

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

CANADA'S  
NATIONAL  
**BAJLET**  
SCHOOL

# Assemblée Internationale 2017

A Unique 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. NBS' distinctive pedagogy for its Professional Ballet Program integrates elements from the best in classical ballet training methods, contemporary dance and the latest advances in science and movement. NBS alumni work in 80 companies in Canada and abroad, frequently taking leadership roles as choreographers and artistic directors.

NBS also delivers a broader range of community programs than any other professional ballet school in the world. NBS welcomes people with a casual interest in dance (for drop-in sessions during Culture Days), people with a serious recreational interest in ballet (Associates Program and Adult Ballet), and people who pursue dance for fun, fitness, and well-being at any age – the Sharing Dance community engagement program.

Whether training elite, Olympic-caliber ballet dancers or promoting the benefits of dance to people of all ages and abilities in the wider community, NBS demonstrates the relevance of dance and improves quality of life.

### **Professional Ballet Program**

NBS is the only ballet academy in North America to provide dance training, academic education, and residential care on the same campus for students from Grade 6 through the Post-Secondary level. As talent is the sole criterion for entry, every student has access to the highest level of training regardless of family finances or geography.

### **Teacher Training Program**

Dance majors and professional dancers become teachers or ballet masters with the NBS Teaching Diploma and either RAD or Cecchetti qualifications. Joint degree programs with York University (Toronto) or Simon Fraser University (Vancouver) are also available.

### **Associates Program**

This part-time program provides after school and weekend dance classes for over 400 boys and girls, 6 – 17 years of age.

### **Adult Ballet Program**

Nearly 700 adults of all ages and levels, many with no previous ballet experience participate in this popular program. Exceptional instruction, live piano accompaniment, state-of-the-art facilities, and personal attention are the hallmarks.

### **Sharing Dance Program**

NBS believes that everyone should have access to high-quality dance programs, encouraging people to engage artistically, and reap the health and social benefits that dance provides. For almost a decade, NBS' Sharing Dance community initiative has grown under the guidance of NBS artistic staff who are leading the charge in creating the quality and caliber of material expected of a renowned dance training institution.

Sharing Dance promotes broad public participation in dance for pleasure and for the physical, social, emotional and cultural benefits. In particular, it delivers enjoyable dance activities to schools and community groups serving to build fundamental movement skills in children and youth. It also engages seniors, including those with Parkinson's disease or dementia, with activity that improves health and quality of life.

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### **About the Assemblée Internationale 2017 (AI 17)**

*AI 17 – A Ballet Festival. Uniting the World*

#### **Bringing the world together**

AI17 welcomes students and artistic staff from twenty-one 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 choreography created by NBS Alumni and current students. These performances will see blended casts from each of the schools' participants. Casting for these latter works has been assigned prior to the AI17, yet rehearsals with the casts will only occur once the students are all on site.

#### **Exploring new technologies**

Shaun Amyot, AI 17 Co-Artistic Director, has collaborated with professors from York University's Faculty of Computational Science. Together with Don Sinclair, professor and Chair of the Department of Computational Arts, and Doug van Nort, professor in the School of the Arts, Media, Performance & Design, Amyot is using sensors provided by Thalmic Labs to measure motion and speed of the dancers bodies which will project images from the data collected onto a backdrop. A soundscape will be created simultaneously, unfolding as the sensors on the dancer's bodies respond to their movements.

#### **Participating Schools**

The schools invited to participate in the Assemblée Internationale 2017 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. This year's AI sees an increase in the number of schools attending the AI 09 (11), AI 13 (18) and now, 21.

## **NBS AI 17 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 Canada's National Ballet School in 1972, Staines danced as a first soloist with The National Ballet of Canada and The Dutch National Ballet until an accident cut short her performance career. She subsequently enrolled in NBS' Teacher Training Program, joining NBS' Artistic Faculty in 1982. She was appointed Artistic Director in 1989.

Staines works to evolve ballet education by building on the best of traditional schooling while ensuring dancers develop the self-awareness and creativity essential to leading dynamic, innovative careers and lives. She is the driving force behind 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.

Staines served as juror for the Prix de Lausanne from 1993 to 1995 and was President of the Jury in 1998 and 1999. In 2001, Staines accepted the volunteer position of Artistic President Designate for the Prix de Lausanne and assumed the full responsibilities of Artistic President from 2002 - 2008.

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; and in 2013, she received the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal in recognition of her contributions to the dance community.

### **AI 17 Co-Artistic Director, Faculty Member & Choreographer: Shaun Amyot**

Shaun Amyot began teaching at NBS in 2005. He teaches Contemporary Repertoire and Improvisation Technique as well as co-manages the Post-Secondary Program and the Career Planning Program.

A native of Ottawa, Ontario, Shaun 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.

Shaun then switched gears to Musical Theatre where he further developed his craft. His diversity of talents allowed him to be cast as an ensemble member, dance captain, assistant choreographer, and principal artist. Favourite musical theatre roles include

Amos in Chicago on Broadway and Tobias Ragg in Sweeney Todd for Canstage. He can also be seen in the Oscar winning movie musical Chicago!

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

As a choreographer, Shaun has produced works for the Stratford Shakespeare Festival, the San Francisco Ballet School and NBS; most notably STREAM, a live streamed dance work created in collaboration with Michael Schumacher that saw dancers from the National Ballet Academy in Amsterdam join the international cast present in Toronto for the Assemblée Internationale 2013.