FREE

CELEBRATING 20 YEARS IN 2019

Bilingual and intercultural
*Version française au verso*

The feminine meets spirituality and the environment
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The Source
forum of diversity

Vol 20 No 7 | October 22–November 5, 2019

www.thelasource.com

*Photos courtesy of the authors*

Writers Festival

# A week of literary festivities

*by* KYLIE LUNG

**Granville Island will be full of authors and literary enthusiasts for the 31st annual Vancouver Writers Fest. Attendees will be able to experience performances and readings from local artists as well as many from around the country and abroad from Oct. 21–27.**

Among the featured writers, poet Vuyo Mgoduka, author Philip Huynh, and author/illustrator Julie Flett will take the stage in various programs throughout the week to share their works, mingle with fellow literary minds, and inspire up-and-coming artists to pursue their own creative ambitions.

### Cree-Metis in illustration

Julie Flett is a Cree-Metis illustrator, author, and three-time recipient of the Christie Harris Illustrated Children's Literature Award. She has illustrated several books over her career and has written and illustrated her own books along the way, including *Wild Berries, Owls See Clearly at Night: a Michif Alphabet*, and *Birdsong*.

Flett's creative process for her pastel illustrations and writing is derived from closely observing the world around her as well as reflecting on her own memories growing up.

"I really think in terms of film and film stills," says Flett. "The scenes often stem from my own experiences as a child, or from having watched my son, his friends, my nieces and the children in my life. They're so much a part of the work that I do. And I would say that Birdsong really honors the makers in my childhood."

Flett's Cree heritage is a vital part of her creative process and she hopes to keep the language alive through her work. Her grandparents spoke Cree to her as a child and she made an effort to become more accustomed to her ancestral language as an adult.

"When I was learning about Michif, there was almost a sense of coming home," says Flett. "And it was tremendously healing. From there I started to learn more Cree, a language that my grandfather had grown up speaking. It's something I wanted to pass along in the books I worked on. Something that we

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Verbatim

## Beyond boundaries

*by* DANIELA COHEN

"Where are you from?" A familiar question. One I've heard ever since I moved to Canada at age 16. I remember how my classmate's face wrinkled in confusion when he heard the answer. "But you're not…" "There are all kinds of people in South Africa."

I hadn't realized my skin colour would be a surprise. I never expected people to ask me if lions roamed the streets. I didn't recognise I had an accent until I asked for water at a store and received a puzzled frown and a request to repeat myself.

Now I was surrounded by triangular fir trees instead of the familiar bushes populating the streets of Johannesburg. I was excited to see Smarties in Safeway, but my tongue rejected the sugary taste that replaced the creamy chocolate I'd previously enjoyed. I saw one black student in my school. I waited to see more black students, but they didn't appear. Coming from a country where the majority of people are black, it felt surreal, like something was missing.

I come from a place where it's not possible to pretend we are all the same. Growing up in apartheid South Africa, where people were classified based on race and designated certain rights accordingly, these differences were brought home to me at a very young age. I didn't understand it until later, but I felt the discomfort of it.

Coming to Vancouver brought a different kind of discomfort. During my time here, I have felt most at home in spaces with other immigrants, people who can relate to my experience. I sit with a Venezuelan friend who tells me she longs to bring her parents to Vancouver, and my heart hurts with hers. A fellow African confides his story about escaping a genocide. I

*See "Verbatim" page 4* ➤

# Cultural Spotlight

Photo courtesy of Vancouver Asian Film Festival

*Scene from* Empty by Design.

# Culture on the screen

*by* TINA QU

**Over thirty filmmakers and panelists from Canada and other countries will participate in the 23rd annual Vancouver Asian Film Festival (VAFF), which promotes and celebrates the diversity and depth of Asian culture and identity in film and media. VAFF takes place Nov. 7–10, 2019 at the Cineplex Odeon International Village.**

The longest-running Asian film festival in Canada, VAFF was founded in 1995 by Barbara K. Lee. The festival focuses on current issues faced by immigrants, women, and marginalized individuals. This year's theme is 'No Limitasians', a call to celebrate performers of Asian heritage, to challenge boundaries and expectations, and to create opportunities without waiting for Hollywood to come calling.

### The lineup

The 2019 lineup includes 13 films, three industry panels, three special presentations, and 38 feature-length and short films of all genres in the English language or with English subtitles.

The international premiere of In a *New York Minute*, directed by Mandy Ximan Li, opens the festival. Starring Amy Chang, Yi Liu, *Wu's Assassin's* Celia Au, VAFF brand ambassador Ludi Lin, and Cheng Pei Pei, the movie follows three female strangers who discover that the solution to their problems lies in a single pregnancy test.

Other film offerings include VAFF Canadian Spotlight film *Becoming Labrador*, directed by Rohan Fernando, Tamara Segura, and Justin Simms, and VAFF Centrepiece Spotlight *Empty by Design*, starring *The Atom on Crisis on Infinite Earths*' Osric-Chau, Rhian Ramos, Madeliene Humphries, Chris Pang, and Dante Basco. *Becoming Labrador* focuses on a group of Filipino workers who move to Labrador in hopes of a better life, while *Empty by Design* centers around two isolated individuals who return to the Philippines after years of being away and how they help each other find peace and connection to their lost culture.

> "[It's] helping Asian filmmakers to more powerfully and authentically express themselves through film.
>
> *Barbara K. Lee, founder of Vancouver Asian Film Festival*

VAFF will also include a documentary features series, a narrative features series, an international shorts program, and two Canadian shorts programs. The closing night presentation will feature the international premiere of *Yellow Rose*, directed by Diane Paragas, about a Filipino girl named Rose who wants to pursue her country music dreams but has her world shattered when her mom gets picked up by US Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

Photo courtesy of Vancouver Asian Film Festival

*Scene from* Yellow Rose.

### Asian filmmakers come together

"Having lived away for 20 years, when I returned, I could see and feel a difference in Vancouver where Asians now have an equal say and the confidence to call this home as much as everyone else," says Lee. "This change came only thanks to organizations like VAFF that have been pushing for the right representation and narrative of what the Canadian social fabric should look like all these years. This new sense of belonging made me want to join the organization to help it grow to enable more people to feel the same way."

Lee finds that the hard work done by a team of dedicated volunteers to bring the community together is a rewarding experience. "[It's] helping Asian filmmakers to more powerfully and authentically express themselves through film and showcase their work to the larger community," she says. "It is so much fun seeing filmmakers proudly share their work and interact with audiences, putting on events that bring the industry out networking and sharing ideas that help strengthen and enrich the local filmmaking community."

For more information, please visitwww.vaff.org.

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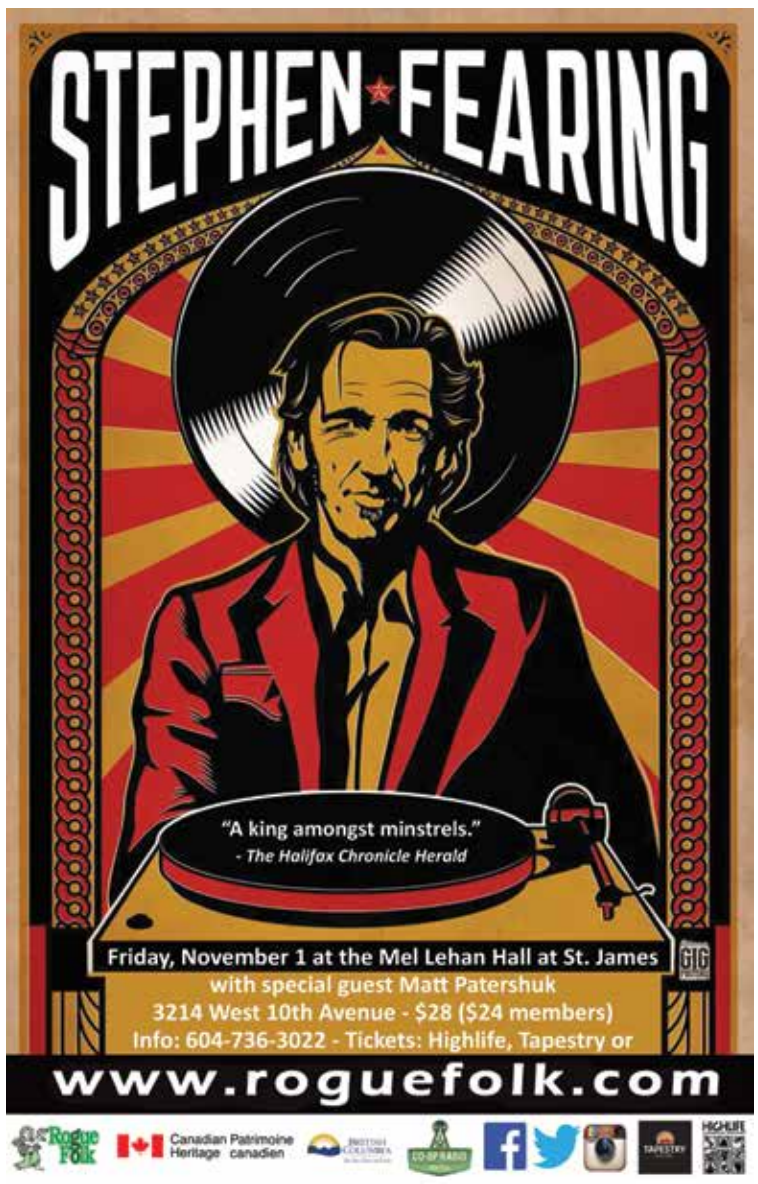

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# Empathy trumps conflict

*by* MATTHEW FRASER

**Conflict and confrontation can be a daily occurrence in everyday life. They can be incited by a difference of opinion, religious belief, social conduct or even parking disputes. Though these disconcerting moments can be frequent, many people are not properly equipped to navigate or deal with these uncomfortable moments.**

Kimberly Jackson Davidson is the director of the Yeworkwha Belachew Center for Dialogue (YBCD) and the ombudsperson for Oberlin College. As such, she has intimate experience with traversing interpersonal misunderstandings and facilitating clear and honest conversations. On Oct. 23, Davidson will be leading a public dialogue entitled *Power of Empathy* at the Morris K Wosk Centre.

### The benefits behind listening

In some ways the quest to expand and increase multiculturalism has forgone diversity of thought, oftentimes treating entire groups as monolithic or even criticizing those whose opinions stray from expectations. When asked if Davidson believes that racial diversity may be harder for some to accept than diversity of thought, her reply is cautious.

"I believe – based on experience – that people deal with differences more easily when they have the opportunity to slow down and privilege understanding over persuasion and being correct," she says.

She continues by explaining that listening to others while not challenging them and allowing space for mutual acceptance is integral to forwarding dialogue. Openness to challenging perspectives in lieu of being right can open the door to finding important and productive common ground and mutually beneficial paths forward. Though this can seem difficult in the face of drastic differences, Davidson sincerely believes that the struggle is ultimately beneficial.

"We probably have had new experiences with people that we are different from that will help us to acknowledge the unwelcome perspective and to ponder what need, value or aspect of our identity has been undermined by the encounter that triggers us," she explains.

### Empathy is not new

Many people may feel as if current relations between political rivals or disparate ideologies are at a worse state than ever before, however, Davidson contends that the context of the time and conversation as well as the shift in boundaries and norms has more to do with the current state of dialogue than a shift in our ability to empathize.

"I suspect in many instances that social and cultural expectations related to mannerly communication might have masked the absence of empathy. Empathy is not a new concept," she says.

In addition, the media has played an outsized role in both helping and hobbling relations. In her opinion the media has done well by presenting counter-narratives of historic events commonly presented in ways that reinforce the view of the mainstream (a master narrative). Master narratives often obscure why some groups continue to express an experience of past and present disenfranchisement leading to further misunderstanding and neglect.

Photo courtesy of SFU

Kimberly Jackson Davidson.

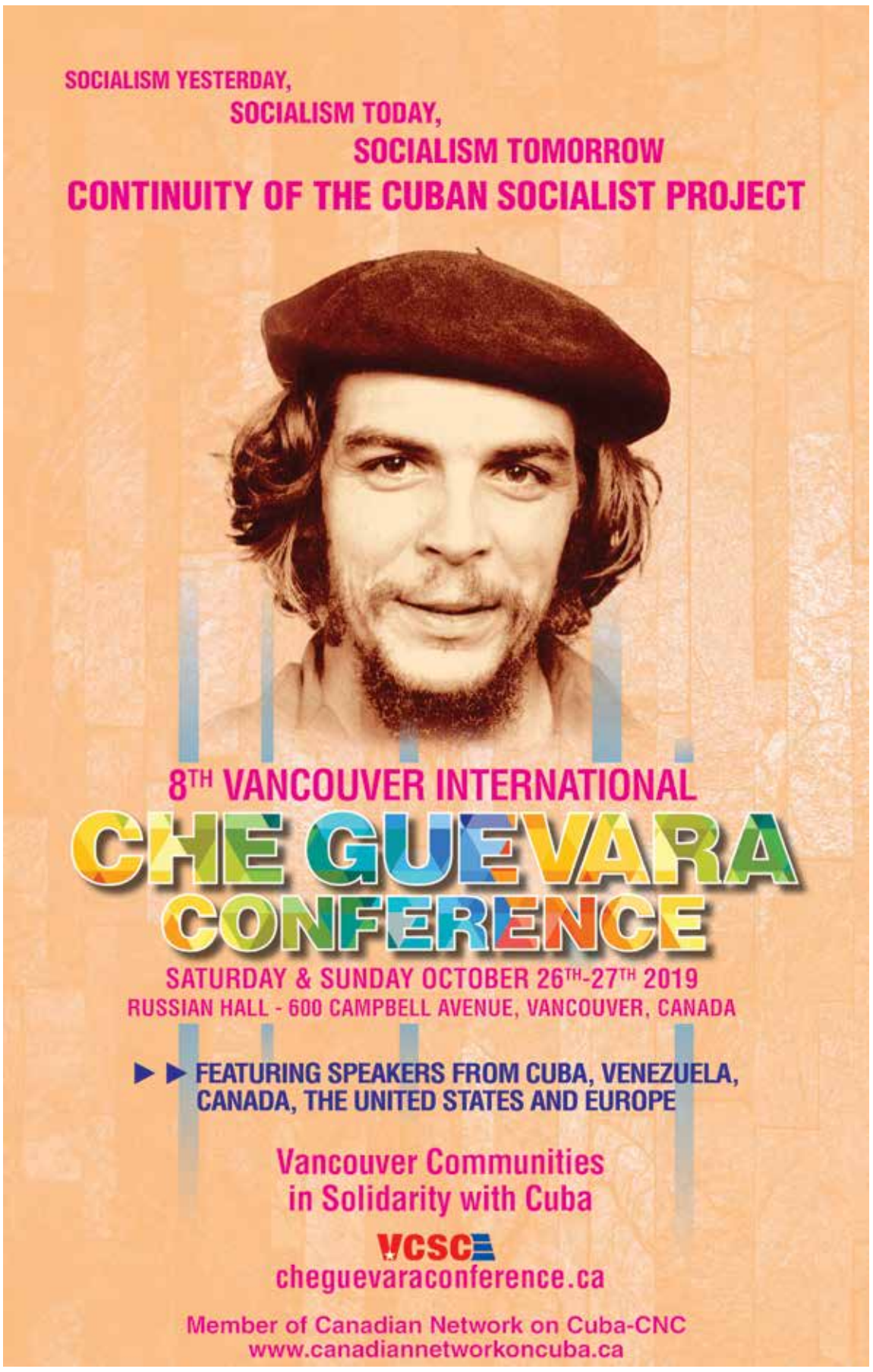
On the other hand, the news media is a double-edged sword. It has helped to connect the world and to keep us informed. However, the news media has in many ways helped to perpetuate biased and monolithic views of different people in ways that can reinforce derogatory stereotypes. This has allowed people to become lazy and unconcerned about understanding those whose life experiences and world views are different.

### The hard part of human nature

The most pessimistic outlook to the question of empathy would state that human nature ultimately prevents humankind from accepting itself in total without prejudice. When faced with this perspective Davidson acknowledges the hint of truth in it, but quickly separates it from the potential peoplehave.

"I think it hinders us from easily choosing to accept people who seem very different, however, I don't believe our human instinct to protect ourselves 'prevents' us from being accepting on a broader scale," she says. "[I believe] that if I practice behaving in ways that seek to value others and their differences when the opportunity presents itself my effort will have an impact on others."

For more information, please visit www.sfu.ca/dialogue/news-and-events/archives/2019/bruce---lis-welch-community-dialogue--power-of-empathy.html

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didn't have access to in books as children."

### A purple city comes to Vancouver

Canadian author Philip Huynh recently published his first book, *The Forbidden Purple City*. Huynh's parents fled Vietnam during the war and Philip was born in Vancouver, but he revisits his parents' homeland in his work. Huynh, a lifelong storywriter, is a practicing lawyer during the day, but still finds the time to hone his passion for writing. So far, Huynh has been published in the *Journey Prize Anthology* and was given distinction within *The Best American Short Stories*.

*The Forbidden Purple City* is a collection of nine short stories that follow the lives of people who have left Vietnam. The title refers to the former imperial capital of his parent's home country in Huế, Vietnam. The story's characters focus on several different types of people, ranging from poets to a young bride, as they make their way to a new home, just as his parents did decades ago.

"My collection is about the lives of the Vietnamese diaspora after the war, many of whom are coping with memories that occupy the strange terrain between trauma and nostalgia," says Huynh. "The stories explore how the past haunts and events animate the characters' present lives. Despite this focus, the characters are diverse, and the settings are far-flung, from Vancouver and Winnipeg, to New York, to South Korea, to Vietnam."

Working in law may appear incongruous with creative literary ambitions, but Huynh finds that his profession benefits his art in unexpected ways.

"Being a lawyer has brought me into contact with people from all walks of life and unusual milieus – whether it is a warehouse in Florida, a courtroom in Toronto, or a hedge fund in Connecticut," says Huynh, "Although I don't write literally about the people I've met, certain things about certain people inevitably inspire some of my characters."

### Healing in poetry

Poet and vocalist Vuyo Mgoduka lived all over the world before coming to Vancouver. Born in Durban, South Africa, the artist was raised by a single mother along with an older brother. After being bounced from place to place for several years, Mgoduka found writing to be the much-needed outlet in which to unleash the feelings of isolation and abandonment felt in childhood.

Mgoduka first noticed an affinity for the written word in a humorous misunderstanding in grade school and love for poetry only blossomed from there.

"I first discovered that I had a knack for writing in the second grade when my English teacher called me to the front of the class to share a story I had written," says Mgoduka, "and then later on in high school when I got called to the principal's office because they thought I had plagiarized a poem in the 8th grade. It was funny, but after that I knew I had something of value."

Since then, Mgoduka has used a poetic platform to promote equality and social awareness. The artist has been featured on the Wax Poetics radio show, the Vancouver Poetry Slam, and performs regularly at Stew Jams. Mgoduka feels that poetry is unique for its ability to capture feelings and emotions with its economic use of words.

"I think longer narratives definitely have their place, but I really love that poetry is an ongoing conversation between the writer and the audience," says the poet. "I feel like the length allows it to be revisited so often that even as the writer you discover new, hidden meanings over time. I also really enjoy the fact that poems don't need witnesses to have an impact. The healing starts as the words are forming."

For more information on the festival, visit www.writersfest.bc.ca.

# Including all of Vancouver

*by* COLLEEN ADDISON

**In Alden Habacon's view, diversity is a fact of Canadian work. Most workplaces in Canada will include people who bear dissimilar appearances, backgrounds, and beliefs. Yet *inclusion* – ensuring that every member of a workplace team feels welcomed and valued – is a goal that bears its own challenges.**

"It's an aspect of Canada that's non-negotiable. But, in our effort to create diversity, we've created mythology about how diversity is supposed to work," says Habacon, a diversity and inclusion strategist who consults for such clients as Arc'teryx clothing, the University of British Columbia and the Canadian Consulate in Hong Kong. "The reality is what we're never willing to admit, that a diverse team is going to be a more difficult team."

Habacon will detail these difficulties and how to resolve them in a workshop at Simon Fraser University, entitled "Inclusive Leadership and Intercultural Skills for Leaders," which will take place on Oct. 31. Admission is free.

Photo courtesy of Alden Habacon

Alden Habacon.

### An accent on understanding

Many of those who work in and lead diverse teams have no comprehension of what inclusion entails, Habacon opines.

"The myth is that contact with diversity leads to understanding," he says. "If I eat sushi every day, I'll get to know Japanese culture. If I have women in my workplace, I'll know where women are coming from."

But, Habacon says, instead of doing the difficult work that true inclusion requires, Canadian companies have often turned to simplistic solutions.

"I genuinely believe that those in leadership want to create a positive environment for everyone," he says. "I've never yet met a leader in any environment whose intention is to keep people out, to keep women or people with disabilities out. But that's sometimes the impact that we have."

> "I've never yet met a leader in any environment whose intention is to keep people out, to keep women or people with disabilities out.
>
> *Alden Habacon, diversity and inclusion strategist*

As one example, Habacon speaks about an early solution to the lack of female representation in Canadian leadership.

"The assumption 15 years ago," he says, "was that the more women we would have in corporate Canada's leadership the more inclusive workplaces would be for women. [But] to be leaders [the women] had to take on behaviours that were not inclusive. We have to go back to those environments and see if leaders are having the effects they want to have."

These problems are not necessarily about people's prejudices, Habacon points out. In fact, it's often the opposite.

"I asked an audience once, 'How many people here have struggled with someone's accent?'" he says. "They've asked the person they're speaking to, two, maybe three times to repeat, but on the fourth time, they stop. They pretend they understand. Why? Because [they're] scared of being called a racist. But [they] have no idea what has been said. That's not communication!"

This fear of being labelled bigoted prevents needs being met, Habacon notes.

"It's really hard to address the stuff we're struggling with, so we tend not to," he says. "Let's figure out what adaptations and supports we need."

### Committed to courage

Rather than resorting to quick fixes, says Habacon, people in diverse teams should look more closely at their behaviours, particularly with regards to the layers of privilege that, for example, white or able-bodied people have.

"The research is very clear," he says. "When you have power, authority, you see the world differently. You are more insensitive. It's harder to give feedback to those in power."

But awareness is not the only quality that people must possess in order to work well in diverse teams, says Habacon.

"They should be committed to making inclusion work," Habacon says. "It takes courage. We need to be humble. It turns out that it takes courage to be humble in our society. You need to empower people to contribute."

"People get excited," he says. "I get them to identify what the benefits are from working in a diverse team."

For more information, please visit www.sfu.ca/sfu-community/events.html#!view/event/event_id/6924

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laugh with my Mexican friend at jokes that ring with a sarcastic humour similar to the humour used in South Africa. Our journeys here are vastly different, but the sense of displacement, of being a foreigner and starting from scratch in this place, unites us.

On one of my visits back to South Africa, I smiled at the black man behind me in the checkout line. He smiled back. "Can you buy my bread for me?" I couldn't respond. My stepmother laughed and warned me to be careful, that they would try to get what they could from you. I didn't like the feeling of having to adjust the way I behaved according to the race of the person behind or in front of me.

In a reconciliation workshop I attended recently, we were asked to share our cultural identity. I heard other immigrants hyphenating theirs: "nationality of origin-Canadian." I felt my heart pound as my turn came closer. Was there space not to hyphenate, to simply say "I'm African"?

Normally I would say I'm South African, but the concept of cultural identity felt like a bigger question. And in light of the xenophobic violence that has recently reared up again in South Africa, identifying myself as part of the continent rather than separate from it felt important. Africa is the beat my heart is attuned to, the soil my being was nurtured in – it is my roots and my foundation.

I'm still reconciling myself to living on this land. And reconciling with the reality that its oppressive history is not so different from that of the country I grew up in. I'm grateful to be able to get to know people from all over the world in Vancouver, learn about different cultures and make friends beyond boundaries and borders.

We all come from somewhere.

We all come from somewhere. The connection to my ancestry gives me a strong place to stand. It doesn't create a line I use to divide. People in this city have such diverse origins, but we all found our way here. One way or another. Willing or unwilling. Permanent or transient.

MOSAIC

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**Public Service Announcement:**
**November 1 – 15, 2019 Free Community Activities**

**Community Health Day for Seniors (Mandarin/Cantonese)**

In partnership with Rexall Pharmacy, MOSAIC will have workshops on common ailments and injuries, as well as a Flu and Diabetes Clinic for seniors. Registration is required for free flu shot and diabetes check-up. No walk-ins due to limited supply of vaccine.
November 5, 2019
10:00 am: Workshop on Cold and Flu
10:30 am: Workshop on Fall Prevention
11:00 am – 1:00 pm: Flu and Diabetes Clinic (Registration required)
Please call 604 254 9626 to register for a flu shot / diabetes check-up
November 5, 10:00 am – 1:00 pm
MOSAIC Head Office, 5575 Boundary Road, Vancouver
Daisy 604 254 9626 ext 1005 || daisyau@mosaicbc.org

**Financial Literacy (Arabic/English)**

Learn about RRSP, TFSA and RESP. Know the difference and the benefits and requirements.
November 7, 12:30 pm – 2:30 pm
MOSAIC #200A-7134 King George Blvd., Surrey
Fairuz/Adia 778 591 9334 || fzenati@mosaicbc.org or ajadallah@mosaicbc.org

**Canadian Citizenship Preparation**

Join us for a two-day workshop to prepare for Canadian citizenship! The sessions will be facilitated by MOSAIC staff. We will talk about topics such as Canada's history, symbols, government and geography, as well as the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. Free service. Registration required.
November 14 & 15, 10:00 am – 1:00 pm
Vancouver South Hill Branch Library, 6076 Fraser Street
Shaima 604 254 9626 ext 1021 || sjaff@mosaicbc.org

**Canadian Citizenship Preparation**

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November 15, 1:00 pm – 5:00 pm
Port Moody Public Library, 100 Newport Drive
Fadia 604 636 4712 ext 107 || fhwaijeh@mosaicbc.org

**How to renew Permanent Resident Card (Mandarin)**

Topics covered in this workshop:
1. Eligibility and preparation of documents
2. Calculating the days of residency in Canada
3. Processing time
4. FAQs

November 8, 10:30 am – 12:00 pm
CCM Centre Level 2, Crystal Mall, 4500 Kingsway, Burnaby
Angel 604 254 9626 ext 2121 || atse@mosaicbc.org

**How to Apply for Canadian Citizenship (Mandarin)**

Topics covered in this workshop:
1. Application information for adults and children
2. Application instructions for children applying independently
3. Documents preparation
4. Calculating the days of residency in Canada
5. Processing time
6. FAQs

November 15, 10:30 am – 12:00 pm
CCM Centre Level 2, Crystal Mall, 4500 Kingsway, Burnaby
Angel 604 254 9626 ext 2121 || atse@mosaicbc.org

**English Conversation Circle: Canadian Workplace Culture**

Things you will learn here:
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· Job interview tips
· Dress code
· Business vocabulary
· Formal & informal communication
· Do's and Don'ts at work
For intermediate English language level/LINC 4+. Free service. Registration required.
Mondays, November 4 & 25, 4:00 – 6:00 pm
Tuesdays, November 5, 12, 19 & 26, 4:00 – 6:00 pm
MOSAIC Language Centre 304- 2730 Commercial Drive, Vancouver
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**Culture Smart Conversation Circle (Citizenship)**

- For permanent residents applying for citizenship in the next 1-2 years
- Should have at least CLB 4 speaking and Listening to participate in the conversation
- Topics: Canadian geography, climate, history, civic life, rights & responsibilities of Canadian citizens based on the Discover Canada guide
- Not a citizenship test preparation workshop
- Light refreshments and bus tickets will be provided
- Facilitator: Pia Kolba

Fridays, October 11 – November 22, 2:00 – 4:00 pm (no session on Nov 15)
MOSAIC Head Office, 5575 Boundary Road, Vancouver
Shaima 604 254 9626 ext 1021 || sjaff@mosaicbc.org

*MOSAIC is a multilingual non-profit organization dedicated to addressing issues that affect immigrants and refugees in the course of their settlement and integration into Canadian society.*

# Finding inspiration in the ukulele

*by* VINH NGUYEN

**Dreaming of strumming a few tunes on a ukulele? Music enthusiasts might be interested in Patrice Savoie's offer of introductory lessons on the stringed instrument.**

The local musician will be conducting a special four-week beginner session, starting on Oct. 26 at Terry Fox Library in Port Coquitlam.

### History and meaning of the ukulele

The four stringed instrument originally comes from Portugal where its name is Machete de Braga, says Savoie. However, the ukulele is mainly known for being a popular instrument in Hawaii.

"The word ukulele means 'fleas jumping,' because when Portuguese people brought their version of the ukulele to Hawaii, Hawaiians thought that their fingers looked like fleas jumping," he adds.

According to Savoie, the ukelele can be used in various musical genres. He recommends that beginners get familiar with it as it is an easy instrument to learn and not too expensive to buy.

"The ukulele can be used to play chords, as an accompanying instrument, but can also be used as a solo instrument,'' he says.

### Finding passion in music

Savoie has been holding workshops to teach people how to play the ukulele for the past two years. His experience has been a positive one.

"I really like to do workshops, it's always an adventure, because every class is different. It usually goes really well, people enjoy it, they learn something new and hopefully they get inspired to keep playing after,"he says.

Savoie recalls many memorable moments of his time working with the participants.

"I really enjoy [seeing] a big group of people that have never played music before play together and make it sound good. I love to see their smiles," he says. "Sometimes people don't stay for the four weeks, which is very normal, because music is not easy, but that's okay, because the other students get more out of the lessons. The smaller the group the more I can teach them."

For the upcoming ukulele workshop, he says that inspiration is one of the factors he's looking for.

"What I always look for is that some of the students get inspired to keep playing. Music has changed my life for the better, so I hope that I inspire people and that they can see what I find so interesting and fascinating about music," he says.

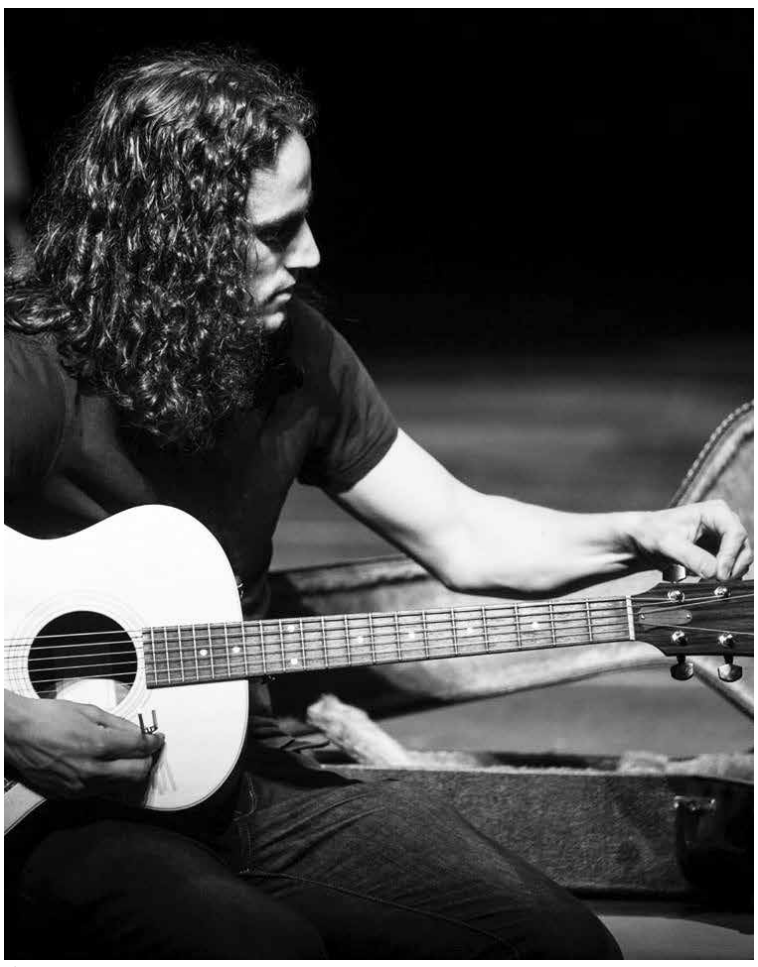

Photo courtesy of Patrice Savoie

*Patrice Savoie teaches both the guitar and the ukulele.*

### Music as a way of life

Hailing from the province of Quebec, Savoie spent his time playing and learning the guitar. He then took up music as a career, attending specialized music courses and opening his own teaching centre in British Columbia.

While finding his path to become a music teacher, Savoie says he first started with the guitar, then added the ukulele. His music workshops have gathered a lot of interested learners. He attributes this success to the similarities between the guitar and the ukulele.

"I fell in love with this little instrument. I started writing songs with it and I noticed that it is a great instrument to teach beginners, as it is easier than guitar," he says.

Savoie hopes to inspire other people to explore the world of music and find happiness in creating their own melodies.

"I also love to see them realize that you can learn just a few things and be able to play and create songs," he says enthusiastically.

For more information, please visitwww.paliatsky.com and www.fvrl.bibliocommons.com/events/5d5332f78c3e542400ab16d7

Photo by Farah Nosh

'Laa.a Jaad | Fine Weather Woman, 2017, Lightjet print on dibond, 19.85 x 32 inches.

## Out of Concealment

# The interconnectedness of femininity, the supernatural, and the environment

*by* JASMYNE EASTMOND

**Haida artist, activist and lawyer Terri-Lynn Williams-Davidson manifests an Indigenous ethos of environmentalism while honouring the power of Indigenous femininity in her solo exhibition *Out of Concealment* on display at the Bill Reid Gallery of Northwest Coast Art from Oct. 23, 2019–Apr. 5, 2020.**

What began as writing songs about supernatural beings for her 2017 album *Grizzly Bear Town* metamorphosed into Terri-Lynn Williams-Davidson's quest to depict the supernatural figures that occupied her lyrics.

"I wanted to write about supernatural beings, but as I wrote the music, I kept wanting to picture what they would look like in real life," says Williams-Davidson.

Reimagining traditional female Indigenous supernatural beings as they would appear in the physical, environmental landscape of Haida Gwaii, *Out of Concealment* presents themes of environmentalism, sexuality and culture via multimedia installations of photomontages, film and sound – with Williams-Davidson as the subject of her own pieces.

"All of these pieces are performance art pieces where I am working really hard to become the supernatural beings," she says. "When I look at the pieces, I don't see myself. I see Haida Gwaii."

### Revitalizing and sharing culture

Based on her research into the ethnographic record and the oral history passed onto her by her mother and relatives, Williams-Davidson returns to her ancestral origins to uncover a culture suppressed by colonial rule and share traditional stories and messages with future generations, sustaining and preserving the legacy of Haida Gwaii.

In the hopes of making the Haida Gwaii cultural history accessible to all through art, the pieces showcased in *Out of Concealment* have been carefully selected to create a space of collective accessibility and appreciation.

"I have grandchildren who are fascinated with Disney princesses and I feel that there is a gap in the community in that kids are not as familiar with the supernatural beings as they are with Disney princesses," says Williams-Davidson. "I wanted to give them something to visualize and something to connect with and a way to reconnect with the culture."

A rewriting of Williams-Davidson's identically titled book, *Out of Concealment*, has been done for children. Williams-Davidson's *Magical Beings*, co-authored by Sara Florence Davidson, will explore supernatural beings in language accessible to children. The *Magical Beings* book launch will take place at the Bill Reid Gallery on Nov. 2, just weeks before the launch of William-Davidson's *Haida Box of Knowledge: Guidance from Supernatural Sisters* on Nov. 30, an oracle deck to help everyday people draw upon guidance from supernatural beings.

Photo by Farah Nosh

Ts'uu K'waayga | Cedar Sister, 2017, Lightjet print on dibond, 32 x 24 inches.

The exhibit's interactive elements invite visitors to transform into supernatural beings, aligning with the themes of *Out of Concealment* and drawing upon the Haida word for 'mask,' which better translates into the English verbs 'become' or 'imitate.'

### Finding lessons in our relationships with the earth

*Out of Concealment* works to both open its audience's eyes to unfamiliar landscapes and evoke new ways of interacting with familiar terrains, ultimately prioritizing an appreciation for human interconnectedness with natural and spiritual worlds.

As an environmental lawyer representing the Haida Nation, Williams-Davidson directly views the underrepresentation and dismissal of supernatural realms in legal issues and aspires to establish an acknowledgement of the supernatural in Canada's legal and environmental landscapes. The Vancouver premiere of *Out of Concealment* will also feature *Plastic Woman*, a sculptural piece made of plastic Williams-Davidson found on the beaches in the remote south of Haida Gwaii to examine the pervasive human relationship with plastic and debris.

"The land is not something to be owned and resources are not something to be dominated and exploited. We need to find lessons in our relationships with the earth that also translate to our relationship with women," says Williams-Davidson. "We can see the impacts of these fractured relationships by seeing the many, many missing and murdered Indigenous women in Canada."

Photo by Farah Nosh

Kaagan Jaad | Mouse Woman, 2017, Lightjet print on dibond, 21.25 x 32 inches.

For more information on the event, visit www.billreidgallery.ca.

For more about Williams-Davidson, visit www.ravencallingproductions.ca.


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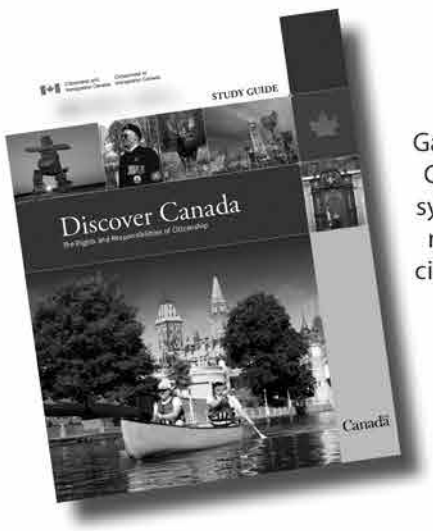


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Source: Macleans.ca, Photograph by Brian Howell

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# A Dog's Life: A philosophical tale

*by* THIERRY MAOUT

***Marona's Fantastic Tale*, the latest animated feature film from director Anca Damian, will have its Canadian premiere at SPARK Animation 2019.**

The event, one of Canada's leading animation festivals, will gather top animators from around the world in Vancouver (Oct. 24–27) for films, talks, panels and workshops led by distinguished filmmakers.

Originally formed in 2008, the Spark Computer Graphics (Spark CG) Society has been working for more than a decade behind the scenes of Vancouver's computer graphics community, organizing and hosting events that foster community, ignite the imagination and advance technology.

Among the films presented this year, SPARK will present Anca Damian's third full feature film, *Marona's Fantastic Tale* (France), a movie about an "average" dog and her extraordinary life.

*Scene from* Marona's Fantastic Tale.

*Photo courtesy of GKids*

### Marona's fantastic tale

Anca Damian, 57, is a critically-acclaimed director with a talent for reinventing herself and pushing the boundaries of her medium. She does so by exploring eclectic subject matters but also by the animation techniques and styles she decides to adopt in each of her movies.

"I try to find the best expression for each movie. I am not stuck in one technique. It makes my movies unusual," she says.

Her first long-form movie, *Crulic – The Path to Beyond* (2011), was the first Romanian animated movie in over two decades at the time of its release. It presented the real story of Claudiu Crulic, a 33-year old Romanian man falsely accused of a theft and imprisoned in Poland, where he conducted a hunger strike to prove his innocence. Her second feature film, The Magic Mountain (2015), was about Adam Jacek Winkler, a Polish anti-communist who in the 1980s fought against the Soviet Union in the Soviet–Afghan War, alongside Ahmad Shah Massoud.

In light of these two previous efforts based on real cases and deep topics, her latest feature film *Marona's Fantastic Tale*, a philosophical tale about a mixed-breed dog who the viewer follows through her life and her different homes and owners, might seem like a striking break.

However, the movie is "not just a dog story," Damian explains.

"Under the coat of a family animated movie, this is a heavy story,'' she says. "I was actually saving a dog in the streets of Romania (it's a true story!), and it inspired me to write this story about happiness, life, relationships with others and the fact that the only lessons that we should be learning in life are love lessons."

Through the depiction of Marona's journeys, her unfailing empathy and love, and the deep traces her life leaves among the humans she encounters, the movie exhibits deep layers of emotions and meaning, both via the story itself and the visual experience brought to the viewers.

"Everything is deeply thought in the visual concept and there are many levels of lecture. Everyone watching will perceive their own and don't need to understand everything," she explains, referring to the visual cues and layers some of the audience might not be consciously aware of. "The emotion goes through the colors and visuals, even if viewers don't understand it."

### A deep thematic connection

In many ways, *Marona's Fantastic Tale* is fundamentally linked to the rest of Damian's previous work.

"From one movie to another I try to reinvent myself, but there is a deep connection in themes," she says. "My films are born from the answers I am looking for: Why are we born? What should we do to be better? What is the meaning of life?"

The themes of empathy, identity and how humans relate to each other are central to Damian's work, and will be at the core of her next project, an upside down reinterpretation of Robinson Crusoe as an animated musical about refugees on a Mediterranean island, set to be completed in 2020.

About her work and the choice of the topics and subject matters she chooses to address, Damian is emphatic.

"I would never do a movie if I don't believe it's important," she says. "I still believe art can bring change, by opening the hearts of the audience. It might not change the world right away, but it might open the heart of someone, and it is a start."

For more information, please visit www.sparkfx.ca.


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PICS


# The Creature Creeps!: a Halloween comedy for everyone

*by* JAKE MCGRAIL

**For their annual Halloween celebration of ghouls and ghosts, Stage 43 Theatrical Society has a new show that offers a comedic spin on spooky classics.**

*The Creature Creeps!*, the first show of Stage 43's 2019–2020 season, is halfway through its run at Coquitlam's Evergreen Cultural Centre, with four more shows from Oct. 23–26. Written by American playwright Jack Sharkey, the show is a farcical comedy, using a classic Hollywood horror backdrop to conjure mirth rather than fear.

*The cast of* The Creature Creeps!

*Photo courtesy of Stage 43*

### A night of fun

"I read the script and thought it was just such a fun piece," says Miles Lavkulich, the play's director. "When I made my pitch to [Stage 43] about my vision of the piece, I wanted to keep it loose and fun and play up the humour as much as we could."

Set in a Transylvanian castle at the turn of the 20th century, mad scientist Donald Von Blitzen's latest experiment is interrupted by his daughter, who returns from college with some friends. Various hijinks ensue, and Lavkulich feels this production is a perfect fit for the season.

"It's just a lot of fun," he says, "especially around this time of year when everyone gets so busy... kids are back in school, Halloween is coming and people want to just have a bit of a laugh."

And Lavkulich aims to cause more than just a bit of laughter. He earnestly describes the show as both silly and campy, with a vibe that will hopefully leave a smile on the face of everyone who attends.

"You're taking people who should definitely not be in a haunted house and putting them in one," he says. "Everyone in the family can come to the show, anybody who wants to have some fun."

### Fresh and engaging

Lavkulich is effusive in his praise for the team that has assembled this show with him, including those behind the scenes and in production. This is his first time working with Stage 43, and he said he is very happy with the experience.

"We've had a ton of support from everybody at Stage 43, and we ended up with this wonderful cast that just dove into everything. Even now there's last minute changes, and they're like 'sure, let's go with it.'"

*Miles Lavkulich, play director.*

*Photo courtesy of Stage 43*

Going into initial rehearsals, Lavkulich had a general idea of the direction he wanted the show to head, but he didn't have a plan of exactly what was going to happen. With a fairly large cast of twelve actors, he said he's made sure to be open to input from everyone involved in the production.

"You have to trust your actors," he says. "I think it's much better to really work with the talented people you have and let them bring their creativity to the script."

Rehearsals began back in August, and for Lavkulich and the cast, the script and the show has remained fresh and funny the whole way through. Given how much time he has spent time reading and thinking about the show's contents, Lavkulich sees that staying power as a really good sign for their performances.

"Even now we're still laughing hysterically at some sections of the show," he says. "I've heard these lines for two months straight, and I'm still laughing... it's a good thing when you're doing a comedy and you're this far along and people are still really into it all."

Lavkulich was unable to pick out a favourite part of the show, as he felt that there are too many moments to choose from. He hopes those who attend the show will take away that same joy he has, and that it will stick with them through Halloween and beyond.

"I hope people leave with a smile on their face," he says, "and that a week later they're still quoting the show and giggling to themselves."

For more information, visit www.stage43.org.

# Zion Fyah: a melting pot of musical influences

*by* XI CHEN

**Born in Iran, Zion Fyah lived in England and in New York City throughout his early teenage years before moving to Canada at the age of 17, and traveled to even more places as a working musician later on. Because of his diverse exposure to different cultures, his music is also a mix of different influences from reggae to middle eastern, sometimes with a spiritual undertone.**

Fyah and his band L'land will be performing at Cafe Deux Soleils on Nov. 2.

"I learned through my travels as a musician, I really fell in love with music from different people. In my music, you will hear influences from Bob Marley, Persian classical musicians, some folk musicians and even rock musicians. Whatever I digest and make my own, I try to express musically and lyrically," Fyah says.

Fyah has had a guitar since he was seven years old and says music has always been the forefront of his family life growing up. He also has a love for words, and studied English literature at university and later worked as a criminal lawyer before transitioning into music 15 years ago.

### The origin of Zion Fyah

Zion Fyah is what he calls his 'soul name.' He chose it after he became part of the Rastafarian movement through the musical influence of reggae legend Bob Marley.

"Zion is a very significant term or philosophy in Rastafari – it means the land of righteousness, the land of love and harmony. I started calling myself this many years ago after I became a follower of that path. I also met Bob Marley's son; he referred me as Zion Fyah, and Fyah means fire. Now many people know me as Zion; it is becoming my legal and primary name," Fyah explains.

Several sources depict Rastafari is as a new religious and social movement developed in Jamaica during the 1930s to promote African identity and fight against colonial oppression. Reggae music, the soul music of Jamaica, is also at the core of Rastafarian culture, both popularized globally by Bob Marley through his music.

Despite coming from a different cultural background than a typical reggae singer, Fyah believes all kinds of music are related and that reggae specifically has a lot in common with eastern music.

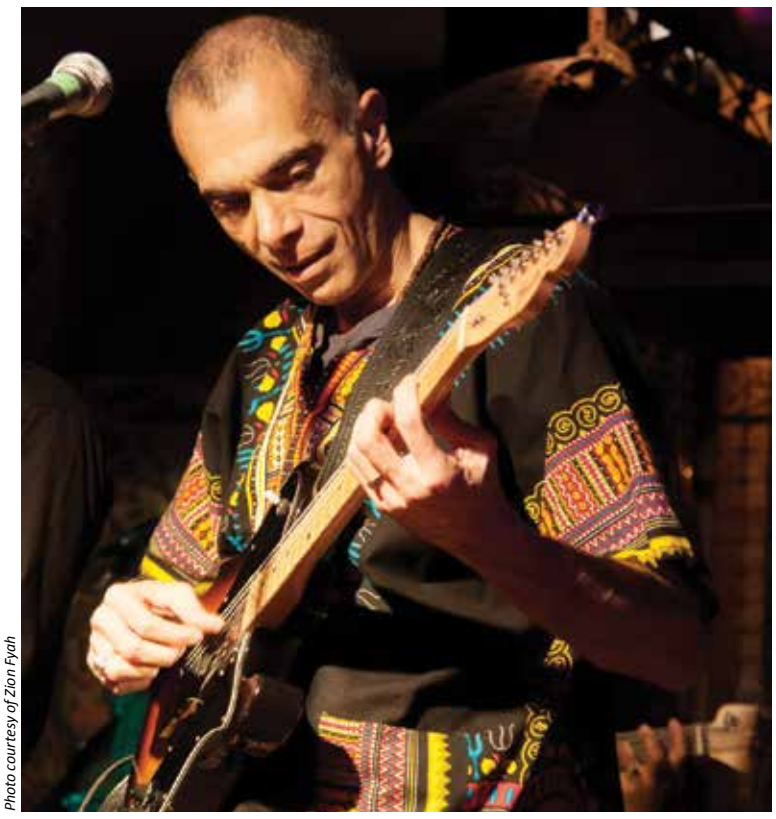


Photo courtesy of Zion Fyah

Zion Fyah.

"All music goes back to the heartbeat and reggae specifically concentrates on the heartbeat – that is what the reggae rhythm is, it is like returning you spiritually to your essence," Fyah says. "The Caribbean has been influenced by many foreign cultures, mixing with the black diaspora, so it has a lot of melodic tendencies of eastern music, and the lyrics often speaks of suffering, of striving and of looking for freedom and justice; eastern people share these goals too."

### Music with a message

Fyah's own music, influenced by the reggae tradition, is often a social and political commentary, underlined with a religious or spiritual yearning. For example, in his own favorite song Revolution, he sings, 'revolution is the only solution to this pollution… oceans are polluted, people uprooted, truth is refuted, everyone is used.'

"I don't think many artists are trying to address these issues in music today," he says. "I try to be authentic. I am not trying to create a product of any particular kind, I am trying to express how I feel in the most beautiful way I can. In my case, there are two broad categories, one is social and political commentary, and the other is love. Those are the two emotions that I tend to feel the most strongly about."

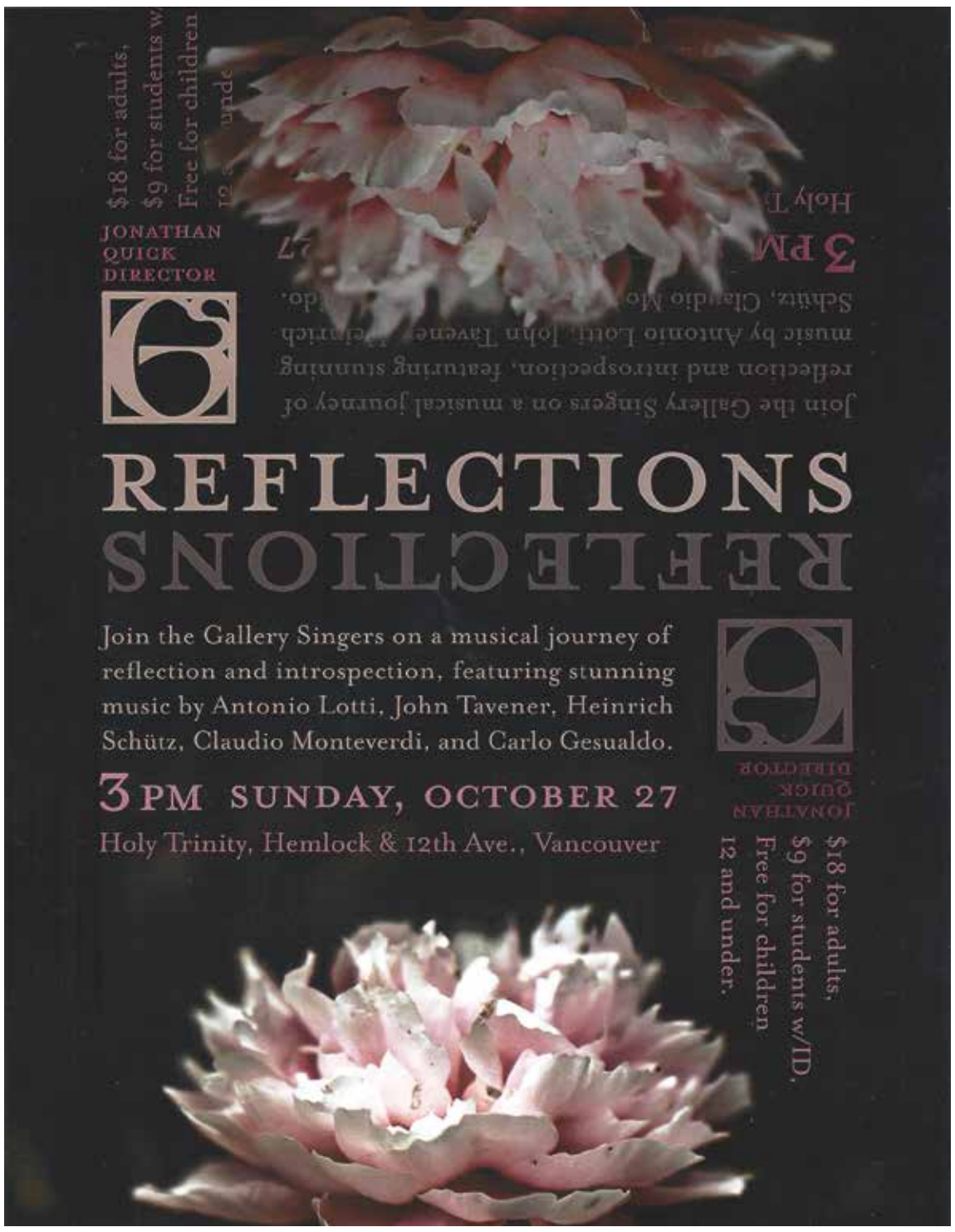
The musician says he would love to be heard a lot more but won't sacrifice his art for it.

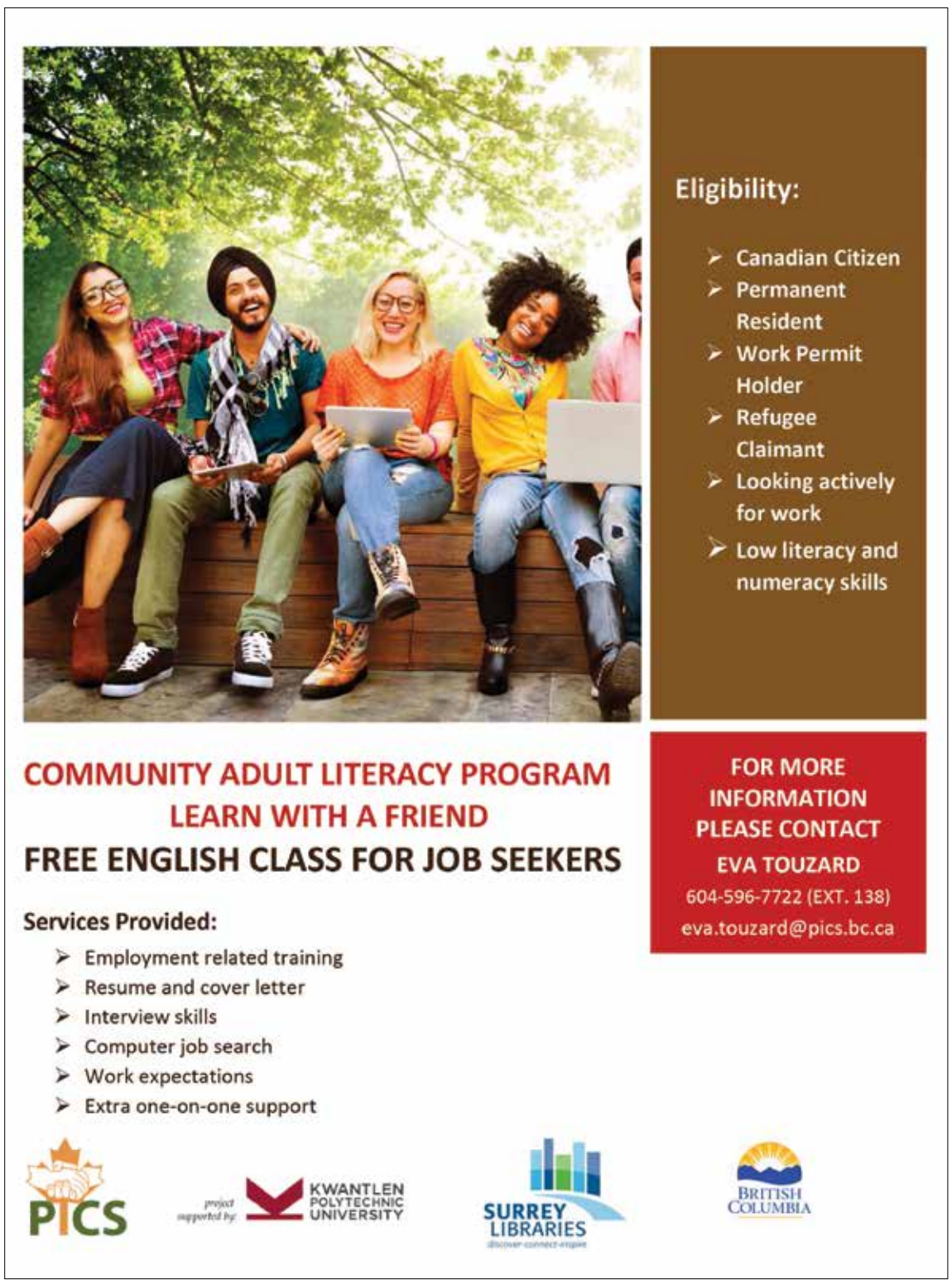
"I play on the weekends. Sometimes there are only 20 people, but there is such a beautiful connection," Fyah says.

Still continuously honing his skills and writing songs as disciplined as he can, Fyah believes the definition of art is both skill and heart.

"When the muse comes you have to have the skills to express the art, but one without the other is not art if there is no heart," he concludes.

For more information, please visit www.cafedeuxsoleils.com.




# The Rescue: hope in humanity

*by* VICTOR VAN DER MERWE

**The 2019 Chutzpah Festival will be back in Vancouver from Oct. 24 to Nov. 24, 2019. The festival showcases music, theatre, comedy and dance from around the world, including Alvaro and Boris Castellanos's documentary film *The Rescue* with live musical accompaniment.**

Since the two filmmakers play bass and piano, respectively, they developed what they call a 'live film-concerto' to play alongside their film, while also contracting local musicians to help fill out the sound.

### Unique and impactful

*The Rescue* is about the two filmmakers' grandfather, the 'Righteous' Colonel José Arturo Castellanos and how he and a Jewish friend saved the lives of thousands of Jews during the Holocaust by issuing them Salvadorian nationality certificates. Because the film subject was so extraordinary, the Castellanos brothers felt it needed something unique.

"When our film was coming together in the editing room, my brother Alvaro and I started to think about how we could tell the story in the most unique and impactful way – we wanted to do it in a way only we could do it," says Boris Castellanos.

Soon the music became as important as the film itself and the brothers decided to push the boundaries of the traditional film screening, becoming closer to the film and the audience all at once.

"Having already started choosing pieces of music to compliment our narrative, we decided to go a step further. The idea was to expand the traditional film format by integrating synchronized, live performances of these special musical pieces from the 30s and 40s by a 7-piece Latin chamber orchestra led by Alvaro and I, and in a sense do away with the invisible barrier between the film screen and the audience," Castellanos explains.

The first performance of what the brothers call a 'live film-concerto' was at the German Federal Foreign Office in Berlin, formerly the headquarters of the Reichsbank. It was there the filmmakers received an overwhelmingly positive response from the audience and knew they were on the right track.

### Very expensive therapy

Castellanos says an ambitious project like this comes with the standard challenges of any film and a few other challenges that are not so standard. He explains that the massive scope of the story meant they had to travel multiple times to the USA, El Salvador, Germany, Switzerland and Israel to interview Holocaust survivors and descendants of the Colonel. With only some support from a small number of benefactors and a small artist grant from the Ontario Arts Council, many of the costs were covered with great personal sacrifice by the filmmakers. The Holocaust survivors were of advanced age and therefore the brothers felt they couldn't wait for all the funding to come through before starting the filming process. They embraced a 'shoot first, ask questions later' policy and because of that, they are still trying to recoup expenses. However, they feel the process has all been worth it.

"When we speak to audiences after performances, we like to joke that working on this project was like very expensive therapy," says Castellanos. "Throughout the process, as we learned more about our grandfather – whom we never met – his great deeds and his complicated family life. We were able to better understand and deal with long-standing issues we had with our own father, the Colonel's troubled son. Another rewarding aspect for the brothers is having the opportunity to speak to younger generations about the importance of humanitarianism, standing up to injustice and honouring those who did the right thing.

Photo courtesy of Alvaro and Boris Castellanos

"The Rescue *is a performance piece," says director Boris Castellanos.*

### Hope in humanity

The product that resulted from all this hard work is meant to inspire, says Castellanos.

"Philosophically, our hope is that the audience comes away with a sense of hope in humanity and are inspired by this unlikely story of collaboration between a Salvadoran diplomat and his Jewish friend whose positive impact on humanity is immeasurable," says Castellanos. "Since *The Rescue* is a performance piece, the ultimate reward is when the audience is visibly moved by the combination of the beautiful music, images and the inspirational subject matter."

*The Rescue* will be performed at the Norman Rothstein Theatre on Nov. 23.

For more information, go to www.chutzpahfestival.com.

October 22–November 5, 2019

# Cultural Calendar

*by* SIMON YEE

Another edition of The Source's Cultural Calendar is here, featuring a sampling of events, activities and festivals happening in and around Metro Vancouver to help you decide what you would like to do! Whether you like to listen to music, drink tea, watch the stars or just spend some quality time with the family, this list has you covered. Have a safe and spooky Halloween season everyone!

* * *

**19th Annual Chutzpah! Festival**
*Oct. 24–Nov. 24*
*Norman Rothstein Theatre, Vancouver and other venues*
*www.chutzpahfestival.com*

The Chutzpah! Festival is an annual performing arts festival committed to bringing world-renowned international dance, music, theatre and comedy to Vancouver audiences. For a full month, internationally acclaimed performers from cultural hubs such as Canada, Israel, the European Union and the United States of America take the stage of the Norman Rothstein Theatre and other venues around Vancouver. Check out their website for a complete list of performances.

* * *

**Bangarra Dance Theatre**
*Oct. 25–26, 8 p.m.*
*Vancouver Playhouse*
*www.dancehouse.ca*

DanceHouse will be hosting Australia's acclaimed Bangarra Dance Theatre at the Vancouver Playhouse on Oct. 25 and 26. Choreographed by Bangarra's Artistic Director Stephen Page and former Assistant Artistic Director Bernadette Walong-Sene, the retrospective piece is a visionary fusion of nine of the company's celebrated Indigenous and contemporary works that boldly bridge past and present. Bangarra Dance Theatre has an authentic style of totemic storytelling reflecting the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities – tracing the unbroken connection between people, the land and creation itself. Established in 1989, the cutting-edge company has played a critical role in the resurgence of traditional dance expressions.

* * *

**Halloween Tea Ceremony**
*Oct. 26, 11 a.m.–3 p.m.*
*Nikkei National Museum & Cultural Centre, Burnaby*
*www.centre.nikkeiplace.org*

Trick or Tea at the Nikkei National Museum & Cultural Centre on Oct. 26. Gather to enjoy a spooktacular bowl of matcha during the centre's popular book sale! The tea ceremony is a carefully choreographed Japanese cultural activity of preparing and serving matcha tea accompanied with traditional Japanese sweets. It is appropriate for anyone who is interested in the art of tea and/or Japanese culture. Check out the centre's website for more information.

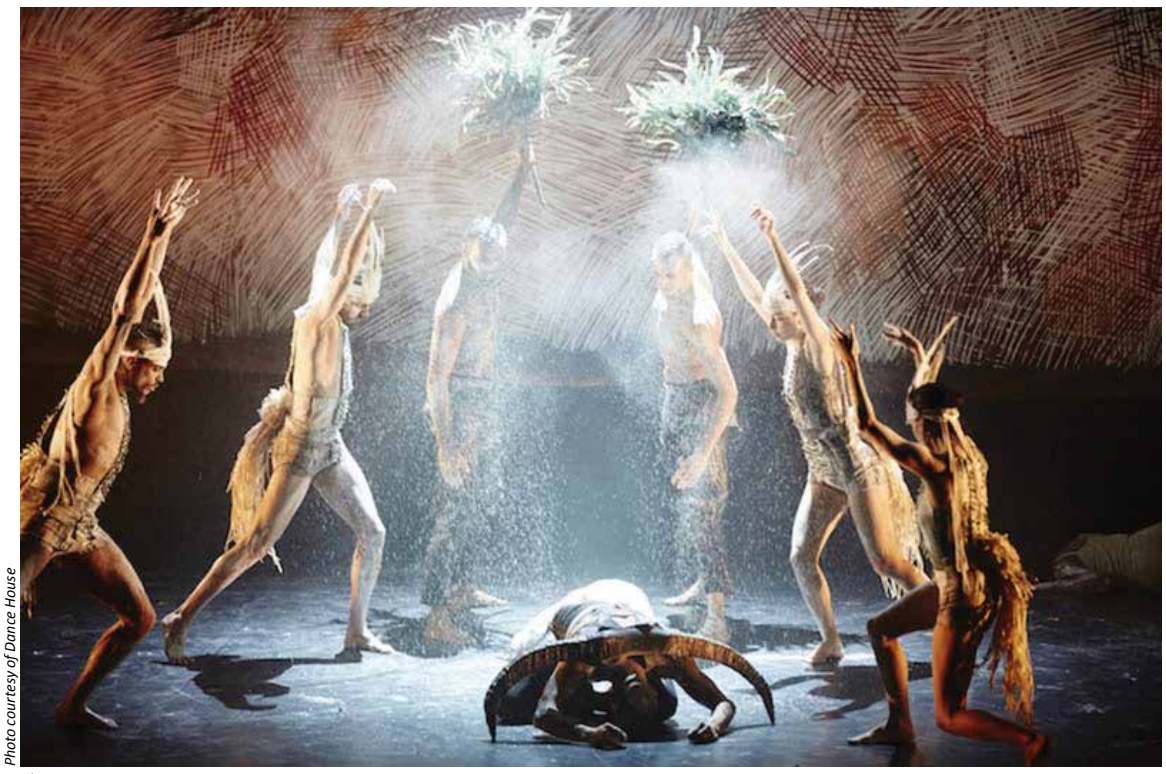


Photo courtesy of Dance House

Australian dancers bring visionary performance to Vancouver.

* * *

**The Haunted Sea: Halloween at the Cannery**
*Oct. 26–27, 11 a.m.–4 p.m.*
*Gulf of Georgia Cannery, Richmond*
*www.gulfofgeorgiacannery.org*

This Halloween dive to the darkest depths of *The Haunted Sea* at the Gulf of Georgia Cannery National Historic Site, and explore what lurks in the fathoms below! Encounter spooky sea creatures and twisted tentacles floating alongside historic legends and sea lore. Entertain your imagination with games, crafts, activities and a journey into the deep while learning about the true terror of the seas! Drop in between 11 a.m. and 4 p.m. to enjoy Halloween crafts, activities and treats. Suitable for kids of all ages – costumes are encouraged!

* * *

**Cycling the Silk Road**
*Oct. 28, 2 p.m. and Oct. 29, 7 p.m.*
*Bonsor Recreation Complex, Burnaby and Unitarian Church of Vancouver, Vancouver*
*www.kenyaeducation.org*

The Kenya Education Endowment Fund (KEEF) will be featuring a talk and slide show about a 13,000 kilometre cycling trip across Asia in 2018 – from Beijing to Istanbul – showcasing history, culture, geography and logistics. The Tour d'Afrique team completed this incredible journey in five months.

Photo courtesy of Kenya Education Endowment Fund

Cycling for educational aid.

Admission is by donation to KEEF to assist very poor, bright students in Kenya, where high school is not free. Check out KEEF's website for more information.

* * *

**Modulus Festival**
*Oct. 29–Nov. 3*
*Various venues in Vancouver*
*www.musiconmain.ca*

From Oct. 29 to Nov. 3, the Modulus Festival returns to Vancouver. Connect with leading musicians and composers from around the world in fun, intimate settings filled with exceptional music, and explore ideas about music's role in creating meaning for society. The 2019 Modulus lineup spans from epic to intimate and everything in between. Check out Music on Main's website for a complete list of events.

* * *

**16th Annual Downtown Eastside Heart of the City Festival**
*Oct. 30–Nov. 10*
*Various venues around the Downtown Eastside, Vancouver*
*www.heartofthecityfestival.com*

The 16th annual Downtown Eastside Heart of the City Festival features 12 days of music, stories, theatre, poetry, cultural celebrations, films, dance, readings, forums, workshops, discussions, gallery exhibits, mixed media, art talks, history talks and history walks at over 40 venues throughout the Downtown Eastside (DTES). This year's theme Holding the Light has emerged from the compelling need of DTES-involved artists and residents to illuminate the vitality and relevance of the DTES community and its diverse and rich traditions, knowledge systems, ancestral languages, cultural roots and stories. For more information, please check out the festival's website.

* * *

**Ballet B.C.'s Program 1**
*Oct. 31–Nov. 2, 8 p.m.*
*Queen Elizabeth Theatre, Vancouver*
*www.balletbc.com*

Program 1 invites you to surrender to the sublime experience of living. Ballet B.C. will launch the season with works by two acclaimed dance makers. Aszure Barton opens the evening with the Ballet B.C. premiere of *BUSK*, showcasing her versatile and poignant choreography. Probing and liberating, Johan Inger's *B.R.I.S.A.* returns to delight Vancouver audiences. Please visit their website for tickets and more information.

* * *

**A Universe of Surprises**
*Nov. 1, 5–7 p.m.*
*H.R. MacMillan Space Centre, Vancouver*
*www.spacecentre.ca*

Our universe is full of surprises, from ghost remnants of black hole jets to exotic planets around distant stars to Boyajian's star, the most mysterious star in our galaxy. Join space scientists Chris Lintott and Laura Trouille who will use these unexpected discoveries to explore what we know – and what we don't – about our dynamic universe. They will examine how scientists cope with surprises, reveal what it's like to think you might have found aliens and explain how you too might make a remarkable discovery from the comfort of your home. With future telescopes set to provide astronomers with a dynamic view of the universe for the first time, there's never been a better time to look up at the night sky – and be surprised!

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**25th Coup de Coeur Francophone de Vancouver**
*Nov. 2–30*
*Le Studio 16, Vancouver*
*www.lecentreculturel.com*

Le Centre culturel francophone de Vancouver looks forward to presenting the 25th edition of Coup de Coeur Francophone de Vancouver in November. Originating in Montreal, the event is an annual testimony to francophone culture. Today, a number of presenters in Canada use the Coup de Coeur label to refer to a series of concerts that are organized independently but are united around a common desire to celebrate the arts through francophone music and song. Since its beginning, many artists have come to perform at this annual event: Michel Rivard, QW4RTZ, Daniel Lavoie, Myriam Parent, Martha Wainwright, Radio-Radio, Fred Pellerin, Les Sœurs Boulay, Les Hays Babies, Anaïs and many more. For a list of events and performers, check out their website.

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**Shaping Vancouver 2019: What's the Use of Heritage?**
*Nov. 5, 7–9 p.m.*
*SFU Goldcorp Centre for the Arts, Vancouver*
*www.sfu.ca/sfuwoodwards*

SFU will be hosting a conversation examining the disruption taking place in heritage as a discipline and as locally practiced and the challenges it faces in remaining relevant. Competing meanings have been attached to heritage, and there are opposing views on the evolution of the discipline expressed. Some feel heritage has broadened too far while others feel strongly that heritage needs to continually re-examine its concepts in order to respond to current needs. This comes at a time when there is increasing questioning of the usefulness of heritage due to its traditional focus on preservation. Check out SFU's website for more information.