

THEATER VISIONARY ROBERT LEPAGE BRINGS ONE-MAN TOUR-DE-FORCE TO ANN ARBOR MARCH 15 – 17

YVES JACQUES STARS IN *THE ANDERSEN PROJECT*

ANN ARBOR, MI (February 1, 2012) — Hailed as “a theatrical conjurer, whose dazzling shows have captivated audiences around the world” (*Guardian*, London), director and playwright **Robert Lepage** brings collaborators from his creative team **Ex Machina** to Ann Arbor’s **Power Center for the Performing Arts** (121 Fletcher Street) to perform the incredible one-man play, *The Andersen Project* starring **Yves Jacques** on **Thursday, March 15 at 7:30 pm** and **Friday and Saturday, March 16 and 17, at 8 pm**. This production is presented by the **University Musical Society (UMS)** as part of **Pure Michigan Renegade**, a 10-week celebration of thought-leaders and game changers in the performing arts.

Recognized worldwide for his creative and original approach to theater, Lepage has shaken the dogma of classical stage direction to its foundations over the last 34 years, especially through his use of new technologies. *The Andersen Project* tells the story of a Québécois songwriter whose encounters in Paris allow him to find out what defines, motivates, and inspires him. Actor Yves Jacques seamlessly and brilliantly moves between multiple characters in this one-man play, portraying the Québécois songwriter, a senior manager of the Opéra Garnier, a young janitor and graffiti artist of African descent, as well as a dog who could well be guiding the tale along its way. *The Andersen Project* explores questions about sexual identity, personal demons, unfulfilled fantasies, and a thirst for recognition and fame that are drawn from Andersen’s life and writings, only to serve as filigree to the modern tale.

For tickets or additional information, contact the University Musical Society at **734-764-2538** or online at www.ums.org. Tickets may also be purchased in person at the League Ticket Office (911 North University Avenue). UMS Ticket Office hours: Monday-Friday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Saturday 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., closed Sunday.

Robert Lepage, founder of the multidisciplinary production company **Ex Machina**, is a director, playwright, actor, and film director. Contemporary history is his source of inspiration, and his modern and unusual work transcends all boundaries.

Lepage was born in Quebec in 1957 and entered the Conservatoire d'art dramatique de Québec in 1975, at the age of 17. After a study period in Paris in 1978, he returned to Quebec and became involved in many creative projects, gaining experience as actor, author, and director. Two years later he joined the Théâtre Repère.

In 1984, his play *Circulations* toured Canada and received Best Canadian Production award at the Quinzaine Internationale de Théâtre de Québec. The next year *The Dragons' Trilogy* gained him an international reputation, quickly followed by *Vinci* (1986), *Polygraph* (1987) and *Tectonic Plates* (1988). In 1988 he formed his own professional management company, Robert Lepage Inc. (RLI).

From 1989 to 1993 he was Artistic Director of the Théâtre français at the National Arts Centre in Ottawa. Meanwhile pursuing his own creative projects, he directed *Needles and Opium* (1991), *Coriolanus*, *Macbeth*, and *The Tempest* (1992). With *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in 1992 he became the first North American to direct a Shakespeare play at the Royal National Theatre in London.

A turning point in his career came with the founding of his multidisciplinary production company, Ex Machina, in 1994. Under his artistic direction, this new team produced a steady output of plays, beginning with *The Seven Streams of the River Ota* (1994), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1995), and a solo production, *Elsinore* (1995). In 1994, he made his début in the world of cinema. He wrote and directed his first feature film, *Le Confessionnal*, which appeared the following year at the Cannes Festival Directors' Fortnight. He went on to direct *Polygraph* in 1996, *Nô* in 1997, *Possible Worlds*, in 2000 (his first feature film written in English), and finally, in 2003, a film adaptation of his play *The Far Side of the Moon*.

La Caserne, a multi-disciplinary production center in Quebec City, opened in 1997 under Robert Lepage's leadership. In their new quarters he and his team created and produced *Geometry of Miracles* (1998), *Zulu Time* (1999), *The Far Side of The Moon* (2000), *La Casa Azul* (2001), a new version of *The Dragons' Trilogy* with a new

cast (2003), and *The Busker's Opera* (2004). This was followed by *The Andersen Project* (2005), *Lipsynch* (2007), *The Blue Dragon* (2008), and *Eonnagata* (2009).

Robert Lepage's work has been recognized by many awards. Awards of note include the 2004 Hans Christian Andersen Prize for his outstanding artistic contribution to honoring Hans Christian Andersen worldwide. (This production was commissioned by the Danish government in commemoration of the bicentennial of Andersen's birth.) In 2005, Lepage received the Institut France-Canada's Samuel de Champlain Prize for his contribution to French culture and the Stanislavski Award for his contribution to international theatre. In 2007, the Festival de l'Union des Théâtres de l'Europe honoured him with the distinguished Prix Europe (previously awarded to Ariane Mnouchkine and Robert Wilson). In 2009, he received the Governor General's Performing Arts Award for his outstanding contribution to the cultural life of the country.

Yves Jacques began his career on comedy television in Quebec, with imitations of famous political figures that became classics and earned him numerous Gemini Awards. He then made a splash on the big screen in *Jesus of Montreal* (2004) portraying a greedy lawyer who defends the Devil. Since then Jacques has appeared in a number of films including the 2011 Academy Award Winning picture, *The Barbarian Invasions* (Best Foreign Language Film).

In the Canadian theatre, Yves Jacques has appeared in more than 20 productions. In 1993 he won the Felix Award for Best Male Role in *La Légende de Jimmy* and a year later, he won the Gemini Award for Best Actor for his role in the television version of *Fourberries de Scapin*. Jacques has also appeared in many plays and television productions in Paris.

Ex Machina is a multidisciplinary company bringing together actors, writers, set designers, technicians, opera singers, puppeteers, computer graphic designers, video artists, contortionists, and musicians. In 1994, when Robert Lepage asked his collaborators to help find a name for this new company, he had one condition: the word "theatre" could not be part of the name.

Ex Machina's creative team believes that the performing arts — dance, opera, music — should be mixed with recorded arts — filmmaking, video art and multimedia. They believe that there must be meetings between

scientists and playwrights, between set painters and architects, and between artists from Québec and the rest of the world. Ex Machina wants to become a laboratory, an incubator, for a new form of theatre that will touch audiences in this new millennium and beyond.

Quick Facts

- This is a **Pure Michigan Renegade** event.
- Presented with major support from the **Creative Ventures Leadership Fund**, a multi-year challenge grant created by **Maxine and Stuart Frankel** to support artistic, innovative, and cutting-edge programming.
- Funded in part by an award from the **National Endowment for the Arts. Art Works**.
- Media Partners: **WDET 101.9 FM, Michigan Radio 91.7 FM, Ann Arbor's 107one**, and **Between the Lines**.
- **Robert Lepage previous UMS appearances:** Robert Lepage's *The Far Side of the Moon* was presented in the Power Center for the Performing Arts in March 2005. That one-man play also starred Yves Jacques in a variety of roles.
- **Additional information:** http://lacaserne.net/index2.php/theatre/the_andersen_project

THE ANDERSEN PROJECT

EX MACHINA

Thursday, March 15 at 7: 30 pm

Friday, March 16 at 8:00 pm

Saturday, March 17 at 8:00 pm

Power Center (121 Fletcher Street)

Tickets start at \$24

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Related Event

UMS Night School: Explore Pure Michigan Renegade. UMS Night School is comprised of 90-minute "classes" hosted by

Mark Clague, associate professor at the U-M School of Music, Theatre & Dance. Each introductory session includes a presentation by a genre expert, an interactive exercise to draw you into the themes behind the performance, and a takeaway reading to enjoy on your own. On **Monday, March 12 at 7 pm**, UMS Night School will introduce *The Andersen Project*; on **Monday, March 19 at 7 pm**, the production will be discussed. Location: **Ann Arbor District Library** (343 S. Fifth Avenue - Multipurpose Room). **No registration is necessary. Free and open to the public.**

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UMS Ticket Office

734-764-2538

Outside the 734 area code, call toll-free **800-221-1229**.

(These numbers should be published.)

<http://www.ums.org>

Mail or fax orders to:

University Musical Society
Burton Memorial Tower
Ann Arbor, MI, 48109-1011
Fax: 734-647-1171

Special discounts for groups! Call 734-763-3100

Press information/Photos: Contact Truly Render, 734-647-4020 [DO NOT PUBLISH]

Television crews and still-photographers are welcome to cover UMS events; however, please provide 48 hours notice so that we may secure permission from the artists and alert the production staff. Please contact Truly Render at 734-647-4020 to arrange media coverage.

Media Inquiries / Further Information:

Truly Render, University Musical Society
734-647-4020
trender@umich.edu
www.ums.org/news

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