

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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***Marco Polo: The Musical Is Getting Ready To Set Sail***  
***Close to 200 New Brunswick performers are preparing to take the stage at Harbour Station for the world premiere of an amazing local success story***

In October, Saint John Theatre Company will partner with New Brunswick playwright Mark Blagrove and the New Brunswick Youth Orchestra to stage the world premiere of *Marco Polo: The Musical*. The event will be staged in two performances: a youth matinee and an evening performance open to the general public – both will occur at Harbour Station on October 23, 2010. The musical will serve as a focal point for the Saint John 225 celebrations.

*Marco Polo: The Musical* is an original work, written by Saint John native Mark Blagrove with music composed by Richard Kidd. The play follows the story of several individuals whose lives are tied to the Marco Polo ship from its construction and launch at Marsh Creek in Saint John – to the record breaking trip from Liverpool to Melbourne that earned her the reputation as being ‘The Fastest Ship Ever Built’ – to her final resting place off the coast of Prince Edward Island.

The production will be a great celebration for our community. 2010 is the 225<sup>th</sup> birthday of the City of Saint John. “This amazing community project, which coincidentally falls on the 20th birthday of the SJTC, is a tremendous example of why Saint John is worthy of being a Cultural Capital of Canada for 2010,” says Stephen Tobias, Director. “There is no better time to bring two great Saint John based organizations together to tell a story that celebrates the history of our community and our region. The event will commemorate a great ship as well as a great period in New Brunswick when the region was renowned world wide for our shipbuilding expertise.”

With almost 200 regional actors, musicians, and choral singers, *Marco Polo: The Musical* will be the largest theatrical event ever staged in New Brunswick, by New Brunswickers. The production will consist of an 80 piece orchestra, 40 actors and singers and a 60 member concert choir. “We were immediately captivated by the opportunity, the challenge, and the sense of occasion – to bring the story of the Marco Polo back to life in Saint John for all New Brunswickers to enjoy” adds Don Matheson, Executive Director of the New Brunswick Youth Orchestra.

The musical will feature a strong educational component and will strive to offer a free youth-oriented matinee that is fully sponsored; opening up Harbour Station to 3000 students from across New Brunswick to attend the special event. *Marco Polo: The Musical* will be the culmination of weeks of student outreach activities scheduled for the Fall semester. School visits, study guides, research projects, essay contests, and many other activities will lead up to the October 23<sup>rd</sup> Student Matinee. The matinee performance will also offer a post-show Q&A session where students will be able to address the cast and crew to learn more about the process of developing such a large theatrical production.

The evening performance, which will also be held on October 23, will be open to the general public. Tickets go on sale September 1, 2010 at the Harbour Station box office. For more information please call the Saint John Theatre Company at 652-7582.