

NUIT



A work by
JEAN-PIERRE PERREAULT

Produced by
CITADEL+COMPAGNIE

"It has often been said that dance is an ephemeral art form, I think that this is wrong. Perhaps a performance of a dance work is ephemeral, but the choreographic writing and all its scenic elements, that are so integral to a work, do remain.

But even the interpretation given by a performer is not ephemeral, because often it leaves an indelible mark on the memory and the soul of the spectator. When the lights in the theatre go out and the work begins, the only thing that really matters is the meeting between the performer and its audience. Many performers have danced NUIT over the years and every one of them has brought and left a little of themselves.

It is essential for the new generation of dancers to put value in repertory. It is a sign of maturity of our art form, and it will guaranty us its constant renewal and its relevance well into the future.

I would like to dedicate this series of performances to the dancers who participated in the creation of NUIT in 1986: Louise Bédard, Hélène Blackburn, Pierre-André Côté, Annie Dréau, Claude Godbout Pierre-Paul Savoie, Daniel Soulières and Tassy Teekman."

- Jean-Pierre Perreault, NUIT program note March-April 2002 production





NUIT

June 8 - 10, 2023

Fleck Dance Theatre

Nuit, like many of Jean-Pierre Perreault's works, is characterized by a visually and structurally imposing set, and the investigation of the relationship between sound and the body interpreted by dancers of great artistic maturity.

In **Nuit**, eight performers, grappling with the hurly-burly of everyday life, interact in a "story without a plot." During this harsh night, the characters push themselves to their limits, different types of interaction take shape and areas of tension emerge among the various materials, masses, volumes and configurations. Dance becomes a "sculptural material endowed with mobility."

This demanding, fiery work, performed in half-light, expresses a troubling, subterranean vulnerability, rooted in the unflinching integrity that its author succeeded in transmitting to the dancers, who become percussion instruments, beating the ground in intoxication and finally exhaustion. The singular materiality of **Nuit** and the interpenetration among the multiple components that Perreault created make this a major work not only in Perreault's legacy but in the history of Canadian choreography.



Jean-Pierre Perreault
Photo Credit: Michael Slobodian

Jean-Pierre Perreault

Jean-Pierre Perreault was a dancer, choreographer, artistic director, teacher, and designer whose legacy boasts a large body of choreography and a career of international distinction. Although Perreault initially intended to pursue the visual arts, he began training in dance with Jeanne Renaud and Peter Boneham at the age of nineteen. When Renaud formed Le Groupe de la Place Royale in 1966, both Boneham and Perreault were founding members.

Perreault studied classical and modern dance, and by 1968 he was teaching at Le Groupe's school. He and Boneham became co-directors of the company when Renaud left in 1971, and the 1970s became a time of great choreographic development for Perreault. By the time he left Le Groupe in 1981, he had produced over twenty works for the company. After leaving, he worked as an independent choreographer and teacher in Canada and Europe, including Simon Fraser University, the Laban Centre and the Cullberg Ballet. He returned to Montreal in 1984 creating his own company, La Fondation Jean-Pierre Perreault, and teaching at the Université du Québec à Montréal until 1991. It was here that he mounted his signature piece, *Joe*, a ninety-minute work for twenty-four students that has since been remounted several times and celebrated worldwide. The 1980s and 1990s saw the creation of many of Perreault's other renowned works such as *Stella* (1985), *Nuit* (1986), *Les Lieux dits* (1988), *Îles* (1991) and *Les Années de Pèlerinage* (1996).

Perreault's works often began as drawings and paintings and, accordingly, he is also well known for his designs, which have been given solo exhibitions all over the world. In total, Perreault produced over forty-eight choreographic works in his lifetime. In 1990 he won the Jean A. Chalmers Award for Choreography and in 1996 the Jean A. Chalmers Award for Distinction in Choreography, an award that recognizes his entire body of work. Jean-Pierre Perreault died of cancer in 2002.





ABOUT CITADEL + COMPAGNIE

Citadel + Compagnie is a dance organization with its home, The Citadel: Ross Centre for Dance, embedded within the Regent Park community of downtown Toronto. The Citadel also acts as home to its own professional dance company, Compagnie de la Citadelle. Through the creation, curation and cultivation of contemporary dance, C+C's mission is to make a significant and lasting contribution to dance in Canada. Led by Artistic Director, Laurence Lemieux, the company commits to the creation and production of innovative and accessible original works of dance.

Through remount initiatives, the company dedicates itself to the preservation of important Canadian dance work.

"The years in which I danced for Jean-Pierre Perreault had a profound influence on my artistry, choreographic sensibilities and later my artistic direction. Since returning to Toronto in 2007 it has been my long-held desire to bring Perreault's work to audiences outside of Montreal."

Perreault's eighty-minute masterwork, Nuit, has touched many lives, resonating deeply with audiences, artists and presenters alike. A work that among many things explores the individual among the collective, Nuit is a piece that is able to sustain the passing of time. In its remount it offers a new generation of artists the opportunity to bring their experiences, stories and artistry to the embodiment of the material and allows audiences to feel its impact in a new context and time."



Laurence Lemieux
Photo Credit: Aleksandar Antonijevic

- Laurence Lemieux

CHOREOGRAPHY AND ARCHITECTURE

The performance space and the relationship to the spectator

"Jean-Pierre Perreault fashioned dramatic spaces that operated at different levels at different times, situating the performers, defining the action, informing the movements, triggering the gestures and creating musicality in order to draw the spectator's gaze. He began by designing the space and then gave it form through set, lighting and costumes, which he also designed in most cases.

For his first work, Les Bessons, which he created in collaboration with Maria Formolo in 1972, Perreault turned to Suzanne Swibold, a multidisciplinary artist herself, who came up with a visual concept in which images were projected on the performers' bodies, enveloping them in a single, shifting form.



Orénoque (in rehearsal), 1990

Pictured: Sylviane Martineau, Daniel Soulière and Tassy Teekman
Photo Credit: Cylla Von Tiedemann

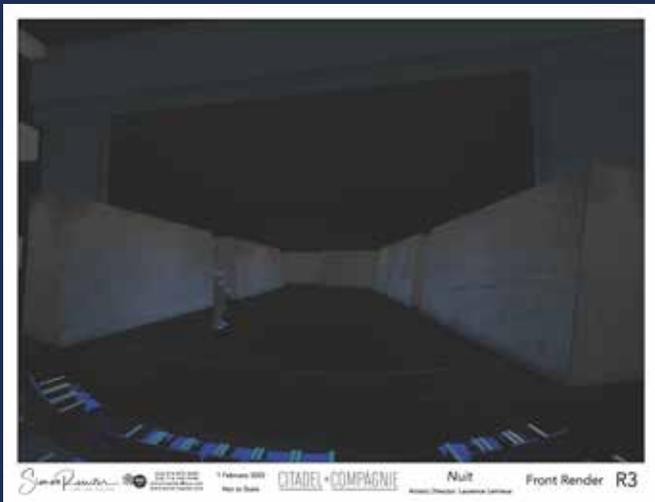
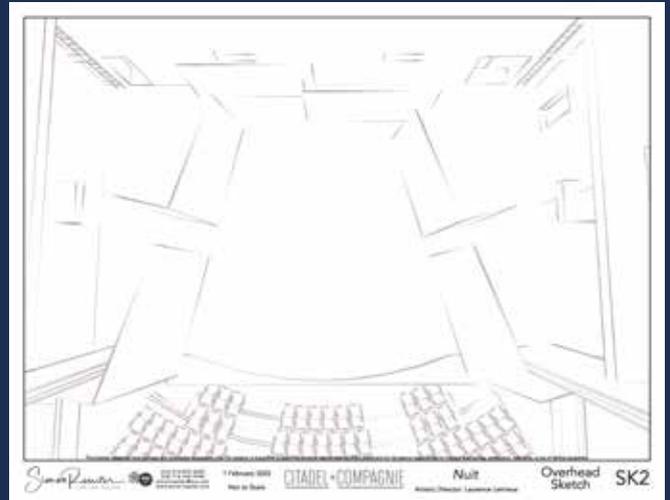
In the following years Perreault experimented with various types of set design, but all aimed to place the dancer "not in a decor but in a world." The ramps or mounds appeared for the first time in 1977, in Dernière Paille. Perreault subsequently used pyramid-like structures in Joe (1983), Stella (1985) and Orénoque (1989). In the latter, the set spread out horizontally to evoke the infinitely open space of the desert. He explored the potential of the inclined plane in various forms: a natural slope in Les Dames aux Vaches (1978), an environmental sculpture in The Highway '86 Event, uneven terrain in Piazza (1988) and a seesaw for the trio in Adieux (1993).

Walls and the use of paint as an architectural element appear for the first time in Nuit (1986). The side walls, painted by Perreault, would return in Lieux-dits (1988) and Orénoque (1989). In Éva Naissance (1987), a rare solo written for Paul-André Fortier, the flame-patterned leotards and pointe shoes were also painted by Perreault. In Adieux and La Vita (1993), Installation chorégraphique 1 : l'Instinct (1994), Les Éphémères 1997 and Les ombres (2001), he continued his exploration of modular elements (walls, triangular wooden structures) that made it possible for the performers to change the set in front of the audience. In Les Années de Pèlerinage and Eironos (1996), not only were mobile objects (in this case painted walls) used but their manipulation was choreographed and meticulously rehearsed. The transformation of the space by the rearrangement of these elements was an integral component of the piece.

In Perreault's second-to-last choreography, L'Exil-L'Oubli (1999), the set was reduced to a barely visible red mark on a backdrop. In his last work, The Comforts of Solitude (2001), written for the National Ballet of Canada, the painted graphics, now dominated by aqua and ochre tones, expanded to envelop the entire stage."

- jeanpierreperreault.com/thematiques

THE SET



"Dance is always situated in a place, in time, and in a light. The relationship between people and space, between dancers, is architecture. The dancer is always in relation with the cubic space and with the others. Moreover, in my work, the relationship to space is often more important than the action."

- Jean-Pierre Perreault

Nuit is unquestionably the foundational work to Jean-Pierre's philosophy. This is why it is absolutely crucial to rebuild the scenery for our remount of Nuit.

Created in 1986, Nuit toured nationally and internationally, and was last performed in Montreal in 2002. Unfortunately, after Jean-Pierre's passing, all of the scenic elements were thrown away.

After much consultation with la Fondation Jean-Pierre Perreault, we have agreed on a new design for the scenery of Nuit. We are reducing the the overall design from 8 walls to 6 to better suit the size of most theatres, and aim to replace the solid structure with demountable steel frames onto which the specially-designed canvas can be attached, and later removed. In the long run this will make the scenery much more efficient for touring and storage than their original counterparts, which should ensure a longer lifespan for these new pieces. We believe this new design will give us the capacity to tour the work more broadly, while keeping with Jean-Pierre's original structural and artistic concept.

Nuit



THANK YOU!

Laurence Lemieux

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