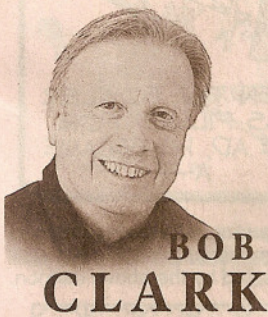




Courtesy, Couvrette Photography

Critically acclaimed soloists Daniel Bolshoy and Julie Nesrallah join forces for a Spanish-tinged show at the Epcor Centre tonight.

# Sizzlin' start to summer



## BOB CLARK

The Classical Guitar Society of Calgary celebrates the conclusion of its 30th season with a young Canadian couple who are rapidly gaining national prominence both as soloists and partners in song.

Meet the Nesrallah-Bolshoy Duo — mezzo-soprano Julie Nesrallah and guitarist Daniel Bolshoy.

Nesrallah has garnered critical acclaim as a soloist with celebrated ensembles ranging from the Montreal Symphony and National Arts Centre Orchestras to the St. Lawrence String Quartet and the tango ensemble Quartango; while Bolshoy, a prizewinner in eight guitar competitions, has been featured in concerts and recitals across Canada.

As a duo, they have performed frequently at Canadian music festivals as well as on national radio and television.

The pair met at the 2001 Ottawa Chamber Music Festival, Bolshoy recalls. The guitarist was preparing a recital of Spanish music and wanted to add Seven Spanish Songs by Manuel de Falla to his program.

"Julie was a very well-known opera singer around Ottawa, and so they suggested we do it together — and we found the combination worked really well," Bolshoy says.

"Since then, we have put together many Spanish and Latin programs, just like the one we're going to do in Calgary."

The Nesrallah-Bolshoy program at the Epcor Centre's Engineered Air Theatre tonight includes songs by Enrique Granados and the Argentinian composer Carlos Guastavino, as well as the aforementioned

songs by de Falla and transcriptions by Bolshoy himself of five Cuban songs by Xavier Montsalvatge.

Also on the program are solo guitar pieces and vocal selections from Bizet's opera, *Carmen*.

An interesting sidelight on the duo: The Ottawa-born Nesrallah is of Lebanese descent, while Bolshoy was raised in Israel.

"It's a collaboration that would be very hard to make happen in the Middle East," Bolshoy says.

The guitarist points out that the Israeli embassy in Ottawa, recently picking up on the couple's Arab-Jewish background, has arranged a Middle Eastern concert tour for the duo.

"The fact we're doing good work together here is sending a positive message back there," Bolshoy says. "And we like that idea very much."

The Classical Guitar Society of Calgary begins at 8 p.m. Tickets: \$20, \$12 students/seniors/members.

Two of the Bard's funniest comedies and one of today's funniest comedies about all of the Bard's plays will likely have audiences rocking as well as rolling in the grass this summer at Prince's Island Park.

Mount Royal College's Shakespeare in the Park (SITP) will present *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Much Ado About Nothing* starting in July, followed by *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (Abridged)* in August.

The plays' well-known themes of love, intrigue and mistaken identity will be dressed differently this summer — *Much Ado* gets its Italian setting bumped up to the days immediately after the First World War, while *A Midsummer Night's Dream* moves to the 1980s, with music by AC/DC, The Beastie Boys and Elton John, among others.

Sharing the stage with MRC drama students are well-known Calgary actors Frank Zotter, Stephen Hair, Grant Linneberg and Heather Lea MacCallum. The director is Shakespeare

In the Park artistic director Martin Fishman.

*A Midsummer Night's Dream* runs July 5 to 13 and alternate days from July 25 to Aug. 19; *Much Ado About Nothing* takes place July 14 to 23 and alternate days from July 26 to Aug. 20. Showtime: 7 p.m.

The one-hour abridgement of all 37 Shakespeare plays runs Aug. 9 to 19, at 12:10 p.m.

SITP admission is pay-what-you-will, although \$10 is recommended.

Among imminent highlights at the Banff Summer Arts Festival:

The Banff Centre jazz orchestra performs tonight at the Margaret Greenham Theatre led by one of the American legends of jazz — pianist, educator and composer, Muhal Richard Abrams.

The 75-year-old musician, co-founder of the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians, possesses a technical mastery and knowledge that embraces the entire history of jazz — which he's demonstrated countless times with artists of the calibre of Max Roach, Dexter Gordon, Art Farmer, Sonny Stitt, the Art Ensemble of Chicago, Anthony Braxton, and just about everyone else.

Showtime is 7:30 p.m. Tickets: \$15, \$12 students/seniors, \$8 child. Arts Lover Passholders free.

Winner of the 2004 Scot Trads Music Awards Folk Band of the Year, the supergroup Old Blind Dogs plays the Centre's Margaret Greenham Theatre on Sunday.

The 15-year-old quintet's unique sound blends traditional Scottish jigs and reels with a kind of rock-funk fusion feel. Very catchy, and a lot of fun.

The Playbill Series show starts at 8 p.m. Tickets: \$20, \$18 students/seniors/Arts Lovers Passholders.

Tickets to all summer festival events are available through the Banff Centre box office. Call 1-800-413-8368.

# BOOKS & THE ARTS

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