

# The Bridges of Madison County - the Musical, in Concert

*Nightingale Arts Collective debuts first production with renowned musical director and professional singers and musicians*

**March 18, 2024 - Calgary, AB** - Nightingale Arts Collective, a new performing arts organization, is pleased to present its debut production the Tony award-winning musical *The Bridges of Madison County*, in concert. This talented group of professional vocalists and musicians will be led by prominent musical director John Goulart, the current director of the Bow Valley Chorus and Firebird Symphony and Chorus.

The concert will take place in the Studio Theatre at cSPACE on April 12 and 13th at 7:00 pm. The show will be presented in a concert format to reduce production and ticket costs. With minimal costuming and set design, the music takes centre stage bringing the audience along on the emotional four-day love story between the characters Robert and Francesca.

Founded in October of 2023 by Meaghan Schulz and Melissa Wang Jackson, Nightingale Arts Collective seeks to provide more performance opportunities for the many talented professional and emerging artists in Calgary. It aims to do so in a safe and collaborative environment where artists can be involved in the selection of works and productions.

“We have so many talented musicians and vocalists in Calgary and in a city of our size, there just aren’t enough performance opportunities,” says co-founder Meaghan Schulz. “It is difficult to find paying work, let alone finding content that is something you would necessarily choose. We’re excited to present our first production and I think Calgarians will be surprised and impressed with the level of talent we’ve assembled for this production.”

*The Bridges of Madison County, the Musical* is a Tony-award-winning Broadway musical written by Jason Robert Brown. The music is soaring and at times heartbreakingly moving. The characters are complicated, multifaceted people, and the work reveals their humanity and inner conflict in a powerful way. The artists who have been cast in the Calgary production are perfectly suited to bring these characters to life.

Lead vocalist Stuart Howe is an internationally recognized operatic tenor who trained at the New England Conservatory of Music. He is noted for his interpretation of the heroic roles of Rossini and Donizetti, which he performed in several European opera productions. He is returning to Alberta, where he first studied vocal training at MacEwan University.

It was there he met Meaghan Schulz, the female lead for Bridges. Meaghan is a mezzo-soprano who graduated from the University of Alberta Bachelor of Music in Voice Performance program, and the MacEwan University Theatre Arts program. Meaghan has appeared with the Calgary Opera and Cowtown Opera, and sings with The Firebird Symphony Orchestra and Chorus, and with the Bow Valley Chorus. Some of her previous roles include Mrs. Banks in Mary Poppins, Reno Sweeney in Anything Goes and Sister Mary Amnesia in Nunsense.

Musical director John Goulart is arranging the score, playing guitar and mandolin, and recruiting musicians including a cellist and percussionist. Dr. Colin Martin, President of the Alberta Writers Guild, will serve as Narrator to help link the musical numbers and clarify the plot.

Nightingale Arts Collective is seeking a corporate sponsor for the event.

Plans for the Collective include artist-choice cabarets, collaborative shows with other artist groups such as dancers and actors, and possibly fully staged musicals.

The Bridges of Madison County, the Musical, in concert, will be an intimate and affordable experience for music lovers of all ages. Tickets are \$45 and can be purchased through [Brown Paper Tickets](#). Happy Hour runs in the lobby before the show, starting at 6:00 pm. Theatre doors open at 6:30 pm.

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**Media contact:**

Michelle Schurman

Publicist

[michelle@michelleschurman.com](mailto:michelle@michelleschurman.com)

403-463-9607

**About Nightingale Arts Collective**

Nightingale Arts Collective is a grassroots organization dedicated to showcasing the amazing talent and passion of Calgary's performing artists. We provide a safe and collaborative atmosphere to uplift artists and support their professional development. We showcase professional and emerging artists in Calgary and the surrounding areas.