Storytelling in the Digital Age

By BETTY SHEA

As society turns increasingly to online sources for news and entertainment, storytelling becomes more and more about creating digital content.

Fortunately for local artists, Vancouver is a hub for digital creativity. From producers to social media specialists, here are some messages from the local talent.

Pay attention to your audience and to social media

"When you’re making a film, it’s really important to think of your audience early on," says Dr. Yvette Lu, actor, filmmaker and family physician. "Build your audience when you’re making your film by starting social media accounts, posting behind-the-scenes pictures, so that when your film comes out, you already have a following."

Lu is host and co-producer of House Call with Dr. Yvette Lu, a series of short online films about caregivers across Canada. The series is nominated for two categories, Best Reality and Best of BC, at the 2018 Vancouver Web Festival taking place this month. Founded in 2013, the festival has attracted digital submissions from over 24 countries this year. The 3-day event includes screenings, panel discussions, workshops and more.

For those who rarely spend time on social media, venturing beyond Facebook, let alone Pinterest or Instagram, can seem daunting. One way to gain a foothold is by attending social media conferences and seminars. Stephanie Michelle Scott, social media specialist of Wildfire Effect Consulting, and Holly Carinci, founder & CEO of HollyWords Publicity Group, are co-leading a workshop entitled 'Social Media, How To Build An Audience For Your Personal Brand' at the Vancouver Web Festival.

Scott explains that good stories appeal to a wide range of people but, more importantly, they are highly relevant to a niche group. Therefore, it pays to spend time on one’s social media presence.

"Getting [the stories] in front of that niche group is 'internet gold,'" says Scott. "When you hear about a ‘viral’ video or a social media post? This is what we mean. And that can lead to online sources for news and entertainment."

Getting the notices right is also important, she says. "If you have a strong social media presence, I’m sure they want to be kind and prepare us for the hard times that were ahead of us, but it sounded very ominous. This is, after all, a very mosaic culture where people from all walks of life could come together in a new place. What if no one gets along with each other? What if this is just like South Africa?"

Scott says she was prepared for the hard times, but was surprised at how well everything went. "Don’t think for a moment it is going to be easy here. It’s like South Africa here too."

That was the warm welcome we received from two South African expats that met us at YVR with Tim Hortons coffee. "I am sure they wanted to be kind and prepare us for the hard times that were ahead of us, but it sounded very ominous. This is, after all, a very mosaic culture where people from all over the world come to live together in a new place."

What if no one gets along with each other? What if this is just like South Africa? If we could not have black and white people live together in harmony, what are the odds that people from all walks of life could come together? I looked at my tired-eyed family and wondered if they suddenly doubted our decision to immigrate too.

The first family decision we made in our new country was to vote as a group. We decided that Canada would hold a more certain future. We received from two South African expats that met us at YVR.

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Scandinavian fishing stories

by Masha Rademakers

The Scandinavian Cultural Society is organizing its annual Nordic Spirit Images Exhibit at the Scandinavian Community Centre. The exhibit will move to the Gulf of Georgia Cannery in Steveston on May 5 before returning to the Scandinavian Cultural Centre. This year’s exhibit will focus on early Scandinavian-Canadian fishing activities in BC.

“The immigrants who came to Canada from Scandinavian countries were often sea-going boys. Most would have grown up in farming families, but even those liked to fish for additional food during the winter. They knew how to handle themselves around water,” says Carolyn Thauberger, who organized the Nordic Spirit Images Exhibit alongside John Stuart, Isaac Van der Horst, and members of the Scandinavian Cultural Society.

Vikings

Every year, the photo exhibit displays photos from one or more of the five Scandinavian Community groups: Swedes, Finns, Norwegians, Danes and Icelanders. This year focuses on all the groups together.

“Scandinavians have a lot in common. They don’t like showing off, and they value honesty. Another similarity is that they like to work together,” says Thauberger. If you look at the history of cooperatives, movements in western Canada, you notice that many early leaders of these cooperatives were Scandinavian,” says Thauberger.

More than 9000 members are connected to the Scandinavian Community Centre in Burnaby where people from Nordic countries and anyone interested can join a club or attend Nordic cultural events. Thauberger is a member of Canada mostly for economic reasons in the early 1900s.

“It was a time where land had run out in the Scandinavian countries, and often only the oldest son could inherit the farm while other sons and daughters had to fend for themselves,” says Thauberger. “The Norwegian government started providing technical education which made my grandfather a blacksmith and my grandmother a numismatist, but even with these skills, jobs were scarce.”

An important reason that Canada became a settler’s destination was the fishing industry. As Thauberger explains, there was poverty in the Scandinavian countries after the Second World War. People started to come to Canada where they hoped to be able to continue fishing and sell their catch for a good price.

“One group of Norwegians connected to the Community Centre escaped from Norway during the war. They had been secretly ferrying refugees from Norway to the British Isles with their fishing boat until one day the Germans got a hold of this information. Before they could escape, they were captured by the Norwegian smugglers put all their family members on the boat – about 20 people, and as much food as possible onto their fishing boat and sailed to Canada,” says Thauberger.

Dog

The photo exhibit will feature pre-1950s photos of commercial and sport fishing, which have been gathered from the families connected to the Scandinavian Community Centre.

“The pictures come with a lot of interesting stories. One of the stories came from Norm Enridge, who got into trouble when he went ocean fishing with his younger brother when they were young. They called the Coast Guard, but when help arrived, the boys were already in the water next to their capsized boat. Norm had already been pulled out of the water when one of the men asked, ‘Do you want us to save your dog too?’ But Norm didn’t have a dog. That hairy head still struggling in the water was his little brother,” says Thauberger.

The pictures and their accompanying stories, live interviews, and an evening concert this year will all be part of the Nordic Spirit Images Exhibit, on April 14 and at the Scandinavian Community Centre.

For more information, visit www.scandinavianscentre.ca.
A gala to celebrate Muslim women in B.C.

by Ozlem Suleyman

Voices of Muslim Women (VMW), a non-profit organization, will be holding their annual gala on April 22, 2018 at the Bell Performing Arts Centre in Surrey to celebrate and inform the community about the accomplishments, talents and fearlessness of local women in Metro Vancouver.

Hosts of this year’s gala include UBC Associate Professor and Canada Research Chair, Ayesha Chaudhry, and Aliza Vellani, a Canadian television actress from Little Mosque on the Prairie. “I am very excited but also a little bit nervous,” says Vellani. “The gala provides a space for the community to come together and engage in a discussion in shared experience, and I want to do my very best to contribute on that day.”

The gala

Part of the gala will be a film festival and storytelling showcasing some films. The second half will have an award ceremony recognizing and honouring local films. The second half will include people recognizing the accomplishments, talents and fearlessness of local Muslim women in Metro Vancouver.

“The gala will be showcasing an external partner and an internal member this year,” says Fatima Ahmed, co-founder and program’s director. Tayybeh Syrian Cuisine, a caterer in Vancouver and the external partner of VMW, will have an opportunity to share their story.

The gala will also showcase one of the internal members, Aliza Youssfi, who is the creator of The Sisters Project, a portrait series that aims to diversify women, in a photography exhibition. According to Ahmed, besides making new friends and finding new allies to talk about causes that affect everybody, the gala can give the youth something to look forward to and they can become inspired by their role models.

The gala gives people the chance to dress up and experience some amazing food and entertainment. Part of the gala will be a film festival and storytelling showcasings. Festivals and storytelling showcasings are aiming to diversify women’s experiences so it is quite a unique occasion.

“The gala and VMW’s programs allow Muslim women to enter their respective industries without feeling defined by their faith while also being empowered by their faith,” says Vellani.

“A nervous laughter filled the room,” says Vellani. “Welcome to Canada! Here no one fights with anyone.”

For Muslims and non-Muslim alike

In April 2017, Aisha Amijee, founder, board president and executive director of VMW, organized an event called “The Voices of Women Festival” in Coquitlam. Ahmed attended that event as a representative from another organization co-sponsoring part of the event. Amijee and Ahmed discussed how to turn the event into an ongoing service for a wider demographic over a cup of coffee. The two decided to start a non-profit organization that would offer programs, services and events to target women of all ages and backgrounds.

Voices of Muslim Women (VMW) is a non-religious, social and professional organization that provides space for self-identified Muslim women, while also building relationships with the larger community. Although VMW focuses on Muslim women because they are marginalized, non-Muslims and men are welcome to join and participate in their events.

“We are not a religious organization,” Ahmed explains. “The point of using ‘Muslim’ is as a cultural identity, and there are lots of ways that people choose to live that culture.”

VMW members hope to have sustainable support for their ongoing programs such as digital storytelling and art therapy in the future.

“What I think makes VMW so unique is the fact that the programs run by VMW are taught and supported by Muslim women,” says Vellani. “It makes such a difference when you attend a class and see fellow Muslim women teaching and executing that profession to the fullest.”

VMW was founded in B.C. but Ahmed is hoping to reach out across Canada and the world to build a strong network to face challenges such as mental health, addiction, racism and internal biases.

“We are growing. We are young. We are open to feedback, collaboration and ideas,” Ahmed adds. “So, we are willing to talk to everybody who is out there. Whatever you think you know about the group, you don’t. Please talk to us.”

For more information, visit www.voicesofmuslimwomen.com.
Accidental tattoo artists

by VICTOR VAN DER MERWE

The Vancouver Tattoo and Culture show will be at Van-
couver Convention Centre in Canada from Apr-
on 20-22. With almost everyone nowadays having at least one tattoo, it is hard to believe a time when being a tattoo artist was not seen as a good profes-
sion.

Two artists who saw the possi-
bilities in the medium are Emilio Hidalgo who can be found at The Fall Tattoo Studio and Mirella Stefanucci of Mirella’s Touch of Class Tattoos in Burnaby.

Old country, olden days

Born and raised in Lima, Peru, Hidalgo wanted to be an artist, but his parents wanted him to study something more respect-
able.

“They wanted me to study archi-
decture, but I wanted to do art,” he says.

Once in art school in Peru, Hidalgo discovered tattooing. He left school and went to a shop in the city to help out and in 2000, he started tattooing as a career. Tattooing carried a stigma in Peru: his first clients were gang-
sters, the kind of people that did not care about stigma and could afford tattoos. In 2007, leaving his shop in the hands of his sister, he moved to Canada with his Ca-
dian wife and started working as just an artist at the Fall. With the headquarters of owning a shop gone, he likes that he can focus on his art and leave the business to other people.

New world pioneer

Vancouver born Stefanucci has been tattooing for over 25 years, but tattooing came into her life almost by mistake when she was in high school.

“I hated school, but I loved art so I took every art course I could take. I was going to become a graphic artist when just by fluke I met a tattoo artist,” says Stefanucci.

The tattoo shop she walked into was Curly’s Tattoos. He thought she was a great artist and asked her if she would like to come help out in the shop and it took off from there. Just like Hidalgo, Stefanucci had a hit of pushback from her parents.

“I was the little Italian girl and Mom and Dad wanted me to work in an office and conform to that kind of life and it really was not my cup of tea.”

Direct from her apprentice-
ship Stefanucci opened her first studio in Vancouver, becoming the first female artist to own her own tattoo studio in Canada.

The future

For Hidalgo the future lies back in his home country of Peru. He wants to develop his art and broaden his influence on the tat-
too world and then go and may-
be own a small shop in the coun-
try. Where people who want his kind of tattoo will come and find him.

“I would like to move back to my country one day and be more relaxed. Somewhere out of the city and people who like my work will follow where I am,” he says.

For Stefanucci the industry is headed for a bright future.

“Don’t know if it could get any better than what it is. These young artists are just phenom-
enal. When I started no one was aspiring to be a tattoo artist and now kids are going to art school

so that they can become tattoo artists,” she says.

For both these artists who have made a career out of prac-
ticing art in a way they did not originally thought possible, it has become clear that the stig-
a of tattoos are going away and art schools are now not acciden-
tally giving us tattoo artists, but eagerly training the next gen-
eration of body artists.

Some of those young tattoo artists will be displaying their art and capability at the Vancou-
ver Tattoo Show.

For more information, please visit www.vancouvertattoo.ca

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SFU is in a new_space

by MUNATSI MAVHIMA

Business of Design students and faculty at Simon Fraser University have carved out a makerspace leading students to make more than just con-
nections in the classroom and hopefully reaching people across the Lower Mainland.

The Business of Design program is a very young, year-long pro-
gram that began in the fall of 2016. According to the program’s website, “The program is for you if...you want to make a positive impact in the world through sus-
tainability.”

“Space for sustainability

This initiative is described by co-
director of the Business of Design program, Lisa Papania, Ph.D. as “the prototype before the proto-
type of what a space could be.”

Since 2007 she has been looking for ways to bring practical crafts-
manship to her business classes. As Papania explains, “the focus that I’ve always had, besides un-
derstanding the value of work, is also on sustainability...you can’t keep pushing the price of products down and expect those things not to negatively impact the environment.”

The push for a makerspace

Efforts to advance these ideas were initially thwarted. This was because workstations and makerspaces were restricted to students of specific faculties, whether it was in fine arts, in-
teractive art and technology or communications, art and tech-
nology. Business students were left to borrow space where they could. This would not have been possible without the collabora-
tion of students and faculty from the Emily Carr University of Art + Design. This was a collabora-
tive effort, namely City Studio, an initiative that presented stu-
dents with real life problems fac-
ing different groups in Vancou-
ver. The program was offered by both SFU and Emily Carr in part-
nership with the City of Vanvou-
ver. As connections with Emily Carr grew, especially with Theu-
nis Szyman of Basic Design, he opened his space in Maker Labs to SFU business students in 2014.

The students are the future

At SFU’s Surrey campus, room 400B (which is 1800 sq. ft) has been a space unrestricted by the divisions of different faculties where anyone is able to make a positive impact. Students, teach-

ers and entrepreneurs from dif-
ferent backgrounds in SFU and beyond have created a space that is all-encompassing. It works as a workshop, meeting area or to fit the needs of any of its occupants at the time they re-
quire it. It is driven by students of the Business of Design cohort program, specifically those from the fall 2017 program. Jay Tseng, Benta Cheng and Henry Lin are some of the students involved in making _Space a reality at the Surrey campus. By meeting with leaders and stakeholders from SFU, including student groups, student society members and the wider community, these stu-
dents were able to create a space that brings people together in a creative and productive way.

“Our goal is to help students explore their passion and alsotake any concept into reality,” says Lin.

At the heart of _Space and all that has been achieved are the students who’ve been in charge of moving the SFU physical mak-
er space forward. Jay Tseng, one of the Business of Design students integral to _Space told SFU’s Beedie School of Business, “We believe that our space is not just a makerspace but a design space, art space, social space, start-up space, inspirational space and so much more. When people use our space, they will naturally define what this space is to them.”

It is also all in the name. _Space is a makerspace, a study space, and a creative space that joins a growing number of col-
laborative workspaces across Van-
couver that are designed to be interdisciplinary and interac-
tive. This expands what it means to work with others from different backgrounds and expertise and allows a space for it. There are big plans for a _Space and places like it, says Papania. “We want to create a makerspace and a maker’s experience that feeds into those other [makerspaces across the Lower Mainland],” she adds.

For more information, go to: www.sfu.ca/funews/
stories/2018/05/business-
of-design-students-launch-
makerspace-at-sfu-surrey.html

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The Source is looking for volunteer copyeditors

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- You’ll work with writers to help them iron out any wrinkles in their articles.
- You’ll be required to attend an editing session every other Sunday afternoon [twice a month].

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- Extensive knowledge of Canadian Press style preferred.
- Great people skills.

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"Learning about the plants and our ancestors’ ways of life is how we can reconnect ourselves to the land and also to each other, even across cultural and language differences," says Graham.

Respect and reciprocity
"It’s not just about taking; we have to ask ourselves what we can offer in return, and find ways to reciprocate and give back," says Graham.

"I like introducing people to plants they’ve been walking past – sometimes for years – but never really seen or met before," says Rebecca Graham, facilitator of the Urban Food & Fibre walk, which will be taking place Apr. 14 at Coquitlam Heritage.

"Most of us are completely disconnected from nature these days – and even from each other," says Graham.

Graham says the Urban Food & Fibre walk is meant to show us the marvels that live in our own backyard, not only to connect us with nature, but to also help us realize that we too are a part of nature. She says it’s not just about using plants for food but recognizing that everything that comes from our backyard can be used as a resource.

"We can’t live without fibre any more than we can live without food or shelter," says Graham, who notes that clothing, rope, fishing lines, nets and baskets are all made with fibre.

She says it’s also important to recognize our impact on the environment; what we do, how we consume and what we take changes our ecosystem. She feels this walk is an opportunity to have conversations about the land we live on and to learn more about it.

"The dandelion only grows where there are people," says Snyder. "It helps to flush toxins, gives us minerals and vitamins, depending on how she’s [dandelion] extracted. She’s a little misunderstood."

Both Snyder and Graham believe humans have a responsibility to the plant kingdom and future generations.

"It’s exciting to see everyone’s eyes going wide with wonder," says Graham. "Facilitating that experience for people is some of the most important work I do."

For more information on the walk, please visit www.coquitlamheritage.ca/eventslist/2018/4/14/urban-food-fibre-walk
A conversation with Lee Maracle

**by Brittany Thomson**

As part of the New Legends of Vancouver Author Readings, author Lee Maracle will be reading from her latest book, *My Conversations with Canadians*, at the Vancouver Public Library’s Central Branch on Apr. 22.

Written in the Notes application on her iPhone, this collection of prose essays started as a pipe dream for Maracle that eventually became a reality. Broken up into thirteen different conversations, *My Conversations with Canadians* dives head first into the questions Canadians have been asking First Nations people for years – questions Maracle says have followed her throughout her whole career. When starting out, Maracle said she was told that “Indian books don’t get published because Indian people can’t read.” Including things like what pronouns to use and how Canadians can help, her book covers a wide variety of topics including colonialism, left-wing politics and the Inquisition into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women. She believes that Canadians just don’t know First Nations people, and she has taken it upon herself to better educate the masses. Maracle says she often finds herself repeating, ‘Nothing about us, without us.’

Residential schools: a cultural genocide

According to Maracle, until Canadians begin to prioritize issues in their own backyard versus those overseas, the misunderstandings between Canadian and First Nations people will continue to grow. The thirteenth conversation of the book is titled ‘Reconciliation and Residential Schools as an Assimilation Program’.

“You cannot reconcile something that is versus, the misunderstandings between Canadian and First Nations people will continue to grow. The thirteenth conversation of the book is titled ‘Reconciliation and Residential Schools as an Assimilation Project’. She feels if the Canadian Government really wants to affect change and harbor a healthy relationship with the First Nations, they must ask them what they need versus telling them what they are getting.

Curriculum addendum

As a parent and grandparent, Maracle worries about future generations being uneducated in their own culture. She also has some thoughts on how Canadian parents can prepare their children for dealing with racism in and out of school.

“Kids emulate us. We need to ask ourselves as parents, what kind of human being do I want this child to be? Kindness is the way to raise a child. Be thoughtful if you want them to be thoughtful. Be good if you want them to be good,” she says.

Maracle hopes to continue the conversation and jokes that her next book might be titled *Conversations with First Nations*, since Indigenous people have just as many questions about Canadians, and continue to educate both Canadians and First Nations people.

“I missed the classroom experience as an Indigenous student. Make our stories part of curriculum. We need to be able to study our own work. We need that to advance as a country,” she adds.

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Maracle hopes her book will inspire other Indigenous writers and wishes to continue supporting new and upcoming writers in the Indigenous community.

“I hope that I manage to support emerging writers and leave a legacy behind that I was the lead goose in a flight of a lot of writers,” she says.

For more information on the VPL Author Readings please visit [vpl.bibliocommons.com/events](http://vpl.bibliocommons.com/events)
Unleash your best: fundraiser for Rohingya refugees

by SIMON WILLIAMS-IM

The first photography exhibition of Marco Francesco Lilliu was unveiled April 5 in the cultural playground of Commercial Drive at The Drive Coffee Bar and runs the rest of the month.

Lilliu, a family and business lawyer, is a Vancouver-based photographer showcasing his work after long time encouragement from friends and admirers. Lilliu's donation of the exhibit's profits to charity has sparked further public interest in his project.

The exhibition focuses on the photographer’s own experience of Cambodia and Myanmar. All funds will support Rohingya refugees, who face the daily pain of living in crowded camps after fleeing an ethnic cleansing campaign last year.

Lens focuses on refugees

In less than six months, over 670,000 Rohingya (an ethnic and religious Muslim minority) fled the brutality of Myanmar’s military and found themselves sheltering in neighbouring Bangladesh.

The crisis has been highlighted by the United Nations as a ‘textbook example of ethnic cleansing’ and reports that 100,000 refugees are in danger of landslides, floods and disease as the monsoon and cyclone season approaches.

The situation motivated Lilliu to propose an exhibition after becoming aware of the situation during his travels across Myanmar (formerly known as Burma). As a photographer, he documented his journey from multiple trips to the area, ranging from photos of the bustling streets of Phnom Penh to the rebel-run lands on the border with China.

“While the photos I’m exhibiting are curated from five trips to Myanmar and Cambodia over the past few years, I’m excited that the proceeds are going to help people in need affected by this tragedy,” he says.

Juggling work and passion

Lilliu believes that travel is a fantastic way to explore the world and helps him to engage with his future projects. He’s currently planning to go to Cox Bazar in Bangladesh where a majority of Rohingya refugees are located, across from the border with Myanmar, Erbil (Arbil) which is the capital of Iraqi Kurdistan to explore the daily life experiences of locals and later to visit Nepal for a hiking and photography expedition.

When asked how this is possible with a full time job, Lilliu smiles. “I take a couple weeks off work. I do work on the flight to my destinations,” he says. “I work on the plane, distraction free, and usually travel for 2-3 weeks as work doesn’t allow for long trips.”

During his travels, Lilliu spends time exploring and taking photos and when on location, he meets people in the legal world and networks.

In terms of his artwork, he doesn’t rely on Photoshop but uses such programs for small edits in terms of sizing.

Lilliu recommends finding a passion and driving it forward. “Just do it. I came up with an idea and then drove it forward,” he says. “When you have a side project, you need to focus, set hours to spend reading and learning about the topic.”

This exhibition offers a vast array of photographs, which Lilliu says are “affordable for people.” The money raised by the project will go to BRAC, an international charity with operations in 12 countries and is focused on ending extreme poverty.

For more information, please visit: www.instagram.com/marcofrancesco news.un.org/en/story/2018/03/1004232

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When asked how this is possible with a full time job, Lilliu smiles. “I take a couple weeks off work. I do work on the flight to my destinations,” he says. “I work on the plane, distraction free, and usually travel for 2-3 weeks as work doesn’t allow for long trips.”

During his travels, Lilliu spends time exploring and taking photos and when on location, he meets people in the legal world and networks.

In terms of his artwork, he doesn't rely on Photoshop but uses such programs for small edits in terms of sizing.

Lilliu recommends finding a passion and driving it forward. “Just do it. I came up with an idea and then drove it forward,” he says. “When you have a side project, you need to focus, set hours to spend reading and learning about the topic.”

This exhibition offers a vast array of photographs, which Lilliu says are “affordable for people.” The money raised by the project will go to BRAC, an international charity with operations in 12 countries and is focused on ending extreme poverty.

For more information, please visit: www.instagram.com/marcofrancesco news.un.org/en/story/2018/03/1004232

Unleash your best: fundraiser for Rohingya refugees

by SIMON WILLIAMS-IM

The first photography exhibition of Marco Francesco Lilliu was unveiled April 5 in the cultural playground of Commercial Drive at The Drive Coffee Bar and runs the rest of the month.

Lilliu, a family and business lawyer, is a Vancouver-based photographer showcasing his work after long time encouragement from friends and admirers. Lilliu’s donation of the exhibit’s profits to charity has sparked further public interest in his project.

The exhibition focuses on the photographer’s own experience of Cambodia and Myanmar. All funds will support Rohingya refugees, who face the daily pain of living in crowded camps after fleeing an ethnic cleansing campaign last year.

Lens focuses on refugees

In less than six months, over 670,000 Rohingya (an ethnic and religious Muslim minority) fled the brutality of Myanmar’s military and found themselves sheltering in neighbouring Bangladesh.

The crisis has been highlighted by the United Nations as a ‘textbook example of ethnic cleansing’ and reports that 100,000 refugees are in danger of landslides, floods and disease as the monsoon and cyclone season approaches.

The situation motivated Lilliu to propose an exhibition after becoming aware of the situation during his travels across Myanmar (formerly known as Burma). As a photographer, he documented his journey from multiple trips to the area, ranging from photos of the bustling streets of Phnom Penh to the rebel-run lands on the border with China.

“While the photos I’m exhibiting are curated from five trips to Myanmar and Cambodia over the past few years, I’m excited that the proceeds are going to help people in need affected by this tragedy,” he says.

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Complex characters drive a whodunit

by JAKE MCGRAIL

Nine Dragons, a play set in 1920s Hong Kong, traces the journey of Tommy Lam, Hong Kong’s best detective, as he struggles against both the criminals and the colonial system that shape his job and his life.

The show runs at the Gateway Theatre April 12–21, and is a co-production with Vertigo Theatre and the Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre.

Setting the stage
Written by Jovanni Sy, Nine Dragons is a crime thriller set in colonial Hong Kong. Lam is a detective on the police force, but though he is the best detective around, the colonial system and blanket discrimination in his home-country means he is always being held back from reaching his full potential.

“Tommy is an extraordinary character,” says Craig Hall, director of the show. “He’s Sherlock Holmes-like, very capable, but he’s hit by a glass ceiling, held back because of who he is. He struggles with his cultural identity in a world where who he is creates barriers.”

Hall is also the artistic director of Vertigo Theatre, a company that devotes itself specifically to mystery theatre.

“I’ve always been drawn to the genre,” says Hall. “Mystery, police procedure, ghost stories; they’re all rife with potential to both entertain and shock.”

Jovanni came to Hall five years ago, when he was writing the piece, with a request for them to try and help him nail the genre.

“We saw huge potential in it, and we helped him develop it,” says Hall.

The mystery genre can sometimes be seen as simply a world of “whodunits” – full of plays that are purely entertainment-driven, but Hall pushes back against that idea. He sees the genre as richer than that, and while he still wants to make sure its viewers are entertained, he wants this show to pack a well-rounded punch.

“We get the tropes,” he says, “the archetypes of the characters, it’s a fun night out; but there’s a social core to this piece. I’m hoping the audience is entertained, but that there’s something that resonates beyond just a fun evening out at the theatre.”

Mary Ng plays Tommy Lam in Nine Dragons.

One of the pieces of the social core is a struggle with cultural identity, and it’s something that not only Lam but a multitude of characters attempt to deal with on-stage.

“They’re making their way in a time where they’re not empowered,” says Hall, “but through their nature and audacity they’re burning a new path. There’s also some moral ambiguity in this piece; everyone is working inside and outside of the law, making complex moral choices that make them much more interesting. They’re complex characters, not just heroes and bad guys.”

Filling the role
The character of Lam will be played by John Ng, an actor who has been a part of the development of the show since its initial stages around five years ago.

“I knew Jovanni from way back,” says Ng. “When I wrote the play, I became involved in the initial workshop and its development. He said that the Tommy Lam character was perfect for me, so I’ve been a part of it since.”

Ng himself is originally from Hong Kong, as he was born and raised there before moving to Ottawa at the age of eight. When he was a child, Hong Kong was still under British rule so he has an understanding of the history Nine Dragons represents – and an appreciation of Lam’s struggles.

“Tommy’s main motivation is to prove people wrong,” says Ng. “To show that we, as Chinese citizens, can fulfill our own destiny; we don’t need to rely on Europeans in order to succeed.”

The mystery and crime thriller genre is one that Ng had never worked in until this show, so he is excited to bring the character of Lam and the world of Nine Dragons onto the stage at the Gateway Theatre.

“I want the audience to feel like they’ve gone through a roller-coaster ride,” he says, “because of all the twists and turns in the plot. I hope that they want to see more of the character, see more of him trying to solve different cases.”

For more information, visit www.gatewaytheatre.com.

Photo courtesy of Gateway Theatre

Craig Hall, artistic director of Vertigo Theatre and director of Nine Dragons.

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A dynamic and bold Celtic fiddle player, Kierah presents a powerful night of traditional and original music inspired by her Irish/Scottish heritage. In an ever-changing music scene, Kierah showcases an infusion of pop and world rhythms, taking Celtic music into a new direction.

Appearing with multi-instrumentalist and producer, Adrian Delan (piano, accordion, viola, mandolin); innovative guitarist Adam Dobres and percussionist Robin Wynne (The Paper Boys).

Sunday, April 22nd at the St. James Hall
3214 West 10th Avenue - $24 ($20 members)
Info: 604-736-3022 - Tickets: Highlife, Tapestry or
web: www.roguefolk.com

Kierah

The Rogue Folk Club Presents

Featuring PATSY THOMPSON with Bruce Powell's SILVER CITY BAND

Saturday, April 14, 2018, 7:30 pm
To honor Loretta._MENU SPECIALS & BEVERAGES FEATURING 'LORETTA LYNNE MOKTAIL'
Anatolian folk songs revisited

By Curtis Seufert

To celebrate the Turkish National Sovereignty and Children’s Day, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Turkey and the Turkish Consulate General in Vancouver presents Arpanatolia, the Turkey-based musical, at the Chan Centre Apr. 24.

"The Turkish government is inviting children from all around the world, every April 23rd, to celebrate it all together. We are trying to continue that tradition," says Anil Inan, Turkish Consul General of Vancouver.

Arpanatolia brings the Anatolian past to the present. The trio, comprised of Çağatay Akyol (harp), Ferhat Erdem (Anatolian instruments) and Cemal Özkızıltas (percussion) brings together Anatolian folk songs, many of which have been around for millennia, with the modern Western harmonic system, showcasing a long and rich history of Anatolian culture through music.

A history with the harp

Since he was a child, Akyol knew that he wanted to become a musician, but up until his first day at his music conservatory, he had his eyes set on the violin. His instructors stated that only right-handed people could play violin, and since Akyol is left-handed he was forced to pick another instrument. Sensing that Akyol was unimpressed by the other options, the harp instructor asked if he would be interested in becoming a student of the harp. Akyol, having overheard a conversation describing the instrument earlier that day, agreed despite never having seen the instrument.

"The harp teacher asked me, ‘Would you like to play harp?’ I said ‘yes’, and she asked me what it looked like,” says Akyol. "And I heard a bit about it at the door [of the conservatory], so I said ‘it’s like a triangle, with the strings and such’ and she said, ‘Congratulations, then I’ll take you!’"

Playing the harp for nearly 40 years, Akyol is the second ever known male harpist from Turkey and has built a lengthy career of performance roles, including current solo harpist for the Turkish Presidential Symphony Orchestra, a position he has held since he was 19, as well as being the harpist for Arpanatolia.

"We have very rich culture: if you look at a country to their food, to their ‘kitchen,’ you can see how they live," he says. "So we have incredible foods, and for each village you can find 30, 40 different [ones], which means you have a rich culture. So Arpanatolia has the likeness of a kind of ‘kitchen’ of music."

Avrupa’nın muazzam entrikası, Anadolu halk müziği, ‘küçük’ olarak adlandırılır. Three of the best known characters in this genre are: İsmet Akyol, who is a renowned harpist; Ferhat Erdem, who specializes in Anatolian instruments; and Cemal Özkızıltas, who is well known for his percussion skills.

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A ‘kitchen’ of music

Founded nearly five years ago, Arpanatolia has pursued the goal of bringing the past to the present. By showcasing folk songs and instruments that date back to the Hittite empire (founded around 3600 years ago), Akyol aims to bring that era of music to audiences today.

"Arpanatolia has a mission, I can say, because we are playing Anatolian music, our traditional music, our folk songs, which means we move the history of these pieces from the past to the future. We try to remember for the people, from their past and for the future also. Generally music is a bridge from the past to the future," he says. "And I heard a bit about it at the door [of the conservatory], so I said ‘it’s like a triangle, with the strings and such’ and she said, ‘Congratulations, then I’ll take you!’"

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For more info, please visit www.chancentre.com
April 10–24, 2018

by Simon Yee

Spring is here and a lot of events happening around town are focusing on the beauty and importance of our environment. Check out the cherry blossoms this year in Vancouver Cherry Blossom Festival. Experience a visual feast of wildlife and nature, conservation and the environment, through the lens of international and local filmmakers at the Elements Film Festival. And March down Commercial Drive in honour of Earth Day, a global event dedicated to bringing awareness of the multitude of environmental catastrophes affecting our planet.

Vancouver Cherry Blossom Festival

April 1–29

Various neighbourhoods around Vancouver

www.vcbf.ca

The Vancouver Cherry Blossom Festival story is one of romance. It is an annual celebration that marks the reawakening of our community of all that makes us alive and human. We smile at one another. We take our lunches under the spreading blossoms. We spend the warming nights beneath illuminated clouds of flowers. We celebrate as people who have celebrated since time immemorial, with poetry, music, dance, food and drink, laughter and love. This April visit the myriad neighbourhoods for events centered on the cherry blossom tree. Visit the festival website for more information.

Incident at Vichy

April 11–22

Studio 16, Vancouver

www.theatreintheraw.ca

Arthur Miller’s tale Incident at Vichy playing at Studio 16 this month portrays persecution and anti-Semitism during the early days of the Second World War. During the Nazi occupation, a group of people are detained in a warehouse in the “Free Zone” of Vichy, France under suspicion of being Jewish. Their unconcern, fear and confusion is stirred up as they contemplate what options they may have left. What fate awaits them? For tickets and more information, please check out the Chan Centre’s website.

Elements Film Festival

April 14–15

Telus World of Science, Vancouver

www.elementsfilmfest.org

The Elements Film Festival will be held at the Telus World of Science on April 14 and 15, featuring dozens of environmentally-focused films, both shorts and feature length, from countries all over the world. Experts, filmmakers and accomplished scientists will engage in panel discussions and Q&A’s following the screenings. Take an extreme look at the waters of the Indian Ocean, the peak of Mount Kilimanjaro and the Marañon River in Peru through the lenses of some of the world’s most intrepid filmmakers. Check out the film festival’s website for a complete schedule of events.

Elizabeth Hollick: Body Politic

April 24–June 10

Surrey Art Gallery www.surrey.ca/culture-landmark

The Surrey Art Gallery will be showcasing the works of White Rock painter and muralist Elizabeth Hollick until June 10. Often startling and always colourful, the paintings by Hollick unite the human body with the world at large. She is celebrated throughout Surrey for her lively figurative paintings of local places, stories and characters. For many years she has also been fascinated by human anatomy, as well as the architecture and landscape of White Rock. With her signature humour, each painting in Body Politic portrays the connections between the privacy of the interior world and the development of society at large.

Daymé Arocena and Roberto Fonseca

April 15–17

Chan Centre for the Performing Arts at UBC, University Endowment Lands www.chancentre.com

The Chan Centre for the Performing Arts will present Afro-Cuban neo-soul singer Daymé Arocena and Havana-born piano virtuoso Roberto Fonseca in an exhilarating co-headline on April 15. These shining talents who draw from Cuba’s storied musical tradition will each ignite the stage – Arocena with her intoxicating vocals and Fonseca with his sophistication on the keys – offering a fresh and modern take on the styles rooted in their Caribbean home country. For tickets and more information, please check out the Chan Centre’s website.

National Canadian Film Day

April 18

Various venues across Canada

www.canadianfilmday.ca

The National Canadian Film Day has always been about encouraging all Canadians to celebrate the incredible achievements of the country’s filmmakers. On April 18, join your fellow Canadians in theatres, libraries, schools, public squares and drive-ins across the country as we celebrate our nation’s cinema. For a complete list of films playing around Metro Vancouver, please visit the NCFF’s website.

Light Transforming: Choral Explorations II with Michael Zaugg

April 20, 8 p.m.

Dunbar Ryerson United Church, Vancouver www.vancouverchamberchoir.com

On April 20, the Vancouver Chamber Choir will be presenting Light Transforming, a collection of choral works guest conducted by Swiss-Canadian conductor Michael Zaugg. This last choral presentation of this musical season will bring the whole range of vocal expression – from the majesty of choral and orchestra to the multi-hued palette of unaccompanied voices. Zaugg’s programme will have many new and intriguing choral works by Rautavaara, Rheinberger, Whitacre, Archer, Saint-Saëns, Elgar, Knudsen and Joby Talbot. Visit the choir’s website for a full repertoire list.

Make It! The Handmade Revolution

April 20–22

Pacific National Exhibition, Vancouver www.makeitshow.ca/vancouver

Since 2008, Make It has grown to become one of the most popular and well-attended craft fairs in Canada, with biannual shows in Vancouver, Edmonton and Calgary. Over 110 Makies (and some brand new ones too) are bringing their beautiful handmade goodies back to the Forum at the Pacific National Exhibition for a fabulous spring show! Stock up on accessories, jewellery, clothing, art, home decor, food, baby/kid items and lots of other beautifully crafted goods. As always, there will be delicious food trucks and a beer garden so make sure you come hungry and thirsty! Check out the Make It website for more information.

Eighth Annual Earth Day Parade

April 21, 5 p.m.

Commercial Drive, Vancouver www.earthdayparade.ca

Earth Day is a global event campaigning on behalf of environmental protection of our precious Earth. April 21 at 5 p.m., there will be an Earth Day parade on Commercial Drive from Broadway to Grandview Park to bring awareness of the problem of excess plastic pollution. Participants will be greeted by a celebration comprised of artists, musicians and all the good things that come with coming together as a community to address the things that matter most today. The event is family friendly, and youth from the across the Lower Mainland are welcome and encouraged to come. To learn more about the parade visit earthdayparade.ca. To learn more about the global initiative, please check out earthday.org.

Spirit Horse

April 21–29

Waterfront Theatre on Granville Island, Vancouver www.carOUSEltheatre.ca

Spirit Horse will be playing at the Waterfront Theatre from April 21 to 29. This musical adaptation of the popular children’s book, with music and lyrics by Don McLean, is an ode to the breathtaking beauty of the horses who roam the plains. The production follows the adventures of two First Nations children whose family is caught between traditional ways and urban culture. Angelina and Jesse’s lives are changed forever when their grandfather, who lives by the old ways on a prairies reserve, brings them a horse that has mysteriously appeared to him. The children feel an incredible bond to this majestic animal, which links the girls and their dad to their Stoney Nation heritage. The play is recommended for ages eight and older due to some challenging themes, intense moments and high-stakes scenes of action and adventure.