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Courtesy photo  
Two Les Ballets Jazz de Montreal dancers perform a piece titled "Fiesta" that will be seen in their Hult Center appearance.

## Jazz troupe intricate, humorous

By Ming Rodrigues  
Emerald Contributor

While other modern dance groups may be more dedicated to elevating dance into rarefied realms that often leave audiences in a state of open-mouthed bewilderment, Les Ballets Jazz de Montreal is happy to remain securely anchored in its world of pure and unadulterated kinetic entertainment.

This world-famous Canadian dance troupe was created to be enjoyed for what they are — bright, sometimes flashy, sometimes humorous, invariably intricate and always visually exciting.

It takes more than flawless, precise executions to sustain their unique dance style that fuses the elegance of classical ballet and the excitement of modern dance with the emotional richness of jazz music.

Under the hands of artistic director Genevieve Salbaing, Les Ballets' technique has evolved into one of seemingly effortless spontaneity, where the dancers are known to melt from the most exuberant and light-hearted dancing into strongly dramatic pieces.

Their try-anything enthusiasm has delighted audiences everywhere. "Wings on their feet, fire in their bellies" and "Inspiring, graceful, formidably precise, coupled with delightful humor" are some of the rave reviews the

troupe has garnered.

With so much going for it, unflagging energy has got to be one essential element of Canada's most traveled cultural ambassador. Celebrating its 20th anniversary this year, Les Ballets Jazz has performed at many of the world's leading dance and jazz festivals, having given over 1,500 performances on five continents and in 52 countries — throughout Canada and the States, Europe, Mexico, the British Isles, the Caribbean Islands, the Mideast and the Far East.

Hosted by the Eugene Ballet Company, Les Ballet Jazz's performances here will include choreography by some of the best dance choreographers in the country: Lynne Taylor Corbett, whose film credits include *Footloose* and *My Blue Heaven*; David Parsons of the Parsons Dance Company; Ulysses Dove, a choreographer whose career includes a stint with the Alvin Ailey Dance Theater; and Margo Sappington whose credits include the Broadway production of *Doonesbury*.

The music ranges widely through the jazz repertoire: from Oscar Peterson to Pat Metheny to Lee Gagnon. And more.

Les Ballets Jazz de Montreal will perform on Feb. 18-19 at 8 p.m. in the Hult Center's Silva Concert Hall. Tickets, available at the EMU Main Desk, are \$3.50, \$7.50, \$11 and \$17.50 for students and \$7 to \$35 general admission.

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