

SKIRTSAFIRE

MARCH 5-15
2026

FESTIVAL



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WELCOME TO SKIRTSAFIRE

MAKING #YEGHERSTORY SINCE 2012!

This year's theme, "The Maps We Make" inspired a festival full of new works that chart journeys of belonging, resilience, and transformation. From March 5-15, explore Old Strathcona, the French Quarter and our newest venue, Arts Hub Ortona, to catch first drafts, new ideas, and storytelling that sparks conversation and connection.



Opening the festival is the world premiere of Ms. Pat's *Kitchen* by Jameela J. McNeil. Inspired by Jameela's journey as a Jamaican-Canadian, this heartfelt play explores intergenerational healing, consent, and the search for identity.

Our Indigenous programming, *I am Eagle* by Matricia Bauer, brings to life Matricia's personal story as a Sixties Scoop survivor. This multidisciplinary puppet show traces her journey back to culture, community, and self.

Audiences will also get a first look at a workshop reading of *Put Your Lips Together*, the latest work by local playwright Louise Casemore. This new play follows four women navigating toxic workplaces and discovering whether strangers can band together to challenge injustice.

Closing the festival is Shannan Calcutt's new one-woman show, *Things I Shouldn't Tell You*. Strap in for a wild ride as Shannan hilariously unveils everything she wishes someone had told her about perimenopause, aging, and life in the middle. It's the survival guide to midlife madness you didn't know you needed.

All new work. Many new voices. All created by women. And of course, you can still enjoy SkirtsAfire favourites like *The Shoe Project*, *emBODYment*, *Off the Page*, *Comedy Night*, *Key of Me*, and *Songs in the Sanctuary* (with special guest Claire Coupland).

Thank you for being part of this celebration of women's voices. Whether this is your first SkirtsAfire experience or your 14th season, we're thrilled to have you with us - and can't wait to share these stories, laughs, and powerful moments with you!

Amanda Goldberg (she/her/elle) Artistic Producer



At the beginning of each event, you will hear a festival welcome by:

ᑕᑦᑭᑦᑲᑦᑲᑦ **Cikwes** ᑕᑦᑭᑦᑲᑦᑲᑦ *iskotew kiskisákay* (SkirtsAfire)

Cikwes is a nehiyaw ᑕᑦᑭᑦᑲᑦᑲᑦ soul singer and a JUNO nominee from Bigstone Cree Nation. She is one of Canada's unique artists; composing music with the ancient art of chanting & hand drumming, blending it with soul, jazz, and RnB. Her acclaimed album *kākisimo bᑦᑦᑲᑦ* earned her a Juno nomination and recognition as a leading voice in Indigenous sound art. Cikwes' music revives nehiyawewin (Cree language). Singing in Cree and using traditional musical elements, she plays a role in language and cultural revitalization. She is part of

the movement of Indigenous artists reclaiming language and culture. She has played over one hundred shows and shared stages with Aysanabee and Jeremy Dutcher. Her ethereal vocal style transform the Cree syllabics into sound art. Her heartfelt stories and songs take you on journey of intergenerational healing through the power of music. Cikwes holds a Master of Music from York University. Her music is recognized for several national and international music awards, including a Grammy consideration. Her third Cree language album, *Nehiyaw Iskô* was released on November 3, 2025.



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Message from His Worship Mayor Andrew Knack



On behalf of City Council and the people of Edmonton, welcome to the 2026 SkirtsAfire Festival!

We are fortunate to live in a city overflowing with talent, imagination and creativity. Thanks to our vibrant arts community, residents and visitors can experience memorable performances and shows throughout the year.

Every March, SkirtsAfire illuminates venues across our city with bold, insightful and poignant works created by local women and non-binary people from diverse backgrounds. I thank the SkirtsAfire Society for creating a safe space for women and members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, and creating opportunities for thought-provoking performances in our diverse city.

This festival matters because representation matters. When more voices are heard, we set the stage for a more vibrant and inclusive Edmonton. Let's take this opportunity to show our support for the women and non-binary Edmontonians who are sharing their compelling art with us.

Congratulations to this year's performers, and I hope everyone in the audience feels inspired by what they see at this year's SkirtsAfire!



Andrew Knack
MAYOR, CITY OF EDMONTON



Welcome to the SkirtsAfire Festival!

This Festival is proudly showcasing the work of women. Each year, the artists present powerful and insightful stories to a diverse audience that is eager to be challenged and moved by passionate performances and exhibitions.

With a program that reflects the true diversity of the thriving arts community in Alberta and across Canada, the festival fosters creativity, inclusion and meaningful cultural engagement. This year, through theatre, music, dance, comedy and visual arts, it will present bold premieres and unforgettable interactive artistic performances that celebrate resilience and the voices shaping the future of the arts.

As Minister of Canadian Identity and Culture and Minister responsible for Official Languages, I congratulate the organizers, artists, and volunteers who have made this Festival a success year after year.

I wish everyone a fantastic time at this annual tradition!



The Honourable Marc Miller





**Message from the
Lieutenant Governor of Alberta**

As both the Lieutenant Governor of Alberta and an Honourary Patron of *The Shoe Project*, it is my pleasure to welcome everyone to the 2026 SkirtsAfire Festival. *The Shoe Project* is presented in partnership with YWCA Edmonton, with support from Workshop West Playwrights' Theatre, who first brought this initiative to Edmonton.

This production resonates deeply with my own experience as a newcomer to Canada, but I have also seen how its themes of courage, resilience, and hope in the face of adversity speak to theatregoers of all walks of life, no matter their country of origin. At a time when immigrants are often spoken of in sweeping generalities, *The Shoe Project* allows us to perceive them and feel empathy for them as flesh-and-blood individuals.

I offer my gratitude to the leaders, volunteers and supporters whose sustained dedication has built SkirtsAfire into one of Edmonton's major arts festivals, a place where women of all ages and ethnicities unapologetically take centre stage and audiences gain a more sophisticated appreciation of our wonderfully diverse province.

I congratulate Amanda Goldberg, Brienne Jang and the rest of their extraordinary team for their ongoing commitment to inclusion and diversity in the arts, as well as this event's sponsors and supporters.

Best wishes to all for another successful festival!

Her Honour, the Honourable Salma Lakhani, AOE, BSc, LLD (hon)
Lieutenant Governor of Alberta



**2026 Honorary Skirt
Tina Thomas CEO,
Edmonton Community Foundation**

I'm absolutely thrilled to be the Honorary Skirt for this year's SkirtsAfire Festival! As a past attendee, I've experienced firsthand the magic this event brings to our city – a celebration of women's creativity, talent, and bold voices across the performing arts. As CEO of the Edmonton Community Foundation and a long-time Edmontonian, I've witnessed how essential a thriving arts scene is to our community. The arts do more than entertain – they open our eyes to new worlds, challenge our perspectives, spark conversations, and bring us joy. SkirtsAfire does all this while celebrating the power of female artists, amplifying our remarkable stories and contributions that might otherwise go unheard and unseen.

I can't wait to see what this year's festival has in store, and I hope you'll be there to experience it with me!



**2025 Honorary Skirt
Catherine Vu Chief Uptime Officer,
Pro-Active IT Management Inc.**

Serving as Honorary Chair of SkirtsAfire was both a privilege and a joy. Before my year with the festival, I appreciated the arts – but being immersed in SkirtsAfire programming truly opened my eyes and my heart in a new way. Sitting in theatres, galleries, and conversations led by women artists reminded me how powerful art can be in shaping empathy, sparking dialogue, and helping us see the world – and each other – more fully.

One of my greatest joys was introducing friends to SkirtsAfire and watching them experience it for the first time. Seeing their surprise, emotion, and appreciation reinforced just how impactful this festival is.

SkirtsAfire is more than a festival; it is a vibrant celebration of women's creativity, courage, and connection. I am deeply grateful to the artists, volunteers, sponsors, and leadership team who make this festival possible and ensure women's stories continue to be seen, heard, and celebrated.

May this festival leave you inspired, moved, and just a little changed – as it did for me.

Ms. Pat's Kitchen

BY JAMEELA J. MCNEIL

The Bailey family has won their golden ticket! Their very own restaurant that is. A brand new kitchen in Edmonton, featuring Jamaican patties, stew chicken, and of course Ms. Pat's famous soup! As Pat transitions into this new stage of her life, her daughter Kenise prepares to take a leap into adulthood, although her journey to independence is not what she thought it would be. Something is troubling Kenise and Pat can sense it. Pat would do anything for her daughter, but in her attempt to save Kenise she must first recognize her own scars. *Ms. Pat's Kitchen* examines intergenerational healing and how we all carry pain differently.

**FEATURED
NEW
WORK**



MS. PAT'S KITCHEN by Jameela J. McNeil

THURSDAY, MARCH 5 | 7:30pm

Join us for a reception after the show catered by OTTO Food and Drink with music by DJ Jeree!



FRIDAY, MARCH 6 | 7:30pm

SATURDAY, MARCH 7 | 1:30pm & 7:30pm

SUNDAY, MARCH 8 | 1:30pm

Runtime: 75 minutes, no intermission

LOCATION: ArtsHub Ortona (9722 102 St NW)

TICKETS:

Tickets are \$29.99 for adults and \$24.25 for students/seniors (plus applicable fees). Limited Pay-What-You-Will tickets available. Purchase online at skirtsafire.com.

Content Warning: This play contains references to and discussions of assault.

NOTE FROM THE PLAYWRIGHT

Jameela J. McNeil

I began writing this play whilst taking part in the Citadel Theatre's RBC Mentorship Program. I started the program with a different play in mind but soon began shifting my focus as my heart felt led to write this story. Soon after I participated in Nextfest's My First Play Program where I had the opportunity to present a script reading. Then came Common Ground Arts Society. Common Ground taught me about self-producing my work, provided an opportunity to workshop the script, and partnered me with SkirtsAfire and, well, here we are. If only the beginnings of this story were so simple...From Vaughn Road, to Willowridge, to Westmorland, and St. Catherine, JA. The journey traces back to many streets and shores...

To the mothers, daughters, aunties, grandmothers, fathers, sisters, uncles, and brothers your story matters.

To the Black kids 'who don't know where they come from'. Who have yet to find 'home'. The westernized, melanated peoples.

May you find shelter here.

Acknowledgements: Special thank you to ArtsHub Ortona, Citadel Theatre, Common Ground Arts Society, Varscona Theatre, Writers' Guild of Alberta, Theatre Prospero, La Cité Francophone Theatre, David Bruns (Home Once More), Nico Van der Kley (Victoria School), Sexual Assault Centre Of Edmonton (SACE), Jeff Osterlin, Whittyn Jason and The October People Productions. SkirtsAfire acknowledges the generous support of Citadel Theatre's Heart and Hub Program. Thank you to our Soup Sponsor: Sauce - Modern Caribbean Cuisine.

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ARTISTIC TEAM

Ms. Pat's Kitchen by Jameela J. McNeil



Jameela J. McNeil | Playwright, Producer

Jameela is an actor, writer, and producer. She is a MacEwan Theatre Arts Alumna based in Edmonton. She has performed on stages such as the *Citadel Theatre*, *Mayfield Dinner Theatre*, *Workshop West*, *Lunchbox*, *Theatre Calgary*, *Royal Manitoba Theatre*, *Persephone Theatre* and at the *Stratford Festival*. Since 2020, she has pursued playwriting. Her training began with *Tarragon Theatre's Young Playwrights Unit* (2021) and she has been writing and learning from mentors through programs such as the RBC Horizon Emerging Artists Program (Citadel) and Writers Guild of Alberta ever since. In 2024, she became a producing mentee with Common Ground Arts Society where she has learned about producing her very first play, *Ms. Pat's Kitchen!* She is passionate about digging into the past, examining familial bonds, and putting a spotlight on the stories that have been forgotten or unexplored.



Patricia Darbasie | Director¹

Pat is a graduate of the University of Alberta's BFA Acting and MFA Directing programs. Directing credits include: *Ribbon*, a one-woman show about Amber Valley (U of A Studio), *The Syringa Tree*, another one-woman show, (York University), *Mesa* (Atlas Theatre), *Henry V*, *The Ash Girl* and *Chrysothemis* (Concordia University Edmonton) *The Domino Heart* (Edmonton Fringe). Heaven reopened the Shoctor Theatre (Citadel Theatre) in 2021 and then The National Arts Centre in Ottawa hosted a remount of Heaven in spring of 2023. Pat returned to the U of A to work with BFA students with *God of Carnage* (Studio Theatre) and *Cloud Nine*. She was busy in 2022 with *The Mountain Top* (Shadow Theatre), and *Sexy Laundry* (Mayfield Dinner theatre). Pat was also the assistant director of *The Color Purple* (Citadel Theatre /RMTC) and she did a remount of *The Mountain Top* (Citadel Theatre) for which she was nominated for a Sterling award for Best Director.



Kat Evans | Technical Director/Production Manager

Kat Evans (she/her) is a freelance professional Artist, Designer, Creator, Producer, PM/TD, Technician and Stage Manager based in Amiskwaciy-Wāskahikan (Edmonton, Alberta) on Treaty 6 Territory, Metis Regional Council 4. She holds a BFA in Theatre Design from the University of Alberta, and is the Co-Founder of The October People Productions. She specializes in practical SFX and immersive design for theatre, film, and escape room experiences. In addition to stand-alone productions, Kat is involved in several festivals and presentation series throughout the year, including The Edmonton International Fringe Festival, RISER Edmonton, and DARK. She is a core creative team member of the Dead Centre of Town Collective, with Catch the Keys Productions. She is honored to have multiple Sterling Awards nominations for her Design work and in the category of Outstanding Individual Achievement in Production (Production Manager). She is the recipient of the 2025 Sterling Award in this category.



Amy Dass | Sound Designer²

Amy Dass is an emerging South Asian theatre designer based in Amiskwaciy-wāskahikan (Edmonton, Alberta) and is a recent graduate of the BFA in Drama program at the University of Alberta. Amy aspires to design for theatres across Canada and internationally, while continuing to uplift stories that reflect the diversity of lived experiences. Amy's practice spans costume, lighting, and set design. Her work has been seen at the Citadel, Bleviss Laboratory Theatre, Fringe Festival, Mile Zero Dance, etc. Select credits include *Life of Pi* (Assistant Set and Props Design), *Witch* (Set and Props Design), and *Hyenat Trail* (Lighting and Sound Design).



Andraya Diogo | Lighting Designer

Andraya (she/her/hers) is a stage designer/manager from amiskwaciy-wāskahikan (colonially known as Edmonton, Alberta, Canada). She has worked as a designer, stage manager, production manager, dresser, stage kitten, clown wrangler and technical theatre educator, with a passion for abstract, conceptual stage design and colour-coded paperwork. PREVIOUS: *Vinyl Cafe: The Musical* (Citadel Theatre) as Assistant Stage Manager, *Lucky Charm* (Found Festival/Defiance Theatre) as Stage Manager, *Alphabet Line* (Prairie Strange Productions) as Associate Production Designer, *A Christmas Carol*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream: The '70s Musical* (Citadel Theatre) as Apprentice Stage Manager, *Brick Shithouse* (fenceless theatre) as Costume Designer. Andy is proud to facilitate the Young Production Company at Citadel Theatre and is so grateful to call Edmonton's arts community home. Lots of love to Jameela and Kat. More at andrayadiogo.ca.



Chantel Fortin | Set Designer

Chantel is a freelance production designer, scenic artist and props master who's been working the art scene in Edmonton for nearly 20 years. She debuted at Teatro Live! with *Cocktails at Pam's* in 2016 and subsequent set designs for the company include *39 Steps*, *On the Banks of the Nut*, *The Noon Witch*, *Private Lives*, *The Occulist's Holiday*, *The Exquisite Hour/Love is for Poor People*, *Deathtrap*, *Shockers Delight!*, and *Witness to a Congo*, the last of which earned her a Sterling nomination. She also designed the sets for Teatro's 2021 streaming project *Lost Lemoine: Parts One and Two*. Her other set design credits include *Our Man in Havana* for Bright Young Things, *Going to St. Ives* and *Mesa* for Atlas Theatre. She's also done scenic painting and props for Workshop West, The Citadel, and Edmonton Opera. In other media, she has production designed commercials for AGLC, Play AB, DJI and Joico Hair, among others. Chantel has also served as production designer in recent years for a number of feature length films produced locally by Northern Gateway Films, and Dept. 9's *Souls Road* and most recently was Key Scenic for A24's 2025 horror film *The Land of Nod*.



Chariz Faulmino | Costume Designer

Chariz Faulmino (she/they/siya) is a multidisciplinary artist based in amiskwaciy-wāskahikan. They are thrilled to make their Costume Design debut with this beautiful new play. Chariz is deeply inspired by the opportunity to tell this story through this new medium- especially as it shares the tenderness and complexity of the immigrant familial experience, one she is quite familiar with. Special thanks to Jameela for writing this powerful story and for her trust in me in helping bring this world to life. Chariz extends heartfelt gratitude to their loved ones for their constant support and love, and to those who continue to guide them in spirit. Upcoming performances: *The Wizard of Oz* — Citadel Theatre (March–April); *The Invisibles* — National Arts Centre (May) | @cheeky.rizz



Makeda Romanetti | Stage Manager

Makeda is a Jamaican stage manager whose practice centres on new work, collaboration, and community. She has supported productions and workshops across Edmonton's independent theatre scene, including *Jabulani Arts Festival* (2025), *Breaking Ground* (2024), and *Evandalism* (2022). She recently completed a stage management residency at the Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity, where she worked as an Assistant Stage Manager on *Kohkom's Babushka* (2025). She is grateful to bring Jamaican storytelling to Edmonton with the *Ms. Pat's Kitchen* team.

ARTISTIC TEAM CONT'D

Ms. Pat's Kitchen by Jameela J. McNeil



Noreta Lewis | Pat

Noreta Lewis was born in Jamaica where she taught music, drama, dance and poetry to youths. She won the Jamaica Cultural Development Commission (JCDC) Gospel Festival competition in the year 2000 with the song "I'll Make it Through the Valley". In February, 2025, she appeared as a singer on the 5ARTISTS1LOVE show at the Winspear Theatre. She resides in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, and has worked with Engagement Lab Theater of Alberta. She is currently a member of Third Space Playback Theatre Company, Inspirational Drama Company and Ribbon Rouge Foundation Art Space Theater Team. Her most recent project was playing the lead role in the play entitled *Oboingba Tries to Change Her Fate*. She also directed her 1st musical in 2025, with the Sihle-Sizwe Foundation; *A Beat of Change*, which got rave views. She also teaches music therapy and is the founder of a youth dance group in Edmonton called The Chi-Fire Dances (named after her nephew Chicano Lewis who was murdered in Jamaica). Noreta is a singer and a music teacher by profession and has taught in the public school in Jamaica for 7 years before migrating to Canada. Noreta continues to sing, teach music and to enjoy her new found love in theatre.



Michelle Todd | Sharmaine

Michelle feel good enuh to be working with this wonderful cast, crew, and creative team with MPK and SkirtsAfire! An Edmonton native, Michelle has been active in the arts community for many years as an actor, writer, choreographer, director, facilitator, and producer. A graduate of MacEwan's Theatre Arts program, Michelle's credits include; *After the Trojan Women* (Common Ground Arts Society), *Tiny Beautiful Things* (Shadow Theatre), *Black Widow Gun Club*, *Lady Porn*, *Destination Vegas* (Whizzgigging Productions), *Carole of the Belles*, *Mass Debating* (100% More Girls), and *SLUT* (Northern Light Theatre). All her love to Bob, Marcus, and Glenson.



Rochelle Laplante | Kenise'

Rochelle Laplante (she/her) is an Edmonton-raised multidisciplinary performance artist. She is overjoyed to be part of the premiere of *Ms. Pat's Kitchen* and can't wait for everyone to hear this deeply moving story. Previous credits include: *A Midsummer Night's Dream: The 70's Musical*, *Clue*, *A Christmas Carol* (Citadel Theatre); *Little Shop of Horrors*, *Peter Pan Goes Wrong* (Arts Club/ Citadel Theatre); *CTRL-ALT-DEL*, *Hoodies* (Concrete Theatre); *Caribbean Muskrat* (Teatro La Quindicina); *Macbeth* (Freewill Shakespeare); *Hiraeth* (Bright Young Things); *The Importance of Being Earnest* (Empress of Blandings).



Kijo Gatama | Phyllis

Kijo Eunice Gatama is a multidisciplinary artist based in Edmonton, Alberta, working across playwriting, acting, dance, and artistic direction. A graduate of the University of Alberta's BFA Acting program (2022), they specialize in performance theatre, Afrocentric dramaturgy, and esoteric studies, grounded in interdisciplinary and community-forward practice. Recent credits include *Dance Nation* (SkirtsAfire 2025), *Hyena's Trail* (Here for Fear Collective, 2025), and upcoming productions with SkirtsAfire, Shadow Theatre, and Jabulani. Their playwriting explores folklore and Queer Afro-Canadian experiences. An excerpt of *Hyena's Trail* appears in *Alberta's Black Creators Anthology* (2027), next year published.



Douglas Prout | Robert

Doug is a veteran theatre practitioner, with a career spanning over 4 decades and theatrical success across many genres. His work has received acclaim all over Jamaica, across the wider Caribbean, the UK, USA and of course here in Canada. He is a much sought after Director, well known for his professionalism, work ethic, attention to detail and the uncanny ability to motivate and manage diverse casts. Mr. Prout is hailed for directing for celebrated Jamaican playwright, Basil Dawkins for 11 years in a row, 5 top class plays starring "King of Comedy", Oliver Samuels, and for his acting in a recurring role for over 10 years on CVM TV's long-running mini-series, "The Blackburns of Royal Palm Estate".

- 1 Professional artists who are members of the Canadian Actors' Equity Association
- 2 Member of the Associated Designers of Canada

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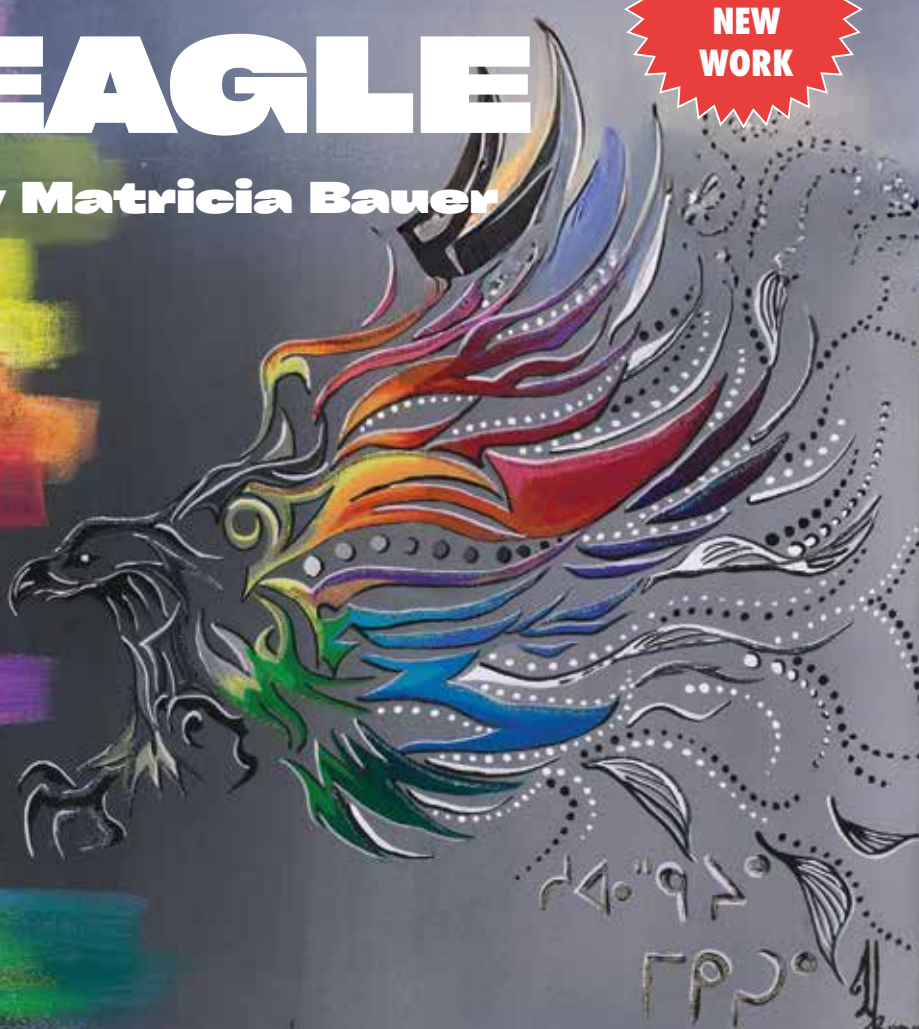
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I AM EAGLE

by Matricia Bauer

**FEATURED
NEW
WORK**



I am Eagle is a story about birds—a play that uses fantasy to explore a very real and human experience. In this story, a young eagle, representing Matricia, is taken from its nest and raised in a place that's not its own. The eagle faces adventures and challenges, grappling with its identity and a deep sense of not belonging. The journey back to its true flock becomes a powerful metaphor for Matricia's own return to her culture and community. Through puppetry, the play captures a sense of wonder and flight, blending elements of fantasy and falconry to symbolize the freedom that comes with self-acceptance. These fantastical elements create a safe space, allowing both Indigenous and non-Indigenous audiences to engage with difficult history in a way that's both meaningful and inspiring.

I AM EAGLE by Matricia Bauer

FRIDAY, MARCH 6

7:30pm

**OLD STRATHCONA
FARMERS'
MARKET**

*Join us for a reception after the show
catered by Old Strathcona Farmers' Market!*

SATURDAY, MARCH 7

1:30pm

*Runtime: 60 minutes, no intermission,
followed by a 15 minute talkback*

LOCATION:

Walterdale Theatre (10322 83 Ave NW)

TICKETS:

Tickets are \$27.75 for adults and \$22.25 for students/seniors (plus applicable fees). Limited Pay-What-You-Will tickets available. We are happy to offer a limited amount of complimentary tickets for Indigenous Peoples thanks to support from the Alberta Blue Cross. Please claim your ticket using the "Free Tickets for Indigenous Peoples" option at skirtsafire.com.

NOTE FROM THE PLAYWRIGHT

Matricia Bauer

My story, like many Indigenous peoples of my generation, is one of silence and loss. As a '60s Scoop survivor, the trauma of that experience has been a quiet but constant presence in my life. Feelings of cultural displacement, confusion, and suffering were carried in silence from childhood through adulthood. My journey included a confusing marriage, raising my children, and a long battle with addiction.

It was during my path to sobriety that I began to reconnect with my story. This healing process inspired me to create a story that would be cathartic for me while also offering understanding and connection for others.

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THE SHOE PROJECT

Venue Sponsored by



**PRESENTED BY SKIRTSAFIRE FESTIVAL
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH YWCA EDMONTON**
with support from Workshop West Playwrights' Theatre

Shoes accompany us on our journeys. They are with us wherever we go, they say who we are, where we came from, and where we are going. These performances will open your heart and transform your perceptions of what it means to be Canadian.

SATURDAY, MARCH 7 | 7:30pm

Join us for a reception after the show catered by Culina Catering!



SUNDAY, MARCH 8 | 1:30pm

ASL Interpreted Performance by: Amorena Bartlett & Jenni Stevens



SUNDAY, MARCH 8 | 7:30pm

Runtime: 90 minutes, no intermission

TICKETS:

Tickets are \$29.99 for adults and \$24.25 for students/seniors (plus applicable fees). Limited Pay-What-You-Will tickets available. Purchase online at skirtsafire.com.

LOCATION:

Gateway Theatre
(8529 Gateway Blvd)

Featuring

Shenin, Bangladesh
Sasha Kim, Ukraine
Najiba, Afghanistan
Mounira Koujah, Syria
Mona Alshaab, Syria

Irene Akumagba, Nigeria
Eve Christine, Uganda
Dera, Haiti
AyanaStrong, Burkina Faso
HEYA, South Korea

Artistic Team

Nancy Kirugi,
Project Coordinator



Amena Shehab, Project Coordinator
Conni Massing, Writing Mentor
Alyson Connolly, Voice & Speech Coach

The Shoe Project's mission is to advance education by providing programs, courses, workshops and seminars to immigrant and refugee women to develop their written and oral skills, as well as their leadership skills. Thank you to The Shoe Project for their guidance and contributions towards the Edmonton chapter of this initiative and to YWCA Edmonton for continuing the journey. To find out more about The Shoe Project visit <https://ywcaCanada.ca/what-we-do/projects-initiatives/the-shoe-project/>



The Shoe Project is a national initiative that amplifies the voices of Canadian immigrant and refugee women through storytelling. Whether selected by choice or imposed by circumstance the shoes we wear can make or break a journey, shape our experiences, and open doors to our future. *The Shoe Project 2026* is Edmonton's fifth live iteration of this compelling project. In November, a group of immigrant and refugee women began working with veteran Canadian playwright Conni Massing to write stories of their arrival and adaptation to Canada centered around a pair of shoes they have worn. Once their stories were complete, each woman worked with Voice and Speech Coach Alyson Connolly, and they now tell their story for audiences in a revelatory public performance.

Content Warning: *The Shoe Project* deals with subject matter around immigration, refugee camps, war, and other hardships while fleeing a country and travelling to a new one. While many stories can be uplifting and happy, there will be some tragic, sad, and harrowing stories shared as well.

The Shoe Project is Supported by



BUTLER FAMILY FOUNDATION



PUT YOUR

LIPS TOGETHER

a new play by louise casemore

Put Your Lips Together is a surreal neon-noir about the experience of women in the workplace. It revolves around four strangers who cross paths following a candlelight vigil for a young woman killed after reporting harassment by her coworker. As they seek shelter from an unsettling storm, their conversation offers much needed space to escape routines and commiserate about their lives. As they continue meeting each month in secret, troubling commonalities are unearthed about how they're each treated at work. Within the glow of an empty diner, a question emerges that sets a dangerous plan in motion: Could a group of strangers work together to blow the whistle on each other's toxic workplace?

FEATURED
NEW
WORK

PUT YOUR LIPS TOGETHER

 by Louise Casemore

TUESDAY, MARCH 10

7:30pm | Play Reading

THURSDAY, MARCH 12 

7:30pm | Play Reading *

***Followed by a panel discussion: "Writing Real Women."**

A conversation about writing three-dimensional women, questioning recurring tropes, and ethical approaches to characters inspired by real people. Moderated by Kristen Padayas with Panelists: Louise Casemore, Rayanne Haines, Nicole Moeller and Elisa Marina Mair-Sánchez.

ASL Interpreted Performance and panel by:
Jenni Stevens, Gail Benin, Marquesa Dubois & Hope Lagaden

Runtime: 90 minutes, no intermission

TICKETS:

\$21.50 for adults and
\$18.75 for students/
seniors (plus applicable
fees). Limited Pay-What-
You-Will tickets available.
Purchase online at
skirtsafire.com.

LOCATION:

Gateway Theatre
(8529 Gateway Blvd)

NOTE FROM THE PLAYWRIGHT

Louise Casemore

Theatre is sometimes described as "a light in a dark place". This sentiment always carried a curious double meaning to me. On one side, it's a solace – getting swept into a dazzling spectacle when the world outside feels unbearable. From another direction, theatre is also capable of shining a light on the darkness of our world – illuminating what's going unsaid. While still in process, my hope is that *Put Your Lips Together* can ultimately satisfy both definitions. The light and the dark, the lived and the imagined.

In 2021, the IBA released a report ranking Canada *last* in the world for whistleblower protection. This presentation is dedicated to the innumerable women who shared their experiences in support of this play.

Venue Sponsored by



This event is supported by



ARTISTIC TEAM

Put Your Lips Together by Louise Casemore



Louise Casemore | Playwright

LOUISE CASEMORE is an artist advocate, prairie ambassador, and two-time Sterling Award winning playwright. The recipient of the ATP/Enbridge Playwright's Award, she was shortlisted for the inaugural John Palmer Award from the Playwright's Guild of Canada and is an Edmonton Artist Trust Fund honoree. Original plays include *OCD*, *GEMINI*, *Undressed*, and *LUCKY CHARM*. Louise remains active in the national community by way of dramaturgy, teaching Interdisciplinary Arts at MacEwan University, and sector research. She is Company Manager for the Banff Centre Playwright's Lab, and proudly sits on the Board of Concrete Theatre. *The Playwright would like to acknowledge the Canada Council for the Arts and Woodland Farm artist residency, as well as Citadel Theatre for their generous support.*



Emma Tibaldo
Dramaturg



Amanda Goldberg
Director



Anna Kuman
Choreographer



Selina Painchaud
Sound Designer



Dayna Lea Hoffmann
Performer



Coralie Cairns
Performer



Maya Baker
Performer



Beth Graham
Performer



Maija Corrigan
Stage Directions Reader

Find full artist bios at
[skirtsafire.com/show/
put-your-lips-together](https://skirtsafire.com/show/put-your-lips-together)



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TAPROOT EDMONTON

SPARKLERS: ADVENTURES FOR YOUNG AUDIENCES

Dream Catchers curated by Gomathi Boorada

Event Sponsored by



Venue Sponsored by



WEDNESDAY, MARCH 11

6:00pm

Runtime: 1 hour, no intermission

LOCATION:

Gateway Theatre (8529 Gateway Blvd)

TICKETS:

\$16.75 for adults and \$10 for Kids 12 and Under (plus applicable fees). Limited Pay-What-You-Will tickets available. Purchase online at skirtsafire.com.



Indra's Gift: Mohini the Enchantress | Shivamanohari School of Performing Arts

Featuring: Gomathi Boorada, Hemali Boorada, Alphonsa Ashwajit, Niharika Renjit, Vedanth Murthy

Shivamanohari company is one of the most sought after Kuchipudi Dance groups in North America led by Gomathi Boorada. Performing in different cities across Canada and internationally, Shivamanohari company is known for its exquisite technique and engaging performance of uncolonized traditional arts of India with a modern narrative.

Indra's Gift is a Multidisciplinary theatre production with Indian classical dance, Balinese shadow puppetry and drama. The play is written by Chris Dodd, directed by Maralyn Ryan, choreographed by Gomathi Boorada.

Mohini the Enchantress is a small episode from *Indra's Gift*.

SkirtsAfire is lighting up the stage for young audiences!

Dream Catchers is a joyful collection of performances curated by Gomathi Boorada that celebrates culture, imagination, and storytelling from around the world.

Families can journey through Chinese folktales with the **Mingle Ensemble**, where storytelling and live harp music weave together stories of heritage, identity, and wonder. Travel to Greece with a lively, interactive **shadow puppet adventure** from **To Vouno**, featuring the clever Karagiozis and a cast of unforgettable characters, filled with music, laughter, and audience participation. Experience the beauty of Indian classical dance with a special excerpt from *Indra's Gift*, performed by the acclaimed **Shivamanohari School of Performing Arts**: a vibrant blend of movement, theatre, and myth. And adding extra excitement and spectacle, **Chinese lion dancers** from **Shang De Martial Arts** will bring rhythm, colour, and high-energy movement to the celebration.



Traditional Chinese Lion Dance | Shang De Martial Arts

Shang De is a non profit organization teaching tai chi praying mantis kung fu, lion dance, tai chi and weapons.



Upon the Lake | Mingle Ensemble

Mingle Ensemble is a performance collaboration between storyteller Ruoh-Yeng Chang and musician Jia Jia Yong, who bring together live storytelling and music to celebrate and share their Chinese heritage.



Karagiozis and the Festival of Wisdom | To Vouno

"To Vouno" ("the mountain" in Greek) is a shadow puppet theatre collective of Greeks and Lebanese celebrating Mediterranean heritage through Karagiozis shadow theatre. Drawing from the rich storytelling traditions of both cultures, the group reflects deep historical connections across the Levant and Aegean. Like a mountain that watches over its people, "To Vouno" stands as a gathering place for laughter, wisdom, and cultural expression. Using puppets from the Hellenic Canadian Community of Edmonton and Region, the company brings humour and heart to old tales for new audiences.

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What begins as words on the page comes to life through a captivating selection of works-in-progress and excerpts. Off the Page is a multidisciplinary storytelling showcase weaving plays, poetry, and music. Across friendships, girlhood, migration, motherhood, and queer awakening, women confront buried truths, fractured bonds, and survival. Ancient myth meets contemporary voices, revealing how love, memory, and art become acts of healing, resistance, and self-discovery across generations.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 11

7:30pm

Runtime: 120 minutes with intermission

LOCATION:

Théâtre Servus Credit Union

La Cité Francophone (8627 91 Street)

TICKETS:

Tickets are \$21.50 for adults and \$18.75 for students/seniors (plus applicable fees). Limited Pay-What-You-Will tickets available. Purchase online at skirtsafire.com.

Find content warnings at skirtsafire.com/content-warnings



SKINS: IX Requiem by Kijo Gatama

A Jamaican restaurant in our kitchen. Our first rebellion. Our blood.

SKINS: IX Requiem ruptures from Kijo's film SKINS, wearing the skins of those who made us. This is a live adaptation of a new skin taking shape.

Playwright/Performer: **Kijo Gatama** (she/her)
Light Design: **Amy Dass**
Sound Design: **Atenea**



Caw Caw! | A play by Mhairi Berg

Featuring: **Mel Bahniuk** as Viv, **Kristen Padayaz** as Jess, and **Dayna Lea Hoffmann** as Anna. Directed by **Brett Dahl**.

Three girls. Each convinced she was the only one. Each fed the same lies. Now, deep in the backcountry, they've set the perfect trap to make him face the truth. But as the wilderness closes in and their secrets begin to splinter, girlhood becomes both shield and weapon. Will their bond hold - or will the weight of what they carry pull them apart?



Dido's Coat of Many Colours | A New One-Act Play

Written and Performed by **Danielle LaRose** (she/her/elle)
Co-Created with **Elizabeth Grierson** and **Brann Munro**

Dido was a Queen and a refugee. Exiled from her kingdom of Carthage, she brought her people thousands of miles from home and helped them build a new one. A home fashioned from scraps of guile and patches of gumption, stitched together with tenderness and unwavering courage. Now, a prairie mother follows the example set by this ancient Queen as she sets about creating a new life for her and her three daughters- one UHAUL box at a time.



Emilia Fox Hillyer | Host

Originally from Massachusetts and Wampanoag land, colonially known as Eastern Massachusetts, Emilia is a first-generation settler on Treaty 6. She is the proud recipient of five (or six, tough to keep track) ear surgeries performed by ENT surgeons all over so-called Northeast Florida. Nowadays, Emilia is a performer, puppeteer, educator, multi-instrumentalist, and founding member of pUbeRtykiDs and Boston's Fork & Shoe Theatre Cooperative. She is currently pursuing an MFA in Theatre Practice at the University of Alberta.



The Tragedy of Knowledge by Ruth Alexander

Featuring: **Alexandra Dawkins** (Reece), **Ruth Alexander** (Angela), **Kristi Hansen** (Hayden) & **Patricia Zentilli** (Lara)

After forty-five years of friendship, three women confront the secrets that threaten to destroy their shared history. 'The Tragedy of Knowledge' is a play with songs that explores female friendship over time, a Gen X mother and millennial daughter relationship, and the redemptive power of music when truth changes everything.



(Girl) Lover by Bailey Bieganeck

Loving the wrong person is common, but what about loving wrong people of the same gender in a heteronormative society? This is a series of poems that journeys through one woman's love of other women. Featuring the good, the bad, and the ugly of it all, as told by Bailey Bieganeck, poet, performer, and playwright.



Macabre by Sara Campos-Silvius

Sara Campos-Silvius (she/her) is a queer, multiracial Latine artist and performer creating in prose, poetry, theatre, and film. She was an Alberta Playwrights' Network IBPOC Playwright in Residence and her work has been featured in the Edmonton International Film Festival, Edmonton Poetry Festival, Expanse, Found Fest, Springboards, Connections//Collisions, and many more. She has also been a member of the integrated disabled performing arts group CRIPSiE since 2013. Check out Sara's work at www.saracs.art

SCHEDULE

MARCH 5-15, 2026



THURSDAY MARCH 5



Ms. Pat's Kitchen by Jameela J. McNeil
Opening & Reception
7:30pm - 8:45pm | ArtsHub Ortona

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FRIDAY MARCH 6

Ms. Pat's Kitchen by Jameela J. McNeil
7:30pm - 8:45pm | ArtsHub Ortona

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I am Eagle by Matricia Bauer
Opening & Reception
7:30pm - 8:45pm | Walterdale Theatre

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SATURDAY MARCH 7



Ms. Pat's Kitchen by Jameela J. McNeil
1:30pm - 2:45pm | ArtsHub Ortona

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I am Eagle by Matricia Bauer
1:30pm - 2:45pm | Walterdale Theatre

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The Shoe Project
Opening & Reception
7:30pm - 9:00pm | Gateway Theatre



Ms. Pat's Kitchen by Jameela J. McNeil
7:30pm - 8:45pm | ArtsHub Ortona

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SUNDAY MARCH 8



Ms. Pat's Kitchen by Jameela J. McNeil
1:30pm - 2:45pm | ArtsHub Ortona

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The Shoe Project
1:30pm - 3:00pm | Gateway Theatre



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Workshop: Celebrate Your Ridiculousness with Shannan Calcutt
5:00pm - 8:00pm | Walterdale Theatre

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The Shoe Project
7:30pm - 9:00pm | Gateway Theatre

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TUESDAY MARCH 10

Put Your Lips Together by Louise Casemore - Play Reading
7:30pm - 9:00pm | Gateway Theatre

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WEDNESDAY MARCH 11

The Key of Me at Chianti: Duos
5:00pm - 7:00pm
Chianti Cafe & Restaurant

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Sparklers: Adventures for Young Audiences *Dream Catchers*
6:00pm - 7:00pm | Gateway Theatre

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Off the Page
7:30pm - 9:30pm | Théâtre Servus Credit Union, La Cité Francophone

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THURSDAY MARCH 12

The Key of Me at Chianti: Song Circle
5:00pm - 7:00pm
Chianti Cafe & Restaurant

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Put Your Lips Together by Louise Casemore
Play Reading & Panel Discussion
7:30pm - 9:00pm | Gateway Theatre



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Things I Shouldn't Tell You by Shannan Calcutt - Opening
7:30pm - 9:30pm | Walterdale Theatre

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FRIDAY MARCH 13

Things I Shouldn't Tell You by Shannan Calcutt
7:30pm - 9:30pm | Walterdale Theatre

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emBODYment
7:30pm - 9:00pm | Théâtre Servus Credit Union, La Cité Francophone

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Comedy Night
8:00pm - 10:00pm | Gateway Theatre

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SATURDAY MARCH 14

Things I Shouldn't Tell You by Shannan Calcutt
1:30pm - 3:30pm | Walterdale Theatre

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emBODYment
2:00pm - 3:30pm | Théâtre Servus Credit Union, La Cité Francophone

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Things I Shouldn't Tell You by Shannan Calcutt
7:30pm - 9:30pm | Walterdale Theatre

page 32

Songs in the Sanctuary
7:30pm - 9:00pm | Holy Trinity Church

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SUNDAY MARCH 15

Things I Shouldn't Tell You by Shannan Calcutt
1:30pm - 3:30pm | Walterdale Theatre

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SCAN FOR DIGITAL FESTIVAL SCHEDULE & TICKETS

VENUE INFORMATION

- ArtsHub Ortona**
9722 102 St NW
- Gateway Theatre**
8529 Gateway Blvd NW
Venue Sponsored by YWCA Edmonton
- Walterdale Theatre**
10322 83 Ave NW
Venue Sponsored by Capital GMC Buick
- Théâtre Servus Credit Union, La Cité Francophone**
8627 91 Street
- Chianti Cafe & Restaurant**
10501 82 Ave NW
- Holy Trinity Anglican Church**
10037 84 Ave NW



THE KEY OF ME AT CHIANTI

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Celebrate a night out with dinner and a show! Enjoy deals on appetizers, wine and beer at everyone's favourite pasta place while listening to the sweet sounds of our featured performers! Then head down the street to one of SkirtsAfire's shows!

Reservation at Chianti required to receive discounts. Call (780) 439-9829 and let them know you're booking for "SkirtsAfire" to save your seat!

DUOS WEDNESDAY, MARCH 11 | 5:00pm - 7:00pm

LOCATION:

Chianti Cafe & Restaurant (10501 82 Ave NW) *By Donation at the Door*



Rachel Gleddie & Esther Forseth

Join Edmonton singer-songwriters Rachel Gleddie and Esther Forseth for an intimate and powerful set that celebrates vulnerability, strength, and connection through music. With guitars in hand and voices that complement each other effortlessly, they move through songs that reflect on change, connection, and the moments that shape us. It's a performance shaped by where they've been—two artists sharing the roads that they've traveled.

ARTISTS
ADOPTED BY
LILLI
CHEVRIER



Lena Daniels & Willow Gladue

Indigenous multi award winning country music artist Lena Daniels is a part of the Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation and Global Country Music. Inspired by traditional old school country music she writes with her husband and plays guitar, ukulele and piano.

Willow Gladue is a Métis artist from Beaumont, Alberta, known for her singing, dancing (especially Métis jigging), and playing multiple instruments (fiddle, guitar, piano, drums). She gained recognition for her music, particularly her debut single "They're Just Eyes," and is a passionate promoter of her Métis culture alongside her mother, Felice.

ARTISTS
ADOPTED BY
BERNADETTE
GASSLEIN



Diana Stabel & Lindsey Nagy

Lindsey Nagy and Diana Stabel have been friends and musical collaborators for many years, sharing countless stages, travels, and unforgettable musical moments along the way. Their deep love of music shines through every performance, where their blended voices and genuine connection create shows that feel both intimate and timeless.

SONG CIRCLE THURSDAY, MARCH 12 | 5:00pm - 7:00pm

LOCATION:

Chianti Cafe & Restaurant (10501 82 Ave NW) *By Donation at the Door*



Carla Jayne (she/her)

Carla Jayne is a singer-songwriter whose folk country roots aid in exploring her small town prairie upbringing in Alberta. Catchy melodies and timeless lyrics evoke the work of Sheryl Crow, Brandi Carlile and Joni Mitchell. Chinooks and Sea Monsters, her FACTOR-funded debut EP, was recorded at Royal Studios in Edmonton. Released in April 2024, it garnered radio play across Canada, including on CBC and CKUA. It earned a spot on the Edmonton Journal's Fresh Tracks list of "10 Must-listen Albums from Edmonton Artists in 2024".

ARTIST
ADOPTED BY
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Paula Eve Kirman

Paula Eve Kirman is a singer/songwriter who writes and performs music with a message. She has been performing her original work in Edmonton for almost two decades at a variety of events and venues. Her songs are known for themes of social justice. Her song "Summer," about an unhoused woman, was a finalist in the 2017 International Songwriting Competition. She has since released three full-length albums: The Crow (2022, co-produced by the late Bill Bourne), Corners (2023), and Causes (2025), a compilation of Paula's protest songs thus far.

ARTIST
ADOPTED BY
STEPHEN
OLESEN &
CARLA AYLES



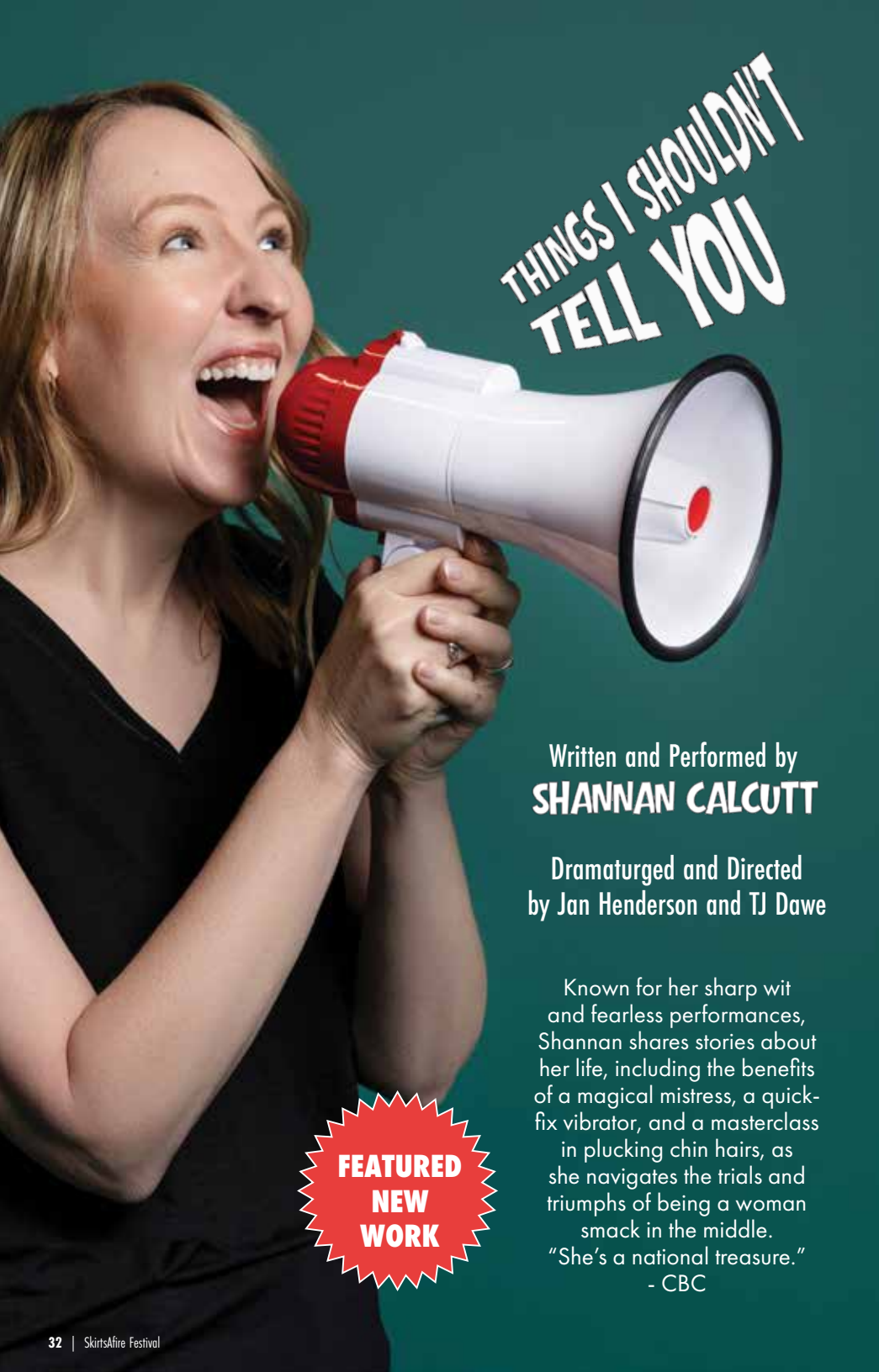
Commonwealthgirrl (she/her)

Raised in a large, wildly creative family with a CBC radio host dad and powerhouse actress mom, Marie Fontaine grew up steeped in the rich tones of French chanson and art pop, inspired by icons like Kate Bush and Charles Aznavour. Heartbreak and a borrowed keyboard ignited the spark that gave birth to Commonwealthgirrl: songwriter, artist, firestarter.

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THINGS I SHOULDN'T TELL YOU

Written and Performed by
SHANNAN CALCUTT

Dramaturged and Directed
by Jan Henderson and TJ Dawe

Known for her sharp wit and fearless performances, Shannan shares stories about her life, including the benefits of a magical mistress, a quick-fix vibrator, and a masterclass in plucking chin hairs, as she navigates the trials and triumphs of being a woman smack in the middle. "She's a national treasure."
- CBC

**FEATURED
NEW
WORK**

THINGS I SHOULDN'T TELL YOU by Shannan Calcutt

THURSDAY, MARCH 12 | 7:30pm
FRIDAY, MARCH 13 | 7:30pm
SATURDAY, MARCH 14 | 1:30pm & 7:30pm
SUNDAY, MARCH 15 | 1:30pm

Runtime: 120 minutes, including a 15-minute intermission
Act One: 60 minutes, Intermission: 15 minutes
Act Two: 30-45 minute Talkback, Kindling Conversation

Content Warnings: Adult Language, this show is intended for ages 16+.

LOCATION: Walterdale Theatre (10322 83 Ave NW)

TICKETS:

Tickets are \$29.99 for adults and \$24.25 for students/seniors (plus applicable fees). Limited Pay-What-You-Will tickets available. Purchase online at skirtsafire.com.

NOTE FROM THE PLAYWRIGHT Shannan Calcutt

I truly believed mid-life would be a time in my life where I'd be thriving, but I somehow missed the memo on the crash-landing of second puberty. *Things I Shouldn't Tell You* is a call to action for trumpeting our truths on topics too often considered faux pas, shameful or vulgar. It's followed by a talkback— an invitation to be real together, to share both our trials and triumphs, and maybe, even vent a little!

"I laughed. I cried. I peed a little."
- Debi Cornwall

"It's like having a heart to heart chat with your funniest friend."
- Kathy Treat

"I could not stop thinking about this body of work. I thought about it all night and did not want to cleanse my palate of it."
- Ruth Naomi Floyd

"Best roller coaster I've ever been on. Vulnerable, beautiful, and f#\$%ing hilarious."
- Molly Jensen

"Shannan Calcutt gives a masterclass in humor, humility, and what women wish we knew."
- Joey Borgogna

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ARTISTIC TEAM

Things I Shouldn't Tell You by Shannan Calcutt



Shannan Calcutt | Playwright & Performer

Declared "a national treasure" by the CBC, Shannan Calcutt has played an eclectic range of venues worldwide from Saskatoon's Wash 'n Sloss Pub to the Sydney Opera House. She has spent the last twenty years making people laugh on the Vegas Strip in Cirque du Soleil's *Mad Apple*, *Zumanity* and *Spiegelworld's Atomic Saloon Show*. One of the world's leading educators in Clown and Play, she teaches regularly at Cirque du Soleil and Celebration Barn Theater. She's profiled in the book "Clowns: In Conversation with Modern Masters," by Ezra Lebank and David Bridal.



Jan Henderson | Director & Dramaturg

Jan Henderson is one of North America's leading teachers and directors of clown. As director, writer and performer with Edmonton's Small Change Theatre, she literally clowned her way around the world, discovering first hand that laughter is the universal language. She is Senior Artistic Associate for Small Matters Productions, teaches at the University of Alberta, and offers workshops through her company, Fool Moon Productions. She received the Elizabeth Haynes Stirling Award for Outstanding Contribution to Theatre in Edmonton. Her lifetime of work is celebrated in the documentary, *The Wise Fool*, by Geraldine Carr. www.foolmoon.org



TJ Dawe | Director & Dramaturg

TJ Dawe is a Vancouver based writer, performer, director, and dramaturg. He's toured many autobiographical monologues, including *The Slipknot*, *Medicine*, and *Blueberries Are Assholes*. He's co-created stage parodies of *Star Wars*, *Lord of the Rings*, *Sex and the City*, and *Six Chick Flicks*. His co-written play *Toothpaste and Cigars* was made into the feature film *The F Word*, starring Daniel Radcliffe, Zoe Kazan, and Adam Driver. He co-hosts *The Enneagram in a Movie Podcast*, and is co-writing a book on the subject. In recent years he's directed touring shows featuring experts expounding on the psychology of serial killers and cults. He leads an online course on creating one-person shows: soloshowcourse.com.



WORKSHOP: CELEBRATE YOUR RIDICULOUSNESS

Led by Shannan Calcutt



SUNDAY, MARCH 8 | 5:00pm-8:00pm

LOCATION: *Walterdale Theatre* (10322 83 Ave NW)

Tickets are \$49 and include a ticket to *Things I Shouldn't Tell You* by Shannan Calcutt (pg 32)!

It's time to risk being seen in all your glory! Discover the freedom and joy that comes when you embrace your clown and celebrate your ridiculousness.

About "Celebrate Your Ridiculousness!"

In this workshop, you will:

- Take big risks
- Follow your impulses
- Connect with your audience
- Flaunt your flaws
- Laugh in failure's face
- Experience the power of the ensemble

And much more!

This is a rare chance to train in Edmonton with Shannan Calcutt, one of the world's leading instructors of clown and play. Her workshops have inspired artists from all walks of life to live in the moment, play from the heart, risk being vulnerable, overcome obstacles, and be the kind of collaborator that lifts up everyone in the room. Shannan teaches regularly at Cirque du Soleil, Celebration Barn Theatre and The Clown School. Her popular residency, *Make a Show with Shannan*, has helped over two dozen artists create new shows that have toured throughout North America. Learn more about her remarkable work here: www.shannanalcutt.com

Please visit skirtsafire.com to purchase tickets.



emBODYment is back with an array of awe-inspiring movement pieces from floor to ceiling – come and experience these impactful moments in motion.

FRIDAY, MARCH 13

7:30pm

SATURDAY, MARCH 14

2:00pm

Runtime: 90 minutes with intermission

LOCATION:

Théâtre Servus Credit Union, La Cité Francophone (8627 91 Street)

TICKETS:

Tickets are \$27.75 for adults and \$22.25 for students/seniors (plus applicable fees). Limited Pay-What-You-Will tickets available. Purchase online at skirtsafire.com.

Find content warnings at skirtsafire.com/content-warnings



Maggie Dickson: Bird on Fire | Samara Von Rad (she/her)

Samara Von Rad is an Actor/Stunt Performer/Musician from Edmonton. Samara grew up in a musical family and started acting at a very young age. She discovered Aerials and Circus in 2009 and has been hooked ever since. Samara's act is inspired by a true Scottish story and is a tale of resilience. The music was co-written by Samara and Daniel Sedmak and mixed by DJ Sizzle. The voiceover was provided by local actor Cody Porter.

ARTIST
ADOPTED BY
MARIELLE
TURGEON



Two Threads | Stephanie Gruson (she/her)

Stephanie Gruson is an Edmonton-based aerialist who has trained and performed with Firefly Theatre & Circus since 2009. Known for her dynamic silks work, she has appeared in many of Firefly's productions. Stephanie is also a producer with the Alberta Circus Arts Festival, supporting the growth of circus arts in Alberta. This act is a reflection on Stephanie's grief in losing her dad and a close friend, losses that have shaped her in profound ways. Through the silks, she explores the tension between holding on, falling, and rising again, while navigating motherhood within that grief.

ARTIST
ADOPTED BY
TREVA
SWICK



Deviani Andrea | Host

Deviani Andrea is a dancer, choreographer and educator. Immigrant from Mexico, she has called Amiscwaciwaskahikan "home" for the past 6 years and has found a surrogate family in the local dance community. Her expertise in Contemporary dance has led her to collaborate with Good Women Dance Collective, Mile Zero Dance, Azimuth Theatre, SkirtsAfire, Citadel Theatre, among others. With a strong sense of community and social justice, Deviani works to advance the principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion. She also fosters decolonization of spaces and champions Indigenous teachings. Catch her on Instagram at @deviani.andrea

ARTIST
ADOPTED BY
dots
Dance & Performance



Floating Feather | Sarah Visser (she/her)

Sarah the Aerialist, an international circus artist, presents a flirtatious, cabaret inspired dance trapeze act blending advanced aerial technique, heels dance, and bold audience interaction. Radiating glamour and magnetic confidence, she seduces the crowd with her trapeze work, theatrical presence, and unapologetic femininity.



A Butterfly Dream | Dim Sum Dance Society

Macy Yau – Instructor/Choreographer
Katelyn Ly – Instructor/Choreographer

Dim Sum is a traditional Chinese meal centering around sharing and a joyful social experience. The values that make this sharing of a meal a staple in Chinese culture, is also embodied by the Dim Sum Dance Society team. The group presents a dance about musicians spending their day looking for inspiration, with little luck. Longingly their gaze drifts where carefree butterflies roam, musing about how nice life must be as a butterfly. That very night their musings come to fruition as they dream they were butterflies, traveling around the city and observing the different lives each person lives.

ARTISTS
ADOPTED BY
LYNN
MANDEL



A Sky Full of Stars | Marla Albiston (she/her) - Aerial Lollipop

Marla Albiston (she/her) is a dancer/aerialist/choreographer/instructor who resides in Edmonton, AB. She completed her Bachelor of Education degree from the University of Alberta, and then accepted a contract performing with Princess Cruise Lines aboard the Princess Coral. Currently, Marla teaches dance and yoga at Lillian Osborne High School, works as a freelance dance instructor/choreographer/adjudicator, and performs with the local contemporary dance company Viva Dance, and the local aerial circus company Firefly Theatre and Circus.



The Olympics Piece

Performed by **Anastasia Maywood, Janita Frantsi and Molly Bell**

All the current Olympic sports (summer and winter), performed by three performers, with full costume changes.

ARTISTS
ADOPTED BY
THOMAS
USHER



Laundry Day | Avery Denington - Contortion

The only constants in life are death and taxes... I would like to add laundry to the list.

ARTIST
ADOPTED BY
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SONGS IN THE SANCTUARY

Choral Concert Featuring the Claire Coupland Trio

Event Sponsored by
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Curated by Laura Hawley, join us for this powerful showcase of women's voices featuring three local women's choir performances, and headliner, the Claire Coupland Trio.

SATURDAY, MARCH 14

7:30pm

Runtime: 90 minutes, no intermission

LOCATION:

Holy Trinity Church (10037 84 Ave NW)

TICKETS:

Tickets are \$21.50 for adults and \$18.75 for students/seniors (plus applicable fees). Limited Pay-What-You-Will tickets available. Purchase online at skirtsafire.com.



Claire Coupland Trio

Claire Coupland, Guitar & Vocals | Anna Luth, Percussion & Vocals | Regan Luth, Violin & Vocals

There is a pureness to Claire's voice that can silence a room. A moving songwriter and compelling guitarist, contemporary folk singer songwriter Claire Coupland combines her smooth signature folk finger picking, soaring melodies and a little dose of jazz chord changes. She effortlessly draws audiences into her intimate and heart wrenching performances of loss, escape and the messiness of the human experience.



ChandraTala

ChandraTala (Sanskrit for "rhythm of the moon") was founded in September 2019 and is the Korora Choir Association's upper voices choir for experienced soprano and alto singers of any gender identity. The choir has collaborated with local and national musicians and groups, including the Canadian Chamber Choir, Edmonton Symphony Orchestra, Ariose, and Maddie Storvold. ChandraTala continues to perform and collaborate throughout the community, pursue diverse repertoire, commission and premiere new works, work with clinicians locally and nationally, and support one another in community and song.



Ariose

Ariose, a treble voice choir, led by Artistic Director, Jolaine Kerley, has been enchanting audiences in Edmonton since its inception in 1995. With a mission rooted in celebrating the rich tapestry of Canadian composers, this nationally recognized ensemble has become known for its artistic excellence. Through programming, collaboration, outreach, and commissioning, Ariose maintains an unwavering commitment to showcasing the wealth of musical talent that Canada has to offer. Ariose frequently collaborates with Edmonton area choirs and is excited to be performing at the 2026 SkirtsAfire Songs in the Sanctuary concert.



Nottingham Women's Choir

In 2016 Nottingham Women's Choir formally began, in response to a growing desire on the part of the mothers of the youth singers to have their own opportunity to create and share beautiful music together. Over the years, this non-auditioned choir has flourished, welcoming new singers and performing at seniors' lodges, local and provincial festivals, and concerts in Sherwood Park and Edmonton. In April 2024 the choir was awarded the President's Scholarship at the Sherwood Park Music Festival. This amazing group of women is directed by Amy Appleton and accompanied by Janine Fisher.

WHERE THE MUSIC BEGINS.

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SKIRTS ON WHYTE

Skirt Design Challenge



Our Skirt Design Challenge is back! We have chosen 4 local artists to create a Skirt that will be displayed at 1 of 4 participating Old Strathcona retailers. The Designer's challenge will be to create an upcycled piece from donated fabrics and cutoffs based on the festival theme, The Maps We Make. Be sure to visit each location and enter our draw to win a basket of Old Strathcona goodies thanks to the Old Strathcona Business Association! Fabrics donated by Laura Wynnychuk and Rainbow Draperies.

LOCATION:

- 1 The QUILTBAG (10516 82 Ave NW)
- 2 Village Goods (10432 82 Ave NW)
- 3 gravitypope Tailored Goods (10414 82 Ave NW)
- 4 Bamboo Ballroom (8206 104 Street NW)

★ In collaboration with Laurel's On Whyte - visit in store for a bonus entry into the draw!



FEATURED ARTISTS:



Melissa Squire



Lola D. Sanchez



Please visit skirtsafire.com for more information about the exhibited artists.

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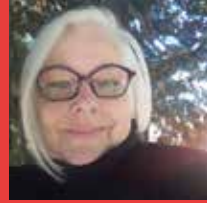
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 2024 - Katherine O'Neill
 2025 - Catherine Vu
 2026 - Tina Thomas

Looking to help make a difference in increasing the number of women in the arts? Consider joining the Board of Directors or a Committee of SkirtsAfire! Find out more:



The Skirts behind the scenes. Thank you for all you do!

SKIRTSAFIRE FESTIVAL PRODUCTION & ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM:

Artistic Producer	Amanda Goldberg
Managing Director	Brianne Jang
Assistant Managing Director.....	Amanda Samuelson
Festival Technical Producer	Rae McCallum *Adopted by Lyle & Elizabeth Trytten
Assitant Technical Producer & Artist Liaison.....	Nicole Maloney
Festival Coordinator.....	Vanessa Wilson
Volunteer Coordinator.....	Alyson Dicey
Front of House Manager.....	Linh Dang
Front of House Supervisors	Elka Eisenzimmer & Alison Besecker
Festival Bookkeeper.....	Pam Aseltine
Festival Graphic Designer	Erin Dewar
Deaf Accessibility Coordinator.....	Amorena Bartlett
ASL Interpreting Consultant and Liaison	Jenni Stevens
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The Shoe Project Writing Mentor.....	Conni Massing
The Shoe Project Voice & Speech Coach	Alyson Connolly
The Shoe Project Event Support	Jocelyn Davison - Bee Together
Songs in the Sanctuary Curator.....	Laura Hawley
Sparklers Curator.....	Gomathi Boorada
T-Shirt Designer.....	Emily Chu
Walterdale Theatre Liaisons	Sally Hunt & Richard Hatfield
Walterdale Theatre Technical Director	Rebecca Cave
Walterdale Theatre Technician.....	Judah Truong
Walterdale Theatre Sound Technician.....	Mike Tulley
Walterdale Theatre Stage Manager	Claire Sonmor
emBODYment Lead Aerial Rigger	Michael King
emBODYment Riggers	Lee O'Reilly & Hugh McCune
Gateway Theatre House Technician.....	Jen Magel
Gateway Theatre Audio Technician	Jon Mottram
Gateway Theatre Audio Technician/Stagehand.....	Amanda Yim
Gateway Theatre Stage Manager	Gina Moe
Sparklers Stagehand	Joe Gilbody
La Cité Francophone Technical Director	Nic Juba
La Cité Francophone House Technician.....	Morgan Conrad
La Cité Francophone Stage Manager	Galen Hite
La Cité Francophone Lighting Technician.....	Abby Gwilt
Holy Trinity Church Lighting Technician	Saron Beraki
Key of Me and Holy Trinity Church Audio Technican.....	Shella Apostol
ArtsHub Ortona Technician	Juliana Stephens
Web Designer.....	Gabrielle Chipeur - 12Strong Ltd
Media Relations.....	Kate Jestadt Hamblin - Bottom Line Productions
Festival Videographer.....	Katie Elizabeth Studio
Festival Photographer.....	Lindsey Tran - Understudy Studio
Festival Photographer.....	April MacDonald Killins
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Nicole Josette
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Gail L Gravelines
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Kerry Mutch
Carley Okamura
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Janine Waddell
Janice Williamson
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WALTERDALE LOBBY ART EXHIBIT BY IRINA GROBMAN



Irina Grobman is an award-winning professional artist who recently relocated from Ontario to Alberta. Originally from Ukraine, she moved to Canada in 1999 and has proudly called it home ever since. Working in oil, acrylic, and watercolor, Irina explores a wide range of subjects and styles. She is passionate about sharing her knowledge through teaching at the Irina Grobman Art School and as an in-demand guest instructor. Her work has been featured in numerous juried exhibitions and has received multiple awards. An avid plein air painter, her piece The Bird Man was a finalist in the 2022 McMichael Plein Air Competition, earning an Honorable Mention and being exhibited at the McMichael Canadian Art Collection.

For more information about the exhibit, visit skirtsafire.com/lobby-art-exhibit-by-irina-grobman

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SkirtsAfire acknowledges the generous support of Citadel Theatre's Heart & Hub Program for the loan of accessibility materials to the 2026 Festival, including sensory kits (made by Brooke Leifso). Both organizations believe that the arts are for everyone, and commit to continue working together and with our Edmonton performing arts colleagues to continue removing barriers to participation for all.



Thank you to Servus Credit Union for supporting accessibility through our Pay-What-You-Will program.

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Annette Loiselle
Kim Neeser
Sandra Olarte Mendoza
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Elva Rice
Katherine Sammer
Kyra Sammer
Margaret A Shone
Trevia Swick
Mike Tulley
Holly Turner
Zoe Verhees
Robina Zyp

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A GREAT BIG THANK YOU TO OUR AMAZING VOLUNTEERS!

The donation of your valuable time is essential to the success of the festival and we are extremely grateful. Please help us show our appreciation and send a smile to your friendly **SkirtsAfire Volunteers!**

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To buy tickets, visit [skirtsafire.com/raffle](https://www.skirtsafire.com/raffle)



JOIN THE SKIRTSAFIRE FAMILY!

BECOME A MEMBER!

SkirtsAfire's members play an important role in our organization. It is a great way to get involved with a festival giving a platform to women in the arts and truly making a difference.

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO BECOME A MEMBER TODAY, VISIT [SKIRTSAFIRE.COM/BECOME-A-MEMBER](https://www.skirtsafire.com/become-a-member)



Courage takes the stage

Proud to support the SkirtsAfire Festival and the artists who inspire us.



GRAB YOUR SKIRTSAFIRE MERCHANDISE!



We are thrilled to reveal our 2026 shirt design, with artwork by Emily Chu. Pick up yours during festival events at Gateway Theatre, Walterdale Theatre or La Cité!

Emily Chu is a Chinese illustrator and visual artist based on Treaty 6 (Edmonton). Emily's practice includes commercial illustration, murals, storytelling, sketching, and community-arts initiatives. Emily is the founder and lead organizer of Chinatown's newest LNY Market: Together Chinatown Arts Festival, and storytelling map project: Chinatown Stories Map. She is also co-organizer of the arts fundraiser project: Chinatown Greetings.

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