



Dora Award-winning Acting Up Stage Company announces its 10th Anniversary Season

Thom Allison, Barbara Barsky, Arlene Duncan, Reza Jacobs, Sterling Jarvis, Marc Kimelman, Lily Ling, Steven Gallagher, Eliza-Jane Scott, Lezlie Wade, Nigel Shawn Williams and many more bring the 10th anniversary season to life.

Toronto, Ontario, April 8, 2013... Acting Up Stage Company is proud to announce its 2013-2014 season celebrating the company's 10th anniversary. The season commemorates the company's history by reuniting artists and collaborators from years past in presenting a reimagined revival of Acting Up Stage Company's first major hit, a new production in association with a valued partner, a tour of a recent production, and the continuation of our yearly sell-out smash tribute concert.

Having carved out a niche in Toronto over the last decade producing, developing and advancing modern musical theatre, the 10th anniversary season will celebrate and further our commitment to thought-provoking, artistically challenging musical works. Artistic Producer Mitchell Marcus says: "I am immensely proud of the last ten years and deeply grateful for the relationships that we have built with Toronto audiences and artists. This milestone anniversary feels like an ideal time to reunite with many of our past artists and to remount one of our early hits which remains a source of great pride in the history of our organization. Coupled with this nostalgic look back, we are also using this anniversary season to explore new artistic styles and new ways of telling stories to reach audiences both locally and nationally."

Productions

The first show of the season will be the return of Acting Up Stage Company's annual smash tribute concert, in which the songbook of a legendary singer/songwriter (or group) is re-examined through a storytelling lens. *UnCovered: Sting and The Police* will delve into the catalog of one of music's most influential New Wave groups, taking audience members on a journey through the riveting stories found in their music. Featuring Canadian musical theatre stars, and entirely re-orchestrated and rearranged by perennial music director Reza Jacobs, *UnCovered: Sting and The Police* will unearth the fascinating narratives at the heart of such classics as "Desert Rose," "Don't Stand So Close To Me," and "Fields of Gold." *UnCovered: Sting and The Police* will play Koerner Hall on November 18, 2013

In January, Acting Up Stage Company is thrilled to reunite with *Caroline, or Change* partners Obsidian Theatre to present *Once On This Island* by Lynn Ahrens and Stephen Flaherty. Told through the eyes of a child storyteller, *Once On This Island* mines issues of race and class on a Caribbean island where socio-economic status is determined by shade of skin. When the dark skinned Ti Moune falls in love with a lighter-skinned upper-class man, the gods send her on a journey, testing the power of love against the fear of death. With a Caribbean infused score, stunning dance numbers and a beautiful story inspired by Rosa Guy's novel "My Love, My Love", director Nigel Shawn Williams, musical director Lily Ling and choreographer Marc Kimelman are sure to delight and inspire audiences with this musical about the power of love. *Once On This Island* will feature a cast of 11 including Dora Award-winners for *Caroline, or Change*, Arlene Duncan and Sterling Jarvis. *Once On This Island* begins on January 21, 2014 at the Ada Slaight Hall (Daniels Spectrum).

In March, Acting Up Stage Company's mainstage season culminates with a reimaged revival of the company's first breakout hit, *Elegies: A Song Cycle*. Originally produced in 2007, *Elegies* was hailed as "****" (out of 4). The most satisfying, fulfilling, beautifully performed piece of musical theatre I've seen in this city for a long time," (Toronto Star) "beautiful music and art in song," (CBC) and "the finest I've encountered in four decades of reviewing," (Post City Magazine). Directed by Lezlie Wade, this musical by William Finn is a deeply personal work written in response to September 11th. Comprised of 15 sung eulogies to people both real and fictional, Finn's moving song cycle examines the infinite joys in life through the stories of those who are no longer with us. Each song paints a different portrait – from Finn's friends whom he lost to AIDS, to his mother whom he lost to cancer, to his dogs and finally to the victims of the World Trade Centre collapse. Featuring original cast members Thom Allison, Barbara Barsky, Stephen Gallagher and Eliza Jane Scott, *Elegies: A Song Cycle* will conclude Acting Up Stage's 10th anniversary season with the core experience that has consistently been offered over the last decade – great storytellers in an intimate space, telling moving stories through song. *Elegies: A Song Cycle* begins at the Aki Studio Theatre (Daniels Spectrum) on March 28, 2014.

A National Tour

Acting Up Stage Company is also thrilled to be presenting its first national tour in January, bringing the critical and audience favorite from 2012 *Do You Want What I Have Got? A Craigslist Cantata* to Western Canada and expanding the company's reach beyond Ontario for the first time. Created by Bill Richardson, Veda Hille and Amiel Gladstone, *A Craigslist Cantata* sets actual Craigslist postings to music in a 90 minute song cycle which is both hilarious and surprisingly poignant, shedding light on the millions of personal stories which get posted on Craigslist every day. The Acting Up Stage Company and Factory Theatre co-production of *Do You Want What I Have Got? A Craigslist Cantata* will be presented by Alberta Theatre Projects and High Performance Rodeo (Calgary) from January 22-February 1, 2014 and at the Citadel Theatre (Edmonton) from February 5-23, 2014.

New Musical Development

Now in its third year, Acting Up Stage Company is very proud to continue to develop original Canadian musicals through *NoteWorthy* thanks to the support of **BMO Financial Group**.

May 2013 will see the inauguration of a new 'Matching Phase' where three playwrights and three composers are placed into different combinations to explore collaboration. Under the leadership of *NoteWorthy* director **Robert McQueen** and guest artists **Neil Bartram** and **Leslie Arden**, our six collaborators include playwrights **Erin Shields** (Governor General's Literary Award for Drama 2011 for *If We Were Birds*), **Alex Poch-Goldin** (Dora-nominee *Cringeworthy* and *This Hotel*) and **Anna Chatterton** (Dora-nominee *Stitch*), and composers **Bram Gielen** (*Biggish Kids*), **Dustin Peters** (scores for string quartet, ballet, film and chamber music), and **Adam Sakiyama** (BMI Lehman Engel Musical Theatre Workshop graduate).

Within the 2013-2014 season Acting Up Stage Company will also support the continued development of *Alexandria* (by Reza Jacobs and Andrew Kushnir), offer a new 'Matching Phase' for three new composers and three new playwrights in the Fall, and award three new projects (to be announced) commissioning funding.

Youth Education & Outreach

Rounding out Acting Up Stage Company's artistic initiatives for the 10th Anniversary season are our education programs. November will see the 8th annual incarnation of *One Song Glory*, an entirely free training program for youth aged 13-19 from across Ontario. Over four weekends, 45 young people partake in masterclasses, workshops and panel discussions, culminating in a showcase performance at the Toronto Centre for the Arts. Over the last decade, *One Song Glory* has trained over 400 young Ontarians since its inception in 2006. Auditions will take place in October 2013; those interested may submit a headshot and resume to info@actingupstage.com. ***One Song Glory* runs November 16 through to December 8, 2013.**

As well, Acting Up Stage Company will once again mentor two emerging artists through the second annual *Syd and Shirley Banks Prize*. Chosen through an open audition process, the two winners receive the opportunity to create their own showcase cabaret, perform in *UnCovered: Sting and The Police*, receive mentorship from the artists in the season's mainstage productions in addition to a \$1000 cash prize.

Acting Up Stage Company 2013/2014 Performance Schedule

UnCovered:
Sting and The Police

Music Direction, Vocal Arrangements and Orchestrations by Reza Jacobs
November 18, 2013
TELUS Centre for Performance and Learning, Koerner Hall

Once On This Island
Produced in association with Obsidian Theatre Company
Book and Lyrics by Lynn Ahrens
Music by Stephen Flaherty
Directed by Nigel Shawn Williams
Musical Directed and Original Arrangements by Lily Ling
Choreographed by Marc Kimelman
Starring Arlene Duncan and Sterling Jarvis
January 21-February 9, 2014 (Opening night: January 23)
Daniels Spectrum, Ada Slaight Hall

Elegies: A Song Cycle
By William Finn
Directed by Lezlie Wade
Starring: Thom Allison, Barbara Barsky, Steven Gallagher and Eliza-Jane Scott
March 28-April 20, 2014 (Opening night: April 1, 2014)
Daniels Spectrum, Aki Theatre

Do You Want What I Have Got? A Craigslist Cantata
Co-produced with Factory Theatre
By Veda Hille, Bill Richardson and Amiel Gladstone
Directed by Amiel Gladstone
Musical Directed by Veda Hille
January 22-February 1, 2014, Alberta Theatre Projects / High Performance Rodeo
February 5-23, 2014, The Citadel Theatre

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