



October 29, 2009:
For immediate release

“Suddenly, we were not at a concert ... but near the doorway of a colourful, candle-lit, hedonistic theatre, where all dreams are made visible.”

(from a Globe and Mail review of Tafelmusik's 1999 presentation of King Arthur)

**Drawing on the stuff of legends:
Tafelmusik presents *King Arthur* by Henry Purcell
November 12 to 15, 2009**

Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra and Chamber Choir

*Directed by Ivars Taurins
Featuring: R.H. Thomson, actor
Suzie LeBlanc, soprano
Charles Daniels, tenor
Nathaniel Watson, baritone*

Date + Times: Trinity-St. Paul's Centre
Thursday November 12th – Saturday November 14th at 8PM
Sunday November 15th at 3:30PM

Ticket Prices: \$39 - \$82
Face the Musik for ages 30 and under: \$20/\$25
PWYC Fridays: Friday November 13th

Venue: Trinity-St. Paul's Centre, 427 Bloor Street West

Box Office: Trinity-St. Paul's Centre: 416.964.6337 / www.tafelmusik.org

Website: www.tafelmusik.org / www.myspace.com/mytafelmusik

Tafelmusik toasts the 350th anniversary of Henry Purcell's birth with a concert version of the semi-opera *King Arthur*, based on a play by John Dryden. Audience favourite **R.H. Thomson** returns to Tafelmusik to narrate Dryden's drama about warrior kings, fair maidens, and scheming sorcerers. **Ivars Taurins** directs the Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra and Chamber Choir, who are joined by a stellar cast of soloists: soprano **Suzie LeBlanc**, tenor **Charles Daniels** and baritone **Nathaniel Watson**. Dryden's poetic account of King Arthur's battle against the Saxons draws on the stuff of legend — chivalry, magic, love and mythology — to bring the story to life. While politics and military conquest define the plot, the opera is primarily a fairy story for the stage, full of humour and fantasy.

The story is told through Dryden's verse, which outlines a blockbuster plot: King Arthur is pitted in battle against his political and romantic rival, Oswald, who has captured the King's beloved, Emmeline, the blind daughter of the Duke of Cornwall. After many bloody battles, the rivals turn to their resident magicians, Osmond and Merlin, and their spirits, Grimbald and Philidel, for help. The patriotic finale sees the reconciliation of the enemies, and concludes with a hymn to St. George, the patron saint of Britain.

Adapted for the concert stage from the original five-act "Dramatik Opera", these performances of *King Arthur* comprise all of Purcell's original music, including his lively dances, thrilling choruses, and one of his most beautiful songs, *Fairest Isle*.

Long-time Tafelmusik collaborator **R.H. Thomson** has worked as actor and director in theatre, film and television for the past 30 years. Most recently he has appeared in Anouilh's *Antigone* at Soulpepper Theatre, the Greek film *Anthanasia* by Panos Karkanevatos and the television mini series *The Englishman's Boy* based on the novel by Guy Vanderhaeghe. His most recent collaboration with Tafelmusik was as narrator for *Metamorphosis*, a programme that premiered in 2005 and has toured extensively.

The trio of vocal soloists performing in *King Arthur* includes two who reprise their roles from the 1999 production: soprano **Suzie LeBlanc** and tenor **Charles Daniels**. Acadian-born **LeBlanc** has established an international career specializing in 17th and 18th century repertoire. She is a frequent guest of Tafelmusik and has appeared with many of the world's leading early-music ensembles in concert and opera performances as well as on disc and on film, including the lead role in Jean Rodrigue's 2008 film *Lost Song*.

British tenor **Charles Daniels** made his Tafelmusik debut in 1999 as a guest soloist in *King Arthur*. He is well-known for his performances of baroque music, and is particularly sought after for his interpretations of Purcell's music, which he has recorded extensively. A graduate of the Eastman School of Music, baritone **Nathaniel Watson** is a frequent guest of Tafelmusik, having recently appeared in Mozart's *Requiem*. Together with Charles Daniels and R.H. Thomson, he performed in the Calgary Philharmonic's 2007 presentation of *King Arthur* — also conducted by Ivars Taurins.

Founded in 1981 by its director Ivars Taurins, the Tafelmusik Chamber Choir is recognized as "the best period-performance choir anywhere in the world." (*Globe and Mail*). *King Arthur* invites the choir to demonstrate its clarity and rigour throughout, culminating with the chorus *How happy the lover* in the famous multi-layered passacaglia. Tafelmusik last presented *King Arthur* in November 1999, drawing particular praise for Taurins and the choir from the *Globe and Mail*: "The single most impressive thing ... was the chorus. What a fine group of singers this is: precise, well-balanced, highly musical and attuned to intelligent nuance."

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Tafelmusik's *Face the Musik* programme is supported by
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Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra, led by Music Director Jeanne Lamon and founded in 1979, is one of the world's leading period performance ensembles. All members of the Orchestra are specialists in historical performance practice, and their collaboration results in a delightful transparency, vitality and richness of sound. Tafelmusik performs over 50 concerts a year at home in Toronto, tours extensively around the world, has released over 75 CDs and has received nine JUNO Awards. In 2005, Tafelmusik received a Grammy Award nomination. Tafelmusik is the Baroque Orchestra-in-Residence at the Faculty of Music, University of Toronto and operates its annual Tafelmusik Baroque Summer Institute which attracts pre-professional and professional musicians from around the world. The Tafelmusik Chamber Choir, specializing in baroque performance practice and vocal technique, was formed in 1981 to complement the Orchestra. Tafelmusik made its sold-out Carnegie Hall debut in February, 2009. This season, Tafelmusik embarks on five major tours to Europe, Mexico and the U.S.

For media information or to arrange an interview, please contact:

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