

History of the company

**A pioneer of
contemporary
dance
in Quebec and
Canada**

**Over 30 works
in its repertoire**

**From small
forms
to monumental
shows**

SYLVAIN ÉMARD DAN SE



Sylvain Émard first distinguished himself as a dancer working with renowned choreographers such as Jean-Pierre Perreault, Jo Lechay, Jeanne Renaud, Louise Bédard and Daniel Léveillé before he formed his own company in 1990. Here his signature style soon emerged. Émard is recognized for his complex and refined choreographic vocabulary. His approach draws on the kinaesthetic power of dance by highlighting the inherent intelligence of the body. His repertoire now includes over thirty original pieces that have had a resounding impact all over the world.

Since its foundation, Sylvain Émard Danse has continually evolved. During its first years, its artistic director and choreographer Sylvain Émard created mainly solo works such as *Ozone*, *Ozone* (1987) and *L'Imposture des sens* (1988). In 1990, the company co-produced *De l'Éden au Septentrion*, its first group piece. The same year, Sylvain Émard received the Jacqueline Lemieux Prize of the Canada Council for the Arts for his accomplishments. *Terrains Vagues* (1993), a work for four performers, marked the beginning of a second cycle involving more interactions between the dancers, thereby energizing the space in a new way. Presented in Glasgow (Scotland), at the Canada Dance Festival (Ottawa), in Montréal and on tours across Western Canada and the Maritimes, this production initiated a much wider dissemination of Sylvain Émard's repertoire.

In 1994, Sylvain Émard felt the need to return to the solo structure, choreographing and performing *Des siècles avec vous*. The show was publicly and critically acclaimed, and Sylvain Émard was named Dance Personality of the Year by the Montréal cultural weekly VOIR.

With *Rumeurs* (1996), a male quintet co-produced with the Canada Dance Festival, Sylvain Émard explored nature of the human soul under the theme of memory. Sylvain Émard Danse was awarded the Grand Prix du Conseil des Arts de la Communauté Urbaine de Montréal in 1996. The same year, he received the prestigious Jean A. Chalmers Award for the body of his work.



« I am trying to develop dance that is anchored in everyday life, without losing its poetry. I want to concentrate on what is at the very heart of life in our society. »

Sylvain Émard

After creating dance for a group, Sylvain Émard felt the need to return to the stage. This led to *Te souvient-il?* (2000), a pas de deux co-created with his long-time collaborator, choreographer Louise Bédard. The resulting work drew on experiments in set design by the artist Pierre Bruneau. Acclaimed as a unique piece, *Te souvient-il?* was performed more than fifty times across Québec, English-speaking Canada, Mexico and France.

In 2004, Sylvain Émard began a new creative cycle called *Climatology of bodies* which takes climate as a metaphor for the external elements affecting our daily lives. The trilogy is comprised of *Pluie* (2004), *Temps de chien* (2005) and *Wave* (2008). In March 2009, Sylvain Émard Danse presented the full version of the *Climatology of bodies* at the renowned New Territories festival in Glasgow, Scotland.

In 2009, Sylvain Émard Danse created *Le Grand Continental*®, at the Festival TransAmériques (FTA). A mix of line dance and contemporary dance, this joyous piece has since then featured over 3,000 non-dancers in several performances across Canada, the United States, Mexico,

South Korea, New Zealand, Germany and Austria attracting some 125,000 spectators. In 2011, Sylvain Émard was named Personality of the Week by *La Presse*/Radio-Canada for *Le Grand Continental*®.

While *Le Grand Continental*® kept expanding, Sylvain Émard unveiled *Fragments – Volume I*, a collection of four striking short pieces (three solos and a duet).

In October 2012, Sylvain Émard embarked on a new creation for seven male dancers entitled *Ce n'est pas la fin du monde* (it's not the end of the world). This group piece premiered in Bordeaux at Théâtre Jean Vilar as part of the dance biennial *Danse Toujours*, in the Great Bordeaux in April 2013. Also, during this biennial, the company reprised *Wave* (2008) and *Fragments – Volume I* (2010). In addition, Sylvain Émard created a self-portrait in dance to mark the opening of the festival.

In 2017, Sylvain Émard was back on stage for the first time in 15 years, with *Le chant des sirènes*, a solo that premiered at Agora de la danse in April. To celebrate Montréal's 375th anniversary, he also presented the largest version of *Le Grand Continental*® to date: *Le Super Méga Continental*, with 375 amateur dancers at Place des Festivals.

Inspired by the ritual aspect of dance and the altered states of consciousness it can induce, Sylvain Émard began working on creating *Rhapsodie*, a large-scale piece for 20 performers, in 2019. In response to the pandemic, the choreographer created the in situ diptych *Preludes*, a prologue to *Rhapsodie*. *Prelude #1 – The Circle* and *Prelude #2 – The Square*, featuring 20 dancers, were presented in Montréal, Repentigny, Saint-Jérôme, Trois-Rivières and Rivière-du-Loup from 2021 to 2023. Film versions of *Preludes* were featured at numerous international events, including the 39th InShadow Lisbon ScreenDance Festival in Portugal. After two postponements, *Rhapsodie* finally saw the light of day at Danse Danse in February 2022, to the delight of audiences and critics alike. More recently, *Prelude #1 – The Circle* engendered

a digital version, the immersive installation *Choir* (co-created with mirari) where 12 performers dance in a constant stream round the spectators, their bodies projected on a 360-degree screen. The sextet *Magnetic Fields* has made its début in January 2025 as part of the Danse Danse season.

A proponent of the commingling of genres, Sylvain Émard navigates with ease from one milieu to another – film, theatre, the visual arts and opera, as seen, for example by his collaboration on Lorin Maazel's opera *1984*, directed by Robert Lepage (Royal Opera House in London in 2005, La Scala in Milan in 2008 and Valencia Opera House in Spain in 2011). Sylvain is a founding member of Circuit-Est centre chorégraphique, created in Montréal in 1987.



« Since dance has such great evocative and expressive power, creating a new work always requires much reflection and a thorough development of ideas. As a form of expression, dance may have a long history—yet each performance is necessarily of the moment. It follows that dance must be constantly renewed. To meet this challenge, I enter into a dialogue with the body. The more it speaks to me, the more I understand the full scope of what it has to say. This is how a vocabulary of movement can be developed, and it is precisely what I love most about choreography: being able to develop a language that allows me to investigate the body and reveal some of its deepest secrets. »

Sylvain Émard

Awards and recognitions

2026	Recipient of the Governor General’s Performing Arts Award
2024	Sylvain Émard, recipient of recognition prize from Quartier des Spectacles Partnership for is contributions to the cultural vitality of Montréal
2018	Winner of the CINARS International Collaboration Award for the re-creation of <i>Le Grand Continental</i> ® at Santiago a Mil (Chili) and Potsdamer Tanztage (Germany)
2014	Winner of the People’s Choice Award in the Best Nonprofit Event Concept—Budget Under \$250,000 category, for <i>Le Grand Continental</i> ® in Boston, BizBash National Event Style Award, New York
2011	Sylvain Émard, named Personality of the Week by <i>La Presse</i> /Radio-Canada for <i>Le Continental XL</i>
1996	Winner of the Jean A. Chalmers Prize for Choreography for his lifetime achievement Sylvain Émard, winner of the Grand Prix du Conseil des arts de la Communauté urbaine de Montréal for <i>Rumeurs</i>



© Jean-Baptiste Bucau | Ce n'est pas la fin du monde (2013)

1995	Sylvain Émard, nominated for the Dora Mavor Moore Award for <i>Agathe</i>
1994	Sylvain Émard, named Dance Personality of the Year by the Montréal cultural weekly VOIR for <i>Des siècles avec vous</i>
1990	Sylvain Émard, recipient of the Jacqueline Lemieux Prize from the Canada Arts Council

Repertoire

2025	<i>Chorale</i>	A Sylvain Émard Danse production, in collaboration with Albédo
	<i>Magnetic Fields</i>	A Sylvain Émard Danse production
2024	<i>Choir</i>	A Sylvain Émard Danse production co-created with mirari
2022	<i>Rhapsodie</i>	A Sylvain Émard Danse and Danse Danse co-production, supported by the Canadian National Arts Centre's National Creation Fund (Canada). In collaboration with the Centro de Producción de Danza Contemporánea (CEPRODAC) of Mexico
2020	<i>Preludes</i>	A Sylvain Émard Danse production, with the special support of the Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec
2019	<i>Le Petit Continental</i>	A Sylvain Émard Danse production
2017	<i>Le Super Méga Continental</i>	A Sylvain Émard Danse and Festival TransAmériques co-presentation, an official event of Montreal's 375 th anniversary celebrations (Canada)
	<i>Le chant des sirènes</i>	A Sylvain Émard Danse and Agora de la danse (Canada) co-production
2013	<i>Ce n'est pas la fin du monde</i>	A Sylvain Émard Danse, Ville d'Eysines/Le Plateau (France), Théâtre de Lorient (France), the Brian Webb Dance Company (Canada) co-production, with the support of iddac, Agence culturelle de la Gironde

2011	<i>Le Continental XL</i>	A Sylvain Émard Danse and Festival TransAmériques co-production, co-presented by Quartier des spectacles (Canada)
	<i>El Gran Continental</i>	A Sylvain Émard Danse and Festival de México co-production
2010	<i>Fragments – Volume I</i>	A Sylvain Émard Danse and Canada Dance Festival co-production, with the support of Goethe-Institut (Canada)
	<i>Le Très Grand Continental</i>	A Sylvain Émard Danse and Festival TransAmériques co-production, co-presented by Quartier des spectacles (Canada)
2009	<i>Le Grand Continental</i>	A Sylvain Émard Danse and Festival TransAmériques co-production, co-presented by Quartier des spectacles (Canada)



© Ansan Street Arts Festival (2015), social photo inc. | *Le Grand Continental* in South Korea (2015)

2008	<i>Wave</i>	A Sylvain Émard Danse, Station Zuid (The Netherlands), Grand Théâtre de Lorient (France) and Usine C (Canada) co-production
2005	<i>Temps de chien</i>	A Sylvain Émard Danse, Canada's National Arts Centre, Banff Centre, Canada Dance Festival (Canada) and Grand Théâtre de Lorient (France) co-production
2004	<i>Pluie</i>	
2001	<i>Scènes d'intérieur</i>	A Sylvain Émard Danse, Agora de la danse (Canada) and Centre Culturel Aragon (France) co-production
2000	<i>Te souvient-il?</i>	A Sylvain Émard Danse and Louise Bédard Danse (Canada) co-production
1998	<i>Mensonge Variations</i>	
1996	<i>Rumeurs</i>	A Sylvain Émard Danse, Canada Dance Festival, Femme 100 têtes (Canada) co-production
1994	<i>Des siècles avec vous</i>	
1993	<i>Terrains Vagues</i>	
1991	<i>Retour d'exil</i>	
1990	<i>De l'Éden au Septentrion</i>	A Sylvain Émard Danse and Danse-Cité (Canada) co-production
1987	<i>Ozone, Ozone and L'Imposture des sens (1988)</i>	



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**The dancing
body does
not lie,
and truth
is too
rare to
be ignored.**

**S.É
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