



The Toronto Jazz Orchestra Swings
Saturday, February 18, 7 pm – 1 am, Dovercourt House
Sunday, February 19, 3:30 – 6:30 pm, The Rex Hotel

For immediate release – Toronto, February 8, 2012: The Toronto Jazz Orchestra (TJO) pays homage to the great big band music of the Swing Era with two upcoming shows. On Saturday, February 18, the TJO teams up with Swing Toronto to present the annual Swing Thing at the Dovercourt House, with dance lessons starting at 7 pm, and a swing dance starting at 9 pm. On Sunday, February 19, the TJO performs at The Rex Hotel, 3:30-6:30 pm. Vocalist Alex Samaras guests with the ensemble for both performances; vocalist Sophia Perlman will also join the band on February 19.

“We’re usually playing more contemporary big band repertoire,” said TJO Artistic Director Josh Grossman, “so it’s a blast to be paying tribute to one of the greatest periods of big band music with these two shows. Swing Toronto is a great co-presenter – the Swing Thing is always a party. And the crowd at The Rex is a discerning audience – they know their big band!”

The Swing Thing (Saturday, February 18 on the main floor of Dovercourt House, 805 Dovercourt Road) kicks off at 7 pm with a Charleston lesson, and continues at 8 pm with a Lindy Hop lesson. At 9 pm the TJO takes over and plays three sets of the original arrangements of Count Basie, Duke Ellington, Benny Goodman and more. Vocalist Alex Samaras is the featured guest for the evening. The Swing Thing is a social, inclusive affair – guests need not bring a partner, and the lessons and dance are geared towards Swing enthusiasts of all ages and abilities. Admission is \$18 with one lesson, \$20 with both lessons and \$15 for the dance only; students save \$3.

On Sunday, February 19, the TJO continues swinging with three sets of music at **The Rex Hotel**, 194 Queen Street West, 3:30-6:30 pm. The emphasis on the 19th will be on music which emerged from or was influenced by the Swing Era, but that is perhaps less danceable. The band will still play classics like *Sing, Sing, Sing* and *In The Mood*, but will also perform tunes like *Diminuendo and Crescendo in Blue* (Duke Ellington), *Willow Weep for Me* (Stan Kenton), and arrangements of Swing Era tunes by Jim Knapp and John Hollenbeck. The afternoon will also feature for the first time in TJO history two guest vocalists – Alex Samaras and Sophia Perlman. No cover, donations appreciated.

The **Toronto Jazz Orchestra** (TJO) was formed in 1998 by Artistic Director and Conductor Josh Grossman and is made up of some of the top emerging jazz talent in Toronto. The TJO performs regularly at the Rex Hotel, has released three CDs and has performed with nationally and internationally acclaimed guest artists such as Phil Nimmons, Ingrid Jensen, Kevin Turcotte, Seamus Blake, Geoffrey Keezer and Kurt Elling. Special projects like The TJO Swings are a regular part of the TJO’s programming; previous presentations have included the music of Phil Nimmons, the Stan Kenton Orchestra, the Vanguard Jazz Orchestra, Duke Ellington, *West Side Story* and the Radiohead Jazz Project.

Alex Samaras is quickly becoming one of Canada's leading vocalists in the jazz and new music scenes. Alex studied vocal performance in the jazz program at the University of Toronto and at



the Banff Center's Creative Music Program; he also spent time working in New York City with contemporary arts icon Meredith Monk and her vocal ensemble. He performs locally with the Sondheim Jazz Project, is part of Bram Gielen's *Biggish Kids* which was a hit at the 2010 Summerworks Festival, and was selected for the Young Centre Emerging Artists Program under the mentorship of Gregory Oh. Alex teaches privately and has lead improvisational theater workshops and music/voice master classes across Canada and the United States.

Sophia Perlman has made a name for herself as one of Canada's most promising young vocalists. Her musical maturity and impressive ability as an improviser has made her a first call not only as a bandleader but also as a frequent guest with many of Toronto's top musicians and ensembles including Richard Underhill, The Bob Brough Quartet, Richard Whiteman, The Toronto Jazz Orchestra, The Darcy Hepner Jazz Orchestra, Ravi Naimpally, The Toronto Rhythm Initiative, and the late Jeff Healey. Since 2005, she has held a Monday night residency at Toronto's Reservoir Lounge with The Vipers, whose self-titled, second album was released in November of 2011, and has been widely played on JazzFM, and CBC. Sophia is featured on JUNO Award nominated and winning albums, and recently recorded a duo album with long-time collaborator Adrean Farrugia.

For more information on The Toronto Jazz Orchestra Swings please call (416) 899-5299, email thetjo@mnsi.net or visit www.thetjo.com.

The Toronto Jazz Orchestra Swings

Saturday, February 18

The Annual Swing Thing

Dovercourt House, 805 Dovercourt Road

7 pm – Charleston lesson

8 pm – Lindy Hop lesson

9 pm – Dance

With guest vocalist Alex Samaras

\$18 with one lesson, \$20 with both, \$15 dance only

Students save \$3

Co-presented with Swing Toronto

Sunday, February 19

The Rex Hotel, 194 Queen Street West

3:30-6:30 pm

With guest vocalists Alex Samaras and Sophia Perlman

No cover, donations appreciated