



NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release

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800-838-3006

Ten Thousand Things Brings Hallmark Approach to MY FAIR LADY

Lerner & Loewe's musical tours to prisons, housing projects, homeless shelters & Willmar before public shows at Minnesota Opera Center May 7-30



(Minneapolis, MN) – Ten Thousand Things brings its hallmark approach to musical theater with the company's first-ever production of MY FAIR LADY. New York-based director Lear deBessonnet, overseeing five of the Twin Cities most skilled actors, will explore Lerner and Loewe's tale through the lenses of class and feminism.

The show begins its tour to prisons, shelters, housing projects and Willmar April 23, closing with four weekends of public performances May 7-30 at the Minnesota Opera Center.

The cast features Kate Eifrig as Eliza and Steve Hendrickson as Henry Higgins, with Bradley Greenwald as Freddy Eynsford-Hill, Kimberly Richardson as Colonel Pickering, and Luverne Seifert as Alfred Doolittle. Kathy Kohl provides costumes, with sets by Jeremy Wilhem and music by Peter Vitale.

"*My Fair Lady* may seem fluffy on the surface but it actually deals with complex issues of class and gender, which are heightened when performed for our broad array of audiences," says TTT Artistic Director Michelle Hensley. "Paring it down to bare bones allows one to focus on the story and its complexities, which rarely happens in a traditional production. Lear has a deep commitment to including marginalized populations in theater—as evidenced by her huge production of *Don Quixote* in a downtown Philadelphia church with both homeless and professional actors—and a deep understanding of musicals, as evidenced by the musical she has written, *On The Levee* (a re-examination of *Showboat*), which will be done at Lincoln Center this summer."

This is deBessonnet's first production with Ten Thousand Things. "*My Fair Lady* presents a universe in which

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the way you talk and dress literally determines your place in the pecking order,” notes deBessonet. “The artificiality of class distinctions and the complexity surrounding promises of class climbing are served up on a platter of richly drawn characters, unparalleled Shavian wit, and exquisite music. Performing what is sometimes a musical of massive spectacle in an intimate, stripped down way with the audience a maximum of 10 feet away from the performers provides an opportunity to experience Eliza's journey in a totally new way. The alchemy created by this kind of production changes what could be a tidy musical into something electric, beautiful and perhaps even a bit dangerous.”

ABOUT THE TEN THOUSAND THINGS DIRECTOR & CAST

Lear deBessonet (Director) develops new works for theatre with a focus on interdisciplinary and site-specific music-theatre projects. Her *On the Levee*, a new music-theatre collaboration with Marcus Gardley, Todd Almond and visual artist Kara Walker, will premiere at Lincoln Center's LCT3 in June 2010. Also upcoming: a new adaptation of *The Scarlet Letter* by Naomi Iizuka premiering at the Intiman Theatre in 2010, and a new site-specific piece for the Old Globe Theatre in 2011. In May 2009, her site-specific *Don Quixote*, a collaboration with playwright Lucy Thurber and the punk-gypsy ensemble The Psalters, premiered in Philadelphia and was named in “Best Shows of 2009” by Philadelphia Weekly.

Kate Eifrig (Eliza Doolittle) returns to TTT after playing Elvira in *Blithe Spirit* at the Jungle Theater and reprising the roles she played in *Tiny Kushner* at the Guthrie Theater for Berkeley Repertory Theater. **Bradley Greenwald** (Freddy Eynsford-Hill) has performed opera, theater, music-theater, concert and recital repertoire with Theatre de la Jeune Lune, Guthrie Theater, Children's Theatre Company, Jungle Theater and starred in TTT's *Stones in His Pockets* this past January. **Steve Hendrickson** (Henry Higgins) is a TTT Artistic Associate, appearing in numerous productions, including *Cyrano de Bergerac*, for which he received an Ivey Award. **Kimberly Richardson** (Colonel Pickering) has performed in two previous TTT shows, as well as with Live Action Set, Workhaus Collective, Open Eye Figure Theatre, and Children's Theatre Company. **Luverne Seifert** (Alfred Doolittle) most recently appeared as Iago in *Othello* and as a variety of characters in *Raskol* with TTT. He is head of BA Performance in the Department of Theatre Arts and Dance at University of Minnesota and a long-time Artistic Associate with Theatre de la Jeune Lune.

ABOUT TEN THOUSAND THINGS

Ten Thousand Things productions bring lively, intelligent theater to people with little access to the wealth of the arts. This award-winning theater company invigorates ancient tales, classic stories, and contemporary plays through its search for honest, open interactions between actors and audience. Theater-goers experience the immediacy and vibrancy of theater through a performance in which there is no stage and actors perform in the middle of the audience, inches away from patrons. With minimal sets and costumes, the finest quality actors in the region fully engage the audience by distilling the story to its essence. Up close, with no distractions, audience members can observe facial expressions and body gestures in startling detail, lending an immediacy, authenticity and intimacy that no other theater in the nation provides.

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TEN THOUSAND THINGS THEATRE COMPANY...

Because theater is richer when EVERYONE is in the audience.

WHAT: MY FAIR LADY by Frederick Loewe and Alan Jay Lerner
Directed by Lear deBessonet

PUBLIC (PAID) SHOWS: May 7–30: Fridays & Saturdays at 8 pm; Sundays at 4 pm
Minnesota Opera Center, 620 N. 1st St., Minneapolis

TICKETS: \$25; \$15 for students w/valid student I.D. on Sundays (password MFLStudent)
www.tenthousandthings.org or 800-838-3006

FREE SHOWS:

Reservations required at www.tenthousandthings.org or 800-838-3006

Twin Cities

Wed April 28, 2pm, Parker Skyview Manor (1815 Central Ave NE, Minneapolis)
Fri April 30, 10am, Wayside House (3705 Park Center Blvd, St Louis Park)
Sat May 1, 3pm, John Carroll Senior High Rise (300 Grand Ave W, St Paul)
Tue May 11, 10:30am, Hubbs Center for Lifelong Learning (1030 University Ave W, St Paul)
Wed May 12, 7pm, House of Charity (714 Park Ave, Minneapolis)
Tue May 18, 6:30pm, Cornerstone Advocacy (1000 E 8th St, Bloomington)
Wed May 19, 2pm, Dorothy Day Center (183 Old 6th St, St Paul)
Tue May 25, 1pm, Cerenity Senior Care (514 Humboldt Ave, St Paul)
Thu May 27, 7pm, St Paul Jewish Community Center (1375 Saint Paul Ave)

Willmar, MN

Tue May 4, 7pm, Willmar MinnWest Technology Campus
Wed May 5, 1 pm, Willmar Addiction Center

PRISON PERFORMANCES (open to media only)

Hennepin County Women's Corrections, Plymouth, Fri April 23
Shakopee Women's Corrections, Sun April 25
Ramsey County Women's Correctional Facility, St Paul, Thu April 29

Performer and Creative Team bios follow on page 4-5



THE CAST & CREATIVE TEAM

KATE EIFRIG (Eliza Doolittle) most recently played Elvira in *Blithe Spirit* at the Jungle Theater after returning from Berkeley Repertory Theater where she reprised the roles she played in *Tiny Kushner* at the Guthrie Theater. She has also appeared locally with such theater companies as The Or dway, Outward Spiral, Park Square, Actor's Theater, and Fifty Foot Penguin. Her performance in *Nine Parts of Desire* (directed by Joel Sass) earned her an Ivey in 2008. *City Pages* named her Best Actress in their Best of the Twin Cities issue for 2006. She was also honored to be awarded a McKnight Theater Artist Fellowship 2008-2009.

BRADLEY GREENWALD (Freddy Eynsford-Hill) has performed opera, theater, music-theater, concert and recital repertoire with several Twin Cities' arts organizations, including Theatre de la Jeune Lune, Guthrie Theater, Children's Theatre Company, Jungle Theater, Nautilus Music-Theater, Minnesota Dance Theatre, VocalEssence, Minnesota Orchestra, Lyra Baroque Orchestra, A Prairie Home Companion, Ten Thousand Things, Skylark Opera and Ballet of the Dolls. Bradley is the recipient of a Minnesota State Arts Board Fellowship in music, the McKnight Fellowship for Theater Artists, and a 2006 Ivey Award.

STEVE HENDRICKSON (Henry Higgins) is a Ten Thousand Things Artistic Associate and has been a professional actor for 28 years. With TTT he has appeared in *Measure for Measure*, *The Tempest*, *Cymbeline*, *Winter's Tale*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Eurydice*, *Endgame* and *Cyrano de Bergerac*, for which he received an Ivey Performance Award. Steve was the first performer to receive the Dayton-Hudson Distinguished Artist Fellowship.

KIMBERLY RICHARDSON (Colonel Pickering) is an actor and dancer. In theatre, she has performed with Live Action Set, Workhaus Collective, Open Eye Figure Theatre, Jon Ferguson, Shawn McConneloug, and Children's Theater Company. In dance, she has performed for choreographers Molissa Fenley, Paula Mann, Sally Rousse and Deborah Jinza Thayer and was honored with a 2006 Sage Award for Outstanding Performer. This is her third show with TTT.

LUVERNE SEIFERT (Alfred Doolittle) is head of BA Performance in the Department of Theatre Arts and Dance at University of Minnesota. He recently appeared as Workhaus Collective's production of *800 Words* for which he received an Ivy Award for his performance as Phillip K Dick. He has most recently appeared as Iago in *Othello* and a variety of characters in *Raskol* with TTT. He served as an Artistic Associate for Theatre de la Jeune Lune where he appeared in over 20 productions.

LEAR DEBESSONET (Director) has been developing new works for theatre in New York since 2003 with a focus on interdisciplinary and site-specific music-theatre projects. Upcoming: *On the Levee*, a new music-theatre collaboration with Marcus Gardley, Todd Almond and visual artist Kara Walker premiering at Lincoln Center's LCT3 in June 2010. Also upcoming: a new adaptation of *The Scarlet Letter* by Naomi Iizuka premiering at the Intiman Theatre in 2010, and a new site-specific piece for the Old Globe Theatre in 2011. In May 2009, her site-specific *Don Quixote*, a collaboration with playwright Lucy Thurber and the punk-gypsy ensemble The Psalters, premiered in Philadelphia and was named in "Best Shows of 2009" by Philadelphia Weekly. Other recent work includes a re-imagining of the musical *Oliver!* at NYU's Experimental Theatre

Wing, a country-blues adaptation of Brecht's *Saint Joan of the Stockyards* at PS122, and transfigures, produced Off-Broadway by Women's Project. Through her production company, Stillpoint Productions, she also conceived and directed Deborah Stein's *Bone Portraits* at Walkerspace and *Death Might Be Your Santa Claus*, a site-specific work performed at an abandoned bank next to the NY Stock Exchange. She has assisted Martha Clarke, Anne Bogart, Marianne Weems, and Bart Sher, and was named one of Time Out New York's "25 People to Watch." In 2008, she received the first annual Presidential Award for Artistic Excellence by the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council alongside Mayor Bloomberg and Edward Albee.

MICHELLE HENSLEY (Producer) is the founding director of Ten Thousand Things. She has directed and produced over 40 tours for Ten Thousand Things, and is the recipient of a MN State Arts Board Fellowship, a McKnight Theater Fellowship and the Francesca Primus Prize for outstanding contribution to the American theater by a female artist.

KATHY KOHL (Costumes) has designed for many Twin Cities companies, including TTT, Children's Theatre Company, Frank Theatre, Guthrie Lab, History Theatre, Illusion, Joe Chvala's Flying Foot Forum, Jungle Theater, Theater Latte Da, Minnesota Orchestra, Ordway Center, Park Square, Sandbox, SteppingStone, and Walking Shadow. Kathy has won the Star Tribune theater reviewers' award for Outstanding Costumer several times, and has been recognized by Lavender Magazine and City Pages "Best Of" awards.

PETER VITALE (Music) has worked on 20 previous TTT productions as an actor, music director, composer and photographer. He has appeared at other local theaters including the Guthrie Theater, Jungle Theater, Frank Theater, Minnesota Opera, North Star Opera, Park Square Theater, Minnesota Jewish Theater Company and the Ordway. Peter is a 2008 recipient of a Meet the Composer grant for his work on *Raskol* through the MetLife Creative Connections Program.

NANCY WALDOCH (Production Manager) is happy to be working on her twelfth TTT production. When not with TTT she does scenic carpentry work for a number of theaters including but not limited to the Jungle, Frank and Guthrie Theaters.

JEREMY WILHELM (Sets) directed and designed *800 Words* for Workhaus Collective, making City Pages' Top Ten list. He directed and designed *Sadgrrl_13* and designed *The Sense of What Should Be*, also produced by Workhaus Collective. He designed *Copperhead* for Bessie award-winning choreographer Karen Sherman at the Southern Theater, winning a Sage Award for design, and designed *Beyond the Owing* for Genevieve Bennett at Red Eye Theatre.