

Karen Kain
Artistic Director

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Big steps for ballet

NBOC confident of a successful new 2009/10 program

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It wasn't just spring that was in the air yesterday as the National Ballet of Canada announced plans for the 2009/10 season.

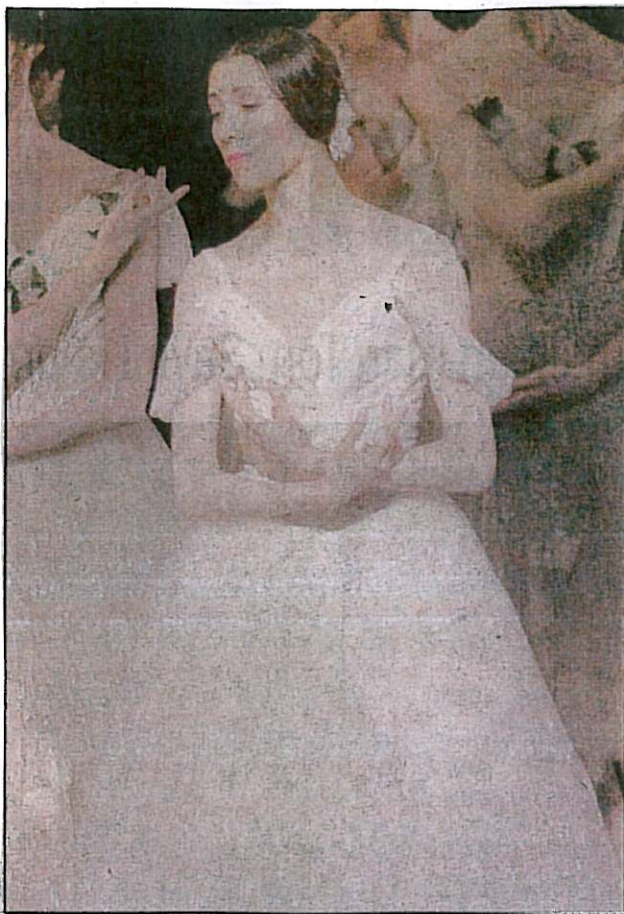
There was also an air of cautious optimism as executive director Kevin Garland gazed into her crystal ball and told the assembled media, dancers and patrons that the auguries were good.

"We do believe that we will make it through the year without an operating deficit," Garland predicted, at the same time acknowledging the past year. "The world has changed very dramatically and the National Ballet is not immune."

The stage thus set, artistic director Karen Kain took to the podium to unveil a new season — a season that blends company classics and audience favourites with exciting world premieres, in the process polishing not just the company's reputation, but one of its classical ballets as well.

The season kicks off with a western Canadian tour of the company's production of Rudolf Nureyev's *The Sleeping Beauty*, restaged by Kain herself. It is slated to touch down in Calgary, Edmonton, Victoria, Nanaimo and Vancouver in late September and early October.

The Sleeping Beauty will also be on offer when the NBOC visits Ottawa in November and then again when the cur-



National Ballet of Canada principal dancer Chan Hon Goh will be retiring in June after 20 years with the ballet.

tain goes up on the company's 2009/10 season here in Toronto at the Four Seasons Centre on Nov. 13.

It will be paired in the fall season with a mixed program that will include Balanchine's *The Four Temperaments* and Jerome Robbins' *Glass Pieces*,

as well as the world premiere of a new work by Edmonton-born Azure Barton.

After a seasonal run of the company's enduring Christmas classic *The Nutcracker*, choreographed by James Kudelka, the winter season kicks off in early March with

a mixed program that pairs Marie Chouinard's *24 Preludes* by Chopin with Kudelka's *The Four Seasons* and Jerome Robbins' solo work, *A Suite of Dances*, in its company premiere.

A run of Kudelka's *Swan Lake* completes the winter season.

The summer season kicks off in June with a mixed program that sees the company revisiting Jerome Robbins' tremendously popular *West Side Story Suite* and his *Opus 19/The Dreamer*, as well as a new work by Finnish choreographer Jorma Elo.

A revisiting of John Crank's enduring *Onegin* closes the season, showcasing new sets and costumes from designer Santo Loquasto, who also created the lush sets and costumes for *The Nutcracker*.

In announcing the season, Kain also took time to pay emotional tribute to principal dancer Chan Hon Goh, who after 20 years with the company will be retiring in June.

Recalling that Goh had always exhibited "one of the lightest jumps imaginable," a tearful Kain wished Goh well, insisting: "It always happens to soon."

Goh bid an elegant farewell to the company in her remarks, saying: "I have lived my dream ... and I feel so fortunate."

"I look forward to this new life, but I will always be an artist. Thanks for 20 amazing years."

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