



**THE GRAND MASQUERADE!**  
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## **One of THE MOST SPECTACULAR HALLOWEEN EVENTS EVER IN NORTH AMERICA! 2004-2005-2006-2007**

Drawing its inspiration from our society's irrefutable taste for mystery and the unexpected, from 2004 through 2007, The Grand Masquerade successfully produced an event combining artistic flair and cultural flavor into a participative experience for the general public to enjoy.

In its festival-like format, this gathering of Halloween-goers offered new perspectives on Montreal's historic quarter with its multi-discipline, urban approach to such an event, using cultural references borrowed from a multitude of sources from Halloween traditions and the Day of the Dead, to the folklore, stories and legends of Quebec, American Indian and Celtic origins; including the mysterious and lesser-known facts drawn from the history of Montreal and New France, plus inspiration taken from fantasy-based literature and cinema.

The Masquerade occupied a strategically favorable spot in Montreal's busy festival calendar for 4 years running, breathing life into Old Montreal at an otherwise dreary time of year.



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**2000-** In this millennium year, the predecessor to the Grand Masquerade – LE RENDEZ-VOUS DE L'HALLOWEEN ! – is presented by Les Productions L'Entracte in the Plateau Mont-Royal district and proves hugely popular. Activities include a grand procession and various theme workshops (cinematic special effects, giant marionettes).

With phenomenal public participation and outstanding media coverage, the adventure gets the go-ahead signal.

**2001-** Les Productions L'Entracte and L'Équipe Spectra decide to combine forces to jointly develop this new arrival on the Montreal event scene.

**2002-** During this transition year, following numerous consultations, organizers decide that future development of The Grand Masquerade – the event's new title – will take place within Old Montreal.

**2004-** The public responds enthusiastically to cries from the tomb, namely those of the organizers of the 1<sup>st</sup> Edition of The Grand Masquerade, a phantasmagoric three-night celebration of Halloween which take place at Place Jacques-Cartier and the Bonsecours Market. Les Productions L'Entracte and L'Équipe Spectra estimate that about 75,000 individuals show up for the evenings of sheer terror organized on their behalf, a thoroughly ghoulish spectacle that bodes well for those of coming years. Compliments were abundant as Montrealers indulge in the latest annual festive event that has been added to their yearly calendar. Comments are equally laudatory with regard to the organization of the Old Montreal site. So if the soothsayers have their way, there is little doubt we will be seeing the event successfully repeated year after year, for the delight of young and old. The hub of activity is at the Festival's site, inaugurated with the Fallen Angel site, on October 29, which doubtless leave a lasting impression on all in attendance.

Le bal – *La Nuit du Sacrifice* is completely sold out and monstrously successful, as festivalgoers descend on the Salle de la Commune at Bonsecours Market. The welcome – prepared by and for the living dead – come off exactly as planned, too, and people come decked out in their most morbid of apparel, as had been suggested. Earlier in the evening is the Visite des fantômes du Vieux-Montréal, accompanied by the station master and also well attend by the public, plus La Procession Funèbre, another visual treat that take place on October 31 and is also attended by imaginatively costumed celebrants, another indicator of the huge potential it promises for future editions. It is truly spectacular to witness 5000 ghostly figures parading under the pouring rain, on Saint-Paul Street – quite surreal, in fact. And behind their masks, it is clear that visitors from all Montreal's cultural communities are in attendance, especially those of Latin origin for whom the Feast of the Dead is a long-standing tradition. All in all, and thanks to the sponsors, particularly Loto-Québec and Molson Export, official event's sponsors, the entire event is such a success that organizers are planning to increase the number of special events and activities and hoping to extend next year's celebration to four days, instead of the three for this inaugural year.



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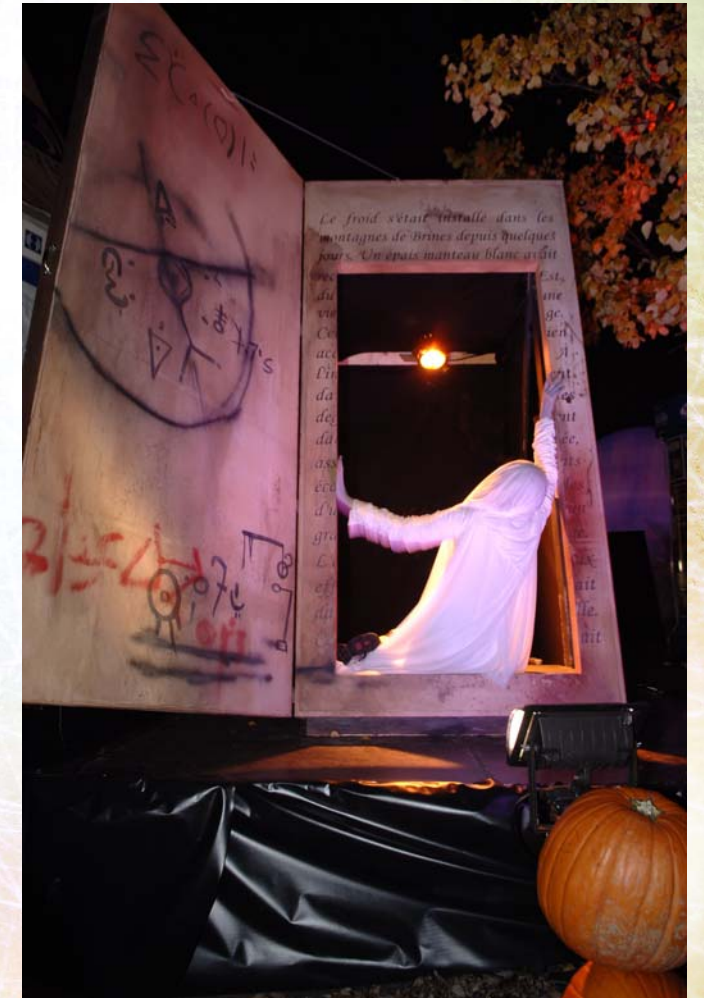
**2005-** Once again, in this 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, The Grand Masquerade is a monstrous success! Event organizers estimate that 100,000 revellers turned out to frighten themselves silly in Old Montreal – a 30 percent increase on last year's attendance. The crowd size peaked on Saturday night during the *Funeral Procession* followed by *La Noce*. This macabre evening drew no fewer than 30,000 party-goers who, with ghoulish eagerness, turn up donning all manner of marvellous disguises for the occasion.

One of the event's most notable features is the fabulous entertainment site, which transfigures the face of the historic Old Montreal district. With such diverse performances and the many other attractions set up, this storied Montreal location takes on a whole new look. Some 300 actors, performers, musicians and extras took part in the 2005 edition's deliciously decadent celebrations. The future of the event looks promising now having strengthened ties with numerous artists who are set to further develop collaborative efforts in the coming years.

The second edition gave rise to wonderful collaborative efforts from the realms of visual arts, cinematic special effects and fantasy-literature publishing – whose haunting presence will remain in Old Montreal over the years to come. The foreboding *L'Antre*, set up in the Bonsecours Market, successfully scared the living daylight out of the assembled party-goers during the free pre-opening event. And the festival's two horrifically fun-filled balls – the black gothic *Nuit du sacrifice!* and *Le Théâtre de l'infini!*, both proved so popular that organizers regretfully turned away many spectators hoping to join in the festivities.

The Grand Masquerade has indeed made its bloody mark on us all. Frightening, startling, surprising, daunting – even shocking – though it is, the event is clearly well on the way to becoming permanently implanted on the Montreal event calendar. In just its second year, this grand Halloween celebration is already attracting attention from specialty and tourism-based media, such as Canadian magazines *Rue Morgue* and *Canadian Travel Press* and California's *Triple A*, keen to investigate the new and original way Montrealers have devised to drive away evil spirits that threaten them each November, in the Month of the Dead. Also referenced on the web, on Alliance Impériale and Radio Caribou, The Grand Masquerade has had encounters with journalists from Argentina's *Europa Press* and Mexico's *Comunicaciones Reportura de Asuntos Cultural* (IMER - Instituto Mexicano de la radio).

**2006-** Even the ferocious forces of nature could not defeat the thousands of visitors who came to celebrate the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of the Grand Masquerade. *L'Entracte*, now the sole promoter of the event, is proud the festivities commenced with the opening act of Clive Barker's *Weaveworld*, the latest theatrical production from the Théâtre Sans Fil.



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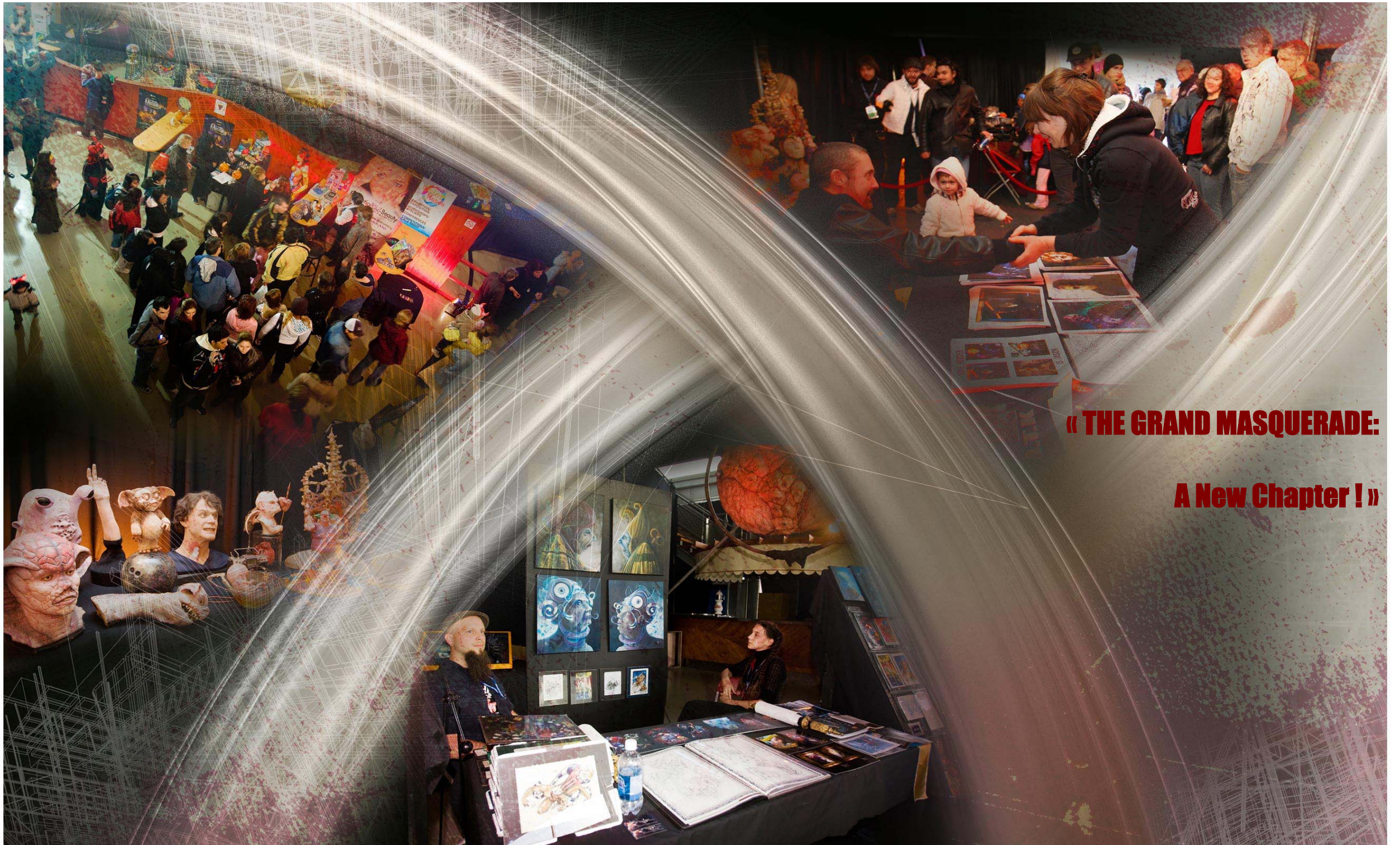
**2006 (suite)-** On Friday, the first of the three great theme balls, held free of charge on Place Jacques-Cartier Square, got off the ground with an immense audience, suitably and spookily dressed for the part, grooving to the eerie tunes of the various guest DJs and musicians and trembling at the sight of the many frightful characters wandering the site. Throughout the duration of the theme balls, *Urban Legends!* (Friday October 27th), *The Wedding Ceremony!* (Saturday October 28th), *The Ceremonial Fantasy!* (Sunday October 29th), the public mingled among over 50 artists, actors and performers who entertained them with 150 “apparitions” from beyond our realm. Benoit Dagenais gave quite a performance in his role as the Narrator of the event.

Each night was lit up by a striking performance from Malefik, who set the Grand Masquerade skies ablaze, in what was certainly one of the more gripping events in the weekend line-up: an impressive show combining the art of pyrotechnics, music, theater and multimedia, raising the bar for unique and high-color events to come .... congratulations should be extended to other related events that were part of this successful weekend: among them were Doctor Demento’s Clinic and Invocations, brought to you by The Medley and Club Sin, The Ghosts of Old Montreal and the Shed 16 Labyrinth.

**2007-** Thousands of Halloween fans flocked to the Quays of the Old Port and Old Montreal for some great chills & thrills at *The Grand Masquerade*. This carnival of fantasy, brainchild of Productions L’Entracte, this year welcomed special guest **Kane Hodder**, well-known American actor & stuntman, otherwise known as Jason from the *Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>* film series. A mention also goes to actor and singer **Annie Dufresne**, who played an important role in hosting the *Masquerade’s Balls* and the *Parade*. Tens of thousands of people attended the *Rendez-vous of Fantasy and Imaginary Arts and Crafts* to meet the 25 specialist exhibitors from various fields, exploring their wares & know-how. The musical entertainer MALÉFIK certainly attracted quite a crowd at his three pyrotechnics shows spread over the weekend. *Dame Violette’s Halloween Parade* took to the streets once again last Saturday evening, with over 250 performers, including around fifty musicians, bringing Notre-Dame Street to life in a vibrant display.

*The Mini-Masquerade* was a great new addition this year, gathering the littlest of Halloween fans and their families for some Sunday afternoon entertainment, such as craft sessions, various shows & guided workshops on site, and the *Children’s Parade* which drew over 300 little people all dressed-up to march down the street. *The Mini-Masquerade* certainly brought a few smiles to faces! To celebrate Halloween itself on the night of the 31<sup>st</sup>, the general public was invited to join in ***The Ghost Hunt– Samhain’s Night Edition***, an event prepared in conjunction with *Old Montreal Ghosts*. In this uniquely creative event, booked out well in advance, over fifteen criminals, sorcerers and unknown entities took over the streets of Old Montreal to tell their sordid stories, misadventures and secrets ... over 300 participants meandered through the streets, armed with nothing but maps, seeking out the historical figures that still haunt the area today. A successful premiere!





**« THE GRAND MASQUERADE:**

**A New Chapter ! »**

## **THE GRAND MASQUERADE... back to haunt!**

Despite media accolades and its immense popularity with the public, the organizers decided in 2008 to postpone the *Masquerade* and discuss with various partners involved in the event the question of financing such a large-scale event in the format produced from 2004 to 2007 (ref: festival with a free outdoor site).

With the objective of ensuring the event's long-term survival, this exercise of re-vamping an event that has certainly made its mark on Montreal's festival calendar is certainly a must.

**A new chapter awaits... for 2011!**



## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

**THE GRAND MASQUERADE**  
2065, rue Parthenais  
# 10  
Montréal (Québec)  
H2K 3T2

[info-mascarade@grandemascarade.com](mailto:info-mascarade@grandemascarade.com)  
[grandemascarade.com](http://grandemascarade.com)