

# A Message from the Artistic Director



**DEAN BURRY**

Watershed Artistic Director

Welcome to the fourth Watershed Festival and another year of reimagining music theatre! 2023 was a big year for us with the world-premiere of *The Lancashire Lass* and we are thrilled to be returning with more music and drama. One of the main goals of Watershed has been to celebrate and support forms of music theatre not traditionally given centre stage - to shine a light on the great work being done out there to bring new voices to the theatre and create new audiences to hear those voices. Watershed 2024 celebrates Neurodiversity and Disability Arts and we are thrilled to be partnering with Kingston's own H'art Centre, a leader in neurodiverse and disability arts creation to create a *HAPPY*, a new music theatre work which will premiere at the Isabel Bader Centre for the Performing Arts on April 20, 2024.

Our three-day festival will also include a screening of *Shiny Things: The Conductor with ADHD* followed by a Q&A with the very subject of the film, renowned conductor Rosemary Thomson, a professional panel discussion on issues of neurodiversity in the music theatre field with artists from across the country including Mariposa Opera's Robin Hahn, and presentations of *Refractions* and *Reflections*; a new work by PeerLess Productions.

Since 2021, the Watershed Festival has served to reinforce for me the incredible power of music theatre when it becomes a platform for the entire community - when it became a stage for diverse perspectives. We hope you will join us at Kingston's Isabel Bader Centre, April 18-20 for three days of inspiring music, theatre and connection as we celebrate the Watershed Festival - Reimagining Music Theatre!

*Dean Burry*