

# The Plains of Abraham Epic Tour

## SCHEDULE

Vancouver  
April 12-15

Calgary  
April 18-20

Saskatoon  
April 22-25

Winnipeg  
April 27-30

Toronto  
May 3-6

Ottawa  
May 8-9

Montreal  
May 10-13

Saint John  
May 15-17

Halifax  
May 19-22

Charlottetown  
May 23-25

St. John's  
May 28-31

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Cover photo credit: A View of the Taking of Quebec, September 13th, 1759 Library and Archives Canada, G139911



[www.plainsofabraham.ca](http://www.plainsofabraham.ca)

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A cross-country tour that  
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The Plains of  
Abraham  
Epic Tour

AN INITIATIVE OF THE DOMINION INSTITUTE

# The Plains of Abraham Epic Tour

A CROSS-COUNTRY TOUR THAT SHOWCASES A POEM OF TRULY EPIC PROPORTIONS

## Plains of Abraham Epic Tour

The Dominion Institute and poet Jack Mitchell are embarking on a cross-country tour that showcases a poem of truly *epic proportions*. Starting in Vancouver and touching down in eleven major cities, Jack will present *The Plains of Abraham* to more than thirty audiences and allow Canadians of all ages to experience the power of the Homeric epic tradition while learning about one of the most pivotal events in Canadian history.

## A History Lesson - Plains of Abraham

The Battle of the Plains of Abraham took place on the 13<sup>th</sup> of September, 1759. It was one of a number of battles between French and British forces during the Seven Years War (1756-1763), and perhaps the most famous ever fought on Canadian soil.

The Seven Years War began in Europe, but hostilities soon spread to North America, where tension between New France and New England simmered. This time, however, the British were determined to invade and conquer Canada.

With battle victories on both sides throughout the summer of 1759, Quebec remained uncaptured. Wolfe ravaged the countryside and bombarded Quebec, while Montcalm patrolled the north shore. On September 12<sup>th</sup>, Wolfe's leading soldiers, masquerading as a French supply convoy, opened the way for the rest of the army to climb the steep cliffs of the north shore. The next day, the battle began on the Plains of Abraham and both Montcalm and Wolfe were killed. The British forces held the field.

Although the city surrendered, the war was not over. That winter, the French general Lévis trained more troops in Montreal, marching in the Spring of 1760 to try to retake Quebec. Victorious at the Battle of Ste.-Foy on April 28<sup>th</sup>, 1760, Lévis lacked the artillery to assault the citadel, and eventually had to retreat to Montreal. He surrendered there on September 8<sup>th</sup>, ending the history of the Seven Years War in North America.

## A History Lesson – Epic Poetry

Epic poetry is a way of telling stories. Instead of speaking freely, however, the epic storyteller speaks in *verse* (rhythmical language). Epic poems are designed to be listened to by an audience. Most cultures around the world have a tradition of epic poetry, usually for telling stories about their history, heroes, and gods. In Western culture, the most famous epic poetry is that of the ancient Greek poet Homer. In his two poems, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, he describes the tragedy of the Trojan War and its aftermath.

In reviving epic poetry for Canada, Jack Mitchell has turned to Homer for inspiration. The Siege of Quebec is in fact rather like the Siege of Troy, for both took place long ago, and in both stories the main characters perish – Achilles and Hector at Troy, Wolfe and Montcalm at Quebec. In terms of form, too, *The Plains of Abraham* uses a type of verse (iambic octameter) that is deliberately meant to resemble the verse of Homer (dactylic hexameter). Just as the *Iliad* helped to give the Greeks a common sense of who they were, *The Plains of Abraham* aims to unite all Canadians in an awareness of the glory, and the tragedy, of shared history.

## Poet - Jack Mitchell



Jack Mitchell ([www.jackmitchell.ca](http://www.jackmitchell.ca)) is the composer and performer of *The Plains of Abraham*. Born in Sackville, N.B., he grew up in Ottawa and has lived in Paris, Montreal, and San Francisco. He is twenty-eight years old and currently lives in Mountain View, California, where he is a Ph.D. Candidate in Classics at Stanford University. In addition to

*The Plains of Abraham*, Jack has also written a young adult novel, *The Roman Conspiracy*, ([www.romanconspiracy.com](http://www.romanconspiracy.com)) which is set in ancient Rome will be published in October by Tundra Books.