The Source
forum of diversity

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 Vuoi 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 Bidingsong really honors the make- ers growing up.

"When I was learning about Michif, there was almost a healing. From there I started to learn more Cree, a language that I come from. It’s something I want 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.

"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, people were classi- fied based on race and desig- nated certain rights accord- ingly, these differences were brought home to me at a very young age. I didn’t understand it until later, but I felt the dis- comfort 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 immi- grants, people who can relate to my experience. I sit with a Venezuelan friend who tells me she longs to bring her par- ents to Vancouver, and my heart hurts with hers. A fel- low African confides his story about escaping a genocide.

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A philosophical tale told through animation
Reggae spirit knows no frontiers

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Reggae spirit knows no frontiers

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Verbatim
Beyond boundaries
By Daniela Cohen

Where are you from?" A fa- miliar question. One I’ve heard ever since I moved to Canada at age 16. I remember how my classmate’s face wrin- kled 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 recognize I had an ac- cent 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 popu- lating the streets of Johan- nesburg. I was excited to see people who can relate to me. I sit with a Venezuelan friend who tells me she longs to bring her par- ents to Vancouver, and my heart hurts with hers. A fel- low African confides his story about escaping a genocide.

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Yi Liu, Celia Au, Wu's Assassin's
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 Limitations’, 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, and a Centrepiece Spotlight program. The festival focuses on a group of Filipino workers who move to Labrador to the screen

"[It's] helping Asian filmmakers to more powerfully and authentically express themselves through film.

Barbara K. Lee, founder of Vancouver Asian Film Festival

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.

VAFF also will include a documentary 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 career must navigate her world shattered when her mom gets picked up by US Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

Asian filmmakers come together
"Having lived away for 20 years when I returned, I could see and feel a difference in Vancouver. I was so proud to feel the same way."

Lee finds that the hard work done by a team of dedicated artists and the film community together is a rewarding experience. "[It’s] helping Asian filmmakers to more powerfully and authentically express themselves through film and connection to their lost culture." She says. "It is so much fun seeing filmmakers try out networking and sharing ideas that help strengthen the community."

For more information, please visit www.vaff.org.
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 discordant 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 YESworthy Belachew Center for Dialogue (YBCD) and the ombudsman for Oberlin College. As such, she has intimate experience with versing 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 Work Centre.

The benefits behind listening

In some ways the quest to experience empathy is not new. Empathy is not new to mainstream (a master narrative) done well by presenting counter-narratives of historic events and present disenfranchisement and neglect.

In her opinion the media has helped to perpetuate biased and derogatory stereotypes. This has allowed people to become comfortable moments. Many people may feel as if current relations between political rivals or disparate ideologies are at a worse state than ever before, though Davidson contends that the context of the time and 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).

“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 underemphasized by the encounter that triggers us,” she explains.

Empathy is not new

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“You might read the one page I didn’t have access to in books as children,” Davidson says.

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 was born in Vancouver, but he revisits his parents’ homeland in his work. Huynh, a lifelong storyteller, 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 Hué, 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 eventuates in 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.

“Our law firm 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, 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 principal’s office because I didn’t have access to in books as children,” Davidson says. “I 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, but 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 supposedly 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 Consultate in Hong Kong. "The reality is what we've 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.

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."

"I asked an audience once, 'How many people here have struggled with someone's accent?'" he says. "They're asking 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!'"

"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."

"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."
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 ukulele 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.

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 visit www.paliatsky.com and www.fvrl.bibliocommons.com/events/5d5332f78c3e542400ab16d7.
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 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 Williams-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.

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.”

For more about Williams-Davidson, visit www.ravencallingproductions.ca.
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 common techniques, learn visualization 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 that explores the boundaries of her mother and cinema as she explores 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, Cri - lic - The Path to Beyond (2011), was the first Romanian animated movie ever made. The movie starts at the time of its release. It presents the real story of Claudiu Culea, 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 1970s 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 man’s journey, and 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. “It 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 within 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 Fantast - ic Tale is fundamentally linked to the rest of Damian’s previous work.

“From one movie to another I try to reinvent something. It’s like 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 with ourselves? What is the meaning of life?”

The themes of empathy, iden - tity and how humans relate to each other are central to Da - man’s work, and will be at the heart of her new film, an up - side down reinterpretation of Robinson Crusoe as an animated movie about an apeman on a Mediterranean island, set to be completed in 2020.

About her new film and the choice of the topics and subject matters she chooses to address, Damian is reflective.

“I would never do a movie if I don’t believe it’s important,” she says. “It’s not a question of changing, by opening the hearts of people, by helping the human race to look at the world from a different perspective. I want to work on an up - side down turn. What is the meaning of life, of death? It’s a deep theme.”

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

The Creature Creeps!: a Halloween comedy for everyone

by JAKE McGRAIL

For their annual Halloween cele - bration of ghouls and ghosts, Stage 43 Theatrical Society will present a new show that offers a come - dic 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 and performed by American playwright Jack Sharkey, the show is a live-action comedy, using a classic Hollywood horror backdrop to conjure mirth rather than fear.

A night of fun

“I read the script and thought it was just such a fun piece,” says Miles Lukvulkich, 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 Fantasy Spanish castle at the turn of the 20th century, mad scientist Donald Von Blitzen (Miles Lukvulkich) has interrupted by his daughter, who returns from college with some friends. Various hijinks ensue, and Lukvulkich 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 lot of fun.”

In many ways, the show’s success is a result of the show’s cast, and the script, and the show has remained fresh and funny the whole way through. Given how much time he has spent time reading and think - ing about the show’s contents, Lukvulkich 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, and to think that it might be a good thing when you’re doing a comedy and you’re this far along and people are still really into it all.”

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

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For more information, please visit www.pics.bc.ca, or call at 200-8161 Main St., Vancouver, to find out how we can best help you.

The Source
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 U'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 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.

"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 recruiting 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 Salvadoran 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 complement our narrative, we decided to go a step further. The idea was to expand the traditional film format by integrating synthesized, 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 overwhelming positive response from the audience and knew they were on the right track.

The Rescue: hope in humanity

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, 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.

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October 22–November 5, 2019

by SIMON YEE

Another edition of The Source’s Cultural Calendar is here, featuring a sampling of events and 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 Chutpah! Festival
Oct. 24–Nov. 24
Norman Rothstein Theatre, Vancouver and other venues www.chutpahfestival.com

The Chutpah! Festival is an annual performing arts festival committed to bringing together 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 at 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, 4 p.m.
Vancouver Playhouse www.dancehouse.ca

Dancemuse 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 Wollan-Sene, the retrospective piece is a visionary fusion of the art of tea and/or Japanese culture. For anyone who is interested in the Japanese sweets. It is appropriate 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.

* * *

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

This Halloween dive to the darkest depths of The Housted 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 sea! Drop in between 11 a.m. and 4 p.m. to enjoy Halloween fun, crafts, activities and treats. Suitable for kids of all ages – costumes are encouraged!

* * *

Cycling the Silk Road
Oct. 26, 2 p.m. and Oct. 29, 7 p.m.
Bonacore Recreation Complex, Burnaby and Unitarian Church of Vancouver, Vancouver www.kenyasecondaryedu.org

The Kenya Education Endowment Fund (KEEP) will be featuring a talk and slide show about a 17,000-km cycling trip across Asia in 2016 – from Beijing to Istanbul – showcasing history, culture, geography and logistics. The Tour d’Afrique team completed this incredible journey in five months.

The 16th annual Downtown Eastside Heart of the City Festival features 10 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 (DTE). 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 DTE 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.

* * *

Modulus Festival
Oct. 29–Nov. 3
Various venues in Vancouver www.musicmamn.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 the evolution of the discipline examining the disruption taking place and as locally practiced and the need of DTES-involved artists and residents to illuminate the vitality and relevance of the DTE community and its diverse and rich traditions, knowledge systems, ancestral languages, cultural roots and stories.

* * *

What’s the Use of Heritage?
Shaping Vancouver 2019:
The 16th annual Downtown Eastside Heart of the City Festival Oct. 30–Nov. 10 Various venues around the Downtown Eastside, Vancouver www.heartofthecityfestival.com

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

Program 1 invites you to surrender to the sublime experience of 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.

* * *

A Universe of Surprises
Oct. 5–7 p.m.
H.R. MacMillon 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, the night sky – and be surprised!

* * *

25th Coup de Coeur Francophone de Vancouver
Nov. 2–3
Le Studio 26, Vancouver www.lecentreculturel.com

Le Centre culturel francophone de Vancouver looks forward to presenting the 25th edition of Coup de Cœur Francophone de Vancouver in November. Originating in Montréal, the Coup de Coeur is an annual testimony to francophone culture. Today, a number of presenters invite you to this Coup de Coeur label to refer to a series of concerts that are organized independently but are unit ed 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, MQaRTZ, Daniel Laviole, Myriam Parent, Martha Goldenwright, Radio Radio, Fred Pellerin, Les Sœurs Boulay, Les Hays Babies, Anais and many more. For a list of events and performers, check out their website.

* * *

Shaping Vancouver 2019: What’s the Use of Heritage?
Nov. 7–7 p.m.
SFU Goldcorp Centre for the Arts, Vancouver www.sfu.ca/fac/woodwards

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.