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Inclusion at the top: AMSSA’s community work pushes back against the status quo

by LILLIAN LIAO

March 21 is the UN-designated International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. For Katie Crocker, CEO at the Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Service Agencies of BC (AMSSA), the work to make Vancouver’s institutions, particularly its workplaces, more inclusive requires inviting diversity to the table not just as guests, but as leaders.

“Our systems, including workplaces and institutions, are designed to keep the people in power at the decision-making

level,” says Crocker. “Organizations will congratulate themselves on having a diverse workforce, but when you look at the roles and who is making decisions, it is still white men.”

Having been at AMSSA for 10 years, Crocker has seen the organization grow from a staff of nine to 35 and face new challenges, including restrictions placed on client services according to one’s immigration status – all the while remaining strong advocates for the benefits of diversity.

Workshopping inclusion

Since its inception in 1977, AMSSA has looked to establish a so-

ciety based on the principle of justice and equity for all. In addition to serving its community and government stakeholders, it also functions as a province-wide network of support and resources for its more than 80 member organizations. A key aspect of its anti-racism work lies in its two workshops – Safe Harbour: Respect for All and Cultural Safety. For Crocker, an insightful workshop is one that facilitates participant engagement with both the material and each other.

“We often find that within one group there are a few folks who have a lot of knowledge in their

justice, equity, diversity and inclusion journeys while others are just starting to learn about diversity and inclusion,” she Crocker. “In these dynamics, those who have more advanced knowledge support their colleagues in the understanding.”

Examining topics such as biases, stereotypes and discrimination, Safe Harbour introduces students to diversity and inclusion principles, encouraging them to recognize the value of an inclusive work environment while learning how to apply these principles to their workplaces. Similarly, the Cultural Safety workshop explores inter-

sectionality, respectful communication and cultural humility, as instructors lead participants into a deeper understanding of relationship power dynamics in their workplaces.

“Having a knowledgeable and dynamic presenter is always great, especially with live workshops. Sometimes the interaction within the group may be emotional, curiosity or even tension and hostility,” says Crocker. “A good facilitator and presenter will often give space to ensure all participants feel included, but also be able to move the workshop along.”

See “AMSSA” page 5 ➤



Italian past and present in the Okanagan
Page 3



Shining light on an artistic and human legacy
Page 6



DakhaBrakha brings the noise for Ukraine
Page 7



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Nearly one in five sports participants experience or witness unfair treatment or discrimination, according to new Stats Canada survey

by STAFF WRITER

While conversations continue to arise about discrimination in sports, new data from Stats Canada suggests that discrimination in sports, particularly along the lines of race and sexuality, is still a substantial issue. These discriminatory behaviours can take many forms and act as a barrier to participation in sports for racialized people, the 2SLGBTQIA+ community and other marginalized groups.

The data, released on March 4, comes from the most recent wave of the Stats Canada Survey Series on People and their Communities, which examined participation and experiences in community sports, among other topics.

Some of the recently shared results examine unfair treatment, racism and discrimination in sports in Canada. A key stat that highlights the breadth of this issue is as follows: 18 per cent of surveyed Canadians who participated in a sport in the five years preceding the new report said they experienced or witnessed unfair

treatment, racism or discrimination in sport.

Who is most affected

The results show that certain population groups were more likely than others to experience or witness unfair treatment, racism or discrimination. Lesbian and gay Canadians (42 per cent) were more than twice as likely as heterosexuals (17 per cent) to report having experienced or witnessed such behaviour.

Racialized people (26 per cent) were also more likely than their non-racialized counterparts (15 per cent) to have experienced or witnessed unfair treatment, racism or discrimination while playing a sport. Black (34 per cent), Filipino (32 per cent) and Korean (32 per cent) people were among the most likely racialized groups to experience or witness these behaviours.

The most common motivation cited by victims and witnesses was race or skin colour (64 per cent), followed by physical appearance (42 per cent) and ethnicity or culture (38 per cent). But a significant portion also reported sex (23 per cent), language (22 per cent), religion (21 per cent) and sexual orientation (20 per

cent) as reasons for the discrimination committed against them or other participants.

Those in higher positions of authority in sport were not exempt from from discrimination, but they were considerably less likely than participants themselves. While coaches, officials and others occupying non-athletic roles experienced or witnessed discrimination (five to 15 per cent), athletes and participants (80 per cent) were generally most likely to report experiencing or witnessing unfair treatment, racism or discrimination in a sport.

What discrimination looks like, and when it's reported

The most common types of discrimination reported by victims and witnesses involved being made to feel uncomfortable, such as through insensitive jokes or remarks (60 per cent), or being called names, insulted or mocked (48 per cent). This was followed by being ignored by others or excluded from conversations or group activities (44 per cent) and people talking behind the person's back (42 per cent).

However, many victims and witnesses also reported having experienced or witnessed threats or harassment (20 per cent) and even physical attacks or assaults (8 per cent).

Many of these incidents were also never reported by the victim or the witnesses (32 per cent). However, almost one-quarter of victims and witnesses said they reported at least one incident officially by filing, for example, an official complaint or report. More victims and witnesses (35 per cent) said they informally reported the incident, such as by telling a teammate, friend or family member, or sharing it on social media.

In 2023, one-quarter (25 per cent) of Canadians felt that racism and discrimination were problems in community sports in Canada.

For more information about the study, as well as the Survey Series on People and their Communities, visit www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/240304/dq240304a-eng.htm

Source: Stats Canada—The Daily

Le plaisir of the words by Le Stylo à mots

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L
1												
2												
3												
4												
5												
6												
7												
8												
9												
10												
11												
12												

Horizontally

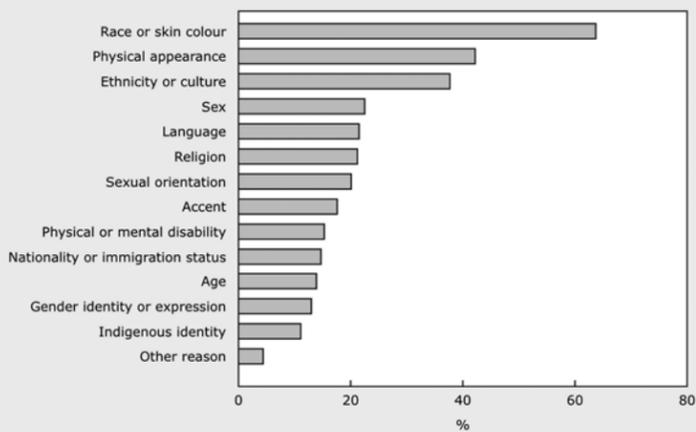
- 1 – not foreign
- 2 – letter – insect's egg – champion
- 3 – microwave stimulation – birds
- 4 – over a surface – pull apart with force – rodents
- 5 – donkey – Asian mountains
- 6 – house with services – seafood – land in water
- 7 – long and straight – white rain
- 8 – cold solid – invisible
- 9 – understand – currency – large amount of water
- 10 – loose – me and others
- 11 – high section of railroad – lack of red blood cells
- 12 – wooden shoes – match

verticalement

- A – personnes sans mouvements
- B – pain – ville française ensoleillée – note
- C – racontes – périodes de temps
- D – petites îles – langue thaï
- E – pour manger vite ou bien
- F – indique l'état – plantes toxiques
- G – rejetterai la vérité – alcool
- H – subtilisa – banni de plusieurs régimes – lettre grecque
- I – semence – matériel textile
- J – conservations d'aliments – possède
- K – démonstratif – antigène obscure – du verbe avoir
- L – terminée – tissu

For answers, see page 8

Reasons reported by victims and witnesses for unfair treatment, racism or discrimination committed against them or others in sport in the previous five years, 2023



Note(s): Sex refers to sex assigned at birth. Discrimination based on physical appearance includes discrimination on the basis of weight, height, hairstyle or hair colour, clothing, jewellery, tattoos or other physical characteristics.

Source(s): Survey Series on People and their Communities – Participation and Experiences in Community Sports (5378), 2023.

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Intergenerational cultural sharing, with a side of gnocchi

by CURTIS SEUFERT

In the last century, plenty has changed about cultural attitudes towards Italians in Canada. While they no longer face widespread discrimination, Italian-Canadians once faced intense levels of prejudice. So as Italian culture becomes more accepted in the country over time, what role does an Italian cultural club have in 2024?

For Gordon Hotchkiss, co-chair of the Kelowna Canadian Italian Club (KCIC) heritage committee, there are many good answers to that question. He says organizations like KCIC are in a unique cultural position to share the importance of diversity with others. At the same time, the club looks to offer a space to the city's Italian-Canadian community to come together and celebrate their culture.

"Our president Rosann [Nanci] says it's like coming to a big Italian wedding. You come to one of our dinners, everyone knows everyone," says Hotchkiss. "Organizations like ours continue to promote multiculturalism and diversity and the importance of that, and the lessons that can be learned from it. I think that's also something we want to carry forward."

Changing with the times

Founded in the 1960s, KCIC was originally created as a support network and community space for Italian new arrivals, but plenty has changed since then. While that demographic faced widespread discrimination in Canada even after World War II, negative sentiment has since largely dispersed, with many feeling very integrated into Canadian culture.

As time goes on, and Canada's cultural relationship with its Italian immigrants has evolved, so too has the mandate of KCIC, which now serves Italian-Canadians who have called this country home for generations.

"Over time the mission has shifted from providing that support network to really embracing, preserving the culture," says Hotchkiss. "The heritage activities that we've taken on seem to be a nice fit for that."

Those activities include events which suit both long-time members of the club and members of the wider community alike, including pasta dinners, language courses and cooking classes.

Hotchkiss says cooking classes have been an especially good opportunity to connect with Italian culture for those who may have lost touch, including younger generations whose connection with Italian culture came primarily through their grandparents.

"They kind of go through this evolution where you grow up and you have your *nonna* and *nonno*. And when you lose that connection with the past when *nonno* and *nonna* are no longer around, you go 'Oh my God, I missed that,'" says Hotchkiss.

Hotchkiss says classes like these – often led by Italian-Canadian women who have been cooking Italian dishes for de-

acades – offer a welcoming space to jump back into the culture.

"There's kind of an informal, you know, 'Come into our *cucina*. I'll teach you how to make, you know, gnocchi,'" he says.

A perspective on acceptance

Hotchkiss himself has played a leading role in the club's heritage and historical efforts. His largest project to date was writing, producing and directing an entire documentary about the Casorso family, who are believed to be the first Italian immigrant family in the Okanagan.

That documentary showcases the unique social position that Italian families like the Casorsos had in Kelowna, given the region's agricultural focus. As Hotchkiss explains, owning a farm changed the Casorsos' re-



Photo courtesy of the Kelowna Canadian Italian Club

Kelowna Canadian Italian Club members film for an upcoming documentary series on Italian contributions to Okanagan irrigation and railway systems.

lationship with the usual social hierarchy, allowing more leeway than the strict "pecking order" of industrial work which typically employed Italians in other B.C. towns.

"You can have a farm next to an English or a French or a Polish family. You're equal because you [all] have to try to get the crops off in time," he says. "So you had a really unique experience happening here that I think created much more of an acceptance for the Italian families."

Hotchkiss says it's stories like these that are important to share with both the Italian community and the wider public. In addition to offering Italian-Canadians a space for communal cultural celebration, he hopes KCIC can continue to share stories like these which offer a unique perspective on the importance of cultural acceptance.

"At the turn of the 19th century, Italians were pretty far down the pecking order of desired immigrant groups," says Hotchkiss. "[But] we can now talk about it in a way that may not push any hot buttons politically. We can get across those principles of why it's important to welcome newcomers and how it's vital for Canada to continue to function as the country it is by bringing new ideas and fresh perspectives."

KCIC will be hosting its 58th Anniversary Gala on March 23 at the Immaculate Conception Parish Church Hall. For more info on the event and on KCIC, visit www.kelownaitalianclub.com

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Don't experiment on First Nations' rights

There's a bill winding its way through Parliament that threatens First Nations' rights under the guise of promoting reconciliation with Indigenous peoples. Bill C-53 proposes legislation that the federal government claims will merely confirm self-government rights for three provincial Métis organizations in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Ontario.

What could be wrong with that?

In fact, what Bill C-53 does is fabricate out of whole cloth a raft of new "communities" claiming Métis status in Ontario. If passed, the bill will have dramatic consequences for legitimate Métis, Inuit and First Nations groups across Canada by granting constitutional rights to a group with no legal or historical basis to claim those rights.

“...Canada can't create Métis groups that never existed.

The bill not only recognizes all the new communities represented by the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO), but purports to grant them all constitutionally-protected Aboriginal rights.

First Nations across the country have sounded the alarm.

Over 630 First Nations across Canada oppose Bill C-53. Yet, the federal government is attempting to rush Bill C-53 through Parliament despite widespread objections from First Nations and the Red River Métis.

Why not take the time to consult with those groups most affected? Passing the bill now – without consulting First Nations and without verifying the legitimacy of MNO's claims would be a new kind of colonialism. A deep discussion needs to take place between Treaty partners before decisions like this are made.



Photo courtesy of QUOI Media

▲ First Nations' rights are not for experimenting on, says Jason Batise.

First Nations are angry and disillusioned because the federal government has point blank refused to meaningfully engage with First Nations about our concerns – telling us that the creation of new rights-holders on our lands is none of our business. Look no further than the government's refusal to respond to our requests for information, citing cabinet secrecy.

Strangely, federal government officials admitted that they made no attempt to verify the legitimacy of MNO communities granted Aboriginal rights by Bill C-53.

So, let's look at the MNO claim to Aboriginal rights.

Some commentators argue recognition of MNO is consis-

tent with the Constitution. That is a fallacy. MNO claims that the modern coming together of people with mixed Indigenous and non-Indigenous ancestry creates new Aboriginal rights – a proposition that the leading decisions of the Supreme Court of Canada on Métis status explicitly reject.

Métis rights that are protected by s. 35 of the Constitution flow not from mixed ancestry but from the existence of a culturally distinct, self-governing nation that formed around and from the Red River communities in Manitoba before the Canadian government took control of the lands that are now Canada.

As a matter of historical fact, Métis communities expanded further west, but did not extend into Ontario because of the way the fur trade developed.

First Nations in Ontario know there were no distinct Métis communities in our territories historically because we have always been here – we would have noticed. Unlike the federal government, First Nations have done our research.

MNO's claims are based on changing the identities of First Nations individuals in the past into "Métis" simply because they are mixed race (referred to a "half-breed" in census records).

In an effort to paper over the glaring lack of facts supporting MNO's claims, the Métis National Council announced it is convening an "expert panel" made up of hand-picked individuals to investigate the legitimacy of MNO. This is just a political fig leaf.

This panel won't change the fact that Canada can't create Métis groups that never existed. And if the expert panel's objective is to find out if the communities represented by MNO actually exist, why is Bill C-53 going forward now without that input?

What is needed is a transparent and independent review of MNO's claims – a review that includes First Nations. First Nations are entitled to ensure the federal government isn't creating illegitimate groups simply for its own political reasons.

Bill C-53 is very much about land – our land. Bill C-53 recognizes MNO as a rights-holder on lands that don't belong to them, but which MNO loudly claims are theirs. And Canada isn't even waiting for Bill C-53 to be passed to begin creating a land base for MNO.

An academic booster of the legislation recently said Bill C-53 was an "exciting experiment." Our message to Canadians and parliamentarians is clear: First Nations' rights are not for experimenting on.

We deserve fairness and transparency. Bill C-53 should be withdrawn until we get it. ✉

JASON BATISE is a member of Matachewan First Nation and the Executive Director of the Wabun Tribal Council.

Source: Quoi Media

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Beating back plastic together

Local undergrad spearheads community effort to understand microplastics at Vancouver's beaches

by **CHERIE TAY**

Helen Wong has found a way to blend community advocacy with greater environmental understanding. The environmental science student at Simon Fraser University (SFU) brought in over 20 volunteers to aid her undergraduate thesis project, which looks to learn more about the impact and extent of microplastics on Vancouver's coasts.

After winning a \$1500 Ocean Actions Grant for youth-led environmental initiatives, Wong's student volunteers joined her rainy-day effort to collect sand samples for lab analysis. After being blown away by the turnout, Wong hopes the effort will inspire environmental action beyond even her own project at SFU.

"It was pouring rain so I could not have picked [a worse] day," says Wong. "It was the last Saturday of January and I was like, 'There's going to be 2 people who come and I don't fault them.' I myself would not want to go out in the rain. But 25 people came! I was just like, 'wow.'"

Getting the dirt on Vancouver's sand

Wong grew curious about microplastics after taking a course with her current thesis supervisor Anna Hippmann. While she didn't know much about the issue beforehand, she says the

"eye-opening" course led her to wonder how the material might be affecting Vancouver's coast due to the plastic's non-biodegradable properties.

"There are islands of plastic floating in the ocean, and with Vancouver being literally by the ocean it hits so close to home," says Wong. "I was curious since plastic doesn't break down or biodegrade. It just gets smaller and smaller. All the plastic that's been made is probably still here on the planet somewhere, and I [wondered if there was] any in Vancouver."

For her project, Wong traveled to five different beaches in Vancouver – Kitsilano Beach, Jericho Beach, Hadden Park, Sunset Beach and Barnet Marine Park – five times each, in addition to



▲ Volunteers use a sieve to parse sand samples, part of a research effort led by SFU environmental science student Helen Wong.



▲ SFU environmental science student Helen Wong recently led a sand sample collection effort to better understand microplastics at Vancouver's beaches.

the 25-person collection effort at Kitsilano Beach. The laborious process involved shoveling scoops of sand into a sieve and filtering it into a bucket. The pieces that float on top of the sieve are probable microplastics, so she brings those samples to a lab for further investigation.

"If it's squishy, it's most likely microplastic. If it starts to crumble, it's probably not," says Wong. "So we collect them in

vials and I look at these under a microscope with a camera attached. It will take a picture and tell me properties such as color, size and diameter."

Practical issues such as affordability are also a key factor in the research process, with Wong only being able to send 55 samples in total, due to grant limitations, to a lab for FTIR, or Fourier Transform Infrared Spectroscopy, a technique that helps her to

analyze whether samples are truly microplastics or not.

But while that process might be time-consuming, Wong hopes that participants gained insight into the fieldwork process and feel more motivated to enact change and better understand the plastics' environmental impact.

"They got to dig, they got to sort through everything and clean the samples. When you are in class or just chilling looking through all this different media, there is a disconnect with what's really out there," she says. "Events like this not only expose people to what fieldwork is like, but they get to do something cool outside."

And while this kind of work can engender a sense of climate anxiety – the propensity to feel pessimistic about the future of the world's worsening climate systems – Wong resists such feelings by remaining hopeful that tiny improvements can lead to something greater. Seeing so many others willing to help out surely doesn't hurt either.

"[Climate anxiety] is not something that only young people feel, but literally anyone who cares about the environment... Policies are in place and are very important, but they also take a lot of time to implement, you won't be able to see [the results] right away," says Wong. "Having conversations, talking about it, learning what it all means and breaking it down is very helpful." ✂

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► "AMSSA" from page 1

Other useful tips, according to Crocker, include establishing rules around participant engagement at the beginning of the workshop and customizing materials as well as activities to each of their clients. Despite these strategies, there remain challenges in ensuring that DEI workshops are fulfilling their goals.

Difficult conversations

While some participants have sought out and requested workshops for their own development, Crocker notes that people usually hear about these workshops from their employers who have a working relationship with AMSSA. Crocker further considers how mandated DEI training in the workplace may lead to participant disengagement.

"They may feel forced into training and are there just because they must be, which can be a hindrance to learning as they

group composed of white men. In response to such binary perspectives, Crocker, who identifies as a white, settler woman but also someone who has experienced mental illness, advocates for an intersectional approach that examines how discrimination may even exist inside the "us" category.

"This is a very hard topic to address, but it has to be talked about," says Crocker. "Sometimes we do not understand or support each other within [the] scope of the spectrum of people identified in DEI politics or practices."

A multifaceted approach to DEI is indeed a foundation of AMSSA's community work, as they support many settlement program providers around B.C. Some notable members include Immigrant Services of BC, MO-SAIC, and Shuswap Immigrant Services Society. With a focus on newcomer settlement in B.C., Crocker highlights how important it is to recognize Indigenous leadership and understand what it means to be living on this unceded and stolen land.

"Many newcomers have their own experiences with colonization, and we have had impactful dialogue circles about how they can leverage their own medicines and cultural practices to connect with and show respect to Indigenous people here," says Crocker.

To this end, AMSSA has collaborated with Indigenous leaders to form an Indigenous Advisory Council, aiming to teach new immigrants the lasting impacts of colonialism and ways of living that recognize Indigenous rights. For Crocker, institutions can only become more inclusive when those at the top reflect the diversity of Vancouver's communities.

"Women, Indigenous people, Black people, people of colour, people with disabilities, neurodiverse people, gender diverse people, 2SLGBTQIA folks must all have a place in boardrooms – but that place is not just around the table, it is at the head of the table," says Crocker. ✂



▲ AMSSA CEO Katie Crocker says that in order to truly prioritize inclusion, diversity in leadership is key.

may not understand the importance of the training to their work," she says.

For Crocker, challenges with applying DEI principles also exist beyond their workshops. One of these challenges is the adoption of a mentality that pits an "us," the historically disenfranchised group, against a "them," the historically empowered

For more information about AMSSA, visit www.amssa.org

A legacy beyond art

New exhibit showcases the impactful work and life of Tseshaht artist George Clutesi

by ABBEY BILOTTA

GEORGE CLUTESI: *hašahʔap / ʔaaphii / ʕćik / haaʔaksuqʔ / ʔiihmisʔap* is a retrospective exhibition currently premiering in Vancouver until Jan 19, 2025 at the Bill Reid Gallery of Northwest Coast Art. The exhibition explores the life and legacy of George Clutesi, a Tseshaht First Nation artist, actor, writer and ambassador for Canadian Indigenous culture, recognized for his role in preserving and celebrating the Nuuchah-nulth community's cultural traditions and customs.

For Aliya Boubard, curator for the Bill Reid Gallery, it's an essential chance to showcase the artist's impact, not only of his work, but in his life as well.

"Clutesi came from the Nuuchah-nulth community, and this exhibition is really a retrospective of his life while also showcasing the work of seven contemporary artists and scholars who are responding to Clutesi's work," says Boubard.

Commemorating an artist and educator

Clutesi aimed to create and share his work throughout his career so his voice for the Tseshaht community would never completely disappear, even after his death. His artworks, created from the 1940s until the 1980s, consist of different prints, paintings and sketches, all forms of which are featured in the exhibition.

The exhibition celebrates not only Clutesi's work as an artist,

but his past as an educator of Nuuchah-nulth culture. His first published novel, *Son of Raven, Son of Deer*, was one of the first books that was written about Tseshaht culture.

"He was incredibly influential and did so much to educate people... He was quite well known throughout his career and during the time he was alive, but since then his name has kind of dropped a bit," says Boubard. "Through this exhibition, we really wanted people to get to know who he was and the importance of the work he did throughout his life."

Boubard notes that a big part of the exhibition's inspiration was a film created to be shown alongside it. The film interviews several survivors of the Alberni Valley Residential School: Clutesi attended that residential school, and also worked there as a custodian later in his life. In

the film, the survivors discuss the impact Clutesi had on them while he was working there.

"He showed them love, care and compassion in an environment that was really traumatic in so many ways. So this film was a way of showing who George Clutesi was as a human and the kindness he shared with those survivors," says Boubard.

The exhibit also features books published by the artist and snippets of newspaper clippings and articles written about Clutesi both during his career and after his passing in 1988. Boubard also notes the original curators of the exhibition included text that featured writing both about and by Clutesi.

"They really wanted to incorporate his own voice in addition to the exhibition, which comes through quite clearly when you read through some of the panels in the gallery," says Boubard.

Boubard also notes the artwork included in the exhibition consists of art from both museum collections and personal collections. Some of the artwork was even framed by Clutesi himself. Overall, the exhibit looks to give audiences a sense of where all his artwork came from, and truly highlight the artist's lasting legacy.

"He was an extraordinary person and he left quite a memorable legacy. So we really want people just to know who he was, in the same way that we educate people about Bill Reid and his legacy as well," says Boubard.

For more information, visit www.billreidgallery.ca/blogs/exhibitions-page/george-clutesi

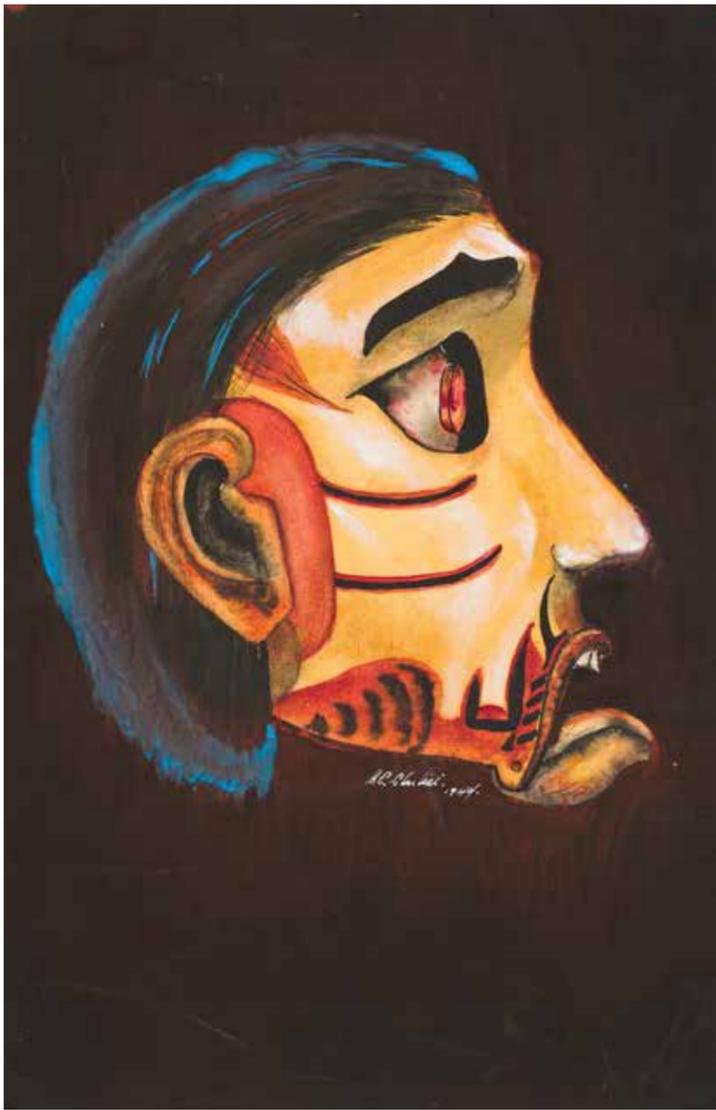


Photo courtesy of the Royal BC Museum

▲ George Clutesi, *Mask of Plenty*, 1944.



Photo courtesy of University of Victoria Legacy Art Galleries

▲ George Clutesi, *Two Figures*, 1959.



Photo by Dane Campbell, courtesy of Alberni Valley Museum

▲ Tseshaht artist George Clutesi in 1969, whose art, and legacy, is currently on display at the Bill Reid Gallery of Northwest Coast Art.

13&14 APRIL 2024

VANDUSEN BOTANICAL GARDEN

APRIL 13 (10AM-6PM)
APRIL 14 (10AM-5PM)

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Pioneer of DIY modular synths in Africa, Afrorack performs for the first time in North America

AFRORACK

April 20, 2024 | 8pm

with Adam 2, Goo and Jacob Audrey Taves

Red Gate (1965 Main Street, Vancouver, BC)

Tickets \$20 / PWYC at door

Tickets on sale now at Red Gate:

<https://redgate.tv/tickets/#afrorack>

Brian Bamanya, aka Afrorack, is known as being the first person to build a DIY modular synthesizer in Africa. While pursuing his interest in modular synths, Bamanya encountered difficulties in accessing the required technology, resorting to scouring computer repair shops in his hometown of Kampala, Uganda, until he was able to build his own instrument - a wall of homemade modules and FX units that he named The Afrorack. Using this technology, Bamanya plays with elements of electronic music such as techno, acid and ambient, infusing them with African musical traditions and polyrhythmic structures, all the while delivering melody and groove. This performance marks Afrorack's North American debut.

The evening will also feature producer and DJ Adam 2 as well as audiovisual artists Goo and Jacob Audrey Taves.

Presented in partnership with Red Gate Arts Society. Details can be found on our website: <https://newmusic.org/afrorack/>

Brian Bamanya is an experimental multidisciplinary artist from Uganda and performs and records under the name Afrorack. He is one of the people pioneering the making of electronic music instruments in Africa. Always finding fascination in tinkering with electronics, building circuits, hacking devices and messing around with microcontrollers, he has completed projects in sound art, electronic music, experimental visuals, renewable energy and kinetic sculptures. He has appeared at several international festivals which include Atlas Electronic, Nyege Nyege, Elevate, Dakar Art Biennale and Sonar among others. In May 2022, Bamanya released his debut self-titled album - The Afrorack - which was received with popular acclaim making it to several music writers' best albums of 2022 including The Wire Magazine's top 50 albums of 2022. He has also been featured on the BBC world service. <https://hakunakulala.bandcamp.com/album/the-afrorack>

ABOUT VANCOUVER NEW MUSIC

Supporting creativity, innovation, curiosity and a multiplicity of voices and ideas, Vancouver New Music is committed to curating practices, not only works, and embracing the rhizomatic expansion of current modes of sound and music creation. Founded in 1973, Vancouver New Music regularly commissions and premieres new works by Canadian and international composers, presents an annual festival that focuses each year on a theme within the new music landscape and explores the interaction of contemporary music with other disciplines such as theatre, installation, and media arts. Other activities include lectures and workshops with visiting artists, community presentations, and other sound-, art-, and new-music related community events, such as Soundwalks. <https://newmusic.org>

DakhaBrakha lends a melodious voice to Ukraine

by DREW STEWART

Over the last 20 years, DakhaBrakha has established itself globally as a unique artistic force, bringing some of Ukraine's most stylish and fantastical music to the world stage. But more recently, the group has used their international fame to help raise awareness about Russia's invasion of their country, with their Tour for Ukraine project.

This month, that goal makes its way to B.C. as DakhaBrakha brings their unique sound to Vancouver's Massey Theatre on March 29 and the University of Victoria's Farquhar Auditorium on March 30.

"We want people to be aware of what is happening in Ukraine, not only information-wise, but emotions-wise too," says Marko Halanevych, the band's frontman.

A message in the melody

The quartet, made up of Halanevych, Iryna Kovalenko, Olena Tsybulska and Nina Garenetska, falls into a category of experimental Ukrainian folk music unique to them. The group's music is heavily rooted in classical Ukrainian folk, but is played with a variety of instruments and vocal styles

which contribute to their distinctive sound.

Beyond the more standard musical elements, the band also adapts sounds from the world around them like birdsong, wind and rain.

"Our concept is mixing different musical stylistic elements," says Halanevych. "We listen to the world and absorb the best and combine it with our natural Ukrainian beginning."

flections, [including] my works and the works of Maria Volkova, and illustrations by Serhii Yarmolenko, Serhii Maidukov, Marysia Rudska, Katya Lisova, Neivanmade and many others," says Halanevych.

DakhaBrakha's music has also been impacted by the conflict. It is often upbeat and energized, but that does not match up to what many Ukrainians have been put through since the inva-

“We listen to the world and absorb the best and combine it with our natural Ukrainian beginning.”

Marko Halanevych, frontman of DakhaBrakha

The group was established in Kyiv in 2004 by Vladyslav Troitskyi, the band's director. Troitskyi's theatre background is prominently featured in DakhaBrakha's shows through elaborate costumes and stunning visual accompaniments. However, since the war in Ukraine began, the visual aspects of the show have been altered.

"Our program has changed since the full-scale Russian invasion. We have a new video art, which represents our re-

sion. So while creating art is still their primary goal, Halanevych says the group has also focused on using their art to send a message about what is happening in their homeland.

"For two years of the full-scale invasion, we have been trying to remind people about the war in our country and thank them for their support," he says. "It is difficult for us now to play entertaining and cheerful compositions. In fact, there are tracks dedicated to those who died because of Russian aggression or dedicated to people who defend our freedom."

Hope brings strength

Halanevych also talks about the impact on the band of representing their country during the war. Mainly, he emphasizes feelings of inadequacy.

"We are often called cultural ambassadors," he says. "We are already used to this definition. However, to be honest, we have a constant feeling that we are not perfect and need to do more and be more."

Despite the weight of this responsibility, he believes the message is getting across.

"We have been talking a lot with different people. After the concerts all over the world, we believe we manage to represent the correct message and still try to keep the balance between art and important messages," says Halanevych.

While representing Ukraine is an important part of the group's new show, they also emphasize that it is not all about tragedy, aiming to give the show some positive energy when they can.

"In addition to empathy, we would like people to feel proud and hopeful and have the strength to help and support us in the future," says Halanevych. ✍️



▲ Experimental Ukrainian folk quartet DakhaBrakha is using their unique musical approach to give a voice to their country.

Photo by Olga Zakrevska

For more information on the concerts, visit www.caravanbc.com/events



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March 19–April 2, 2024

Cultural Calendar

by SIMON YEE
CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

As we awaken to the gentle embrace of spring, which starts today in B.C., a tapestry of cultural experiences unfolds before us. From thought-provoking discussions to captivating performances, this season invites us to explore new perspectives and indulge in artistic delights. Whether you're drawn to the rhythm of dance, the power of music or the intrigue of theatre, there's something for everyone to enjoy. So, as the days grow longer and the air fills with anticipation, why not seize the moment and immerse yourself in the breadth of events awaiting you?

**Dwelling in the Wilderness
Modern Monks in the
American West**
March 21, 6–8 p.m.
<https://events.sfu.ca/event/39313-book-launch-dwelling-in-the-wilderness-modern>

What might the lives of contemporary monastics teach us about putting down roots? Whereas many of us are constantly on the go, stressed out and focused on productivity, the life of a monk prioritizes staying put and paying attention. Many monks take a vow of stability that commits them to their home monastery, leading them to develop a deep connection with and knowledge of the land they inhabit. Monastic life teaches those who practice it to move more slowly through the world, and the monastic sense of place may even hold a key to responding to the growing ecological crisis threatening our environment. Join SFU Lecturer in Religious Studies Jason M. Brown as he discusses this topic on March 21 at SFU Harbour Centre.

Red Velvet
March 21–April 21
www.artsclub.com/shows/2023-2024/red-velvet

It's 1833, and at London's Theatre Royal, Ira Aldridge is making history by becoming the first Black actor to tread the boards as Shakespeare's Othello. As the public and parliament debate the abolition of slavery, how will audiences react to the revolution already taking place on the stage? Be transported to the tempestuous Covent Garden rehearsal

hall in this thought-provoking and captivating play within a play about the little-known but true story of the groundbreaking performer. Playing at the Stanley Industrial Alliance Stage from March 21 to April 21.

**On Liberal Institutions,
Protecting Pluralism
& Free Debate**
March 22, 7 p.m.
www.eventbrite.ca/e/on-liberal-institutions-protecting-pluralism-free-debate-tickets-826214177847

When considering what 2024 has in store, author and *The New Yorker* contributor Adam Gopnik, feels compelled to share a political message that isn't about politics. Rather, it's about how this year, the institutions of liberal democracy are threatened in ways that they have never been before. Gopnik is terrified by what he sees as a lack of understanding among voters – younger and older alike – of the unique nature of our institutions and democracy within the wider context of human history. And how these institutions that we take for granted – the ones that guarantee everything from free debate to the protection of marginalized people – are in fact very fragile to assault. On March 22, join Gopnik and consider ways to protect the possibility of politics through arguments of history, logic and conscience.

Côté Danse's X (Dix)
March 22–23, 8 p.m.
www.dancehouse.ca/event/cote-danse

As the global pandemic shrank the world, and the concept of home became a site of comfort, stability and foundational identity, the story of Odysseus took on even greater resonance. Taking inspiration from Homer's mythic poem, five dancers delve deeply into the idea of an inner compass, not only as a means of navigation, but also as a tool of connection to the elemental forces of the earth. Accompanied by the sculptural sounds of American experimental band Son Lux, *X (Dix)* charts a course into the unknown, as well as the challenges of finding your way home again. This performance by choreographer Guillaume Côté will happen at the Vancouver Playhouse March 22 and 23.

**Handel: Hallelujah
& Trumpets**
March 24, 3 p.m.
www.earlymusic.bc.ca/events/handel-hallelujah-and-trumpets

Experience the splendour of George Frideric Handel's music at Early Music Vancouver on March 24! *Eternal Source of Light Divine* was Handel's first and only court ode and one of his earliest attempts to win the hearts of English listeners with radiant music in their own language. *Blessed are they that Considereth the Poor* was Handel's last anthem and a celebration of everyday charity rather than royal power. This concert brings together these two bookends of Handel's career in England to frame a collection of the composer's most beloved melodies from the worlds of opera, orchestral, chamber and keyboard music.

FourPlay
March 27–April 7
www.langara.ca/studio-58/current-season/current-2023-fourplay.html

Studio 58 students are skilled in areas other than acting and production – they're also playwrights! FourPlay presents four original one-act plays, written by Studio 58 students. This festival showcases the next generation of contemporary playwrights. The four plays are *Pretty Girls* by Sweet Eden Haile, *Gillyt as Fin* by Terrence Zhou and Caylen Creative, *Panty Sniffers* by Jenna Leigh and *Fly, Love* by Yorlene Bernido. For a brief synopsis, cast information and tickets, please check out the Studio 58 website.

**True Tribal: Contemporary
Expressions of Ancestral
Tattoo Practices**
On view from March 28
www.museumofvancouver.ca



▲ Tattoo art by Mo-Naga.



Photo by Luciana Freire D'Amunício

▲ A performance by Aché Brasil is an explosion of colour, energy and music.

True Tribal: Contemporary Expressions of Ancestral Tattoo Practices, on view at the Museum of Vancouver from March 28, explores 30-plus years of Indigenous tattooing from around the world and the artists who are reconnecting with traditional skin marking practices. The revival of ancestral tattoo designs and motifs, the re-envisioning of meaning and protocols and the re-fashioning of ancestral application methods is part of Indigenous peoples' efforts to reclaim their lands, cultures and identities. Tattoo artists Tristen Jenni Sanderson (Woodland and Plains Cree), Terje Koloamatangi (Tongan), Nolan Malbeuf (Métis), Mo-Naga (Uipo Naga), Julie Paama-Pengelly (Māori), Gordon Sparks (Mi'kmaq), Nathalie Standingcloud (Cherokee) and Dion Kaszas (Nlaka'pamux) use contemporary technologies to build upon ancestral design conventions as seen on ancestral belongings. Their work gives power back to Indigenous people to think through and theorize their own world and life views while taking away the colonial tools that separated them from the visual language of skin markings.

Aché Brasil
March 28, 12 noon
www.thedancecentre.ca/event/ache-brasil

A performance by Aché Brasil is an explosion of colour, energy and music that embodies the exuberant culture and rhythms of Brazil. The company will demonstrate folkloric Afro-Brazilian dances and music, including the famous dance-martial art of capoeira – an astonishing display

of acrobatics, breathtaking kicks and self-defence tactics, accompanied by the irresistible sound of the berimbau. Please visit The Dance Centre's website for tickets and more information.

Vancouver Cherry Blossom Festival
March 29–April 25
<https://vcbf.ca/>

The Vancouver Cherry Blossom Festival starts on March 29, and one of the first free festival events is the Haiku Exhibition where poetry converges with art, featuring a collaborative masterpiece crafted by talented artists inspired by the winning haiku of the previous year. The festival will highlight the many parks throughout the city with cherry blossom trees, and here's hoping it will be in bloom that day. For more information, please visit the VCBF website.

Battle of BC 6
March 29–31
www.start.gg/tournament/battle-of-bc-6-7

The Battle of BC 6 is an international-scale gaming convention taking place in the heart of Downtown Vancouver. Brought to you by Galint Gaming, they will host a weekend of intense competition, camaraderie and community. This year the event has features such as welcoming the fighting game community with competitive brackets for Street Fighter 6 and TEKKEN 8. There will also be more fun side events, exciting exhibitors, special guests and plenty of surprises on the big stage.

Answers:

- | | | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| 1 – INDIGENOUS | 7 – LINEAR – SNOW | A – IMMOBILISÉES | G – NIERAI – SAKÉ |
| 2 – MAIL – NIT – ACE | 8 – ICE – UNSEEN | B – NAAN – NICE – LA | H – OTA – SEL – MU |
| 3 – MASER – EAGLES | 9 – SEE – RIAL – SEA | C – DIS – ANNÉES | I – GRAINE – LIN |
| 4 – ON – TEAR – RATS | 10 – SLACK – US | D – ILETS – LAO | J – SALAISONS – AI |
| 5 – ASS – ALAI | 11 – EL – ANAEMIA | E – RESTAURANTS | K – CET – LW – EU |
| 6 – INN – TAI – ISLE | 12 – SABOTS – UNION | F – EN – ARNICAS | L – CESSÉE – BASIN |

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