

L'Ensemble national de folklore  
Les Sortilèges



## Cover

"Les Sortilèges"  
by Claude LeSauteur

Claude LeSauteur was born in Rivière Pentecôte, Québec in 1926. Since he first emerged from the Beaux-Arts in 1950, his lyrical imagination has been a treasured part of Québec's art landscape.

Could his painting be haunted? The shapes won't stay on the page. "Follow us", they insist, "into the past". So we follow them into long ago and even longer ago when our strange and wonderful ancestors danced through the joys and sorrows of their lives. It is their stories that Les Sortilèges have to tell.

The Ensemble National de Folklore Les Sortilèges would like to thank The Ministère des Affaires Culturelles and The Conseil des Arts de la Communauté Urbaine de Montréal for their continued support.

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**O**ur ancestors were close to the land. From the time the cock crowed until the shadows fell, they coaxed that land into submission. If one were to add up all the furrows they ploughed over the centuries, they would reach around the world.

For a little bread and shelter they raked their ovens and carried rivers of milk and water. They lived their lives and loved their loves, birthed their babies and buried their dead. Whatever happened to them, they danced out, danced out how they felt about it in jigs and cotillions. They danced because they couldn't stop dancing. Because life is a dancing out of destinies, a sortilege.





Message from the Prime Minister  
of Canada

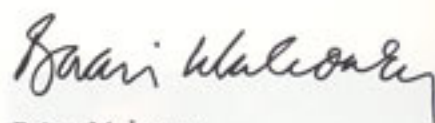
"Claps the hands  
and know the thoughts  
of men in other lands."

John Masfield

I am delighted to extend my warmest greetings and sincere best wishes to the members of Les Sortilèges, who again this year will enthrall and captivate an ever-growing audience.

It is well known that Les Sortilèges have in a sense acted as our nation's cultural ambassadors. Their success lies not so much in their tremendous vigour and vitality, but rather in their uncanny ability to portray, through dance, rhythm and costume, the many aspects of our Canadian mosaic, which several generations of immigrants have shaped and formed. Indeed, the international reputation which the troupe enjoys is perhaps due to the fact that no one can fail to see something of himself in their work.

On behalf of the Government of Canada, may I take this opportunity to congratulate the members of Les Sortilèges on their high degree of excellence, as well as on the prestige which they, and indeed all Canadians, enjoy.



Brian Mulroney  
Prime Minister of Canada



It is with great pleasure that my colleagues and myself have kept abreast of the successes that Les Sortilèges have known through the years.

Whenever they have performed, on the stages of the world's most important cities, they have been enthusiastically applauded, thus adding to the well-established reputation of Montréal as an international metropolis.

I am pleased to avail myself of this opportunity to extend my sincere congratulations to Les Sortilèges and wish them the best of luck.




Jean Doré  
Mayor of Montréal

Message from the President of  
Conseil des arts

If folk art is the expression of a people through its dances, songs and music, the Québec group Les Sortilèges is an eloquent ambassador for our culture on the world stage.

The Conseil des arts de la Communauté urbaine de Montréal is proud to salute this talented ensemble, which for twenty-two years has faithfully carried out its mission of making known our traditions through the medium of folk dance.

In the name of the Conseil des arts de la Communauté urbaine de Montréal, I wish them a long and joyful career.



Jean-Pierre Goyer  
President  
Conseil des arts  
de la Communauté urbaine de Montréal

As Prime Minister of Québec, I am pleased to pay tribute to the folkloric ensemble Les Sortilèges for their most significant contribution to Québec's culture and to its influence on the international scene.

Being the only professional folkloric dance company in the country, Les Sortilèges never cease, at home or abroad, to gain the public's admiration. Already deeply implanted within our cultural life, which it enhances with the quality of its performances, the company also helps to highlight our collective identity by appearing on the most prestigious stages of the world.

The beauty of dancing is that it can be understood everywhere and by everyone. I therefore encourage you to carry on your art in the same tradition of excellence and wish you continued success.



Robert Bourassa  
Prime Minister of Québec



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hile Les Sortilèges is the hearts and minds of an entire ensemble, it is also the courageous vision of founder and artistic director, Jimmy Di Genova. A vision, which some twenty years later, is stronger and clearer than ever.

Since its creation in 1966, Les Sortilèges has become Canada's premier folkloric dance company. It is passionately committed not just to the art of dance, but to the preservation and promotion of folk art and tradition. Mr. Di Genova has established a national folklore school, library and research centre which is the only concept of its kind in Canada. While preserving history by bringing it to life on stage, Les Sortilèges has also produced a fine album series of traditional music.



Reflecting the multi-ethnic kaleidoscope of Canadian culture, the Ensemble National de Folklore Les Sortilèges has a repertoire which is international in scope and calibre. It is no wonder the Company has captured the hearts of audiences around the world and become one of our most spirited ambassadors.



"People will not  
look forward  
to posterity  
who never look back  
to their ancestors."  
Edmund Burke





"A great work of art  
is like a dream;  
for all its apparent  
obviousness it does  
not explain itself."

Carl Jung



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n ancient sortileges, a diviner cast lots and sometimes even cast spells on his eager audience. In today's modern version, a whirl of bodies, costumes, emotions, scenery, lights, orchestra and stage becomes an unforgettable tapestry, as Jimmy Di Genova works magic on his troupe so it can work magic on us.



*"I paint not the thing  
I see but the feelings  
they arouse in me."*  
Franz Kline



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atching Les Sortilèges dance is like watching colours let loose from a rainbow.

Each costume is a labour of love, no detail too trivial to track down. The details are often hidden in legends or in the myriad rural communities tucked away in the nooks and crannies of the land. Often they are brought back by the dancers from their travels. The perfect lace for a wedding dance, the most charming way to drape a shawl or kerchief, the tiny buds of Indian Paintbrush embroidered on a dress. When the Shakapoine is danced and that Métis hunter runs into his first moose, we know he is impeccably dressed for the part.

Watching Les Sortilèges dance is like watching the great wheels of old spinning flax into yarn. The bodies of the dancers weaving step after step into the fabric of kinship and joy.





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he geometries of dance are affected by geography. People in mountainous regions tend to dance in leaps and bounds. People living warlike lives express pride and fearlessness in their steps. People in hot climates dance out the contraries of passion and languor.

Confucius said that dance should be mild and delicate, but would a fiery Cossack agree with him? In joining hands with other cultural heritages, *Les Sortilèges* celebrates the infinite variety of the human spirit in motion.





*"Pray tell me,  
can she spin?"*

James I





*"There was a star  
danced, and under  
that was I born."*  
Shakespeare





*"Dancing is the loftiest,  
the most moving,  
the most beautiful of  
the arts, because it is  
no mere translation or  
abstraction from life;  
it is life itself."*  
Havelock Ellis

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eaping, lifting and lunging, the dancer uses every muscle to fight free of the earth's gravity and command space as his own. Then, once he has claimed his space and asserted his own individuality, he must be ready to relinquish it for the mastery and discipline of his art.

Les Sortilèges puts passionate precision into every step, because their's is a sworn commitment to preserve folk expression in its purest form. Not a nuance must be lost or it risks being lost forever.

Les Sortilèges is safekeeper for some of our most treasured dance traditions. And even after 20 years of experience, it is still as fresh and alive as its first stage performance.





**L**es Sortilèges has performed all over the globe, from Ireland to Japan, from Israel to the United States. It has danced out not only its own Canadian folk identity but the dances of other international communities.

It takes bravado to venture into cultures other than one's own, to dance a polka or a Czardas. But to take another people's culture into one's own body is to connect heartbeat to heartbeat.

Les Sortilèges speaks a language that does not need words. The language of the family of man.





*"I have no idea whence  
this tide comes,  
or where it goes,  
but when it begins  
in my heart,  
I know that a story  
is in the offing."*  
Dorothy Canfield



**D**ance is as old as the human race itself. That's what the fiddle is saying from village to village, making the barn doors swing and the cutlery bounce on the tables and the grandmothers' toes tap furiously under their sewing.

The fiddler is about as old as his fiddle which is made out of hard maple and a plank of fir and which he plays at dizzying, devilish speed. These were the days when an old ox would yield enough tallow for at least 300 candles. When you knew it would rain if the cat slept with his nose in the air and you passed a coffin out through the window because it was bad luck putting it through the door.

These were the days when the bread was the bread of life and the nights were long. When Les Sortilèges dance, they are not dancing one story, they are dancing out the ancient memories of people everywhere.







*"Anyone lived in  
a pretty how town,  
with so many  
floating bells down,  
spring summer  
autumn winter,  
he sang his didn't  
he danced his did."*  
e.e. Cummings







**Marius-Barbeau  
Documentation Centre**

Established in 1977 by the Ensemble National de Folklore Les Sortilèges, the Marius-Barbeau Documentation Centre is primarily aimed at the preservation and communication of folkloric art and tradition. The Centre's research base focuses on traditional dance and music from Quebec and other parts of the world, the history of costume with particular emphasis on the folkloric aspect both in the Province and at large, as well as songs, popular customs, legends and folk beliefs. These subjects in turn have unearthed a wealth of other fascinating information.

Research is grouped into four sectors: library, dossiers, choreographic notations and an audiovisual section consisting of a videotheque, slide facilities and a discotheque.

The library carries over 1500 volumes, specializing in French, as well as English and a number of other languages. Often the foreign-language editions are purchased directly from their country of origin. A series of subscriptions to both local and foreign publications adds another vital dimension.

The Centre also includes over 300 dossiers containing folders, brochures and articles painstakingly collected over the past years.

More than 2500 choreographic outlines of both Canadian and international dances are available to the researcher.

Finally, the videotheque, discotheque and slide facilities provide research tools to the researcher and teacher that are both practical and entertaining.

The Marius-Barbeau Documentation Centre, named in honour of the noted Canadian ethnologist and folklorist, is not affiliated with a university and is financed through donations, grants and other initiatives.

Over the past ten years, the Centre has also published over a dozen books on traditional music, dance, jigs and legends. The book entitled "J'ai tant dansé...J'ai tant sauté"

was specially designed for teaching dance to children. All publications are available at the Centre. Currently, a major edition on Quebec peasant costume in the 19th century is in the works.

The Marius-Barbeau Documentation Centre is open to the public through appointment, Monday to Friday between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. All documentation is considered as reference material and research must be done at the Centre. Use of facilities is free of charge with a photocopy service also available. For further information, call (514) 274-5656.

The Ensemble Nationale de Folklore Les Sortilèges has also set up the Ecole Nationale de Folklore in order to respond to the more in-depth needs of those interested in the folkloric tradition. It offers:

- Courses in dance and jigs for personal development.
- Cultural workshops designed for schools and interested groups in Montreal and across Canada.
- A national folklore seminar held in Summer each year.

The school is also in the process of setting up a program to train professional folkloric dancers.

Twice yearly, the Ensemble National de Folklore Les Sortilèges organizes auditions in order to select dancers who are interested in pursuing a professional career in dance or who wish to dance on a semi-professional basis.

For further information, please contact the office of the Ensemble Nationale de Folklore Les Sortilèges.



**THE TALENT  
OF OUR ARTISTS**

**A FORCE  
THAT EXTENDS BEYOND  
ALL FRONTIERS.**

**THE SNC GROUP  
TAKES PRIDE  
IN HELPING CULTIVATE  
ARTISTIC EXPRESSION.**

**ENGINEERING  
THE WORLD,  
ENGINEERING  
THE FUTURE.**

**SNC**





*Hommage aux Sortilèges*

« Les Sortilèges » de Claude LeSautour  
huile sur toile  
20" x 24"



# Montreal culturel



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Ville de Montréal  
Commission d'initiative et

■  
**A Living  
Tapestry**



**Danse des heures.** Collage. Acrylic on paper. 71 cm x 101 cm. Reprotech Collection.

Claude Dulude 1968

Reprotech wishes to pay  
special tribute to the artists  
of our land who are able  
to express the beauty of movement  
and colour so eloquently.