



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE OF RUFUS WAINWRIGHT'S *PRIMA DONNA* AT LUMINATO 2010

**TORONTO (March 30, 2009)** – Luminato, Toronto Festival of Arts and Creativity, proudly announces the North American premiere of famed Canadian singer-songwriter Rufus Wainwright's debut opera. Commissioned by Luminato, Manchester International Festival, and Melbourne International Arts Festival, *Prima Donna* will have its North American premiere at Luminato in 2010.

*Prima Donna*, the first of Luminato's 2010 programming to be announced, is written entirely in French by Wainwright, who also composed the opera's score. Set in Paris, 1970, *Prima Donna* tells the story of Régine Saint Laurent, an aging opera singer attempting to regain her status as one of the world's greatest sopranos. An avid opera aficionado, Wainwright is a Canadian-American citizen who spent his formative years in Montréal. He is considered one of the greatest singer-songwriters of his generation.

"I'm so thrilled to have my opera, *Prima Donna*, performed at Luminato in Toronto," says Rufus Wainwright. "The further I venture through the world of opera the more I realize how daring and risky one has to be in order to succeed in this fickle medium. From the composer to the producer and the hundreds of glorious people in between there must be a steel rod of dedication linking all the elements. Thank you Toronto for having the guts to make it happen."

"The 2010 North American debut of *Prima Donna* is yet another example of Luminato's commitment to commissioning and developing local, national, and international work in partnership with a variety of artistic entities," says Luminato CEO Janice Price. "As with this year's Luminato co-commission of Robert Lepage's *Lipsynch*, *Prima Donna* will give 2010 festival-goers the opportunity to celebrate the North American premiere of a new work by a world-renowned Canadian artist."

"Luminato is thrilled to showcase Rufus Wainwright's operatic debut," says Chris Lorway, Luminato's Artistic Director. "I had the opportunity to be with Rufus in Leeds for *Prima Donna*'s first readthrough. I can guarantee Rufus fans and opera buffs alike will not be disappointed."

Affectionately referred to by Elton John as “the greatest songwriter on the planet,” Rufus Wainwright has established himself as one of the great male vocalists and songwriters of his generation by carving out his own singular sound, on albums including *Poses* (2002), *Want One* (2003), *Want Two* (2004), and *Release The Stars* (2007). His legendary 2006 Carnegie Hall tribute to Judy Garland is available on both CD and DVD. Wainwright is currently composing a musical adaptation of Shakespeare Sonnets together with Director Robert Wilson at the Berliner Ensemble to be premiered in April 2009.

Luminato is an annual celebration of the arts where Toronto’s stages, streets, and public spaces are infused with theatre, dance, classical and contemporary music, film, literature, visual arts, and design. Now in its third year, Luminato brings a world of creativity to the city for ten days **June 5-14, 2009**. Tickets for Luminato 2009 events go on sale April 16.

Commissioned by Luminato, Toronto Festival of Arts and Creativity, Manchester International Festival, and Melbourne International Arts Festival.  
World Premiere produced by Manchester International Festival and Opera North.

### **ABOUT LUMINATO**

For 10 extraordinary days in June, Toronto’s stages, streets, and public spaces are illuminated with arts and creativity. Luminato is an annual multidisciplinary celebration of theatre, dance, classical and contemporary music, film, literature, visual arts, design and more.

For more information, visit [luminato.com](http://luminato.com). Tickets will be available beginning April 16 through all Ticketmaster outlets (call 416-872-1111 or visit [www.ticketmaster.ca](http://www.ticketmaster.ca)).

Luminato gratefully acknowledges the generous support and vision of its Luminaries, SuperNova donors, and Patron Passholders; corporate sponsors, particularly our presenting sponsor, L’Oréal; our dedicated government partners, especially the Government of Ontario and the Government of Canada; and many other partners and supporters.

**Luminaries:** The Founding Luminaries were among the Festival’s first supporters. These visionary arts patrons and civic-builders stepped forward to help found Luminato, and will be recognized for their commitment in perpetuity.

Founding Luminaries – Mohammad and Najla Al Zaibak, Charles and Marilyn Baillie, Avie Bennett, Helen Burstyn and David Pecaut, Kate Alexander Daniels and David Daniels, Joan T. Dea and Lionel F. Conacher, Ian and Kiki Delaney, John Donald and Linda Chu, The Duboc Family Foundation, Margaret and Jim Fleck, Linda Frum and Howard Sokolowski, Kevin and Roger Garland, Anthony and Helen Graham, Lucille and Urban Joseph, Michael and Sonja Koerner, Chetan and Clara Mathur, Judy and Wil Matthews, Rob and Cheryl McEwen, Pierre L. Morrissette, Sandra and Jim Pitblado, Jonas and Lynda Prince, Richard Rooney and Laura Dinner, The Slaight Family, Marisa and Edward Sorbara, Larry and Judy Tanenbaum, and David and Robin Young. Founding Corporate Luminaries – BMO Financial Group, Ivey Foundation, MacLaren McCann, Manulife Financial, RBC, St. Joseph Communications, TELUS, Tourism Toronto.

Luminaries - Tony and Anne Arrell, Salah Bachir, The David & Stacey Cynamon Family Foundation, Cam and Alexandra di Prata, Lonti Ebers and Bruce Flatt, The Ira Gluskin and Maxine Granovsky Gluskin Charitable Foundation, Jay and Barbara Hennick & Family, Joan and Jerry Lozinski, Sloan Mauran and Adrian Tauro, Joseph Mimran and Kimberly Newport-Mimran, David and Audrey Mirvish, Nancy Pencer, Geoff and Megan Smith. Corporate Luminaries - Dancap Productions Inc., Falls Management Company.

**SuperNova Program Development Fund:** Joseph Mimran and Kimberley Newport-Mimran, Pierre L. Morrissette, Jonas and Lynda Prince.

**Luminato Sponsors:** L'Oréal, TELUS, OLG, National Bank Financial Group, Manulife Financial, Scotiabank, The Weather Network, President's Choice, Aeroplan.

**Government Partners:** The Government of Ontario, Government of Canada – Department of Canadian Heritage, City of Toronto, Ontario Arts Council, Canada Council for the Arts, Tourism Toronto, Waterfront Toronto.

**Foundation Partners:** The Hal Jackman Foundation, The Sidney Lee Dream Foundation, The Lloyd Carr-Harris Foundation, The John McKellar Charitable Foundation.

**Major Media Partners:** CTV, The Globe and Mail.

**Major Marketing Partners:** Cineplex, The Toronto Star, Tourism Toronto, St. Joseph Communications.

**Marketing Partners:** Telelatino, Metro, Asian Television Network, Toronto Life.

This list represents commitments as of March 17, 2009. Additional 2009 sponsors, government partners, and individual donors will be announced shortly.

- 30 -

For media inquiries, please contact:

Laura Hughes, Manager, Media Relations and Communications

O: 416-368-3100 ext. 242, C: 647-966-3870, E: [lhughes@luminato.com](mailto:lhughes@luminato.com)

Nick Poirier, Media Relations Coordinator

O: 416-368-3100 ext. 253, E: [npoirier@luminato.com](mailto:npoirier@luminato.com)