

Joëlle Rabu - Biography

Canadian singer-actor Joëlle Rabu has been performing worldwide ever since she first stepped on stage in Vancouver in 1983 with the hit musical *Piaf Her Songs Her Loves*. For decades, Joëlle and her quartet of musicians toured throughout 5 continents.

Joëlle was born in Winnipeg shortly after her parents emigrated from Brittany, France. She spent her adolescence in Courtenay on Vancouver Island and, at the age of 16, left home for 3 years to travel around the world with a childhood friend, fulfilling her intrigue of languages (she is a polyglot) and the diversity of world cultures.

Joëlle has graced the stage with many prestigious symphony orchestras, including the Phoenix, Winnipeg, Vancouver, Vancouver Island, Kamloops, Peking Pops, and Nova Scotia. A highlight of her 40-year stage career is her highly acclaimed musical theatre production, *Tonight...Piaf*, which is supported by rich, elegant orchestrations penned by her son, composer-arranger-pianist Nico Rhodes.

During her 1980 to 1994 stint in Vancouver, and being a seamlessly bilingual artist, Joëlle was invited to write and directed 5 televised *'Gala de la Chanson'* for BC's French Cultural Centre in collaboration with Radio-Canada, as well as 2 *Chant' Ouest*. As a young mother in the 90's, she pursued her studies and, with a diploma in Early Childhood Education under her belt, she went on to write & produced 5 bilingual musicals for young audiences. She also penned 3 children's books yet to be published, and recorded an original, bilingual, festive album for preschoolers.

Joëlle is no stranger to the theatre world, having played myriad stage roles (*Cabaret, Irma la Douce, Goodnight Disgrace, Anything Goes, Marion Bridge, Harry Chapin: Lies and Legends, Murder on the Nile* to name a few) for professional Canadian theatre companies. She is the recipient of 2 Jessies Richardson theatre awards for her role as Edith Piaf; a BC Touring Artist of the Year award; a Juno nomination for her album *Passport*; the Nanaimo Arts & Culture Ambassador award; the distinguished Artiste Francophone de l'Ouest honour, and the Governor General's 70th Anniversary Queen's Jubilee award for Arts and Music Excellence.

Joëlle is honoured to be an adopted member of the K'aadasGa KiiGawaay - Taan'u Wolf Raven clan on Haida Gwaii. She was given her Haida name, jaada K'aajuu Gaaya (*girl with precious voice*) by her matriarch, the late Ildagwaay at a 2019 potlatch in Skidegate.

In 2022, Joëlle released her 8th independent recording *Maybe This Time: a concept* album exploring her life in music and the music in her life.

Joëlle continues to call Nanaimo home, where she actively engages in community projects and performance mentoring, sharing her passion for the arts, as she continues to tour showcasing her versatility in various concerts. Her current collaboration with Nigerian-Canadian singer Buwa, *'Just the 2 of Us'*, is a testament to her commitment to diverse artistic expression. Joëlle's dedication to impactful storytelling shines through in new play *'I Don't Belong Here'*, written in collaboration with Kelly Wyatt, with music direction by Nico Rhodes. The play, premiered in November 2025 and has already attracted much attention for its thoughtful exploration and diverse perspectives of a day in a dementia care facility as seen by the residents, the care aides and the family members. www.joellerabu.com

