

# UPSTAGE

A GREAT PLACE TO READ ABOUT GREAT THEATRE

**Belfry**  
Theatre

VOLUME 3 / ISSUE 2



*WE ARE  
STARDUST,  
WE ARE  
GOLDEN*

# Hello!

Welcome to the Belfry and the premiere production of *I Think I'm Fallin' - The Songs of Joni Mitchell*, created by Michael Shamata and Tobin Stokes.

Joni's contributions to the world of music are legendary – she's crossed folk, pop and jazz borders, working and recording with some of the best in each genre. You're probably humming one of her songs right now.

"She's a better poet than Dylan and without question a far better musician. I don't think there's anybody who can touch her. James Taylor comes close, but I think it's her, and I don't think the record companies ever realized that or have known what the story was."

David Crosby

Her artistry continues to inspire a new generation of artists, and we're sure you'll share in the joy of her music for the first time or all over again.



**SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 5 AT 11 AM**

Belfry Theatre, Studio A, 1291 Gladstone Avenue

Free Event. Join us in Studio A for a live talk show hosted by CBC Radio's Gregor Craigie, featuring creators Michael Shamata and Tobin Stokes, actor Evangelia Kambites, teacher and musician Robert Holliston and singer / songwriter Kathryn Calder (pictured below).

If you can't make it to B4Play in person, don't worry: you can listen to these always entertaining interviews on our website or listen to our podcasts at [soundcloud.com/belfrytheatre](http://soundcloud.com/belfrytheatre).

Tracey Power and Gregor Craigie - Photo by Emily Cooper



**BELFRY THEATRE**  
**1291 GLADSTONE AVENUE**  
**VICTORIA, BC**  
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**WWW.BELFRY.BC.CA**



**UPSTAGE** is produced four times per year and can be

found at branches of the Greater Victoria Public Library, the Belfry and online at [issuu.com/belfrytheatre](http://issuu.com/belfrytheatre). If you would like a digital copy please drop us a line at [hello@belfry.bc.ca](mailto:hello@belfry.bc.ca).

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*I Think I'm Fallin' - The Songs of Joni Mitchell* is generously supported by



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# MY LIFE WITH JONI

MUSICAL MAN

ABOUT TOWN

ROBERT HOLLISTON

ON THE MAGIC OF

JONI MITCHELL



## Story Highlights

Joni's song *Both Sides Now* has been covered by over 1100 artists.

Last season Jonathan Gould starred in *Chelsea Hotel* and Anton Lipovetsky starred in *A Christmas Carol*. Brent Jarvis, Evangelia Kambites and Linda Kidder are all making their Belfry debuts in *I Think I'm Fallin'*.

Joni has been nominated for 16 Grammy Awards, won 9, and was inducted into the Grammy Hall of Fame in 1999.

I REMEMBER MANY THINGS ABOUT LIFE DURING THE SUMMER OF 1979: preparing my move to Vancouver as a full-time UBC music student; working during the day at the Inter-Cultural Association (and during the evenings for what is now Pacific Opera Victoria); practicing (when time allowed) and partying (time always allowed). And most of all haunting our local record store daily, waiting for the release of Joni Mitchell's newest album, *Mingus*. I remember the day it arrived: I bought the vinyl album (for home), the cassette (for work), and the new issue of *Rolling Stone* which had a photo of Joni on the cover and the (now-legendary) interview with Cameron Crowe inside. Went back to work, shut the door, sat at my desk, listened and read. Was baffled a bit by the melodies, lyrics, and sound - at first. But by the third listening was absorbed, impressed, entranced, astonished, still maybe a bit baffled but starting to sing along. It occurred to me then that perhaps no artist in the history of popular music had gone through so

many changes, explored so many styles - and done all of it so convincingly, so beautifully, so well - in so brief a span as a mere decade.

My introduction to Joni Mitchell came about in junior high school when I got to know her third album, *Ladies of the Canyon*. Of course I knew a few songs from the earlier records, but only tangentially, and probably in recordings by Judy Collins (note to potential Joni fans: it's a rite of passage to learn to prefer Joni's recordings of her early material to anybody else's). I loved that album and knew every song by heart, but other musical interests took over and that was that, which means that such iconic releases as *Blue* and *Court and Spark* more or less passed me by. For a while ...

Full Joni fandom struck in the summer of 1978, when a friend introduced me to *Miles of Aisles*, Joni's first live album. As I could afford them, I bought all the others, listened closely and really

got to know her songs, lyrically and musically. And as I wanted to know about this multifariously gifted human being, I read as much as I could find about her.

The revelation of hearing, within a span of one summer, *Blue, For the Roses*, and *Court and Spark* is something I can't adequately describe: this was songwriting, singing, and music making at the highest possible level, but as sophisticated as it was, it was also moving. I mean solar plexus, emotionally moving.

By the mid-1970s, Joni was using more sidemen in her recordings, some of them culled from a local group known as L.A. Express (her accompanying band on *Miles of Aisles*). Individually they enlivened and enriched the sound of the above-mentioned albums as well as Joni's first live release, but writers and critics were confused. Was this jazz? Was it still pop? Was a former folkie becoming too "L.A.?" How are we supposed to choose a category for someone who keeps changing??

The 1975 release of *The Hissing of Summer Lawns* established once and forever that Joni Mitchell was an artist who answered to nobody. Lyrically, her subject matter seemed to move from personal revelation to social commentary. Musically, she continued to explore new sounds and different genres, most strikingly using a recording of the African Drummers of Burundi many years before "world music" began influencing California-based pop music. Joni's follow-up album, *Hejira*, usually ranks higher in the overall popularity stakes, and it's a magnificent achievement in an entirely different, and different sounding, way. For the first time since *Clouds* (1969) there were no piano songs, and the familiar players in the back-up band were now

joined by the iconic bassist Jaco Pastorius, who, along with Joni's own guitar sound, most defined this album's unique sound-world.

And then there's *Don Juan's Reckless Daughter*. In my opinion, you can't be a Joni fan if you don't love this album. (OK, you can, but I'll never stop trying to convert you.) Among the back-up players on *Don Juan* we encounter for the first time in Joni's work the name Wayne Shorter of *Weather Report*. Almost 40 years on, I LOVE this very daring, also very polished album. Much reviled at the time, *Don Juan* caught the attention of the great jazz bassist Charles Mingus.

[Long before the release of *Don Juan's Reckless Daughter*, Joni was talking about the influence of jazz musicians on her work: Miles Davis, of course, but also Billie Holiday and Edith Piaf.]

So, back to the summer of 1979. A small notice in the Victoria Daily Times that I almost missed: Joni Mitchell at the Pacific Coliseum. September 2, 1979 – a show that has now been immortalized on an album (called by *Rolling Stone* "one of a half dozen or so truly great live rock albums") and a video: *Shadows and Light*. Opening the concert was the *a cappella* vocal group The Persuasions, and Joni was backed by a now-legendary band: Jaco Pastorius, Pat Metheny, Lyle Mays, Michael Brecker, Don Alias. I've heard Joni live twice since then but this concert was and remains one of the top five concert experiences in a lifetime of concert-going. And a great way for Joni Mitchell to cap a decade of extraordinary musical evolution. ▲

*Robert Holliston is Head of Keyboards at the Victoria Conservatory of Music and is Curator of Public Engagement at Pacific Opera Victoria. He taught The Life and Career of Joni Mitchell for the University of Victoria's Continuing Studies.*

## Cast & Creatives



**Jonathan Gould**  
(ACTOR / MUSICIAN)



**Brent Jarvis**  
(MUSICIAN)



**Evangelia Kambites**  
(ACTOR / MUSICIAN)



**Linda Kidder**  
(ACTOR / MUSICIAN)



**Anton Lipovetsky**  
(ACTOR / ASSISTANT  
MUSICAL DIRECTOR)



**Michael Shamata**  
(CONCEPT / DIRECTOR)



**Tobin Stokes**  
(MUSICAL DIRECTOR)



**Cory Sincennes**  
(DESIGNER)



**Alan Brodie**  
(LIGHTING DESIGNER)



**Laura Krewski**  
(CHOREOGRAPHER)



**Deborah Williams**  
(ASSISTANT DIRECTOR)



**Paul Tedeschini**  
(SOUND DESIGNER)



**Amy Jewell**  
(STAGE MANAGER)



**Christopher Sibbald**  
(ASSISTANT STAGE  
MANAGER)

## Why I Chose This Play

When I first designed this season of plays, it included a work by American playwright Sarah Ruhl. It's a very good play, which is why I programmed it. They were all very good plays, and yet I was not feeling totally comfortable with the overall mix; I felt there was a colour missing from the season I had planned.

Following the 40th Anniversary Season, which had included *Chelsea Hotel* and *Puttin' on the Ritz*, I realized that music was the element that I was missing. Out went Sarah Ruhl; in went Joni Mitchell, and we suddenly had a season of all-Canadian writers.

The choice of Joni Mitchell was extremely easy. I had put together a season of plays by women, so a female songwriter made sense. A Canadian female songwriter made even more sense. A writer of the calibre of Joni Mitchell made the most sense. Her lyrics are exceptional: complex, full of quirks and surprises, and at the same time, completely recognizable and easy to relate to. Her music is equally outstanding: melodious, confident, multi-layered, and able to insinuate its way into your soul.

To be honest – I had flirted with a Joni Mitchell show early on in the planning stages. However, as the piece that I was considering centred on many of her more obscure songs, and proudly avoided the more popular ones, I decided that it wasn't right for us. Thus, when I circled around and came back to Joni Mitchell, the decision was taken to create a new piece especially for the Belfry.

That decision led naturally – and happily – to a collaboration with the remarkable composer and musical director Tobin Stokes, and an unparalleled cast of actor/singer/musicians. Together we have put onstage a world of love and longing, joy and heartbreak, using only Joni Mitchell's stunning words and music.

**MICHAEL SHAMATA**, Artistic Director

## LIVE EVENTS

Throughout *I Think I'm Fallin' - The Songs of Joni Mitchell* we'll host a number of events that will deepen your experience or just plain astound you.

### AFTERPLAY

Facilitated discussions – audience member to audience member – following every evening performance of *I Think I'm Fallin' - The Songs of Joni Mitchell* (except Opening Night and Talkback Thursday). These are a great opportunity to share your thoughts and hear how fellow patrons reacted to the show.

### TALKBACK THURSDAY

**THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 17**

Meet the actors from *I Think I'm Fallin' - The Songs of Joni Mitchell* post-performance when they return to the stage to answer questions and provide insight into the play.

### VOCAL EYE

**SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 27 AT 2 PM**

For our patrons with low or no vision, we offer a VocalEye performance during *I Think I'm Fallin' - The Songs of Joni Mitchell*. Trained Audio Describers provide descriptions of the visual elements of the show, allowing people with low vision to enjoy the theatrical experience without missing any of the details.

## Belfry Librarian

The wonderful librarians from the Greater Victoria Public Library have compiled a list of books to help you get even more out of our production of *I Think I'm Fallin' - The Songs of Joni Mitchell*.

***The Fiddle And The Drum*** [DVD Video] by Joni Mitchell

***Gathered Light: The Poetry Of Joni Mitchell's Songs***  
by Lisa and John Sornberger

***Girls Like Us: Carole King, Joni Mitchell, And Carly Simon—  
And The Journey Of A Generation*** by Sheila Weller

***Joni: The Creative Odyssey Of Joni Mitchell*** by Katherine Monk

***Joni Mitchell: In Her Own Words*** by Joni Mitchell

***Shadows And Light: Joni Mitchell*** by Karen O'Brien

***Woman Of Heart And Mind [DVD Video]: Joni Mitchell :  
A Life Story*** by Susan Lacy

***The Words And Music Of Joni Mitchell*** by James Bennighof

***The Road to Woodstock*** by Michael Lang and  
Holly George-Warren

Compiled by Sarah Isbister, Public Service Librarian,  
Greater Victoria Public Library



# The Beauty of Philanthropy



## Some patrons have understandably asked: “So which campaign should I contribute to this year: the Annual Fund or the Capital Campaign?”

If you are a Belfry donor, subscriber or regular patron, you may soon find a letter in the post, asking you to consider making a donation. Annual contributions directly support our productions and are a critical part of the quality onstage you see each year. We have also launched a capital campaign this year to make further improvements to our heritage home, increasing the comfort and service we can provide you. Some patrons have understandably asked: “So which campaign should I contribute to this year: the Annual Fund or the Capital Campaign?”

Our answer is a cheeky “Both!” We are asking you, our supporters, to please keep up your annual support so we can continue to produce great theatre, including hiring and housing guest artists, and building those amazing sets. We don’t want to raise funds for the building renovations at the expense of the art.

If you can make an additional one-time gift to the capital campaign at any point over the next 10 months, we would be most grateful. The government of Canada has committed \$340,000 to our capital project and we need to raise the balance of the funds, so any contribution you make is matched by the government’s commitment and is very important to complete our improvements.

If you have not yet been a Belfry donor, or it’s been awhile since you have been, it’s a great season to consider a meaningful gift. We are

delighted to be receiving first-time donations from new friends as well as family foundations. Mavis De Girolamo is a long-time supporter and contributor to both campaigns for the following reasons:

*The Belfry is so marvelous in terms of its productions; it is a great place to come to enjoy quality performances. I like to feel I am contributing to an arts community that exemplifies diversity and inclusion.*

Of course, it’s entirely up to you whether you wish to support one or both campaigns. That’s the beauty of philanthropy: you get to decide when and how and what motivates you most to give. And you really can’t go wrong either way, because all the donations go to your beloved Belfry Theatre.

We offer some attractive benefits at all levels to our annual member donors, and we encourage monthly pledges as an affordable way to give. Donations to the capital campaign have recognition benefits at most giving levels, and naming opportunities are available around the building as incentives for larger gifts.

Thanks a million for your support!

For further information on benefits, donation levels and recognition, pick up our Donor Program and Capital Campaign brochures in the lobby or contact Susan Stevenson, Development Manager or Judi James, Capital Campaign Coordinator 250-385-6835 or at [development@belfry.bc.ca](mailto:development@belfry.bc.ca).

Above: Oliver Becker and Celine Stubel, *The Last Wife* · Photo by Emily Cooper

# Calendar



## I Think I'm Fallin' – The Songs of Joni Mitchell

### PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE

**November 8 - December 4, 2016**

Tuesdays – Thursdays at 7:30 pm

Wednesday Matinees at 1 pm  
(November 16, 23 and 30)

Fridays + Saturdays at 8 pm

Saturday Matinees at 4 pm

Sunday Matinees at 2 pm

### Audience Engagement Schedule

**B4PLAY** · Saturday, November 5 at 11 am

**TALKBACK THURSDAY** · November 17

**AFTERPLAY** · Following most  
evening performances

**VOCALEYE** · Described performance  
Sunday, November 27 at 2 pm

## How to buy tickets

**By telephone**  
250 385 6815

Please have your credit card ready, as well as the date and time of the performance you wish to attend.

**Online**  
Visit [belfry.bc.ca/tickets](http://belfry.bc.ca/tickets)

and buy your tickets online, anytime.

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Drop by our Box Office.

We accept Visa, Mastercard, American Express, debit card, cheques, and, of course, cash.



## Thank you!

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### FINE WINE DONORS

We gratefully acknowledge the donations of fine wine from the individuals and restaurants that are recognized in the live auction catalogue lot descriptions. Your generous contributions to Crush help ensure the continued success of our wonderful theatre. Thank you.

### VINEYARDS AT

#### TASTING TABLES

Thank you to all the vineyards and agents for your generous participation.

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Volcanic Hills Estate Winery  
Plus Sea Cider Farm & Ciderhouse

### SILENT AUCTION DONORS

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Hoynes Brewing  
Inn at Laurel Point  
Le Soleil Executive Hotel  
Moon Under Water Brewpub  
Vaughn McColl  
Richard Mosselman,  
landscape consultant  
Moxie's Bar & Grill  
Patricia O'Brien  
Pacific Opera Victoria  
Patisserie Daniel

Joan Peggs  
Phillips Brewing  
Pizzeria Prima Strada  
PuSh International Performing  
Arts Festival  
Jennifer Roberts Florist  
The Roost Farm Winery  
Sheringham Distillery  
Silk Road Tea  
Smuggler's Cove  
Spinnakers Brewpub  
and Guesthouse  
Stage Small Plates Wine Bar  
Paddy Stewart  
Vancouver International  
Wine Festival  
Victoria Wine Festival  
The Whole Beast  
Joe Wiebe  
As well as all the vineyards  
listed above.

### SPECIAL THANKS TO

Ame De Paoli; Croy & Company Stage  
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N Puff; Avril Matthews, Jennifer Scigliano,  
Executive Chef Takashi Ito, and the  
wonderful team at the Inn at Laurel Point;  
Opimian Society; Treehouse Media; SW  
Audio+Visual; Victoria Wine Festival.

### BELFRY THEATRE CRUSH VOLUNTEER COMMITTEE

Monty Bryant, Josh Clark, Scott  
Cumming, Ame De Paoli, Paddy Stewart,  
Roshan Vickery and wine vignettes  
writer Robert Moyes.

Up Next

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