

For Immediate Release

In Association with Volcano Theatre, Moveable Beast, & Richard Jordan Productions UK

Centaur Theatre Company

presents

CENTURY SONG

Co-created by

Neema BICKERSTETH, Kate ALTON & Ross MANSON

Performed by internationally acclaimed soprano **Neema BICKERSTETH**

Directed by **Ross MANSON** ▪ *Choreographed by* **KATE ALTON**

Set Design **Camellia KOO** ▪ *Costume Design* **Charlotte DEAN** ▪ *Lighting Design* **Rebecca PICHERAK**

Projection Design **Torge MØLLER & Momme HINRICHS** (*fettFilm, Germany*)

Associate Video Design **Cameron DAVIS, Kaitlin HICKEY & Jeremy MIMNAGH**

Structured Improvisations & Music Co-Direction **Gregory OH** ▪ *Pianist* **Matt POON**

Percussion, Computers, Structured Improvisations & Music Co-Direction **Debashis SINHA**

Touring Percussion **Benjamin GROSSMAN** ▪ *Improvisational Themes* **Reza JACOBS**

Montreal, January 17, 2020 – the unique Canadian-made Edinburgh Fringe Festival hit, *Century Song*, featuring the rich soprano voice of Dora Award-winning [Neema Bickersteth](#), comes to Centaur Theatre as the second of two exquisite gems in Centaur’s Presenting Series this season. The powerful one-act co-creation, directed by [Ross Manson](#) and choreographed by [Kate Alton](#), will be presented from **February 12 to 16, 2020**.

“Without words – we’re forced to exist in all the other ways we communicate.”

– Neema Bickersteth

Inspired in part by Virginia Woolf’s [Orlando](#) and Alice Walker’s [In Search of Our Mother’s Gardens](#), and backed by an international team of artists, *Century Song* is a riveting hybrid of theatre, music, dance, and visual art. Neema Bickersteth inhabits a century of women whose identities are contained within her own in a superb, aural experience. Music by some of the most adventurous composers of the past 100 years is set against an evocative tapestry of influential art and inventive animations. Whimsical and riveting, *Century Song* is a wordless chronicle of the age, built from art.

Century Song began with a question. As a classical singer, Bickersteth spent many years training her voice but once she felt fully accepted and immersed in the art form, she began to ask herself, “How can I, as a Black person singing European roles from another era, connect personally to this art form? I love this music, but I began to feel constricted in my expression of it. I began to look for other ways to fuse my training and love of classical music, with my dawning awareness of other modes of expression.” A photo Bickersteth discovered of her great great grandmother made her think of time: “where I am within time and space – my family’s time, the many spaces that my family has occupied on the planet ... I’m going back in time to 1916. I’m going to perform *Century Song* as me.”

“For our Presenting Series, I wanted high quality, internationally renowned works from new voices that need to be heard and which speak to our times”, explained Centaur’s Artistic and Executive Director, **Eda Holmes**. “Rigorous beauty is at the core of *Century Song*. I don’t think anything quite like this has been seen at Centaur before. Drawing from Neema’s own life story and using her formidable gifts as an artist, the play reveals a brilliant new mode of storytelling using music and imagery in perfect harmony. I’m very excited for Montreal audiences to see this stunning creation.”

“Century Song doesn’t just leave you wanting more, it leaves you bereft that this glorious hour is over.”

- Manchester Theatre Reviews Hub, UK

“Neema Bickersteth is a supernally gifted soprano” - Vancouver Observer

“an unforgettable multimedia journey, and a must-see” – Toronto’s NOW Magazine

★★★★ *“the kind of theatre that doubles as art through the interconnectedness of its many different and equally arresting elements”* - The List, UK

“incredibly beautiful and poignant [...] beyond what mere words could encompass.”
- Ottawa’s Herd Magazine

★★★★ *“Century Song is a love letter to a hundred years of female endeavour. [...] Bickersteth is magnetically flawless”* - The Wee Review, UK

“Bickersteth is, quite simply, a captivating performer [...] an incredible feat of dance, music, and theatricality.” - Vancouver Presents

The [Cubist movement](#) influenced Canadian [Kathleen Munn](#), whose paintings appear on the *Century Song* canvas, a mutating work of art expertly manipulated by [fettFilm’s](#) Momme Hinrichs and Torge Möller. Striking images from the German [Expressionist](#), [Käthe Kollwitz](#), and [Marcel Barbeau](#) ([Quebec’s Automatiste Movement](#)), mingle with [Pop](#) art by [Andy Warhol](#) and [Yayoi Kusama](#). In addition to original music and improvisational themes created by Canada’s [Reza Jacobs](#), compositions by [Sergei Rachmaninoff](#) (Russia), [Olivier Messiaen](#) (France), [John Cage](#) (USA), [Georges Aperghis](#) (Greece), are seamlessly integrated into *Century Song*.

Media Call: Wednesday February 12th at 12:30pm

Trailer: <https://vimeo.com/107279247>

Audience guide: <https://www.volcano.ca/centurysong>

Performance Schedule:

February 12, 13, 14 & 15	8:00 PM
February 16 (closing)	2:00 PM

Visit centaurtheatre.com for more details.



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