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First Male to Receive Oregon Dance Scholarship Returns Home to Direct the West Coast Premiere of *Le Grand Continental*

Portland, OR – New York-based dancer & Oregon native, [Jamie Benson](#), has accepted the position of Rehearsal Director for [Le Grand Continental](#), an ambitious, 30-minute contemporary line dance by Montreal-based choreographer Sylvain Emard. Jamie Benson, the first male ever to receive a dance scholarship from the Dance Drill Coaches Association of Oregon, has since moved on to direct, produce, choreograph & dance for dozens of theatre events, commercials & films in New York, Los Angeles & Seattle. As Rehearsal Director, Benson is responsible for casting & teaching a very diverse group of 150 Oregonians a wildly creative line dance. Benson says, “I have the privilege of ushering Oregon into the international community of *Le Grand Continental*. To share this global, dance glory with my family & home state is a real thrill.” Benson's mother & twin brother will also be dancing with him. Local dance presenter [White Bird](#) is producing this special event as a way to celebrate their 15th anniversary & thank the people of Portland for supporting them for so long. ***Le Grand Continental* is slated for 2pm & 4pm performances on September 30th, 2012 at Portland’s Pioneer Courthouse Square.**



[Jamie Benson](#), proclaimed as “one of the strongest, hottest contemporary dancers of his generation” by dance critic Lewis Segal, is a dancer, choreographer & Alumnus of Cornish College of the Arts. Benson first garnered critical attention originating the role of “Eldon” in LATC’s Ovation award winning production of *Shag with a Twist* in 2005. Back Stage West heralded Benson as “the most Chaplin-like” of the wordless production. Benson has also performed in the Film *Rent*, McDonald's *Mario Art* commercial, Rei Aoo's *Dance Planet*, on the television series *Dance360* & as a member of the Rudy Perez Performance Ensemble. For more visit jamiebenson.com.



Montreal-based choreographer [Sylvain Emard](#) first distinguished himself as a dancer working with renowned choreographers such as Jean-Pierre Perreault, Jo Lechay & Louise Bédard before forming Sylvain Émard Danse, in 1990. A proponent of the commingling of genres, Sylvain Émard navigates with ease from one milieu to another – film, theatre, the visual arts & opera, as seen, for example by his collaboration on Lorin Maazel’s opera *1984*, directed by Robert Lepage & presented on the celebrated stage of Covent Garden in London in 2005, & again at La Scala in Milan in 2008.

[White Bird](#) is committed to bringing the best Portland-based, regional, national, & international dance companies to Portland, Oregon & to fostering the growth of dance in the region. Each year they present 12 companies from around the world & commission new works from Portland-based choreographers.

For more information, photos & interviews, please contact Jamie Benson at 323-704-5287 or info@jamiebenson.com

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