

February 26 - March 23, 2019

theatre:
CALGARY

The Scarlet Letter

An illustration of a woman, Hester Prynne, from the back, wearing a white bonnet and a dark, long-sleeved dress with a white collar and cuffs. A red corset is visible under the dark dress, laced up the back. She is holding a red string in her hands. The background is a solid reddish-brown color.

By Phyllis Nagy

Based on the novel by Nathaniel Hawthorne

At Theatre Calgary we strive to create a welcoming, inclusive and safe environment for diverse communities.

To formally open our productions, Theatre Calgary will pay tribute and recognize the Indigenous people of the Treaty 7 region as the past, present and future stewards of this land where our performance takes place.

In response to the release of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 Calls to Action, the act of giving territorial or land acknowledgement has now become best practice across Canada. In our efforts to embrace the language and spirit of reconciliation, we recognize that our practice will evolve as Theatre Calgary strengthens our relationships within local Indigenous communities and with artists. Theatre Calgary is committed to maintaining regular engagement with Indigenous and community leaders for consultation on best practices.

Territorial Acknowledgement

Welcome to Theatre Calgary.

We would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge that this performance is taking place on Treaty 7, signed at Blackfoot Crossing in 1877. We are on the traditional territories of the peoples of Treaty 7 including the three Blackfoot Nations: consisting of the Siksika, Piikani, Kainai Nations; the Stoney Nakoda Nations: consisting of the Bearspaw, Wesley and Chiniki Nations; and the Tsuu T'ina Nation. The city of Calgary is also home to Métis Nation of Alberta, Region III.

We are grateful to have the opportunity to present in this territory.

I have deep admiration for Phyllis Nagy, the writer who has adapted *The Scarlet Letter* for the stage. Phyllis was born in Manhattan in 1962. Thirty years later, she moved to London, England where she served as the Royal Court's writer-in-residence, where she honed her craft writing stories for the stage. Then, she made her way into the world of Hollywood where she began writing for television and film. As of today, Nagy has been nominated for an Academy Award, an Emmy Award, and a Golden Globe Award.



Show business has always been an industry primarily run by men. Times are changing though, and Hollywood is seeing more women in executive positions. However, Derek Thompson of *The Atlantic* reported in 2017: "...behind the camera in Hollywood, nothing has changed since the late 1990s." Last year at the Golden Globe Awards, *Lady Bird* won for Best Picture (Musical or Comedy), but its writer/director, Greta Gerwig was not nominated for Best Director. How can a movie win for Best Picture and the director/writer (the heart and soul of a movie) not even be nominated? In the history of the Golden Globe Awards only one woman has ever won Best Director – that was Barbra Streisand for her work on the film, *Yentl*. Over in Academy Awards land, it took 81 years for a woman to take home the Best Director award. In 2010, Kathryn Bigelow made history as the first woman to win Best Director for her film, *The Hurt Locker*.

Last year, it was reported that Phyllis will write and direct a movie based on the life of singer, Dusty Springfield. This will be the first time, in Phyllis' three-decade career, that she's been given the green light to not only write, but direct a major feature film. Just like the character of Hester Prynne in *The Scarlet Letter*, Phyllis continues to define herself in a world that still judges women on so many levels. Thank you, Phyllis, for your complex adaptation of *The Scarlet Letter*, and a big thank you for the continued inspiration you give to artists and audiences around the world.

Stafford Arima

Artistic Director

Theatre Calgary gratefully acknowledges the support provided by the City of Calgary through Calgary Arts Development, the Government of Alberta through The Alberta Foundation for the Arts, the Government of Canada through the Canada Council, Canadian Heritage, and all corporate and private contributors.

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theatre:
CALGARY
Stafford Arima, Artistic Director

Director's Notes



Why would a 21st Century feminist playwright be drawn to adapt a 19th Century novel examining Puritan New England society?

At the centre of *The Scarlet Letter* is Hester Prynne, the ‘branded’ adulteress, the fallen woman, the transgressor. She has stepped outside the strict moral codes of this society. She has violated the Puritanism vision of a community bound to live a godly life in order to shed one’s sinful condition.

How does Hester respond to this judgement, to this sentence? Both Nathaniel Hawthorne (in his novel) and Phyllis Nagy (in her adaptation) create a woman who openly, publicly accepts full responsibility for her actions. She chooses to stay in the community, wearing the scarlet A brazenly, some might say, on her chest for all to see in the light of day; daring everyone to confront the oppression of this society’s moral rectitude.

From the first reading of Nagy’s play, I was drawn to Hester’s strength. She is anything but a victim: she remains in control of her fate, of her choices. And this, despite the challenges, the continuous threats to her happiness or, at the very least, peace of mind. In fact, I admire all the female characters in the play: Hester, Pearl, and Hibbins all dare to be themselves, refusing to submit as they resist the pressures of this oppressive patriarchal society to behave... to fit.

So why did Nagy revisit this story?

I believe Nagy wanted to examine our own society and its attitudes toward ‘transgression.’ Her work compels us to question our propensity to judge, to confront our fears and to live an honest life. Ultimately, Nagy dares us to accept the frailty of our humanity, in each other and in ourselves.

Micheline Chevrier

Director

interACTIVE

Enhance Your Experience

TALK THEATRE THURSDAY

February 28 – in the Upper Lobby

Director MICHELINE CHEVRIER

March 7 – in the Upper Lobby

Composer ALLISON LYNCH

Get an insider's perspective on the process of making theatre. Meet an artist from the production's creative team before the show, in conversation with a member of Theatre Calgary's artistic staff.

TALKBACK TUESDAY

MARCH 5, MARCH 12, MARCH 19

– in our Theatre

Join us for a lively post-show discussion with members of the cast.

SPOTLIGHT SATURDAY

MARCH 9 – in the Upper Lobby

Puritan Justice and Family Law

John Siddons LLB, Brynn Doctor

(Doctor Law)

Join us pre-show to hear about how laws and justice have changed over the past 400 years.

SENIOR SATURDAY

MARCH 16 – in the Upper Lobby

Actor – BOBBI GODDARD

Before the performance begins, Senior Saturday patrons are invited to enjoy some snacks followed by an engaging chat with a theatre professional or relevant expert, providing insight into the performance.

EDUCATORS CIRCLE

Are you an educator? Do you love theatre and need a break from marking or planning? Join our Educators' Circle. Benefits include: Tickets to all five mainstage shows, Ability to exchange tickets to another date, and purchase additional tickets at 20% off*. Visit www.theatrecalgary.com to register today!

*some conditions apply

GO BEHIND THE CURTAIN

Go beyond being an audience member and see what else we have to explore. Theatre Calgary offers a number of additional theatrical experiences such as Workshops, Panel Discussions, Industry Nights, and Play Guides.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

We are always looking for ways to engage with all citizens of the City of Calgary and surrounding area. If you have a community event, project or initiative that you think Theatre Calgary could partner with, contact us to start the discussion today!

GET ONLINE

Find further details about our programming at www.theatrecalgary.com

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For all of these programs, and any other learning or community engagement inquiries, please contact:

Chris Stockton

Senior Manager of
Education & Outreach

(403) 294-7440 ext. 1122

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Max Bell Theatre at Arts Commons
February 26 to March 23, 2019

theatre:
CALGARY
presents

THE SCARLET LETTER

by **Phyllis Nagy**

Adapted from the novel by Nathaniel Hawthorne

Director **Micheline Chevrier**

Set and Costume Design **Judith Bowden**

Lighting Design **Harry Frehner**

Composer **Allison Lynch**

Assistant Director **Cristina Cugliandro**

Voice Coach **Jane MacFarlane**

Fight Director **Karl H. Sine**

—

TC Mentors program:

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Directing **Jay Northcott**



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theatre:
CALGARY

Stafford Arima, Artistic Director

Illustration: Andrea Uccini

The Cast

| | |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Master Brackett | Paul Cowling |
| Arthur Dimmesdale | Charlie Gallant |
| Mistress Hibbins | Bobbi Goddard |
| Roger Chillingworth | Christopher Hunt |
| Governor Bellingham | Declan O'Reilly |
| Pearl | Kristen Padayas |
| Hester Prynne | Heather Pattengale |
| | |
| Stage Manager | Emma Brager |
| Assistant Stage Manager | Justin Born |
| | |
| Head Of Lighting | Catharine Crumb |
| Head Of Sound | Chris Jacko |
| Head Stage Carpenter | Scott Morris |
| Head Dresser | Rachel Michelle Sheridan |

The Scarlet Letter has one 20-minute intermission.

The videotaping or making of electronic or other audio and/or visual recordings of this production or distributing recordings on any medium, including gate internet, is strictly prohibited, a violation of the author's rights and actionable under United States copyright law.

For more information, please visit:
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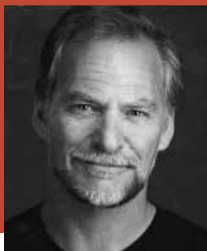


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Paul Cowling



Charlie Gallant



Bobbi Goddard

Paul Cowling — Master Brackett

For Theatre Calgary: *A Christmas Carol* (2008), *Enchanted April*, *Timothy Findley's The Wars*, *The Cripple of Inishmaan*. Paul has been seen in theatres around Calgary, as well as theatres from coast to coast. Favourite shows include: *A Moon for the Misbegotten*, *Becky's New Car*, *Wait Until Dark*, and *Hamlet*. Recently, Paul spent Christmas in the mountains playing Ebenezer Scrooge in a five-person production of *A Christmas Carol* at the Banff Springs Hotel. Paul sends his love out to all his friends and loved ones, and thanks for supporting live theatre and the arts!

Charlie Gallant — Arthur Dimmesdale

Theatre Calgary debut. Fresh off playing Edmund in *Long Day's Journey Into Night* at the Stratford Festival, Charlie has also enjoyed 4 seasons at The Shaw Festival, 5 seasons at Bard On The Beach, and has worked in theatres across Canada such as Groundling, RMTC, Citadel, Vancouver Playhouse, Arts Club, and Belfry. Highlights: Proteus in *Two Gents* (BOTB), Boy in *Peter & The Starcatcher* (Shaw), Lt. Kaffee in *A Few Good Men* (Citadel/ RMTC), Brindsley in *Black Comedy* (Arts Club), Jean in *December Man* (Greenthumb), Jude in *Snowman* (Rumble). FILM/TV: *Murdoch Mysteries*, *The Strain* (FX), *Fringe* (FOX), *Percy Jackson: Lightning Thief* (FOX 2000). TRAINING: Studio 58. ET CETERA: 2 Jessie Awards, several scholarships and nominations. Charlie moonlights as a musician, photographer, dancer, writer, director, and filmmaker. As ever, buoyed and made better by Kate. @charlie_byrd

Bobbi Goddard — Mistress Hibbins

For Theatre Calgary: *Bad Jews*, *The Tempest* (SBTB 2015), *Much Ado About Nothing*. A proudly prairie theatre artist, Bobbi was born in Saskatchewan, raised in Alberta, and is a graduate of the University of Alberta's BFA Acting program, and the Mount Royal Theatre Performance program. She has worked on Alberta stages with Ghost River Theatre, Swallow-a-Bicycle, Catch the Keys, Theatre Network, the Freewill Shakespeare Festival, Concrete Theatre, and more. Bobbi's performance as Daphna in *Bad Jews* garnered her a nomination for a Betty Mitchell Award. When she's not acting, she works as a dialect coach, Shakespeare know-it-all, and watches telenovelas. Up next, you will find Bobbi in Edmonton's Hawrelak Park for the Freewill Shakespeare Festival's 2019 season.



Christopher Hunt



Declan O'Reilly



Kristen Padayas

Christopher Hunt — Roger Chillingworth

For Theatre Calgary: over 40 productions, including: *The Humans* (assistant director), *Twelfth Night*, *The Audience*, *7 Stories*, *Glorious*, *Humble Boy*, *Hay Fever*, *Copenhagen*, *True West*, *Private Lives*, *Memoir*, *The Importance Of Being Earnest*, *Charley's Aunt*, *Amadeus*, *Tartuffe*. Elsewhere: 1979 (Toronto); *Dracula: The Bloody Truth* (Vertigo); *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* (Shakespeare Company/ATP); *Flight Risk* (Lunchbox); *The Goodnight Bird* (Centaur); *Much Ado About Nothing* (Globe). Awards: Eight of Calgary's Betty Mitchell awards, most recently for *Twelfth Night* (Theatre Calgary). Film/Television: *Heartland*, *Caitlin's Way*, *Shanghai Noon*, *You Know My Name*. Upcoming: *Waiting For Godot* with Black Radish Theatre at THE GRAND. He lives in Calgary with his family - Elizabeth, Grady and Arden.

Declan O'Reilly — Governor Bellingham

For Theatre Calgary: *A Christmas Carol* (1991-93, 1996, 2015-18), *The Audience*, *King Lear*, *One Man, Two Guvnors*. Recent Credits: *Much Ado About Nothing* (The Shakespeare Company); *The Lonely Diner* (Vertigo); *Jeeves Takes a Bow* (Chemainus Theatre); *The Skin of Our Teeth*, *Tent Meeting* (Rosebud); *Shakespeare's Rebel* (Bard on the Beach); *Circle Mirror Transformation* (Sage/Shadow Theatre). Declan also appeared at Theatre New Brunswick, The Charlottetown Festival, Young Peoples Theatre (Toronto), Summer at the Roxy, Persephone Theatre, Phoenix Theatre and Lunchbox Theatre. @thedeck69

Kristen Padayas — Pearl

Theatre Calgary debut. Kristen is a mixed-race actor and producer based in Calgary. She is a graduate of Grant MacEwan College's Theatre Arts program and the University of Alberta's Bachelor of Fine Arts Acting program. Select credits include: *Bare: A Pop Opera* (Raw Mango Theatre), *Working it Out* (Alberta Worker's Health Center), *Bone Wars* (Punctuate Theatre), *Apple* (Sage Theatre), *Flight Risk* (Lunchbox Theatre), *Shakespeare's Will* (Thou Art Here Theatre). In 2016, Kristen was nominated for an Elizabeth Sterling Haynes award for Outstanding Achievement in Theatre for Young Audiences for her work in the Sterling award winning production of *Under Cover* produced by Concrete Theatre. She's an artistic associate of Chromatic Theatre & a co-artistic producer with the multi award-winning indie company Impossible Mongoose. Much love to her husband Dan for his endless support. @kristenpadayas



**Heather
Pattengale**



Micheline Chevrier



Judith Bowden

Heather Pattengale — Hester Prynne

For Theatre Calgary: *A Christmas Carol* (2015-18). Acting credits include: *Mark Twain's The Diary of Adam and Eve*, *The Christians*, *The Skin of Our Teeth*, *Outside Mullingar*, *The Last Train to Nibroc*, *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, *Doubt*, *It's A Wonderful Life*, *Our Town*, *My Name is Asher Lev*, *We Won't Pay*, *Mary's Wedding* (Rosebud); *Talley's Folly* (Chemainus); *Kaspar Hauser* (Fireside); *We Are The Body* (Burnt Thicket); *Hamlet* (The Shakespeare Company). Heather has also co-written two plays with friend and collaborator Morris Ertman: *May and Joe* (music and lyrics by Paul Zacharias), and *Mark Twain's The Diary of Adam and Eve*; and produced and created *Kaspar Hauser* with the Fireside Theatre ensemble. Enormous gratitude to Paul Z and little Amelia.

Micheline Chevrier — Director

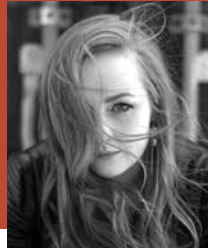
For Theatre Calgary: *The Sisters Rosensweig*, *Hay Fever*. For the past 35 years, Micheline has worked across Canada as a director, artistic director, dramaturg and teacher. As a director, she has worked at such theatres as The Shaw Festival, the National Arts Centre, Theatre Calgary, Alberta Theatre Projects, the Citadel, the Globe Theatre, Manitoba Theatre Centre, Canadian Stage, Young People's Theatre, L'UniThéâtre, the Centaur Theatre, Imago Theatre and Theatre New Brunswick among others. She has also worked abroad with BeMe Productions in both Barcelona and Munich. From 1995 to 2000, she was the Artistic Director of Ottawa's Great Canadian Theatre Company and, since 2013, Micheline has been the Artistic Director of Imago Theatre (Montreal).

Judith Bowden — Set and Costume Design

For Theatre Calgary: *The Great Gatsby*, *The Sisters Rosensweig*, *Dangerous Corner*, *Holiday*, *Berlin to Broadway*, *Cabaret*. Judith has been designing for the past 25 years. Recent set and costume design credits include: *Sense and Sensibility* (Manitoba Theatre Centre), *Paradise Lost* (Stratford Festival), *London Road*, *The Other Place* (Canadian Stage), *Chimerica* (Manitoba Theatre Centre & Canadian Stage), *The Humans* (Citadel & Canadian Stage), and *Grand Hotel*, *Saint Joan*, and *Sweeney Todd* for the Shaw Festival, where she has designed for the past 17 seasons. Recent costume design credits include: *Watch on the Rhine*, *My Fair Lady* and *The Music Man* (Arena Stage, Washington D.C.), *The Changeling* (Stratford Festival). Judith has had the opportunity over the years to work at a number of theatres in Canada including The National Arts Centre, Alberta Theatre Projects, Young Peoples Theatre, The Grand and Pacific Opera Victoria.



Harry Frehner



Allison Lynch



**Cristina
Cugliandro**

Harry Frehner — Lighting Design

For Theatre Calgary: *One Man, Two Guvnors*, *Shirley Valentine*, *Mom's the Word*; *For Crying Out Loud*, *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels*, *Our Town*, *The Cripple of Inishmaan*, *Cabaret*, *Berlin to Broadway*, *Private Lives*, *An Inspector Calls*, *Cyrano de Bergerac*, *Waiting for Godot*, *Hamlet*, *Evita*. Harry is an acclaimed Canadian lighting designer, who calls Calgary home. He has worked coast to coast in Canada and internationally designing productions for dance, opera and theatre.

Allison Lynch — Composer

For Theatre Calgary: Sound Designer/Composer - *As You Like It*, *Romeo and Juliet* (SBTB); Music Director - *A Christmas Carol* (2016-18); Actor - *A Christmas Carol* (2011-18), *The Secret Garden*, *Dear Johnny Deere*, *One Man, Two Guvnors*. Elsewhere as composer: *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* (ATP); *Double Indemnity* (Vertigo); *Benefit, Bone Cage* (Downstage); *Equivocation* (GZT, Shakespeare Company); *Shakespeare's Will* (Sage); *The List*, *Thy Neighbour's Wife*, *It is Solved by Walking*, *The Russian Play* (Betty nomination), *Essay* (Urban Curvz/Handsome Alice); *Adventures of a Black Girl in Search of God* (Ellipses Tree). Her score for *The Penelopiad* (ATP, Betty nominations: score and musical direction) was also performed in Montreal and at Arts Club Vancouver (Jessie Nomination). Allison has three Betty Mitchell Awards for acting and you can see her onstage next as Horatia in The Shakespeare Company's *Hamlet*. Her album *Skin & Flame* is on CD Baby, iTunes and Spotify and was nominated for a YYC music award for Jazz recording of the year. allisonlynchmusic.com

Cristina Cugliandro — Assistant Director

Theatre Calgary debut. Cristina Cugliandro is a theatre director and artistic director of Odd Stumble Theatre in Montreal. She is a design-based director and therefore works intimately with designers and performers to create a visual, coherent, dynamic, and visceral journey for audiences. She is also committed to artist development and event curation. Cristina is thrilled to be working with this incredible team on *The Scarlet Letter*. Selected credits: *Elsewhere* (Odd Stumble/Imago Theatre 2017/19), *Archipelago* (Odd Stumble/Rialto Theatre 2018), *Possible Worlds* (Bishops' University 2017), *What Happened After Nora Left Her Husband* (Imago Theatre 2017), *In Search of Mrs. Pirandello* (Centaur Theatre Wildside Festival 2016). She is a Master's graduate of The Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts and Birkbeck University in London, England.



Jane MacFarlane



Karl H. Sine



Emma Brager

Jane MacFarlane — Voice Coach

For Theatre Calgary: More than 45 productions since 2000 including *Mary and Max A New Musical*, *Honour Beat*, *The Secret Garden*, *Twelfth Night*, *Blow Wind High Water*, *The Audience*, *Skylight*, *Bad Jews*, *The Crucible*, *Liberation Days* (WCT co-pro), *One Man, Two Guvnors*, *The Mountaintop*, *Enron*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, seven seasons of Shakespeare by the Bow and 15 years of *A Christmas Carol*. Jane has also worked for ATP, is the Voice & Dialect Consultant for Vertigo Theatre and the Voice & Text Coach for The Shakespeare Company. She has taught at such institutions as York University, Harvard University, Southern Methodist University, MRU, UofC, and UofA.

Karl H. Sine — Fight Director

For Theatre Calgary: Actor – *A Christmas Carol* (2011, 2013-18), *The Crucible*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *Enron*, *Much Ado About Nothing*. Fight Director (selected) – *As You Like It*, *Hamlet*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *Romeo and Juliet* (Shakespeare by the Bow); *King Lear* (Bard on the Beach co-pro), *Liberation Days* (WCT co-pro). Selected Actor – *Sherlock Holmes and the Case of the Jersey Lily*, *The Hound of the Baskervilles* (Vertigo); *Macbeth*, *Equivocation*, *Othello* (The Shakespeare Company). Selected Fight Director – *Macbeth*, *Romeo & Juliet*, *Equivocation*, *Othello* (The Shakespeare Company); *I'll be Back Before Midnight*, *The Game's Afoot* (Vertigo). Karl has received four Betty Mitchell Awards – three for Fight Direction and Best Actor for *The Crucible*. Karl is a Certified Fight Director with the Academy of Fight Directors Canada. Thanks to Lindsey and their wonderful kids Olivia, Charlie and Zachary.

Emma Brager — Stage Manager

Select Theatre Calgary credits include: *Mary and Max A New Musical*, *Sisters: The Belles Soeurs Musical* (Segal Centre), *Crazy for You* (Citadel co-pro), *King Lear*, *Mary Poppins* (Citadel co-pro), *A Christmas Carol* (2008-14), *The Kite Runner* (Citadel co-pro), *Cats*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *The Comedy of Errors* (Shakespeare by the Bow), *Romeo and Juliet* (Shakespeare in the Park). Other credits include: *ZORRO: Family Code*, *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike*, *Venus in Fur*, *The Motherf**ker with the Hat* (ATP); *August: Osage County*, *Death of a Salesman* (Citadel); *Undercover*, *The Hollow* (Vertigo); *Blind Date* (Spontaneous Theatre/WCT). Emma would like to thank her family for keeping the home fires burning, and her husband Eric for everything!



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Justin Born



Alixandra
Cowman



Jay Northcott

Justin Born — Assistant Stage Manager

For Theatre Calgary: *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, *Skylight*, *The Crucible*, *The Philadelphia Story*, *The Great Gatsby*. Elsewhere (selected): *Dracula: The Bloody Truth*, *The Lonely Diner*, *The Hollow*, *Calamity Town*, *The Game's Afoot*, *The Huron Bride* (Vertigo); *Mickey & Judy*, *Epiphany*, *The Santaland Diaries* (Lunchbox); *To The Light*, *Venus in Fur* (ATP); *Jeremy de Bergerac*, *Maria Rasputin Presents* (Forte); *The Diary of Anne Frank*, *Tuesday's with Morrie*, *Queen Millie of Galt*, *Mary's Wedding* (Rosebud Theatre); *The Canadian Badlands Passion Play* (2010 – 2014); Production Services Coordinator of Calgary Stampede Grandstand Show (2015 – 2019). Love to Ariel, Mom, Dad, and Lucy.

Alixandra Cowman — TC Mentors - Sound Design

Theatre Calgary debut. Sound design credits include *Kodachrome* (Fire Exit), *Bright Lights* (Theatre BSMT), *Helen* (Ignite), and *Still Stands The House* (Wick Productions). Alixandra also works as an actor, and will next be appearing in the Canadian premiere of *Bright Star* at Rosebud Theatre. Alixandra is a member of bluegrass-folk duo The Dearhearts, with whom she has released two albums and toured across North America. Alixandra wishes to thank her family and Conrad for their constant love and support in every wild thing she does.

Jay Northcott — TC Mentors - Directing

Theatre Calgary debut. Ever since Jay was a child they always wanted to change the world. Sadly, they didn't develop any world-saving superhuman abilities, so Jay fell in love with making art. Jay is a multidisciplinary director, playwright, puppet maker, solo performer and advocate for racialized and marginalized artists. They are a graduate of the BFA Performance program from the University of Lethbridge and has recently relocated to Toronto! Jay is super happy to be back in Calgary and create this fascinating show with Micheline. Favorite directing credits include: *Iphigenia and the Furies* (on Taurian Land) (Saga Collectif), *Sweat* (The Arts Club), *The Cows* (Theatre Junction), *Girls!Girls!Girls!*, *City of the Broken* (TheatreXtra). Acting credits: *Premium Content* (Major Matt Mason), *The Listening Room* (Cardiac Theatre) *Saddest Dance Party Ever*, *Light Skin Dark Skin* (Swallow-A-Bicycle). @Nervousshypwreck

Special Thanks & Acknowledgements

Heath Kai, Armour Equipment

Luigi Fiore, Peroni

Frank and Gabriele Lynch

Slot 5: The Curation of *The Scarlet Letter*

By Jenna Turk, Artistic Associate

As Artistic Associate, I have the pleasure and privilege of assisting Artistic Director Stafford Arima in season programming. This process is a continuous one where we will be simultaneously curating works for the next season as well as several years ahead of time. While season selection is an inherently artistic practice (choosing pieces that will aesthetically wow an audience with the set, the costumes, the music), it is also an emotional one (the productions will hopefully impact an audience at their core and leave them laughing or crying, or both), and it is absolutely a logistical puzzle too (do all shows in the season fit together, are the right artists available at the right time, and how do these works adhere to our mandate?). The task is complex, but can be extremely fulfilling.

Sometimes in the process, the season seems to be all lined up – ready to be announced, when all of sudden it's not. Inevitably things change, and they change for a great variety of reasons: We lost the rights, the director is no longer available, the actor is no longer available, everyone is no longer available, etcetera, etcetera. Subsequently, we must select a new show. In my brief experience with Theatre Calgary (I have been in my position since October 2016), each year, there has been a necessitated change. And, each year that change has been for the better. This season, that change led to the striking production of *The Scarlet Letter* you are about to see.

When charged with finding a new “Slot 5” show, Stafford, Producer Lesley MacMillan, and I set to work. Yes, we do have lists of shows

and shelves full of scripts we have considered previously and hope to produce one day, but generally when faced with fitting one show into an otherwise complete season, we are looking for something a little more particular. We are working within a certain budget, within a specific time of year, and within a season that already exists.

One of the criteria for “Slot 5” this season was our desire to have a literary adaptation. Plays based on books have a history of doing well at Theatre Calgary: They are recognizable, attract a wide audience, and assuredly tell a strong story. Truthfully, I was also interested in finding a play that featured women in leading roles as we have so many phenomenal women-identified actors in the city craving challenging parts, besides the season as-is was a little male-centric with *BOOM X* and *Billy Elliot* rounding out the second half of the year. As Artistic Associate, it is always my hope that we are equitable. Furthermore, our core patron-base is women aged 45+ who love the arts – and that same group LOVES to read.



Theatre Calgary's shelves full of scripts.

The fall before I arrived at TC, *The Crucible* was beautifully brought to the Max Bell stage under the direction of R.H. Thomson. It was a great success for Theatre Calgary, and oh how I wish I could have seen it! Reviewing past productions sometimes gives me ideas for future productions, and looking through archival photos of *The Crucible* set me thinking along a certain path. I was quickly reminded of *The*

Scarlet Letter – Nathaniel Hawthorne’s striking 1850 novel about the unforgettable protagonist, Hester Prynne (she’s been dubbed “the first true heroine of American fiction”). Set in the 17th century, in Puritan Massachusetts, this instant bestseller (it was one of the first books mass-produced in America) tackles themes of shame and stigma, love and guilt, and dignity and repentance (no small task). Last winter, when we were searching for “Slot 5”, women’s rights were top of mind and those themes seemed eerily on point. That fall, the Harvey Weinstein sexual assault allegations had been reported by both The New York Times and The New Yorker, women had united online in support of victims everywhere with the hashtag #MeToo, and the second annual Women’s March was on the horizon.

Now, I tend not to be a fan of “issue” plays, shows that are so focussed on getting their message across that the story is neglected or worse – forgotten altogether. I believe the audience is smarter than we often think, they are more than capable (and it is all the more satisfying for them) to put the pieces together themselves, to connect the dots in a period play to the themes of today. I think that is why shows like *The Crucible* endure. Hawthorne’s *The Scarlet Letter* seemed like the perfect story for Theatre Calgary to tell, the question was: Which version to choose?

This work of historical fiction has long resonated in popular culture, inspiring over fifteen film adaptations, as well as countless references in literature, TV, opera, and the theatre. Folks may remember the 1995 box-office flop starring Demi Moore, some younger audiences may have heard its inspiration in *multiple* Taylor Swift songs, and the hard-core theatre lovers may have been reminded of the classic story when American playwright Susan Lori Parks turned it on its head in *F*cking A* – which was most recently seen Off-Broadway in 2017. However, in reviewing adaptations, I was quickly drawn to the Phyllis Nagy version.

Nagy is an exceptional writer and well-known for her stage adaptations, however she is perhaps most famous for the film *Carol* for which she

was nominated for an Academy Award for Best Adapted Screenplay (the film starred Cate Blanchett). Nagy's adaptation of *The Scarlet Letter* was commissioned for the Denver Centre Theater Company in 1994, and subsequently opened in New York later that year in a production by the Classic Stage Company featuring Cynthia Nixon as the bearer of the 'A', Hester Prynne (this was just prior to her television fame via *Sex and the City* and almost 25 years before her gubernatorial run in NY). In the New York Times' review, Ben Brantley said, "in Ms. Nagy's interpretation...symbols, subtext and contemporary correspondences are scaled up in a way that calls nudging attention to form as well as content." This play has a very particular aesthetic. It is dark and sexy, and full of metaphor. This is not an easy text. It will challenge its audience, and therefore requires a smart director.



Hester, Pearl, and Mistress Hibbins costume sketches by Judith Bowden.

In selecting Nagy's adaptation of *The Scarlet Letter* for "Slot 5", Stafford, Lesley, and I quickly knew we wanted Micheline Chevrier at its helm. She is one of Canada's most accomplished directors, having previously directed at the National Arts Centre, the Shaw Festival, and the Great Canadian Theatre Company in Ottawa (where she was Artistic Director from 1995 to 2000 – during my formative years growing up there), as well as at Theatre Calgary (*Hay Fever*

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and *The Sisters Rosensweig*) among others. Chevrier is currently based in Montreal where she is the Artistic and Executive Director of Imago Theatre whose mission is to be “a catalyst for conversation, an advocate for equal representation and a hub for stories about unstoppable women.” Doesn’t she sound like the perfect fit?

Fortunately, she said yes. “Slot 5” was set with a killer script from Phyllis Nagy (featuring three juicy roles for women) and a fierce director in Micheline Chevrier (who has chosen a design team to die for). From a curatorial perspective this play works logistically, but please know it is my sincere hope that *The Scarlet Letter*’s artistry wows you and that its emotional core moves you this season – that the production, like the task, is complex, but extremely fulfilling.



Micheline Chevrier directs Heather Pattengale, Paul Cowling, and Kristen Padayas in Theatre Calgary’s rehearsal hall.

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— Spotlight on CORPORATE PARTNERSHIPS - SHAKESPEARE BY THE BOW

Tell me a bit about Norton Rose Fulbright's history with the theatre.

Over the last 25 years, a number of our lawyers have been on Theatre Calgary's Board of Directors. We always attend the annual gala, and more recently, have begun sponsoring young actors through the summer favourite, Shakespeare by the Bow.

Why has Norton Rose Fulbright chosen to partner with Theatre Calgary?

Theatre Calgary brings Calgarians together. For our firm, experiencing the arts with our families and our clients is a great way to strengthen relationships and also expand our creative boundaries.

How do you plan to use the benefits you receive from this partnership?

We believe the best theatre experience is shared with clients, families, friends and colleagues. We love Shakespeare by the Bow and the annual program and look forward to both.

How do you think Theatre Calgary benefits from corporate partnerships?

We hope that partnering with local businesses provides Theatre Calgary with an opportunity to expand your patronage and build longstanding relationships that help support your vision and mission; financially and through knowledge sharing.

Do you see value in a program that's designed to develop and nurture up-and-coming artists in our community?

Yes. We see tremendous value in programs designed to nurture those starting out, whether they are artists, lawyers or otherwise. It is indicative of an organization's investment in excellence when the learning, development and mentorship of its people is a priority. People thrive in environments where they feel supported, challenged, and where they know they play a meaningful and valuable role. When people are thriving, they are also happy and high performing. Opportunities for mentorship, to take risks, to learn and to grow create situations that encourage the development of interesting and accomplished individuals.

What benefits are there from the pay-what-you-will performances offered in the gorgeous natural setting of Prince's Island Park?

Pay-what-you-will performances offer accessibility for guests and, because of the casual nature of the experience, present a sometimes intimidating art form in a very approachable way.

What impact do you think not having corporate support would have on our organization?

We place tremendous value in the work that Theatre Calgary is doing to stimulate, provoke and delight the hearts and minds of Calgarians. We're thrilled Theatre Calgary continues to enrich our city.

What would you like to say to other businesses to encourage them to support the arts in this city?

A vibrant art scene is capable of inspiring the next generation of creative thinkers. We view our support of the arts as an opportunity to foster innovation in Calgary, and we encourage other businesses to do the same.

Saluting our Corporate Partners

Calgary's remarkable, vibrant arts and culture sector is made possible by support from our partners like Norton Rose Fulbright. Partners play a vital part in our world, enabling us to produce art in Calgary and build our city into a great place to be.

We love our partners and how they help us execute our dreams for theatre in Calgary. At the same time we help our partners realise their visions for community building and supporting the arts. Together we are building a great city to live in.

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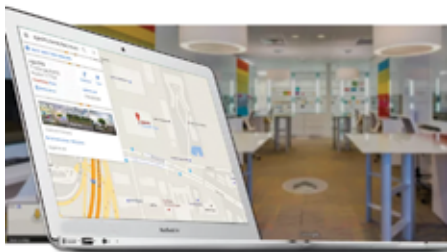


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