



Press release
For immediate release

LIGHTING UP THE MONUMENT-NATIONAL

19TH CENTURY FAÇADE, 21ST CENTURY LIGHTING

Montreal, October 16 2009 – After a successful pilot project, the Monument-National will show its true colours for the first time tonight at 7PM. The theatre façade will reveal its identity with a landmark work of illumination that is environmentally friendly and energy-efficient. The result of a collaboration between the Quartier des spectacles Partnership and the Monument-National, this element of the Quartier des spectacles Lighting Plan will highlight the significance of a key cultural institution by integrating it into the nightscape of 21st century Montreal.

“In this effort to enhance an icon of Montreal theatre, my first motivation was to express the excitement and magic of the theatre world in the medium of light” said Axel Morgenthaler, designer and president of Photonic Dreams. Working from the orientations of Ruedi Baur and Jean Beaudoin of Integral, the artistic directors of the Lighting Plan, Morgenthaler has created a dramatic and architectural lighting installation that will showcase the theatre’s unique sense of place and indicate moments of activity for passersby. The lighting concept acts in tandem with the common luminous signature – the distinctive double line of red dots projected onto the pavement at the entry to many of the neighbourhood’s cultural venues – also conceived by illumination artist Axel Morgenthaler.

The designer’s inspiration came to life through dynamic LED (light emitting diode) luminaries, which can be programmed to change colour or brightness. This bright idea consumes very little electricity (an average of 1.2 kWh), 75 percent less than a traditional light fixture. The luminous signature is also energy-efficient, consuming 83 times less energy than a conventional bulb and lasting 25 times longer.

“The illumination of the Monument-National is a spectacular and innovative way to mark its entry into the 21st century, and confirms its status as the cornerstone of the Quartier des spectacles. Our venerable cultural complex has never looked so inviting, or revealed its detailing so clearly to art and architecture lovers. Long live the Monument-National!” emphasized Félix Martel, director of the Monument-National.

“Two months from now, the façades of six other cultural venues will bear the mark of different lighting designers, and the sidewalk in front of most venues will be lit with the luminous signature. Lighting up the Monument-National marks the beginning of a bright and colourful autumn for the Quartier des spectacles. Light is the soul of the neighbourhood. Two months from now, it will be hard to visit the area without noticing it” added Charles Lapointe, president of the Quartier des spectacles.

The illumination of the Monument-National is part of phase 1 of the Quartier des spectacles Lighting Plan, financed by the City of Montreal and the Quebec Ministère des Affaires municipales, des régions et de l’occupation du territoire. The Monument-National also contributed financially to the project.

About the Quartier des spectacles Lighting Plan

The first tangible expression of the neighbourhood's visual identity, the Lighting Plan illuminates the richness of the Quartier des spectacles while respecting the environment. Light spills from the theatres and pulses with the rhythm of cultural activities, revealing the essence of the neighbourhood and giving it an identity. It immerses visitors in a unique, powerful and distinctive urban experience. In a single glance, they can see the full abundance of Montreal's cultural offerings.

About Photonic Dreams

Axel Morgenthaler is recognized in Quebec as one of the most innovative visual designers working today. Throughout his career, he has made his talents known as a lighting designer and a multimedia artist, both in Quebec and abroad, through his work for Cirque du Soleil and others. He has developed works of public art, as well as over one hundred lighting, scenographic and multimedia concepts for dance, theatre and opera. His company, Photonic Dreams, has the technical expertise and the artistic sensitivity needed to master the medium of light, and a comprehensive knowledge of the technologies used in the field. His principal preoccupations include human beings, architectural spaces, light and visual perception. He is currently working on multiple urban illumination projects for Montreal's Quartier des spectacles. www.photonicdreams.com

About the Monument-National

The history of the Monument-National started in 1893. The property of the National Theatre School since 1978, and fully renovated in its centennial year, this building dedicated to performance and theatre education is today a place of infinite possibilities. Its daring nature is highlighted by its modern décor, which preserves traces of the previous century and foreshadows the centuries to come. www.monument-national.qc.ca

About the Quartier des spectacles

Located in downtown Montreal, the Quartier des spectacles has been the cultural heart of the metropolis for over 100 years. As the site of an impressive number of artistic manifestations, this destination is equaled only by New York's Broadway for its concentration of cultural assets – but has no equal in the diversity of its cultural offerings. www.quartierdesspectacles.com

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