

Live News Story 1 – Jorja’s Album Release Show

Written by Lyra Brown

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EDMONTON — A bustling Wednesday night crowd filled The Aviary as local artist Jorja Polischuk launched her new album *Showtunes*. Backed by a full band and a room buzzing with laughter, the performance felt less like a small venue showcase and more like a Broadway debut.

The show also reflects Edmonton’s post-pandemic resurgence in live performance, with artists and audiences eager to reconnect through ambitious, Broadway-level productions.

Jorja acknowledged the nerves early, telling the audience, “I couldn’t decide if I wanted to cry or throw up backstage, but now I’m out here with my amazing band and we’re gonna play some songs for you tonight.” The crowd responded with cheers.

The eclectic setlist spanned contemporary and classic musical theatre — from *Parade* and *The Bridges of Madison County* to crowd favourites like *Beetlejuice*, *Waitress*, and *Wicked*. Each number was introduced with humour, backstory, or personal reflection, giving the audience an intimate connection to songs many already knew by heart.

One highlight came when Jorja sang *What Is This Feeling?* from *Wicked* with a longtime friend she met in MacEwan’s Theatre Arts program, drawing laughter and applause for their playful back-and-forth.

Some choices carried political resonance. Introducing *Cabaret*’s “*Maybe This Time*,” Jorja told the audience, “Cabaret is just politically and morally so important. I love it. And the music from it is fantastic.” Later, her voice soared through *Beetlejuice*’s *Dead Mom*, a role she admitted she aspires to: “Lydia is one of my dream roles... but for now, I’ll just sing *Dead Mom* for you.”

The emotional centre of the night came during *Waitress*’s “*She Used to Be Mine*,” a song Jorja framed with the character’s struggle to escape an abusive marriage. She walked the crowd through the setup and quoted the album’s lead-in: “Dear baby, if you ever wanna know the story of how you got your crib, it was bought with the money that I was going to use to buy us a new life.”

Near the close of the evening, Jorja paid tribute to Stephen Sondheim with a medley from *Into the Woods*. “Over the years, I have come to revel in his work. I’m so inspired by it. It’s beautiful, it’s touching — these songs are some of the most well-written in musical theatre,” she said.

Audience members echoed the enthusiasm. Emma Ryan, a friend and fellow theatre lover, called the project “an awesome initiative” that brings together Jorja’s passion for both music engineering and musical theatre. Alex McDonald, who studied alongside Jorja in MacEwan’s Music Program, praised her talent: “She has the most incredible vocals I’ve ever encountered. I’m so excited to hear her nail these musical theatre songs.”

From backstage nerves to a standing ovation, Jorja's *Showtunes* debut underscored that Broadway-level storytelling can thrive on an Edmonton stage — and that local artists are driving the city's cultural resurgence.

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The Aviary was filled with a lively Wednesday night crowd ahead of Jorja Polischuk's *Showtunes* release.



Local artist Jorja Polischuk takes centre stage at The Aviary, debuting her album *Showtunes* with soaring vocals.



Polischuk performs “*What Is This Feeling?*” with a longtime friend she met in MacEwan’s Theatre Arts program.



Backed by her full band, Jorja's arrangements blended rich instrumental layers with theatrical vocals.



Jorja closes the night with a passionate finale that brings the crowd to its feet.

All photos by Lyra Brown

Source List

- Jorja Polischuk (performer) – jorjapolischuk@gmail.com | [@jorjapolischuk](#)
- Randi Gallipeau (pianist, band member) – randigallipeau@gmail.com | [@rannders](#)
- Emma Ryan (audience member)
- Alex McDonald (audience member)