

Everybody dance now

>> Four choreographers lead the public mass movement at Le Bal Moderne

by **MARITES CARINO**

Marie Béland guarantees there'll be no shushing in the Grande Bibliothèque this Saturday night. She's one of the organizers behind Le Bal Moderne, an evening of choreography for the masses that will take over the airy library entrance April 29 to celebrate International Dance Day. But don't get the impression that this is a giant bird dance or gang macarena. "We invite professional choreographers to create short and simple dance sequences, which they will teach to the public," Béland explains.



IN STEP: Le Bal Moderne

Béland is co-founder of La 2e Porte à Gauche, a dance production company made up of UQÀM dance grads

Frédéric Gravel, Pascale Levasseur and Amélie Bédard-Gagnon, who share a common mission to create exchanges between artists and the public and to make dance accessible to all kinds of people in all kinds of spaces. You may have stumbled across their productions while strolling by shop windows of Simons or walking through the Musée d'Art Contemporain at this year's Nuit Blanche.

The concept of Le Bal Moderne goes back to 1993 and was conceived by Michel Reilhac for the Festival Paris Quartier d'Été. Since its creation, it's gained in popularity, mostly in Europe, due to Belgian dance company Rosas who started producing the event on a regular basis and to date has welcomed more than 10,000 participants. Inspired by the concept, Béland contacted Reilhac in 2004 and obtained permission to start up Quebec's own version. "As far as I know, officially, we're the only ones doing this in Canada," she says, adding that Le Bal "helps to demystify contemporary dance because people experience it through their body and they gain a better understanding of what it is."

For their eighth edition of Le Bal Moderne, they've invited movement makers Lük Fleury, Guylaine Savoie, Catherine Tardif and Bobby Thompson, who will take turns at the choreographic reins with their distinct styles. They'll each take about 45 minutes to teach the public their sequence, which can be done either alone or with a partner. In between choreographic sets, participants can take a breather and sit back to observe Les Imprudanses, a dance-improv match where spectators vote on what's hot and what's not.

Le Bal Moderne gets moving Saturday, April 29, 9 p.m., at La Grande Bibliothèque (de Maisonneuve and Berri), free