

Ubu Opera is a Toronto-based collective dedicated to creating new and vibrant music theatre that draws on the rich history of classical chamber music and the human voice, fused with the immediacy of physical theatre. Our vision is to bring these arts together to make theatre that is entertaining, thought-provoking, and deeply human.

Learn more about our company at ubuopera.com

Ubu Opera acknowledges that the land on which we meet rehearse, and perform is the traditional land of many Indigenous Nations including the Anishnabeg, the Huron-Wendat, the Haudenosaunee, and the Mississaugas of the Credit, whose songs have been sung on this land for thousands of years. This meeting place is now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples from across Turtle Island. We are grateful for the opportunity to live and sing on this land.

Songs for Moby Dick

Composer: Peter Thompson

Text: Herman Melville

Director: Adam Paolozza

Lighting Design: Sebastian Marziali

Stage Manager: Rachel More*

Set and costumes: Peter Thompson

Performers

Peter Thompson, voice

Erika Reiman, piano

List of Songs

- i. Ishmael
- ii. The Pequod
- iii. All's Astir
- iv. Starbuck
- v. Stubb
- vi. Dagoo
- vii. Flask
- viii. Queequeg
- ix. Ahab
- x. The Masthead
- xi. Ahab at Night
- xii. Pip
- xiii. The Hunt
- xiv. Epilogue

* Rachel More appears courtesy of Canadian Actors Equity

Background

Commercial whaling dates from the 17th century. The peak of the American whaling industry was in the 1840's and 1850's, with its main target being the sperm whale. Whale oil was used as a lubricant, and spermaceti, the oil from the head-case of the sperm whale, was highly prized for lighting, burning with a clean, bright flame in lanterns and in candles.

Whaling was a dirty, dangerous occupation, attracting young men from lower economic groups, as well as those seeking adventure, such as Herman Melville. The crews were diverse, and included many black and indigenous sailors, as well as South Sea Islanders. Hunting a whale involved stalking a sleeping whale in small rowboats, harpooning it, and being dragged behind the whale until it becomes exhausted and able to be slaughtered.

Sperm whales are intelligent, social animals. The whale hunt led to the near-extinction of these beautiful, fascinating creatures, until the banning of the commercial hunt in the 1970's. Since that time, sperm whale populations have rebounded significantly, despite other threats including being caught in fishing lines and the ingestion of plastic pollution.

*Thanks to Theatre Passe Muraille, Andra Bradish, and
Sherry Liang*

*Scan for synopsis and
Artist Biographies*



ALLIANCE FOR
CANADIAN
Musicals

TORONTO
FRINGE
FESTIVAL

Songs for Moby Dick



composed and performed by

Peter Thompson

an Ubu Opera production