

THE
**Nathaniel Dett
Chorale**

Connecting Through Afrocentric Music



“A spirit of unity, rendered in song.”

~The Globe and Mail

The Nathaniel Dett Chorale is Canada's first professional choral group dedicated to Afrocentric music of all styles, including classical, spiritual, gospel, jazz, folk, and blues. These 21 classically-trained, outstanding vocalists have shared the stage with internationally recognized artists such as Juno Award-winning jazz pianist Joe Sealy; and opera star Kathleen Battle and the Toronto Symphony Orchestra. The Chorale had the unique privilege being the only Canadian ensemble invited to perform as part of the celebrations surrounding the historic inauguration of President Barack Obama. The Chorale has also performed at events honoring world leaders Nelson Mandela and Archbishop Desmond Tutu, and personalities Muhammad Ali and Oscar Peterson. The multi-faceted vocalists of The Nathaniel Dett Chorale, whose talent stretches beyond the traditional expectations of a classical chamber choir, perform all styles and genres of music as appropriate to the traditions of the African Diaspora.

The Nathaniel Dett Chorale's **vision** is to be a premier performer of Afrocentric composers, and a touchstone for the education of audiences regarding the full spectrum of Afrocentric choral music. The Chorale's **mission** is to build bridges of understanding, appreciation, and acceptance between communities of people through the medium of music.

Founder Brainerd Blyden-Taylor named The Chorale after internationally-renowned African-Canadian composer R. Nathaniel Dett (1882-1943), who performed at prestigious concert halls such as Carnegie Hall and Boston Symphony Hall. Dett was dedicated to the cause of Black music, winning the Bowdoin and Frances Boot prizes in 1920 from Harvard University. Blyden-Taylor established The Chorale to draw attention not only to Dett's legacy but also to the wealth of Afrocentric choral music, and to be a professional choral group where persons of African heritage could see themselves represented in the majority. Since its inception in 1998, The Nathaniel Dett Chorale has honoured the memory of its namesake, performing a jubilant and uplifting repertoire extensively throughout Ontario and North America and delighting national audiences in critically-acclaimed extended tours to the Maritimes (2000, 2004, 2006), Quebec (2002, 2005, 2006), Manitoba (2003), Western Canada (2001, 2004, 2005, 2009), and the United States (2003, 2005, 2007, 2008, 2009.) The Chorale has also garnered international attention, accepting invitations to perform at Polyfolia in France (2004), the 7th World Symposium on Choral Music in Japan (2005), and the prestigious chamber music series at the U.S. Library of Congress (2007).

Recordings:

Listen to the Lambs (Marquis Classics, 2002)
An Indigo Christmas (Marquis Classics, 2003)

Films:

Didn't My Lord Deliver Daniel (performance video – Romalis Productions)
Baptism (performance video – Romalis Productions)
Carry Me Home: The Story & Music of The Nathaniel Dett Chorale (Romalis Productions/Riddle Films, 2003) – Winner of the 2003 Canada Award (Gemini Awards)
An Indigo Christmas (Riddle Films, 2003)
In Performance: The Music of The Nathaniel Dett Chorale (Riddle Films, 2004)

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Performance Highlights:

Canadian Embassy Inaugural Celebration of President Barack Obama (Washington DC) – 2009
Out of Many: A Multicultural Festival of Music, Dance and Story (Smithsonian's NMAI) - 2009
Simply the Best: Oscar Peterson Memorial Concert (Roy Thomson Hall, Toronto) – 2008
US Library of Congress (Washington DC) – 2007
Dance Theatre of Harlem, with Jessye Norman in attendance (NYC) – 2007
MacLean's 100th Anniversary Gala (Toronto Centre for the Arts) – 2005
Polyfolia 2004 (Saint Lô, France) – October 2004
National Association of Negro Musicians (Detroit MI) – 2004
Tribute to Mohammad Ali (Skydome, Toronto) – 2002
Songlines: A Musical Reflection on 9/11 (CBC Radio) – 2002
Official Choir for the 2008 Toronto Olympic Bid – 2001
Archbishop Desmond Tutu's Convocation (University of Toronto) – February 2000
Opening Ceremonies of Mandela and the Children Celebration (Skydome) – September 1998

Awards:

2003 Canada Award (Gemini Awards) for *Carry Me Home: The Story & Music of The Nathaniel Dett Chorale*
2003 Gemini nomination for Best Ensemble Performance in a Performing Arts Piece for *Carry Me Home: The Story & Music of The Nathaniel Dett Chorale*

The Nathaniel Dett Chorale has shared the stage with:

Kathleen Battle & The Toronto Symphony Orchestra
Juno Award-winning jazz pianist Joe Sealy
Dora Award-winning actor/singer Jackie Richardson
Rising jazz star Nikki Yanofsky
Hannaford Street Silver Band
The Signal Hill Alumni Choir of Trinidad & Tobago (West Indies)
The Concert Choir of Hampton University (Virginia)
Faith Chorale, Toronto Mass Choir and The University of Toronto Gospel Choir
World music star Donné Roberts
Rising Latin star Eliana Cuevas
Guillermo Fragoso (Cuba) and The York University Cuban Ensemble

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Commissions:

Ah voltige mon amour, Charles Demuyneck
Go Down Death and The Crucifixion, Stewart Goodyear
And Still We Sing, Music: Joe Sealy; Words: David Woods
No Sé Porque Piensas tu, *Cancion de Cuna Para des Pertar a un Negrito*, and *Orishas #1*, Guillermo Fragoso

For more career highlights, visit our website www.nathanieldettchorale.org

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