



A creative twist  
on Inuit art  
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# The Source

forum of diversity

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www.thelasource.com



Photo by Daniel Fox

## Verbatim

My experience with  
integration in Vancouver

by LAURY-ANN MAHIEU

These days, many Canadians are proud to call our country multicultural and diverse. Along with saying ‘eh’ and living in igloos, Canada is also known internationally for being a kind and welcoming place. As a nation, we can look back to Canada’s history and the decades of oppression, negligence and exploitation of minority groups and say that we have changed. Because most citizens in Canada were at some point immigrants, there’s an ongoing debate about whether Canada is assimilating or integrating people.

Like most Canadians, I immigrated to Canada. Granted I was just three months old, therefore all I’ve ever known growing up were the streets of Vancouver. Seeing as I am half Asian and half European, I’ve often thought about my ethnic identity and whether I fit in with either culture, not to mention in North America, a completely different continent.

French was my maternal language, then came Chinese. When I entered kindergarten, I didn’t know English. During the day, I went to a French school and in the evening I attended Chinese school. To this day, I’ve never been to an English school, so how is it that English is currently the language I’m most comfortable with? Whichever it is, assimilated or integrated, I now feel like a Canadian more than ever, having mixed my two ethnic cultures to form a new one.

I was lucky to be exposed to different cultures in my childhood by participating in festivals, events and through the different community centres my parents registered me to. I was able to meet many other children from diverse cultural backgrounds; at a very young age, multiculturalism had become my reality.

I remember participating in numerous theater classes. A

See “Verbatim” page 7

## A peek into the life of career adventurers

by HARRY JING

Get inspired and learn about the action-packed lives of adventurers and explorers by watching breathtaking presentations and listening to incredible stories. Explore the world of wildlife photographers, professional hikers, and wilderness explorers at the Vancouver Convention Centre’s Outdoor Adventure & Travel Show (Feb. 29–Mar. 1).

Emmett Sparling, one of the guest speakers, is a profes-

sional photographer and adventurer. Traveling since graduating from high school, Sparling has spent his time diving with whale sharks, hanging from helicopters, and hiking the highest peaks of the world. Discover Sparling’s creative process and watch the first screening of his upcoming short film.

Daniel Fox, another guest speaker, is a wilderness explorer, photographer, and author. Fox often journeys into the wilderness, photographing pristine wildlife. Wishing to pass on his learnings from nature, Fox founded WILD.

ECO (Wilderness Immersion for Leadership and Discovery through Education, Conservation, and Opportunities), a non-profit organization aiming to offer disadvantaged youth an opportunity to experience nature and gain leadership and cooperative skills.

### The birth of an adventurer

Sparling’s journey began when his mother handed him a camera and sent him into the garden to take photos.

“It all started with taking macro photos of insects,” reminisces Sparling.

Those photos of bugs and flowers blossomed into an obsession with photography. One day, after feeling that his creative freedom was stifled in the fashion industry, Sparling dropped everything to spend five months backpacking through Mexico and Indonesia. It was during these trips Sparling began posting landscape photos to Instagram and growing his portfolio. As his work gained traction, commissions from tourism companies began flooding in. Sparling now works

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### Also in this issue



God’s lake looks  
for kinship and  
accountability  
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Brazilian troupe  
heats up the stage  
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# Cultural Spotlight

## Dressed in Black: From Africa to Canada

by COLLEEN ADDISON

**Growing up in England, Lolly Bennett loved to dress up. She and her friends wore “sticky-outies,” brightly coloured clothes, to church every Sunday.**

“All the neighbours would say, ‘look at those girls, how well they are dressed,’” Bennett laughs.

Now Bennett is showing how clothing influences how we view other groups of people. Her new exhibit, *Dressed in Black: The Journey*, examines the clothing of a specific group of Black people who came to British Columbia in the late 1850s.

There are different views of Black people in early Canadian history, points out Bennett, who is chair of the Vancouver chapter of the National Congress of Black Women Foundation.

“You often see pictures of Blacks with terrified faces and tattered clothing, running,” she says. “It wasn’t always the case. These were middle-of-the-road people, well dressed. They were well-educated, doctors, lawyers, painters. They came by ship, several hundred of them.”

Photographs of these people, and of their ships, can be seen in *Dressed in Black*, held at the Vancouver Maritime Museum during the month of February as part of Vancouver’s 2020 Black History Month.

### Invitation to a better life

Black people came to British Columbia due to a fortuitous set of circumstances, explains Bennett. With the advent of the Gold Rush, powerful Hudson’s Bay company chief factor Sir James Douglas became concerned about the fate of his small Vancouver Island colony.



▲ Images of early Black immigrants.

“The land was in jeopardy of being overrun by our neighbours to the south,” Bennett says. “Douglas, who was of mixed race, knew that Blacks were in turmoil. They were free, but they weren’t respected; they had no voting rights. Douglas sent a steamship captain to San Francisco with an invitation to Blacks to come to British Columbia.”

Steamships were the transportation mode of the day, notes Bennett, but the steamship Douglas sent was a fine one. Douglas’s Black passengers clothed themselves to match.

“Those early steamship riders got dressed in their finery to travel,” Bennett says. “They were wearing a lot of layers, adornments like lace, hand-sewn, hats, gloves. They wore double-hemlines, very thick, to keep the dust down as they walked.”

Many in the Black community continued to dress formally, even as they settled into life in British Columbia, Bennett continues.

“Joe Fortes is a name that is quite well-known in Vancouver,” she says. “He was a merchant mariner from Trinidad; he was a British colonial. He got the job of lifeguard in Vancouver. He was quite well-rounded and polished and very well-dressed. People forgot about his colour.”

Fashion was not the only thing Blacks brought to this part of the world, Bennett says.

“Important things were done by Black people, inventions, creations,” she says. “John Sullivan Deas was a tinsman in the 1800s. He owned the largest cannery on the Fraser river. He had salmon tins with labels, [and] he commissioned an artist to do the labels.”

### Separate doors

Life in British Columbia did have its challenges, something that Bennett, a woman of mixed race born and raised in Manchester, England, knows a great deal about.

“[Douglas] has clear intentions that Blacks would be treated fairly. [But] it was a rough country,” she says of Canada at this



▲ A mannequin shows typical clothing of the period, like that possibly worn by Black people in British Columbia.

time. “The British colonialists had a superior mentality. In the early 1900s, Vanier Park was a segregated beach. It was known in the Black community as “brown skin beach.”

Bennett’s childhood was also marked by racism. Although her parents were married, her father was coloured, and this fact led to difficulties in 1940s England.

“There was the colour bar, still prevalent and in effect,” she says. “My dad couldn’t go in the same door as my mother to enter the establishments they went to.”

Bennett, who now resides in metro Vancouver, wants to showcase British Columbia’s Black history and culture. She believes that, unlike the history of England, Black history here may soon be forgotten.

“Blacks have been in B.C. for 150 years,” she says. “[We’re] layered into the history of Vancouver. There’s a large community, and there’s a lot of history here. To have no footprint is a tragedy.”

For more information, please visit [vancouvermaritimemuseum.com](http://vancouvermaritimemuseum.com).



▲ Lolly Bennett, an Englishwoman of mixed race now living in Vancouver, curated the exhibit *Dressed in Black*.

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**Mailing Address**  
Denman Place PO Box 47020  
Vancouver, BC V6G 3E1

**Office**  
204-825 Granville St., Vancouver, BC

**Telephone** (604) 682-5545  
**Email** [info@thelasource.com](mailto:info@thelasource.com)  
[www.thelasource.com](http://www.thelasource.com)

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# Solidarity with animals in the city

by XI CHEN

**What would a truly cosmopolitan city look like? Does the diversity we aspire to extend beyond humans to other species?**

Handes Gurses, visiting assistant professor of literature at Simon Fraser University (SFU), will answer these questions and more when she hosts *Standing Together: Human-Animal Encounters in Istanbul and Athens*, on Feb. 27 at SFU Harbour Centre. During this talk, she will discuss the politics of urban life, as seen in two documentaries that focus on stray animals.

## The silent others

“I am interested in the figure of the animal in contemporary world literature, and how we can talk about animals in a

non-anthropogenic way,” says Gurses, who is currently working on a book about how animals are used in the creation of national identities. “The figure of the animal as the silent other is a very rich concept to explore. It can symbolize the silent other of the nation-state, who is included and who is excluded.”

The two documentaries, *Kedi* from Turkey and *Dogs of Democracy* from Greece, make stray cats and dogs the central characters, each with their own unique name and personality.

“*Dogs of Democracy* is about this one particular dog, Loukanikos, who took part in the protests in Athens after the financial crisis and became a significant figure of the movement,” Gurses says. “How did he choose sides? How did he decide to stick with the protesters but not the police force? I am interested in exploring the solidarity between humans and animals.”

The other documentary *Kedi* is an even more politicized film, although at first glance it seems merely about cute cats of Istanbul. Through the eyes and experiences of the cats, says Gurses, the film shows gentrification issues, urban poverty as well as marginalized people in the urban space.

The films also touch on issues such as how barriers between different groups can be overcome through communication. “With humans, we just assume it is easier to communicate, but there is usually a mismatch. Communica-



▲ Scene from *Kedi*.

tion with animals is proof of that; we are communicating with this entirely different other who we have very little in common with, but we still share deep bonds of love, friendship, and companionship,” Gurses says.

## Different urban experiences

In both Greece and Turkey, street animals are much more visible than in Vancouver, where one rarely sees a stray animal anywhere within the urban boundary. According to estimates by the *New York Times*, there are about 130,000 dogs and 125,000 cats roaming free in Istanbul, living side by side with its 15 million human residents.

However Vancouver does have its share of stray animals but they are dealt with differently, says Maria Soroski, co-founder of VOKRA (Vancouver Orphan

Kitten Rescue Association), which has been active in rescuing stray cats in British Columbia for over 20 years.

“In our culture we want the pet to be our family member. In other countries they are part of the community for many generations. That is the key difference,” she says.

Because of this cultural difference, continues Soroski, stray animals are not socialized well in Vancouver. They are truly on their own, not members of the community.

Just like in the documentary *Kedi*, urban change has also contributed to the situation of Vancouver’s stray animals. According to Soroski, the last few years have also seen more cats get left behind when people move homes due to the lack of affordable housing in the city.

“A lot of landlords also do not allow pets. If it were allowed by law like in Ontario, then there would be a lot more people adopting cats,” Soroski says.

Gurses believes the Turkish experience with stray cats is an interesting concept for us to think about when it comes to building urban policies.

“Caring for a stray animal is a different kind of relationship than caring for a pet,” she says. “It is a communal collective way of caring for animals; it is a different way of interacting with urban life; it creates a new community that is not based on ownership but based more on solidarity and camaraderie.”

For more information, please visit [www.sfu.ca/sfu-community/events.html#view/event/event\\_id/9753](http://www.sfu.ca/sfu-community/events.html#view/event/event_id/9753)



▲ Handes Gurses, visiting assistant professor at SFU.

Photo courtesy of SFU





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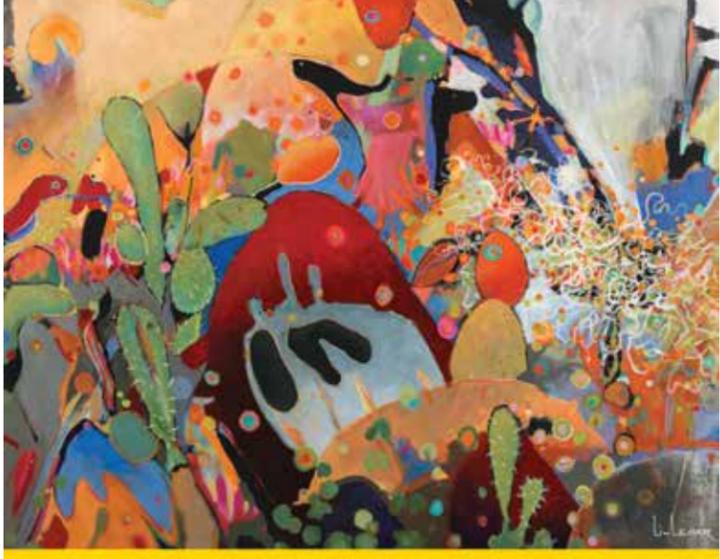
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## Portrait

## Rosio Godomar, woman extraordinaire

by ANINDITA GUPTA

According to various news media, social media and other sources, women in some parts of the world are denied basic rights. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2017), there is an average difference of at least \$170 between the pay of women and men of all races. These differences exist in most industries, including education.

Rectifying this global issue takes a huge amount of work. One Vancouver resident doing her part is Rosio Godomar.

**Educate Girls Network**

In 2013, Godomar started the organization Educate Girls Network (EGN).

The network helps educate young girls to become teachers. EGN does so by offering scholarships to underprivileged female students, who otherwise would

not be able to financially support their university education. The organization's goal is to help young girls gain better education, improve the conditions of individuals, their families, communities and nations, just as Godomar learned from years of

Liberia. One of EGN's goals is to improve these numbers. There may be fewer female students in the country, but there are even fewer women in the teaching industry. According to EGN, if women are not being educated as students, they cannot rise to

Though she cherishes the memories of her childhood, growing up in a rural setting, the lack of a good education was always an issue. It was not until Godomar was eight that her family moved to the capital city of Lima, where her academic excellence was

Health Authority as a food service supervisor at Burnaby Hospital. One of her many other roles is that of treasurer of the United Nations Association of Canada, Vancouver branch. As treasurer, she works closely with co-presidents, ensuring

“I was inspired by life-changing educational opportunities and would like to do the same for Liberian girls.

*Rosio Godomar, founder of Educate Girls Network*

working around the globe. “I realized the common need was for young women to receive an education. A girl with an education provides support to her whole family as well as her community,” says Godomar.

In 2017 UNESCO released statistics that show a gap of 19.3 per cent between the literacy rates in men and women aged 15-24 in

become educators.

“My hope is that through Educate Girls Network we can bring awareness about places and people from one part of the world to another,” she says.

**Helping young girls in Liberia**

Godomar's inspiration to create EGN came from her childhood in Ayacucho, Peru in the 1950s.

recognized. At the end of high school, Godomar was offered a scholarship to study at the Social Security School of Nutrition in Lima. First of her family to leave Peru, she went on to earn an M.Sc. in Human Nutrition from the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro in Brazil. “I was inspired by life-changing educational opportunities and would like to do the same for Liberian girls,” says Godomar.

Godomar has worked with various programs of the UN since 1987. From 1991 to 1995, she contributed to community-based initiatives and humanitarian relief all over the globe, from Angola to Iraq to Pakistan. Her work targeted on improving the government's capacity to implement nutrition and food security policies and programs, focusing on the welfare of children, pregnant women, female farmers, students, and people who have become refugees in their own countries. In the recent past, Godomar worked for Fraser

the accuracy of financial reports and is responsible for responding to board and stakeholder financial queries.

Not only has one of Godomar's organizations supported and offered scholarships to six Liberian girls in the last academic year alone, she is also involved in numerous philanthropic efforts in Vancouver and around the globe. “[it is] a small network group but it has a big heart” says Godomar about EGN. She hopes that with the help of both social media and more traditional communication methods, the word on this initiative reaches more and more people.

Godomar currently lives in Vancouver working as a nutritionist, as well as running her non-profit and playing many important roles in society. ✉

For more information about Rosio Godomar and the EGN, see [www.educategirlsnetwork.org](http://www.educategirlsnetwork.org).

Source: [www.inequality.org/gender-inequality](http://www.inequality.org/gender-inequality).



Photo courtesy of Rosio Godomar

▲ Rosio Godomar with students after a training by the UN in Monrovia, Liberia, 2009.

## An Italian meal to support mental health

by CHIARA NONNI

**Chef Tyler Uguccione, along with a variety of current and past students from the Coast Mental Health Culinary Program will be serving a dinner benefitting the program at Social Crust Café on Feb. 27.**

The menu will consist of four courses, including hand-rolled picci pasta with mushrooms as well as flank steak with gremolata and winter vegetables.

Currently the Chef de Cuisine at Gastown staple Di Beppe, Uguccione shares his thoughts about his food journey, Italian cuisine, and the upcoming fundraiser.

**Inside a chef's world**

When walking into Di Beppe, one can't help but feel the Italian disposition overtake them. The ambiance feels freshly authentic, yet Uguccione says his relationship with the cuisine comes from his experience in the kitchen rather than exposure to Italian culture growing up. Fortunately, he has much experience, having worked for multiple Italian restaurants, and enjoys the delicious simplicity of the cuisine.

As many chefs have, Uguccione began his career as a university student, washing dishes to earn money during his studies in Ottawa. Feeling confused with the direction his education was taking,

he decided to move to British Columbia for a ski-season to assess his future from a mountaintop vista, working in the meantime as a line cook. He enjoyed the culture, teamwork and creativity of the kitchen life and ultimately decided to return to Ottawa to pursue culinary school at the Algonquin College of Applied Arts and Technology, with plans to return to Vancouver in the future.

The chef enjoyed attending culinary school in Ottawa and relishes that the food scene there has changed significantly over the past decade toward smaller restaurants with more diverse inspirations and higher quality food.

“There is definitely more variety here,” he says, adding that

the close availability of fresh and different ingredients in Vancouver creates a separate atmosphere for the culinary universe than what he learned cooking in his hometown.

Uguccione has been working at Di Beppe for just over a year, after interviewing around the city upon his return to Vancouver. With so many options in this part of the country, he wanted to make sure that the community



▲ Heartwarming Italian recipes on the menu.

and physical space of the restaurant he chose fit with his personality and ethos in the kitchen.

When asked what one can do if they want to elevate their Italian home cooking, he replies that “fresh, high quality ingredients are key,” noting

that a home cook can create great food just by investing in an above standard olive oil or even just an assortment of fresh herbs.

He has ambitious plans for Di Beppe, wanting to move even further toward authentic Italian dining in the same vein as their sister restaurant, Ask For Luigi. Uguccione notes certain logistical difficulties in providing diners with these options, such as space and cost constraints.

“We have twice the number of people dining here, so it can be challenging but we do want to move more in that direction,” he says.

He also expresses his enthusiasm for the Coast Mental Health cause as well as working with the culinary students. His goal is to be able to guide the students and have them experience the passion of creating a four-course dinner service for a roomful of patrons.

Former student Frank Roberts shares his enthusiasm for the project.

“I am very excited and happy to be given the opportunity to work with Chef Tyler and a bunch of great people,” he says. ✉

For more information regarding the event, visit [www.eventbrite.com/e/guest-chef-night-ft-di-beppe-tickets-90330471873](http://www.eventbrite.com/e/guest-chef-night-ft-di-beppe-tickets-90330471873)



▲ Chef Tyler Uguccione.

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## TOPIC

## Family:

What does family mean to you vs what it *ought* to mean? Is it possible to *create* family? Does family teach us *acceptance*? How does our environment contribute to familial outcomes?

*We all want to be happy and fulfilled, but how much does our family contribute to these experiences? Should we hold our family accountable for our life's journey?*

## The Dialogue

Moderator: Valerie Malla

*Topic: Family & Life*

Carnegie Community Centre: Floor 3, Rm #2  
401 Main Street, Vancouver BC  
Saturday, February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2020 / 2:30 PM – 4:00 PM



## TOPIC

## Prescription and illicit drug addiction:

An epidemic since the mid-20th century. How do we prioritize human care? As such, are the internal systems of care in need of public enquiry?

*Humans are an interesting mix of a united family and great diversity. When it comes to social responsibility for individual suffering, is addiction an opportunity for us to view how we treat humanity in terms of priorities?*

## The Dialogue

Moderator: Valerie Malla

*Topic: Prescription and Illicit Drug Addiction*

Carnegie Community Centre: Floor 3, Rm# 2  
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Saturday, March 28<sup>th</sup>, 2020 / 2:30 PM – 4:00 PM



## TOPIC

## Celibacy:

Voluntary or involuntary -- what are the pros and cons? Should it be less shunned and more understood? What place does celibacy have in our current society and culture?

*What place does celibacy have in a hyper-sexualized society? Would understanding gentler forms of intimacy broaden our sexual nature, and thereby, lead to a more celebratory perspective?*

## The Dialogue

Moderator: Valerie Malla

*Topic: Celibacy & Understanding*

Carnegie Community Centre: Floor 3, Rm#2  
401 Main Street, Vancouver BC  
Saturday, April 25<sup>th</sup>, 2020 / 2:30 PM – 4:00 PM



# Speed dating with fiction: local writers share their work

by KYLIE LUNG

Several authors from around British Columbia will be sharing their fiction in a writers showcase at the Central Library on Feb. 23. Michele Amitrani, Joan Boxall, Maggie Edwards, Janet Hudgins, and Japhy Ryder will read snippets of their works at this event.

Amitrani is a prolific fiction author who has written several dark fantasy and science fiction stories as well as short stories like *Glass into Steel* and *Not that Fairytale*. His most recent work is *Lord of Time*.

### Old world to new

Amitrani was born and raised in Italy. He lived there until he was 23 years old and he brings the formidable histories of his home country to the complicated and mysterious worlds present in his stories.

"When I walk beside the Colosseum or the Fort Imperiali, I know I'm walking on ancient ground, sharing paths with the ghosts of Julius Caesar and Augustus, Virgil and Cicero," says Amitrani, "That says something about me, about my writing style. I'm drawn by ancient things because they speak a language you have to decipher to really understand. You have to pay attention and be willing to immerse yourself in the past."



▲ Michele Amitrani, writer.

Amitrani's books and stories provide the reader with that full immersion because of his meticulous attention to detail. His endless imagination allows him to spin entire worlds and supernatural existences out of a single thought. He does not want the reader to skim over his writing; he wants his words to shake the hyperactive-brain of today into paying attention.

"It's 2020. The attention span is short and getting shorter," says Amitrani, "But if I can get you to stop on a page, to go back and re-read a passage that spoke to you, your tribute of time is the best compliment you can give to me."

### Trials & tribulations of self-publishing

Amitrani has always loved fanciful worlds of paranormal beings. He does not have a favorite supernatural being that he likes to write about, but enjoys the larger process of building multi-layered plots and uni-

verses. Not surprisingly, his influences include exceedingly creative minds like J.K. Rowling, George R.R. Martin, and J.R.R. Tolkien. A deep bond between author and character develops when Amitrani brings his imagination to life.

"All the fictional people inside these worlds are my literary heroes," says Amitrani, "They are my friends, and my mentors and my enemies too. They taught me that reading a book is not merely looking at the words on a page. It means building up character and discovering yourself."

Amitrani made it his mission to get his stories out to the world, throwing traditional literary agents and publishers to the wayside.

"Self-publishing a book that resonates with the reader is hard, and it's a lot of work," says Amitrani, "There's more to it than you can imagine. Publishing a story is not the end of the process. It's just the beginning."

He admits that he often procrastinates due to his need for perfectionism in his writing, but he hopes to shake this habit in 2020.



▲ Cover of *Lord of Time* by Michele Amitrani.

"Procrastination is the death of creativity," he says, because the mind cannot work at its full imaginative power when it is clogged with deadlines and publishing dates. Even when publishing dates are set by Amitrani himself.

### 2020 challenge

In a bid to challenge himself and his writing, the author is doing his own 12X2020 challenge. He pledges to his followers that he will write and publish 12 stories in 2020 (one every month) and all stories will be free to read and open to comments.

"I let my stories tell me where they want to go," says Amitrani, "Every story I write is different. It has its own needs. Sometimes I can keep to myself most of the things I know about the world. Sometimes I need to go deeper, describe better, make you feel more."

Amitrani is excited about the challenge that lies ahead and the anticipation of new worlds that will spring from his fingertips. ✍️

For more information, visit [www.vpl.bibliocommons.com/vents/5dfbad45f357d12f00850dbb](http://www.vpl.bibliocommons.com/vents/5dfbad45f357d12f00850dbb)



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# A case with consequences

by JAKE MCGRAIL

**A contemporary conspiracy thriller, the world premiere of *Cipher* is underway at the Arts Club's Granville Island Stage.**

Running until Mar. 7, the show looks to subvert iconic tropes of the noir genre, with a cold case that examines some modern social issues.

## Neo-noir

*Cipher* centers around a long unsolved murder mystery, a fictional Vancouver Island case inspired by a real mystery, Australia's Somerton Man. A forensic scientist thinks she's close to uncovering the truth of the past, but finds herself caught up in the present as well.

"It's based on a woman's obsession with a Cold War era cold case," says Craig Hall, the director of *Cipher* and artistic director of Calgary's Vertigo Theatre. "But then a young South Asian man shows up, says he and his family might have some involvement, and the two of them go down the rabbit hole of this conspiracy."

Originally developed in Calgary by Vertigo Theatre, *Cipher* was brought to Vancouver for its world premiere by the Arts Club. Hall calls it "neo-noir", as it recognizes the romanticism attached to the noir genre, while

"There's a movement element to the show," says Hall, "with different scenarios playing out in front of both the characters and the audience. Aside from addressing important contemporary issues, [the writers] chose to tell the story in a very unique way."

## Sense of reality

Many of the contemporary issues that Hall alludes to revolve around the character of Aqeel Saleemi, a young man for whom the case has personal meaning, and who faces plenty of challenges from external forces.

"I'm a big fan of cold case thrillers and true crime stories," says Praneet Akilla, the actor who plays Saleemi. "And as an actor of colour, having a character so well-developed as he is really drew me in."

Akilla received the show's script back in December of 2017, and fell in love with it, participating in intermittent workshops all the way up to when full rehearsals began in earnest. The role of Saleemi is one that delves into very real and heavy issues, and Akilla sees that as one of its strong points.

"I know a lot of my South Asian friends have faced a lot of the problems that Aqeel goes through, when it comes to issues like racial profiling and subconscious discrimination," he says. "I think it's important



▲ Ellen Close and Praneet Akilla: costume design by Stephanie Kong.



▲ Craig Hall, director of *Cipher* and artistic director of Calgary's Vertigo Theatre.

also looking to bring the darker reality of the genre to the stage.

"It's dark, but I would say it has a fairly broad appeal," he says. "It's spy vs spy, yet it's very contemporary. It's iconic but also subversive."

Hall describes the visualization of *Cipher* as almost like a film: there are instantaneous changes of location, and the world it inhabits is highly conceptual.

there's light shone on these issues, while not force-feeding it to the audience."

In the show, Saleemi is torn culturally, and for him the case is more than just a case: it's a longing to find out who he is, and his place in the world. While Akilla has not lived the same life as the character he plays, it is a role that he's been able to truly inhabit.

"There's always a part of me in any character I play," he says. "In terms of this character, I think a lot of it is a lived experience... through my own experience and through other friends' stories. The writers wrote a character I was able to understand and inhabit from day one."

Two words that Hall used as pillars of the show are "empathy" and "consequence". Akilla echoes that, and hopes those who see *Cipher* walk away with some natural self-reflection.

"I want people to go away with a bit more self-awareness about their role in society," says Akilla. "The things they can do to make it better, any subconscious prejudices that they might have... just to be more aware of peoples' stories, and have some more empathy and understanding." ✍️

For more information, visit [www.artsclub.com](http://www.artsclub.com).



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## INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY CELEBRATION

March 7<sup>th</sup>, 2020

20<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL SHAKTI AWARDS GALA

The Shakti Awards were founded in 2000 to recognize and honour women who have displayed Shakti - strength and energy, in their community, locally and/or globally. Shakti is the mother Goddess, the source of all, the universal principle of energy, power and creativity. Shakti is responsible for creation; she is also the agent of all change. Similarly, the Shakti that resides within every woman is a force to reckon with and to celebrate.

Do you know a woman who deserves to be recognized as a leader, advocate, artist, visionary or a source of strength? This is your opportunity to have her celebrated by nominating her for the Shakti Award. The women who have displayed Shakti amongst us represent an inspiring account of positive social, cultural and economic change in the world. The Shakti Awards are an opportunity for us to recognize these women, quite often the unsung heroes, and share their vibrant stories. If you would like to nominate a woman that embodies Shakti, please use the information below and email your nomination to [shaktisociety2000@gmail.com](mailto:shaktisociety2000@gmail.com) no later than February 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2020.

The Shakti Awards will be presented at the Shakti Awards Dinner Gala on Saturday, March 7<sup>th</sup> at Bollywood Banquet Hall at 6:30 p.m. Tickets are \$50 each. For tickets, donations and sponsorship enquiries, call 604-307-8796.

Please note that nominations must be submitted via email. Submissions sent through other means, (social media, in-person or phone/text messages will not be considered). Ensure that the description of the nominee's accomplishments reflect the category in which she is being nominated and provide clear examples of how the nominee has excelled in the specific field and why you feel she deserves the Shakti Award in that specific category.

### Categories:

- ♀ Academic Achievement Award (High School or University/College student)
- ♀ Public Service/Volunteer Award
- ♀ Business Entrepreneur Award
- ♀ Artistic Achievement Award
- ♀ Sports and Recreational Award
- ♀ Resilience Award - A woman who has overcome adversity and has used her personal journey in a way to inspire and motivate others to be positive despite challenges and setbacks.

### Nomination Information:

- Name
- Age
- Address, phone number(s) and email
- Name, phone number and email of nominator
- Brief summary of reason for nomination - how the nominee's accomplishments relate to the stated category, the impact of their role, and why they should be chosen to receive a specific award.
- Identify how the nominee will contribute to Shakti: Empowerment of Women, Children and Families Society



## God's Lake: the lived truths

by THERESA K. HOWELL

**God's Lake Narrows is a small Indigenous community located approximately 550 kilometres northeast of Winnipeg. This isolated fly-in community is only accessed by way of plane, boat or winter ice roads.**

Certain lives within this community will be explored in the upcoming verbatim theatre production, *God's Lake*, hosted by Presentation House Theatre. It runs from Feb. 18–23 and is presented by Victoria's Castlereigh Theatre Company. The company specializes in documentary style theatre based on real-life accounts and storytelling.

### Genesis of the play

The community has seen its share of tragedy, says Francesca Albright, the artistic director of the company. In 2013, the community was shaken by the murder of 15-year old Leah Anderson. The community is still waiting for answers seven years later.

"This project came along when myself and Kevin Lee Burton, award-winning filmmaker, producer and former resident of God's Lake Narrows, began a conversation about collaborating on a story about the unresolved death within the broader context of missing and murdered Indigenous women in Canada and traditional justice," says Albright.

The piece has been in research and development since 2017. During this time, Britt Small, the director, says that the true-to-life nature of the story affects how she navigates her role.

"Because it is a verbatim piece there is an obligation to be as authentic and clear as possible. To not mediate that in any way and let it exist as it is," says Small.

This I think has really deepened the work," says Small.

### Indigenous foundations

In July, composers, Ziibiwan and Melody McKiver traveled to Sioux Lookout for a week to work through and reimagine the score. In combination with Burton's original film work, new projection designers Astros Media captured video and photographic footage from Manitoba. This multidisciplinary approach transports the audience into another space.

"The understanding and feeling of it are more prismatic as opposed to just words on paper giving it a kind of feeling that you cannot get anywhere else," says Small.

While the multi-disciplinary production serves as a unique approach to verbatim theatre, it is important that the script honours the story and words of the people who spoke them. Having strong Indigenous foundations and sometimes common life experiences helps the dialogue to elevate and illuminate some uncomfortable truths.

"All the dialogue within the script is not Indigenous people speaking to Indigenous people. It is a dialogue of Indigenous people speaking to non-Indigenous people. If the audience is non-Indigenous, I want them to know we are speaking directly to them," says actor, Aqqu Meekis.

Meekis, best-known for his work on the APTN tv production *Cashing In*, is from the Oji-Cree Nation of Sandy Lake reserve, another fly in community in Northern Ontario. It has had its own share of tragedies.

"The nuances brought up in the script, I can definitely relate to and understand," says Meekis.

While the play reflects on a specific tragedy, it does offer hope. Small, who says she was humbled by working on this piece, comments that there are solutions suggested by some of the charac-

## Mapping Worlds

# A blur of boundaries between reality and fantasy

by TINA QU

**Mapping Worlds showcases Inuit artist Shuvina Ashoona's pieces that reflect fantastical imagery linked to her roots in Kinngait (Cape Dorset). The exhibition will run from Feb. 22–May 24, at the Vancouver Art Gallery (VAG).**

"The show was inspired by working with Ashoona for over 15 years and is based on my research done for my Ph.D. dissertation entitled *Cracking the Glass Ceiling: Contemporary Inuit Drawing*," says Nancy Campbell, Mapping Worlds' curator. "The exhibition will include work done by Ashoona in the past ten years or so."

### A meeting of imagination and nature

Ashoona's current art practice differs significantly from her early work, says Campbell, not only in scale but also with the introduction of colour and larger paper sizes. Her iconography expanded to include more fantastical imagery, including hybrid animals, spirits, and monsters. She does, however, always retain a link to her home in Kinngait and uses references to northern plant life, animals, and people.

"Her imagination is evident in her work, as the work does not record or illustrate a scene; it combines many elements and streams of consciousness," adds Campbell.

Campbell believes that Ashoona is a creative and expressive artist and is fascinated by several of her pieces.

Her *Interior* and *Settlement*, two small dry-point etchings, were her first pieces to be included in the Cape Dorset annual print collection in 1997. Today, her work attracts both private galleries and public institutions. She's been featured at the Basel Art Fair, the National Gallery of Canada, and the Justina Barnicke Gallery at Hart House. Ashoona was also included in the prestigious Phaudin publication, *Vitamin D2. New Perspectives in Drawing*, as she's slowly gaining more international recognition.

"It's hard to say what her best pieces are," she adds, though, one of her favourites currently shown at the VAG is *Titanic*.

"Her attention to detail in this work is phenomenal and some-



▲ *Handstand*, 2010, Stonecut & Stencil, Printer: Qiatsuq Niviaqsi, 86.3 x 62 cm.

what hilarious," she points out. "She has a band playing on the top deck as people seem to be swan diving into the frigid waters. I have a fondness for this work as well as I know the James Cameron film is one of her favourites."

### Redefining Inuit art

"As with all curatorial work, the best part of putting together an exhibition is developing a deep relationship with the artist. Ashoona is an incredible talent and an amazing person," she de-



▲ Shuvina Ashoona.

clares. "In addition, the team at The Power Plant Contemporary Art Gallery in Toronto has been so supportive." Campbell also loves the "immense satisfaction" she has that "the exhibition is touring. People who are not familiar with Ashoona's work can see it and also redetermine their assumptions about what Inuit art should look like."

Ashoona is an artist from Kinngait, Nunavut. She began drawing in 1996, working with pen and ink, coloured pencils, and oil sticks. She is a member of the West Baffin Eskimo Cooperative that has fostered artists in that community since 1959. Her parents, Kiawak Ashoona and Sorosilutu, are both well known for their contributions to the arts in Kinngait. She joined the cooperative as a vocation, and a means to support herself. There, she found guidance and encouragement in addition to the support she was searching for. ✍

For more information, please visit [www.vanartgallery.bc.ca](http://www.vanartgallery.bc.ca).



▲ (Left to right) Erica Wilson, *Akulu*, Ashley Cook, Nick Benz.

During this last year after their festival premiere in January 2019, they have spent time refining the production through collaboration with local artists. They brought in the expertise of costume designer Carmen Thompson and collaborative choreographer Starr Muranko of Raven Spirit Dance.

"Starr worked with the actors to generate a [physical and emotional vocabulary] about the words they were saying.

ters. Over and over the play talks about what home really means for people, home within self, community and the larger world.

"In the end, it is about how we find kinship with each other and how we are accountable with each other as people regardless of where we are from," Small says. ✍

For more information: [www.phtheatre.org](http://www.phtheatre.org)  
[www.castlereigh.com/gods-lake-1](http://www.castlereigh.com/gods-lake-1)

### ► "Verbatim" from page 1

notable performance was that of a play inspired by Anne of Green Gables a couple of years ago. I had read the book before learning the play, possibly the first Canadian literature novel I've enjoyed. However, thinking back, I don't remember learning about or doing obvious 'Canadian' things, because for me, Vancouver's identity was shaped by those who inhabited it.

Another memorable event that I fondly look back on is the historic 2010 Winter Olympics. I remember a joyful and exciting ambiance, the big screens where we would gather to cheer on our favourite hockey team and the voices of so many singing our national anthem. It might be nostalgia talking, but to me, I was seeing different cultural groups

coming out to celebrate being Canadian... in addition to all the gold medals we won.

A distinct memory that has stuck in my mind throughout the years is that of my visit to eastern Canada. After meeting people in small majoritarily caucasian towns, I realized the importance of diversity. Multiculturalism in Vancouver has allowed me to broaden my point of view of the world, in turn making me a more empathetic and tolerant person. The people I met coming from those small towns were most likely not malicious with their offhand remarks, but rather misinformed and narrow-minded.

Growing up as a mixed child has been confusing at times, for others and myself. To give my personal point of view on the matter

at the beginning, Vancouver has made me feel more integrated than assimilated. Thanks to the diversity of cultures, traditions and religions, I've never quite felt like an imposter in this city. Other places in the world and even in our country aren't as tolerant to multiculturalism. So even with all its flaws, I know how lucky I am to be able to live in Vancouver where celebrating differences is seemingly encouraged.

Because I grew up in the city, I have a limited perspective on this subject. It would be interesting to extend this conversation to other immigrants, those coming from completely different cultural backgrounds and speaking different languages. Do they feel more integrated or assimilated in the City of Vancouver? ✍

►“Adventure” from page 1

at a diverse range of jobs, creating short films and taking photos of his jaw-dropping adventures and exotic destinations.

### Awe-inspiring Adventures

Sparling’s landscape photography career was launched into new heights with his groundbreaking shots of Rainbow Mountain before sunrise. Sparling and his team had to create a route bypassing the tourist entrance’s 8 a.m.–opening time to get to the mountain before sunrise. The photo was taken after trekking for hours at seventeen thousand feet above sea level. The group left base camp at midnight, hiking at -20°C, braving the cold and lack of oxygen. Arriving just before sunrise, the sky bloomed pink for five short minutes before returning to the usual grey. It was in these conditions Sparling snapped the photos that would kick-start his landscape photography career.

“You plan something for so long and when you actually stand there, you go: ‘Oh that’s what that looks like.’ It’s an incredibly satisfying feeling,” says Sparling.

### An average day in the life of an adventurer

Sparling describes his crammed daily schedule during a photo shoot in Derawan, East Borneo. Each morning, Sparling would wake up at 5 A.M. and ride a speed boat for two hours before reaching a completely open ocean. He would then don a wet-suit and dive into an empty azure ocean. Awaiting below the waves were whale sharks, jellyfish, and all sorts of exotic marine life. No matter where Sparling worked, early mornings and physically demanding activities greeted him. Depending on the job, Sparling would have to skydive, bungee jump, free dive, or hike to capture his desired images.

### Exploration versus adventure

Fox has always fashioned himself an explorer, not an adventurer. He explains adventure is about seeking a thrill. It’s a feeling that’s mostly positive.



▲ A view of Machu Picchu, Peru.

“Traveling has always been a gene in me,” says Fox.

Jumping out of a plane and feeling that shot of pure adrenaline and excitement is an adventure. Meanwhile, exploration is seeking something unknown, pushing boundaries, and stepping out of comfort zones. Explorers seek to learn something they don’t know or to discover a place they haven’t been. Explorers and adventurers have different motivations while traveling.

“I’m definitely more of an explorer. I’ve always [sought] to learn, to discover, and to use nature as a framework for per-

sonal exploration,” explains Fox. “For me, nature is this thing that’s bigger than myself. By spending time in it, by going out, by experimenting, I get to discover myself and discover life.”

### WILD.ECO

It was during a paddle around the San Juan islands that Fox



▲ Rainbow Mountain, Peru.

connected the dots of what would become WILD.ECO.

“Why should youth value nature and wilderness when they don’t know what it is?” questions Fox.



▲ Emmet Sparling travels the world, camera in hand.

Fox works to raise money through selling books and prints of his photographs to send disadvantaged youth to a month-long wilderness camp. Recalling his childhood experiences with nature, playing in parks, climbing trees, and going to summer camps, Fox says these experiences created anchor points for him to return to as he grew older.

Fox feels today’s youth lack memories of the outdoors. Through the wilderness camp, Fox aimed to create anchor

points and memories along with new-found appreciation of nature and wilderness in teens.

“You always have these bigger themes around us, and once you include humans, then it makes a lot more sense than trying to exclude humans.”

WILD.ECO also operates a mentorship program geared towards anyone, young and old – Fox explains that nature can be found everywhere: in the air, trees, planet, sun, and even in humans. Using insights

from nature, Fox seeks to help people make sense of the confusing forces of life, and to find comfort in them.

He hopes to alleviate some anxiety of the future. Fox compares his belief in nature to religion. He simply replaces religious faith with nature as his framework of understanding things bigger than himself. Over twelve months, Fox teaches people twelve themes found throughout nature and life. He assigns them a task at the beginning of each month that requires research, reading, and exercise. Then he asks them to draw and write one page documenting their learning.

“We’ve created a framework that’s negative towards the human species; we think the human species is a cancer on the planet, and that we’re wrong in all these ways,” explains Fox. “But when we say all these things, no one wants to wake up and be a human. I want to let people know that there’s a future and there’s a way.”

For more information on the event, check out: [www.outdooradventureshow.ca](http://www.outdooradventureshow.ca).

# SING UNTO THE LORD

3 PM  
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GallerySingers.ca

The Gallery Singers are joined by strings and continuo to perform Henry Purcell’s “O Sing Unto the Lord” as well as works by Claudio Monteverdi, Joseph Haydn, and Georg Philipp Telemann.



# Cultural Calendar

February 18–March 3, 2020

by SIMON YEE  
CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

Are you done with the cold weather? I sure am. The spring season is right around the corner and though I loathe to swap a cold weather season for an allergy season, I could use some more sun and warmth right about now. If you're like me and have been hibernating all winter, hopefully one of the festivals or events below might be the right occasion to get back outside!

\*\*\*

## 19th Annual Talking Stick Festival

Feb. 18–29  
Various venues  
[www.talkingstickfest.ca](http://www.talkingstickfest.ca)

The Talking Stick Festival began as a way to showcase and celebrate Indigenous art and performance to a wider audience. Now in its 19th year and bringing out upwards of 20,000 attendees each year, this year's theme is *Chéichenstway*: "upholding each other, lifting each other up." This festival of extraordinary Indigenous performance and art features some of the best emerging and established Indigenous artists Turtle Island has to offer, with a lineup of theatre, storytelling, writing, music, spoken word, dance, film, visual arts – and more!

\*\*\*

## CelticFest Vancouver

Feb. 20–Mar. 28  
Various venues around Vancouver  
[www.facebook.com/CelticFestVancouver](http://www.facebook.com/CelticFestVancouver)

CelticFest Vancouver is Western Canada's biggest annual Celtic festival. It is a rich cultural celebration of the seven Celtic nations' kinship and community. The festival showcases the best of Celtic music, dance, spoken word and supports the rich Celtic Community based in the city. This year's festival features an ever-expanding lineup of guests and events, including a Ceilidh on Mar. 13, a St. Patrick's Day Family Event on Mar. 15 and more. Visit the CelticFest's Facebook page for a complete lineup.

\*\*\*

## Vancouver International Mountain Film Festival

Feb. 21–Mar. 1  
Various theatres and venues  
[www.vimff.org](http://www.vimff.org)

The Vancouver International Mountain Film Festival is an annual 10-day community festival, featuring mountain film screenings, live multimedia presentations, photography exhibitions, workshops, seminars and other special events. By presenting unique outdoor and mountaineering films that illustrate experiences and cultures from all corners of the globe, the festival brings communities together to promote positive values and active lifestyles. For a list of shows and more information, please check out the festival website.

\*\*\*

## Making Our Way Home

Feb. 22, 1–4 p.m.  
312 Main Street, Vancouver  
[www.sfu.ca/publicsquare/upcoming-events/blair-imani.html](http://www.sfu.ca/publicsquare/upcoming-events/blair-imani.html)

Blair Imani, activist, writer and historian, brings her second il-

lustrated tome of radical history to Vancouver in time for Black History Month! This book launch and conversation, co-hosted by SFU Public Square, celebrates Imani's wisdom and authorship and invites local Black activists for an intimate dialogue on the parallel but different histories of Black Canadians. Join Imani for a rich discussion on the importance of Black history in the context of Black liberation with a collection of influential Black voices. Tickets by donation with proceeds going to cover event costs. Check out the SFU website for tickets and more information.

\*\*\*

## Sea Songs & Shanties

Feb. 22, 7:30 p.m.  
Chan Centre for the Performing Arts, University Endowment Lands  
[www.earlymusic.bc.ca](http://www.earlymusic.bc.ca)

Join the musicians and vocal soloists of La Nef and Chor Leoni Men's Choir as they explore music of the sea with capstan shanties, halyard shanties, laments, forecastle songs and short haul shanties: hear the rich songs and music that accompany a sailor's work and play. Inspired by a tradition of English maritime music going back to the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries, Seán Dagher, the troupe's musical director, has created modern arrangements of these songs to display all the warmth and depth they deserve. For tickets and programme information, check out the Early Music B.C. website.

\*\*\*

## Lineages and Land Bases

Feb. 22–May 18  
Vancouver Art Gallery  
[www.vanartgallery.bc.ca](http://www.vanartgallery.bc.ca)

The artworks in lineages and land bases, on display at the Vancouver Art Gallery until May 18, address differing understandings of the self and personhood in relation to nature as artists seek to represent their relationships to the world around them. At the centre of the exhibition is a focused look at the life and work of Sewinchelwet (Sophie Frank) from the Skw̓w̓w̓7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish Nation) and Emily Carr. The two women were close contemporaries and friends for 33 years, a relationship that was shaped by the profound inequalities between them resulting from colonialism. A comparison of Frank's basketry with Carr's late landscapes both prefigures and extends the critique of the separation of nature and culture seen elsewhere in the exhibition that urge patrons to think anew about the meaning of the self and its ties to the non-human world.

\*\*\*

## Vancouver Jewish Film Festival

Feb. 27–Mar. 8  
Various theatres around Vancouver  
[www.vjff.org](http://www.vjff.org)

Since 1988, The Vancouver Jewish Film Centre has presented high quality comedies, dramas, thrillers, hot and timely documentaries and whimsical shorts at the festival, showcasing the diversity of Jewish culture, heritage and identity through film. Catch an irreverent cinematic spin on the Israeli Palestinian conflict, a tale of star-crossed lovers in Mexico

City and uplifting stories of hope and healing for Holocaust survivors. For tickets, shows and more information, please check out the festival's website.

\*\*\*

## The House at Pooh Corner

Feb. 28–Mar. 29  
The Waterfront Theatre at Granville Island, Vancouver  
[www.carouseltheatre.ca](http://www.carouseltheatre.ca)

Bring your young children to the Waterfront Theatre to see the Carousel Theatre's adaptation of British author A.A. Milne's children's classic storybook *The House at Pooh Corner*, playing until late March. Take a magical trip into the Hundred Acre Wood and discover the wonderful world of Winnie-the-Pooh and his friends. Music and puppetry without strings make this a very special treat for family audiences. Join the theatre troupe as they explore how the friends around us can shine brighter than any stars in the sky.

\*\*\*

## Gwenessa Lam and Hyung-Min Yoon: Trace

Feb. 29–April 26  
Evergreen Cultural Centre, Coquitlam

Every day, we peer into a black mirror and ask it to help us understand the world. We wake our sleeping, darkened screens and attempt to make sense of the world through pixels and bytes. The exhibition *Trace*, opening Feb. 29 at the Evergreen Cultural Centre, brings together artworks



Photo courtesy of Carousel Theatre

▲ Music and puppetry bring classic tale to life.

by visual artists Gwenessa Lam and Hyung-Min Yoon that explore the power of the black mirror in a range of its incarnations. Through multiple mediums, including artists' books, sculpture and printmaking, Lam and Yoon consider the circulation of images and the evolution of their meaning across time, countries and platforms. There will be an artists' talk and reception from 2–4:30 p.m. on Feb. 29.

\*\*\*

## Resounding Joy: Beethoven's Ninth Symphony

Mar. 1, 2 p.m.  
Orpheum Theatre, Vancouver  
[www.vancouveracademyofmusic.com](http://www.vancouveracademyofmusic.com)

The Vancouver Academy of Music (VAM) will be celebrating their 50th anniversary season with a special presentation in honour of the genius of Ludwig van Beethoven on Sunday, Mar. 1 at the Orpheum Theatre. Under the baton of Conductor Emeritus Leslie Dala, more than 100 students from the VAM Symphony Orchestra (VAMSO), four

esteemed vocal soloists, Vancouver Bach Choir, and members of VAM's Choral Program will perform a dazzling concert featuring Beethoven's most revered works. The program order will see *Fidelio* Overture open the concert, followed by Piano Concerto No. 4 and will conclude with a jubilant performance of *Symphony No. 9*. For tickets and more information, check out the VAM website.

\*\*\*

## Inheritance: A Choose-Your-Adventure Experience

Mar. 3–15  
Annex Theatre, Vancouver  
[www.touchstonetheatre.com](http://www.touchstonetheatre.com)

A remote property is up for grabs. Three people race to claim it. You – the audience – decide how the story unfolds. Set on a vast, rural estate, urban couple Abbey and Noah are on a week-long getaway to visit her father. When they arrive, they find him missing and a local Indigenous man, Frank, staying there instead. When it's revealed that the colonial property rights to this unceded land are up for grabs, the audience – with anonymous voting devices in hand – decides what happens next. An exciting and daring interactive play like nothing you've experienced, *Inheritance* puts the power in the palms of its audiences, giving them the freedom to choose the action of the play. At key moments, the play is halted, multiple plot choices are offered, and with a click of a button the audience picks the path the play takes next, ultimately deciding its outcome.



**TALKING STICK FESTIVAL 2020** FEB 18–29, 2020  
EXPLORING INDIGENOUS CULTURE THROUGH THE ARTS

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**Sunday February 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2020**

**Roundhouse Community Arts & Recreation Centre**  
181 Roundhouse Mews, Vancouver, BC V6Z 2W3

**Grand Entry at 12:00pm**

Arts and Crafts Vendors Traditional Foods  
Dance Specials Performances Cultural Exhibitions

**This is a family friendly events**  
Elders's Lounge and Respite room on-site

To book vendor tables or for general inquires, please contact  
[Powwow@fullcircle.ca](mailto:Powwow@fullcircle.ca)  
604.683.0497

**chéichenstway**  
upholding each other, lifting each other up