

## The Nathaniel Dett Chorale

www.nathanieldettchorale.org



*“What an interesting audience filled the church— many of the same kinds of people you see at other choral events, but leavened with a wonderful multiracial, multigenerational, cross-section of the Toronto public, greeting one another, moving to the same spiritual beat.”*

—Toronto Globe & Mail

Hailed as a National Treasure of Canada, and CAPACO 2009 Touring Artist of the Year, the Nathaniel Dett Chorale is Canada’s first professional choral group dedicated to Afrocentric music of all styles, including classical, spiritual, gospel, jazz, folk and blues.

These classically trained, outstanding vocalists have shared the stage with internationally recognized artists such as Juno Award-winning jazz pianist Joe Sealy; opera star Kathleen Battle and the Toronto Symphony Orchestra; the Signal Hill Alumni Choir of Tobago, West Indies; and the Concert Choir of Hampton University, Virginia.

The Chorale has also performed at events honoring world leaders Nelson Mandela, Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Muhammad Ali. These multi-

faceted vocalists, whose talent stretches beyond the traditional expectations of a classical choir, seek to broaden their vision to include all styles and genres of music, from classical to jazz, folk, blues and popular music as appropriate to the traditions of the African Diaspora.

Having toured the United States on a continuous basis since 2006, the Nathaniel Dett Choral was invited by the Canadian Embassy to perform at the inauguration of President-elect Barack Obama in January of 2009, as well as being the only International Group to be asked by the Smithsonian to perform on the museum’s world music stage during the Obama inauguration festivities.

### Latitude 45 Arts

*“The Fresh Sound of Virtuosity”*

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The Nathaniel Dett Chorale’s vision is to build bridges of understanding, appreciation and acceptance between communities of people, both Afrocentric and other, through the medium of music. The Chorale’s mission is to be a premier performer of Afrocentric composers – past, present and future – and to be a touchstone for the education of audiences and communities regarding the full spectrum of Afrocentric choral music.

Founder Brainerd Blyden-Taylor named the Chorale after internationally renowned African-Canadian composer R. Nathaniel Dett (1882-1943), who performed at prestigious concert halls such as Carnegie Hall and Boston Symphony Hall. Dett was dedicated to the cause of black music, winning the Bowdoin and Frances Boot prizes in 1920 from Harvard University.

Since its inception in 1998, The Nathaniel Dett Chorale has honored the memory of its namesake, performing a jubilant and uplifting repertoire extensively throughout Ontario and New

York state and delighting national audiences in critically acclaimed extended tours to the Maritimes (2000 & 2004), Western Canada (2001, 2004, 2005), Quebec (2002) and Northern Ontario and Manitoba (2003). The Chorale has recently garnered international attention, accepting invitations to perform at Polyfolia in France and the 7th World Symposium on Choral Music in Japan in 2005.

In November 2002, The Nathaniel Dett Chorale released its first CD (Listen to the Lambs), a historic first commercial recording of the choral works of R. Nathaniel Dett. February 2003 saw the release of Gemini award winning “Carry Me Home: The Story & Music of The Nathaniel Dett Chorale,” a documentary celebrating this unique ensemble and their place in Canada’s musical spectrum which, along with a concert film based on The Nathaniel Dett Chorale’s “An Indigo Christmas” concert, were released on DVD in 2004. A live CD of “An Indigo Christmas” was previously recorded in 2003.

January 2010

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