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<http://www.torontosun.com/life/tofashionweek/news/2009/10/16/11426561.html>

Springing forward

The country's top designers set to converge for Toronto's fashion week

More than 35 runway shows, dozens of the nation's top designers and a flurry of activity converge this week in Toronto for the biannual love-fest known as LG Fashion Week.

LG Fashion Week Beauty by L'Oreal is the full name of the event which kicks off Monday, with a new venue and the theme Wear Love.

"Wear Love is about a group of like-minded people who love fashion and have similar energy, purpose and commitment to creating and celebrating fashion in Canada, and globally," says Robin Kay, president of the Fashion Design Council of Canada (FDCC) which produces the event.

"Wearing love is about going the second mile and actually walking the walk and talking the talk."

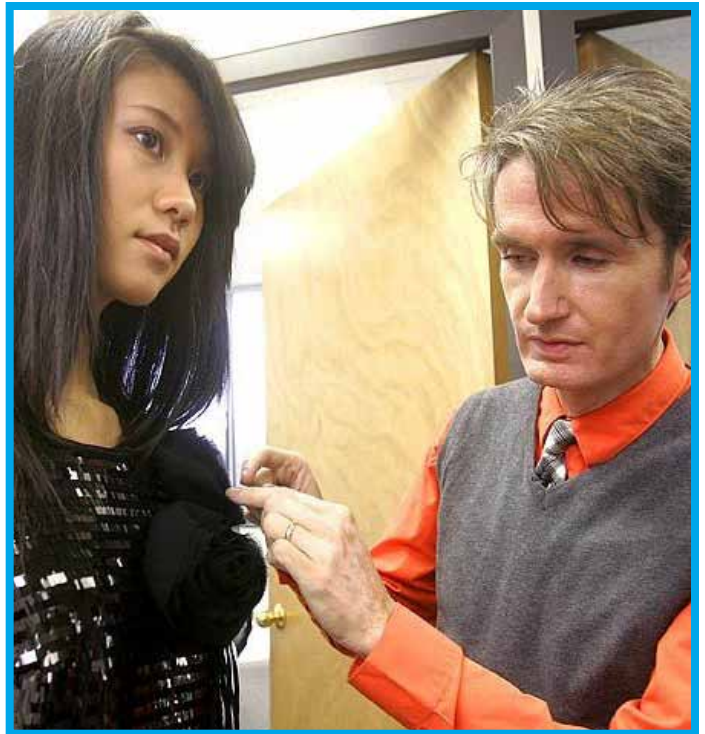
The fashion shows will preview the latest designer collections and forecast the key fashion trends and colours we're likely to wear next spring.

Excitement and anticipation are running high as many have spent months preparing for the event.

"The entire process takes months and is quite consuming, but is well worth the effort to be able articulate my vision on the runway," says Vancouver-based designer Cheri Milaney.

"The preparation for our spring 2010 show began immediately after our last show in March."

Although the event takes place in Toronto, fashion week's reach stretches wide, with many designers, including Calgary's Paul Hardy, Vancouver's Vata Brasil, Halifax-based Katrina Tuttle and



Toronto fashion designer David Dixon fits London model Clare in one of his designs for a behind the scenes look at LG fashion week. Dixon designs his own line as well as a line for the Barbie brand.

(MIKE HENSEN/SUN MEDIA)

Montrealers Travis Taddeo and Andy The-Ahn, hailing from near and far.

Others, such as New York based designer Romona Keveza, Mumbai-based Vibygor and the Dubai-based Frame design duo, are part of an international contingent who are also strutting their stuff.

"We're launching our first commercial collection here at LG Fashion Week. We feel it's the perfect

foundation for building a recognizable brand and look forward to immersing ourselves in the fashion community,” says Dubai-based designer Stephen Frame of Frame.

This week’s spate of shows will include retail offerings and present a wider representation of menswear than at some fashion weeks.

Designer menswear collections include those by Lizares and Bustle, as well as the clothes of several Canadian designers and manufacturers that will appear on the runway of local retailer Gotstyle Menswear.

Retailers Joe Fresh Style, Sears Canada and Rudsak will show their spring collections, while **Alberta-based Triple Flip will make their Ontario debut by staging a runway photo shoot to showcase trends for tweens.**

Holt Renfrew also shows highlights from featured designers at a by-invitation-only, off-site event that takes place during Monday evening’s cocktail hour.

Monday’s official opening gala featuring “100 Years of Beauty by L’Oreal Paris” combines fashion and drama with a special presentation of garments from the Stratford Shakespeare Festival.

“We’ve teamed a number of items from festival designers with current looks from the fall 2009

collections, and have also selected four period costumes to illustrate the historical influence on the designs we are seeing today,” says Erika Larva, one of the show’s producers.

Toronto’s week of fashion takes place at a new, two-acre venue at 1030 King St. W. which allows for more space and activities, more guests and greater accessibility.

“We’re excited about our new location as we feel it helps make us more visible and accessible to the street and the people, and helps us to show all those who love fashion, that fashion is alive and well,” says Kay.

There’s an extended main runway which is said to be close to a mile long and another area for by-invitation-only gatherings, such as the Hot Lights fashion photography panel discussion and book event which takes place on Wednesday afternoon.

While a few events may be private, much of what goes on will be public.

Although LG Fashion Week logically attracts a large attendance from retail buyers, designers and other industry insiders, this year’s larger facility hopes to attract more members of the fashion-loving public.