

ARTIST BIO:

dTaborah (a.k.a. Tabby) Johnson – and her jolly company of friends

dTaborah (Tabby) Johnson has been part of Canada's cultural landscape for over four decades. She appeared in The Royal Alexandra Theatre's *Porgy and Bess* at the ripe age of 11, and at 16 – and several plays later – in *HAIR* back “home” again at The Royal Alexandra. Anne and Ed Mirvish, whom she called her fairy godparents, were there at her opening in NYC in the Schuberts' production of *Stand-Up Shakespeare*, directed by Mike Nichols and written by Kenneth Welsh. Tabby appeared in Las Vegas at the MGM Grand and at The Aquarius Theatre in Los Angeles in the Rock Opera *Jesus Christ SuperStar*, returning to LA as a Maryjane Girl with the original Rick James and The Stone City Band.

The eclectic career of Tabby Johnson has led her from stage to films to television to concert venues to radio – and all the cracks of light in between. She has been honoured with an **American Music Award**, a **Grammy** nod for her work with Rick James and the Stone City Band. A **Dora Mavor Moore** nod for her work as Petite Mama in *The Nutmeg Princess*, a **Gemini** nod and a **NYC Children's Television Award** for best show for her work on *Guess What?*, and two **New York Theatre** nods for best new cabaret performer.

Whether dancing with **Gene Kelly**, crooning with the **Duke**, helpin' **Stevie** with wardrobe (Calvin his brother and dresser was colour-blind), **marching on Queens Park**, hosting radio shows or galas, or leading voices in song and political issues at **International Labour conventions**, Tabby has consistently championed the Canadian arts scene and titillated audiences at home and abroad.

In becoming a single parent, she branched out into more child-centered work, including in *The Big Comfy Couch*, *The Noddy Shoppe*, and *Polka Dot Door*. She credits these shows in supporting her later classroom work with children of all ages and abilities in both the public and private school systems – where she also discovered just how many children are child-minded by TV.

Tabby first turned her hand to writing in her first solo piece *Born Again Virgin* – which she wrote as her child slept – followed by *The Gospel According to Me*, *My African Behind*, and the precursor to *The Incredible Adventures of that Nice Canajun Gurl*, titled *Nowhere Now Here*.

At 61 years of age, Tabby joined the Open Program of the renowned Workcenter of Jerzy Grotowski and Thomas Richards in Italy. She worked with the company for two and a half years of practical performance research, training, teaching, and performing in Europe and the Americas. This work with a company of much younger people helped Tabby to rediscover her skills and talents and to look for a new way to channel her experiences, her knowledge, and her creative spark – to re-find and to continue to refine the artiste that she has always been.

Tabby has worked for years with both Neil Brathwaite and Brooke Blackburn – and is delighted to be doing so again – including on recent presentations of the precursor to *The Incredible Adventures of that Nice Canajun Gurl*, which was titled *Nowhere Now Here*, presented at various venues around Toronto. She met Myrto Koumarios during her sojourn with the Open Program (Workcenter of Jerzy Grotowski and Thomas Richards), and is delighted to be working with her as a dramaturg on this piece.

She is grateful to Jonathan Bensimon (director of photography), Rebekah Miskin (producer), Monica Remba (editor), and Oliver Whitfield-Smith (editor's assistant) for their excellent work on making her "live" show a filmic piece of art! *She is ever thankful – for oh so many things – to her son, Joachim Johnson, for all of his precious encouragement and support in making this project a reality.*