



THE SEGAL CENTRE AND COPA DE ORO PRODUCTIONS PRESENT

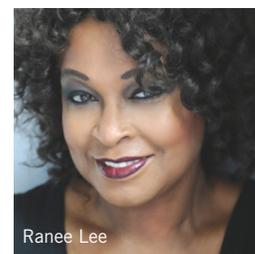


THE MAHALIA JACKSON MUSICAL

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY ROGER PEACE
STARRING RANEE LEE
ACCOMPANIED BY MEMBERS OF THE IGS CHOIR,
UNDER THE DIRECTION OF MARCIA BAILEY
WITH TAUREY BUTLER ON PIANO

WORLD PREMIERE
GOSPEL MUSICAL!

MARCH 3
TO MARCH 24, 2013



Montreal, February 7th, 2013 – The Segal Centre for Performing Arts and Copa de Oro Productions are proud to present the world premiere of *The Mahalia Jackson Musical*, starring the legendary Raneé Lee as the Queen of Gospel. Written and directed by Roger Peace and featuring a live choir on stage, this roof-raising, foot-stomping gospel celebration will be presented at the Segal Theatre from **March 3rd to March 24th, 2013**.

The Mahalia Jackson Musical traces the rise of celebrated singer and civil rights activist Mahalia Jackson, from poverty in New Orleans, to international success as one of the most influential gospel artists in the world. As told by Mahalia herself and members of her family, the play takes the audience on an uplifting journey through the development of her career and her key involvement in the Civil rights movement – culminating with Martin Luther King’s historic March on Washington, where she performed in front of 250, 000 people.

Mahalia Jackson’s remarkable rags to riches story became the source of inspiration for veteran Montreal playwright and director, Roger Peace, who writes and directs this new musical. Known for capturing the spirit and essence of the most captivating women in show business (Billie Holiday, Etta James, Judy Garland, Edith Piaf), he explains that the key in telling the story “*is the music... audiences may not always remember the details, but they will always remember the music.*”

He adds: “*Mahalia Jackson believed she was put on the earth to spread God’s word through her Gospel music, and people gravitated to her because of the way she made them feel.*”

Mahalia Jackson’s moving gospel songs are at the forefront of this exhilarating musical starring Montreal music icon **Raneé Lee**. Renowned for her ability to channel the grand dames of jazz, this inimitable Juno Award winning singer and actor will win over the hearts and souls of all when she performs favourites like “When the Saints Go Marchin’ In”, “Summertime” and “Down by the Riverside” joined by nine members of Montreal’s **Imani Gospel Singers (IGS)** choir, under the direction of **Marcia Bailey**. Montreal Jazz favourite **Taurey Butler** accompanies on piano.

As various members of Mahalia’s family and friends, **Adrienne Irving** and **Tristan D. Lalla**, playing a total of seven characters combined, contribute to the dramatic unfolding of the story that spans close to 50 years. Set design by **Jean-Claude Olivier** and lighting by **Peter Spike Lyne** complete this lively production.

Mahalia Jackson – The Voice of Civil Rights (biographical notes)

Born in 1911 in New Orleans, Mahalia Jackson was raised in a home shared by 13 people by her aunt Duke. Though her earliest influences were the sights and sounds of Uptown New Orleans, hot jazz bands and Bessy Smith’s bluesy voice, she found great inspiration at the Mt. Moriah Baptist Church, where she sang multiple times a week. At the age of 16, like many African Americans in the South, she took part in the Great Migration to Chicago for better opportunities. Ever lifting her spirit through church and its music, she made the oath to use her voice for spiritual song – a promise she kept.

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**DIRECTOR AND WRITER
ROGER PEACE**

**PRODUCER
ALLAN SANDLER**

**SET DESIGN
JEAN-CLAUDE OLIVIER**

**LIGHTING DESIGN
PETER SPIKE LYNE**

**MUSICAL DIRECTOR
AND ARRANGEMENTS
TAUREY BUTLER**

**STAGE MANAGER
TODD BRICKER**

**APPRENTICE STAGE MANAGER
KATE HAGEMeyer**

**STARRING
RANEE LEE AS MAHALIA JACKSON
WITH ADRIENNE MEI IRVING
AND TRISTAN D. LALLA
WITH TAUREY BUTLER ON PIANO
ACCOMPANIED BY
MEMBERS OF THE IGS CHOIR,
UNDER THE DIRECTION OF
MARCIA BAILEY**



Her fame soared with the 1948 hit "Movie on Up a Little Higher" selling a million copies in the US alone. Battling racism and segregation throughout her life, she rose above it all, and toured throughout the country and was invited to perform at Carnegie Hall at the first Negro Gospel Musical Festival, a monumental event in the history of gospel music. This was followed by mainstream success in the late 1950s, touring the world, recording several albums for Columbia and appearing on many popular television variety shows. Her riveting contralto, signature call and response style and soulful voice made her an international star by 1960.

As early as 1956, Civil Rights leaders called on Mahalia Jackson to lend her powerful voice to the iconic movement – for rallies, marches and demonstration, eventually becoming a close friend and supporter of Martin Luther King Jr. Her activism, combined with her faith and her unrivaled voice made her one of the most important musical artists and historical figures of the 20th century. She died at the age of 60 in 1972, and was posthumously awarded a Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award the same year. She was inducted in the Rock'n'Roll Hall of Fame in 1997.

*Source: <http://www.mahaliajackson.us/>

Sunday@-The Segal, Monday@-McGill

For this edition, we are proud to welcome **Tyrone Benskin**, MP for Jeanne-Le Ber and former Artistic Director of Black Theatre Workshop. As we observe Black History Month, Mr. Benskin will discuss the contribution of the arts to the struggle for equality. Join us for this intimate talk on **Sunday, March 3rd, 2013** (11:00 a.m., with complimentary refreshments and snacks) for Sunday@-The Segal and on **Monday, March 11th, 2013** (7:00 p.m.) for a more in-depth workshop at McGill University. Entrance is free. **Sunday@-The Segal, Monday@-McGill** is presented by CJAD.

About the Segal Centre for Performing Arts

The Segal Centre is a meeting place for all of the performing arts, showcasing the best professional artists from here and abroad and playing a leading role in the artistic development of Montreal's youth and the creation of its cultural legacy. Through theatre, music, dance, cinema and the Academy, the Segal Centre is setting a broad vision by recognizing the importance of building bridges through the arts and supporting multicultural projects in Montreal. The Centre's commitment is to ensure that creativity resonates within our community and that it remains accessible and inspiring each and every day, leading the performing arts world of tomorrow. www.segalcentre.org

About Copa de Oro Productions

Copa de Oro was officially established in January 2010 by Allan Sandler and Roger Peace. The company was formed with the express vision of signing and presenting original musical and theatrical works for the legitimate theatre. Although the company is relatively new, these two faces have been around a long time and represent a wealth of experiences in both the theatrical and musical arenas, both here in Canada and throughout the world. www.copadeoro.ca

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For interviews and media inquiries, please contact:

Andrea Elalouf, 514.739.2301 x 8363, aelalouf@segalcentre.org

www.segalcentre.org/media



UP NEXT IN THE SEGAL THEATRE:

Sherlock Holmes **World premiere**

A fresh take on an unrivaled classic starring cherished Montreal actor and young Hollywood sensation Jay Baruchel.

By Greg Kramer - Based on the works of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle - Directed by Andrew Shaver - A Segal Centre Production

MEDIA CALL

Opportunity for interviews, photo-ops and video with cast, director, and design team.

Thursday February 28th at 12:30 p.m.

OPENING NIGHT

Thursday March 7th at 8:00 p.m.

Please RSVP before Monday March 4th

PERFORMANCES

March 3rd to March 24th, 2013

PREVIEWS

March 3rd to March 6th, 2013

RUN

Monday - Thursday - 8:00 p.m.

Saturday - 8:30 p.m.

Sunday - 7 p.m.

MATINÉES

Wednesday - 1 p.m.

Sunday - 2 p.m.

TICKETS

514.739.7944

www.segalcentre.org

SUNDAY@-THE SEGAL,

MONDAY@-MCGILL:

Sunday, March 3rd - 11:00 a.m.

Monday, March 11th - 7:00 p.m.

GUEST: Tyrone Benskin, MP for Jeanne-Le Ber and former Artistic Director of Black Theatre Workshop.

ENTRANCE IS FREE.

WHERE

Segal Centre for Performing Arts

5170, ch. de la Côte-Ste-Catherine

Montréal

Metro

Côte-Ste-Catherine/Snowdon

Bus: 129 / 51