

REGROUPEMENT  
QUÉBÉCOIS DE  
LA DANSE



**COLLECTIVE STRENGTH IN MOTION FOR OVER 25 YEARS**





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# EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS WITH PASSION!

In its 25-year history, the Regroupement québécois de la danse has been fortunate to have three strong, committed executive directors at its helm: Gaétan Patenaude, from 1984 to 1994; Françoise Bonnin, from 1996 to 2002; and Lorraine Hébert, since 2003. With an unwavering sense of purpose, they steered the RQD through turbulent waters and earned the trust of its members. Here, they share their stories, recalling some of the crucial moments and challenges that have made the RQD what it is today.





## Message from Gaétan Patenaude

Founding member and former Executive Director of the  
*Regroupement québécois de la danse* (1984–1994)

In the years leading up to the creation of the Regroupement in October 1984, I was president of the Québec chapter of the Dance in Canada Association. It was in this capacity that I conducted a study on founding an association of dancers and choreographers. That was in the spring of 1983, a time when the ministère des Affaires culturelles was looking into ways to improve the working conditions of artists. In June 1983, at the Dance in Canada Association's annual general meeting in Saskatoon, the Québec chapter proposed transforming the association into a federation, but the proposal was rejected.

In April 1984, a report on the above study, titled *Vers une ère de la coexistence créatrice* (Toward an era of creative coexistence), was submitted to the ministère des Affaires culturelles and circulated in the community. The report identified the dance milieu's concerns over its development. The section on creating an association for dance artists says much about people's aspirations at the time:

“A key finding is the need for an organization that can do the necessary advocacy work with government departments and the media, as well as liaise and coordinate with artists, groups and various communities.”

Given the widespread desire for such an organization, the Québec chapter of the Dance in Canada Association held a meeting open to all community members on May 23, 1984. It was decided at this meeting to strike a committee in charge of putting together a professional dance artist association. This founding committee consisted of Jean-Pierre Perreault (Chair), Daniel Soulières (Vice-Chair), Paul-André Fortier (Treasurer), myself (Secretary), and Michèle Morin (member).

Our mandate was to draft a charter and general regulations for the organization, design its representational structure (Board of Directors, membership categories and fees, committees, etc.), prepare a development plan for the first two

years (projects, services to members, etc.), submit a funding application to the ministère des Affaires culturelles, and call an inaugural general meeting. Incorporated under the name Regroupement des professionnels de la danse, the organization was officially registered on October 4, 1984, and held its first meeting on February 9, 1985, at the Centre St-Pierre in Montreal.

We knew we had to propose an inclusive structure and deliver an inclusive message. Other than an association of dance companies that never really got off the ground, there was at the time no umbrella organization in the dance community with which government departments and agencies could discuss how to improve the working conditions of artists. The stakes were high.

Jean-Pierre Perreault urged community members to focus on the things that united them. He invited dance professionals to join forces and identify ways to improve their situation, rather than just put up with it. That was why all dance professionals (performers, choreographers, teachers and administrators) were included in the decision-making process. Since our priority was to improve the working conditions of dance professionals, it was decided that service organizations and companies should not be included as members. The decision to include them was made at the first *États généraux de la danse* conference, held in 1994.

With the support of those who attended this first meeting, our Board of Directors and various committees began implementing a development plan.

I remember Jean-Pierre Perreault felt it was very important to have members sit on the committees. He wanted the Regroupement's projects to reflect the community's wants and needs, since the organization was founded not only to give dance professionals a collective voice, but also to provide tangible services to members. Fostering a spirit of democracy was

a key task of the Executive Director and elected members. The process may have been time-consuming, but it yielded better results in the long term.

I'm not really in a position to judge the work accomplished during my mandate as executive director. As a dance enthusiast, I think it's more apt for me to look back on how dance in Québec has evolved over the past 25 years, starting with the creation of the Regroupement. Some years later, as an observer at the second *États généraux de la danse*, I was able to see how the decision to focus on the democratic participation of RQD members had paid off. Reading the documentation, attending the various workshops, and watching members take the microphone at the plenary session to suggest changes and comment on proposals, I was struck by how the community had matured and how members were using the Regroupement (which I fondly referred to as "our collective strength in motion") to voice their opinions.

In closing, I'd simply like to say it was a privilege to be part of the evolution of the professional dance community and to witness the rise of talented artists over the course of 15 years. During that time, I rubbed shoulders with many artists, teachers and administrators on the Board of Directors and various committees. I also had the pleasure of attending rehearsals and premieres. Those experiences were invaluable, both personally and professionally: they guided my thinking and helped me better identify ways to enhance the profession. My time with the Regroupement will always be very special to me.

I'd like to thank all those who put their trust in me throughout that period. Thank you to my dance friends. I'm proud, as an honorary member of the Regroupement québécois de la danse, to continue to be part of this initiative. Congratulations to us all for staying the course for 25 years. Our work is by no means done: there's always room for improvement, which is why we need to keep moving and supporting one another.

October 15, 2009



First Estates General of Dance



Daniel Léveillé and Louise Lecavalier



Gaétan Patenaude

# Interview with Françoise Bonnin

*Françoise Bonnin was appointed Executive Director of the Regroupement québécois de la danse in February 1996. It had been two years since the first États généraux de la danse conference. The structure of what until that point had been called the Regroupement des professionnels de la danse du Québec had just been modified to allow dance organizations and companies to join and participate as members. To mark this turning point, the association was renamed the Regroupement québécois de la danse.*



## **RQD – What was the Regroupement like when you took the reins?**

**Françoise Bonnin** - What was, and still is special about the Regroupement is the fact that it encompasses all dance professions in Québec. When I took up my new position, the Regroupement had mainly focused on individual members' needs (health, working conditions, unionization, etc.). There were huge expectations and concerns about the recent inclusion of dance companies. A previous attempt to create an association of companies hadn't worked, so rather than create a new entity, we decided to let them join our association. As with any change, there was some anxiety.

## **RQD – What were the main challenges you faced at the time?**

**FB** - Bringing organizations and companies on board was certainly a new departure that required special attention. The Regroupement was the only association in Québec devoted to professional dance. It was even asked to play a role at the national level, since CAPDO, the national association, had folded. We had a lot on our plate! Despite efforts to set priorities and streamline activities, we were overwhelmed, which was something of a mystery to me. It was only when we started identifying support organizations for each of the disciplines represented on the Conseil québécois des ressources humaines en culture (CQRHC) that I understood. Most disciplines had several associations—sometimes up to a dozen—whereas the dance community had only one: the Regroupement québécois de la danse.

The other challenge was to overcome a prevailing unwillingness to put new structures in place. Governments weren't interested in funding new initiatives, since their budgets were generally frozen, and the community was afraid that any new organizations would siphon funds away from artists and creative work. But research conducted by the Mouvement pour les arts et les lettres (M.A.L.) showed that the consolidation of theatre organizations 20 years earlier had allowed actors to improve their working conditions. I believed we had to consolidate existing structures. It wasn't necessarily an easy sell,

since the dance community had always been in an extremely precarious position. Fortunately, the recently founded Agora de la danse and Diagramme showed how organizations could support others and help the community grow. That was one of the reasons I pushed for the incorporation of La danse sur les routes du Québec. I figured we needed to make room for independent organizations if we wanted additional funding for new projects that would benefit the community as a whole.

Another major challenge during my mandate was overseeing the follow-up to the first États généraux de la danse that somehow ballooned into a hugely ambitious five-year plan. All the same, much was accomplished as a result of the conference recommendations—for example, dissemination through La danse sur les routes du Québec; visibility through the *Étude sur la visibilité de la danse au Québec*<sup>1</sup> and the Québec Danse website; funding through the M.A.L.; the creation of a professional development program; and the expansion of the dance training program.

## **RQD - Is there one victory you're particularly proud of?**

**FB** - I'd say there were both internal and external victories. Of course, the strategic plan was an important milestone. With the Board of Directors, we were able to develop a common vision for the Regroupement and a viable, realistic plan.

But for me, our greatest achievement was the creation of the Mouvement pour les arts et les lettres. The Québec government's sectoral committees on the cultural workforce, which were a forerunner to the CQRHC, allowed association leaders to begin working together regularly for the first time.

To give you a sense of how things were, I'd like to relate an anecdote. One day, I realized I wasn't able to reach anyone in the community—even our most stalwart members weren't available. So I organized a breakfast with a few people and asked them what they thought the challenges in dance would be over the next four years. I believe it was Francine Bernier who said (you're going to laugh), "Do you really want to know? A massive burnout across the community!" That's when I knew we had a big problem on our hands.

When I related this anecdote to my colleagues on Québec's theatre and music councils, they said, "You too?" So I decided, along with Dominique Violette of the Conseil québécois du théâtre and Andrée Girard of the Conseil québécois de la musique, to complete a study documenting needs in dance, music and theatre<sup>2</sup> and incorporating the notion of a cultural worker. We founded the Alliance pour le financement de la danse, du théâtre et de la musique, which led to the creation of the M.A.L. I've always believed in the motto "united we stand" and I think we were able to accomplish a lot by making common cause. I believe the M.A.L. has been successful largely because it serves as a single mouthpiece for several disciplines. The dance community was able to play an important role in the M.A.L., finally speaking out about the lack of resources and staking its claims.

### **RQD - Do you have any regrets or things you would have liked to see happen?**

**FB** - The recommendations of the first *États généraux* led to major accomplishments, even though it was a ridiculously ambitious program! Still, Rome wasn't built in a day. My experience with the Regroupement taught me that mobilizing a community whose work and art is focused on the body is extremely difficult. We had to rally all stakeholders around the crucial issue of funding, and voice our demands loudly so governments wouldn't be able to turn a deaf ear. The Regroupement was also busy mobilizing partners across Canada. But it was very difficult to bring artists and cultural workers (who are also in high demand) together. I realized the best way to get everyone involved would be to organize a dance summit, which would attract some of the big names in dance and get a lot of press. Unfortunately, I left before this could come about.

I also wanted to help dance training institutions across Québec, including those offering so-called "leisure" classes, obtain an appropriate teacher certification program, which they'd been trying to do for many years.

### **RQD - What do you think of the RQD today?**

**FB** - I was very impressed by how the community came together at the second *États généraux*. I was happy to see so many fresh faces, a sign that emerging dancers are taking their place in the discipline. I was thrilled to see how much progress has been made in terms of professionalization and how younger members are voicing their opinions. I believe the Regroupement carries a certain weight in Québec's social, political and artistic spheres, and that it's accomplished a lot in recent years.

However, as a member of the *États généraux* review committee, I felt quite daunted by the expectations and challenges that

lay ahead. It was reassuring to know that the recommendations would not constitute the RQD's next five-year plan, as was the case in 1995, but would rather serve as the basis for a development plan. I believe this is a very positive step. The Regroupement will need to make strategic choices based on its capacity to take action, since it can't address everyone's needs or be all things to all people.

Of course setting priorities is extremely difficult, because the community is highly diverse and the needs are great. Once you've identified common needs, you have to stick to key priorities in order to follow through and obtain tangible results.

To end on a positive note, I recently participated in a fabulous "Parcours Danse" event organized by La danse sur les routes du Québec. It was very exciting to discover fresh talent and see how the work of established choreographers has evolved. It was also very interesting to see Danièle Desnoyers in action and to note the strong links that have formed over the past ten years between the dance community and multidisciplinary presenters—proof of just how productive and valuable dialogue and joint action can be!

*Comments collected by Judith Lessard Bérubé*

1. *Étude sur la visibilité de la danse au Québec*, conducted by CROP for RQD, February 1999.

2. *Étude sur la situation et les besoins financiers des artistes, des travailleurs et des organismes professionnels de la danse, de la musique et du théâtre*, completed by Le Groupe DBSF for the Alliance pour le financement de la danse, du théâtre et de la musique, with the RQD's cooperation, 2000.

# Interview with Lorraine Hébert

Executive Director of the Regroupement québécois de la danse since 2003



photo: Martine Doyon

**RQD - The second États généraux de la danse professionnelle du Québec conference, which was held in April 2009, created high expectations. How has the RQD followed up on this highly democratic exercise?**

**Lorraine Hébert** – I first want to note that the États généraux was the result of four years of work. We submitted our first grant application to the Canada Council for the Arts' Flying Squad program in the fall of 2004. The design, planning, and application for funding took longer than the initial timeline in the *Grands Chantiers de la danse* project, which was submitted to the three arts councils in 2006, and had the États généraux slated for 2008. Our difficulty in securing the necessary funding meant that a project manager couldn't be hired until December 2007 and work on the *Grands Chantiers* couldn't begin before March 2008.

This was certainly an ambitious project, but despite the considerable human and financial resources involved, we believed it was the way to go. The *Grands Chantiers de la danse* was first and foremost a process of consultation and dialogue, and many dance professionals were invited to take part in one way or another. We strongly believed in an open exchange of ideas across sectors and generations. Our objective was to allow the dance community to form a collective vision of how the discipline was evolving. This meant that people had to understand each other's needs and realities, as well as the relations of interdependence among all stakeholders, whether they're involved in training, research, creation, production, dissemination or services. It's true that, given its broad themes, the *Grands Chantiers* cast a wide net—too wide, some would say! But these themes were specifically chosen to think past the usual division between arts administration and practice. The greatest challenge for the dance community is to align and strengthen all the links in the chain, and Lord knows they're tight!

We're currently working on a Master Plan for professional dance in Québec (Plan directeur de la danse professionnelle

au Québec 2011-2021) in order to shape a collective, comprehensive vision of how our discipline is evolving. Of course, we're using the recommendations from the second États généraux, most of which were adopted unanimously, but we're applying them according to strategic priorities, so we can better identify stakeholders and optimal modes of action to obtain concrete results for the entire discipline. At this stage, we're looking into how countries like Great Britain went about structuring professional dance, taking into account every link in the chain, including training, outreach, research, creation, production, and dissemination at the local, national and international levels. I'd say one of our first priorities is to reassert the value of research and creation in dance, and develop a better understanding of the production cycle in choreography. Any initiative to structure the discipline must allow artists to attain high levels of excellence and competitiveness in terms of innovation. I still maintain that the conditions for research, creation and production in dance need considerable improvement. The real challenge of the Master Plan is to propose strategies that are focused on a single goal: reinforcing the core of dance—an art involving research and creation that requires substantial investment in training, promotion, dissemination, audience development and conservation.

The États généraux was a great success, but the RQD is now shouldering an enormous responsibility, given available resources and the issues that continue to arise as we work on our Master Plan. The challenge is not to give in to pressure from all sides, but to stay focused on the task at hand, making time and space for reflection. It's important to do things well and I doubt all our hard work will be for naught. I only have to think of the determination and conviction it took to get to where we were in April 2009. We're sitting on a gold mine and we'll find ways to tap it. The Master Plan needs to inspire, mobilize and foster commitment among many stakeholders over several years. Of course, we have to take current opportunities and constraints into account, but if we were simply to leave it at that, we'd be failing at our main task, which is to focus on the specific realities of dance.



**RQD – You’ve talked a lot about the Master Plan and the thinking that has to go into it, but how do you see the future of the RQD?**

**LH** – In addition to working on the Master Plan, we’re involved in a necessary strategic planning exercise. It’s clear that the RQD will have a role to play in the implementing the Master Plan—a much more significant role than we could have anticipated when we launched the *Grands Chantiers* project. The *États généraux* meeting was incredibly stimulating for the community as a whole, and several projects are either under discussion or development as a result. We need to take this into account in our strategic thinking, as our main goal is to continue mobilizing and rallying the troops around development projects. The RQD must find ways to create permanent mechanisms for consensus-building and joint action. This will involve reviewing our current modes of representation and consultation, as well as information and communication tools. It was in this vein that, following the *Grands Chantiers*, we proposed a dance observatory as part of the Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec’s *Relance Culture* program. Let’s hope that the program will keep going for another year, since we received only a fraction of the amount requested and haven’t been able to make the necessary adjustments to remain visible.

One thing’s for sure, the *États généraux* was a watershed for the RQD. In the period leading up to the conference, the RQD was positioning itself as a consensus-building and advocacy organization at the local, provincial and federal levels. Since the *États généraux*, the RQD has had to find ways to broaden its horizons and take advantage of the tremendous advances that have been made in countries that have implemented development plans. These plans are very instructive in terms of things such as the positioning of dance in the public sphere and on an international scale; the place of dance in schools; recognition of the diversity of dance styles; the importance of having a training system that ensures consistent quality from primary school or leisure classes all the way to professional dance institutions; and the need for dance-specific infrastructure and equipment.

There’s so much to do and even though the RQD can’t do everything, it’s often the only organization that can tackle most of the issues. I’m reminded of the time when choreographers were asked to join the Union des artistes after the latter submitted an application for recognition to the Commission de reconnaissance des associations d’artistes et des associations de producteurs (CRAAAP) in July 2008. The choreographers asked the RQD to act on their behalf in order to have original creations and repertoire dance excluded from the UDA’s jurisdiction. After a difficult and costly legal battle, at the same time as the L’Allier commission was under way, it became clear that the professionalization of work relations



..... Plenary session at l’Agora de la danse

cannot be decided on a case-by-case basis. This is the spirit in which we need to address recommendations that, adopted unanimously at the *États généraux de la danse*, call for better labour relations by having each sector adopt a code of ethics, establishing rules aimed at improving communication within work teams, and conducting a qualitative and quantitative study on the unionization of dancers. As far as the RQD’s role in such matters is concerned, there are no easy answers, but the questions are highly relevant.

Whatever choices the RQD makes in the coming months concerning its direction, it has become imperative that we question our current capacities and limitations. It’s an honour to serve the community, but we sometimes forget that the RQD is an organization which, like other dance organizations, has to cope with an acute shortage of human and financial resources.

**RQD – Are there things you regret not being able to do at the RQD?**

**LH** – My close involvement makes it difficult for me to answer that question. You can always do better and I believe you can do anything if you really set your mind to it. My one regret is sometimes just being who I am, meaning I’m always looking at the big picture. Other people are able to rapidly pinpoint a few parameters that can be used to develop programs, action plans or projects—and it works! But there are times in the evolution of a community when you need to invite everyone to the table, because the more people you get involved, the more people you have to make things happen. That said, I must confess that after six years at the RQD, I’ve become increasingly impatient and outraged about the working conditions of dance artists and professionals. I take comfort in the fact that I’ll be able to collaborate again on the Master Plan with our consultant Pascale Daigle, from the firm DS 20|07, and starting in March, we’ll have the support of a follow-up committee. That will give me the stamina I need to see the *Grands Chantiers* project through to the end. It’s clearly ambitious, but given the current situation, I’m convinced it’s worth it.

Interview by Judith Lessard Bérubé



# 25 Good Reasons to Celebrate 25 Years of RQD

*Memories tend to fade with time, which is why the RQD decided to ask 25 people for their personal recollections of 25 highlights in the association's history. This exercise in collective memory, with its gaps and revelations, showed the extent to which the RQD is tightly woven with personal stories. Do you remember when . . . ?*

Before it was called the Regroupement québécois de la danse, the association that today represents some 500 individuals and organizations from all walks of professional dance in Québec was called the Regroupement des professionnels de la danse du Québec. The man who fought to bring the RQD into being in 1984 was Gaétan Patenaude. He's now a coordinator for the Permanent secretariat on the socioeconomic status of artists at the ministère de la Culture, des Communications et de la Condition féminine, but in 1984, Gaétan was President and Coordinator of the Québec chapter of the Dance in Canada Association. His introductory message in this booklet clearly shows how the Regroupement came about. This section features some of the highlights in the RQD's short but rich history. To give our review a personal touch, we selected 25 topics and asked 25 individuals to reminisce about their experience—an effective way to measure our progress and a clear reminder that behind all the actions and victories, there are people. Passionate people who fight to make dance as important to society as it is to them.

## 1. The creation of l'Agora de la danse

Martine Époque's famed company Le Groupe Nouvelle Aire produced the likes of Édouard Lock, Louise Lecavalier, Ginette Laurin, Louise Bédard and Paul-André Fortier. It was also thanks in part to Martine that the dance milieu acquired a special space for creation and performance. Agora de la danse was the fruit of her determination and hard work, combined with that of the Regroupement and Florence Junc-Adenot, then Vice-Rector of Administration and Finance at UQÀM. The year was 1986: the Festival international de nouvelle danse (FIND) had put Montreal on the map, and **Charles-Mathieu Brunelle** was head of the Regroupement's "Choreographers' table."

"The Regroupement gave choreographers a voice and its Executive Director, Gaétan Patenaude, did a fantastic job of lobbying," says the former choreographer, now in charge of Montréal's Nature Museums. "He made it possible for Québec talent to be recognized by the CAM, CALQ and CCA. At the time, dance was as provocative, innovative and fresh as media arts and new media are today. But those were tough times for choreographers who worked in overheated studios with almost no room for audiences. The Agora was a symbolic gathering place for all that creative energy."

## 2. Study on occupational health and safety

In 1988, the RQD took on a sacred cow by launching a broad enquiry into the prevention, nature, frequency and severity of injuries among professional dancers in Québec. The results of this ground-breaking study were presented at the Montpellier Dance Festival in France. It raised the RQD's profile in the media and public mind, and allowed the organization to draw up a first social contract for the professional dance community. Funded in part by the federal Department of Communications, Québec's ministère des Affaires culturelles and the Institut de recherche en santé et sécurité du travail, the study was carried out by the task force on the social aspects of prevention in occupational health and safety. **Manon Levac**, a dancer and professor at UQÀM's dance department, was one of the people interviewed.

"That vast study always makes me think of the sociologist Michel Perreault. I remember his lively curiosity during two long and fascinating interviews on injuries. For a dancer, it wasn't easy to talk about such a sensitive topic. I'm grateful to him for listening, rephrasing his questions and exploring my answers with such understanding and rigour. This personal memory aside, the study allowed dancers to break their isolation and was an important step toward having our profession and working conditions recognized."



..... Interview with Jean-Pierre Perreault

## 3. The Médias-Danse symposium

Twenty years ago, the lack of media coverage of dance was a great concern. In 1989, the journalist assigned to dance at *La Presse* was let go and not replaced. That led to the idea of organizing a symposium for dance and media professionals from across Canada and the United States. Some one hundred people spent an entire weekend discussing ways to improve coverage of dance in print and electronic media, the relationship between critics and artists, and the development of dance in relation to new technologies. At the time, **Diane Carrière** was a choreographer and performer, as well as Coordinator of Université de Montréal's dance program, and President of the Regroupement.

"It was an unprecedented time of effervescence and growth, and the symposium was one of the first events to bring the artistic community together," recalls Diane, now retired. "All stakeholders got together to underline the importance of media coverage in the promotion of dance. I'll never forget the passion and spirit of Gaétan Patenaude, the Regroupement's Executive Director and the driving force behind this initiative, and that of Jeanne Renaud, its Honorary Chair and spokesperson."

## 4. The birth of *Diagramme Gestion culturelle*

Following in the footsteps of the Dance Umbrella of Ontario, Québec founded its first dance service organization in 1991. The Regroupement called for the creation of *Diagramme*, helped appoint its first Executive Director, and provided technical support in the first few months of operation. The idea was to give independent choreographers a lifeline and way to move forward. **Danièle Desnoyers** was one of the first people to take advantage of this vital assistance.

“At the time, I was developing contacts with emerging European choreographers. I would often leave on tour with dancers for several weeks, which involved managing large budgets and relatively complex logistics,” she notes. “We were glad to be able to work with *Diagramme*, but it also raised questions, since we were looking for new ways to manage artists’ careers, and adjustments were required on both sides. When I see how many artists now benefit from this type of arrangement, I’m amazed at how far we’ve come.”

## 5. The reorganization of the Regroupement

In 1994, when the Regroupement des professionnels de la danse du Québec was celebrating its 10th anniversary, dancers were allowed to join the Union des artistes. The prospect of salaried, unionized dancers was a concern to dance companies funded by arts councils. Looking for an organization to defend their interests, they naturally turned to the Regroupement des professionnels de la danse du Québec, but at the time, the association only had individual members. **Pierre Des Marais**, Executive Director of the Fondation Jean-Pierre Perreault, was given the task of persuading reluctant professionals to allow companies to join the Regroupement. They finally agreed to transform the structure, statutes and regulations of the RPDQ which, following the first *États généraux de la danse*, became the Regroupement québécois de la danse.

“At the time, I think over half of Montreal’s dancers were salaried workers and the Regroupement’s members were afraid that companies would eventually dominate the organization,” recalls Pierre Des Marais, who is now co-director of Danse Danse. “They were perceived as rich, untrustworthy employers. For their part, companies and organizations wanted their say and didn’t understand why the president of the RQD was an independent artist. Over the course of a year, I met with the negotiating group twice a week to reach an agreement. I couldn’t necessarily count on the support of company choreographers, who were individual members of the Regroupement. Jean-Pierre Perreault even stated publicly that he wasn’t sure letting companies join the association was a good idea! He didn’t realize the impact of this expression of solidarity with the dancers. Perhaps he was afraid choreographers would gradually hand over the reins to company

administrators. Negotiations were tough, but in the end, all dance sectors were represented by a single organization, which is what has made the RQD so strong.”

## 6. The first *États généraux de la danse*

There was a proliferation of dance companies in the 1980s, some of which put Montreal on the map internationally. A new generation that included Émard, Blackburn and Desnoyers, to mention just a few, were finding it hard to make a name for themselves and the general mood was pessimistic. Canada was coming out of a recession, right-wing politics was on the rise in most of the country, and there were fears of cuts to arts funding. This was the context in which the first *États généraux de la danse* was held. For close to a year, an organizing committee and seven working committees formulated some 80 recommendations that would lead to the first three-year development plan for dance in Québec. In February, 119 delegates from the various sectors met at Agora de la danse. **Sylvain Émard**, a young choreographer and President of the Regroupement, was one of them.

“I remember the excitement around the preparations for this first major conference in the community. There were high expectations and a lot of unknowns. It was a first in Canada and, I believe, in North America—quite an adventure for what was at the time the Regroupement des professionnels de la danse du Québec. There were major issues which the entire dance community wanted to tackle. The community tended to doubt its ability to analyze and clearly state its concerns. This sense of insecurity was so entrenched that the Chair of the meeting, Monique Simard, raised the subject in the plenary session to affirm the contrary. At the time, we needed reassurance. Fortunately, that’s no longer the case.”

## 7. Dance training support program

It isn’t easy to stay in shape when you have no contract and no money in the bank. To support performers and contribute to artistic excellence, the Regroupement created the professional training reimbursement program in 1994. Today, all eligible dancers can take advantage of the program, which operates on a first-come, first-served basis. They’re reimbursed \$7 per class taken in Québec for as long as funds last. Many of today’s dancers might not realize how hard these benefits were to come by. **Claire Adamczyk**, who was the cultural advisor on dance at the Conseil des arts de Montréal from 1983 to 2004, was on the front lines.

“It took a lot of persuading to get the Conseil des arts de Montréal involved in the program, because up until then, it had only supported companies. We also had to convince dancers to choose dance classes over other types of available training.

Later, the provincial and federal governments joined the program, which increased the budget. I'm very pleased with this project—it's been good for all dancers."

## 8. Celebrating International Dance Day

In 1995, the RQD organized its first event for April 29, declared International Dance Day (IDD) by UNESCO. At the time, cultural worker **Ginette Ferland** was a young artist who was very active in the dance collective Brouhaha Danse. She served as Artistic Director for the IDD celebrations from 1998 to 2000. Among the many activities on the program, she remembers a great urban parade that was covered by the evening news, a modern ball called *Bal Dingue*, a choreography directed by the public, and a folk dance cabaret. She also proudly remembers the family programming that brought professional artists and Montreal school students together on the same stage, as well as four hours of solo and duo performances in storefront windows on Saint Laurent Boulevard.

"It makes me long for the days when I wasn't just crunching numbers and trying to sell shows," she says. "I can see myself setting up dressing rooms at the back of the Latitude Nord store. We were all together, committed, and in close contact with the audience. It gave us great joy and strength."

## 9. The creation of La danse sur les routes du Québec

At the first *États généraux* conference, the touring committee pointed out that Québec works were being performed less and less in the province, and that there was an urgent need to address this problem. It seemed like a hopeless situation. In July 1995, Gaétan Patenaude hired Lorraine Hébert to develop a pilot project which she submitted to the RQD before joining the French-language theatre section at the Canada Council for the Arts in December 1996. In the fall of 1995, the first "Parcours Danse" event was held, in which a group of presenters were invited to meet some ten dance companies. In 1997, the RQD obtained start-up funds from the ministère de la Culture du Québec following several meetings coordinated by Suzanne Benoît with presenters interested in *La danse sur les routes du Québec* (DSRQ). Diane Perreault took over from Suzanne and was followed, a few years later, by Tessa Goulet, who transformed the DSRQ into a satellite organization of the RQD in 2000. Paule Beaudry has been DSRQ's executive director since 2003. In some ten years, *La danse sur les routes du Québec* has become a model for other performing arts organizations across Québec and Canada. **Gilles Savary**, Executive Director of Fortier Danse-Création and a member of the DSRQ's Board of Directors for many years, recalls:



..... Les Soeurs Schmutt, *Pas de danse, pas de vie!* (2005)

"When I began working in dance in 1987, the community spent more time complaining than taking action and had a hard time focusing on common goals. *La danse sur les routes du Québec* came out of the RQD's commitment to solving a complex problem. It proved that, with commitment and determination, we could chart our destiny. Since 1994, our community has grown in a spectacular fashion. We now recognize our ability to face challenges and we understand that change takes time. We might not see the results right away, but we need to be patient and persistent, because future generations of artists and professionals will reap the rewards."

## 10. The birth of the Conseil québécois des ressources humaines en culture

"Human resources" in the cultural sector are all those people who keep a city's arts scene alive and vibrant. They're the ones we're referring to when we say that artistic achievements require a lot of hard work and determination! Starting in 1994, developing this workforce became a key issue for several cultural organizations who worked together for the next five years to create the Conseil québécois des ressources humaines en culture. The RQD's Executive Director at the time, **Françoise Bonnin**, helped establish this permanent body for consensus-building and advocacy, and served as its Vice-President for two years.

"The CQRHC was important because it allowed artistic and cultural communities that didn't know each other and weren't engaged in talks of any kind to meet on a regular basis and discuss common issues," she says. "Through these meetings and the establishment, at the same time, of the *Mouvement pour les arts et les lettres*, cultural workers were recognized as such and included in discussions about professional development."

## 11. The founding of the *Mouvement pour les arts et les lettres*

The *Mouvement pour les arts et les lettres* (M.A.L.) was founded in October 1999 to promote the arts and lobby for budget increases in Québec—at a time when budgets were being cut to eliminate the deficit. Today, the M.A.L. serves some 15,000 artists and cultural workers in seven provincial groups and 13 regional councils. The RQD stands out among these groups for its fighting spirit and the commitment of its members. As President of the RQD from 1999 to 2004, **Pierre-Paul Savoie** participated in six public demonstrations, which resulted in the M.A.L. securing a 40% budget increase for the *Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec*.

“I was able to make a contribution at an important point in our cultural history,” notes the choreographer and performer. “By joining forces and getting people involved, we were able to raise awareness and foster commitment throughout the cultural community. RQD members helped strengthen the dance community and give it a voice. My most vivid memories are of a gathering of 700 artists at the *Théâtre du Nouveau Monde*, the public demonstrations, and the presentation I made to the Commission on culture. I learned so much from this unique experience and I saw how rallying around a common cause benefits all parties involved.”

## 12. Cultural legacy at risk

In February 2000, the Québec government’s Commission on culture, called to examine the roles of the *Conseil des arts et lettres du Québec* and the *Société de développement des entreprises culturelles*, listened to the briefs of some 30 Québec organizations at public hearings. The RQD presented a position paper titled “*Un Patrimoine culturel humain en péril*” (A cultural legacy at risk), the result of two years of discussions about dance funding by the RQD’s Board of Directors. The document, written by Lorraine Hébert (who was a freelancer at the time), was of excellent quality and highly relevant, but it was the personal accounts of artists at the hearings that made the biggest impression. Line Beauchamp was deeply moved by newly elected RQD President Pierre-Paul Savoie’s impassioned account of the difficult and dangerous conditions in which dancers work. As cultural spokesperson for the official opposition, she decided to throw her weight behind dance and continued to do so when she became Minister of Culture. Executive Director Françoise Bonnin and artists Louis Robitaille and **Ginette Laurin** were also part of the RQD delegation.

“We went all the way to Québec City, and I remember how disappointed we were to see all the empty seats on the government side,” recalls the choreographer. “It sent out a mes-

sage that culture wasn’t all that important, and Pierre-Paul Savoie clearly stated our displeasure, noting that time was of the essence. The official representatives’ response suggested they were unfamiliar with the realities of dance. They were so far from understanding the crux of the problem that all they could come up with were Band-Aid solutions. We were worlds apart.”

## 13. Change in regulations and adoption of the 2000–03 Strategic Plan

After being restructured in 1994, the RQD had four sectoral committees and 14 sub-committees that worked independently and submitted recommendations to the 13-member Board of Directors. This structure was proving to be unwieldy—there were insufficient human and financial resources to meet all the demands. By changing its general regulations and adopting its first 2000–2003 Strategic Plan, the RQD was able to clarify its mission and refocus on common issues. **Christine Bouchard**, who was Executive Director of LADMMI at the time and sat on the RQD Board, witnessed these changes close up:

“We had to change the way groups were represented within the RQD,” recalls the current director of cultural programming at the *Bibliothèque et archives nationales du Québec*. “There was huge potential for progress but the needs were daunting. Our challenge was to make the best choices and satisfy individual and collective needs in all sectors. Everything went without a hitch. I didn’t sense any rifts among the various groups, and while the goals were ambitious, they undoubtedly led to a better positioning of dance in the media and in the cultural landscape, both at home and abroad.”

## 14. Professional development at the RQD

When she was hired as an assistant manager at the RQD, **Maryse Gervais** had no idea she would go on to become Coordinator of Professional Development in 2001. Until then, dancers had few opportunities to take master classes in Québec and, other than the two-odd training classes Maryse organized every year, professional development was limited to classes offered by performers themselves. In 2000, an agreement was signed with the *ministère de la Culture et des Communications et Emploi-Québec* to implement a provincial human resource development strategy in the cultural sphere. It planned for a budget envelope of close to \$27 million, over a third of which was earmarked for a fund to stabilize and consolidate arts and culture in Québec. With the support of the *Conseil québécois des ressources humaines en culture* (Maryse’s current employer), a new position was created at the RQD. Maryse’s scope for action increase tenfold.

When she left the RQD, the professional development department was ably taken over by Dominic Simoneau.

“When the position opened up, it was all quite informal and I could never have anticipated all the doors that would open for me,” she recalls. “My job not only allowed me to seek funding, but also to consult and brainstorm with representatives from all sectors. These consultations helped me develop an effective professional training and development plan. Although the dancers have remained our top priority, we’ve also been able to diversify our programming and client base over the years.”

## 15. Canada-wide mobilization

In 2000, the Canada Council for the Arts envelope was increased by \$25 million in recurring funding. The fact that the Council had only allocated \$400,000 of this funding to dance spurred one of the RQD’s most intense lobbying efforts ever. In the first few months of 2001, the RQD submitted a report titled *Danse en péril / Dance at Risk* to then CCA Chairman, Jean-Louis Roux. Soon thereafter, the RQD joined forces with the Dance Umbrella of Ontario to develop the “Dance at Risk – National Petition Action Group” campaign. Major dance organizations across the country lent their support and 650 signatures were collected on a petition demanding better support from the CCA. In particular, the petition demanded that the CCA fund a national survey on professional dance in Canada. Funding was granted for a preliminary study and **Louise Laplante**, who had just left the Fondation Jean-Pierre Perreault, agreed to coordinate it.

“The story didn’t unfold as we might have hoped, considering all our efforts,” says Louise, who now heads up government affairs and special projects at the Orchestre symphonique de Montréal. “Getting the green light for a preliminary study raised hopes and we were very proud to have paved the way for this first national survey. But when Deloitte and Touche estimated the survey would cost over \$300,000, the Canada Council for the Arts abandoned the idea in favour of sectoral studies, some of which were carried out in tandem with Canadian Heritage. Of course, this decision was not well received by the steering committee which was made up of key individuals from Canada’s dance community who were convinced of the need for a broad study.”

## 16. A communications department

In February 2000, the RQD was finally able to open a full-time communications position. Several projects were under consideration, including the development of a website. **Catherine Caron** was the organization’s first Communications Officer, a position she held until 2002. Her comments



Video dance creative workshop at Studio 303 (2009)



RQD technical class

show just how important the launching of the Québec Danse website was. Once the site was up and running, and with funding from the Canada Council for the Arts, two other employees would put their heart and soul into developing the communications department, which has since become the RQD’s nerve centre: Marilou Aubin (2004–06) and Judith Lesard Bérubé (2006 to the present). Catherine takes us back to the department’s early days:

“In 2000, we didn’t have sufficient funds to continue publishing our print newsletter. This was quite disappointing for me (interestingly enough, I’m now the associate editor of a magazine!). So the website project became a top priority. Funding was available for the site, which allowed us to open a communications position for a limited period and to develop a multi-

purpose tool. The project was quite a bumpy ride right up to the launch date, and we found it quite ironic that the government sent the minister in charge of the fight against poverty as its representative . . . It's important to remember all the communications work that went into getting the *Mouvement pour les arts et les lettres* off the ground. We worked hard to get the community behind the initiative and to join forces with others. I remember thinking people should write to the minister—think of Amnesty International! For me, this was a formative experience that has helped me up to the present.”

## 17. The 2005–08 Strategic Plan

In the months following the arrival of the RQD's new Executive Director, the Board of Directors began a strategic planning exercise and called on Groupe DBSF to assess the situation. After deliberations by the Executive Director, Board of Directors, and Normand Dulude of Groupe DBSF, new directions for the RQD were presented to members at the 2004 general assembly. In the months that followed, and with funding from the Flying Squad, the Executive Director met with consultant Stéphane Leclerc for six working sessions to develop a preliminary version of the 2005–2008 Strategic Plan. The plan was finalized over the course of three further working sessions with the Board of Directors. **Clotilde Cardinal**, a member of the Board from 2003 to 2007 and Co-Director of *Danse Danse*, recalls:

“After what seemed like endless hours of discussion about strategic directions, Stéphane Leclerc got a clear grasp of the issues and, as if by magic, was able to create a synergy among the various stakeholders that would help both elected administrators and appointed members develop an effective plan. If you don't get everyone on board, a strategic plan isn't worth much more than the paper it's written on.”

## 18. A plea for dance in Montreal

In the fall of 2005, in preparation for public consultations on a municipal cultural policy proposal, the RQD organized a series of focus groups to sketch a broad outline of the community's current situation and needs. The results of these groups formed the basis of a position paper titled “L'avenir de la danse à Montréal” (The future of dance in Montreal). The RQD's new Assistant Manager, writer **Benoit Pelletier**, drew on his public service experience to draft a position paper aimed at informing public decision makers and “helping them help us.” Dance was in a state of crisis following the loss of the *Festival international de la nouvelle danse* (FIND) and the recently cancelled international tour of the *Fondation Jean-Pierre Perreault*. These two events would be used to bolster the RQD's arguments. The demands included the need

Anik Bissonnette



for equipment, infrastructure and financial support from the *Conseil des arts de Montréal* and were defended by RQD President Anik Bissonnette, RQD Executive Director Lorraine Hébert, and Executive and Artistic Director of *Danse-Cité*, Daniel Soulières.

“At the time, not everyone found the approach relevant or effective. People were impatient, the sense of urgency was palpable, and we had to work hard to convince people how important it was to be methodical if we were to get what we wanted. As a result of the ‘Bissonnette effect,’ the *Forum des équipements culturels* made dance a priority.”

## 19. Launching *Pas de danse, pas de vie!*

There was a time when the RQD received grants for *International Dance Day* (IDD) from the City of Montreal, Québec's *ministère de la Culture et des Communications*, *du Maurier Arts Ltd.* and even *Canadian Heritage*. In 2000, much of this money dried up, putting an end to the RQD's involvement in IDD. In 2004, however, RQD members declared they were ready to pitch in and organize a dance promotion event for IDD. Since then, *Pas de danse, pas de vie!* has underscored the importance of dance in the cultural landscape by bringing the community and public together for several days—thanks to a small grant from the City of Montreal's *Festival and Cultural Events Office*; the tireless efforts of hundreds of artists; the help of many partners, including *Place des Arts*; and a contribution of human and financial resources from the RQD. *Rehearsal Director Sophie Michaud* recalls the initial meetings of the event's organizing committee:

“We wanted to come up with a slogan that would spark curiosity and, in a few words, convey our passion for dance. We got to thinking about the value and importance of dance outside



our personal experiences. The answer was clear: dance is life! Ideas came fast and furious. I threw out the phrase “Pas de danse, pas de vie!” with the word “pas” simultaneously signifying negation and creation (dance/life steps). The room fell silent; people’s eyes lit up as they murmured the phrase. It was exactly what we wanted: a clear and convincing message. The slogan was adopted, and I find it more meaningful with each passing year.”

## 20. The RQD/CDA-ACD joint advocacy committee

Realizing the need to work with partners at the national level, the RQD called for the creation of a joint advocacy committee with the Canadian Dance Assembly/Assemblée canadienne de la danse (CDA-ACD). From July 2006 to June 2007, the committee’s work with the Canada Council for the Arts resulted in two reports on the realities and needs of professional dance in Canada, as well as a joint presentation on future challenges at a national consultation on the CCA’s directions, values and priorities for the following three years. Two years of joint work had produced a rigorous, coherent set of ideas. The CDA-ACD members on the joint committee were Jim Smith, Shannon Litzenberger, Judy Harquail and Bob Sirman (who was replaced by Dianne Milligan when he became Director and CEO of the CCA). The RQD members were Louise Laplante, Lorraine Hébert, Clothilde Cardinal and **Kathy Casey**, Artistic Director of the company Montréal Danse.

“What I remember most is our first series of meetings with the CDA-ACD,” she writes. “We had to write a joint report for the CCA on what dance needed in order to grow. Bob Sirman (who wasn’t yet the Director of the CCA) was part of the CDA-ACD delegation. I’d never met him and I was inspired by his approach to strategy development. He encouraged us to tell our ‘story,’ to explain our needs as we experienced them in our day-to-day work, and to stay connected to what kept our community alive, rather than getting tangled up in statistical arguments.”

## 21. The Grands Chantiers de la danse project

When Lorraine Hébert became the RQD’s Executive Director in October 2003, she replaced Louise Laplante, who had been serving as Acting Director for one day a week since July. The team was severely reduced and the dance community was exhausted. People didn’t see how things could improve without an accurate understanding of the discipline’s realities. The idea of holding a second *États généraux* conference was floated at the end of a Board of Directors meeting. But where would the necessary resources and money come from? We needed to reassemble the troops and develop a common vision. The



*Inauguration of Pas de danse, pas de vie! with Québec Premier Jean Charest in attendance, accompanied by Anik Bissonnette, Marie Chouinard and a group of children (2008)*

idea of the *Grands Chantiers de la danse* was put forward and became part of the RQD’s 2005–08 Strategic Plan. It took a year to define the structure: a steering committee and five focus committees that would be chaired by people from the community, bringing together artists and cultural workers representing the various sectors and generations. There were several themes up for discussion: renewal of the discipline, a qualified workforce, working conditions and demands of the discipline, infrastructure and “dance spaces.” The committees’ work was coordinated by a team of three people. More devoted to the cause than ever, **Lorraine Hébert** was involved at every level. Among many other things, she recalls the long, sleepless nights:

“I felt it was a lot to ask of artists and cultural workers who already had their hands full,” she said. “They’d been given ambitious mandates and they invested so much energy, time and passion. I was afraid they’d be disappointed with the results and I must admit I began to have doubts about the structure we’d put in place. How would we manage, out of that melting pot of ideas, to form a coherent vision that would meet the expectations of all sectors and carry us forward? Today it’s clear that we chose the right approach and that taking risks together (the most important lesson from the *Grands Chantiers de la danse*) was what gave us wings.”

## 22. New social safety net for dancers

Since January 2006, an agreement with the ministère de la Culture et des Communications du Québec (MCCQ) and the Commission de la santé et de la sécurité du travail (CSST) has allowed dancers without a work contract to receive workers’ compensation if they are injured during training offered and supervised by a professional. This agreement was the result of joint consultation among the CSST, MCCQ, CALQ and the RQD, which was in charge of its implementation. Dancer and teacher **Sylvain Lafortune** was present when the agreement

“I remember the enthusiasm of everyone involved, both within the dance community and at the ministry and CSST,” he says. “I got the impression they really wanted to understand what dancers were experiencing and develop their policies accordingly. These civil servants managed to set a big machine in motion, which was no mean feat. I was also surprised by how much was accomplished without my even realizing it, and by how hard the RQD worked on every issue. I was moved when Gaétan Patenaude spoke. I hadn’t seen him in years, and he’d done so much for the dance community—co-founding the RQD and skilfully leading it in the early years. I realized this agreement was his baby and his way of continuing to serve the discipline behind the scenes as coordinator for the Permanent secretariat on the socioeconomic status of artists at the MCCC. The dance community had one more thing to thank him for.”



..... Annual general assembly held in 2008

### 23. Advocacy at the federal level

Since 2006, the RQD has been working actively at the federal level, defending public funding for arts and culture and, in particular, funding for international promotion. With cuts to the operating budgets of Canadian cultural centres abroad, the abolition of the PromArt and Trade Routes programs, and the Harper government’s repeated attempts to reduce arts funding to a bare minimum, the threat to dance is ever-present and even growing. If we don’t exert political pressure, we might not even be able to maintain the status quo. Whether it takes the form of media campaigns, petitions, demonstrations or meetings with officials, advocacy is key to the community’s survival. **Alain Dancyger**, Executive Director of Les Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montréal, is someone who walks the talk.



..... Demonstration against cuts to arts funding (August 2008)  
Photo : La Presse

“I’ve experienced both extremes of advocacy work because we help develop and direct policy platforms, but we also deal with individuals,” he says. “I’ve had some rather amusing experiences like having to defend demands for dance infrastructure by drawing comparisons with sewer systems. It’s astonishing that a country like Canada, a member of the G8, still relies on antiquated economic theories. It makes a mockery of people’s place in society and even on Earth. I wonder how it would be if we lived in a society where, by some miracle, the entire population was healthy and well-educated. But this is an age-old philosophical discussion. In this sense, artists are always ahead of their time, and advocacy is a true lesson in humanity and humility.”

### 24. An emergency fund for international touring

Although extensive consultation and research had shown that Québec dance companies were shining on the international stage, and had underscored the importance of public funding for this crucial portion of their activities, the RQD was forced to submit an application for emergency funding to the ministère de la Culture to cover a shortfall in the envelope allocated by CALQ for the presentation of dance works outside Québec. At a press conference announcing a new space for the Marie Chouinard dance company, attended by Minister Line Beauchamp, Lorraine Hébert found out that the application had been approved. RQD president **Anik Bissonnette** remembers how nervous everyone was:

“We were still reeling from the news that Jean-Pierre Perreault’s international tour Joe had been cancelled when we were told, in the summer of 2006, that there was no money left in the CALQ envelope. That meant that some 20 companies would have to cancel their international tour plans. It was a disaster! I can’t tell you the number of phone calls it took to get the emergency fund. It was a crucial victory and the ministry’s support was vital.”

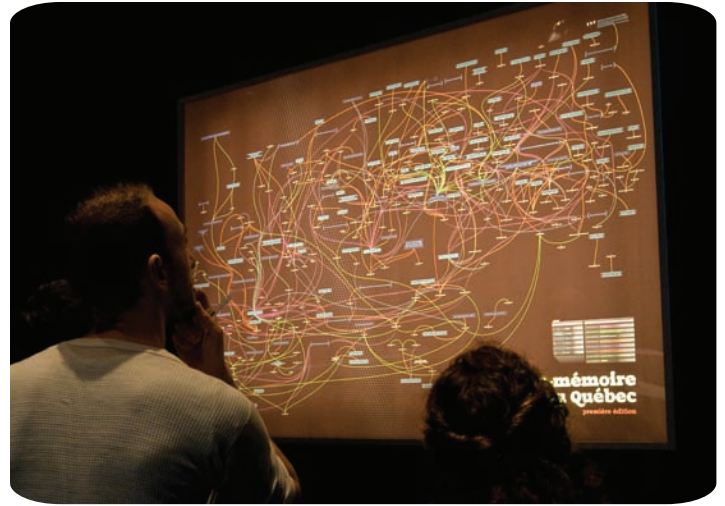
## 25. The second *États généraux de la danse*

The term *Grands Chantiers* (major brainstorming sessions), used to describe preparations for the second *États généraux de la danse*, was no exaggeration. Divided into five working committees, some 60 dance professionals set out to examining the five major themes described above. Of the 200 recommendations submitted after 18 months of meetings, studies and consultations, 79 were selected by the steering committee for public debate. To mark the opening of the second *États généraux* on April 26, 2009, a first version of the *Toile-mémoire de la danse au Québec* was unveiled. This “memory web” of dance in Québec, one of the major achievements of the “dance spaces” committee, maps out the people and places behind this valuable cultural heritage.

The entire undertaking was coordinated by Project Manager **Sophie Préfontaine**.

“First and foremost, there was a group of dedicated, determined and generous people. Then there were the productive bonds they forged. I clearly remember the *Grands Chantiers de la danse* as something I experienced like a dancer: in my body. With each passing day, I saw ideas take form and the way become clear. The brainstorming took on a life of its own! My greatest joy was being able to attend the plenary session on April 26, 2009 and seeing the entire assembly applaud itself as the last proposal was adopted. It was a very emotional moment soon followed by the birth of my son, three days later, on April 29. Now I have two reasons to celebrate International Dance Day!”

Following the second *États généraux*, the Conseil des arts de Montréal recognized the professional dance community’s extraordinary commitment by selecting the RQD as a finalist in the Dance category for the 25th edition of its annual awards. This honour was a public recognition of the community’s consensus-building and joint actions, which had mobilized over 200 dance artists and professionals.



The “memory web” of dance in Québec



Plenary session at *Agora de la danse*



Margie Gillis

# REGROUPEMENT QUÉBÉCOIS DE LA DANSE

The Regroupement québécois de la danse (RQD) is a non-profit association, active at the municipal, provincial and federal levels, that represents and defends the interests of over 500 dance professionals. Founded in 1984 in response to the Québec dance community's need for a common voice, the RQD represents all stakeholders in professional dance: performers, choreographers, teachers, researchers, rehearsal directors, cultural workers, specialized presenters, dance companies, professional dance schools and service organizations. This broad-based membership allows the RQD to play a leadership role in implementing long-term development projects for the entire discipline.

For 25 years, the RQD has developed the many facets of dance and has actively raised awareness of the conditions in which this demanding art is practised. Closely involved with the evolution of a discipline that has reached a turning point in its history, the RQD initiates and supports all projects promoting collective action and long-term initiatives.

The RQD's actions are aligned with five strategic directions:

- **Strengthening the association:**

Ensure that original and repertoire dance professionals are represented by the association;

- **Consensus-building and mobilization:**

Keep members committed to improving working conditions in the discipline;

- **Advocacy:**

Make governments and funding agencies aware of the discipline's development needs;

- **Promoting the discipline:**

Strengthen the place of dance in the public mind and media;

- **Organization:**

Ensure that the association has the necessary resources to carry out its strategic plan.

## Partners 2010-2011 :



REGROUPEMENT  
QUÉBÉCOIS DE  
LA DANSE



3680 Jeanne-Mance Street, Suite 440  
Montréal (Québec) H2X 2K5  
514 849 4003 - [www.quebecdanse.org](http://www.quebecdanse.org)