

ROUGH TRADE

the musical

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

New “Rough Trade” Rock musical set in 1980s AIDS pandemic gets seed funding from The P. Austin Family Foundation

January 30, 2022 - New York/Toronto: Canadian Rock Hall of Famer *Carole Pope* of the iconic ‘80s group *Rough Trade* has joined forces with director *Robert McQueen* (Broadway: *Mamma Mia* / Toronto: *Fun Home*, *Caroline or Change*) and award-winning playwright/performance artist *Kate Rigg* (*Zombie Asian Moms*, *The Phoenix Rides a Skateboard*) to create the new musical “Rough Trade”. The show is set during the 1980s AIDS crisis and pays tribute to the galvanizing action and stories of grassroots activism in the LGBTQ community. Early workshops have featured Broadway star *Chilina Kennedy* (*Beautiful: The Carole King Musical*, *Paradise Square*) who is creating the lead role to portray *Carole Pope*.

The development of the show, together with in-person workshops and workshop production all set for 2022 have been seeded with a generous donation from *The P. Austin Family Foundation*.

The show will use songs from *Carole Pope and Rough Trade’s* extensive Juno award-winning pop-rock catalog to tell the true story of her brother *Howie* who moved to New York from Toronto in the mid-80s in pursuit of sexual freedom, rock n’ roll, and a new life. He lands in the middle of a global pandemic - the AIDS crisis - becomes a founding member of queer activist group ACTUP, and tragically sacrifices his life for love.

Says Pope: “As a community we have all been traumatized for decades by the losses we suffered in the 80s and 90s. Back then, there was still too much homophobia in the world for our voices to be heard in time to save our friends. My brother was my best friend. A lot of people lost their best friends, and for years we have avoided talking about it. With this new generation of young activists taking to the streets, there is a lot of energy around telling our stories and inspiring the community to work together for a better world. I am grateful for The P. Austin Family Foundation stepping up to help us bring my brother’s story to life for this new audience. Also the 80s are back baby! The music, the clothes, the fantastic designs!”

Artists associated with early development of the piece include Broadway actors *Chilina Kennedy* (*Beautiful: The Carole King Musical*, *Paradise Square*) *Kaylee Harwood* (*Jesus Christ Superstar*) and rising Canadian star *Brandon Antonio* (*Next to Normal*/Mirvish Productions) as well as arranger and music producer *Rob Preuss* of the iconic Canadian 80s bands *The Spoons* and *Honeymoon Suite*.

For support or development inquiries please contact

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For more information on the development and workshops of the Rough Trade Musical please go to www.RoughTradeMusical.com or email info@roughtrademusical.com