

Karen Kain
Artistic Director

Canada Ballet dance *Giselle*

By: Ruzik Tuzik

Karen Kain, Artistic Director of The National Ballet of Canada, today announced that Principal Dancer Chan Hon Goh, who retires at the end of the 2008/09 season after 20 years of brilliant performances with the National Ballet, will dance her final performances of *Giselle* on May 27 at 7:30 pm and May 31, 2009 at 2:00 pm. Performances are almost sold out with best availability on May 27.

The role of *Giselle* has been called "the ballerina's Hamlet" and is one of ballet's most complex and demanding roles. This season, Principal Dancers Chan Hon Goh, Greta Hodgkinson, Sonia Rodriguez and Xiao Nan Yu return to this challenging role. First Soloist Bridgett Zehr will make her Toronto debut in the role. The role of Albrecht will be performed by Principal Dancers Aleksandar Antonijevic, Guillaume Cote and Zdenek Konvalina.

Principal Dancer Piotr Stanczyk and Principal Character Artist Kevin D. Bowles dance the role of Hilarion and First Soloist Etienne Lavigne and Second Soloist Jonathan Renna will debut in the role. The Queen of the Wilis will be danced by Principal Dancers Heather Ogden and Xiao Nan Yu and First Soloist Stephanie Hutchison.

Guest Artist Ruben Martin, Principal Dancer with San Francisco Ballet, will dance the role of Albrecht on May 28 at 7:30 pm with Sonia Rodriguez. Mr. Martin was born in Reus, Spain, and trained at Escuela Municipal de Danza and Estudio de Danza de Maria de Avila. Major roles include Prince Siegfried and von Rothbart in Helgi Tomasson's *Swan Lake*, Albrecht in Tomasson's *Giselle*, Espada in Tomasson/Possokhov's *Don Quixote* and the Nutcracker Prince and Snow King in Tomasson's *Nutcracker*. This will be Mr. Martin's first engagement with the National Ballet.

Since its premiere with the company in 1970, Sir Peter Wright's *Giselle* has been a mainstay of the National Ballet's classical repertoire. The role of *Giselle* is a highly emotional and technical one, setting the bar to which the very best dancers aspire. Successive generations of female Principal Dancers have risen to the challenge to interpret this beautiful, spiritual role.

The National Ballet of Canada's *Giselle* was choreographed by Sir Peter Wright in 1965. Sets and costumes are designed by Desmond Heeley with lighting by Gil Wechsler. The National Ballet of Canada Orchestra is conducted by the National Ballet Music Director and Principal Conductor David Briskin.

Sir Peter Wright and dance critic Michael Crabb will host the opening night Ballet Talk 45 minutes prior to the performance of *Giselle*, offering insight and illumination about the ballet.

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