

## Dandi Orchestra Productions – Calgary, Canada

### PROGRAMME CREDITS

Story by Tololwa M Mollel  
Adapted by Doug McKeag  
Score by John Estacio  
Produced by Dandi Productions

### BIOS – *The Twins and the Monster*

#### About Dandi Productions

Dandi Productions was established by performers Doug McKeag and Onalea Gilbertson to develop, promote and tour new and innovative Symphony works for Young Orchestra audiences. Dandi presented the North American Premieres of three Roald Dahl “Revolting Rhymes”, and produced the WORLD Premieres of two additional full-orchestra concert-stories: *The Mysterious Maestro* and *The Twins and the Monster*. As Artistic Producers, Doug and Onalea believe passionately in the fundamental importance of music in young peoples’ lives. As Singers and Actors themselves, they have appeared with major theatres across Canada, in a wide variety of musicals and plays. They develop their productions with a keen sense of humour, top-notch performers, and the highest of entertainment standards. Featuring puppets by the Old Trout Puppet Workshop, these concerts are in turn spellbinding, heartbreaking, scary and hysterically funny.

Dandi has toured across North America, and has performed with the Toronto, Vancouver, Edmonton and Winnipeg Symphony Orchestras, l’orchestres symphoniques de Québec and Montréal, the Calgary Philharmonic, The Grand Rapids Symphony; and was presented at the Hollywood Bowl by the Los Angeles Philharmonic.

#### John Estacio, Composer

In the past 12 years, John has served as Composer in Residence with the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra, the Calgary Opera, the Edmonton Symphony and Pro Coro Canada. His compositions have been played across Canada and in the United States. Orchestra works include *Borealis*; *Solaris*; *A Farmer’s* Symphony; and *Triple Concerto for Violin, Violincello, Piano and Orchestra*. His opera, *Filumena* premiered in Calgary in 2003. John was recently nominated for two JUNO Awards (Canada’s Grammys) for his CD of orchestral compositions *Frenergy: The Music of John Estacio*.

About the *Twins* project, John says, “My inspiration for the music comes from my collaborators, both Tolo’s entertaining story and Doug’s engaging script. The story is a quintessential tale of good versus evil, with a couple of twists. Writing the music for the story is a lot like writing music for a film – there are characters and scenes and action and it is my job to make sure the music is an accurate representation of what is happening in the story. A collaborative opportunity such as this is always a joy. As a

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composer, I spend most of my working time in isolation, so I welcome the chance to work with other artists.”

### **Tololwa M. Mollé, Author**

“Tolo” was born in Tanzania, and now lives in Canada. He is a storyteller and dramatist, and childrens’ author of fifteen books, including the Governor General Award-winning *The Orphan Boy*; *Rhinos for Lunch*, *Elephants for Supper*, *Song Bird*; and *My Rows and Piles of Coins*. Tololwa’s books have been published in the U.S., Australia, Britain, South Africa and Canada. Several of his works have been adapted for the stage, including *The Flying Tortoise*; *Subira, Subira*; *A Promise to the Sun*; and *The Visit of the Sea Queen*.

On *Twins*, Tolo says, “My grandmother loved to tell stories, usually at suppertime to keep us from nodding off, as supper took so long to prepare. Some of the stories were about monsters. Those stories certainly kept us awake! We were truly terrified as we listened to grandmother’s stories, but we were also thrilled. In creating the monster in *Twins*, I borrowed from my grandmother’s yarns and added my own imagined features for the monster’s character. What I love most about being a storyteller is the opportunity to bring an imaginary world to life through characters, images sounds and of course, song. I also love to listen to stories, for as my grandmother taught me, to be a good storyteller, you have to be a good listener.

### **Norma Lewis, Performer**

Norma Lewis is a born and raised Calgarian of Caribbean descent, and has been a performer most of her life. She is the co-producer and founder of Maple Salsa Theatre, whose mandate has focussed on bringing “spicy” international theatre to Alberta Audiences. Ms. Lewis performed in José Rivera’s *Cloud Tectonics*, and one of her most challenging roles in *Mamagorka*, by the late Mexican Playwright Gerardo Mancebo de Castillo Trejo. Originally a Political Science Major at the University of Calgary, Ms. Lewis’ passion for social and political issues has brought a new angle to her creative career. After performing in the controversial play *The Laramie Project* by Moises Kaufman, she performed her first self-created piece, *JOY*. Norma has performed *The Twins and the Monster* across Canada

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