



## MEDIA RELEASE

08/09

### Stratford season kicks off with first preview of *West Side Story*

*April 9, 2009...* The Stratford Shakespeare Festival begins its 2009 season on Saturday, April 11, with the first preview of *West Side Story*.

Featuring explosive dance numbers and an unforgettable score, this modern-day retelling of *Romeo and Juliet* changed the face of the American musical. It is directed by Olivier Award-winner **Gary Griffin**, with musical director **Rick Fox** and choreographer **Sergio Trujillo**.

“*West Side Story* is a classic,” says Mr. Griffin. “I don’t know how many musicals will still be produced in a hundred years, but I do know this one will be. The score, the characters, the dances will always move audiences. Hate and love, violence and passion will always exist almost simultaneously as part of the human condition.

“By producing *West Side Story* on the Festival stage, as one would a Shakespearean play, it is presented in the context of other great classics. The thrust stage allows us to free the musical and make it more intimate. The audience’s experience is heightened by their proximity to the actors: there is no orchestra pit dividing them, no frame to contain the action and set it apart. There is just unbridled passion – two people pursuing love despite violence and danger.”

The production features **Chilina Kennedy** as Maria, in her Festival debut, and **Paul Nolan** as Tony, returning for his third season.

*West Side Story* is based on a conception of Jerome Robbins. Book by Arthur Laurents. Music by Leonard Bernstein. Lyrics by Stephen Sondheim.

*West Side Story* runs until October 31. Opening night is June 5. For tickets call the box office at 1.800.567.1600 or visit [www.stratfordshakespearefestival.com](http://www.stratfordshakespearefestival.com).

General director **Antoni Cimolino** and artistic director **Des McAnuff** have announced that the 2009 season is dedicated to **Richard Monette**, the Festival’s longest-serving artistic director, who died on September 9, 2008, less than a year after retiring from his post.

The Stratford Shakespeare Festival’s 2009 season runs until November 1, featuring *Macbeth*; *West Side Story*; *Cyrano de Bergerac*; *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*; *The Importance of Being Earnest*; *Julius Caesar*; *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*; *Three Sisters*; *Bartholomew Fair*; *Ever Yours, Oscar*; *Phèdre*; *The Trespassers*; *Rice Boy*; and *Zastrozzi*.

*West Side Story* is sponsored by The Dominion of Canada General Insurance Company and Union Gas. Support for the 2009 season of the Festival Theatre is generously provided by Laura Dinner and Richard Rooney.

**Cast (in alphabetical order)**

Matt Alfano.....Action  
Tessa Alves.....Consuela  
Mary Antonini.....Rosalia  
Josh Assor.....Baby John  
Jordan Bell.....Swing  
Carla Bennett.....Teresita  
Andrew Cao.....Bernardo  
Dan Chameroy.....Schrank  
Stephen Cota.....Swing  
Lindsay Croxall.....Minnie  
Bruce Dow.....Krupke  
Brandon Espinoza.....Riff  
Randy Ganne.....Swing  
Nicko Giannakos.....Luis  
Kyle Golemba.....A-Rab  
Graeme Goodhall.....Snowboy  
Eran Goodyear.....Swing  
Jessica Keeling.....Clarice  
Chilina Kennedy.....Maria  
Marc Kimelman.....Big Deal  
Krista Leis.....Graziella  
Josie Marasco.....Anybodys  
Jake McCarroll.....understudy  
Jacques Monfiston.....Indio  
Jennifer Mote.....Velma  
Mike Nadajewski.....Glad Hand  
Paul Nolan.....Tony  
Joe Perez.....Pepe  
Jennifer Rias.....Anita  
Eric S. Robertson.....Diesel  
Stephen Russell.....Doc  
Marco Antonio Santiago.....Chino  
Genny Sermonia.....Francisca  
Julius Sermonia.....Nibbles  
Kolton Stewart.....Boy

**Artistic team**

Director.....Gary Griffin  
Musical Director.....Rick Fox  
Choreographer.....Sergio Trujillo

Co-choreographer.....Joshua Bergasse

Set Designer.....Douglas Paraschuk

Costume Designer.....Jess Goldstein

Lighting Designer.....Kevin Fraser

Sound Designer.....Peter McBoyle

Fight Director.....Simon Fon

Associate Musical Director...Laura Burton

Assistant Director.....Edward Daranyi

Assistant Designer.....Laura Gardner

Assistant Lighting Designers..Gareth Crew, Daniel McIlmoyl

Sound Design Intern.....Tim Lindsay

Assistant Choreographer..... Krista Leis

Dance Captain..... Marc Kimelman

Fight Captain.....Julius Sermonia

Stage Manager.....Kim Lott

Assistant Stage Managers.....Meghan Callan, A. Naomi Duncan

Production Stage Manager....Margaret Palmer

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## **PHOTOS:**

Promotional photos for *West Side Story*:

<http://www.stratfordfestival.ca/imagegallery/index.cfm?Jump=Productions&ProductionsName=westside#westside>

Headshots:

<http://www.stratfordfestival.ca/imagegallery/index.cfm?Jump=Company#Company>

## **VIDEO:**

An archived edition of the Festival webcast “Star-crossed lovers: *West Side Story*’s Tony and Maria” can be viewed at [www.stratfordshakespearefestival.com](http://www.stratfordshakespearefestival.com). It includes interviews with Ms Kennedy and Mr. Nolan and a behind-the-scenes look at the set design with Douglas Paraschuk. Festival webcasts can also be found on YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/user/stratfordfestival>.

B roll of *West Side Story* will be available after April 15. Please contact Ann Swerdfager to receive a copy.

## **AUDIO:**

Audio of “Tonight” is available on MP3. Please contact Ann Swerdfager for a copy.

For more information contact:

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