

ORALTORIO

A Theatrical MiXtape



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*The boom-bap of rap,
the screech of rock,
the cycle of 12 bar blues,
the polyphony of freedom songs,
the abandon of disco,
the bounce of the club,
the rebellion of secret drums.*



“ORALTORIO IS AS INSIGHTFUL AS IT IS MAGICAL!”

~ Mooney on Theatre

***“ORALTORIO IS FORGING A PLACE FOR WOMEN’S EXPRESSION
IN MUSICAL AND URBAN LANDSCAPES.”***

~ Toronto Star

PROJECT OVERVIEW



Analog to digital, griots to emcees...

Oraltorio: a Theatrical MixTape is an original multi-disciplinary creation written and performed by renowned playwright/poet **Motion**, composed and performed by Dora-nominated sound designer **DJ L'Oqenz**, directed by the award-winning **Mumbi TindyeBwa-Otu** and choreographed by the celebrated **Roger C. Jeffrey**. A kinetic coming-of-age tale, Oraltorio traces the personal and collective journey of Northside-born girls-to-women as they grapple with identity, migrate through their histories, and manifest their lineages through ancient, contemporary and Afro-futuristic soundscapes. Running 65 minutes, Oraltorio is an aural riff on music, race, gender, culture, memory, otherness, resistance, ritual, silence, survival and inheritance. The multi-layered voices of the BGirl and the DJ, as the traditional storyteller and drummer, are reborn in their beats and rhymes. A unique fusion of Spoken Word opera and Hip Hop mixtape, Oraltorio explores the creative resistance to the historical silencing of Black women's voices, through the many intertwined revolutions of music and oral culture in the African Diaspora. A journey through word, sound and drama, Oraltorio is "RemiXing Theatre!"



PRODUCTION HISTORY

Inspired by past, present and future movements of Black women in music, Oraltorio: A Theatrical MixTape received its first readings in Factory Theatre's Natural Resources Unit, followed by development at the Banff Centre for the Arts Spoken Word Residency and works-in-progress presentations at b current's Rock.Paper.Sistaz and the Piece of Mine Festival in 2013. It was then presented in a feature performance at the Hip Hop & Punk Feminisms Symposium at the University of Illinois.

These were followed by a residency at University of Toronto-Scarborough's Theatre and Performance Studies Program and Factory Theatre's annual Factory Wired in 2015. A sold-out special presentation took place during Buddies in Bad Times' Rhubarb Festival in 2016.

Oraltorio premiered in Spring 2016 at Toronto's Theatre Centre as part of Why Not Theatre's The Riser Project. Oraltorio's successful premier run garnered excellent reviews, and the Dora Award-nomination for Outstanding Sound Design.

To initiate the vision to share this powerful narrative with national and international audiences, Oraltorio travelled to Accra, Ghana to perform as part of the renowned Chale Wote Street Art Festival in August 2016. The dynamic performance reached over 3000 patrons on the festival's main stage. The incredible reception in a completely new geo-graphic context speaks to the tour potential of the show. IFT Theatre and MotionLive Collective have joined with Volcano Theatre for a live and electric double bill of Toronto theatre, presenting Oraltorio and Century Song at OFF-CINARS in Montreal in November 2016.



CREATIVE TEAM



Motion | EMCEE | PLAYWRIGHT | PERFORMER

MOTION is an emcee, poet, playwright and screenwriter whose aural/sonic works are a fusion of word, sound & drama for the stage and screen. With performances across Canada, the U.S, the Caribbean and most recently Ghana, West Africa, her work has been read in Motion in Poetry (Women's Press), seen on stage with Aneemah's Spot (SummerWorks), and experienced in the co-creation Nightmare Dream (IFT Theatre/Obsidian). An alumna of the Canadian Film Centre (CFC) Writer's Lab, as well as playwright-in-resident at Obsidian Theatre Company, and resident in the Banff Centre for the Arts Playwright's Colony, Motion's recent productions are the Dora

Award-nominated Oraltorio: A Theatrical MixTape with DJ L'Oqenz, and as screenwriter of the ReelWorld Film Festival Impact Award-winning short film A Man's Story (Bravofact). With film projects in development, HeadSpace Rotates Radio going to air, the poetic opera Motherland up next, and teaching Spoken Word, Performance and Culture at York University, Motion continues as "a true testament to the power of words." (TO Star)



DJ L'Oqenz | COMPOSER | SOUND DESIGNER | PERFORMER

L'Oqenz is a powerful force to be reckoned with. DJ, producer, and Dora Award-nominated sound designer - her passion for music and undeniable skills on the turntables have made her a sought after musical resource at home in Toronto and across the globe. Spinning everything from Hip Hop to Jazz - L'Oqenz has the ability to fuse them all effortlessly. She has toured across Canada, the United States, Asia, the Caribbean and the UK, and has shared the stage some of the most respected artists in the business including Zaki Ibrahim, Motion, Jean Grae, Bahamadia, K'naan, M1 (Dead Prez), Maseo (De La Soul) and Kool Herc. She has been heard at

Toronto's Luminato and in LA as opening DJ for renowned poet Saul Williams. In 2012 and 2014 DJ L'Oqenz was music director of "Aneemah's Spot" (MotionLive Collective) which featured at the Summerworks Festival and TD Then & Now Festival, and sound designer of "The Emancipation of Ms. Lovely" by Ngozi Paul at Summerworks 2015. As producer NiteOwlNaps, DJ L'Oqenz is the founder of Inner Voice Music, and can be heard on the Headspace Rotates Radio, recently featured on Okayplayer.com. In 2015, she was resident DJ at the Brooklyn Museum Basquiat exhibit, and created the Tribeca Film Festival Official Playlist. Most recently, she was a featured guest at the Nkabom and Chale Wote Festivals in Ghana.



Mumbi Tindyebwa | DIRECTOR

Mumbi Tindyebwa (Director) is a Kenyan-Ugandan-Canadian theatre Creator and Director raised in Kenya and Victoria, BC and now based in Toronto. She is the Founder and Artistic Director of the Dora Nominated company IFT Theatre, Associate Artist at Volcano Theatre and the 2015 recipient of the Pauline McGibbon Award for Directing. Mumbi has also been nominated for the John Hirsch Award for Directing and been the recipient of the Mallory Gilbert Leadership Protégé Award. Mumbi is also a member of the Soulpepper Academy and an alumni of the distinguished Michael Langham Workshop in Classical Direction at Stratford Shakespeare Festival. Her most popular work includes the sold out, critically

acclaimed site-specific show Nightmare Dream (IFT Theatre, Dora Nomination), Just Me You and The Silence (World Pride, Buddies in Bad Times), Because I Love You (IFT Theatre/TD Then and Now Festival), My Name is Rachel Corrie (Best Director, Best Design, Best Actress Nomination, My Theatre Award/My Entertainment World). Most recently, Mumbi is the Co-Director for the Artist Mentoring Youth (AMY) Project, a 2015 Artist In Resident at University of Toronto and the co-founder of the Kendu Hearth International Theatre Conference in Uganda.



Roger C. Jeffrey | CHOREOGRAPHER

Born and raised in New York City, Roger began his training at Bernice Johnson Cultural Arts Center in Jamaica, Queens. A graduate of Fiorello H. LaGuardia High School of Music & Art and the Performing Arts, he received his B.F.A. from The Juilliard School under the direction of Benjamin Harkavy. Mr. Jeffrey has performed in the companies of Bernice Johnson, Kevin Iga Jeff, Obediah Wright, Earl Mosley, Zvi Gotheiner, Twyla Tharp, Lar Lubovitch, Metropolitan Opera Ballet and with Mikhail Baryshnikov's White Oak Dance Project. Mr. Jeffrey is a New York based freelance choreographer/director. Mr. Jeffrey has choreographed and or directed various theatrical productions including Death of the Diva

featuring Amanda Seales, The Emancipation of Ms. Lovely featuring Ngozi Paul, Blood Claat featuring D'bi. Young, Gemini Rising and Da Kink in my Hair featuring Angie Stone, Melanie Fiona and Terri Vaughn to name a few. He is also the artistic consultant for Rasta Thomas and associate artistic director of Dawn Branch Works. In 1997, Mr. Jeffrey founded Subtle Changes, Inc., a nonprofit artist collective committed to the presentation, development, and exposure of the arts. "Roger C. Jeffrey is one of the most sensitive and savvy of young producers in New York." -New York Times



Ramon Charles | VIDEO DESIGNER

An experience editor, designer and artist. He holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts from the University of Toronto and is a graduate of Sheridan College's Media Arts program. He's spent the past 10 years working in television while juggling a myriad of freelance projects in his off-time. From music videos, short films, animations, promos and commercials, he always creates content that's engaging, thought-provoking, but most of all... memorable. Oratorio is Ramon's first venture into theatre and he can't wait to put his creative stamp on the projection design. It's important that his work connects with the audience, draws them in, and becomes an immersive experience they won't forget.



Andre du Toit | LIGHTING DESIGNER

Andre is a lighting designer for theatre based in Toronto. Recent selected designs include Paolozzapedia, The Double (Bad New Days), The Assholes, Take Me Back to Jefferson/As I Lay Dying (Theatre Smith-Gilmour), The Bakelite Masterpiece (Tarragon Theatre), Watching Glory Die (Canadian Rep Theatre), Florence (The Dietrich Group) Art (Theatre North West) SPENT (Theatre Smith Gilmour, Why Not Theatre, TheatreRUN), Ralph + Lina (Edge of Woods Theatre), Mouthpiece (Quote Unquote Collective) Little Death, The Biographer, (Tango Co.), Business As Usual (Zou Theatre Company), Dirty Butterfly (Bound to Create Theatre) and The Rez Sisters (Factory Theatre). Andre has won two Dora Mavor Moore Awards for Outstanding Lighting Design.



Mel Hague | DRAMATURGE

Mel Hague is a Toronto based dramaturge. She is the Play Development Coordinator at Obsidian Theatre Company. Mel is the Rhubarb Festival Director and Company Dramaturge at Buddies in Bad Times Theatre. Mel has worked with Factory Theatre, bcurrent performing arts, fu-Gen Asian Canadian Theatre, Eastern Front Theatre, Queer Acts Festival, The Paprika Festival, and Mulgrave Road Theatre. Other theatre credits include Litmus Theatre's Birth of Frankenstein (Dora Nomination – Outstanding New Play Independent Category). Mel has an MFA in Theatre from York University.



Jackie Chau | SET & PROPS DESIGNER

Jackie has worked as a set and costume designer across Canada and her work has toured internationally. In addition, she is a production designer and art director for film and television. Selected theatre design credits include: Sexy Laundry (Theatre Aquarius) Annie Mae's Movement, The Place Between, Salt Baby, Almighty Voice and His Wife, Giiwedini, Tombs of the Vanishing Indian, From Thine Eyes, HUFF (NEPA), Antigone Insurgency, Someone is Going to Come, Talking Masks, Like the First Time, Charge of the Expormidable Moose, Ubu Mayor (One Little Goat), Gas Girls (New Harlem Productions), The Making Of St. Jerome (eastBOUND Theatre), Romeo and Juliet (TD Dream in High Park/

Can Stage), Zadie's Shoes (Factory Theatre), Brown Balls (Fu-Gen), The Swearing Jar (Prairie Theatre Exchange), Dirty Butterfly (Bound to Create), Fish Eyes Trilogy (Nightswimming), Moment (ARC Theatre), Cowboy Versus Samurai (Soulpepper). Jackie was named in NOW magazine's Top 10 Theatre Artists of 2009 and has received 5 Dora nominations for outstanding set design.



Mariuxi Zambrano | COSTUME DESIGNER

Mariuxi Zambrano is a Toronto-based multidisciplinary artist and curator with extensive experience in set, costume, production and projection design. She has worked on recognized projects such as the Dora-nominated Nightmare Dream (ift Theatre/Obsidian Theatre), My Name is Rachel Corrie (Best Director, Best Design, Best Actress Nomination), and in Tender Napalm at the Theatre Passe Murielle as part of SummerWorks. She has also been recognized as outstanding designer by NOW magazine (NNNN). Mariuxi holds an Honours degree in Visual Arts from the University of Toronto, and has worked at aluCine Latin Film+Media arts Festival as the Operations and Outreach Manager.



PRODUCERS



IFT Theatre is a Dora Nominated, Toronto based theatre company with an international focus. Founded in 2011 by award winning Theatre Creator Mumbi Tindyebwa, IFT focuses on creating and producing work that is interdisciplinary and/or experimental in form, style and content. IFT is known for such popular hits as the site specific show *Nightmare Dream* (Dora Nomination), *ORALTORIO* (Dora Nomination), *Because I Love You* (TD Then and Now Festival) and *Dancing to A White Boy Song* (Now Magazine Best of Summerworks Picks). Inspired by an insatiable desire and pursuit for artistic freedom, IFT is a home for artists and audiences of diverse cultural and artistic backgrounds. IFT is the co-founder of the Kendu Hearth International conference in Kampala, Uganda.



MotionLive Collective was formed as an ad hoc collaboration, mobilizing culturally diverse artists to develop new works and innovative creative projects. Coming together to produce an award-winning festival debut of Aneemah's *Spot* at Summerworks 2012, the continued work of the collective has been fostered by key arts organizations such as Obsidian Theatre Company, b current, Factory Theatre and Caribbean Tales. With the vision to increase access through creative collaboration for artists of colour, African Diasporic stories, urban communities and new audiences, MotionLive Collective's projects have included Aneemah's *Spot* (TD Then & Now Series 2014), as well as *Poetiks: Live Exhibit of Word & Sound* (City of Toronto) and the cross-Canadian *Northside Project: Snapshot of Hip Hop Arts*. Bringing together accomplished theatre, musical, visual and literary artists, MotionLive Collective garnered the RBC Arts Award in 2012. The Collective developed the Dora Award-nominated *Oraltorio: A theatrical MixTape*, and co-presented the premier production of the play in 2016, co-produced with Why Not Theatre as part of the Riser Project at the Theatre Centre.

A woman with large, dark, curly hair is singing passionately into a vintage-style microphone. She is wearing a dark zip-up hoodie. The background is dark with some architectural elements visible. A bright light source is at the top center, creating a lens flare effect.

REVIEWS

*"Motion is a **magnetic** performer with a big voice and enviable range."*
NOW MAGAZINE

*"ORALTORIO is forging a place for women's **expression** in musical and urban landscapes."*
TORONTO STAR

*"ORALTORIO is as insightful as it is **magical**."*
MOONEY ON THEATRE

*"ORALTORIO: A THEATRICAL MIXTAPE is **compelling**, throbbing and pulsating with life."*
SLOTKIN LETTER

*"Mumbi Tindyebwa has crafted perfectly realized moments where body, voice, soundscape and background imagery align with **masterful precision**."*
MOONEY ON THEATRE

*"ORALTORIO has me wanting to dance from the second I sat in my seat and left me wanting to come back and **tune in** to Motion and DJ L'Oqenz over and over again."*
THEATRE READER



CONTACT

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