

***Dark Star Requiem: A World Premiere production from  
Tapestry new opera works & Luminato  
featuring the Gryphon Trio & the Elmer Iseler Singers***

**TORONTO, ON...**Tapestry new opera works announced today their second partnership with **Luminato, Toronto Festival of Arts and Creativity**, to present the world premiere of ***Dark Star Requiem***, a dramatic oratorio from poet **Jill Battson** and composer **Andrew Staniland**, during the opening weekend of the 2010 Festival. ***Dark Star Requiem*** explores the 25-year history of the AIDS pandemic with astonishing power and hope. Shining a light on those affected by the fear, confusion and devastation that AIDS has wrought, this world premiere features four outstanding soloists and two percussionists alongside two of Canada's premiere ensembles: **the Elmer Iseler Singers** and **the Gryphon Trio**. The four soloists have impressive talent and represent our national, cultural diversity: **Neema Bickersteth** (soprano), **Krisztina Szabó** (mezzo soprano), **Peter McGillivray** (baritone) and **Marcus Nance** (bass-baritone).

***Dark Star Requiem*** will be deeply integrated into this year's Luminato Festival, whose 2010 curatorial focus comments on the way rights and freedoms are expressed artistically. The artistic team behind the production, including librettist **Jill Battson**, composer **Andrew Staniland**, music director **Wayne Strongman** and dramaturge **Tom Diamond**, will participate in an Illumination panel discussion during the Festival. As well Jill Battson's work, including the poems featured in the libretto, will be featured in public readings. In addition, a companion book to ***Dark Star Requiem*** which highlights the libretto and includes poems which were not set to music for the final score will be sold throughout the festival.

**Tapestry Managing Artistic Director Wayne Strongman says:** *"We are so proud to be producing this important and beautiful new work, with such a brilliant array of artists. The creative team, the performers, and the producers have that rare synergy that comes when a work of such integrity is on the line. For a company like Tapestry, which places collaboration at the top of its mandate, the ongoing partnership with Luminato has also deepened our relationship in our own community as well as abroad. It is a wonderful meeting of creative spirits!"*

***Dark Star Requiem's*** collaborators **Battson** and **Staniland** met at **Tapestry's** 2005 Composer-Librettist Laboratory (LibLab), an annual 10 day "opera boot camp" during which four composers and four writers change partners every two days with each partnership resulting in a brand new five-minute opera scene. Since the LibLab, the partnership spawned a world premiere short opera, ***Ashlike on the Cradle of the Wind***, which was produced as part of Tapestry's ***Opera to Go*** production at the Young Centre for the Performing Arts in 2006. ***Ashlike*** addressed the issue of HIV-AIDS among different generations in the gay community and inspired an invitation from PRIDE Toronto to present the opera at the annual PRIDE Parade celebrations. ***Ashlike*** was reprised in this year's ***Opera to Go*** at the Fermenting Cellar, Distillery Historic District March 24-26, 2010. **Battson** and **Staniland** have maintained an interest in exploring, through opera, the complex issues of HIV-AIDS around the world. ***Dark Star Requiem*** is a full-length dramatic oratorio investigating the history of the global pandemic.

*"In **Jill Battson** I have found a true collaborator. Such a relationship is rare, and is a fresh and welcome alternative to the solitary work I usually engage as a composer. For this project I have used chamber choir, soloists, and percussionists as a medium to explore a contemporary, humanistic requiem. The piece, while not operatic in the traditional sense, will involve a theatrical narrative element, blurring the boundary between operatic and choral experience."* **Andrew Staniland, Composer**

With ***Dark Star Requiem***, the creative partners are exploring the challenges and rewards of crafting a full-scale choral requiem through a humanistic, rather than religious lens. With composer and poet working together as equals at every stage to create the piece, this is a rare collaboration, based on the contemporary operatic model. It is a collaboration that promises a unique meeting ground for the artists to take on issues of global concern.

Among the major issues facing humanity in the present day is history's most deadly epidemic to date: AIDS. ***Dark Star Requiem*** explores this through text and music, the relatively short history of AIDS. This evocative, poetic concert work interlaces such timely topics as ecology, myth, politics, and family as they relate to the pandemic. While the text includes fragments from the ***Latin Mass for the Dead***, the overall perspective is humanistic rather than religious. Focusing on the intimate and personal face of AIDS, the piece resonates with audiences across a wide spectrum of age, class, culture and experience. The creators' aim is to bring a new



focus to the issue, especially in people too young to remember the fear, confusion, and devastation AIDS wrought in the late 1980s, and to remind people not only about the disease, but to bring up issues of racism, homophobia, and disinformation.

*“Andrew and I have mapped out a form for the requiem which consists of a chronology of the disease, charting its known history until the present day. Included in this is disinformation from the beginning of the pandemic, greed within the scientific camps and narrative presentations of the virus. This form has given me the opportunity to write poems in different styles including the longer, narrative poems which will give the audience the ‘story’ and parallel sound poems using fragments of the different parts of the traditional mass for the dead. Sometimes these fragments are in Latin, other times translated into English and often used as themes within the poems. This variety allows for the combination of voices to convey a percussive quality and to add depth, meaning and emotion into the overall text.” Jill Battson, Librettist*

Tapestry is thrilled to once again be part of Luminato. Their relationship began in 2008 when the Festival included the world premiere of **Sanctuary Song** by Abigail Richardson & Marjorie Chan, a world premiere opera for all ages from Tapestry and Theatre Direct which won the Dora Mavor Moore Award for Outstanding New Opera/Musical.

The world premiere of **Dark Star Requiem** is commissioned by Luminato, with additional support from the Ontario Arts Council, and co-produced by Tapestry new opera works and Luminato.

**Dark Star Requiem** premieres June 11 and 12, 2010 at 8pm during the opening weekend of **Luminato, Toronto Festival of Arts and Creativity**. Presented in Toronto’s breathtakingly beautiful new Koerner Hall at the Royal Conservatory of Music, **Dark Star Requiem** will be shown on Friday and Saturday night and is sure to garner public and artistic accolades for its power, poetry and poignancy.

#### DETAILS

##### **Dark Star Requiem: A World Premiere production from Tapestry new opera works and Luminato**

**Written by Jill Battson and Composed by Andrew Staniland**

**Music Director** Wayne Strongman

**The Elmer Iseler Singers** - Lydia Adams, Artistic Director

**The Gryphon Trio**

(Annalee Patipatanakoon, violin; Roman Borys, cello)

Jamie Parker, piano)

**Percussion:** Ryan Scott, Mark Duggan

**Dramaturg** Tom Diamond

**Soloists:**

**Soprano** Neema Bickersteth

**Mezzo soprano** Krisztina Szabó

**Baritone** Peter McGillivray

**Bass-Baritone** Marcus Nance

#### PERFORMANCE DETAILS:

Friday, June 11 – Saturday, June 12, at 8 PM

at Koerner Hall in the Royal Conservatory of Music, 273 Bloor Street West

#### TICKETS

\$30 – 50

For more information, visit [luminato.com](http://luminato.com). Tickets will be available at 10:00 AM, April 15th through all Ticketmaster outlets call 416-872-1111 or visit [www.ticketmaster.ca](http://www.ticketmaster.ca).

#### CREATOR/ARTIST INFORMATION

##### About Tapestry

Celebrating 30 years, Tapestry is dedicated to the creation, development and performance of new opera works through its unique and highly collaborative work process. Under the leadership of Managing Artistic Director Wayne Strongman, Tapestry engages the hearts and minds of artists and audiences on subjects relevant to contemporary society. The Tapestry process begins at the annual Composer-Librettist Laboratory where writers and composers are introduced to collaborative creation. Successful partnerships move on to create 15-minute operas for our annual *Opera to Go* production and graduate to full-length works. Our INside Opera Education Programme gives students the chance to discover their own stories and engage in the creation of new opera. Our children’s operas, *Elijah’s Kite* by Camyar Chai & James Rolfe and *Get Stuffed* by Alexis Diamond and Richard Payne have already toured to over 30,000 students across Ontario. Tapestry productions which have premiered to critical and popular acclaim include *The Shadow* by Omar Daniel & Alex Poch-Goldin, the Dora-Award winning *Sanctuary Song* by Abigail Richardson & Marjorie Chan (with Theatre Direct and Luminato), *Nigredo Hotel* by Ann-Marie MacDonald & Nic Gotham, *Elsewhereless* by Atom Egoyan &

Rodney Sharman, *Still the Night* by Theresa Tova, *Facing South* by Don Hannah & Linda C. Smith and the Dora Award-winning *Iron Road* by composer Chan Ka Nin & librettist Mark Brownell. [www.tapestrynewopera.com](http://www.tapestrynewopera.com)

### **About Luminato, Toronto Festival of Arts and Creativity**

For 10 extraordinary days in June, Toronto's stages, streets, and public spaces are illuminated with arts and creativity. Luminato is an annual multi-disciplinary celebration of theatre, literature, music, food, dance, celebrations, visual arts, fashion, film, and magic. For more information, visit [luminato.com](http://luminato.com). Tickets will be available at 10:00 AM, April 15 through all Ticketmaster outlets (call 416-872-1111 or visit [www.ticketmaster.ca](http://www.ticketmaster.ca)).

### **Jill Battson, librettist**

Jill Battson is an internationally published poet and poetry activist who currently holds the honorary position of Poet Laureate of Cobourg. She was responsible for creating and running the successful poetry reading series 'The Poets' Refuge' and has initiated and produced many poetry events including 'The Poetry Express' – a BYOV at Toronto's Fringe Festival; 'Liminal Sisters' – a language poetry event; 'The Festival of the Spoken Word' – a five day spoken word festival; Fightin' Words – poets in a boxing ring; 'The Poetburo Slams' and the very successful 'Word Up' – a series of interstitial poetry spots airing on MuchMusic and Bravo! which spawned a CD with Virgin Records and an anthology with Key Porter. She was the poetry editor for Insomniac Press from 1999 to 2001.

Jill has been widely published in literary journals and anthologies in North America and the U.K. Her first book *Hard Candy* was received to great acclaim and nominated for the Gerald Lampert Award. She has written several plays and solo works, including *How I learned to live with obsession* as well as *Ecce Homo* and *Hard Candy* – enhanced monologues for dance and voice. She has written the libretti for two short operas *Netsuke* and *Ashlike on the Cradle of the Wind* produced by Tapestry new opera works, and produced an electro acoustic sound art project, *LinguaElastic*, as part of the Canadian Music Centre's *New Music in New Places* series. Her latest book of poems, *Dark Star Requiem*, will be published by Folded & Gathered Press in June to coincide with the performance.

**Andrew Staniland, composer** Composer Andrew Staniland has firmly established himself as one of Canada's most important and innovative musical voices. The New Yorker magazine has described his work as "an alternately beautiful and terrifying instrumental meditation". His music is regularly heard on CBC Radio 2 and has been broadcast internationally in over 35 countries. His work has received numerous accolades, including the 2009 National Grand Prize in EVOLUTION, a contemporary music competition presented by CBC Radio 2/Espace Musique and The Banff Centre, top prizes in the SOCAN young composers competition, and the 2004 Karen Keiser Prize in Canadian Music. His music has represented Canada at both the UNESCO International Rostrum (Paris, 2007) of Composers and the ISCM World Music Days (Hong Kong, 2006).

From 2006 – 2009 Andrew Staniland served as Affiliate Composer to the Toronto Symphony Orchestra. He has also been in residence at the Centre du Creation Musicale Iannis Xenakis (Paris, 2005) and Affiliate Composer to the Canadian National Arts Centre Orchestra (Ottawa, 2002-2004). Andrew's roster of commissioning bodies continues to expand, with new projects involving Tapestry New Opera Works, Duo Concertante, New Music Concerts, and L'Orchestre de la Francophonie Canadienne. In addition to his work as a composer, Andrew is the Program Director for the Alliance for Canadian New Music Projects, where he has developed and implemented a variety of innovative educational initiatives, including a "Composer in the Classroom" project bringing classical composers into Canadian public schools. Andrew also performs himself, both as a guitarist and working with new media (computers and electronics). Andrew joined the music faculty at Memorial University in St John's Newfoundland in January 2010.

**Wayne Strongman, Managing Artistic Director** (Conductor & Music Director for *Dark Star Requiem*) - One of Canada's most distinguished music directors, Wayne Strongman is a champion of Canadian writers and composers. As Managing Artistic Director of Tapestry new opera works, he has commissioned and premiered over 30 new Canadian operas including the Cantonese-English *Iron Road* in 2001 (Brownell/Chan), *Facing South* (Hannah/Smith) and *Nigredo Hotel* (MacDonald/Gotham) which is the most frequently produced opera in Canadian history. In 2006 he premiered *Elijah's Kite* (Chai/Rolfe) in New York City in collaboration with the Manhattan School of Music. Music Director/Dramaturge of Tapestry's Composer-Librettist Laboratory, Mr. Strongman has created a truly collaborative environment for an international roster of composers and writers. His commitment to a contemporary practice within the operatic art form has made Strongman a mentor to many Canadian singers. In 2007 he established the Tapestry New Work Studio Company as a performing resource for the new work creation process which has become Tapestry's unique calling. In 2007-08 he conducted the premiere of the Dora-Award winning *Sanctuary Song* (Chan/Richardson) for the Luminato Festival. In 2008-09 he premiered Tapestry's fifth *Opera to Go* production, *Get Stuffed* (Diamond/Payne) and *The Shadow* (Poch-Goldin/Daniel).

Mr. Strongman also volunteers as choral conductor for the Regent Park School of Music. He was named one of 50 Ambassadors for Canadian Music by the Canadian Music Centre in November, 2009 and on December 30, 2009, Mr. Strongman was appointed to the Order of Canada. For Tapestry's 30th Anniversary 2009-10 season he conducts an *Opera to Go* revival, and premieres *Dark Star Requiem*.

**Tom Diamond, Resident Studio Company Director** (Dramaturge for *Dark Star Requiem*)- Tom Diamond is completing his third season as Tapestry's Studio Company Director/Dramaturg. Past Tapestry productions include the Dora Award winning *Iron Road*, the national tour of *Still the Night* and three versions of *Opera to Go*. His first short film, *The Perfect Match*, premiered to unanimous critical raves as part of *Opera to Go* in 2008 and has toured the festival circuit garnering a nomination for Best Experimental Film at Miami's 7th Annual Short Film Festival. Highlights of his productions include the world premiere of Timothy Sullivan's *Florence and the Lady With the Lamp* for the Elora Festival (Chalmers Award), five productions for Pacific Opera Victoria and ten operas for the Canadian Opera Company, most recently an acclaimed resurrection of the obscure *Don Giovanni* by Guiseppe Gazzaniga (the inspiration for Mozart's masterpiece). His production of *Squonk* was an off Broadway hit and transferred to Broadway where it won the American Theatre Wing's Hewes Award. Mr. Diamond is perhaps most often recognized for his participation in both seasons of the Gemini Award-winning television series *Bathroom Divas*. Recent productions include his first *Magic Flute* for Opera Lyra Ottawa at the National Arts Centre which marked the operatic conducting debut of Pinchas Zukerman.

**The Elmer Iseler Singers, chorus for *Dark Star Requiem*** The Elmer Iseler Singers, conducted by Artistic Director Lydia Adams, is a twenty-voice professional chamber choir based in Toronto, Canada. Founded by the late Dr. Elmer Iseler in 1979, the Elmer Iseler Singers are one of Canada's most illustrious professional choral ensembles. The choir has built an enviable international reputation through its concerts, broadcasts and recordings throughout Canada, the United States and on the international concert stage. Known for the unique beauty of their sound, the Elmer Iseler Singers bring to life exciting repertoire that spans 500 years of great choral music.

**The Gryphon Trio, part of the *Dark Star Requiem* ensemble** Arguably Canada's most renowned chamber ensemble, the Gryphon Trio (Annalee Patipatanakoon, violin; Roman Borys, 'cello and Jamie Parker, piano) last collaborated with Tapestry on the creation of *Constantinople* which the ensemble continues to tour, with many presentations around the globe at major festivals like the Festival of New Ideas (New Haven, CT) and at Banff, as well as being presented by many major houses including Covent Garden. One of the most recorded ensembles in Canada, the trio is resident at the Ottawa Chamber Festival.

## **CAST**

### **Neema Bickersteth, soprano**

Neema Bickersteth began an opera degree at the University of British Columbia, where she received both a Bachelor and Master of Music. She has had the opportunity to perform many operatic roles in both Canada and Europe. Opera Canada described her as having "amazing control of her vocal palette, producing a warm and sensual colour". NOW Magazine affirmed her "a singer with a great voice and as strong a stage presence." A few of Neema's leading soprano roles include Pamina, *Die Zauberflöte* by Mozart, *The Merry Widow* by Léhar, and Rose Maurant in Weill's *Street Scene*. Although classical voice is where Neema is most comfortable, she enjoys singing in different genres and collaborating with various artists. This facility has allowed her many opportunities including the great honour of performing for the XIVth Dalai Lama, the Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Shirin Ebadi. More recently, Neema has been fortunate to be a part of some innovative new works with Urbanvessel, Ambient Opera Society, Lake Nora Collective, Flight Works, Nightswimming, Native Earth Performing Arts and of course Tapestry New Opera Works.

### **Krisztina Szabó, mezzo soprano**

Hungarian-Canadian mezzo-soprano Krisztina Szabó has become highly sought after in both North America and Europe as an artist of supreme musicianship and stagecraft. The Chicago Tribune exclaimed, "Krisztina Szabó stole her every scene with her powerful, mahogany voice and deeply poignant immersion in the empress' plight" after her performance of Ottavia in *L'incoronazione di Poppea*. She made her Lincoln Center début as Dorabella in *Così fan tutte* at the Mostly Mozart Festival where she was praised in the New York Times for being "clear, strong, stately and an endearingly vulnerable Dorabella."

In 2009-10 Ms. Szabó sings as Idamante in Mozart's *Idomeneo* with Canadian Opera Company, returns to Wexford Festival Opera as Susanna in *The Ghosts of Versailles* and performs as Meg in *Little Women* with Calgary Opera. She will also appear as a featured artist with Toronto Masque Theatre, Off-Centre Music Salon, Ottawa's Thirteen Strings and as a soloist in Mozart's *Coronation Mass* with Atlanta Symphony, under Roberto Abbado.

Ms. Szabó exemplifies today's modern singer: she is vocally versatile, possesses excellent stage prowess and paints vivid character portraits on both the opera and concert stages. She sings frequently at the Canadian Opera Company and has been seen in diverse roles, such as Musetta (*La bohème*), The Double-Offred in the Time Before (*The Handmaid's Tale*) and Nancy (*Albert Herring*). In 2006 she helped christen the company's new opera house in their critically acclaimed *Ring Cycle* as Wellgunde (*Das Rheingold* and *Götterdämmerung*), and Siegrune (*Die Walküre*) and returned to open their 06/7 season in the role of Dorabella (*Così fan tutte*). Canadian audiences have also seen Ms. Szabó as Rosina (*Il barbiere di Siviglia*) with Calgary Opera, Edmonton Opera and L'Opéra de Québec, Second Lady (*Die Zauberflöte*) with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra under the baton of Bernard Labadie, Nerone (*Agrippina*) with L'Opéra de Montréal, as the title role in *Iphigénie en Tauride* with Opera Atelier.

Outside of Canada, Ms Szabó has performed a wide variety of roles including: Rosalind (*The Mines of Sulphur*) for the Wexford Festival Opera (company début), Countess (*Le nozze di Figaro*), Judith (*Bluebeard's Castle*) and Donna Elvira (*Don Giovanni*) - all with Chicago Opera Theater, Magnolia (*Showboat*) with L'Opéra National du Rhin, the title role in Charpentier's *Médée* with Le Concert Spirituel in Paris, The Queen of the Fairies in Ana Sokolovic's hilarious new opera, *The Midnight Court*, with Queen of Puddings Music Theatre's tour to England, Hänsel (*Hänsel und Gretel*) and Komponist (*Ariadne auf Naxos*) with Stadttheater Klagenfurt and Bianca (Mercadante's *Il giuramento*) with Washington Concert Opera.

Krisztina Szabó is a frequent performer of recital, concert and chamber repertoire. She has recently appeared as a soloist with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra (Mozart's *Mass in C Minor*), L'Orchestre Symphonique de Québec (Bach's *Mass in B Minor*), the San Antonio Symphony (Handel's *Messiah*), the Talisker Players in Toronto for an evening of chamber music, the Toronto Mendelssohn Choir (Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis* and Mendelssohn's *Elijah*), the Elora Festival Orchestra (Verdi's *Requiem*), Les Violons du Roy's United States tour of (Haydn's cantata *Arianna a Naxos*), the Brooklyn Academy of Music (staged production of Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*) and the Oregon Symphony (Mozart *Requiem*). In recital, she has appeared with Ravinia Festival, Aldeburgh Connection, Music Toronto, Off Centre Music Salon and Music at Sharon. In addition, she has performed with Symphony Nova Scotia, Lanaudière Festival, Calgary Philharmonic, Orchestra London, and Toronto Operetta Theatre.

Ms, Szabó has appeared on television featured in CBC's "Opening Night" in concert with the Canadian Opera Company. On film, she can be seen as Zerlina with Dmitri Hvorostovsky in *Don Giovanni Revealed: Leporello's Revenge*, and she can be heard as the voice of Leanne in the new opera movie *Burnt Toast*. She will be a featured artist in upcoming CD releases with Talisker Players and with Musica Leopoldis.

Ms. Szabó finished her postgraduate studies at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London, England, after completing her undergraduate degree at the University of Western Ontario studying with Darryl Edwards, with whom she continues to study. She has been the recipient of the Emerging Artist grant from Canada Council. She lives in Toronto with her husband, Kristian Clarke and their daughter, Phoibe Clarke.

#### **Peter McGillivray, baritone**

Born in Saskatchewan and raised in Ontario, baritone Peter McGillivray gained international attention in 2005 by winning 2nd prize both at the Montreal International Musical Competition and at the Queen Sonja Competition in Oslo, Norway. He first attracted the national interest of Canadians both as the winner of the 2003 CBC Young Performers Competition and as member of the Ensemble Studio of the Canadian Opera Company. His 2009-2010 season includes *Messiah* with the Elmer Iseler Singers, *Die Fledermaus* with Opera Hamilton, Massenet's *Manon* with Calgary Opera, *Opera to Go* and *Dark Star Requiem* with Tapestry New Opera Works and Rossini's *La Cenerentola* with Pacific Opera Victoria.

Performances in past seasons with the Canadian Opera Company include turns as Sid and as the Vicar in Britten's *Albert Herring*, as Schaunard in Puccini's *La Bohème*, as Dolokhov in Prokofiev's *War and Peace*, and his professional debut as Aeneas in Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*. He was seen as Demetrius in an acclaimed production of Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at the Tanglewood Festival in 2004, as Sid in a production of *Albert Herring* at the Snape Maltings for the Britten Festival in 2005, and starred last year in the world première of Omar Daniel's *The Shadow* with Tapestry New Opera Works in Toronto. He has appeared with opera companies in Calgary, Saskatoon, Québec City and Victoria as well as in concert with the Calgary Philharmonic, Edmonton, Regina and Winnipeg Symphonies, National Arts Centre Orchestra, l'Orchestre symphonique de Québec, and the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic. A frequent guest on the summer festival circuit, he has sung at the Elora, Orford, Ottawa Chamber Music, and Parry Sound Festivals in Canada while having appeared at the Aspen, Ravinia, Tanglewood, Roskilde and Aldeburgh Festivals internationally.

### **Marcus Nance, bass-baritone**

Marcus Nance has captivated audiences across Canada and the United States with his magnetic stage presence and lustrous bass-baritone voice. Vocalist and actor, he is equally at home in theatre, film, opera, concert oratorio, recital and cabaret while setting the highest standards in each, vocally and theatrically. A musical being to the core, Marcus Nance is one of the most versatile and spellbinding artists of our time, commanding the stage with his magnetic physique and sensitive interpretation. The Toronto Star described him as “a major talent” while Academy Award Nominee Atom Egoyan speaks of him as “an absolutely brilliant actor”.

Marcus Nance garnered international attention as Malcolm in the world premiere of Atom Egoyan’s *Elsewhereless* with Tapestry New Opera Works. His vivid and moving performance earned him a Dora Mavor Moore Award nomination for Most Outstanding Male Performer in a Musical. Other awards include a Metropolitan Opera National Council (Regional) Award, a National Opera Association Vocal Competition Award and a Tyrone Guthrie Study Award from the Stratford Shakespeare Festival.

Shortly after his success in *Elsewhereless* Marcus Nance moved seamlessly into the role of the charismatic preacher Moses in yet another world premiere of The Queen of Puddings Music Theatre Company’s *Beatrice Chancy* by George Elliot Clarke and James Rolfe. This performance was filmed for BRAVO! and CBC television.

More recently, Marcus Nance mesmerized audiences with his creative portrayal of Queequeg in Morris Panych’s adaptation of Melville’s *Moby Dick*, commissioned and premiered by the Stratford Shakespeare Festival. He was also seen there as Olin Brit in *The Music Man*, as the commanding revivalist preacher the Rt. Rev. J.D. Montgomery in Gershwin’s *My One and Only* and in the lush choral ensemble of the deep American South woven into Susan H. Schulman’s production of *To Kill a Mockingbird*. For the Western Canada Theatre in Kamloops, British Columbia and the Grand Theatre in London, Ontario he moved audiences with his powerful and emotional portrayal of the Beast in *Beauty and the Beast* and in the title role of *The Mikado* for Drayton Entertainment. New York audiences saw Marcus Nance on Broadway in Baz Luhrman’s production of *La Boheme*, in New York City Centre ENCORES! productions of *Kismet* and *Of Thee I Sing* and as Alidoro in *Cenerentola* with New York City Opera.

For the Shaw Festival of Canada, Marcus Nance has appeared as Dr. Hazlett and Reporter in *Floyd Collins*, as Mike and Earnest in *Pal Joey* and Pompey in *Bloomer Girl*. He performed with Louise Pitre and Billy Ray Cyrus in *Annie Get Your Gun* at Massey Hall, Toronto, with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra as Porgy in excerpts from *Porgy and Bess*, with Tacoma Opera as Sparafucile in *Rigoletto*, with Hawaii Opera Theatre as Haly in *L’Italiana in Algeri*, with Monterey Opera Association as Basilio in *The Barber of Seville*, with Chicago Opera Theatre as Compere in *Four Saints in Three Acts* and at the Toronto Centre for the Performing Arts in *Show Boat*.

Marcus has performed other leading roles with Santa Fe Opera, Glimmerglass Opera, Pacific Opera Victoria, Chautauqua Opera, Vancouver New Music, The National Arts Centre, Shreveport Opera, Ash-Lawn-Highland Summer Festival, Mississauga Opera, Eastern Front Theatre, Edmonton Opera, Natchez Opera Festival, and has sung in concert and oratorio with Orchestra London, Victoria Symphony, North York Symphony, Illinois Oratorio Society, the National Academy Orchestra, Chautauqua Symphony, Fairbanks Festival Orchestra, Windsor Symphony, the Monterey Bay Symphony and the National Arts Centre Orchestra.

Expanding further his creativity and artistic horizons, Marcus Nance made his film debut as the Singing Accountant in Mel Brooke’s feature film *The Producers* starring Nathan Lane and Matthew Broderick. He has also moved into cabaret and jazz with appearances at the Toronto Jazz Festival, Ottawa’s Impressions in Jazz, Sharron’s Party and Acting Upstage. Recently he has been starring in and hosting *Divos and Divas* with Marcus Nance at Statlers Piano Lounge in Toronto performing with guest stars such as Tony Award Nominee Louise Pitre, David Rogers of *Phantom of the Opera* fame and the incomparable opera diva Measha Brueggergosman. And, if you look closely, you might also catch this versatile and talented artist in publicity for the Bay, Sears, Tip Top Tailors, Zellers, Canadian Tire, Foot Locker, Toyota or on the runways of Toronto Fashion Week.

### **NON-SUBSCRIPTION PROGRAMMING:**

#### **I. *Get Stuffed* (Written by Alexis Diamond & Composed by Richard Payne)**

Produced by Tapestry and Words in Motion, and developed with the Canadian Diabetes Association *Get Stuffed* is a children’s opera focusing on making healthy food choices. After a successful premiere tour in 2009, Tapestry will tour *Get Stuffed* to schools and community centres in Ontario, including northern regions, in April-May 2010. *Get Stuffed* is supported with multi-year funding from the Ontario Trillium Foundation and is sponsored by the Ministry of Health Promotion, the Healthy Eating Program at Ontario Agri-Food Education Inc. and Loblaws Canada.

**For booking and other inquiries please call 416.537.6066 x224 or email [education@tapestrynewopera.com](mailto:education@tapestrynewopera.com)**

#### **II. *INSide Opera Education Programme***



Tapestry continues partnerships with the Regent Park School of Music and City Hope in St. Jamestown with programme sponsorship from BMO Financial Group. With funding from the TELUS Community Investment Board, Tapestry conducted a summer INside Opera programme with City Hope entitled the “Real Time Project”. Several youth participants collaborated with professional videographer Juan Baquero to document their peers during the INside Opera creation and performance process. Mr. Baquero is a Toronto based filmmaker who, for the past year, has been working on Listen to This, a Bravo/TVO documentary that explores the influence of music as a creative outlet for kids living in the inner city. A trailer for the documentary can be found on [www.tapestrynewopera.com](http://www.tapestrynewopera.com) or [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)

*“The TELUS Toronto Community Board is excited to support the INside Opera Education Programme, opening the door to an artistic education that at-risk youth in our communities may not otherwise have,” said Johnnie-Mike Irving, acting chair of the TELUS Toronto Community Board. “This program brings youth together with professionals in the field, connecting minds through creativity and building healthier communities in the process.”*

**For more information on INside Opera please call 416.537.6066 x224 or email [education@tapestrynewopera.com](mailto:education@tapestrynewopera.com)**

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For further media information and artist interviews please contact Kim Blackwell at 416-346-4709 (cell), 416-686-0982 or [blackwellcommunications@gmail.com](mailto:blackwellcommunications@gmail.com)