

Le Patin Libre

Short press review - July 2023

Le Patin Libre is the world's first and only contemporary ice-skating company.

Vertical Influences, *Threshold* and *Murmuration* are our 3 full-evening pieces.

The company gathers high level figure skaters. They decided to abandon the stereotypes of the "On Ice" show-business to create a legitimate art of glide: our skating is sophisticated, exciting and worthy of the 21st century.

"...a new master-piece, epic and fascinating." - Toutelaculture.com, juin 2022, France

"An elegant, virtuosic and pure ice skating" - Le Figaro, 2016, France

"Le Patin Libre signs a mature work of art." - Le Devoir, 2018, Canada



"Vertical Influences will blow your mind." - The Guardian, 2015, UK



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SPECTACLES



Murmuration, les envolées du patinage artistique

24 JUIN 2022 | PAR CAPUCINE DE MONTAUDRY

Le Théâtre de la Ville propose un nouveau chef-d'œuvre, épique et passionnant : Murmuration, signé Le Patin Libre, dans le cadre d'un hors les murs. La compagnie québécoise investit la patinoire d'Asnières les 23 et 25 juin pour une chorégraphie sur patins à glace, inspirée des mouvements que font les milliers d'étourneaux avant leur migration.

Juin 2022,
Toutelaculture.com, France

'Murmuration' review (translate)

**Murmuration, figure skating
flies away**

Théâtre de la Ville proposes a new master-piece, epic and fascinating : Murmuration, signed by Le Patin Libre, presented off site. The Quebec company takes over the Asnières ice rink between June 23 and 25th to present an ice skating choreography inspired by the movements displayed by thousands-strong swarms of starlings, before their migration.

This algorithm fascinates Alexandre Hamel, Pascale Jodoin and Samory Ba since more than 10 years. Recently, ornithologists and scientists understood that the murmurations, these movements of starlings before their migration, could be translated into mathematical formulas. The three artists inspired themselves from them and the result is striking. A breathtaking choreographic piece on ice.

Layers of movements

No less than 15 dancers appear on the immense ice surface. They melt into the smoke and darkness. The music, very soft, dives the spectator into a contemplative ambiance. One marvels as soon as the movements start : after a few solitary trajectories, the collective takes shape. Their movements are in perfect harmony but delayed one from the others. Everyone draws the others into a vast choreography. Each movement is necessary, natural, amazingly graceful.

(...)

The Guardian

October 2018
The Guardian, UK

Review of 'Threshold'
and of another work by
another artist present in
the same festival.

Nude, skewed and turbo-charged: the dancers weaving a mesmerising magic | Stage | The Guardian



Dimitris Papaioannou's show at Dance Umbrella is a painterly piece that leaves little to the imagination, while Le Patin Libre deliver a haunting show on ice

Lyndsey Winship

Fri 19 Oct 2018 13.05 BST

(...) There is magic in Le Patin Libre's shows, too. The French-Canadian figure skaters make a new brand of contemporary ice dance, all based on the ghostly glide, the ability to move at great speed while the body remains still.

What's so mesmerising is the way the dynamics of the movement and the group morph while maintaining the unbroken thread of the glide. They swell, flow, accelerate, stretch and contract the space between their bodies. They switch from legato to marcato. It's hugely musical to watch. Their feet trace intricate patterns on the ice, but often it's the simplest moments that are the most arresting, as the five skaters very beautifully just slide backwards and forwards, hypnotic as a swinging pocket watch.

This latest work, *Threshold* (★★★★), brings a new level of emotion. Not a narrative but fleeting glimpses and fragments: moments of conflict between bodies clashing or dodging each other; the push-pull of a couple warily, or wearily, circling each other; a lone body left on the ice.

What they're lacking is a stronger sense of the overall shape. The second half could do with more propulsion and, musically, the moody minor string soundtrack is muted and repetitive. But this is a group doing something that no one else is, and who, like Papaioannou, make you look afresh and with wonder at bodies moving.

CULTURE • SCÈNES

Spectacle : la danse contemporaine à l'épreuve de la glace

La compagnie canadienne du Patin libre présente à Asnières-sur-Seine sa nouvelle création, « Threshold ».

Par Rosita Boisseau • Publié le 13 juin 2019 à 09h27



« Threshold », le nouveau spectacle de la compagnie canadienne du Patin libre.

(translated excerpts of the review)

The Canadian flag-bearer of a new art of skating born on the frozen ponds of Montreal intends to whip the show “On Ice” by making it tilt toward contemporary dance. And it works, as proven once again...

There is a desire to take flight in their movements, but also a need to confront matter through falling, rolling on the ice, whirling like a turtle overturned on its shell.

Their synchronism breathes deeply. Pure energy and choreographic abstraction release a gripping intensity. The force of expansion of glide emerges on infinity.

“The most contemporary and refined art can also appeal to the general public,” declared Alexandre Hamel in 2016. Threshold takes up the challenge.

Vertical review at Somerset House, London – 'brave and brilliant'



Le Patin Libre's Vertical at Somerset House, London Photo: Alicia Clark

Reviews Dance by Katie Columbus - Jan 14, 2016

outstretched in arcs around the rink, with their everyday clothes (there's not a rhinestone in sight) rippling in the cold air.

The once polished ice becomes sliced and hacked. The sound of skates scraping, spinning, and crunching, adds to a multi-sensory performance experience (we are outside, in the freezing air surrounded by the tremendous Renaissance architecture of Somerset House), and is incorporated into a percussive section as the group bang their blades in a tap dance rhythm, advancing diagonally across the rink.

The choreography is surreal at times: blank faces advance en masse to menacing music, like a scene from a horror film; they appear in front of you quicker than you think possible. At others it is playful, funny, quirky to the point of bizarre. The performers are sporty in a sense, with the strong, swinging arms of speed skaters, but it is their artistry that makes Vertical what it is: outstandingly brave and really rather brilliant.

Watching Le Patin Libre is like dreaming about flying – it is a liberating, exhilarating, breathtaking experience. This quintet of former professional figure skaters have freed themselves from the shackles of sequins and judged technical perfection to create a new kind of ice dance.

There is a real sense of playing with movement and experimenting with kinaesthesia, executing feats of weight and balance, gliding in arabesque or deep plié and combining this with upper body twists and flowing release movements.

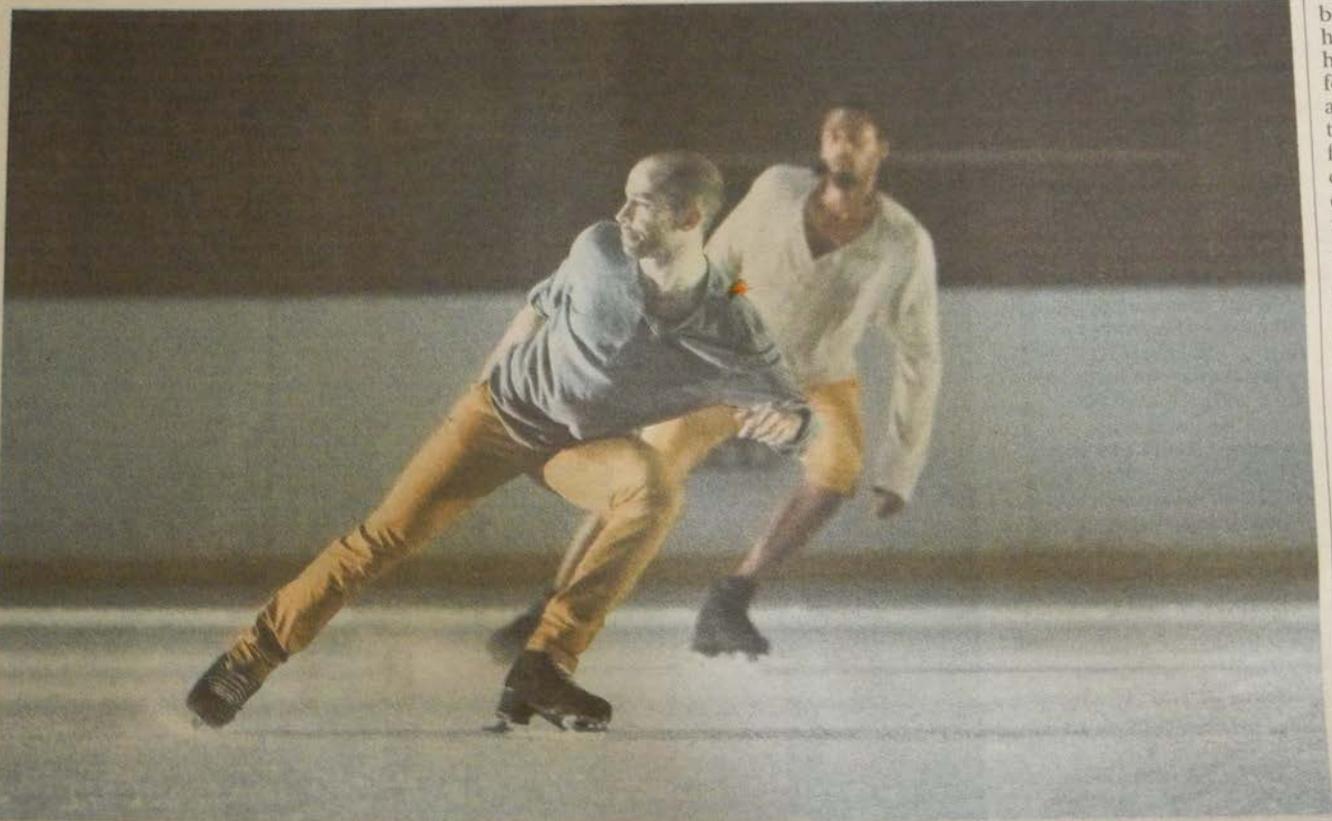
Here there are no score cards. The dancers luxuriate in being free. Like birds they swoop, or soar with arms

Verdict

Le Patin Libre's liberating, brilliant reinvention of ice dance



Cool moves make for breathtaking show



Le Patin Libre demonstrate intelligent artistry, aesthetic beauty and incredible skill in this captivating double bill Picture: Alicia Clarke

DANCE, PHYSICAL THEATRE & CIRCUS VERTICAL INFLUENCES

ASSEMBLY AT MURRAYFIELD
ICE RINK (VENUE 454)

★★★★★

IF YOU'VE ever watched *Dancing on Ice* on TV, or sat through a *Disney on Ice* show – then it's time to forget everything you've learned. The work produced by Canadian company Le Patin Libre could not be further from the glitz and glitter of your average ice dance show.

This is pure movement,

intelligent artistry, aesthetic beauty and incredible skill all rolled into one – and it's breathtaking. Making its Fringe debut in 2014, with a handful of bite-size routines, Le Patin Libre have made a very welcome return with a longer double bill.

Dressed in everyday clothing, the five performers glide across the ice as one unit. Like a shoal of fish or flock of birds, the distance between them never alters as they pick up speed.

During the first half, we observe all of this from the side of the rink, watching the subtle narrative of *Influences* play out.

After the break, it's time for *Vertical* – and for us to move seats. No longer viewing from the sidelines, we're now almost part of the action.

A carpeted section of the ice is covered with cushions, chairs and stools of differing heights to ensure everyone has a great view (imagine that at a Fringe venue). Then on they come, hurtling down the ice towards us, skating faster and faster, closer and closer until... we're plunged into darkness and they disappear.

The on-ice action would look good regardless of the circumstances, but Le Patin Libre

are too theatrically aware to short-change us. Instead, they've created their own soundtrack, and enlisted the help of acclaimed lighting designer Lucy Carter (known for her work with choreographer Wayne McGregor) to elevate their show to an even higher level.

It costs a small fortune to hire Murrayfield Ice Rink, limiting the dates the company can perform there, so pull on a warm jacket and catch them while you can.

KELLY APTER

Until 29 August. 23 August, 6:30pm & 8:30pm.

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**August 2015
Edinburgh, United Kingdom**

During the *Edinburgh Festival* and its *Fringe*, *Vertical Influences* receives many 5-stars reviews and ends up in third place in a list classifying the shows most highly rated by medias. More than 3000 shows are presented during the Edinburgh festivals.

theguardian
Winner of the Pulitzer prize

home › culture › stage classical film tv & radio music books art & design

Dance Le Patin Libre five-star review – skating dancers are a breath of fresh ice

★★★★★

Alexandra Palace Ice Rink, London
Minus the spangles and judges, ice dance lends itself spectacularly well to contemporary movement in *Vertical Influences*, an engaging body rush of a show


Judith Mackrell
Thursday 30 October 2014 14:31 GMT



< Shares 357 Comments 0



Gettin' chilly with it ... Le Patin Libre: *Vertical Influences*. Photograph: Tristram Kenton for the Guardian

Contemporary dance on skates, ice dance without sparkles and mark-schemes – this is territory that has remained weirdly unexplored. But the

October 2014
The Guardian
Londres, UK

Review of
Vertical Influences

Contemporary dance on skates, ice dance without sparkles and mark-schemes – this is territory that has remained weirdly unexplored. But the wonderfully fresh and inventive Canadian group Le Patin Libre are worth the wait: a quintet of bearded, dreadlocked, baggy jeaned dancers who spark with movement ideas that I've never seen on ice before, let alone on stage.

*The group (four men and one woman) are former championship skaters and at moments they remind us of the fact, pulling off dizzying spins and spiralling arabesques with a fine insouciance. But much of *Vertical Influences* plays with choreography and imagery that rinses viewers of all conventional expectations.*

In the first half, the dancers move together as an urban tribe. Accompanied by electronic beats and a lacing of melodic lyricism, they circle round each other at astonishing speeds, and in even more astonishing slow motion. They bait each other, bboy style, in risky shoulder and toe spinning moves, they hunker down in hiphop footwork or wheel into formations as high and free as flocking birds.

All five are joyously engaging performers, communicating a pure body rush of liberation and space. But they're even more astounding in the second half, for which we're seated on benches at the end of the rink. Down at ice level, with the expanse of the rink exaggerated by Lucy Carter's clever lighting, the dancers sweep towards us in a flourish of danger, speed and frozen air. They divide and reform in choreography of exhilarating inventiveness: a solo of staccato footwork that slashes and slices the ice, kaleidoscopic configurations in which limbs and bodies are angled into comic, impossible shapes.

*It's chilly down there on the ice, but *Vertical Influences* is one of those rare shows I could willingly have sat through all over again.*

Vertical Influences is literally the coolest thing at Luminato Fest

Unclassifiable double bill from Montreal's Le Patin Libre skates around some brilliant effects

BY **GLENN SUMI**

JUNE 23, 2017 2:51 PM

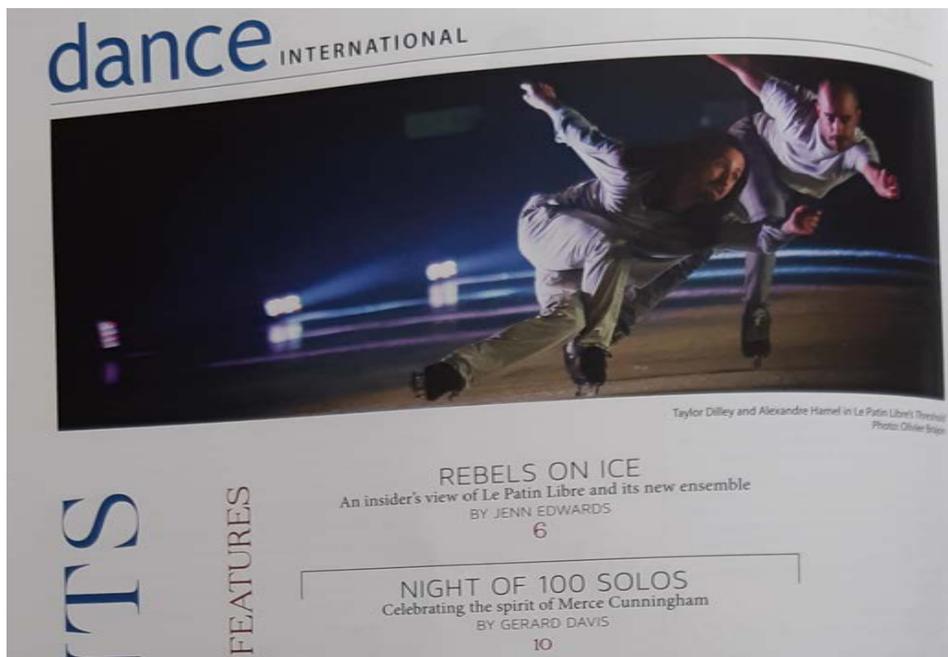


Are the skaters gonna skate right into you? Find out at Vertical Influences, one of the highlights at Luminato.

VERTICAL INFLUENCES by Le Patin Libre (Luminato). At Ryerson's Mattamy Athletic Centre (50 Carlton), **until tonight** (Friday, June 23), 4 and 7 pm, and at Don Montgomery Arena (2467 Eglinton East), **Saturday-Sunday** (June 24-25) at 4:30 and 8 pm. \$32.77-\$44.07. Rating: **NNNN**

Dance? Theatre? Circus? Figure-skating? None of these labels sufficiently captures what you'll experience in Vertical Influences, which finishes its run – or should that be skate? – today at Ryerson's Mattamy Athletic Centre (former home of Maple Leaf Gardens) and then travels to Scarborough's Don Montgomery Arena on the weekend. (...)

A show like this – unlike anything you'll see during the rest of the season – is what makes a festival like Luminato special.



August 2019, Dance International

In a specialized magazine, feature about the company and our upcoming new show

September 2014
 London Evening Standard
 Londres, UK

Weeks before the world-premiere of 'Vertical Influences', a one-page special about 'Le Patin Libre'.

"There's a tangible adrenaline hit on both sides. It's thrilling but also utterly serene."

October 2014
 Metro
 London, UK

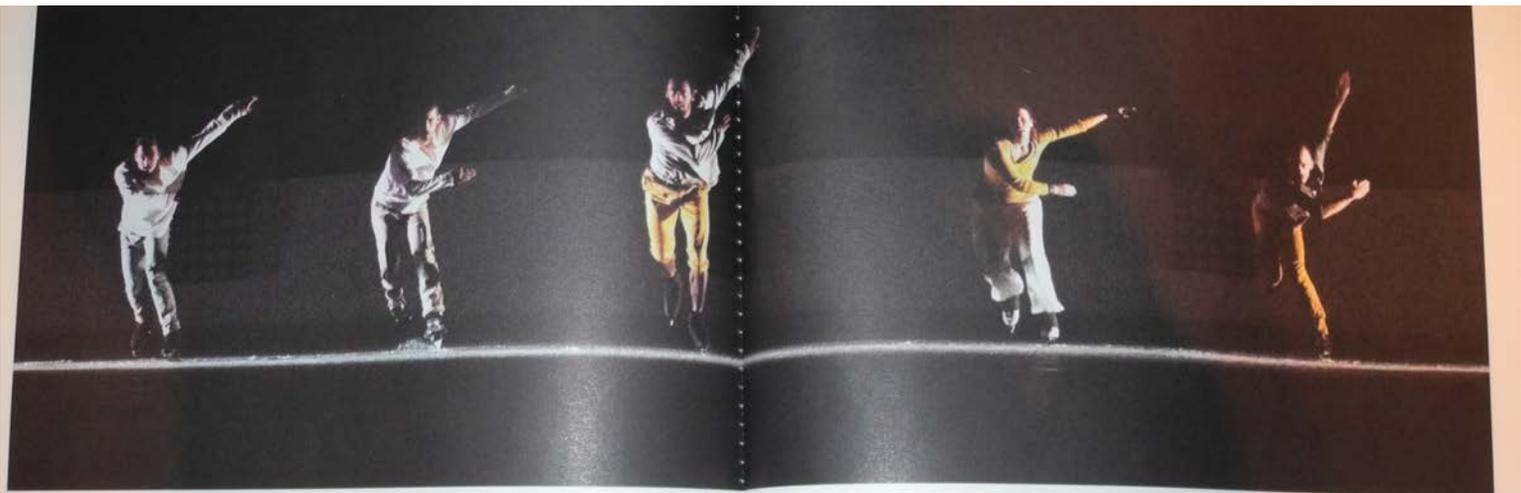
A few days before the world-premiere of 'Vertical Influences', one of London's leading free daily newspapers considers the event as one of the "Ten hottest tickets in town".

January 2013
 BBC World, UK

Short TV feature about the company and an upcoming performance

Breaking the ice: Can figure skating become cool?





LE PATIN LIBRE

自由冰舞舞團

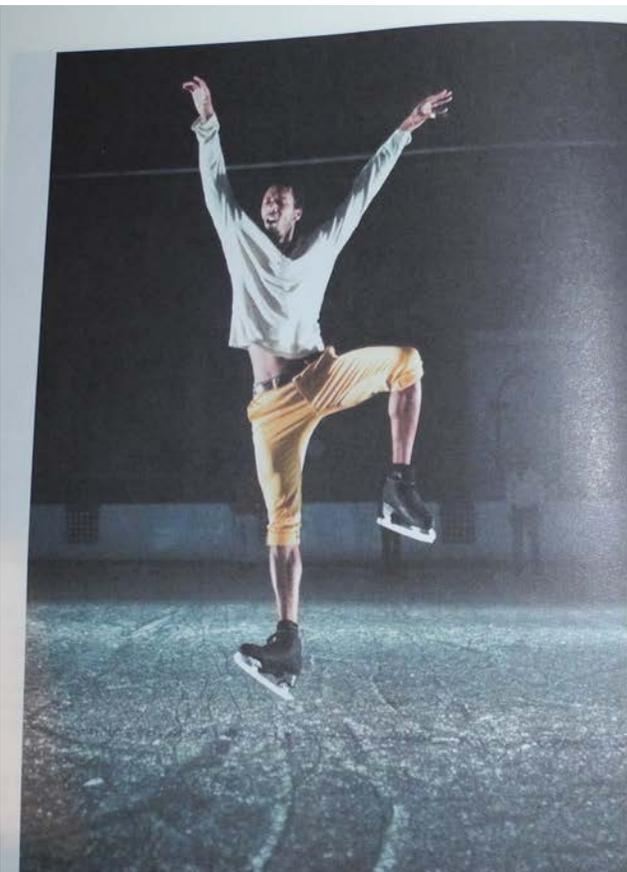
TEXT BY 傑克·艾娃·戴維斯
TRANSLATED BY 趙坤芳

Le Patin Libre, which translates as 'The Free Skate', are the first company of their kind, coining a new form of performance which they have named 'contemporary skating'. They completely overturn any notion of a saccharine, 'Dancing on Ice' style, and forgo the glitter and spray-tan that traditionally adorns the sport. Founded in 2005 by Alexandrie Hamel, the Canadian troupe consists of five principal dancers and devisors, who also act as their own technicians during shows. The company's beginnings are a sure signal of their attitude towards skating: Hamel was kicked out of skate school several times, an incident which clearly still resonates with the troupe's unpretentious, irreverent style.

Their concept of 'contemporary skating' is a fascinating one that has gained traction thanks to interest from Sadler's Wells and other well-established companies. The medium is influenced heavily by traditional ice skating, but also takes inspiration from urban dance routines and martial arts as well as contemporary circus, creating slick, accessible and contemporary dance pieces

自由冰舞舞團首創了通過“溜冰”形式進行戲劇表演的先河。他們創造了“當代冰舞”這種表演形式。他們徹底顛覆了人們對“冰上舞劇”的既有認知，也將“冰舞”這個概念從傳統的冬季運動項目的範疇中解放了出來。該舞團由亞歷山大·哈梅爾 (Alexandrie Hamel) 創建於2005年，在新舞之冠這個加拿大劇團舞上舞者和技术人員一共僅有5人。舞團的成立是因為哈梅爾幾次三番的被溜冰學校開除，而他所領導的舞團無聊和玩世不恭的表演風格引起了其他幾位團員的共鳴。

他們提出的“當代冰舞”這一令人興奮的概念引起了賽德勒斯-威爾斯 (Sadler's Wells) 和其他舞蹈劇場的興趣。傳統的冰上運動對這種新的表演形式有著至關重要的影響，而同時，街舞、武術、當代馬戲等藝術形式的交融也極大地啟發了當代冰上舞蹈的創作靈感。對於當代性與實用性並重的思想也反映在自由冰舞舞團的服裝選擇上：與冰上表演者相比，謹慎的黃色服裝似乎往往更適合那些幕後工作人員。他們的表演模式顯然是一個視覺劇場：演出展示了舞者高超的技巧和能力，特別是在一個不平滑的冰面上，創造了震撼人心的視覺效果。



on ice. This modern, no-hills approach is reflected in Le Patin Libre's costume choices: discreet black outfits which can often seem more suited to those working behind the scenes than those performing on the ice. The form is clearly a subset of visual theatre: the sheer skill and ability on show, particularly on such a harsh surface as ice, creates a thrilling visual spectacle.

Gone is the pretension that often overshadows the sport: the dancers are not afraid to fall (purposefully), skid on the ice and throw all their energy into a show that is more visceral and about the story they are telling than traditionally perfect, taking influence from the competitive nature of the ice-hockey scene in Montreal. Ultimately, they look to completely shatter the constraints placed upon them by their medium, to the extent that at the end of one of their latest performances, the audience are invited to come down from their stalls and skate around the rink with the troupe, learning basic dance routines rather

自由冰舞與傳統冰舞運動不同，舞者們並不擔心跌倒；他們在冰上滑行，並將全部的重量投入到演出當中。他們更注意發自肺腑的來講述故事而不是像傳統冰上運動項目那樣注重動作完美。這與冰上競技運動有本質上的區別。最終，他們會用“冰舞”來徹底顛覆了“冰舞”之上的禁錮。為了實現這樣的目的，他們在最近的一次表演結束時，邀請觀眾從看臺上走下來和演員們一起圍著冰場通行，并學習基本的舞蹈技巧而不是溜冰技巧。這樣一種令人神往的場景展現了自由冰舞舞團致力於消除觀眾與演員之間鴻溝的強烈願望。

作為一家非營利性的公司，免費觀眾佔據了觀眾群體中相當大的比重。自由冰舞舞團想通過冰上的表演來傳達他們的理念，這與傳統意義上的運動範疇內的“冰舞”有很大的區別。他們的舞蹈點並不是在溜冰技術上的難度和表現，而更多的普通通過這種一種形式來表達他們在藝術上的追求。因此劇團的主要目的並非進行一種專業性的藝術表演，而只是希望更多表演者上那種純屬技術性質的“冰舞”或無腦娛樂的目的。他們認為，冰舞不應該被定義為一種運動項目，相反，它應該是一種承載戲劇和社會意義的藝術形式。



2015, ArtZip, China

In a chinese magazine, a review of performances in Macao and Edinburgh and a long feature on *Le Patin Libre*.



**March 2015
RDI Matin
Canada**

On the morning show of one of Canada's national TV networks, our founder and skater Alexandre Hamel talks about the history and process of Le Patin Libre. These TV appearances teach people about our art and art in general, They boost audiences for our shows and are educative.



**March 2014
Nouvelles Hochelaga**

In a local weekly newspaper, an article about outreach activities surrounding a show: ice skating initiations, ice dancing parties, etc.

Translation:
"A rink for all
During the winter school break, about a thousand people decided to participate in one of the many activities proposed by Patin Libre and to see their shows, which happened at Francis-Bouillon Arena."