

ALBERTA BALLET AND JONI MITCHELL BRINGS CALGARY ARTS BRAND ON TO THE WORLD STAGE

2 FEBRUARY 2007

How does an Arts organization reinvent itself, build its profile on a world stage and win new audiences? Alberta Ballet has found the solution through a strong strategic branding program, culminating in a world premier of the unique collaboration between Joni Mitchell and artistic director and choreographer Jean Grand-Maitre.

The Fiddle & the Drum combines ballet, video and new songs especially composed by Mitchell. It deals with the themes of human conflict and the environment and has been described as 'unlike anything ever seen in the history of classical ballet'. It features nine songs and a set designed by Joni Mitchell.

For Laura Haynes, director of Appetite – the London based consultancy that has helped Alberta Ballet to develop its brand and communications strategy since 2005 – it's all about building a strong brand culture in a tough environment and simply taking risks. "Building a name on the international Arts circuit demands a powerful vision and shared values. We've channeled all the creative energy of the ballet into a strategy that challenges the boundaries of dance, music and theatre."

Having this vision and identity has allowed the company not only to feel confident to tackle challenging subjects but also to thrive in Alberta – an oil-rich province of Canada best known for its cowboy hats and 'red neck' bar culture.

Laura Haynes has since been appointed as Chair of Alberta Ballet and continues to develop the power of the Arts brand bringing the Alberta Ballet to the attention of local as well as broader audiences in North America and internationally.

With over 20 years' experience of advising leading fmcg brands and corporations on branding and innovation, Haynes and her team have developed challenging new techniques for brand development and creative thinking to both public and private sector organizations. "This is more than advising and providing creative direction – our clients increasingly want to know how to steer their organizations through stormy periods of change and increased competition for market share, audiences and consumer spend."

Appetite has a great deal of experience of such a challenge – having created the LONDON branding for the GLA, which successfully communicated the cultural diversity, vibrancy and personality of the UK capital city in one identity – as well as working with organizations such as Tetra Pak, Slough Estates and Johnson&Johnson.

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Note to Editors:

Alberta Ballet launched their 40th Anniversary Season with a new brand identity and style designed by Appetite, UK based creative consultancy.

Alberta Ballet is the country's third largest ballet company and is based in Calgary and Edmonton. Celebrating its 40th anniversary, it has a reputation for creating innovative, passionate productions which are both intimate and expansive. Artistic leadership comes from Jean Grand-Maitre, an artistic director and choreographer with an international reputation and experience.

Innovation is at the heart of Alberta Ballet's attitude to the taking the Arts to a wider audience: it recently we launched 'attitude' – an initiative aimed at opening up the performing arts to the 18-35 year old crowd – for a “beer and pizza” combined with a pre-performance chat and performance tickets - that has already attracted over 600 new young attendees in Edmonton and over 800 in Calgary. For a limited period, attitude members can subscribe for 50% of the regular cost for as little as \$80 – 4 performances!

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