Birdie, Set, Swat: a game of badminton

by KATY THOMPSON

Badminton, according to two local coaches, is the second most popular sport in the world after soccer. Vancouver offers many clubs and sports facilities for people of all ages and skills to play badminton, whether recreationally or competitively. Yet, in Vancouver, the majority of badminton players are of Chinese descent.

Ram Nayyar, born in Edmonton to a family of South Asian descent, serves as the head coach at the Vancouver Lawn Tennis and Badminton Club as well as the High Performance Director for Badminton Canada. He says that badminton is huge in China and many parts of Asia.

“It is to that region what hockey is to Canada,” he says. Alvin Lau, a coach at the Vancouver Racquets Club (VRC) and an on-call high school business teacher, adds that the Vancouver-based club is also primarily comprised of Asian members.

“Non-Asian players stick out like a sore thumb,” he says.

Diverse origins

According to the Badminton World Federation, badminton stems from battledore and shuttlecock, a game played in ancient India known as Poona, which was played widely, both throughout Asia and internationally. The game’s appeal ranges from the concept itself to the impressive speeds reached by shuttlecocks – some travelling in excess of 400 km/h – to its reputation as a lifetime sport, with players ranging from ages under five to over ninety.

Badminton’s particular popularity among the Chinese population in Vancouver can be attributed to a couple of factors, according to Lau. He says that many Asians decide to pick up the racquet for the first time because they like the challenge of a technical sport.

“You don’t see results instantly,” says Lau.

Also, unlike sports such as football and basketball where being a larger person is advantageous, badminton attracts many smaller, less traditionally athletic Asians who can learn to excel at the speed and agility with it. In other words, badminton attracts many smaller, less traditionally athletic Asians who can learn to excel at the speed and agility of a different ethnicity on the court.

Nayyar. British military officers stationed in India brought the game back to England where it was popularized after the Duke of Beaufort’s guests played it at his estate, named Badminton, in Gloucestershire, England.

The 1930s saw a rise in popularity of badminton internationally, particularly in Denmark, the U.S. and Canada. The international Badminton Federation was formed in 1933, but badminton was not recognized as an Olympic sport until it was played at the 1992 Olympic Games in Barcelona.

Universal appeal, Asian dominance

“North Americans don’t watch badminton too much because we don’t do so well at it,” says Lau. Nevertheless badminton is played widely, both throughout Canada and internationally. The game’s appeal ranges from the concept itself to the impressive speeds reached by shuttlecocks – some travelling in excess of 400 km/h – to its reputation as a lifetime sport, with players ranging from ages under five to over ninety.

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Contemporary badminton took its form in the 1800s from an Indian game known as Poona, which introduced a net over which to hit the shuttlecock, explains Nayyar. British military officers stationed in India brought the game back to England where it was popularized after the Duke of Beaufort’s guests played it at his estate, named Badminton, in Gloucestershire, England.

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The Slovenian Society celebrates cultural sharing at 18th annual European Festival

Known for their folk dancing, love of music, food and hospitality, local Slovenians have found their home away from home at the Slovenian Society of Vancouver. As one of almost 30 countries participating at this year’s European Festival in Burnaby, Slovenia, represented by the Slovenian Society, will share their heritage with visitors in a variety of Cultural Exhibition activities.

The Slovenian Society of Vancouver was established in 1958 by Slovenian immigrants who wanted to place a call to their own in the Lower Mainland. Joe Herceg, the current president of the Slovenian Society, says Slovenians in the 1950s made a week-long trip by boat from their home country to find a better life in Canada. Many settled in and around the Halifax area before migrating west to Vancouver. “The most determined group landed in Vancouver because they were drawn to the nice climate and the scenery. The lush mountains and water reminded them of back home,” says Herceg, who has been involved with the organization since 1975. “It was a struggle for at least 10–14 years, moving in private homes, basements and renting out venues for meetings and events.”

Luck changed one day when a wealthy woman and her husband saw a Presbyterian church for sale and decided to buy it for the Slovenian Society. Today, it serves as the centre of all Slovenian Society activities.

A community feel at the European Festival
Darja Zlindra, cultural coordinator at the Slovenian Society, says the European Festival brings everyone together; it’s about teaching each other about different cultures and histories.

“Each culture brings something of their own, and when you perform, you feel the [warmth] and the public sees who first became involved with the society as a singer in 1992 and later completed the necessary paperwork to become a grandfather.

Herceg says Slovenians are very warm and sociable people who often provide the food, music and dance at the centre of all gatherings.

Whether it’s in our homes or at the centre, you’re going to be dancing Polka for sure,” says Herceg.

True love leads to Vancouver
When Herceg was in his early 20s, his girlfriend, whom he met while he was working in Austria, broke the news to him that she had a father living in Vancouver and that she would join him in Canada.

“Eight months later, Herceg completed the necessary paperwork and moved to Vancouver. He later married his girlfriend. Thankfully it all worked out,” says Herceg, who is now a father and a grandfather.

Herceg’s first memories of Vancouver include a rainstorm in 1966 when he first arrived and began taking English language classes at a school in downtown Vancouver.

He recalls a very kind, retired English teacher who helped him get his first job as a bakery clerk on Granville Street.

“It was a huge help and morale booster that somebody — a complete stranger — would step up and help out like that. I will never forget that,” says Herceg.

“It depends on how many young people we can recruit in our society as the population is declining,” says Herceg.

For more information:
www.europeanfestival.ca
www.vanlosoc.ca

Erratum
With regards to last issue’s article “Dark comedy: Emotional journey of survival” by Alison Chiang: the play God and the Indian was written in response to Yvette Nolan’s challenge.

Young musicians to perform at European Festival.

“Interests of performers and members and the community so we can learn from one another,” says Zlindra.

At the European Festival, Zlindra says, the Slovenian Society will have a cultural booth complete with souvenirs typical of the culture as well as informative pamphlets on Slovenia and travel.

“The festival is a wonderful opportunity for Slovenians and other cultures to show their cultures to one another,” says Vilko Mavec, the society’s secretary and a teacher of Slovenian language at the centre. “We’re doing all we can to preserve Slovenian language, culture and tradition. Part of that is to show it other nationalities.”

Herceg says Slovenians are very warm and sociable people who often provide the food, music and dance at the centre of all gatherings.

“Within the news to him that she had a fiancé and the Indian gave up the fight and left the film,” Herceg.

Herceg’s current role includes leading the executive committee as well as helping with membership details and event organization throughout the year. Membership numbers say Herceg, are dropping.

“Depend on how many young people we can recruit in our society as the population is declining,” says Herceg.

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New study shows problems for transgender youth

by Sandra Zimmermann

In May, the Stigma and Resilience Among Vulnerable Youth Centre of UBC published a national study focusing on Canada’s transgender youth and their well-being. While the results show that transgender youth face significant physical and mental health issues, they also indicate that a supportive environment is essential. Morgane Oger, a transgender rights activist from Vancouver, believes the study is essential.

The Canadian Trans Youth Health Survey, the first of its kind, was a national online survey conducted by researchers from several Canadian universities and community organizations. The survey included 923 trans youth participants between 14 and 25. It showed the problems trans youth regularly face, such as discrimination because of their gender identity or their appearance, sexual harassment and cyberbullying.

Morgane Oger believes the study is crucial. “It’s a very good study as it shows the evidence. Now we can make a case,” she says. Oger is the chair of the Trans Alliance Society, a spokesperson for the R.C. Safer Schools Coalition, executive member of the Vancouver District Parent Advisory Council and a member of Vancouver’s LGBTQ2+ Advisory Committee. Having come out as a woman only a few years ago, she is aware of the problems transgender people encounter.

Lack of acceptance

Oger, 47, believes being transgender today is similar to being gay in the 1990s when it comes to lack of acceptance. She points out that while transgender people are usually safe in Vancouver, there are many other places where that is not the case. France, her country of origin, is an example. Oger says that the biggest problem for today’s transgender youth is the lack of support from the previous generation, the generation that raised and influenced their peers. She hopes that today’s transgender youth will have a genuine chance instead of being marginalized for no reason like her own generation was.

“I don’t know a transgender doctor or lawyer. But transgender youth nowadays hopefully have a chance,” says Oger.

While there are a few communities and organizations that aim to help transgender people, they are often limited in their possibilities due to financial problems. The Trans Alliance Society and the Catherine White Holman Centre do not receive any government funding. The Trans Alliance Society, whose focus is on legal issues, regularly organizes fundraising events. Whereas the Holman Centre, which is volunteer-run, aims to provide free wellness services to transgender people. Oger notes that nowadays in Vancouver, parents of transgender youth are usually very involved in supporting their children, whereas in the past, teenagers were often abandoned.

Changes in Vancouver’s schools

In 2014, the Vancouver School Board approved a new policy for transgender students. “This policy was implemented to make schools a safer place for all students by creating understanding and respect for sexual orientation and gender diversity,” says Sharalyn Jordan, Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Education of Simon Fraser University.

“The policy maintains the principle of respecting students’ gender identities and other more specific strategies on things like language and pronoun use and gender inclusive spaces,” explains Jordan. She is certain that this way, students learn about the respect for others needed to live in a plural democracy.

“Often, students are currently in the process of building non-gendered spaces such as dressing rooms and washrooms. They also train staff not to separate gender anymore and let students choose their pronouns,” says Oger.

Oger believes that the changes are helpful as they allow students to be more confident and study in a harmonious environment.

To read more about the study, please follow the link: http://news.ubc.ca/2015/05/06/supportive-families-and-schools-critical-in-protecting-transgender-youth-health-ubc-study/
Christy Clark’s LNG economic miracle turned out to be a mirage

Christy Clark’s come-from-behind election win in 2013 was based on false economic projections. Just three months before that provincial vote, in February 2013, her government made a promise of windfall revenues from the rapid development of liquefied natural gas (LNG) exports.

In a press release at the time, the BC Liberals assured British Columbians, “Our LNG industry is quickly developing,” and predicted this new industry would deliver “approximately $1 trillion in cumulative GDP within British Columbia over the next 30 years and that means more than $100 billion will flow directly to the Prosperity Fund.” That $100 billion, we were told, would fund public services and pay off the province’s debt.

Earlier, on May 30, 2012, Christy Clark stood in the Legislature in Victoria and stated that the first LNG facility would be up and running by 2016.

Here we are, three years later, and there are no LNG facilities in operation, and the government has drastically weakened the royalty regime and lowered corporate taxes in a desperate bid to attract foreign investors. As a consequence, even in the best case scenarios the BC Liberals concede that revenues to the government won’t come close to the hype of a $100 billion “Prosperity Fund.”

Last week, the government announced a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Malaysia-based Petronas for an LNG export project in Prince Rupert. According to a report in the Globe and Mail, the terms include: “...$80-billion from the LNG project in royalty revenue to government coffers over the 23-year period. In addition to royalties, an income-tax framework will start with a minimum 1.5-per-cent rate, applying to net operating profit.” The MOU locks in future BC governments to the low tax and royalty rates, a cynical and undemocratic “Hotel California” style arrangement for B.C.’s citizens.

But even the Petronas deal still faces significant obstacles: First and foremost the fact that a key First Nation has rejected LNG development on their territory. Members of the Lax Kw’alaams and the Metis recently voted unanimously to reject $1 billion in cash from Pacific NorthWest LNG, part of the proposed Petronas project near Prince Rupert.

Leaders of the Lax Kw’alaams issued a statement following the vote: “Only Lax Kw’alaams have a valid claim to aboriginal title in the relevant area. Their consent is required for this project to proceed.” The rejection was described as based on spiritual and environmental considerations. The proposed LNG export terminal is slated to be built on Lelu Island, next to Flora Bank, an important salmon habitat.

The BC government went ahead and announced the Petro- nas deal in spite of this decisive rejection, and Premier Clark claims to have confidence that an agreement with the Lax Kw’alaams can still be brokered. This hardly looks like a government that respects First Nations’ land and title rights, nor their responsibility to obtain free and informed consent from First Nations before proceeding with development. In this case the company tried to buy consent with a massive offer of $1 billion in cash, and they still failed. It turns out there are still some things that money can’t buy. The proper response to such an assertion of Indigenous rights would be to take this whole project back to the drawing board.

But the BC Liberals don’t have time for those kinds of niceties. The window for BC LNG is closing fast, due to the sheer number of countries developing shale gas and the related drop in global prices. The window, in fact, may have already closed on B.C., according to the latest research.

Writing in the online publication TheTyee.ca, Andrew Nikiforuk summarized a major new study of BC LNG prospects by the Oxford Institute for Energy Stud-
Game on: in conversation with Jeffrey Jang

Young, innovative entrepreneurs are at the forefront of the vibrant gaming industry that has been flourishing over the last decade in the Lower Mainland. Among them is Jeffrey Jang, who was the recipient of the 2015 BC Business Top 30 under 30 award. His expertise, illustration and design has grown over the years through freelancing and personal artistic creations; his talents reach out to entertain and educate both adults and youth.

“I would always try and draw art-related ideas that could sell,” Jang says, recalling being an artist from a young age. “I would always try doing small entrepreneurial things.”

Today, Jang’s company is a success. In its first year, it generated over one million dollars in revenue, making it a competitive venture in the gaming landscape. It also received funding from various investors and secured partnerships with reputable names in the industry including Microsoft Canada and Blackberry, which promote Jang’s game Boximals in numerous countries.

Boximals

Jang, born and raised in Vancouver, is a graphic designer certified by the British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT). Jang broke into the Vancouver gaming scene in 2013 at the age of 23 when he co-founded Boximal Studios Inc., a company that designed a video game featuring a group of Boximal characters and their journey back home across a fantasy world of lush green forests, mountainous terrain and glorious waterfalls.

His idea was simple: he sketched characters that were a combination of boxes and animals. Jang then worked with various artists to animate it and create a complete game. His game, Boximals, has received international recognition and praise. The game was nominated for best new video game at the 2015 BCBusiness BC Awards.

According to Judy Lo, cultural centre supervisor, volunteers at the Richmond Garden Club look after the watering and maintenance of the garden. The vegetables harvested from the garden are donated to senior’s centres located across from the cultural centre to create healthy meals for the residents.

Currently, the garden is available for events pre-approved by the City. Due to the 50-person capacity of the garden, the venue is restricted to small events. Lo says the turnout for events has been good.

“So far we’ve had poetry readings in collaboration with the Richmond Art Gallery and other private events,” says Lo. “It really depends on the needs of the community.”

A green public space

The rooftop garden is home to a variety of food crops including: herbs, tomatoes, cabbage, garlic, strawberries and kale. It also received funding from the City of Richmond and the British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT). Run by a team of eight, the rooftop garden is a group of Boximal’s and their friends, creating an interesting story, which is an immersive experience for adults and children. Run by a team of eight, the company strives to train and educate by creating custom video game design merged with a movie-set structure that exhibits “immersive” and indulgent experiences.

A typical set, for example, might involve lasers, moving doors, and hidden passageways. Everything is connected with tablets on the wall that you have to play games on and progress through,” says Jang.

Jang says the initial idea stemmed from the concept of escape rooms: participants are locked in a room and have to solve a series of puzzles to escape within a given time constraint. Usually such games have an interesting story, which is one of Immersive’s primarily focuses.

The concept reaches out in particular to corporate team building and hiring candidates that apply for tough jobs. Immersive offers corporations a customized video gaming experience to enhance team performance and challenge participants (allowing one to see who cracks under pressure, emerges as a leader, and is a team player) in an interactive environment.

“We found that there was an opportunity to do something better in Vancouver,” says Jang.

The unique space includes sustainable elements such as recycled glass pebbles along the pathways to represent water and pillar cisterns and planter troughs that help to collect rain water. The outdoor venue also has a large communal table in the centre with a foldable canopy and a small trough in the middle to provide space for planting. This year, the garden has a new attraction: a giant chess board. Chess pieces are available to be signed out at the front desk or it will be readily available if a volunteer is on shift.

“The garden is still relatively new and we are still trying to see what works and we are trying to draw more people with the new chess board,” says Lo.

Giving back to the community

Jang is nominated for best emerging entrepreneur by small business BC awards. Learn more about Jang’s game at www.boximals.com and immersive experiences at www.immersive.com

Richmond rooftop garden provides space for community gatherings

by Naomi Tse

The next time you’re at the Richmond Library, pause for a moment and enjoy yourself on the rooftop garden. Now in its fourth year, the rooftop garden at the Richmond Library/ Cultural Centre is primed to be a popular centerpiece.

According to Judy Lo, cultural centre supervisor, volunteers at the Richmond Garden Club look after the watering and maintenance of the garden. The vegetables harvested from the garden are donated to senior’s centres located across from the cultural centre to create healthy meals for the residents. The rooftop garden is home to a variety of food crops including: herbs, tomatoes, cabbage, garlic, strawberries and kale.

Artificial turf and pillars cisterns and planter troughs that help to collect rain water.

The rooftop garden is now open from 12–7 p.m. on weekdays and 12–4 p.m. on weekends. It is closed in the winter. For more information, please visit www.richmond.ca/ richmond-cultural-centre/rooftop-garden.htm.
Cricket: it's all about the juniors

by Cari Densem

Every weekend, from early April until September, groups of children的年轻人 cross and unify borders from 5 to 99 years old, where the excitement to represent Canada is feverish. "Cricket is treated as part of our culture rather than a sport," explains Anil Khanna, junior co-ordinator of Cricket B.C.

What is cricket?

Cricket bears some similarities to its closest relative, baseball, though it can seem alien to those unfamiliar with its rules and rhythms. It is played on an oval field, even backwards. In general, each team has bats and fields once, with a single inning lasting a defined number of six-ball overs, usually 50. Then again, similarities abound. Eye-hand coordination is tremendous in cricket and a strong throwing arm and swiftness across the field are also critical.

Junior cricket in B.C.

On a given weekend, up to 800 junior cricketers head out to training programs throughout Lower Mainland to learn cricketing skills and compete against neighboring teams. Many of the juniors were born here in Canada although some have immigrated with their families and trace their roots back to cricket-playing nations like India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and others.

Khanna oversees this growing group of junior cricket, and has a long personal history in the sport. He began playing at three years old in Delhi, India, progressing from street cricket with neighbours to school competition and then to the Delhi District Cricket Association. His favourite players include Sunil Gavaskar, Vivian Richards and Sachin Tendulkar.

"Juniors are the future of cricket, and it is important to make sure they have the right development programs to evolve into bigger, better players one day," Khanna says.

For Canadian juniors, the next goal is qualifying for the 2016 Under-19 Cricket World Cup in Bangladesh. To get there, they will need to overpower the USA and Bermuda.

Up and coming

For a group of Under-16 boys asked if they wanted to play for Canada, the answer was a resounding "Yes!" Some of the boys are well on their way; having played for the provincial team in various age groups. "There are definitely many opportunities for junior cricketers to make it big," explains Khanna, pointing out a number of upcoming inter-provincial, inter-school and club tournaments.

Despite these promising signs, he says, there is an urgent need for coaches to train young players and more competitive cricket at younger ages to raise the standard of play. One shining example from the junior program is Elenko Emanuel. He has played for B.C. at the Under-16 level and was the top scorer in a recent match for the Surrey Dolphins, a team of Under-16 players started by Kyle in 1996.

In the shortened under-over game, he scored 25 runs with two boundaries (shots worth four runs each that bounce before crossing the boundary) hit straight down the ground. His 13-year-old older brother, Dod- phins to a win with just a single delivery to spare. Vancouver cricket continues to shine out of the limelight but Khanna has big dreams for the future: an international fixture at a top-quality Vancouver cricket ground. This may take some years off but the groundwork appears solid. 

Circle of Life: using Canada's strongest stone to cross and unify borders

by Paula Choudhury

Jade is at the centre of Circle of Life, a documentary film by Andrew B. Matheson, which will have its free film premiere at the Baumont Studios on May 28 in honour of B.C. jade day. It is characterized by its sheer strength and durability, the stone holds many physically and spiritually important qualities.

Organized by the World Jade Symposium Association (WJSA), a Canadian non-profit organization dedicated to the support of artists who work with the stone, the film speaks to the mostly unknown cultural and social significance that the stone holds for numerous nations, including Canada.

"The sun will melt everything else, but jade will remain," says Brian Matheson, a North Vancouver, B.C. native used for artistic expression through this fine art. The stone invites people from all over the world to observe and share different methods of cutting and finding expression through this fine art. For example, the film explores the differences between a Chinese style of cutting compared to a more Western style.

The film also allows the audiences to understand that it is not only about cultures sharing and exploring one another's authentic art and also about hybridizing, forming an altogether new product that finds its seeds in various cultures and styles.

As Brian explains, with an increasing appreciation and awareness of the gemstone's capability, many more doors are opening for different artists. The WJSA aids in ensuring that artists find their seeds and contains microfibres that have no cleavage in between.

The stone is responsible for becoming one of the most valuable stones in the world. The film introduces us to the differences between a Chinese style of carving compared to a more Western style.

The versatility of the stone is measured by the various nations that have used it for artistic expression. Carving the stone is an important part of the film and, Brian says, the fundamental way the stone can be used as a tool for bonding and unity between cultures.

The film also allows the audiences to understand that it is not only about cultures sharing and exploring one another's authentic art, and also about hybridizing, forming an altogether new product that finds its seeds in various cultures and styles. As Brian explains, with an increasing appreciation and awareness of the gemstone’s capability, many more doors are opening for different artists.

The film also allows the audiences to understand that it is not only about cultures sharing and exploring one another’s authentic art, and also about hybridizing, forming an altogether new product that finds its seeds in various cultures and styles.
Group Truva is a Turkish folk group based in Vancouver. After performing in dozens of venues around the Lower Mainland and Seattle, they will feature in the upcoming European Festival on May 31.

Formed in 2008 by Erdal Kun, Erman Yavuz and Safak Karaca, Group Truva was originally called Truva Trio. The group came together after the three members had already performed solo for a long time. All three have a deep musical background: Kun has played saz, a Turkish stringed instrument, for over 20 years. Yavuz also has over 20 years of experience with acoustic guitar, while Karaca has extensive experience playing bass.

Ayten Kun, Erdal Kun’s wife, is the group’s manager and coordinator, and is involved with pretty much everything behind the scenes. “Erdal, Erman and Safak all knew each other through different festivals and performances,” said Ayten. “They were all doing stuff on their own and finally they thought people had positive things to say about the group.”

Playing before such an unexpectedly large audience gave the band a new sense of the appeal their music had. “That’s when we realized, oh my gosh, Turkish music is valued, people want to hear it,” adds Ayten.

Group Truva is trying to change how people see Turkish folk music. “We’re definitely not the same as other groups,” says Ayten. “We’ve had people tell us that they’ve never heard something like our music before, and that’s what we’re trying to do. We don’t want people to think of our music as just for old people, or as something they’ve heard before. We want them to see that it’s something different, something for everyone.”

Group Truva is redefining Turkish folk music

By Jake McRae

Group Truva: redefining Turkish folk music

Metro Vancouver’s Turkish community, and outside of it as well. This was shown a couple years ago when an invite to the Seattle Turkfest arrived. “The Seattle Turkfest contacted us,” says Ayten. “They told us they wanted us to play, and that there were going to be about 5,000 people there. We went and there were actually 5,000 people there. The crowd reaction was wonderful, and after the show lots of people had positive things to say about the group.”

Playing before such an unexpectedly large audience gave the band a new sense of the appeal their music had. “That’s when we realized, oh my gosh, Turkish music is valued, people want to hear it,” adds Ayten.

Group Truva is trying to change how people see Turkish folk music. “We’re definitely not the same as other groups,” says Ayten. “We’ve had people tell us that they’ve never heard something like our music before, and that’s what we’re trying to do. We don’t want people to think of our music as just for old people, or as something they’ve heard before. We want them to see that it’s something different, something for everyone.”

Group Truva will be performing at the upcoming European Festival, but it wants to use the opportunity to spread awareness and knowledge of Turkish folk music. After the show, anyone can come backstage, talk to the band members, see the instruments and even play them.

“We’ve had people tell us that they’ve never heard something like our music before.”

Ayten Kun, manager of Group Truva
Portuguese religion and politics converge at MOA

by Simon Yee

From 1933 to 1974, Portugal was ruled by the Estado Novo, the authoritarian regime of Prime Minister António de Oliveira Salazar, which censored creative expression and government criticism while promoting its own version of folk art. The 1974 Carnation Revolution overthrew the Estado Novo, and ushered in a period of unrestricted creativity, providing a climate for folk artists to freely criticize the government and its policies.

The roughly 300 works in the exhibition – Portugal religion and politics converge at MOA – are quite unique from the rest of Europe, traditions which continue to flourish today. Religion and politics play an important part in all art, and there are several artworks showing politicians and corporate leaders being mocked, parodied and skewered, and burned in effigy.

“Somewhere In-Between: Motion of Faith, Motion of Fury” is the title of the exhibition, which runs until Oct. 12, can explore the various ways contemporary Portuguese folk artists express their religious, political and cultural beliefs.

“Whatever we’ve tried to do is create a poetic rendition of Portugal with its own traditions, which are quite unique from the rest of Europe, traditions which continue to be alive and use images of the past to understand and sense out of the present,” says Anthony Shelton, MOA’s director and curator of the exhibit.

Understanding Portuguese perspectives

The roughly 300 works in the exhibit, collected within the last five years, include puppets, figurines, carnival masks, ceramic tiles, paintings and more. The exhibit is thematically divided into three sections: “Heaven,” “Hell” and “Portugal,” as the place between the two. Religion and politics play an important part in all three sections.

Shelton spent over a year traveling around Portugal researching folk art and meeting artists and artisans who agreed to have their work shown at the exhibit. David Gomes, a furniture maker in Braga, Portugal, was one such artisan Shelton met and admired for his wit and imagination.

“After the revolution in 1974, Gomes said, I’m liberated! Now I can make anything I want!” And he promptly did, crafting “The Hat of Salazar,” “The Mask of Salazar,” “The Glasses of Salazar,” and making up creative stories about them. It was his character, his personality, the things he made in his shop which inspired him (the character of the exhibit),” says Shelton.

Heaven, Hell and Humans: the religious Portugal

Portugal is primarily Roman Catholic and many pieces reflect the popular influence of Christianity on everyday life. According to Shelton, the Portuguese religious tradition is more cordial than institutional; for instance, saints are portrayed as approachable and friendly, rather than authoritarians. Similarly, the Devil, rather than a figure of incarnate evil, is seen more as impish and mischievous.

Greco-Roman mythology also plays an important part in the Portuguese consciousness. A major section of the exhibit includes sculptures, marionettes and woodcarvings of characters from Ossian’s poems, which tells the tale of Fingal’s journey to India, and the various schemes of the Gods of Olympus that help or hinder the Portuguese explorers.

“Every schoolchild in Portugal has to read this poem. The part that they always remember is when the storm hits because it’s so dramatic, described as a monster of a wave, the sheets of rain that come down and the cloud that makes everything dark,” says Shelton.

Zé Povinho versus the government

Much of the art is political, and there are several artworks showing politicians and corporate leaders being mocked, parodied and skewered, and burned in effigy. A recurring figure is Zé Povinho, a personalization of the ordinary Portuguese man that appears in several artworks, typically shown being crucified or tortured as a tool or pawn of the politicians. One piece shows Zé Povinho giving the Moody’s credit rating agency, which had downgraded Portugal’s credit to junk status in 2012, the Marquês (a rude gesture).

“You’ve got Zé Povinho saying, ‘Why do I always have to pay the national debt, when I’m on mini- mum wage?’ And the president here is saying, ‘Pay up! I only get £10,000 a week!’” Shelton says, translating one of the artworks.

The level of vitriol directed against the government raised eyebrows among some patrons.

“Somebody said the exhibit was politically incorrect. Well, if it’s politically incorrect to criticize governments and world leaders, why not? I’d say it’s life.”

For more information about the exhibit, visit www.moa.ubc.ca

Anthony Shelton, MOA’s director and curator of the exhibit.

The original Dimasalang International Artists Group.

Filipino art and history breathes new life into local modern art movement

by Sophia Delafontaine

Dimasalang III International Artist Group exhibition, Kalayaan (freedom), is on until July 4 at the Surrey Arts Centre. Dimasalang founder Sofronio Vlanan Mendoka, known by Sym, leads the display.

Sandie Gillis, author of Sym – The Power of Life and Struggle, volunteers for the Dimasalang International Artist Group and organized the event.

An inspirational history

In 1968 in Manila, Sym founded the Dimasalang group.

“He was a student at the time, and he lived on a street called Di masalang,” Gillis explains. “Our national hero was Jose Rizal. He was a doctor, but he was also a writer and a freedom fighter who wrote books inciting change in the Philippines while occupied by the Spaniards.”

Using the pen name Dimasalang on occasion, Jose, who died in 1896, helped to inspire Sym for what would become the Dimasalang International Artists Group.

The Dimasalang I was the first rendition of the group, made up of Sym, Abe Cruz, Andy Cristobal Cruz, Ibarra de la Rosa and Romulo Galicano. It was a group of Sym’s students who then formed Dimasalang II.

In 1981, Sym moved his wife and seven children to Vancouver. “Here he taught art, and he continued to form Dimasalang III, which is what is here in Vancouver today,” says Gillis.

Made up of Filipino-Canadian artists, Dimasalang III now is referred to as the Canadian Dimasalang.

International success

Edgardo Lantin, an accomplished artist and a contributing member of the Dimasalang group, is a proud student of Sym’s, and considers Sym his mentor. Receiving the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Federation of Canadian Artists, Lantin claims his artwork has greatly benefited from his involvement in the Dimasalang, and that their group discussions about significant master artists have influenced him.

“As a professional artist, I have been inspired my entire career,” says Lantin. “And I was a doctor, but he was also a writer and a freedom fighter who wrote books inciting change in the Philippines while occupied by the Spaniards.”

“We just want the public to enjoy art, because we believe that art is life.”

Sandie Gillis, volunteer for Dimasalang International Artists Group

The Dimasalang group is not only making an impact in the world of art, but also in Canada’s overall diversity and multiculturalism.

“We would like to use the group’s artwork to the public to give them an inspiration to the population of Filipinos. If we do good work only make good art, it makes them proud,” says Gillis. “And I think that’s one of the goals that our group is looking to achieve.”

As a proud member of the Dimasalang, Edgardo Lantin shares this goal with the group. “I believe that the highest culture in our society is art, seen through various forms. With the diversity of the people who live in Vancouver, we hope and intend to showcase and share our traditions and culture through art,” he believes.

“The group in the Philippines has greatly benefited from his involvement in the Dimasalang, and that their group discussions about significant master artists have influenced him.

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“Our mandate is to increase the exposure of modern art in Vancouver,” Gillis adds. “We just want the public to enjoy art, because we believe that art is life.”

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Sandie Gillis, volunteer for Dimasalang International Artists Group
Bhangra love takes over Vancouver

by KATRINA TRASK

The Vancouver International Bhangra Celebration Society (VIBC) will be putting on its 9th annual City of Bhangra Festival on May 28th through June 6th at various downtown Vancouver venues and SFU’s Surrey campus. The festival will have seven events comprised of 350 performances, all centered on the Punjabi folk dance.

Anita Lai, general manager of VIBC, says the founder of City of Bhangra Festival, her longtime friend Mo Dhaliwal, wanted to create a space where Metro Vancouver’s South Asian community could come together and celebrate the arts.

“VIBC started out in the living room of Mo Dhaliwal’s parent’s home in Abbotsford, B.C.,” says Lai. “Mo, along with his friends Alan Gill and Robin Rather, saw that there weren’t very many South Asian organizations in Metro Vancouver that connected people through the shared experience of the arts and culture of the local South Asian population.”

Lai explains how Dhaliwal further developed his vision for a more broad-based South Asian organization by focusing on bhangra as a way to connect people; he expanded what was originally a three hour exhibition of bhangra competitive dance into a ten day festival with community-accessible programming.

“He wanted to create an inclusive community movement that represented the face of B.C., one that is truly diverse and rich in culture and arts, all while elevating the profile of bhangra. It’s a family event with great food and a great atmosphere,” Lai says.

Lai explains that another one of VIBC’s aims is artistic innovation, which is at the core of the City of Bhangra Festival.

“We create events around artistic collaborations between local artists and international artists of different genres, and it is through these collaborations that more connections are made within the community that span across ethno-cultural and artsic boundaries,” Lai says.

Connection and inclusivity

Lai herself first got involved in VIBC through Dhaliwal. She was looking to change professions and saw an ad posting for the position of general manager.

“I am friends with Dhaliwal, so when the job posting went up, I jokingly applied, and he took it very seriously. And after a few phone calls and conversations, I was hired, she says”.

After a few months of working at VIBC, Lai began to appreciate the organization’s involvement in the community, especially their participation as cultural partners in the Vancouver 2010 Olympics and ICCA, a program that connects Punjabis from Pakistan and India through concert. Lai says VIBC’s City of Bhangra Festival is just one the organization’s events that create inter-ethnic dialogue.

“VIBC was involved in so many important conversations around identity and providing the perspective of first and second generation Canadians. I was able to understand that we were visibly creating the space for South Asian arts, history and dialogue, while creating inclusive spaces for the entire community.”

Audiences will have a chance to connect with their community at this year’s festival, which runs from May 28th to June 6th, with over 30 hours of free programming and two days of a free backyard party sponsored by the Vancouver Art Gallery, DJ Lajit, DJ Reminsce, and Seti X will cross genres with their mix of R&B, Hip Hop and bhangra. (Jaz Dhani, DJ Rekha and DJ Anjali are also expected to wow audiences this year with their genre-blend of electronic music and bhangra. There will also be performances from Shaya, a Finnish bhanga group, and Lady Ra, an Ontario-based DJ.

For more information, visit www.vibc.org

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**Synesthesia: A Bridge of Song**

In support of Music Education, the Vancouver Peace Choir, under the direction of Lisa Peregrine, is excited to bring you an evening of contemporary/choral music, with guest performances by the Eric Hamber Secondary Chamber Choir and the New Westminster Secondary Chamber Choir.

**Synopsis**

With themes from love and life to death and regret, Lai explains that there are also many important conversations around identity and providing the perspective of first and second generation Canadians. I was able to understand that we were visibly creating the space for South Asian arts, history and dialogue, while creating inclusive spaces for the entire community.”

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For more information, visit www.vibc.org
Local artists Shamina Senaratne and Christie Lim have collaborated to create an exhibit, *Here and Through and Back and Through*, with Senaratne's textile creations for the Evergreen Cultural Centre exhibit, *Here and Through and Back and Through*, which began with a line that she says looped back on itself. “It was an image that wouldn’t leave me. It spoke to me of progress and reflection; journeying away or astray and returning; backwards and forwards; beginnings, experience, traumas or disorientation and moving into coherence again,” says Senaratne, who graduated from Simon Fraser University with a Communications and Public History BA.

Senaratne has always been looking for the right medium to convey her message. She finds that textiles allow her to encode texture and form with metaphor and meaning rather than using full sentences. “Materials convey some part of a message; whether verbal or non-verbal, communication affects how the message is formed by respect and love fine materials and craftsmanship, and how to consciously choose the right material for the intended design.”

Hands-on appeal
As an Emily Carr art student, Christie Lim longed for something that was more tactile than what two-dimensional or digital mediums offered – so she started studying textiles at Capilano’s Advanced Textile Art Program in 2003. “I enjoy working with thread and fibre because it’s very hands-on. There is something to be said about the connection you build with a work through the long amounts of time simply holding it and working with the material directly in your hands,” says the Burnaby resident.

Lim notes that she is drawn to this medium because of its immediacy. She explains that textiles are a medium that everyone is very familiar with and can connect with instantly. “Textiles have tradition and historical relevance with every culture; we wear cloth every day, we touch textiles every day. These elements of connection and intimacy are important to my work in that they bring an element of accessibility through materiality,” she says.

She also finds the process of hand embroidery meditative, and draws inspiration from em- broidery artists such as Tilleke Schwartz and Takashi Iwasaki, as well as graphic novelists, phils...
**Cultural Calendar**

May 26–June 9, 2015

**by salena tran**

Summer’s just around the corner and with it comes good weather and amazing events! With children’s events and family-friendly festivities, there’s no reason to stay indoors. Grab a few friends and hit the cultural art shows that include dancing, singing and much more. Here are some events you won’t want to miss!

**Vancouver International Children’s Festival**
May 25–27
Granville Island
1665 Granville St., Vancouver
www.childrensfestival.ca
(604) 788-5755

Bring the kids to the annual Vancouver International Children’s Festival for a fun time! This event is fun for the whole family! Be sure to visit the variety of shows that showcase diversity and multiculturalism. There will be food, crafts and music all around for this joyous festival! Please visit the website for more information on pricing and scheduling.

**Spanish Theatre with English Subtitles**
May 26–31
Various locations
www.latinosociety.ca

In May, Latin American theatre is celebrated all over the Lower Mainland. This year the Latin Society Association puts on Spanish theatre with English subtitles to celebrate the rich culture. Two renowned playwrights have been selected with two phenomenal plays:

- Peter Gravure Automatique: Dalla Husband at Atelier 17
May 28–June 21
Burnaby Art Gallery
634 Dee Lake Ave., Burnaby
burnabyart.com/Things-To-Do/Arts-and-Heritage
(604) 294-7944

- Kuroshio by Katsumi Kimoto
May 28–June 20
Vancouver Art Gallery
155 W 6th Ave., Vancouver
www.kimotogallery.com
(604) 688-9967

Katsumi Kimoto pays tribute to her five years spent on the Pacific Ocean. Her paintings try to capture the movement of water in an abstract form, the reflection of light and the colours of its depths and different environments. For more information on the exhibition, please visit her website.

**European Festival**
May 29–31
Swangard Stadium
3883 Imperial St., Burnaby
www.europelivefestival.com

The European Festival features music, food and crafts from all over the world in this activity packed weekend. This year’s festival has Turkey as featured country. Learn more about Turkey and their beliefs. Discover similarities and differences while speaking to others in a safe environment. If you have additional questions, book a one-on-one appointment. For more information, please visit the website.

**Wonderland Fayre: Spring Family Festival**
May 30–June 1
Wonderland Valley Resort
1756 Depot Rd., Squamish
www.wonderlandvalleyresort.com
(604) 376-4200

The annual Spring Family Festival and Wonderland Fayre brings crafts, fun, sports and a whole lot more. Take a small road trip to beautiful Squamish, B.C., and participate in interactive games and fun! There’s an option to camp overnight, which gives you an opportunity to enjoy the outdoors alongside other families.

**The Human Library**
May 30, 1–2 p.m.
City of Bhangra Festival
999 Canada Place, Vancouver
(604) 294-7944

This instalment of the Human Library is focused on the theme of religions, beliefs and spirituality. Learn more from others who are passionate about their faith and their beliefs. Discover similarities and differences while speaking to others in a safe environment. If you have additional questions, book a one-on-one appointment. For more information, please visit the website.

**Veg Expo 2015**
May 31, 10–5 p.m.
Vancouver Convention Centre
999 Canada Place, Vancouver
www.vegeexpo.ca

This vegetarian and vegan event is focused on all things veggie! Sample new products to help you create and maintain the lifestyle you want. With giveaways, a kids’ zone and free samples, bring the whole family to this natural well-filled event. For more information, please visit the website.

**Doors Open Richmond 2015**
June 6–7
Various locations in Richmond
www.richmond.ca/culture/about/events/doorsoopen
(604) 253-8810

Learn more about what Richmond has to offer at Doors Open Richmond 2015. Discover Richmond’s heritage, culture and arts at this two-day affair. With over 43 sites including museums, national historic sites and art galleries to choose from, you’ll have fun learning about what this unique city has to offer.

**COASTAL SOUND OFFERS AN UPLIFTING CHORAL EXPERIENCE WITH NEW SEASON**

Award-winning choirs deliver artistry, spirit, community and heart to concert-goers

From Sea to Sea: Sunday, June 7th, 2015. 7pm at the Vancouver Cultural Centre, 1205 Pinetree Way, Coquitlam. Enjoy songs of travel, adventure and risk on high seas, beautiful songs of Canada’s heritage, culture and arts.

Coastal Sound Youth Choir and local indie band The Saltteens join forces for a fourth year to present their innovative cross-pollination of classical choral music and indie rock. Choral music just got cooler than ever.

Ticket pricing and purchase information for all shows at www.coastalsoundsmusic.com. VIP Season Pass program for preferred seating and other advantages available until November 1st, 2014.

About the Coastal Sound Music Academy

Coastal Sound Music connects singers and outstanding choral music educators with the community. From the way 4 to 5 year old Madbourdeul song play program, to the professional and award winning Youth and Children’s Choirs, to DeConte, a new choral experience for adults, there is a place for singers to share a sense of spirit, artistry, heart and community.
A recent trip to Boston's North Square

The man dressed in silth centu-ry American costume is standing in historic North Square, an integral part of the North End district in Boston, Massachusetts. It’s the city’s oldest residential community having been settled in the 1630s. The North End, and North Square in particular, was home to crucial events in the early American history.

In the background of the photo, on the left side, is the home of Paul Revere, the famous American patriot who in 1775 warned the Colonial militia of the approach of British forces. His warning occurred in the independence of the American Revolution which culminated in the American Revolution from Britain.

One of the defining factors of the American Revolution was the imposition of the British Stamp Act, a hated tax which was supported by Governor Thomas Hutchinson, the last royal governor of Massachusetts. His home was also in North Square and was raided by citizens protesting the tax.

There are five intersecting streets in North Square, and on the corner of two of them, Sun St. and Moon St., diagonally across from Paul Revere’s house, there have been several churches since 1649. The Old North Meet-ing House was the first and its Puritan minister was Increase Mather, an important figure in his day. Unfortunately, along with his son Cotton Mather, he became negatively associated with the Salem witch trials of 1692 by defending the judges and refusing to denounce the trials. The Old North Meeting House burned to the ground in 1770.

From the 1770s to the 19th centu-ry, the North End included a community of free African Americans. One notable resident was David Walker, who worked in the early 1800s as an outspoken African-American abolitionist and anti-slavery activist.

Bordered by Italy, Austria, Croa-tia, and Slovenia, Slovenia has found itself at a lit-eral crossroads between West-ern and Eastern Europe, with its capital Ljubljana. The country is farther (but not too far) away. It’s unsurprising, there-fore, that its cuisine is as eclectic and diverse as the land itself – much of the region has ties of influences and shared history with its neighbours. Today’s recipe bears similarities to both Turkish, Hungarian and Italian, more specifically, Italian polenta.

Recipes for Žganci date back at least three centuries and first began with buckwheat flour, which was evolving to other grains like wheat and maize. As its ingre-dients are both affordable and widely accessible, I chose to create my own interpretation of a Styrian Žganci, the result is more the latter way than dry and crumbled. It serves as the perfect starchy, whether on its own as a savoury or sweet dish, or as a side dish for a hearty meal. Yield: 6 Servings.

Ingredients

- 3 cups corn flour (not cornmeal)
- 5 cups water or broth
- Salt to taste

Savoury topping/inclusion ideas

- Pork cracklings or bacon
- Hard cheese (such as Parmesan)
- Sauerkraut
- Stew (goulash or braised lamb Shank)

Sweet topping/inclusion ideas

- Honey
- Yogurt or Kefir

Method

1. Bring the water to a gentle boil in a medium saucepan – if you have one with taller sides, it will form a large mass – that’s the perfect starchy, whether on its own as a savoury or sweet dish, or as a side dish for a hearty meal. Yield: 6 Servings.

Ingredients

- 3 cups corn flour (not cornmeal)
- 5 cups water or broth
- Salt to taste

Recipe by Jen dela Luna

Spring Soundwalks 2015

Meet on the path by the tennis courts at Broadcast New Park (Pentiction and Wall Street)

Bring an insect isle, a corridor of shallow water and mountain peaks formed by the last ice age. It was home of the Kwantlen and Sinixt peoples for several thousand years before the arrival of European explorers in the eighteenth century. How many dollars homes perch at the crest of the mountain, this is the view from the crest of the mountains.

Along the banks of Burrard Inlet is New Westminster, an active public space just a stone’s throw from a tanker port and coal yard. Set among farmlands and mountain views, the soundwalk encompasses sounds of urban green space at the foot of industrial activity.