronto), Rhéaume makes his premiere at Montreal's Place des Arts with *Les dix commandements*. The critics rave: "Right on!" writes *La Presse*, while *The Gazette* proclaims "*Les dix* exceeds all expectations (...) Just plain brilliant."

In 1999 Rhéaume starts working under the name *Le fils d'Adrien*: first taking part in the Festival international de nouvelle danse (FIND) with *Épitaphe*, then producing his final show as a Montreal-based artist with his friends Catherine Tardif and Jacques Moisan. *Trinité* is an off-the-wall success that takes *le fils d'Adrien* to Burlington, USA. The time is now ripe for Harold to go back to his hometown. His career is in full flight.

## **A Sensitive Approach**

Harold Rhéaume stands apart from formal and conceptual trends in the dance world. His accessible shows speak a language the public understands – leading the media to dub him a "choreographer of the human condition" who "communicates without words."

His choreography makes extensive use of familiar images, allowing us to understand while creating our own story. This is intimate storytelling you feel in your guts.

Sometimes sensual, sometimes athletic, sometimes delicate, sometimes dynamic – Rhéaume's movement vocabulary is always touching, expressive, and thrillingly physical, with a unique *je ne sais quoi* that makes us think, laugh and cry.

His staging is inventive and polished, never pretentious. Lighting, in Rhéaume's signature pure, strong colours, plays an important role – becoming, in his hands, a full-fledged character in the drama.

Like a filmmaker, he makes use of story and character to create images that lodge themselves in the viewer's imagination. His work is influenced by the flashes of inspiration that are part of daily life; he is a choreographer who follows his instinct.

Rhéaume draws on a wide range of influences, from his beloved musicals to the theatre, paintings, modern architecture, jazz and contemporary music.

But above all he looks to his dancers for inspiration, building his shows around their stories and personalities, their strengths and weaknesses. On stage, the dancers are not just moving bodies: they are genuine individuals, everyday people.

Harold Rhéaume commands our attention with honest works of art that are ingenious but, above all, deeply-felt. Their uniqueness lies in the touching way they show us as we are: with all our strength, with all our vulnerability.