

# The Source

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## Novel notions for community building at the LiterASIAN Writers Festival

by DREW STEWART

Renowned and upcoming Asian Canadian authors will come together to share their stories, inspirations and more at the 12th annual LiterASIAN writers festival next month. From May 4 to 5, six remarkable writers including Keiko Honda and Jennilee Austria-Bonifacio will offer their experiences and perspectives through three discussion panels, culminating in an afternoon of dimsum with the authors.

“We’re going to talk about ancient traditions, our stories, our experiences. It’s going to be really fascinating,” says Austria-Bonifacio.

### How we shape communities

Honda is the author of *Accidental Blooms*, a memoir which chronicles her life as a Japanese immigrant who was afflicted with a rare autoimmune disease while conducting research at Columbia University, and left paralyzed from the chest down. The Vancouver-based author says the book fills a niche she noticed when she immigrated to North America.

“Living abroad as a Japanese person, it’s really heightened my awareness of my Japanese identity,” says Honda. “I have found that there are not many books,



Photo by Anton Fernando

▲ Keiko Honda’s newest memoir offers a story about navigating unexpected life challenges beyond our control, and finding the necessary community to help do so.

or not many voices, of Japanese people who live abroad. There are a lot of stories of Japanese Americans or Japanese Canadians, but there are not many stories of Japanese living abroad.”

As Honda brings her voice to the festival, she hopes her story will find and benefit others who may be in a similar situation to the one she found her-

self in when she first arrived in North America.

“There is this sort of stereotype of Vancouver where it’s so hard to connect with people,” she says. “But I think hopefully my story will shed light on meeting strangers and opening up the home to welcome others.”

Honda believes the LiterASIAN festival and events like it are a

crucial part of bringing diverse perspectives to the forefront of our societal consciousness. She says with programs like this festival, the barriers she faced when she immigrated could be reduced for newcomers today.

“I think it is important because this is a multicultural society, but we still group Asian voices,” says Honda. “And yet Asian

voices are diverse like any other group. So it’s really important to understand and explain that.”

### The stories of a community worker

Austria-Bonifacio, the Filipino-Canadian writer behind *Reuniting with Strangers: A Novel*, captures a series of stories focusing

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Discovering history and ecology collectively  
Page 4

The dangers of social media  
Page 6

Music for everyone, by anyone  
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# Responsible and democratic storytelling for World Press Freedom Day

by LILLIAN LIAO

**May 3 is the UN-recognized World Press Freedom Day, and Saranaz Barforoush thinks it's time for a re-set. As a journalist and assistant professor of teaching at the University of British Columbia's (UBC) School of Journalism, Writing, and Media, Barforoush holds a unique perspective on what's at stake for the future of journalism.**

In her view, it is paramount for journalists to consider how their changing industry – particularly the use of social media – is impacting their mental health.

"I really want on this World Press Freedom Day for journalists to think about their mental health," she says, encouraging journalists to learn how to unplug. "If we don't have journalists who can function, we're not going to have a very democratic society."

## "Likes" threatening democracy

Barforoush regards journalism as a profession of service and care for the public, so social media "likes" or reposts should not be the only indicators that a story is worth telling.

"While it's important to see how many eyeballs we get on stories – it's important for our numbers and for our bottom line – it still needs to be honed into journalists that this is just one part of how your story is coming out," says Barforoush.

Thinking of her own students, she notes that social media expectations may leave journalists, particularly women and women of colour, vulnerable to online ha-

rassment and the pressure of only reporting on popular narratives.

While she recognizes how social media can be an effective tool for journalists and those living under authoritarian governments, Barforoush remains concerned about how these expectations could impact Canada's press freedom.

She fears that if journalists can not carry out their responsibility of reporting on meaningful, true stories with proper

freedom in the lack of diversity in stories being covered – a problem that may stem from the expectation that one can only cover the communities they belong to. She points out that better media literacy education can encourage interest in journalism at a young age, leading to more people capable of responsibly covering stories about different communities.

"Canadian journalism could really benefit from expanding

“ If we don't have journalists who can function, we're not going to have a very democratic society.

*Saranaz Barforoush, journalist*

context while minimizing harm, then citizens will be left to verify stories on their own.

To this end, she encourages thinking about press freedom beyond things like state-sanctioned threats, and highlights how journalists can still be silenced in a democratic society.

"On paper, we are very advanced in terms of press freedom," says Barforoush. "But how free and supportive do journalists feel to do their job in this country? Regarding expenses, the money they are paid, future job security, the hate or pressure they might feel online, those all affect our sense of freedom."

## An undying sense of responsibility

Barforoush also sees another challenge to Canada's press

this knowledge of storytelling so that a person who wants to cover stories about Indigenous issues knows how to do that responsibly, compassionately and respectfully," she says.

When it comes to press freedom, Barforoush also emphasizes audience engagement through finding new ways of storytelling, such as using humour and interactive features or getting journalists to explain their process of reporting.

She believes that with proper support, including government grants, journalists can innovate their storytelling methods and better connect with their communities. The importance of connecting with communities is top of mind for her as she works on a current project in the Downtown Eastside.

"The future is in community journalism, as in connecting with the community, making it work, making relationships, earning our trust back, and for that we need time and more people," she says. "When you go into communities, that's what's encouraged by community members... What I hear from community members is that we want people to spend time with us."

Beyond covering local issues responsibly, Barforoush cites the high number of journalist deaths in Gaza and emphasizes how journalists in Canada ultimately have a responsibility to cover meaningful stories – a responsibility that is also a privilege.

"At the end of the day, it's a profession about responsibility," says Barforoush. "A profession about really saying what matters, about being the public's eyes and ears – whether you're reporting even in entertainment or sports or whatever it is – the responsibility never goes away."

## 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- physical activities - start
- 2- race competitor – prizes for winners
- 3- invented in 1891 by a Canadian – against – leaves – regret
- 4- not in condition to perform – must be of quality for athletes
- 5- appears in defeat – magical spirits
- 6- went fast – choice – sport equipment
- 7- cheats – on top of
- 8- urban railway – football action
- 9- sir – poorly
- 10- baseball positions – sport tactic
- 11- country of many sports – large holes - Britain title
- 12- muscle contraction – not for players

### verticalement

- A) juges – point
- B) panneau d'affichage – aime le mal
- C) compétition amicale – utilisés dans certains sports
- D) salaire de sportif bulgare – hectolitre – ancienne monnaie
- E) langue – couleurs des champions – utilisas
- F) utiles en gymnastique
- G) copie – armes d'escrime
- H) réserve naturelle italienne – habitudes
- I) sans date – nickel – petites balles d'entraînement
- J) pour le deuxième – blesse
- K) colle – ville du Mondial 2002 – c'est-à-dire
- L) tenter – travaux pratiques – distance sportive

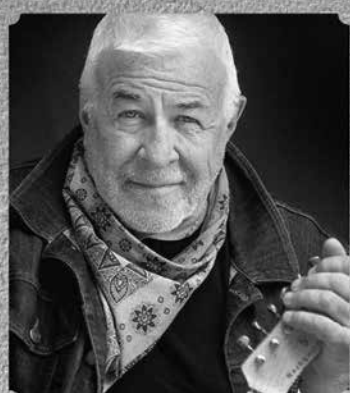
For answers, see page 8



Photo by Alfred Hermida



▲ Journalist and UBC assistant professor Saranaz Barforoush says journalists' mental health is important to consider when talking about press freedom.

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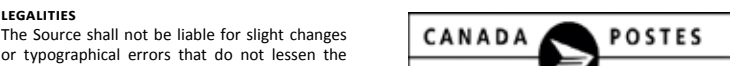
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▲ SAMHAA founder Kulpreet Singh says that building community is just as important as education and awareness when it comes to improving mental health.

## When it comes to mental health support, community is key

by FRENY FERNANDES

As the country approaches Canadian Mental Health Week – taking place from May 6 to 12 – residents, governments and organizations are taking the opportunity to highlight the many challenges Canadians face when addressing mental health. To that end, one Vancouver-based organization is aiming to make a difference, bringing the conversation, and support, for South Asian communities throughout B.C.

Since its very first mental health conference in British Columbia in 2010, the South Asian Mental Health Alliance (SAMHAA) has been hosting workshops, seminars and skill-building programs to empower South Asian British Columbians to prioritize their mental well-being.

With support from the BC Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions, the organization has been working with various clients young and old, as well as community groups, youth groups, women and those impacted by substance abuse. While all of these groups face mental health challenges, SAMHAA founder Kulpreet Singh says different communities require different strategies to face their own unique sets of challenges.

“The generation that moved here in the 60s and 70s encountered a lot of racism and they raised their kids in Canada. But they had a lot of language barriers and experienced different traumas... but they never had an understanding of mental health,” Singh says. “They may have also had stigma and shame and guilt around mental health.”

### Understanding and addressing generational mental health challenges

Singh says it’s important to keep the differences between generations in mind when tackling mental health challenges. He adds that newer generations of immigrants and international students, while more aware of mental health and less stigmatized while seeking help, face different sets of issues than their parents and grandparents.

“These students have a totally different experience. Some don’t have a family to sponsor them. They’re leaving their parents in India. They’re coming here and working on the frontlines and in labour jobs during the pandemic. And then after the pandemic, struggling with high cost of living and isolation,” Singh says, adding that this seemed to have pushed many into substance abuse.

To respond to this, SAMHAA has created programs like the South Asian Youth Mental Health (SAYMH) retreat program and

the Students Overcoming Substance Use Disorder and Addictions initiative (SOUDA) to help the people they serve navigate substance use disorders, and better understand harm reduction practices. For the last few years, SOUDA has led community outreach efforts and workshops on harm reduction, overdose prevention training and Naloxone training to share more information about the toxic drug crisis.

Meanwhile, through programs like SAYMH, Singh says participants are able to gain not only valuable information, but also form meaningful connections with peers and community groups, fostering a crucial sense of camaraderie and support.

“In these retreats for young people, they go for a few days to [our] campsite to learn about mental health first aid, suicide prevention, crisis intervention and substance use response. And they engage in fun activities, become good friends and then go out into the community to share what they have learned,” says Singh.

### A multifaceted approach: Advocacy, outreach and expansion

In addition to its community engagement efforts, SAMHAA is also actively involved in advocacy and policy work, collaborating with local governments and community stakeholders to advance policy changes in mental health and substance use.



▲ SAMHAA leads lessons in topics like overdose prevention training as part of a broader effort to help South Asians in B.C. tackle mental health issues and substance use.

They’ve also led workshops and outreach beyond B.C. in places like Toronto, Montreal, Calgary and even California. Singh says their work has led to other organizations taking inspiration from its model and replicating their own version of the SAYMH retreat program.

But while much progress has been made, Singh says there’s still much more to be done when it comes to getting things to where they should be.

“We are looking to expand the retreat programs to other dem-

See “SAMHAA” page 5 ▶

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## SEE YOU THERE!



# Creating community for Canadian immigrants amidst growing climate concerns

by KATRIANNA DESANTE

**For 25 years, Green Club BC has aimed to educate its members on both B.C.'s environmental and sociohistorical landscapes. Since its founding, the club has sought to inspire environmental activism and a sense of belonging for Canadian immigrants.**

With the recent passing of the club's founder, Dr. Joseph Lin, Green Club volunteer Manal Ma says the club looks to continue building on the legacy Dr. Lin created as climate awareness becomes more important than ever.

"It's not only just a place to learn new things...it's to open [your] eyes, to look around, and be aware of the environment that we're living in," says Ma.

### Exploring the past

The late Dr. Lin, a pediatrician, family doctor and staunch environmental activist from Taiwan, felt lucky to immigrate to Canada after observing people's care and concern for the environment. In the early 1990s, while Dr. Lin was living in Vancouver, he became involved with studying the natural environment with fellow nature enthusiasts.

"That's when he realized it was the perfect time to start a club," says Ma.

This included daily walks, or "free walks," as Dr. Lin termed them, through Metro Vancouver, as well as three- and four-day hikes throughout the rest of the province.

In addition to conducting eco-tours and hikes, Dr. Lin also led "heritage walks" throughout the city's older neighborhoods to help the club's Taiwanese

"We have a flower arrangement teacher ... and we also have a birding instructor... Our club members [and] volunteers come from different walks of life," says Ma.

### Climbing heat and new heights

Since becoming club president ten years ago, retired ecologist Su-Lin Chen has led the club's day hikes and even led members on overnight hikes at other mountains across North America.

"I took people up to the mountains, and that was a first experience for many hikers," says Chen. "That was kind of challenging [...] so I've had to reconsider."

Despite some of these challenges, he has felt grateful for the opportunity to connect with community members on a shared passion for the environment.

"I am very shy," admits Chen. "But since joining the club...I have learned a lot about social activities."

During this time, Chen has dedicated his spare time to studying the effects of climate change by tracing local temperature and geological trends. This includes discovering patterns between B.C.'s climate and historical ice ages.

"I learned that the warming speed is accelerating," he says. "That's why carbon emission[s] should be decreased as low as possible."

Temperature change is just one of the club's many concerns about climate change outcomes in B.C. For some of the club's members, Ma says climate change's impact on B.C. has become increasingly apparent compared to Taiwan's.

For example, Green Club leads approximately 20 walks each

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▲ Green Club BC members enjoy walks throughout the Lower Mainland, as well as longer hikes, both offering beautiful sights and community gathering.

and Chinese immigrants learn more about Vancouver's history. Through these walks, Ma says club members develop a greater appreciation and knowledge of Metro Vancouver's past, both cultural and ecological.

"He realized that once people like us come to a different country, we seldom have the chance to really understand or get to know the new place we live in," says Ma. "It [can] be very difficult for immigrants to find a new community they belong to, so that is one of the reasons Green Club has been so successful."

Today, Green Club has five board members and approximately 30 volunteers who take on different roles and tasks, including guiding, lecturing, and event coordination and promotion. And while the club primarily consists of Taiwanese and Chinese members, Ma says the club is very diverse, welcoming people of all cultural backgrounds and ecological knowledge.

year during cherry blossom season, one of the most popular times of year for the club. But this year, Green Club members noticed how B.C. was affected by the results of an strange event which took place throughout the Pacific Northwest this year: cherry blossom buds blooming alarmingly early.

"A lot of our audiences would come repeatedly year after year, just to enjoy the walk and the spring season after a long break from winter," says Ma. "Cherry blossoms should [have] come later, [but] came earlier. Climate change is affecting the plants and giving them different signals."

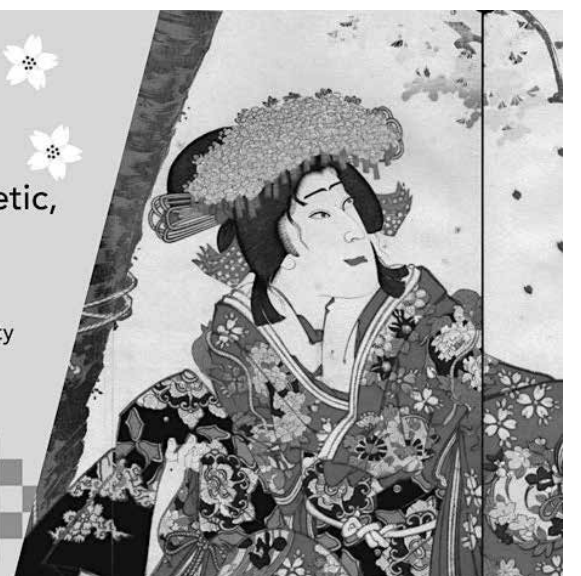
Ma and Chen say, given climate change's increasing presence, Green Club is focusing on encouraging members to work together to reverse human impacts.

"We can't let this temperature change [...] accelerate," says Ma. "Or else we will experience severe climate situations like we've [never] seen before." ❄️

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# “Life is Beautiful”, even with no home

by CURTIS SEUFERT

**Documentary film festival DOXA returns for its 23rd annual iteration, bringing with it a breadth of films which aim to reflect perspectives from across Canada and around the world. This year's program includes dozens of films covering themes such as identity, humanity and community, like Mustafa Uzuner's *La Cancha*, showcasing a community of basketball players in Montreal; and Bita Joudaki's *Persian Pride*, whose story about a 1990s Iranian youth gang in North Vancouver navigates history and stereotypes.**

*Life is Beautiful* also touches on identity and humanity. But rather than turning the camera outward, director Mohamed Jabaly instead turns the camera



Photo by Mohamed Badarne

▲ *Life is Beautiful* director Mohamed Jabaly.

towards himself, documenting his experience of statelessness in Norway as he is unable to return to his hometown of Gaza City.

Now, nearly 10 years after his initial arrival in Scandinavia, Jabaly hopes to share his story in a documentary showcasing the early years of his experience and what it has meant for his

identity as a Palestinian even so far from home.

“This is the story of *Life is Beautiful*,” says Jabaly. “I wanted to show what my life was like. What it’s like to be a Palestinian and all the obstacles we face.”

## Becoming stranded

Jabaly first came to Norway in 2014 to visit and study, aiming

nearly 10 years ago, subsequent border closures immensely complicated his efforts to return.

To make matters worse, when Jabaly applied for residency in Norway, the government did not accept his Palestinian passport. As such, Jabaly was left stranded, rendered effectively stateless.

“I was surprised to discover that I was considered stateless

turning on the camera as soon as things took a turn for the worse. In *Life is Beautiful*, he documents the kafkaesque bureaucratic situation, along with the kindness and support of his host family and the implications it all had on himself and his identity.

“The first moment I realized I was stuck I immediately said I am going to start recording

whose story highlights those challenging early years and extends into 2021 during the era of the COVID-19 pandemic. Jabaly says the film aims to showcase the humanity that is often overshadowed by statehood and identity.

“This is partly why I decided to make the film. I hoped to showcase that I am a hu-

“ I hoped to showcase that I am a human like everyone else. I have a right to exist like everyone else.

Mohamed Jabaly, director of *Life is Beautiful*

to pursue what would eventually become two post-secondary degrees in filmmaking and fine arts. But making the trip from Gaza wasn’t simple. As Jabaly notes, Gaza’s borders have only been open for intermittent periods in recent years. As such, while a brief opening allowed Jabaly to travel into Norway

when I came to Norway,” says Jabaly. “I’ve never been questioned about my identity when I was in Palestine. No one questioned who I am. When I came to Norway, I started to get all of the questions about home.”

Unable to turn home, Jabaly decided to make the most of his uniquely challenging situation,

what is happening to me,” he says. “I started recording my diary not knowing when it would finish. I knew it would end in a film, but I didn’t know how long it would take.”

## Challenges reverberate across countries, decades

The result is a full-length film

man like everyone else. I have a right to exist like everyone else,” he says.

And while the story of *Life is Beautiful* begins in 2014, Jabaly says the story is meant to reflect the reverberating effects of displacement in Palestine ever since the Nakba – the ethnic cleansing and mass displacement of Palestinians shortly after the end of World War II.

He hopes audiences can recognize how the effects of occupation can often begin decades and continents away, and become aware of the situation they are in now.

“What’s happening in Gaza didn’t start now. This started before 1948,” says Jabaly. “My father lived this, my grandfather lived this. We are still living in limbo and it won’t stop until we stop living under occupation.”



Photo by Mohamed Jabaly

▲ *Life is Beautiful* tells the poignant story of Director Mohamed Jabaly becoming stranded and stateless, far away from home.

DOXA takes place at various locations in Vancouver from May 2 to 12.

For more information about *Life is Beautiful* and DOXA, visit [www.doxafestival.ca](http://www.doxafestival.ca)

## ► “SAMHAA” from page 3

graphic communities. We have found success in targeting the retreats, according to language or culture, because it allows people to build camaraderie or to build connections based on culture or faith,” Singh says.

Building upon their understanding that each community has its own challenges, Singh hopes that SAMHAA can expand to get an even greater understanding of the issues facing South Asians in B.C. help them directly, and get the conversation going in their own communities as well.

“With Sikh, Muslim, Hindu, and Christian communities from South Asian backgrounds, or from different nationalities, like Sri Lankan or Nepali or Pakistani or South Indian, we’re looking at targeting different areas and trying to do some targeted retreat opportunities for those demographics so that they can get to know people in their community and the support available within their community,” says Singh. ✍

## ► “LiterASIAN” from page 1

on the lives of other Filipino-Canadians. Additionally, she brings her personal experiences gathered from years of working with Filipino newcomers in a variety of roles, including as a school settlement worker and a newcomer counselor.

“I’m coming in as a community worker who tells stories,” says Austria-Bonifacio. “These are the experiences of people that I feel like a lot of people don’t know about.”

Her novel is a collection of short stories about people leaving their homes and the numerous struggles they face as a result. In particular, she has a focus on the separation of the family that occurs when people immigrate, including leaving their parents and grandparents behind, and how that can impact future generations.

In addition to her unique window into the perspectives of Filipino immigrants, Austria-Bonifacio believes it is important that her book, like Honda’s, fills an underdeveloped area of literature.

“In Canadian literature these stories aren’t really present,” she says. “And when they are it’s often from the perspective of, you know, the white employer with the Filipino nanny. My book isn’t about that. It’s about me opening up this door so you can see these other perspectives.”

## Between bowls of borrowed rice

These two writers, along with authors Lindsay Wong and Ujjal Dosanjh, will be a part of the festival’s largest panel, *Between Bowls of Borrowed Rice: Harvesting Hope Through Storytelling*. The panel was conceived with the idea that each writer brings their own unique perspective and experiences to the table to celebrate and inform audiences about diverse Asian perspectives.

“We all have stories to share,” says Honda. “Let’s say in my case, limited mobility...really it’s about, how do you view something negative as an opportunity?”

Each author on the panel has a background that has informed

their writing in some way, whether it makes up the whole story in Honda’s case, or is more veiled in fiction like in Austria-Bonifacio’s work.

Austria-Bonifacio does not currently live in Vancouver, but will be flying in to join the festival from Toronto. Her outsider’s per-

spective on Vancouver’s Asian communities, is something she hopes plays an important informative role in the festival.

“I love going to the West Coast. I love seeing Vancouver,” she says. “It’s like an older Asian community, too. So it’s interesting to see the differences between Toronto and Vancouver and how they’ve evolved with things like this. And I’m honored to be a part of it as an emerging author.”

She hopes it is this background, and not just the written work alone, that the panel can impart to people attending the festival.

“I’m really interested in hearing about all of these stories and ideas from the other panelists,” says Austria-Bonifacio. “Not even just on storytelling, but them as people, them and their experiences, their perspectives.” ✍

For more information visit: [www.literasian.com/tickets/between-bowls-of-borrowed-rice-harvesting-hope-through-storytelling](http://www.literasian.com/tickets/between-bowls-of-borrowed-rice-harvesting-hope-through-storytelling)



Photo by Jose Bonifacio

▲ Jennilee Austria-Bonifacio’s latest book takes a closer look at the lives of recent Filipino immigrants to Canada.



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## “I Know Your Secret”

# The dangers of social media, in the limelight

by ELAHA AMANI

Director Valerie Methot and Some Assembly Theatre Company present *I Know Your Secret*, a gripping psychological thriller and cautionary tale about the dangers of social media and the terrifying consequences of lost privacy. The production was created in collaboration with diverse Metro Vancouver youth and artists, with the story aiming to resonate with all audiences who are active on social media platforms as well as artists and performers in the Vancouver community.

“*I Know Your Secret* is a fast-moving, sit-on-the-edge-of-your-seat dynamic show with a talented young diverse cast, an intriguing plot, striking visuals and original music,” says Methot. “The audience will want to know what happens next and where to go from here.”

Performances take place from May 1 to May 4 at the Roundhouse Performance Centre with tickets being free to the public.

### Spotlight on diversity and creativity

As director and playwright at Some Assembly Theatre Company for 24 years, Methot says the company aims to keep positive social change at the company’s forefront, including by connecting youth artists with professionals to create the annual the-



▲ *I Know Your Secret* tells a story about the risks of social media, brining in youth performers to showcase it.

ater projects, which are free to the public and school groups.

Methot collaborated with over 100 diverse youth to better understand the perils of social media that they face. The youth were queried if they were concerned about their personal information being online or on social media and the vast majority reported no. This resulted in the play’s message to be aware of how much you share on the internet.

“Working with youth writers helped me understand the darker side of the internet,” says Methot. “They are exposed to a lot of hate, misinformation, inappropriate content and creepy,

dangerous or toxic people who can hide behind fake names and not be held accountable.”

Artists involved with the current project include Ciara Wilkinson, who has been a part of the company for five years now as a youth actor and writer. She plays Angelique, the antagonistic Diva, in *I Know Your Secret*.

Wilkinson’s creative process consists of understanding her character and letting her shine. She says the equilibrium she establishes between herself and her roles is a challenging yet rewarding journey, and that she especially had fun with Angelique in this play.

“While she’s certainly one of the more antagonistic characters within the play, she’s not the big bad nor is she meant to be completely irredeemable,” says Wilkinson.

In order to hammer out Angelique’s motives, intentions and core personality, Wilkinson collaborated with professional artists and mentors over multiple workshops. In the future, Wilkinson hopes to take on the role as one of these youth mentors she has learned so much from.

For now, she says her favourite part of her experience is the friends she’s made along the way.

“Some Assembly is such a warm, welcoming and supportive community who challenge me to be my best self and take creative risks that I never would’ve been able to do without their guidance,” she says.

### Embracing artistic adversity

Methot and Wilkinson are merely two members of the theatre company which hopes to continue to grow along with Vancouver’s broader arts scene.

But with art comes challenges and threats. Because the number of grants the Canada Council for the Arts issue was decreasing, Methot was originally worried about the limitations this could have on production. As a result, she says the team initially looked to use funding limitations and parameters to inspire creativity.

Thankfully, funding challenges did not come to pass, and Methot says she is still overjoyed that the production received the support it needed. As she plans her 25th year with Some Assembly, she says she’s optimistic about what the future holds for continued collaboration with youth and offering an accessible mode of theatre for the community.

“To share these plays with the community, for free, is such a gift. One that shines with a positive ripple effect,” says Methot. ✂

For more information please visit: [www.roundhouse.ca/event/i-know-your-secret](http://www.roundhouse.ca/event/i-know-your-secret)



TIME WILL TELL ARTS SOCIETY + CARAVAN WORLD RHYTHMS PRESENT

# SADHANA

AN EVENING OF BHARATANATYAM

SUJIT VAIDYA (DANCE) A. LAKSHMANASWAMY (NATTUVANGAM/CONDUCTOR)  
 RAMYA KAPADIA (VOCAL) RAMAN KALYAN (FLUTE)  
 CURTIS ANDREWS (MRIDANGAM)

## VANCOUVER PLAYHOUSE

\$10-35 600 HAMILTON ST. 7:30PM  
 TIMEWILLTELLARTS.CA  
 604-241-7292

THURSDAY APRIL 25

# Reflection, togetherness, creativity: “Udlot Udlot” at the Roundhouse

by LUC MVONO

Drawing from the oeuvre of the Filipino composer José Maceda, the Vancouver-based non-profit Western Front invites the public to gather for a rare event: the opportunity to create a work of musical art communally. It will present a musical workshop on April 27 at the Roundhouse Community Arts and Recreation Centre where registered participants will prepare and interpret Maceda’s immersive musical piece, *Udlot Udlot*.

Departing from the standards of many musical performances, the artist-run center released a call for participants on their website to simply “anyone interested in music” to join them for the workshop, forming part of the creative process that will culminate in a public performance on May 4 at George Wainborn Park.

The workshop and performance will allow participants to experience Maceda’s experimental and inclusive work as they reflect on their surroundings and consider their own creative potential.

### An invitation to connect

*Udlot Udlot* was originally performed by a group of 800 students at the University of the Philippines in 1975. The composition accommodates up to 1,000 performers of all musical abilities to produce collective harmony accompanied by a few simple instruments as they connect with their social and natural environments.

Inspired by tropical rainforest ceremonies, the performance bears an element of togetherness whose roots might be foreign to most. But, as Western Front’s curator-at-large Aki Onda explains, the composition’s conceptual foundations are meant to resonate on a universal level.

“Through *Udlot Udlot*, Maceda explored musical ideas that evoked sounds of the rainforest and people’s lives in rural villages. He also felt that this work

embraces people from diverse communities,” says Onda. “It’s a good opportunity to think about the environments we live in.”

### Ode to a visionary

More than a call to reflection, Onda says the event represents an opportunity to pay homage to its composer, remembered for his immersion in both Eastern and Western musical traditions. Having been trained in Western avant-garde musical traditions, in addition to working as an ethnomusicologist researching Indigenous music across Southeast and East Asia, Onda says the composer’s background is

“...the bamboo instrument is a symbol of nature, and an open-air performance means communal gathering.”

*Aki Onda, curator-at-large of Western Front*

reflective of his work’s ability to bring genres, practices and people together.

“Maceda had a gigantic imagination and was driven by unique passion and curiosity,” Onda explains. “Who would think of music with such simplicity as *Udlot Udlot* – a composition that can gather hundreds or thousands of people to play simple bamboo instruments and chant together regardless of their musical experience.”

Unsurprisingly, the musician’s multidimensionality continues to influence artists today. By bringing Maceda’s creation to Vancouver, Onda hopes to stir creativity within the community and shine a light on the works of this crucial Filipino composer.

“I am fascinated by how Maceda’s music is both highly theo-



Photo courtesy of the UP Center for Ethnomusicology, via Western Front

▲ An early performance of *Udlot Udlot*, a musical performance that invites the public to participate, regardless of musical background.

could apply to cities anywhere in the world,” says Onda. “For him, the bamboo instrument is a symbol of nature, and an open-air performance means communal gathering.”

Onda thinks the performance could resonate in a specific way for Vancouverites, with the city’s complex identity at the intersection of diversity, nature and urbanism yielding the potential for a unique experience and interpretation of the piece.

“I thought it would be good to restage this work in Vancouver as the city is so close to nature and

rized and intellectual, covering both Western and Eastern music traditions, and at the same time inclusive and communal,” says Onda. “As his music had been largely forgotten for decades, it felt important to profile his work, as he had many conceptual interests that are still relevant to the current experimental music and performing art scenes.”

For more information about Western Front’s *Udlot Udlot* workshop and performance: [www.westernfront.ca/events/call-for-participants-udlot-udlot](http://www.westernfront.ca/events/call-for-participants-udlot-udlot)

## PUMP COUTURE FASHION SHOW

# VANCOUVER

MAY 31, 2024

Join us for the 2nd Pump Couture Fashion Show and help us reach our goal of raising \$100,000 to support sending 40 children and youth to Diabetes Canada’s D-Camps program. Join over 250 guests at the Italian Cultural Centre. The Italian Cultural Centre has been an essential part of Vancouver’s cultural landscape for more than three decades. It opened in 1977 when its founding members, 13 existing Italian Associations, came together to promote and share Italian culture, values and heritage with all communities.

Mix and mingle with friends, colleagues and our models during our cocktail hour, featuring light food and beverages, interactive entertainment, live music and more. The Fashion Show, featuring emcee Dr. Akshay Jain, the first Canadian physician to be triple board-certified by the American Boards in Endocrinology, Internal Medicine and Obesity Medicine, will leave you inspired and cheering on the models who are living with diabetes as they bravely share their stories while wearing unique fashion from Canadian designers.

All funds raised will help send kids from your community to Diabetes Canada D-Camps, Camp Kakhamela, located on the shores of the Howe Sound on the beautiful sunshine coast outside of Gibsons, B.C.

**Fri May 31 2024 at 07:00 am**  
**Italian Cultural Center, 3019 Slocan St, Vancouver, BC**



April 23–May 7, 2024

# Cultural Calendar



Photo courtesy of the City of Port Coquitlam

▲ During Port Coquitlam's 101st annual May Days Festival, the city will be animated with free family activities, local culture, live entertainment and more.

by SIMON YEE  
CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

Hopefully the spring season is going well for everyone! With so many cultural events and festivals happening these days, there's never been a better time to explore our vibrant and diverse city. Whether you're interested in theatre, music, dance or community, you're sure to find something to satisfy your interests.

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### 13th Annual Party for the Planet

April 27, 11 a.m.–7 p.m.  
[www.partyfortheplanet.ca](http://www.partyfortheplanet.ca)

The Party for the Planet returns to the Surrey Civic Plaza on April 27. Sit and learn about various environmental topics in their speaker series. The environmental workshops encourage active participation and inspire you to learn about different sustainable topics. There will also be many performers, food trucks, exhibitors and a plant sale. For more information about the party, please check out the party's website.

Photo courtesy of Party for the Planet



▲ BC's largest Earth Day celebration returns to Surrey.

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### Zakir Hussain: "Tisra" Indian Music Trio

April 27, 8 p.m.  
[www.chancentre.com/events/zakir-hussain-tisra-indian-music-trio](http://www.chancentre.com/events/zakir-hussain-tisra-indian-music-trio)

Tabla virtuoso Zakir Hussain is proud to present *TISRA* (three

with two of India's finest young musicians: Sabir Khan and Debopriya Chatterjee. This unique trio is composed of tabla (hand drums), sarangi (bowed, three-stringed instrument) and bansuri (bamboo flute), a combination not often heard on the classical stage. Sarangi and bansuri each have roots in ancient India and its mythology; both are also folk instruments. *TISRA* showcases the rich folk and classical traditions of the Indian states of Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Punjab. For tickets and more information, check out the Chan Centre's website.

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### Lamenting for Ukraine

April 28, 7 p.m.  
[www.shadboltcentre.com](http://www.shadboltcentre.com)

Two years into the war, Ukraine's fate feels especially dire and uncertain. With more countries plunging into war, hope grows evermore fragile. As we wander through the darkest hour of this horrific night, we take a moment to grieve our losses. Drawing on ancient Ukrainian lamentation traditions and exquisite music by contemporary

and Yevhen Stankovych (Ukraine) performed by violinist Jack Campbell and pianist Anna Sagalova. Tickets are available on a first-come-first-serve on the day of the performance.

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### The Incredible Adventures of Mary Jane Mosquito

May 1–5  
[www.carouseltheatre.ca/season/maryjanemosquito](http://www.carouseltheatre.ca/season/maryjanemosquito)

Take your young children to see *The Incredible Adventures of Mary Jane Mosquito*, a family-friendly play being performed at Carousel Theatre from May 1 to 5. In this story of a young girl feeling like a misfit and searching for her place in the world, Mary Jane is a mosquito who doesn't have wings, but her voice soars to the stars in this new play by Tomson Highway that weaves music, song and Cree language into its storytelling. After many adventures, Mary Jane learns to make new friends by sharing her language, her kind heart and her songs with the world.

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### ahmm 2024

May 1–26  
[www.oddmeridian.ca](http://www.oddmeridian.ca)

ahmm (Asian Heritage Month at Morrow) invites rupture, nurture, defiance and bows in deep reverence to all things queer. Expect a spirited and gently subversive affair. A multidisciplinary festival with performances of dance, song and poetry; movement workshops; an exhibit of shrines; a gender non-binary lion named Fluffy; and more! Feel free to check out their website to see their month of creative offerings that cultivate non-linear spaces of past, present and future heritage.

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### The Last Dance

May 2, 7:30–9:30 p.m.  
[www.naadaleela.ca](http://www.naadaleela.ca)

Presented by Time Will Tell Arts Society, the Naadaleela Ensemble will perform *The Last Dance*, with music composed by Amir Eslami featuring choreographers/dancers Fereshteh Zakeri (Iran), Ashvini Sundaram (India) and Chengxin Wei (China). Fusing together Persian, Indian, Taiwanese and Chinese traditional music and dance, *The Last Dance* reflects on the struggle for freedom in Iran, as well as our shared value for humanity, friendship and artistic expression. The ensemble will

create a musical conversation between ancient cultures that span the Silk Road and which have been influencing each other for over 2,000 years. The sounds of Persian and Indian classical music meet with those of Taiwan and China, tempered with a tinge of North American jazz aesthetics. Check out the website for tickets and more information.

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### Homecoming

May 2–12  
[www.thecultch.com/event/homecoming](http://www.thecultch.com/event/homecoming)

Three generations of Filipina women hop between an ocean and time, memory and dreams. Set in Canada and the Philippines, *Homecoming* is a visceral show with moments of magic that reach into the afterlife, exploring cultural identity, familial duty and delicious Filipino food. The play asks,

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### Pi's Phucking Phunny Celebration of Comedy

May 4, 7:30 p.m.–12 midnight  
[www.pitheatre.com/shows/pis-phucking-phunny-celebration-of-comedy](http://www.pitheatre.com/shows/pis-phucking-phunny-celebration-of-comedy)

Join Pi Theatre for a much needed night of hilarity with some of the funniest stand-up and improv comedians in the city. The stand-up shows, curated and hosted by local comedian and actor Kwasi Thomas, will feature some of the best and brightest emerging and established comics in Vancouver; and the improv comedy portion of the evening, curated and hosted by Vancouver-based actor, improviser, musician and playwright Jeff Gladstone, will feature the folks at Tightrope Impro Theatre. Check out the Pi Theatre's website for tickets and more information.

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### Port Coquitlam's 101st annual May Days Festival

May 5–11  
[www.portcoquitlam.ca/recreation/events-attractions/may-days](http://www.portcoquitlam.ca/recreation/events-attractions/may-days)

Dating back to 1923, May Days is Port Coquitlam's annual spring festival. The festival officially kicks off with the May Day Opening Ceremony on May 5 at the Port Coquitlam Community Centre, featuring Maypole dancing by local children, dance performances and the presentation of the 2024 May Day Royal Party. Thousands of people from throughout Metro Vancouver will head to downtown Port Coquitlam on May 11 for the annual Rotary May Day Parade – one of the largest in the region – followed by an afternoon of entertainment and activities in Party at the Square – Port Coquitlam Community Centre.



Photo by Emily Cooper Photography

▲ Watch *Homecoming* by Kamila Sediego at the Historic Theatre May 2–12.

what is home for those of us who are displaced, stuck or who have never known a home? And more importantly, can we ever make our way back? In this world premiere, Kamila Sediego weaves a complex story that is raw, intimate and full of humour. Check out The Cultch's website for tickets and more information.

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### East of the Sun

May 3–4  
[www.chinesemusicvancouver.com](http://www.chinesemusicvancouver.com)

Prepare to be enthralled by SE:UM, the Korean ensemble making their much-anticipated Vancouver debut. They are a renowned Korean ensemble that masterfully combines traditional Korean folk melodies with shamanistic rhythms, creating a sound that transcends borders. Sharing the stage is the 2023 West-

## Answers:

- |                       |                      |                      |                     |
|-----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| 1- ATHLETICS – GO     | 7- EUCHRES – ATOP    | A) ARBITRES – BUT    | G) IMITE – SABRES   |
| 2- RACER – MEDALS     | 8- EL – SACK         | B) TABLEAU – MASO    | H) CÉSINE – US      |
| 3- BB – VS – IS – RUE | 9- MR – ILLY         | C) HC – LANCERS      | I) SD – NI – AKIS   |
| 4- ILL – EATING       | 10- BASES – RUSE     | D) LEV – HL – ÉCU    | J) ARGENT – LÉSE    |
| 5- TEAR – GENIES      | 11- US – CAVES – SIR | E) ERSE – ORS – USAS | K) GLU – SÉOUL – IE |
| 6- RAN – OR – NET     | 12- TONUS – WEED     | F) AGRÈS             | L) OSER – TP – YARD |