

NightwoodTheatre



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June 23, 2009

NIGHTWOOD THEATRE ANNOUNCES MILESTONE **4x4 FESTIVAL**

FOR 30TH ANNIVERSARY 2009-2010 SEASON

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Toronto, ON... On the occasion of its 30th Anniversary, Nightwood is proud to announce a landmark celebration of Canadian women directors in the largest season ever produced by the company!

At the centre is the **4x4 Festival: An Off-Road Event of Women Directors**. This momentous event will showcase the talents of four of Canada's top women directors in four productions running in November 2009. The shows, culled from the international repertoire of plays by women, represent some of the finest contemporary voices writing for the world stage.

Artistic Director Kelly Thornton adds, "I wanted to take the emphasis off world premiere and playwright, and to have instead a more focused look at interpretation and the director's oeuvre."

The stellar line-up of directors include dazzling independent **Weyni Mengesha**, **Kim Collier** visionary director of Vancouver's Electric Company (in the company's Toronto premiere), the ever stylish **Eda Holmes**, and **Thornton** herself.

The Festival will also present a **Director's Summit** (November 13-22) hosting **Master Directors**, **Industry Panels** and provocative **Dialogues** against the backdrop of mainstage programming. The Festival expands Nightwood's playbill, broadens profile through creative exchange between national and international delegates and vigorously promotes the talents of emerging and established Canadian women directors.

The 4x4 Festival is fuelled by numerous producing partners including the **Canadian Stage Company**, **Obsidian Theatre**, **Ryerson Theatre School**, **Electric Company Theatre** and **The Virtual Stage**.

Stimulus for the 4x4 Festival: A national study, **Equity in Canadian Theatre: The Women's Initiative**, launched by Nightwood with the Professional Association of Canadian Theatres and the Playwright's Guild of Canada, was the key motivator in spearheading this seminal event for women directors.

The 2004-2005 national study confirmed that the trickle down effect of predominantly male artistic direction contributed to significantly fewer female playwrights or directors enjoying the same level of employment in Canadian Theatre as their male counterparts. Nightwood has identified that the real action required is to provide more professional and training opportunities for female directors. "Without these skills," says Thornton, "they lack the most fundamental prerequisite for the job of Artistic Director and the situation remains Catch 22. If they cannot acquire these opportunities by gainful employment at the theatres then they remain in stasis, unable to hone their skills."

Says Producer Monica Esteves, "Since the inception of the last planning cycle in 2005, Nightwood has made steady and hefty gains in audiences, as well as private and public sector investments. Such an ambitious new venture for Nightwood marks yet another new chapter of growth and progress. And, most vitally, the 4x4 Festival will enable Nightwood to provide increased profile and opportunities to female theatre directors, in addition to our mainstay support and training of women playwrights."

PRODUCTION DETAILS

That Face

Written by Polly Stenham (U.K.) / Directed by Kelly Thornton / Starring Sonja Smits

Oct. 26 to Nov. 21, 2009 / Berkeley Street Theatre Downstairs / Media Opening Night: Oct. 29, 2009

Produced by Nightwood Theatre in co-production with the Canadian Stage Company

"One of the most astonishing debuts I have seen in more than 30 years...fresh, passionate and blackly comic – exhilarating...a remarkable and unforgettable piece of theatre." Daily Telegraph

Mia is at boarding school. She has access to drugs. They are Martha's. Henry has dropped out of school. He has access to alcohol. From Martha. Martha controls their lives. Martha is their mother. That Face is an explosive portrayal of an affluent family in freefall. Winner of the Evening Standard Award, this dazzling debut was written when Stenham was only 19 years old.

Thornton has been the Artistic Director of Nightwood Theatre since 2001 where select credits include *The Danish Play* (Toronto, Edmonton, Ottawa, Copenhagen), *Mathilde*, *Wild Dogs*, *China Doll* (Governor General's Award Finalist), *Bear With Me* and others. She has also directed at the Canadian Stage Company, Buddies in Bad Times, Yukon Arts Centre/Sour Brides, Theatre Passe Muraille / Planet 88 and others. She is the recipient of the Pauline McGibbon Award and a 2008 YWCA Woman of Distinction Award for her commitment to the mentorship and training of young women.

Yellowman

Written by Dael Orlandersmith (U.S.A.) / Directed by Weyni Mengesha (ON)

November 2 to 15, 2009 / Berkeley Street Theatre Upstairs / Media Opening Night: Nov. 4, 2009

Produced by Nightwood Theatre in co-production with Obsidian Theatre

"A landmark in theater history...enthraling...mind-altering" New York Times

A 2002 finalist for the Pulitzer Prize for Drama and winner of the 2002-03 Susan Smith Blackburn Prize, this seminal play is an edgy and provocative examination of the complexities of inter-race prejudice, centering around the relationship between Eugene, a light-skinned black man, and Alma, a dark-skinned black woman.

Mengesha is a Dora nominated director whose credits include: director & composer for the hit play *da kink in my hair* (Toronto, NYC & London); director/dramaturge for d'bi.young's *blood.claat* (2006 Dora Award for Best New Play), and director for *A Raisin in the Sun* (Soulpepper/Theatre Calgary). She is the recipient of the 2008 Toronto Arts Council Foundation's RBC Emerging Artist Award.

A live-cinematic interpretation of Jean-Paul Sartre's *No Exit*

Conceived and Directed by Kim Collier (B.C.)

Translated by PAUL BOWLES / November 11 to 21, 2009

Buddies in Bad Times Theatre Main Chamber / Media Opening November 11, 2009

Nightwood Theatre presents The Virtual Stage and Electric Company Theatre Production

"Another benchmark of brilliance... Jaw-dropping." Vancouver Sun

2009 Winner of 2 Jessie Awards (Outstanding Production & the Critics' Choice Innovation Award)

This existential masterpiece gets a 21st century treatment as a 'live movie' in this extraordinary, hybrid film and theatre performance by the prolific Kim Collier – one of the most exciting Canadian directors of this generation in her Toronto debut. An exhilarating and radical bedlam of eternal damnation, critics are calling Collier's No Exit, "Brilliant... The bravest theatrical ride I've been on this year." Globe and Mail

Collier is Artistic Producer of the Electric Company Theatre and has been involved with the direction of most Electric Company's productions, as well as directing for: Studio 58, Western Canada Theatre, Bard on the Beach and Chemainus Theatre Festival. She is the winner of numerous Jessie Awards.

Serious Money

Written by Caryl Churchill (U.K.) / Directed by Eda Holmes (ON)

November 20 to 22, 2009 / Theatre Passe Muraille Mainspace / Media Opening: November 20, 2009

Nightwood Theatre presents Ryerson University Theatre School

"A breathless, exhilarating crash course in the morality of high finance." New York Times

Serious Money established Churchill as one of the most powerful and innovative satirists of our time. Set amongst the world of champagne, stock exchange swindles and big business, it is a blisteringly funny, three-ring circus of selfishness and greed.

Holmes is the Associate Artistic Director of the Shaw Festival. At the Shaw, she directed *The Little Foxes*, *Tristan*, *Love Among the Russians*, *Floyd Collins*, *Blood Relations*, and *The Return of the Prodigal*. Other credits include: *The Optimists* and *The Pessimist* for Tarragon Theatre; and *The Fall* for Great Canadian Theatre Company.

The Director's Summit

The Summit presents a 10-day exchange of ideas on artistic creation and the director's practice. International delegates include Josette Bushell-Mingo (director of Margaret Atwood's *The Penelopiad*), Johanna Schall, a formidable German director and grand-daughter of legendary theatre-makers Bertolt Brecht and Helene Weigel; and Yael Farber, (celebrated South African Director of Molera). Canadian talent includes Kim Collier (Electric Company, B.C.), Jillian Keiley (Artistic Fraud, Newfoundland, Siminovitch Award-winner), Vanessa Porteous (Alberta Theatre Projects, AB), Jackie Maxwell (Shaw Festival, ON), Jennifer Tarver (ON), Nina Lee Aquino (Cahoots, ON), Weyni Mengesha (ON), Alisa Palmer (ON), Yvette Nolan (Native Earth, ON), Brigitte Haentjens (Sibyllines, QC, Siminovitch Award-winner), and Eda Holmes (Shaw, ON) among others.

A number of other showcase opportunities for directors include the **New Blood Cabaret** as well as a **Director's Showcase** for key directors to watch.

In addition to Summit programming for theatre professionals, the 4x4 Festival will feature an expansive public component including unique forums, panels and workshops on themes of social change, corporate leadership, the commercialization of innovation, education for action, and much more. For the second consecutive season, Nightwood will also be offering free onsite babysitting – as well as talk backs, Tea with Artists, and will be expanding “Crash Courses” (a series of hands-on workshops and classes for the public on directing, playwriting and performance).

Beyond these broad ambitions lie, at the core, the tangible and foremost objective to provide training of the highest calibre to as many women directors as possible, and to enhance their understanding of the craft by exposing them to the work of successful female role models within the Canadian and International theatre landscape.

Director's Summit programming will be announced on August 10, 2009.

ABOUT NIGHTWOOD THEATRE

Nightwood Theatre – Artistic Director Kelly Thornton, Producer Monica Esteves, Chair Susan Quinn.

As Canada's national women's theatre since 1979, Nightwood has launched the careers of many of the leading theatre artists in the country creating a repertoire of Canadian plays including Ann-Marie MacDonald's *Goodnight Desdemona*, *Good Morning Juliet*, Djanet Sears' *Harlem Duet* and Sonja Mills' *The Danish Play*.

We have touched the lives of thousands in our history and today we are thriving. We have won Canada's highest literary and performing arts awards and more than ever our success proves the need for theatre that gives voice to women and celebrates the diversity of Canadian society. Nightwood is a national theatre and we remain actively engaged in mentoring young women and promoting women's place on the local, national and international stage.

That Face is part of the Berkeley Street Project initiative, where The Canadian Stage Company, Nightwood Theatre and other companies are partnering to transform the Berkeley Street Theatre into a dynamic home for contemporary performing arts.

Festival Supporters and Partners:



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4x4 Festival Details

- DATES:** October 26 to November 22, 2009
- MEDIA/VIP:** Thursday, October 29, 2009 (*That Face*, Berkeley Street Theatre, Downstairs)
Wednesday, November 4, 2009 (*Yellowman*, Berkeley Street Theatre, Upstairs)
Wednesday, November 11, 2009 (*No Exit*, Buddies in Bad Times Theatre)
Friday, November 20, 2009 (*Serious Money*, Theatre Passe Muraille Mainspace)
- SHOW TIMES:** ***That Face & Yellowman:*** Monday to Saturday at 8:00 p.m., Wednesdays at 1:30 p.m., Saturdays at 2:00 p.m.
- No Exit:*** Tuesday to Saturday at 8:00 p.m., November 18 & 20 at 1:30 p.m., Saturdays & Sundays at 2:00 p.m.
- Serious Money:*** November 20 & 21 at 8pm, November 21 & 22 at 2pm
- Directors' Summit:** Public and Industry Programming to be announced in August 2009
- TICKETS:** **Single tickets go on sale September 1st**
\$20.00 - \$45.00
Tickets available in advance: 416-944-1740 or www.nightwoodtheatre.net
- FESTIVAL PASSES:** Festival passes go on sale August 27th. Save up to 50% on tickets by calling 416-955-0101
- LOCATIONS:** Berkeley Street Theatre Downstairs (for THAT FACE), 26 Berkeley Street
Berkeley Street Theatre Upstairs (for YELLOWMAN), 26 Berkeley Street
Buddies in Bad Times Theatre (for NO EXIT), 12 Alexander Street
Theatre Passe Muraille Mainspace (for SERIOUS MONEY), 16 Ryerson Avenue

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Press contacts:

For more information and to set up interviews
please contact **Rebecca Peirson** at 416-944-1740 x 8 or rebecca@nightwoodtheatre.net
www.nightwoodtheatre.net