

L'ÉCOLE  
NATIONALE DE  
**BAJLET**  
DU CANADA

CANADA'S  
NATIONAL  
**BAJLET**  
SCHOOL

**Assemblée  
Internationale 2013**  
A Ballet Festival Uniting the World

### About Canada's National Ballet School (NBS)

Established in 1959 by Betty Oliphant and Celia Franca, Canada's National Ballet School (NBS) is one of the world's foremost training institutions for aspiring young dancers and teachers. Attracting students from across the country and around the world, NBS is the only ballet academy in North America to provide elite dance training, academic instruction and residential care on the same campus. The School's progressive curriculum, with its emphasis on the physical and emotional well-being of the student, has put NBS at the forefront of dance training internationally. Talent is the sole criterion for acceptance into NBS' Professional Ballet Program.

In addition to its Professional Ballet Program, NBS also offers a professional Teacher Training Program, a Musician Mentorship Program and Community Classes for both children and adults. The Associates Program offers classes after school and on weekends for students between the ages of 5 and 17, while the School's popular Adult Ballet Program offers classes in the evenings and on weekends to adults of all fitness levels and dance experience.

NBS' doors officially opened in September 1959 in a former Quaker Meeting House (111 Maitland Street, Toronto) purchased for \$80,000. A house on Jarvis Street (410 Jarvis Street, Toronto) was rented to serve as the School's first residence. Enrolment initially consisted of 27 full-time students - all female - and 202 after school students, of which 9 were boys. Betty Oliphant was the Artistic Director, and academics at the School were shared with nearby Jarvis Collegiate. Oliphant remained the Artistic Director of NBS until her retirement in 1989, at which time Mavis Staines took on the role of Artistic Director – a position she continues to hold today.

Following its 1963 incorporation as a Not for Profit Organization, the School expanded into buildings purchased around its original Maitland Street location in Toronto. In 1988, the Betty Oliphant Theatre was also opened on Jarvis Street.

The School's popular Adult Ballet program was introduced in 1996, and today boasts over 700 students. NBS' retail wing, The Shoe Room, opened its doors in 1998 and celebrated its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary by launching a new website, [TheShoeRoom.ca](http://TheShoeRoom.ca), which enables orders to be placed easily from around the world.

June 2003 marked the beginning of Project **Grand Jeté**, an ambitious \$100 million capital expansion project to reflect NBS' international reputation for excellence. Phase I, a new state-of-the-art dance training facility (The Celia Franca Centre) and restoration of two heritage buildings for academic classrooms (The Margaret McCain Academic Building) and administrative offices (Losinski House), was completed in 2005. Phase II, the refurbishment of the School's original Maitland Street buildings for expanded residence facilities, was completed in 2007. Project **Grand Jeté** and its architects, Kuwabara, Payne, McKenna Blumberg Architects and Goldsmith, Borgal and Company Architects, have won 14 prestigious, international architectural awards, including the coveted Institute Honor Award for Architecture from the American Institute of Architects (AIA), making NBS the sole Canadian building honoured in 2007 and only the fourth since the AIA first bestowed the awards in 1949.

NBS celebrated its 50th anniversary from September 2009 to June 2010 marking the anniversary with a series of signature events. These events included the launch of Assemblée Internationale, a student-choreographic festival that saw NBS welcome students and staff from numerous partner schools around the world (NBS will be hosting a second Assemblée Internationale in Spring 2013.) NBS' 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary festivities also included a flashmob in the Toronto Eaton Centre to mark International Dance Day on April 29<sup>th</sup>, and an alumni reunion weekend. Furthermore, in 2010 NBS launched [WantToDance.ca](http://WantToDance.ca), a national

registry of dance schools and studios across Canada. Accessible to all Canadians interested in finding local dance studios, Wanttodance.ca provides information on health, nutrition and dance events.

In 2012, NBS launched another website, Sharingdance.ca, which was created to house all of NBS' flashmob routine instructional videos and encourage and enable Canadians from coast to coast to experience the joy of dance together.

Today NBS grads can be found as dancers, choreographers, artistic directors, teachers and administrators in over 65 dance companies world-wide and even more schools around the globe.

## **Mission and Purpose**

*Mission:* Moving the world

*Purpose Statement:* Canada's National Ballet School develops the most talented youth from within Canada and internationally through an innovative, nurturing learning environment where talent is the sole entry criterion. By integrating artistic, academic and life skills education, NBS students are prepared for successful careers in dance and beyond. Through this, we evolve the art of ballet nationally and globally, celebrating and advancing dance as essential to a vibrant community culture.

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## **About the Assemblée Internationale 2013 (AI13)**

*AI13 - A Ballet Festival Uniting the World*

### **Bringing the world together**

AI13 welcomes students and artistic staff from eighteen international professional ballet schools to Canada's National Ballet School (NBS) for an intensive seven days of classes, performances, forums and professional development for Artistic Directors.

### **Seeing the world on stage**

Performances will range from works representative of each ballet school's culture, to student-created choreography where performances will see blended casts from each of the schools' participants. Casting for these latter works has been assigned prior to the AI13, yet rehearsals with the casts will only occur once the students are all on site.

### **Exploring new technologies**

New to the AI13, NBS is launching a trilogy of projects, with the first component being introduced during the Assemblée Internationale. Shaun Amyot, NBS artistic staff member and choreographer, will collaborate with Amsterdam-based choreographer, Michael Schumacher, to create a work incorporating live streaming with students from the Dutch National Ballet Academy in Amsterdam and AI13 students in Toronto. The two subsequent projects will follow in 2014 and 2015, involving additional schools and multiple locations.

### **Participating Schools**

The schools invited to participate in the Assemblée Internationale 2013 are those with which NBS has a long standing partnership. Students and staff in these schools regularly welcome NBS students on exchanges, and similarly, we eagerly embrace guest teachers and exchange students to our campus each year. All but one of the schools that attended the inaugural Assemblée Internationale 2009 will be attending the AI13, and we are pleased to welcome an additional five schools over and above the initial Assemblée Internationale, held in November, 2009.

## **NBS AI13 Biographies**

### **Artistic Director: Mavis Staines**

*Mavis Staines, C.M., DHumL*

Mavis Staines was born in Quebec's Eastern Townships and received her ballet training at Canada's National Ballet School.

Upon graduation from NBS in 1972 Staines became a First Soloist with The National Ballet of Canada and then danced with The Dutch National Ballet until an injury cut short her performance career. She subsequently returned to Canada and enrolled in NBS' Teacher Training Program, joining NBS' Artistic Faculty in 1982. She was appointed Artistic Director in 1989.

Staines is now devoted to evolving ballet education by building on the best of traditional schooling while ensuring future professional dancers develop the self-awareness and creativity essential to leading dynamic and innovative careers and lives. She also is devoted to NBS' commitment to bring dance to all members of the community, from aspiring future professionals to those involved in the School's myriad community programs and beyond.

A highlight of the School's 50th anniversary celebrations in 2009-2010 included the Assemblée Internationale 2009 (AI09), a gathering of 13 of NBS' international partner schools. At the AI each school presented a work from their existing repertoire, and each school supplied a new work choreographed by a student. The student choreographies were performed by a blended cast of students from each of the schools in attendance. Planning is in place for a second AI to be held in May, 2013.

In addition to her accomplishments at NBS, Staines served as juror for the Prix de Lausanne, widely regarded as the world's premiere ballet competition, from 1993 to 1995, and headed the jury as President in 1998 and 1999. In February 2001, Staines accepted the volunteer position of Artistic President Designate for the Prix de Lausanne and in February 2002, assumed the full responsibilities of Artistic President which she held until February 2008.

In 1998 Staines was a workshop presenter at the IOTPD Conference in The Hague, Holland. In 1999 NBS along with partners in The Hague hosted the first satellite linked dance symposium, with Staines an impassioned advocate for the project. She has since presented regularly at International conferences, most recently in October 2012 in Stockholm.

Over the years Staines also has served in various capacities with a number of dance-related organizations, including: DANCE/USA, Philadelphia, 1994; Dance Advisory Committee, The Canada Council for the Arts; The Dance Community of Educators, Toronto; and Kala Nidhi Fine Arts of Canada, Toronto. In 1998 Staines won the Toronto Arts Award for the Performing Arts. In November 2006, she was named by the Women's Executive Network as one of Canada's Most Powerful Women: Top 100, and in 2008 she was presented an Honourary Doctorate in Humanities from Mount Saint Vincent University. In December 2010, Mavis became a Member of the Order of Canada, in recognition of her commitment to the education and well-being of individuals in the field of dance.

### **Artistic Faculty Member & Choreographer: Shaun Amyot**

The 2012-13 school year is Shaun Amyot's seventh at NBS, where he teaches Contemporary Repertoire and Improvisation Technique.

A native of Ottawa, Ontario, Amyot completed his early training at The School of Dance before entering the Post-Secondary Program at Canada's National Ballet School. In his final year, he was awarded a Canada Council Grant to travel in Europe. This led to an exciting dance career with the Nederlands Dans Theater under the direction of Jiri Kylian and Ballett Frankfurt with William Forsythe. During this time he was a part of countless world premieres originating roles in ballets by not only Kylian and Forsythe but also Nacho Duato, Mats Ek, Hans Van Manen, Amanda Miller, Ed Wubbe and many others.

Amyot then switched gears to Musical Theatre where he was a member of three original Broadway casts, *Ragtime*, *Annie Get Your Gun* (1999 revival with Bernadette Peters) and *Seussical, the Musical*. Favourite musical theatre roles include Amos in *Chicago* on Broadway, Tobias Ragg in *Sweeney Todd* for Canstage, and Hans/Rudy/Two Ladies guy in the celebrated Rob Marshall/Sam Mendes version of *Cabaret*. He can also be seen in the Oscar winning movie musical *Chicago*!

During his time at NBS, Amyot has staged works by master choreographers Nacho Duato, Jiri Kylian, John Neumeier and William Forsythe and assisted Aszure Barton and Matjash Mrozewski on their successful new creations for the School.

The success of his work *Improvisation A109* for the NBS Assemblée Internationale in 2009, led to his first commission: a new piece for the San Francisco Ballet School's annual Student Showcase which premiered in May of 2010 entitled *5.26.10*. His work mixed choreography with improvisation challenging the dancers to find their own voices.

Amyot will once again be creating a new work titled *Stream* for the A13, in collaboration with Amsterdam-based choreographer, Michael Schumacher. Performed by a blended cast of A13 students present in Toronto and joined virtually through live streaming by dancers from the Dutch National Ballet Academy in Amsterdam, Amyot's work will explore the use of new technologies in dance.