



In co-production with



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: July 11 to November 6, 2016
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**Pleiades Theatre & Théâtre français de Toronto
present the Toronto premiere of Tomson Highway's
*The (Post) Mistress (English) / Zesty Gopher s'est fait écraser par un frigo
(français).***

"The (Post) Mistress is a brilliant performance [...] a soul-inspiring celebration of the human spirit."
- Review Vancouver

Toronto (ON) – From October 12 – November 6, Pleiades Theatre, in co-production with Théâtre français de Toronto, presents the Toronto premiere of *The (Post) Mistress* (in English, from October 25 to November 6) and *Zesty Gopher s'est fait écraser par un frigo* (in French, from October 12 to 23), the latest musical by Canada's acclaimed First Nations' playwright, **Tomson Highway**.

The (Post) Mistress tells the story of Marie-Louise Painchaud, the hugely endearing Métis postmistress. In the fictitious village of Lovely, Ontario, located somewhere along the French River, we discover Marie-Louise and her uncanny ability to read the town's mail *through* the envelopes. Letters from around the world tell of her neighbours' foibles, fantasies and fibs, both large and small. They inspire Marie-Louise and she turns these stories into an eclectic array of songs inspired by musical traditions from around the world. We also discover the origins of her extraordinary powers as she passes the time waiting for her beloved husband, Roland Painchaud, to join her. The French title, which translates as "Zesty Gopher got squashed by a fridge," is a line from the play and gives an idea of some of the loopy characters who populate Marie-Louise's imagination and Tomson Highway's world.

This raucous and very touching one-woman musical stars the critically-acclaimed **Patricia Cano**, for whom it was written, and has **Tomson Highway** himself on the piano, accompanied by one of the best sax players in Canada, **Marcus Ali**. Not only did **Tomson Highway** write the play, he is also the **composer** and **lyricist**. Both the French and English versions are directed by **John Van Burek**, with choreography by the renowned **Marie-Josée Chartier**. Set design is by **Teresa Przybylski** and Lights are by **Michel Charbonneau**.

Tomson Highway ranks among Canada's most celebrated authors. He is best known for his award-winning plays, *The Rez Sisters* and *Dry Lips Oughta Move to Kapuskasing*, along with his best-selling novel, *Kiss of the Fur Queen*. Born into a Cree family in Manitoba's far north, he quickly showed a remarkable talent for music. Like most First Nations' children at the time, he was sent to a Residential School, but there he was given access to a piano, which changed his life forever. He attended the University of Manitoba, then Western University, and also spent a year in London (UK) where he studied piano with master teachers such as William Aide and Anton Kuerti. He came to Toronto in the mid-eighties where he was Artistic Director of Native Earth Performing Arts from 1986-1992. Since then, **Tomson Highway** has devoted all his energies to his writing and composing.

The (Post) Mistress / Zesty Gopher s'est fait écraser par un frigo

Produced by **Pleiades Theatre** in co-production with **Théâtre français de Toronto**

Book, Lyrics and Music by **Tomson Highway** | Directed by **John Van Burek** | Designed by **Teresa Przybylski**

Lighting by **Michel Charbonneau** | Choreography **Marie-Josée Chartier**

With **Patricia Cano, Tomson Highway** and **Marcus Ali**

October 12 – 23 (French, with English Surtitles) **October 25 – November 6** (English, with French Surtitles)

Berkeley St. Theatre (Upstairs) | 26 Berkeley St., Toronto

Opening (français): Friday, October 14 at 8:00 PM | **Previews:** October 12 & 13 at 8 PM

Opening (English): Friday, October 28 at 8 PM | **Previews:** October 25 & 27 at 8 PM

Performances: Tuesdays – Fridays at 8:00 PM, Saturdays at 3:30 PM & Sundays at 2:30 PM

Tickets: Preview: \$19 - \$26 | Regular: \$45 - \$49 | Seniors: \$38 - \$42 | Under 30 & Arts Workers: \$30 Pay-what-you-can on Wednesdays and Thursdays | Saturday Rush Tickets at the door: \$20 | Group rates available for 8 or more: \$25 per ticket

Box Office: 416.534.6604 or go to www.theatrefrancais.com