

## Crabb: Dancing their way into our hearts



Tanya Howard in *Alice in Wonderland*.

By Michael Crabb  
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Top 10 dance events to hit the GTA in 2011

1. For theatrical daring and hauntingly poetic imagery it was hard to beat Montreal's Compagnie Marie Chouinard in *Orpheus and Eurydice*. Greek mythology was never this much fun.
2. For high-tech spectacle of the multi-million dollar variety, the National Ballet's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* was eye-poppingly awesome. Bob Crowley's designs, Natasha Katz's lighting and Jon Driscoll's amazing projected effects almost overwhelmed Christopher Wheeldon's choreography.
3. If transgression and provocation was on your dance card, Dave St-Pierre delivered the goods with his subversively riotous *Un peu de tendresse bordel de merde!* (A little tenderness for crying out loud!). Never has stage nudity been quite so in-your-face. I had to get my jacket dry cleaned.
4. *Swan Lake* productions abound and many of them are outstandingly good, but there was still something magical about seeing the dancers of St. Petersburg's Mariinsky (Kirov) Ballet perform this Tchaikovsky-scored classic as if they were born to do it — which in a way they were.
5. If your sides are still aching from laughing too much it's probably because you went to see those irreverently funny men in toe shoes and tutus, Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo. And, boy oh boy, can they ever dance up a dust devil.

6. Downtowners had to find their way to Markham Theatre to catch Montreal's always alluring BJM Danse (a.k.a. Les Ballets Jazz) in January; but they'll likely agree with the locals that it was more than worth the trip.
7. And talking of Markham Theatre, (along with Brampton's Rose and Brock University), bless their programming folk for making it possible once again to enjoy the genius of American modern dance master Paul Taylor and the company that performs his work to perfection.
8. The National Ballet's risk-taking decision to cast aside a much loved, long-serving *Romeo and Juliet* in favour of new Alexei Ratmansky staging proved an artistic triumph — and, to the tune of \$2,097,787, a box office hit. If you missed it this time, don't fret. It will be back soon enough.
9. Who wants to be indoors on a warm summer evening? Once again Toronto's Dusk Dances responded by serving up a friendly open-air feast of easy-on-the-brain entertainment for appreciative audiences of all ages — plus a few attentive dogs.
10. There's Ukrainian dance and then there's Edmonton's Shumka Ukrainian Dancers. They sure know how to put the art in acrobatics. If you tried to repeat some of their most dazzling moves at home you're probably reading this in a hospital bed.

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