FRI 4 MAR–SAT 5 MAR / FESTIVAL THEATRE

#AdlFest

monumental
THE HOLY BODY TATTOO
WITH LIVE MUSIC BY GODSPEED YOU! BLACK EMPEROR

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A NOTE FROM DAVID

The Holy Body Tattoo were the first dance company I ever presented in the United States, with their first show, *our brief eternity*. That was in 2001.

They were so obviously the most exciting dance company on the planet and seemed to arrive fully-formed that way.

By 2005 it was pretty clear that everyone else agreed (including Pina Bausch, who had programmed them in her own dance festival in Wuppertal).

*monumental* was the only piece they ever made specifically for a large stage, and even with taped music it was a remarkable, ground-breaking and audacious work.

At this point Godspeed You! Black Emperor were on indefinite hiatus but this was the only dance piece that ever got permission to use their music, even on tape.

By the time I moved to Australia, Godspeed were back in business, so one of the first trips I made as Artistic Director of the Adelaide Festival was to Montreal to talk to Dana Gingras, co-founder of The Holy Body Tattoo, about remounting *monumental* with the music performed live.

That was five years ago. And it was worth the wait.

In terms of a live experience that engages all of the senses, I can think of very few that scale the heights of *monumental* and Godspeed together on stage.

This really is the one that changes the rules on dance and its interaction with music.

Of everything I’ve brought to Adelaide this is one of the things that comes closest to being the pure distillation of why I do what I do.

David Sefton
Artistic Director

Duration
1hr 15min, no interval
“By your response to danger it is easy to tell how you have lived and what has been done to you. You show whether you want to stay alive, whether you think you deserve to and whether you believe it’s any good to act.”

-JENNY HOLZER

CHOREOGRAPHERS’ NOTE
In the drive to overpower nature and vanquish impermanence, what remains when contemporary culture is stilled are but small tokens that speak of transience and humility. monumental is an elegiac investigation into the physical anxiety of urban culture. In an ever-accelerating climate of greed and ambition, personal relationships are subjected to group identity, and human connection becomes increasingly difficult. Even as some individuals are made larger than life, most break and topple under the strain.

Engaged in never ending corporate wars, the ensemble of nine dancers represents the contemporary Everyman, with the Totentanz (energy, aggression and hostility) that seethes behind their controlled exteriors made explicit. This constellation of characters evokes in turn dissolution, entropy, and the failure of ambition – culminating in the struggle to preserve the self from the erasure and oblivion of modern ‘Urbiculture’ and the impending risk of death from overwork. monumental combines textual elements from Jenny Holzer, film projections by William Morrison, a cityscape environment sculpted by light, designed by Marc Parent and live music performed by Godspeed You! Black Emperor. Choreographic sequences are presented like a series of stop motion photographs or edits in a film. Structured against the desire for continuity and wholeness is the fragmentation and rupture of images – stopped in mid action, jarring, suddenly stilled. Each character is caught in the machinations of love, war, chaos and death. Separated by the physical barriers of the city and the rigidity of social order, the yearning for shared and abiding values is nurtured like a secret shame: desires, indicative of fragility and need, are silenced. Within this isolation, the need for intimacy remains, furtive and hidden beneath looming towers. In the disjunction between immaculate facades and human fragility, innocence is the first loss.

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THE HOLY BODY TATTOO

Canadian choreographers Noam Gagnon and Dana Gingras founded The Holy Body Tattoo in 1993 to explore the nature of human endurance. The company’s unique style combines athletic choreography with the work of collaborators from a range of disciplines, including visual artists, filmmakers, musicians and writers.

Premiering as the company’s fifth and final work in 2005, *monumental* is the third work in a triptych that began with the company’s earliest work *White Riot* (1993) and *our brief eternity* (1996). *our brief eternity* received the prestigious Dora Mavor Moore Award for Best Ensemble Performance. The company’s other critically acclaimed works include *Running Wild* (2004) and a tango-influenced pas de deux *Circa* (2000), the recipient of the Rio Tinto Alcan Performing Arts Award.

The Holy Body Tattoo returned to the stage this January for the first time in 10 years with Godspeed You! Black Emperor performing *monumental* at PuSh Festival in Vancouver.
Canadian post-rock band Godspeed You! Black Emperor formed in 1994 and released their debut album *F# A# ∞* in 1997. Following the release of two more records and years of touring the band went on an indefinite hiatus in 2003.

It was 2010 when the band came together to play their first live shows in seven years, leading to the release of their long-awaited fourth album ‘Allelujah! Don’t Bend! Ascend!’ in 2012. Over the next few years GYBE worked with sound engineer Greg Norman (Electrical Audio) at studios in North Carolina and Montreal, slowly and steadily putting together their fifth album. ‘Asunder, Sweet And Other Distress’ was released in 2015 and featured the mesmerizing, achingly visceral and multi-layered symphonic waves that fans have come to expect from this beloved collective.

In January 2016 GYBE performed monumental live with The Holy Body Tattoo for the first time at PuSh Festival in Vancouver.
CAST AND CREW

**Choreography and Direction** Noam Gagnon and Dana Gingras

**Music** Godspeed You! Black Emperor

**Performers** Caroline Gravel, Louise-Michel Jackson, Kim de Jong, Shay Kuebler, Louis-Elyan Martin, Esther Rousseau-Morin, Sovann Prom Tep, Michael Watts, Jamie Wright

**Choreographic Remount and Rehearsal Director** Sarah Williams

**Lighting Design** Marc Parent

**Text** Jenny Holzer

**Edit and Arrangement** Dana Gingras

**Film Direction** Dana Gingras and William Morrison

**Cinematography and Editing** William Morrison

**Costumes** Marilène Bastien

**Technical Director** Dave Bourdages

**Stage Manager** Claudia Couture

**Sound** Yann Dupuis

**Producer** Sarah Rogers

**Produced by** Animals of Distinction

**Live collaboration initiated by** David Sefton

The choreographers wish to gratefully acknowledge the creative contribution of the original cast to the choreographic process and development of *monumental*: Ric Brown, Sarah Doucet, David Flewelling, Andrea Gunnlaugsson, Day Helesic, Farley Johansson, Blair Neufeld, Sonja Perreten and Sarah Williams.

World premiere of *monumental* with live music performed by Godspeed You! Black Emperor took place on January 28, 2016 in Vancouver BC as a part of the PuSh International Performing Arts Festival.

Special thanks to Jim Smith/Eponymous who produced *monumental* in 2005 and to the National Arts Centre in Ottawa who co-produced and premiered the original version on February 24, 2005.

Thank you to the many people who contributed to this project from its initial inception in 2005 to its current incarnation in 2016 – Menno Plukker, Cathy Levy, Yannick Grandmont, Justin Evans, Gabrielle Desgagnés, Marilou Lépine, Camille Gingras, Daniel Canty, Roger Tellier-Craig, Steven R Gilmore, Erik Whittaker, The Simons Foundation, Luminérgie, Tiago Chasqueira, Guillaume Cavalière

And the Animals of Distinction Board of Directors: Suzanne Hawkes, Patty Jones, Dianne Kennedy, Patricia Kim, Mike Magee, Marie Brassard, Daniel Canty, Line Nault and Karine Denault.

Rehearsals for *monumental* with Godspeed You! Black Emperor were supported through a residency at Place des Arts, Montreal.

The company also gratefully acknowledges the support of the Canada Council for the Arts and the Conseil des Arts et des Lettres du Québec.

A co-production with the Adelaide Festival of Arts, PuSh International Performing Arts Festival (Vancouver), Place des Arts Montréal, Luminato Festival (Toronto), Edinburgh International Festival, BAM for the Next Wave Festival and National Arts Centre (Ottawa).
PROUD MAJOR PARTNER OF THE ADELAIDE FESTIVAL 2016