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## It's complicated: teens' relationship with religion

by JESSICA LI

For 15-year-old Judy Kim, a Korean-Canadian student at a Vancouver high school, Christian faith is an integral part of her life. Every week, Judy goes to church and Sunday school with her family. She also takes part in the Christian club at her school and attends Youth Kosta Christian camp during holidays.

"It's really important to me," she says. "I believe that Christi-

anity is about being a better person and it helps me keep my priorities straight."

Visit any church, temple or mosque and you'll realize that there are many teenagers who feel the same way Judy does about their own religion. But according to a survey by Project Teen Canada, teenagers today are less likely to identify as religious compared to teenagers a decade ago. So which is it - is there a growing trend of youth

placing less emphasis on organized religion, or is religion becoming even more central to teenagers' lives?

The Project Teen Canada survey found that only 12 per cent of teenagers in 1984 identified themselves as atheists, but 24 years later in 2008 this number increased to 32 per cent. At the same time, their faith shifted, too. Fewer teens identify as Christian, and the popularity of other religions like Islam, Bud-

dhism and Hinduism has increased.

### A shift in beliefs

But the decline in the number of self-identified religious teenagers and the shifts in the types of religion they're practicing are not the only changes taking place.

Christian Smith, a sociologist at the University of Notre Dame who led the National Study of Youth and Religion, believes that

See "Youth" page 2 >

### Verbatim

#### Close encounters in unexpected places

by LINDA BENKAIUCHE

When I look closely, I see a variety of people and cultures in many places - on university campuses, while travelling and in social settings. Then, when I look even closer, I realize different cultures are everywhere; the washroom of my workplace is a testament to this.

"I realize different cultures are everywhere; the washroom of my workplace is a testament to this.

Within days of starting my new job, I met a woman who I'll call Clara. It wasn't too long before Clara and I were chatting in French, exchanging personal anecdotes and bonding over our common background. She's a native of Quebec, and I'm an adopted provincial who lived in Montreal as a child when my family first immigrated to Canada two decades ago.

Eventually our friendship expanded beyond the perimeter of the office, and I found myself preparing dinner at her house - singing along to Dub-matique, Eric Lapointe and Ginette Reno. I couldn't help but wonder whether the dynamics of our interactions would be as deep without this common past. More so than a profound attachment to our native province, we share a mutual experience of someone who has left the comfort and security of a language, tradition and family and friends, in order to venture west into the unknown.

Later, I came across Maricelle - also not her real name - once again in the office washroom. Something about her intrigued me. It wasn't the frequency of our run-ins - a common phenomenon among

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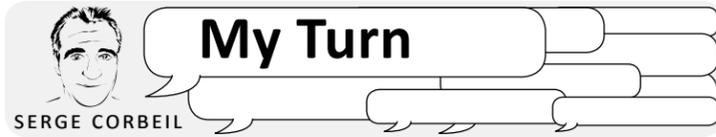
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## My Turn

SERGE CORBEIL

# Political pulse hard to predict in modern times

**S**keptics will be confounded. If you're a Québécois, like me, and of a certain age, you may remember this phrase attributed to the character Capitaine Bonhomme.

Well, that's just what happened to skeptics, and spectacularly so, on May 14. British Columbia's latest election attests to the fact that the electorate's heart and mind is harder to define than ever. The recent results have put pollsters in the hot seat.

Since the elections in Quebec and Alberta last year, politicians from unpopular parties – at least according to polls, and sizing up the discrepancy between reality and predictions – could ask that we look at polls with a grain of salt.

These two elections are the best examples. They are the best of arguments, proof in hand, to keep the base motivated. Evidently, more than ever before, there is some truth in saying that the only accurate poll results are in the votes themselves – in the electorate's last word.

The latest results in British Columbia's election can only beg for a second look at just how voters are polled. The big polling

companies didn't waste any time looking into the matter. However, we must pause before throwing them overboard. The new social reality makes it hard for those who carve out a living by trying to give shape to our collective desires.

Pollsters will tell you that it is increasingly hard to connect with people the traditional way – by telephone. The new methods they are using, evidently, have significant shortcomings. Many claim that some groups are now overrepresented in the results. This could be the beginning of an answer.

But the difference in terms of percentages obtained by the Liberals and the NDP in B.C. seems to mask something else. It could be, and I am of that mind, that the electorate is more volatile than it has ever been. There was a time, not all that long ago, when poll findings during the week before a general election were fairly accurate. But it seems that, for many voters, choices are less and less firmly anchored. It appears that more and more voters make up their mind only once inside voting stations. Ac-

ording to this hypothesis, political parties' main themes become all important.

And, unusual but not unheard of, the very parties that turn up their nose at the polls, are themselves hungry for public opinion findings. The studies they commission are far more precise and serve to refine their message. In the end, the Liberals were the best at reading the population's deepest wishes.

Evidently, they understood that a large number of voters had decided that their economic future, a message pounded by the Liberals, was more important than the change promoted by the NDP. Change is nice, but when the main issue for people is reassurance as to their economic future, that is enough to reverse the tendency shown in the last days of the electoral campaign.

A lesson to take away from this campaign is that a positive approach, honourable as it may be, does not cut it before a more muscular approach based on continuous attacks. Justin Trudeau should take notes here after promising to clean up the Canadian political atmosphere and campaign in a positive way. Could it be that it is Stephen Harper and his party who have it right in the end? The answer is in the question.

We can see why federal troops make the economy their main issue. As long as the world stays in a state of economic torpor, the party best suited to navigate troubled waters will be the best bet. ✍

Translation Monique Kroeger

### ► "Youth" from page 1

teenagers are increasingly inarticulate when discussing their faith and what it means to them. Because the teenagers he studied were able to talk comfortably about other subjects, Smith suggests that this religious inarticulacy is caused by churches failing to religiously engage and educate youth.

According to Reginald Bibby, a University of Lethbridge sociologist who has conducted a series of national surveys on youth and religion, teenagers today are less likely to be uncertain about their religious beliefs than in the past. Previously many teenagers would believe in a god, but not practice organized religion. Many now leave little room for ambiguity when it comes to the religion they practice – they either don't believe in the existence of a god at all, or they make religion a major part of their lives.

### Conflict between generations

For some, the decreasing popularity of religion among teenagers is a concern. One of these people is Diana Zuckerman, president of the National

Research Center for Women & Families.

"Studies have proved that kids who are more religious are less likely to be involved in theft, vandalism or violence against others," she says. Although she does acknowledge that if the quality of the parent-child relationship is statistically controlled for, the link between religion and good behavior is usually not as strong.

While many parents worry about the effects of their children growing up without the same religious values and beliefs they hold, for teens who don't share their parent's faith, coming clean can be a source of anxiety.

"Even though I go to temple with my parents, I really find it



▲ Johannes Gebhardt, Pastoral Apprentice at Vancouver's Reality Church.

hard to connect or take an interest. But I'm afraid [of] what would happen if I told my parents I don't believe in the same things they do," says a grade 10 student at a West Vancouver high school who preferred to speak anonymously.

As more teens lose faith, situations like this may become increasingly common.

### Efforts to increase youth engagement

For many churches, temples and mosques, increasing youth engagement is a key priority. Many have established youth groups where children, teenagers and young adults meet weekly to do activities and learn about their faith. These programs combine learning about and practicing religion with fun events like floor hockey.

Johannes Gebhardt, a pastoral apprentice, is in charge of the youth group at Reality Church. Though he has heard of the studies on the decline of youth interest in religion, in his personal experience, the 20 youth members of Reality Church are the most enthusiastic out of the 170-person congregation.

"They are more engaged because they need to be active, involved in something," says Gebhardt. "Being involved is especially beneficial to at-risk youth: they get good role models and positive influences to turn their life around." ✍

## Spencie's View



### ► Verbatim from page 1

females in our office – but something I couldn't quite put my finger on at first. The details of our initial encounter escape me. Did we use the weather as an icebreaker or exchange tips on curly hair styling methods? Within minutes we had forged a bond partly due to our curls, but mostly due to our common Québécois past, Arab origins and excitement at the thought of being able to communicate in French. When I see Maricelle nowadays, our interactions often include a few jokes about

Arabic. My parents are Palestinians, but I grew up in Toronto and studied French as my minor." Canadian, French and Arabic – I had met my twin in the office kitchen.

Lina and I began to chatter away with such excitement only something or someone of equal or greater interest could have succeeded in interrupting us. Maricelle walked into the kitchen minutes later. "Lina meet Maricelle, Maricelle meet Lina," I said. Within minutes, we formed this fun little trio of French-speaking Canadian



Photo by Susan Sermoneta, Flickr

▲ Writer Linda Benkaïouche met diversity in the most unlikely of places, the office washroom.

her Québécois accent, or some "weird" French expression I use. Puzzled looks and laughs are ever-present in our exchanges.

In the office kitchen, I met yet another person with whom I shared a common background. Kitchens are great, because they create an opportunity for people of various departments to interact in a less formal way. I'll call this colleague of mine Lina. She's a product manager at the technology firm we both work for and had given a demo following the release of a new product a few weeks ago. The technical jargon she employed during her presentation seemed to be accompanied by an accent.

So, as we were both cutting our perfectly ripened avocados in the kitchen one day, I asked her what I have been asked hundreds of times, "Are you originally from Vancouver?" She smiled and replied that she was in fact from Toronto. Was it the obvious unconvinced, and unimpressed, look on my face which led her to shyly proceed with, "I also speak French and

women of Arabic ancestry who now call Vancouver home.

The idea of a Francophone club in our office was born from this encounter, as well as a future invitation to Lina's house for a delicious meal – not a Palestinian one though. Instead, the menu will consist of *pierogi*, a recipe she has now mastered after many years of marriage to a Polish man.

The diversity in my workplace is just another piece of the puzzle that forms my identity. Am I French because it is the country of my birth? Canadian because it is the country my family adopted? Or American because I attended prom and football games for four years in an American school? Perhaps I'm an Albertan because I spent several months in the North of the province?

The daily interactions I have with my colleagues from across the globe serve as proof that a diverse identity is not a source of confusion but a source of interest and fascination. Let's not forget it also makes for great office washroom conversations. ✍

Translation Monique Kroeger, Anne-Sophie Loks, Coralie Tripiér  
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# Eco-art builds cultural understanding

by PHOEBE YU

The topic of pipelines and crude oil in B.C. isn't likely to go away any time soon, and there are those who strive to find new ways to curb environmental degradation. Activists grapple with changes to public policy, and artists have used their work to address environmental issues and promote ecological awareness.

According to Beth Carruthers, an artist and expert in arts, culture and sustainability, ecological art, or eco-art, is much more than just work that depicts nature or wildlife. She suggests what defines eco-art is its aim to educate and spread awareness, as well as being "activist" in nature.

"It's art that embodies a particular ethical stance," she says.

Carruthers likes that eco-art continues to be an elusive term, because it creates an ongoing conversational space and, like ecosystems themselves, it is evolving and not static.

### Art and science together

For Solveig Nordwall, a nature illustration eco-artist and a member of Artists for Conservation, her illustrations serve as a means to communicate and educate people. Nordwall was born in Sweden, raised in Norway and Canada and spent time in Japan. She now shuffles between B.C. and Hawaii.

She typically draws animals and scenery, and has been focusing on ocean life forms. Her illustrations come with facts and information about the item or organism in question.

"Each image becomes like a soundbite," she says.

The works she produces end up combining scientific facts with aesthetics.



▲ Eco-artist Solveig Nordwall.

"I think there's a better chance to have eco-art work if it really joins the art and science," says Nordwall.

She laments the division found between art and science in North America, but believes that nature-art illustration is useful, because its realistic depictions can also reach those who don't understand art.

Aside from trying to bridge art and science, Nordwall also tries to be a bridge across cultures. Scandinavian and Japanese influences can be found in her work, and the information written on them is in English, Norwegian and Japanese.

"Anybody and anything that can cross cultural barriers and

build a bridge is probably the most critical thing that we can do for the environment," she says. "I'd say a lot of the practice that I've seen has been about trying to work with culture."

### Understanding where we are

Carruthers explains that Canadian artists have almost obses-

and it has deep local roots. Vancouver was actually the birthplace of the dramatic interventionist performance works that eco-artists are primarily known for, with locally based Greenpeace leading the way.

Eco-art helps us understand the complex relationships between humans, place and nature,

“I think there's a better chance to have eco-art work if it really joins the art and science.

Solveig Nordwall, eco-artist

sively focused on questions of place, largely because of our colonial history.

She believes that Vancouver's rapidly changing demographics, with all kinds of people com-

and the ethics of those relationships, explains Carruthers. She says that eco-art opens up a different way of thinking about our place and purpose in the world.

"If the world is something we're



▲ Since the 2010 Gulf of Mexico oil spill, Nordwall's work has focused on the ocean.

ing from everywhere, prompts people to ponder how to develop place relations.

According to Carruthers, interrogating how people develop and maintain connections to where they are is one of the most important questions in Canadian eco-art practice. She maintains that ecology plays a central part in our culture, whether we see it or not.

"Where we are informs our culture in ways that we don't know about," she says.

Vancouver's architecture, she suggests, is problematic because people couldn't come to grips with this spectacular space.

Of course, these issues have interested artists for decades. According to Carruthers, while eco-art may be vital today, the movement itself is nothing new. In fact, it began in the 1960s, when the modern environmental movement itself was born,

just tinkering with, then we still have a problem," she says. "What [eco-artists] are doing is offering another experience of being in the world of people." ☘



▲ Beth Carruthers.



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## Left Bank



BC Election

**"I am hurt, but I am not slain. I shall lay me down and bleed a while, then rise and fight again."**

These are words legendary NDP leader Tommy Douglas borrowed from Andrew Barton and used to repeat in order to soothe supporters after a tough election loss. And there's a lot of soothing needed for progressive-minded people in B.C. right now.

There have already been scores of post-mortem analyses written about the shocking failure of the NDP on May 14. But frankly a lot of them read like Monday morning quarterbacking. Almost no one, certainly none of the pundits on our television screens last Tuesday night, saw this coming. So, while there is much to criticize and debrief about the NDP's campaign, to me the more useful thing to do is to look at some of the reasons the BC Liberals won.

berta, and big condo developers in Vancouver – openly boasted of their support for the Liberals. The mainstream media reported this after the fact, but made little of these vested interests behind Christy Clark before or during the campaign.

These are just a few of the stark realities we're up against. There is no silver bullet with which they can be overcome.

As a person of the political left, I criticized the NDP before and during the campaign for the very limited nature of their political program, and for their failure to clearly explain and attack the BC Liberals disastrous record in office.

For all that, the election result is stunning and disheartening. It will have a very real negative

**"In a number of regions of B.C., voters will never elect the NDP...The right-wing could run pylons and win those ridings."**

In retrospect, my certainty that Clark would be done in by the mounting scandals, outright lies and plenty of evidence of outright incompetence, seems naive and somewhat detached from hard political reality. So we have to look closely at why Christy Clark won the election. It's frankly depressing and terrifying, but we must face a few facts about the balance of political forces.

In British Columbia, a sufficiently united right-wing vote will hardly ever be defeated. Indeed, the NDP has only won three general elections in the history of this province. One of those, in 1996, they won on seats despite losing the popular vote. Everyone underestimated the degree of the collapse of John Cummins' Conservative Party of B.C. No doubt federal Conservatives from Harperland worked the backrooms hard to push the right to unite behind Christy Clark.

In a number of regions of B.C., voters will never elect the NDP. Barring a major shift in the political landscape, a progressive majority will simply never come together in places like Richmond, most of the Fraser Valley, and the Okanagan. The right-wing could run pylons and win those ridings.

The mainstream media still has a disproportionate influence on politics in this province. Those of us who work in alternative media, surrounded by our social media networks, can tend to exaggerate the decline of corporate media influence. The major print media in B.C. always oppose the NDP forming government. The *Province* and *Globe and Mail* came out with shameless editorials endorsing Clark in the campaign's final days, echoing the crude "Risky Dix" negative ads run by the Liberals earlier this year.

The Liberals had and will always have more money and more influential people supporting them. In the days after Tuesday's election, two core constituencies – Big Oil companies in Al-

berta, and big condo developers in Vancouver – openly boasted of their support for the Liberals. The mainstream media reported this after the fact, but made little of these vested interests behind Christy Clark before or during the campaign.

A tiny minority of people on the radical left advocate not voting, and sometimes see the trend toward lower and lower voter turnouts as some kind of radical rejection of "the system." This would be comical if the condition of our society and democracy were not so tragic.

"The system" wants you not to vote and not to participate. Back when Emma Goldman said "if voting changed anything, they'd make it illegal," it was illegal for almost everyone in the Western "democracies."

The celebration of 'not voting' represents an anachronistic and self-defeating assessment of the role of the state and of electoral politics and political power, generally. It renders redundant the Right's efforts at voter suppression and does nothing to challenge the increasingly pervasive consumerism and nihilism of our times. Latin America is one of the few places where neoliberalism has been rolled back in the past decade; they also have among the highest voter turnouts in the world. Let's figure this out, and aim for a revolution of participation – a citizens' peaceful insurrection against concentrated economic power.

Elections are one terrain of a long political battle. We have to soberly assess all the factors involved, even when the political realities are not favourable to progressive let alone radical change.

And then we must rise and fight again. ✍

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# Indo-jazz delights with a blend of Eastern and Western musical traditions

by SONJA GRGAR

The fusion of two great musical traditions, jazz and classical Indian music, is exactly what you can expect to find in abundance on May 25 at the Caravan World Rhythms Masters of Wind concert featuring three world class musicians: American jazz saxophone player George Brooks, Indian *bansuri* player Ronu Majumdar and Indian *tabla* player Ramdas Palsule.

Robert Benaroya, founder and managing artistic director of Caravan, is convinced that bringing music and dance from around the world to Vancouver's already culturally diverse audiences is a natural fit. He believes that music and dance invoke different aspects of human experience depending on where they come from, and he finds it personally enriching to watch the local audience partake in their discovery.

And when it comes to selecting fusion music for Caravan to feature, Benaroya has high standards.

"I need to sense that the original tradition of each style or genre of music that is mixed is not lost, and also that some new feeling or vibe is created by bringing different genres together, so that it is not just each musician taking turns playing his or her style of music," he says.

## A little bit jazz, a little bit raga

George Brooks, a highly acclaimed U.S. jazz saxophonist and composer and member of

Masters of Wind, has had a long love affair with *raga*, an ancient and popular melodic mode of Indian classical music that uses a series of five or more musical notes to construct the melody.

Brooks has studied *raga* for decades, most notably with Indian master vocalist Pandit Pran Nath, and has collaborated with the legendary American minimalist composer Terry Riley, as well as Indian classical music greats Zakir Hussain and Hariprasad Chaurasia.

Brooks, who has a deep reverence for the musical style, says that *raga* will feature predominantly in the upcoming Vancouver concert.

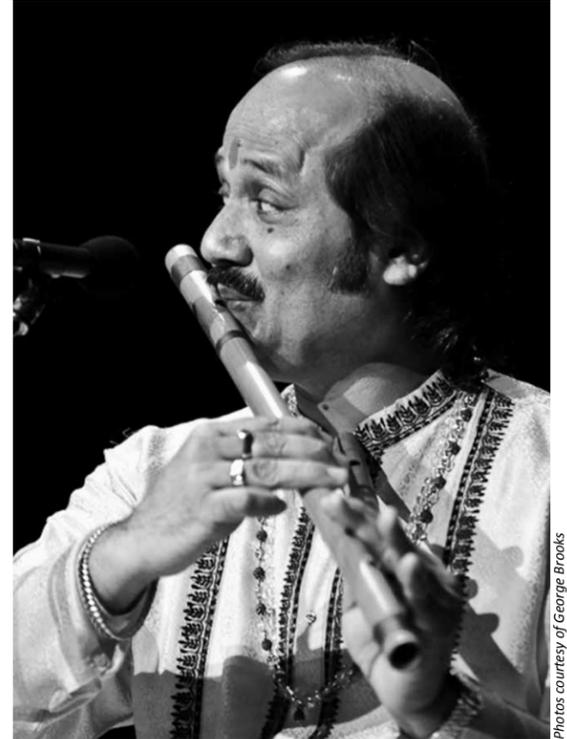
"I like to keep my improvisations in such a way that someone who is an experienced listener to Indian classical music will understand which *ragas* I am expressing. I don't really want to play free jazz on top of a *raga*, because I really believe in the power of the *raga*," he says.

Indian classical music has rich spiritual roots, and Brooks believes that the saxophone is well suited to embodying that element because of how it grounds the musician's breath.

"It becomes a meditative thing, it's really incorporated in your whole body," he says.

## Playing with the flow

Both jazz and *raga* use improvisation, and Brooks feels that so much can be forged through fusion when Indian musicians who are trained in classical Indian



▲ Saxophonist George Brooks (left) and Bansuri flutist Ronu Majumdar (right) performing at Yoshis, San Francisco, May 2010.

forms are curious about exploring harmony and a Western approach to improvisation.

Brooks' long-time collaborator and Indian *bansuri* (flute) master, Ronu Majumdar, has played with the likes of Ravi Shankar and George Harrison. Majumdar sees improvisation as inherent to both musical traditions.

"Jazz music has lots of improvisational space in its format, like Indian classical music. The only difference is that improvisation in *raga* is within the structure, and jazz improvisation is based

on harmony, hence these two genres are always very interesting to merge," he says.

Brooks has collaborated and toured widely with Majumdar as part of the group Bombay Jazz. They also played as Masters of Wind in India alongside jazz guitarist Larry Coryell. However, at the Vancouver concert, Brooks and Majumdar will be joined by Ramdas Palsule, who is renowned for his mastery of the *tabla*, hand drums similar to bongos and unique for their variety of different sounds.

Both Brooks and Majumdar have played in Vancouver before, and they look forward to leaving their cosmopolitan audience with a feeling of good vibrations and a loving atmosphere. ✂

## Masters of Wind – Indian and Jazz Music Concert

May 25, 8 p.m.  
Vancouver Community College Auditorium (1155 East Broadway St.)

For more information, and to buy tickets, go to [www.caravanbc.com](http://www.caravanbc.com)



1720 Grant Street  
Vancouver, BC  
V5L 2Y7  
604 254 9626

[www.mosaicbc.com/settlement-services](http://www.mosaicbc.com/settlement-services)

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### COMMUNITY EVENTS BULLETIN ALL EVENTS LISTED ARE FREE OF CHARGE

#### Understanding Labour Market and Employer Expectations

When: May 24, 6:30–9:00pm  
Where: New Westminster Public Library, 716–6<sup>th</sup> Avenue

Registration required. Please call 604 438 8214.

#### Understanding the Citizenship Application Process

When: May 30<sup>th</sup>, 1–3pm  
Where: MOSAIC Vancouver, 1720 Grant Street, Vancouver  
Topics: Language requirements, eligibility criteria and filling in the online application  
Registration required. Please call 604 254 9626.

#### Citizenship Test Preparation Class (Chinese)

When: May 27 & 31, 10:00am–1:00pm  
Where: MOSAIC Centre for Immigrants Burnaby, 5902 Kingsway

Registration required. Please call 604 254 9626.

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



JON WASHBURN, CONDUCTOR

# AUDITIONS

## Saturday, June 1, 2013

The Vancouver Chamber Choir is holding auditions for professional-level singers. All voices (SATB) are invited.

The Vancouver Chamber Choir is a fully professional choir of 20 experienced, well-trained singers. The key activities of the Choir include a subscription series that is unique in Vancouver, extensive touring in Canada and abroad, broadcasting live concerts on the CBC, recording, commissioning and premiering new choral compositions, and presenting four to five educational programs throughout each season. The Choir demands a major commitment of time and needs to be the singers' top priority.

The Vancouver Chamber Choir usually rehearses on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday mornings. A list of substitute singers is maintained; these people may also be used to augment the Choir if a larger group is needed.

An audition lasts approximately one half hour and singers will be required to sing three or four pieces in different styles and languages; there will also be an interview with Jon Washburn. A formal résumé is required.

Singers are expected to provide their own accompanist for the audition.

Contact Catherine for an appointment  
at [catherinelaub@hotmail.com](mailto:catherinelaub@hotmail.com)

# Taiko fuses family with Japanese heritage

by SASHA LALLOUZ

For Doug Masuhara, growing up as a third-generation Japanese Canadian in East Vancouver didn't provide much opportunity to experience traditional Japanese culture. Western culture dominated his upbringing, and contact with other Japanese families was limited.

But since discovering *Taiko* drumming at the Steveston Buddhist Temple 13 years ago, Masuhara and his family have reconnected with their Japanese roots. He has given hundreds of performances, practiced with several instructors and helped found three *Taiko* drumming groups in Greater Vancouver all with his daughters.

"Through *Taiko* I am learning more about Japanese culture. I am really glad that at a young age my own children started learning about their culture and heritage that way," says Masuhara.

*Taiko* drumming originated in Japan centuries ago, and gave rise to the Canadian *Taiko* drumming scene in Vancouver in the early '70s, he explains. *Taiko* has gained popularity in Vancouver due to groups such as *Katari*, *Tetsu* and *Uzume Taiko*. Other large cities across Canada, such as Toronto and Edmonton, have also echoed Vancouver's interest in these powerful Japanese rhythms by forming their own *Taiko* groups.

## All in the family

As a father, Masuhara knew he wanted to learn more about his culture and share this with his daughters.

"Whatever I can provide to enhance their knowledge of Japanese culture without pushing it on them, I try," he says.

So in 2000, when he heard that the Steveston Buddhist Temple was holding an open workshop for children, he decided to enroll his daughters Jillian, Kelly and Nicole.

"I used to wait around to take them home, so one day I asked



▲ *Tetsu Taiko* performance with sisters Jillian Masuhara, Nicole Masuhara and cousin Stacey Chan (from left to right).

the instructor if I could start drumming too," says Masuhara.

The passion for *Taiko* was infectious.

"For over two years, we learned by playing on tires," he says. When they outgrew the rubber rhythms, the group contacted



▲ Doug Masuhara performing *taiko* on stage.

a local *Taiko* group that created drums with leather skins for the heads and a plastic sewer pipe body.

Drumming at the temple quickly became a community effort, and with the help of other parents they started to build drums from refurbished old wine barrels, adds Masuhara. The group started with 13 members and called themselves the Steveston Buddhist Temple Taiko Group.

Nicole Masuhara, the youngest of the three daughters in the family *Taiko* group, acknowledges the impact *Taiko* has had in her life.

"*Taiko* has given me a chance to travel to Japan, to attend workshops and learn more about Japanese language and lifestyle," she says.

She says the group has also been a part of many Japanese cultural events in Vancouver that have allowed them to connect with other members of the Japanese community.

## Growth and transitions

Nine years later, members grew

and so did their responsibilities. The original 13 members slowly dwindled as drummers entered high school and moved away for university. Her dad explains, they faced a choice to either stop or try to rebuild. They chose to continue. By holding public workshops, the group focussed on inspiring *Taiko* in the local community and encouraging new drummers to join.

The Richmond community started to ask for *Taiko* performances at community centres and festivals. The group, which became known as Steveston Tera Taiko in 2009, progressed from 12-minute performances to 45-minute shows.

Even though Nicole has been drumming since childhood, she still feels the thrill of performing, and even still feels nervous right before a performance.

"But then once you're out there it all goes so fast, and there's this awesome energy coming from everyone," she says.

## Beats forge tight bonds

For the past five years, Masuhara and his family have embraced their new name *Tetsu Taiko*, the Japanese word for iron-like strength. It is not just the rhythms that are strong, *Taiko* has brought the Masuhara family closer.

Out of six members of the group, five are related.

"I don't think any of us would see each other or hang out as much if we weren't a part of *Taiko*," says Nicole.

Masuhara believes his grandparents would have been thrilled to see their grandchildren involved in Japanese culture. "There was no tie culturally for me. I think they would have been happy to see the culture extending into the next generation," he says.

Today *Tetsu Taiko* integrates traditional Japanese rhythms with Western movements. Through an art form rooted in tradition, the Masuhara family shares passionate performances and promotes Japanese culture at multicultural events across the Lower Mainland. ☞

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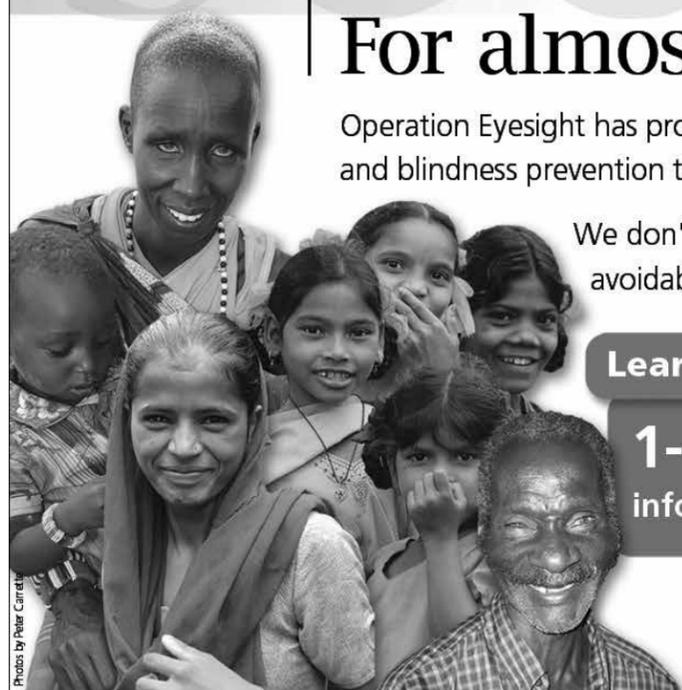
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Photos by Peter Carruthers



Photo courtesy of Just Dance

▲ People of all ages dance with people of all races, so just dance at Just Dance.

## Twenty years of just dancing

by HENRY JOHN

World music dancefest Just Dance will celebrate its 20th anniversary on May 31. The Kitsilano-based dance community has been pushing its vibrant blend of world beat and electronic music in Vancouver since 1993, using sounds and genres from around the globe to create an intimate environment of expressive free-flow dancing.

### Dancing around the world

According to founder and resident DJ Abheeru Ricard, who moved to Vancouver from Quebec in the 1990s, the tri-monthly event is aimed at people with different lifestyles and who aren't limited by North American Top 40 culture.

"We play music from around the world," says Ricard. "There is African influence, Celtic sounds, Bhangra rhythms, electro-swing, as well as more mainstream Western genres such as trip-hop and trance."

Danielle MacCarthy, who attended her first Just Dance event on May 10, was impressed by the way the evening seamlessly incorporated so many different sounds and forms of cultural expression from around the globe.

Of Irish descent, MacCarthy relished the opportunity to dance to great Celtic music, but what struck her most was how the rhythms she was most familiar with blended with others.

She notes that the Celtic music transitioned into Bhangra, then was framed by African drumming and didgeridoo playing, giving what she says was an amazing sense of global cultural perspective.

"I didn't go there just to experience my Irish ethnicity, but to see it surrounded and empowered by everyone else's different cultures," says MacCarthy.

Tapping into the influence of Eastern spiritualism, there is an optional hour long meditation session that precedes the main dance. Many of the dancers – who are encouraged to dance barefoot – incorporate free-form yogic flows into their expressive movements. In line with the group's emphasis on intercultural and spiritual exploration, Just Dance events are billed as non-alcoholic, with the cafe serving delicious chai tea instead of booze.

### All-ages show

The unity vibe extends beyond bringing together different cultures in a night of mutual exploration, with age barriers as well as ethnic barriers being traversed by Just Dance's intercultural fusion. The non-alcoholic

nature of their events, combined with an acceptance of everyone and everything, means that their dance-floor is pretty much the only place in the city where you can find children, seniors, teenagers and everyone in between dancing together in collective abandon.

For Abheeru, the all-age inclusivity of Just Dance is just another part of building on the ability to see potential, and commonalities, among people different from other people – be it an ethnic difference or a generational one.

He says that this idea of socially separating people by age-group is a new concept in human history, and that by doing so humanity is missing out on a lot of inspiration. Although it has a more complex past, the same could be said for cultural and ethnic separation.

"Why limit yourself to only mixing with your own race and only listening to your own culture's music?" he asks.

### Beyond the dance floor

This sense of positive engagement and social unity extends beyond the tracklist and the dance floor of Just Dance events. As a not-for-profit events group, the organization gives all of its proceeds to local charities like



Photo courtesy of Just Dance

▲ DJ Abheeru Ricard.

AIDS Vancouver, the Greater Vancouver Food Bank, Vancouver Sacred Dance Festival and Earthsave Vancouver.

The 20th anniversary party on May 31 will display all these amazing facets. Featuring the internationally acclaimed mixmaster Adham Shaikh, it will be an opportunity to celebrate the amazing variety of cultural sounds available around the globe. ☞

Tickets available from Banyen Books, on 4th Ave, or online at justdance.ca

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## Focus on Local Artist



Photo courtesy of Khan Lee

▲ Khan Lee sculpts away in front of a picturesque scene of Vancouver for his work *Hearts and Arrows*.

## Centre A launches video installation by local Asian artist

by RACHAEL DUDLEY

Watching artist Khan Lee's video installation, *Hearts and Arrows*, the colourful sky of dawn at the Stanley Park seawall, greets your eyes. Set against the backdrop of the ports and North Shore mountains, it takes a moment or two to realize that the silhouetted figure working energetically in the foreground is chipping away at an ice sculpture.

Lee is a Korean-born contemporary artist living in Vancouver. Growing up, Lee was interested

professional ice sculptors, but to no avail. In the end, he decided to do things his own way.

"I read some books and tried it out. I had to learn to carve ice and make the ice. It took me more than a year to have enough practice to feel confident enough to carve in front of the camera and a lot of it was a learning process," says Lee.

### Exploring material potential

The common thread in all of Lee's artwork is his passion and talent for disassembling and

a local Asian-Canadian artist. Centre A is a non-profit public art gallery dedicated to the research, production, presentation and interpretation of contemporary Asian art. It has presented over 300 works of Canadian and international artists.

### Returning to his birthplace

According to Lee, the practice of art is very different in Korea compared to Canada.

"It's very free here, but back [in Korea] it relies more heavily on special education," says Lee.

“ [Khan Lee] really is someone who is interested in experimenting with material and forms and there's something quite playful about how he works.

*Haema Sivanesan, executive director of Centre A*

in the arts from an early age. In high school, he thought he would be an engineer or scientist but ultimately chose to attend architecture school, following in his father's footsteps. It was, explains Lee, a happy medium between his artistic and scientific inclinations.

Once Lee finished school in 1994, he moved to Vancouver with his family, intending to continue his architectural studies. Instead, he enrolled at Emily Carr University, a renowned art institute, and his natural flair for contemporary art grew.

"I decided to practice art instead of making buildings," says Lee.

### The process of creation

In Lee's performance video, he ice-sculpts against an iconic Vancouver backdrop. For him, art is as much about the process as the end result – something he feels contemporary artists often overlook. He says that contemporary art education has a conceptual aspect to it, and he decided to take a different approach.

"I wanted to bring the idea of craft and skills back into the works," says Lee. "It was an experiment of me trying to carve."

His video shows the natural change from darkness into daylight as his sculpture begins to take shape, but not without interruptions from his location. Joggers run past, birds fly by, and the sounds of traffic and seaplanes all play a part.

Before starting on his work for *Hearts and Arrows*, Lee had never ice-sculpted before. He attempted to get assistance from

reassembling objects in new ways. He says that every material has unique potential and that through some trial and error he's attempting to make that relationship work in the hope that it becomes art.

"Like the shape of a cup dictates how it's going to stack together...a lot of modern industrial items are made that way [too]," says Lee.

Haema Sivanesan, director of Centre A, is working with Lee for the second time. She appreciates Lee's unconventional approach and his focus on labour and materials.

"He really is someone who is interested in experimenting with



▲ Haema Sivanesan, Executive Director of Centre A.

material and forms and there's something quite playful about how he works," says Sivanesan.

Sivanesan is pleased to open a new art space with work from

He plans to return to his roots later this year as part of Instant Coffee, an artist collective formed in Toronto in 2000, and now with a presence in Vancouver.

"We do a lot of public art work together, and we have got a residency in South Korea in the fall, so that will be my first time going back to Korea as an artist," says Lee.

*Hearts and Arrows* is the first work to be exhibited at Centre A's new location. The new gallery is located just off Main Street, a popular area for the city's art scene.

"We recently moved, so it's been a little bit of a whirlwind," says Sivanesan. "It's in a great neighbourhood, because there's quite a community of artists and creative people."

Sivanesan believes Lee's work is vital because we live in such a diverse city. She believes it is ultimately about having different communities participate in the cultural life of the city.

She explains that the centre generates different types of dialogue about where Vancouver sees itself compared to Asia, and the exchanges and encounters that can occur through art.

"Whether it's to do with experiences of immigration or social issues, or cultural issues or whatever it is, it allows for a different kind of platform," says Sivanesan. ✉

*Hearts and Arrows* runs from May 24 until July 27 at Centre A's new Chinatown location.

[www.khanlee.com](http://www.khanlee.com)  
[www.centrea.org](http://www.centrea.org)

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# Cultural Calendar

May 21–June 4, 2013

by SAMUEL RAMOS

If you're lucky, one day you'll wake up to the sun beaming on Vancouver and feel the endless possibility of things to see and do. And it'll happen, don't you worry. But more likely than not you'll end up saying to yourself, "Dang it, it's raining!" and someone will respond, "well you do live in Vancouver." So just in case it rains, we have a few indoor events for you to delight in, and momentarily relieve you from cursing Raincouver.

\*\*\*

## Tea for Two Blossoms at VanDusen

Daily, 7:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.  
Truffles Cafe  
VanDusen Botanical Gardens  
5251 Oak Street, Vancouver  
604-331-3603  
vancouver.ca/vandusen

Anyone for tea? Truffles Café at VanDusen Botanical Gardens is now serving a 'proper' afternoon tea complete with three-tier tray of goodies, ceramic tea pots and cups, organic and private label teas. Get a taste of Britain every day, if you like. \$28 for two, or \$50 for four.

\*\*\*

## Camino Real – International Jondo Flamenco Festival

Saturday, May 25, 8:00 p.m.  
149 West Hastings Street,  
Vancouver  
604-767-5522

This annual festival is a grassroots event that has been serving various communities throughout Metro Vancouver since 2003. However, its reach is not limited to one geographic location. Over the years, it has expanded to showcase events in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Seattle, Portland, and California. Its mandate is to build communities through art-focused education and collaboration. Tick-



▲ Shava is one of the international artists performing at this year's City of Bhangra festival. They will be headlining the Downtown Bhangra performance on June 7.

Photo courtesy of Vancouver International Bhangra Celebration

ets \$35/adult, \$30/students and seniors.

\*\*\*

## Annual European Festival

Saturday, May 25 and  
Sunday, May 26  
Swangard Stadium  
3883 Imperial Street,  
Burnaby  
www.europeanfestival.ca

Enjoy music and dance performances from over 30 countries as well as their cultural displays. Please your palate with authentic European dishes at over 14 food booths and shop to your hearts' content. Check website for more details.

\*\*\*

## Building a Culture of Participation with Dave Meslin

Wednesday, May 29  
7:00 p.m.–8:30 p.m.  
SFU Goldcorp Centre  
for the Arts at Woodward's  
149 West Hastings Street  
dalailamacenter.org/event/  
building-culture-participation-  
dave-meslin

Meslin will present ideas meant to empower residents to shape their cities far beyond the simple act of voting. Participants will have an opportunity to interact and present their own ideas for strengthening Vancouver's civic democracy. An after-event reception will continue the conversation in an informal setting over complimentary snacks. Admission is free. Pre-registration required.

\*\*\*

## Discover Art Song

Thursday May 30  
7:00 p.m.–8:30 p.m.  
Central Library  
Alice Mackay Room, Lower Level  
350 West Georgia Street,  
Vancouver  
www.songinstitute.ca/  
songfire-festival-2013

Join Professor Rena Sharon, artistic director of the Vancouver International Song Institute and stunning vocalists from the UBC Opera Ensemble and discover the secret realm of Art Song, the fusion of poetry and classical music. Free admission.

\*\*\*

## Annual City of Bhangra Festival

May 30–June 8  
Various locations  
www.vibc.org

Set to be one of the biggest must-see spring events in Metro Vancouver. This year the festival line-up includes over 11 independent events, hundreds of performers, and international artists from the U.K., New York and India. Check website for details.

\*\*\*

## Forbidden Vancouver presents Secrets of the Penthouse

Thursday, June 6, 5:45 p.m.  
The Penthouse  
1019 Seymour Street, Vancouver  
604-839-3126

forbiddenvancouver.ca/home/  
secrets-of-the-penthouse-3/

An evening of history, burlesque and fine Italian food at Vancouver's most notorious venue! Son of Ross Filippone and club owner Danny Filippone will lead you on an adventure through the Penthouse's incredible history as you delve into the secret bars, dressing rooms and hidden spaces that still survive inside the Penthouse. Each tour lasts around an hour. Guests eat after their tour. The Burlesque showtime @ 6:30 p.m. & 7:30 p.m. Admission \$38.00 + tax.

\*\*\*

## Repercussion (Surrey)

Thursday, June 6  
Surrey Arts Centre  
13750 88th Avenue, Surrey  
604-684-2787  
vibc.org/events/  
repercussion-surrey

Their beat will move more than just your feet. Come join the festivities, onsite bar for all to enjoy, with performances by Israel Berriel, Paul Bray, Rayman / Karn Bhullar, Cassius Khan, Celso Machado, Liam MacDonald, Francis James and Smokey Valley Drummers, Oscar Soto, Surrey Folk Bhangra Club, EV A-Slam, the beat will be rocking all night! With great performers and hundreds of other music lovers alike this is going to be a show you won't want to miss. Admission \$20.



▲ The 16th annual European Festival takes place on May 25 and 26 in Burnaby.

Photo courtesy of Eurofest BC Society



▲ The Penthouse will be unforbidden on June 6.

Photo by Roaming the Planet, Flickr

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## A New Face for an Old Icon

Facelifts typically don't restore our former glory, especially after 60 years of hard living, and this is the case for the iconic Dal Grauer Substation. Built in 1953, this little historic gem on Burrard St., between Nelson and Smith, is still a power horse working to supply the West End and Downtown with Hydro.

Cultural sensitivity, perhaps not always associated with corporate heads, was an attribute of Dal Grauer, head of BC Electric when the substation was built. He was close to the West Coast artistic community and friends with architect Ned Pratt. He commissioned Pratt to design the building in collaboration with local artist B.C. Binning. It was Binning's idea to have the entire exterior wall facing Burrard Street composed of glass to expose the interior electrical infrastructure for anyone on the street to view. He set off both the interior and exterior architecture of the building by using brilliantly lit colour schemes inside. Soon he would change the colours to greens, blues and greys, reflective of Vancouver's natural surroundings. The mosaic glass tiles at the base and sides of the building also reflect these colours.

The whole concept was modernistic and also celebratory of the ideal of marrying industry, art and technology for the ser-



© 2013 Denis Bouvier | denisbouvier.com

vice and enlightenment of all. It was so successful that it slowed traffic, especially when lit at night and soon became a tourist attraction. It was truly innovative public art.

Unfortunately, due to several explosions in the building, the original glass was replaced in 1977 with a shatterproof Plexiglas material. This quickly deteriorated, becoming semi-opaque

and eventually ruined the effect of the original design. The building became somewhat of an eyesore.

After much debate over what should be done, and how much to invest, what you see in this photo is the restoration which happened in spring 2012. The windows were replaced with new colourless Plexiglas and covered with privacy film in

front of the electrical equipment. The stairs on both sides were left exposed except for the first 3 windows up from street level which also have privacy film. The building frame and concrete facings were cleaned and restored; mosaic tiles were repaired and replaced. No, it's not near the original effect, but it's clean and fresh and fits in with the surrounding buildings.

The colours that show are the blues and greens you see and blend with the tiles and those of the connected Scotia Bank and Electra Tower.

Next time you walk by, knowing something of its brilliant past, you might have a little more admiration for this still functioning structure.

Don Richardson

**Canadian Premiere**

Sidiki Conde in

You don't need feet to dance

A film by Alan Govonar

**REEL CAUSES**  
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A benefit for

Thursday May 23rd, 7:15 pm (Doors Open at 6:45 pm)  
Djavad Mowafaghian Cinema, Goldcorp Centre for Arts  
149 West Hastings (1 block from Waterfront Station via Cordova)

Advance Tickets through Eventbrite:  
Reel Causes Members \$10; Non-Members \$12

Cash at the Door: Reel Causes Members \$12; Non-Members \$15

Become a Reel Causes Member: <http://reelcauses.org/membership/>

African immigrant Sidiki Conde, having lost the use of his legs to polio at fourteen, balances his career as a performing artist with the almost insurmountable obstacles of life in New York City, from his fifth-floor walk up apartment in the East village, down the stairs with his hands and navigating in his wheelchair through Manhattan onto buses and into the subway. Sidiki struggles to cope with his disability and to earn a decent living, but he still manages to teach workshops for disabled kids, busk on the street, rehearse with his musical group, bicycle with his hands, and prepare for a baby naming ceremony, where he plays djembe drums, sings, and dances on his hands.

Supported by SFU's Vancity Office of Community Engagement

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April 26-May 25

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