



## **Leading Ladies of Dressage Lined up to Rock the Royal Horse Show**

*It's a six-top in the dressage ring this afternoon for the Grand Prix, followed by the Freestyle to Music tomorrow night.*

November 11, 2009

Toronto, Ontario – One of the most popular events at The Royal Horse Show, this year's \$20,000 CDI 3\* Dressage competition presented by Dominion Regalia, will showcase six top North American riders and their equine partners in a breathtaking display of elegance, artistry and athleticism.

This afternoon's Grand Prix will begin at 4:00pm and will be broadcast live on the internet at [www.royalfair.org](http://www.royalfair.org) as part The Royal's commitment to full webcasting of the Horse Show this year. The Grand Prix is the technical test where all six riders and horses complete the same pattern. All competitors must successfully complete this test in order to be eligible to come to the "dance" tomorrow evening – the captivating Freestyle to music – typically a sold-out evening in the Ricoh Coliseum.

"This is the only indoor show for dressage that you can only even compare to a show in Europe," notes Eva-Maria Pracht, coach and mentor to Canada's dressage elite. "We especially need The Royal to keep holding these top level competitions so we may keep preparing our horses and riders for Europe. I am looking forward to this week – I'm expecting good rides and good performances, and hoping the crowd will be happy because we have some really great riders here this year."

Last year's winner and 1998 Olympic Team Bronze medalist, Ashley Holzer, insists she fell in love with dressage at The Royal.

"I never had done dressage and I came here as a kid and saw a Pas de Deux and I couldn't believe how these horses could dance and do what they did. I remember saying to my dad how beautiful it was. I think it's so important that these shows still exist, that they are in the city, that they bring our sport to so many people. Bringing it to the city – I was that kid 30-some years ago... I thought that was such a cool thing. There are not many of these shows left in the world. It's really something special."

While the Grand Prix is judged on technical merit and an evaluation of each prescribed movement, the Freestyle to music incorporates an artistic element to provide scores for interpretation of music, choreography of music and the harmony between horse and rider.

Listed below is a brief biography on this year's six competitors in the \$20,000 CDI 3\* Dressage Competition presented by Dominion Regalia.

#21 JACQUELINE BROOKS riding Balmoral  
Canada

Jacque is no stranger to The Royal. Balmoral is a 10yr Hannoverian gelding, Canadian born & bred; he was the winner of the North American Breeders Futurity at Devon as a 5 & 6 Year old. Jacque was a member of the 2003 Pan American Games silver medal team, 2nd reserve for the 2004 Olympics; member of the 2006 World Equestrian Games Team; in 2007 made her debut at the World Cup Final and in 2008 was on the team for the Olympic Games in Hong Kong. This pair has enjoyed another very successful year, winning almost everywhere, finishing with a smash as winners of the prestigious Grand Prix at Devon.

#23 ASHLEY HOLZER riding Popart  
Canada

Ashley has long been a leading dressage rider in Canada, having been a member of the 1998 Olympic Bronze Medal Team in Seoul. She and Pop Art, an 11 year old Dutch Warmblood were members of the Canadian Dressage Team in Hong Kong last year, qualifying for the Freestyle, and finishing 13th. This year they continued their success with a 5th place finish at the World Cup and 5th at the CDI5\* Exquis World Dressage Masters in England. Ashley and her husband Rusty, own Riverdale Equestrian Centre in New York where they live with their two children.

#20 HEATHER MASON riding Respekt  
United States

Heather is from Tewksbury, New Jersey. She and Respekt, an 11 year old Dutch gelding, have been partners since Heather imported him as a 3 year old. During the past eight years they have accumulate numbers regional and national titles, including champions at the 2009 Begt Ljungquist Championships. Heather is also a Dressage Judge, and owner of Flying Change Farm.

#24 DENIELLE GALLAGHER-LEGRIFON riding Gallaway's Abrikos  
Canada

Denielle grew up competing in Pony Club Eventing. In 2006 a syndicate was formed to purchase Abrikos. Last year was her first time here at The Royal. At Devon this September she and Abrikos were 4th in the Grand Prix and had a personal best score of 68.4 in the Freestyle.

#25 TINA KONYOT riding Calecto V  
United States

Calecto V, an 11 year old Danish Warmblood stallion, owned by Tina Konyot and John Brialsen. Partners for the past three years, this was their first season at Grand Prix, competing in Wellington, Palgrave and Saugerties, New York. They were second in the Grand Prix and winners of the Freestyle at Devon. A resident of Stuart, Florida, Tina is planning a move to the Toronto area and looking forward to meeting new friends in Canada.

#26 CHERYL MEISNER riding Paganini  
Canada

Hailing from Nova Scotia, Cheryl is riding Paganini, a 12 year old Dutch stallion own by John Risley. Paganini was the best stallion of Holland in 2008, and this year has had first place finishes in both the Grand Prix and Grand Prix Freestyle. Back to back at the Blainville Summer Classic and the Blainville International, as well as the Beaulieu International Classic.

This afternoon's Grand Prix will run from 4:00-5:00 and will be broadcast live on the internet at [www.royalfair.org](http://www.royalfair.org), as will this evening's **CN FEI World Cup Qualifier Grand Prix** for International Jumpers. Tomorrow night's Horse Show features the top double-bill of the Dressage Freestyles to music, followed by the inaugural **\$50,000 Royal Team Challenge** for International Jumpers. Tickets are still available through the website [www.royalfair.org](http://www.royalfair.org) or [Ticketmaster.com](http://Ticketmaster.com)

This year's Royal Horse Show runs through November 15th. By the time the competition ends, nearly \$750,000 will have been awarded in prize money, making The Royal the most prestigious and hotly contested event of the season. For more information, media accreditation, live webcasting, complete schedule, results and to purchase tickets, please visit [www.royalfair.org](http://www.royalfair.org).

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Please advise of web postings.

Attached Photo: 2008 Dressage Champion Ashley Holzer with Pop Art. The pair will compete today and tomorrow in the \$20,000 CDI 3\* at The Royal Horse Show.

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