

3E wants to help women and youth
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The Source

forum of diversity

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Verbatim

On a tightrope

by TELIE MATHIOT

You, yourself, arrived in Vancouver three months ago, a year ago, ten years ago maybe. So perhaps you too have had that feeling of dancing on a tightrope.

I chose Vancouver for reasons that were commonplace: the weather, the language, the price of the plane ticket. The important decision had been to leave. To leave behind that suffocating feeling of a life that might have been too monotonous and settled. To leave and break through barriers. To be a foreigner abroad. To put yourself in perspective by putting yourself in someone else's shoes. To leave to renew oneself and to redefine oneself after the storm. To live an adventure surrounded by other human beings with a different sensitivity and culture. Forgetting yourself to rediscover yourself.

Barely landed on Canadian soil, at the front of the Skytrain that leads from the airport to Waterfront Station, I observe the landscape as it passes by. There's quite the symbolism in this Skytrain that brings you safe and sound to your destination, sometimes letting you see what's ahead – the future that awaits you. And Vancouver reveals itself. I walk alone, then you walk with me, and at a hockey event, we all walk together as friends. Alone and together at once. All passengers on the same boat.

I stroll along the beach in Kitsilano and ask myself the question: "Am I made for a life here? Am I acceptable to these people?" A wave slips under my feet, then a second, and I let myself be carried by that same wave that is the French "family" here in Vancouver. The one that brings you help, support, tools, friendship. Oh yes, the French spirit is alive and well here. A Resistance frame of mind allows for entrenchment

See "Verbatim" page 5

DOXA films: beneath the surface

by VICTOR VAN DER MERWE

The Documentary Media Society is bringing back the DOXA Documentary Film Festival to Vancouver audiences for its 17th year. Running May 3–13, this curated and juried festival is a combination of public screenings, panel discussions, public forums and educational programs.

Over 30 genres will be celebrated this year, including the Latin American genre featuring *A Six Dollar Cup of Coffee* by Andres

Ibañez and Alejandro Diaz and *Cielo* by Alison McAlpine.

Cielo – beneath the starry sky

McAlpine, playwright, poet and filmmaker, stumbled upon the subject of *Cielo* when everything went dark.

"I was walking outside at night in a tiny village in the Atacama Desert, Chile when suddenly all the street lights went out. There was no moon. I looked up. I had never seen such extraordinary beauty. I felt a profound freedom inside – so many questions arose. I set off on a journey in this des-

ert to explore and discover the night sky," says McAlpine.

McAlpine says the film captures not only the people who work on the famous telescopes of the desert but also the people who call the desert home.

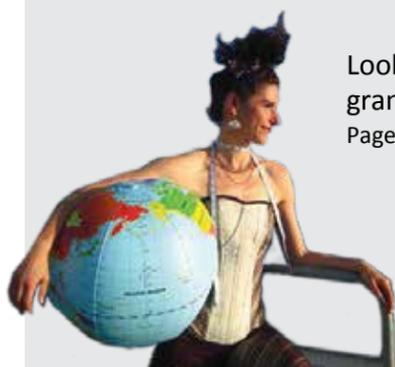
"The remarkable characters we filmed – the desert dwellers and scientists who live and work in the Atacama Desert – their stories, their reflections, their humour and humanity and the endless beauty of the Chilean sky were and are my continual inspiration," McAlpine continues.

When asked what one thing she hopes the audience takes from *Cielo*, McAlpine explains that *Cielo* is the Spanish word for sky and also for heaven, but that it is also used in common speech with the possessive *mi*, or *my* in Spanish, the meaning then changing to my love.

"These meanings float through the film," says McAlpine. "I would like the audience to turn their thoughts to the infinite, the unknowability of our surroundings, to the sky in all its mystery and limitless

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Also in this issue



Looking for a grandfather's story
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A big mix of Afro-Caribbean rhythms
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Cultural Spotlight

Providing youth and women with opportunities and resources

by HARPAUL GILL

3E Organization is hosting Together Towards Tomorrow: Shaping the Future, a hands-on seminar that aims to engage youth and women to be proactive and learn from specialists in particular professions. It will take place on May 9 at the Surrey City Centre Library.

"The 3Es mean to engage, enable and empower," says Reena Singh, 3E co-founder and executive director.

A budding organisation

3E hopes that the participants who attend this session will be comfortable asking any questions they have so that they leave the session better informed than when they came into the session. The panel that has been assembled will include a youth counsellor, educator/teacher, mental health advocate, young CEO/philanthropist, member of the organized crime agency of BC, and a student volunteer.

"...it's all about building a community for youth and women to be seen, to be heard, and to belong. We would be giving them something bigger than themselves to stand for and creating a healthier, more powerful world," says Singh.

A relatively new community network, the 3E Organization was registered as a charity in January 2017. It was created by a small group of women of Fijian ancestry who connected with each other through volunteer activities within their

communities. They sought to create a platform to support women and youth in becoming successful. The group consists of six volunteers motivated by intrinsic rewards and by civic virtue and pride. They are looking to recruit additional members and hope that through community engage-

personal growth but leads to social change," says Singh.

In its response to current social challenges, 3E seeks to empower women, and to provide them with the tools to improve their lives and the lives of their family members.

"We need to work to help women see the positives in

“It's all about building a community for youth and women to be seen, to be heard, and to belong.

Reena Singh, co-founder and executive director of 3E

ment they can increase their numbers.

"We are hoping to enrol more volunteers and members as we now engage in our communities and showcase the work that we do to make a difference," says Singh.

Hopes and challenges

The focus of 3E is on supporting youth and women. It sees youth as being the future of the country and wants to make a positive contribution to society by engaging this population to help prepare them for an increasingly dynamic but often unpredictable world.

"We hope that the 3E organization will bridge the gap by providing youth and women with opportunities and resources that fosters not only

themselves and inspire that in others," Singh says.

The organization's goal is to turn self-doubt into self-love by providing a safe space to connect, network and have conversations about things that matter. 3E provides opportunities and resources to encourage better employment opportunities and lifestyles.

The organization has faced challenges along the way, such as struggles in getting youth engaged and motivated. 3E attributes this, in part, to individuals having their own personal issues and being negatively affected by peer pressure. And they faced struggles in helping women to redefine and value themselves because women are often bombarded with messages that emphasize their limitations rather than their abilities.

"Our hope is that our panel that day is able to address whatever is raised by the youth and that at the end of the evening they leave better informed. We are very confident that by participating and being involved in these activities, it will promote communication, self-confidence, self-esteem, team building, respect for peers and elders, and identify role models amongst the youth," says Singh. ✍

For more information, please visit www.surrey.ca/culture-recreation/26483.aspx?startDate=Apr-25-2018.



Photo courtesy of 3E Organization

▲ Members of the 3E Organization.

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Erratum

In "A gala to celebrate Muslim women in B.C." (Vol 18 No 18), we misspelt the name of the creator of The Sisters Project. Her name should be spelt Alia Youssef. The Source apologizes for the error.

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Photo by William Wright Photography

Cohousing – a community of individuals

by BETTY SHEA

The concept of cohousing often generates a fair amount of skepticism. Can individuals retain their privacy and a sense of self within a community? Can cohousing accommodate the different needs of a diverse group? Does cohousing truly address issues such as isolation and loneliness?

These are some of the issues that will be examined at the Canadian Cohousing Conference (CCC) taking place April 28–29 in Vancouver.

Common misperceptions

At the heart of cohousing lies the intention to form a community. Eating together creates bonds, and cohousing members regularly share meals in a common kitchen. This gives rise to the misperception that cohousing lacks privacy.

“When I explain to people that there will be a common kitchen where we can share meals, people often sort of think of it as a commune,” says Marta Carlucci, parent and member of Driftwood Village Cohousing. “Then I always make sure that I explain that we all have our own kitchen and bathrooms just like any other condo or townhouse.”

Another misperception is that cohousing is suitable only to those who are extroverts and enjoy continuous social interaction. Grace Kim is a founding principal of Schemata Workshop, an architecture firm with a focus on community well-being in Seattle, Washington. Having visited over 80 different cohousing communities, Kim has a theory on why many introverts thrive in cohousing. Unlike social events, members are not forced to make small talk or to participate beyond their comfort level. The deeper connections between members mean that actions are not judged purely on conventional social norms.

“There’s a member in our group who’s very introverted,” says Kim. “At dinner, he’s always on his device. He wants to participate in the conversation but he needs something to distract him as the idea that he’d have to chit-chat is too much for him.” Other community members understand his reasons. “In the community nobody would think it’s rude if he just shows up, eats and leaves,” says Kim. “Nobody’s offended.”

Addressing diverse needs

Carlucci, who holds degrees in community rehabilitation and disability studies from the University of Calgary, is a panellist at the CCC on the topic of disability in cohousing. As a parent of a teenager living with a disability, she advocates for a more inclusive society.

“People with disabilities are also members of society like everybody else,” says Carlucci. “It’s important to take a person as an

individual and understand what their strengths are to participate in the community. Everybody needs something to help us at some point in time in our lives. You don’t necessarily need a disability to require certain accommodations.”

As an architect, Kim feels that physical accessibility is something that should be provided regardless of who the targeted population is. She argues that everyone faces aging and the risk of accidents and disability. It is unreasonable to expect to never need special accommodations.

“Most people, once they’re in a community, would want to stay there for a really long time,” says Kim. “People do not want to have to move just because they become frail and can’t climb the stairs.”

Kim also believes that cohousing supports people with developmental disabilities partly because social activities, such as common meals, are regular, scheduled and predictable.

Isolation is a health risk

Kim will be giving the keynote talk at the CCC on loneliness as an international health epidemic and cohousing as a potential remedy.

“Isolation is such a pervasive thing,” says Kim. “It’s not a surprise that there is so much literature about the health implica-



▲ Grace Kim, founding principal of Schemata Workshop.

tions of loneliness.” The harmful effects of isolation on health and longevity is well-studied, with links to depression, heart disease, diabetes and other health issues. The importance of occupation to one’s identity and sense of self-worth is also part of the problem.

“It is really unfortunate there’s so much isolation based on what we do for a living,” says Kim. “People aren’t spending the time to think about what matters in life and the relationships that they are building.” It is important to initiate and cultivate social connections, and cohousing is a living arrangement that may make it easier to stay connected. ✎

For more information on the Canadian Cohousing Conference, visit www.canadiancohousingconference.ca

Photo by Nicole Raine Photography



Left Bank



Don't just get mad at politicians – get to the root problem behind climate change

Another Earth Day has come and gone, but what have we really learned? The more evidence accumulates that humanity is facing a veritable emergency as a result of global climate change, the more it seems our political leaders are unable or unwilling to act with the necessary urgency.

This paradox was on display last week as Prime Minister Justin Trudeau visited France and pledged allegiance to the Paris climate agreement, while at home he's been pushing ever-more aggressively to ram through Kinder Morgan's Trans Mountain pipeline against the steadfast opposition of local governments and First Nations here on the west coast.



Photo courtesy of Mike Bloomberg

Justin Trudeau in Paris last week.

Trudeau, along with Alberta Premier Rachel Notley, has now gone so far as to enter negotiations with the Texas-based corporation to offer billions of dollars of public money to ensure the construction of the pipeline. All this despite the fact that completing Trans Mountain would mean an accelerated expansion of the Alberta tar sands, which is incompatible with Canada meeting its Paris agreement targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Trudeau is far from the only politician who, while using the right words about climate change in general, has failed to stand up to the fossil fuel juggernaut that remains central to the global economic system.

B.C. NDP Premier John Horgan, whose government is only in power because of an agreement with the Green Party of B.C., has stood his ground against Trudeau on the Kinder Morgan issue but has been a major disappointment on other environmental files. Most notably, last month Horgan announced up to \$6 billion in tax breaks to help persuade liquefied natural gas companies to make a final investment decision. An expanding LNG industry will bring with it more fracking -- a dangerous method of gas extraction that has been linked to water contamination and even earthquakes and which has been banned in many other jurisdictions -- and more climate change causing emissions. Like Trudeau, Premier Horgan's support to expanding a major fossil fuel industry contradicts his professed commitment to taking tough action on climate change.

So, what gives? Basically, no elected politician in Canada has yet been able to articulate let alone confront the real source of the climate emergency and the wider ecological crisis -- namely, the capitalist economic system and its growth imperative. If we

start to debate and discuss this assertion, we'll be much better able to finally implement policies that start to properly address the climate crisis.

Capitalism requires not just growth in general, but specifically accelerated growth of capital accumulation -- a faster rate of return on investment. For all the much-hyped "green" initiatives of individual companies, many of them no doubt sincere, the system requires the maximization of profit and for at least the near future that will still include digging up and burning as much of the trillions of dollars of fossil fuels beneath the earth and the ocean floor as possible.

Trudeau illustrated this reality by saying, "No country would find 173 billion barrels of oil in the ground and just leave them there." This points to the terrible collective action problem that climate change represents. If every country and every government follows this selfish line of thinking, the future will be grim indeed.

There is an alternative, however. The best and perhaps only solution to the global climate emergency is a revival of an international socialist movement. No, I don't mean anything like the old blocs of so-called "socialist" states, many of which followed models of industrialization and production equally as ruinous as most capitalist states. I mean a return to the idea that working people all around the world have interests in common and enemies in common, and that greater equality of outcome -- not just equality of opportunity -- is a desirable thing and is best pursued by expanding political and economic democracy.

The revival of explicitly socialist politics will help us confront the climate emergency because we know that inequality is a major driver of dangerous greenhouse gas emissions. A 2015 study by famed French economist Thomas Piketty found that the rich and super-rich are overwhelmingly responsible for climate destabilizing emissions, with the top 10% contributing about 45% of global emissions. He advocated new luxury taxes to curb inequality and reduce emissions. In other words, taxing the rich isn't just the right thing to do in order to fund public services and increase equality, it's also a key mechanism for surviving the climate emergency and beginning to transition to a fairer, more rational society.

When we start to think and talk about climate change as a product of capitalist inequality, new policies once thought of as radical will become common sense. Why not have a maximum income, for example, or higher taxes on large inherited fortunes? And why not plan to phase out entirely the huge sectors of the global economy that, because of the imperative for maximizing profit, produce huge amounts of waste rather than useful goods and services?

Until we start asking these questions seriously, and acting on the answers we come up with, politicians of all stripes will continue to disappoint all those looking for real climate action. ✂



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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.

Connect with Japanese culture

by VINH NGUYEN

Nikkei National Museum and Cultural Centre is offering KIZUNA: Japanese Culture in English, a program that spans from May to July with varying themes, from language to culture, for everyone to participate in.

Leading the conversation of Japanese culture course at Nikkei's cultural centre, instructor Yoriko Gillard shares what will happen during the workshops and talk about her cultural background. The course starts on May 9 and will focus on creativity. Various activities will be present to encourage participants to discuss cultural aspects of daily life activities in Japan. Everyone is invited, with or without any prior knowledge of Japanese culture or language.

"The May sessions are focused on creativity and I will use many Japanese creative practices, both traditional and contemporary, such as *origami*, paper making, painting, flower arranging and others to discuss what could be Japanese culture and look at it from different perspectives, environments, experiences, knowledge and heritage," Gillard says.

Gillard is currently a Ph.D student in Language and Literacy Education at UBC and a faculty member at Capilano University and International

House Vancouver teaching Japanese language. She is also an artist and poet researching Japanese culture, language pedagogy and human relationships based on a Japanese concept of *kizuna*, which translates to an affectionate and respectful, reciprocal relationship connecting everyone during times of hardship.

A passion for sharing

Gillard has been organizing community events to support earthquake survivors, social activists, educators and cultural professionals in B.C. communities for the past seven years.

"Each time I met with enthusiastic and warm-hearted community leaders and I wanted to learn more about these people who have been working so hard to serve our society outside academy," says Gillard.

On coming to Vancouver to coordinate events, Gillard says that she is grateful to people of B.C. in regards to their help when the Great East Japan Earthquake struck.

"I was not directly affected by the disaster but my heart was broken and B.C. communities showed great support for Japan. This moved me and brought up my spirit so I want to share how Japanese people in Japan also feel appreciative about the support they received from the world," she says. "There are many amaz-



▲ Yoriko Gillard in a photo titled Hopes at Steveston.

ing stories that reminded us to respect one another in Japan and showed the world how our *kizuna* brought us together."

Although Gillard has offered many events including Japanese cultural context to collaborate with Japanese local Taiko

groups, various artists, educators, community leaders, and students, this is her first time offering *KIZUNA: Japanese Culture in English* for anyone who wants to learn about Japanese culture.

"My reason for offering *KIZUNA: Japanese Culture* is to not only inform my knowledge, but also learn from my attendees," explains Gillard.

Her past experiences in events brings Gillard pleasant memories.

"My experience of organizing events is always a memorable one. I love working with honest and hardworking people," she says.

Interaction at the heart of workshops

Gillard often invites artists, poets, community leaders and academic scholars to her events and asks them to let participants interact with them.

"I believe poetry can touch many of our hearts in gentle and sincere ways and this tradition has been an important one in Japan," she says.

Gillard's main philosophy for coordinating events is promoting active interactions with her participants.

"There are so many ways I tried to interact with my participants, as that is my core reason to organize anything in community," says Gillard. ☞

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► "Verbatim" from page 1 in this far from hostile environment. Rather warm, actually. With its coded friendships that are made and unmade according to events and the eyebrow-raising job market.

I am an industrial engineer. But not here. I am a generalist in France. But not here. So who am I? What can I do? And how? I am that person who is not afraid, who rolls up her sleeves and is about to prove to you that she deserves your trust. I go where I am not expected. I take on new challenges. Cook or line operator, administrative assistant or journalist, sometimes even event coordinator. It does not matter, as long as I am useful.



▲ Finding my feet.

And I keep going forward. Sometimes lost in a book, like a little bookworm at the Vancouver Public Library. Sometimes, or maybe even often, meeting new people. I visit, I meet, I discover, I drink coffee. A lot of coffee. You are there and you are all reaching out to each

other. You participate with me in these amazing exchanges and have fun. We find a smile, a laugh, a glow. And we feel good.

I'm walking on my tightrope. Sometimes I am off balance with so much new stuff. Will I manage to get across? Will I find and keep my balance? Somewhere. I have already become one of you. I am here and now a part of this "us," which was only a "you" before.

It does not matter if I go back to France or stay in Canada. France is beautiful. It's the country that has seen me grow up, and I'm proud of it. And Canada is wonderful. This is the country where I again move forward and remake myself. The one cold but welcom-

ing. The other exciting but divisive. Either one can reach out to you or let you slip away. But it does not matter. What matters is that if there are other storms one day, here I have learned to dance in the rain. ☞

Translated by Barry Brisebois

Persian artist Azadeh Emadi is being haunted by pixels

by ALLYSON MCGRANE

Working in conjunction with the SFU School for Contemporary Arts and the Centre for Comparative Muslim Studies, grunt gallery is presenting *Azadeh Emadi: Motion Within Motion*, the first Canadian exhibition by Glasgow-based artist Azadeh Emadi from May 2–12. The unique vision of the Persian artist and visiting scholar unveils the hidden depths of pixels.

"We were initially approached by SFU professor Laura Marks to request a showing of this work. We are very excited about this fortuitous collaboration with the School of Contemporary Arts," says grunt gallery curator Vanessa Kwan.

Making connections through exploration of non-Western sources of algorithmic media art

In 2010, Marks published a book titled *Hanan al-Cinema: Affections for the Moving Image* (MIT Press) which examined experimental cinema and media art from the Arabic-speaking world. Through this book, she was able

to reach others who were similarly enamoured with algorithmic media art, particularly media artists with Islamic heritage. When Marks was working on a Ph.D. in New Zealand, Emadi contacted Marks shortly after the book's publication. This led to an ongoing professional connection that was the beginning of a worldwide network of 40-50 media artists interested in this specific niche.

For this exhibition, Marks believes that the works by Emadi will appeal to many different audiences in Vancouver. Some of these audiences are people who are interested in looking sympathetically at digital technology, those who are curious about cross-cultural perspectives on digital media, members of the Iranian population, anyone who is interested in Islamic art or religious art, and even those who appreciate meditative and sensuous art.

"It speaks subtly to the feelings of displacement, of immigrants and of landing on your feet (24 times/second) – that's what pixels do. The pixels hold up the movies on their little bodies," explains Marks. "In her installation the movie was shot



Photo courtesy of Azadeh Emadi

▲ Still from the *Motion Within Motion* video.

at different locations in Iran. It shows art history of the area. There is something very moving about the light changing on the screen. It offers a feeling of how something small relates to a larger image – a shocking sense of perspective that is humbling and beautiful. The video shows beautiful Islamic mosaics which are a precedent to pixels. It is both beautiful and satisfying – just as an equation can be."

Searching for untold stories

Emadi will bring two works to grunt gallery. The first, *Motion Within Motion*, is a two-channel

installation with immersive sound in the Main Gallery. It features a double screen video projection – allowing for micro and macro projection simultaneously. Filmed in Iran, Emadi went to different locations as the observer behind the camera for the macro video. Then she went into each image to choose what to see in the frame by separating out a single pixel.

"A pixel is invisible at first instance – by revealing it, we see what is different in the overall images. As presented in a black room, the sound is quite powerful. Audiences can get close to the video and watching it

reveals something they didn't know was there," says Emadi.

The second related work, *Floating Tiles*, is in the Media Lab. It follows a similar logic, connecting Persian architecture with digital pixels / tiles and proving a direct connection from 15th century Persia to 21st century digital media.

"Most people look at the image and see the surface of the image. I challenge the surface of the image to show something they cannot see," declares Emadi.

The exhibition features two works by Emadi that each juxtapose classical Islamic tile work with digital manipulation of a modern pixel. This will be accompanied by an essay written by Marks that will be available at the show. It will also feature a May 10 artist talk by Emadi at grunt gallery as well as a related talk titled *Creative Algorithms: From Islamic Art to Digital Media* by Marks on May 23 (followed by a conversation between Marks and Emadi) at SFU Harbour Centre. ✉

For more information about the exhibition by Azadeh Emadi and grunt gallery, please visit www.grunt.ca.

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Photo by Diane Smithers Photography

▲ Naomi Steinberg, performer and storyteller.

Author lets flow a few goosefeathers of emotion

by BRITTANY THOMSON

As part of the Pick Your Poison: Writers' Reading Series, author Naomi Steinberg, along with guests, will be reading from her *Goosefeather* manuscript at The Generative Nest on April 22, May 6, May 20 and June 3.

Steinberg, a well-traveled storyteller from Vancouver, took off on an adventure in December of 2014 and never looked back. Fascinated with the war-torn history of her grandparents during the Second World War, Steinberg interviewed her grandfather. She said he is a terse man, obsessed with the metric system, and she used his interest in measurement to relate to him and open the doors of communication. Though a man of few words, with some pushing her grandfather had an amazing story to tell. While helping with the harvest in Roussillion, France, he successfully hid his new Jewish bride from the Nazi regime. What began as an interview about his work and hobbies, opened the door to his war-filled past. Exhausted but inspired, Steinberg set out to share their story.

"If we allow ourselves to not know and be in experience, there is space for grace and curiosity. Allow ourself to be in this great soup of not knowing," says Steinberg.

The kindness of strangers

With a background in oral tradition, Steinberg was resistant to dive into the literary world. *Goosefeather*, which started as a performance piece, became a memoir – or travel log – of Steinberg's experience of bringing her performance around the planet. She had 365 days of no airplanes, paying only for accommodation and relying on the kindness and generosity of strangers.

"I'm attempting to universalize my personal experience

and make it of use or benefit to humanity, all while trying to figure out what allowed my grandfather to be a hero."

Steinberg notes that she can't take for granted all that she has and all that went into getting her here.

"Part of that legacy for me, is my commitment to social service and acknowledging my privilege – all that hard work that led to me being born."

At times, those feelings have led Steinberg to question whether or not the work should be released.

became the vehicle for her storytelling.

"This notion of measuring water... water is the realm of the emotions; my grandfather was unable to express his emotions, which later affected the rest of my family. So if I have a wish personally, it would be that I be strong enough to allow two goosefeathers' worth of water to come through me. The flow of emotion, learning," says Steinberg.

The performance, built from historic context and Steinberg's own experience with her grand-

“Water is the realm of the emotions. So if I have a wish personally, it would be that I be strong enough to allow two goosefeathers' worth of water to come through me.

Naomi Steinberg, writer and performance artist

"How selfish am I to be using my time to talk about myself, doing this incredible adventure, which I could only do because I'm hyper privileged? Good education, given a lot of love in my life, belief in myself... how lucky am I? Is it ok to put this work out?" Steinberg asks.

Sense of adventure

Through the conversations with her grandfather and three women from Roussillion who knew her grandfather, Steinberg was able to patch together a narrative that would later become *Goosefeather*, the performance. The inspiration for the title came from the three women who used to purchase "one or two goose feathers' full" of water from the local well. This lined up with Steinberg's grandfather's obsession with measurement. As the performance began to piece itself together, the idea of the goose

father and interviewees, became an experience like no other.

That bold and fearless sense of adventure is what Steinberg wants her readers to take away from *Goosefeather*.

"Go for it! People should be more willing to go for it. Want an adventure? Go for it."

Steinberg, who struggled with self-censorship, hopes her readers won't do the same. An older mentor bolstered her confidence and helped her to believe in her story.

"Storytelling demands presence," she says.

The third revision, which Steinberg has just recently finished, is now eagerly awaiting an editor. *Goosefeather*, a working title, will hit the shelves in early 2019. ✍

For more information on the Pick Your Poison: Writers' Reading Series and Steinberg's work, please visit www.goosefeather.ca.

Assembling the new Some Assembly play

by COLLEEN ADDISON

Valerie Methot is addressing youth issues through theatre with *The Release Party*, which will be presented by Some Assembly Theatre Company.

Methot tells a sad story about our youth. As described by her, young people today have to face many struggles, including issues with mental health and bullying as well as thoughts of suicide or self-harm. But, she adds, there is one answer: discuss these issues through theatre.

"Plays and theatre provide a great venue for young people to creatively express themselves with regards to important issues and to raise awareness," says Methot, a theatre veteran who has a Master's of Fine Arts and specializes in using plays to express traumatic events and issues. "It's amazing and inspiring to watch the journey of young people who are doing this."

The Release Party, a play created by Methot and other theatre professionals in collaboration with youth, will be playing from May 2 through to May 5 at the Roundhouse Community Arts &

Adriano agrees with Methot.

"This is the first party that my character has ever been to, and so the play is about that, too," he says. "He also plays the ukulele, [which] I learned while writing the part."

Methot, who works closely with experienced youth counsellor Ken Lawson, hopes the play will help others who may be struggling with similar problems.

"We had a clinician come to the sessions to talk to us about suicide prevention," comments Methot. "She said expressing yourself was really important, expression and music. Strings are good for your heart rate, too, as well as mental health. That's why Rylan plays the ukulele."

Hearing our own voices

The play is performed with a counsellor present, and a booth featuring health information



▲ Cam Adriano plays Rylan, a character who tried to commit suicide in *The Release Party*.



▲ Valerie Methot co-wrote *The Release Party* with a group of youth.

brochures is on display. Thus far, the production has been well received by audiences.

"We've had people stand up in talkback sessions and say how they felt much less alone, seeing themselves and their issues represented on stage," Methot says. "People have really responded."

Adriano adds that the play has been beneficial to himself as a youth.

"We have adult counsellors and information available in schools and elsewhere. But it's important to hear our own voices too," he says.

Methot and Adriano both comment that this experience has been an exciting and rewarding one. Methot is the co-founder, executive and artistic director of Some Assembly, the company who, along with the Roundhouse Youth Theatre Action Group, is responsible for the play. She notes that she loves her work.

"It's meaningful to me as an adult, and a theatre professional, and also personally, as a mother, to provide guidance and help to youth. I've been doing it for 17 years, and I can't imagine doing anything else," she says.

Adriano is in agreement. He is a musician and a student at Vancouver Technical Secondary and very much enjoys acting.

"Theatre is something I throw myself into," he says. ✍

For more information, please see www.someassembly.ca.

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Music with a message

by RAMAN KANG

“We’re kind of like a family band at this point. These people have been in my life musically and personally for a long time,” says Malcolm Aiken, trumpeter and co-founder of Mazacote.

Mazacote is performing at the Vancouver World Music Festival on April 26, 2018 at Guilt & Co, GroundUp at 10 p.m.–1 a.m.

Who is Mazacote

Mazacote, a six-piece band featuring world and Latin music producer hard-hitting, energetic beats with Spanish lyrics.

“The Mazacote stamp is definitely apparent in our arrangement and percussion feel, pulling ideas from Mozambique, Nicaragua, and Cuba to name a few,” says David Lopez, Nicaraguan singer/songwriter and co-founder of Mazacote.

The name, Mazacote, comes from a part of a tune, explains Aiken. It’s when ‘the whole band breaks down and then builds back up into a frenzy of fire power.’ In some languages the name also translates into ‘a mix of things.’

“We are a big mix of things; we’re a mix of different cultures and people. Everyone in the band is an immigrant to this country,” says Aiken.

Mazacote is made up of six people including Aiken and Lopez, Carlos Arias on bass, Chris Couto on timbales, Robin Layne on congas and Niho Takase on piano.

About 20 years ago, Aiken, Lopez and Takase started playing in a big salsa band in Vancouver.

“We got really into it and a decade later we started our own



▲ Mazacote’s lyrics carry a socially conscious message while their beats give everyone something to dance to.

band,” says Aiken. “The energy is pretty contagious, that kind of started me on my journey with playing world music.”

Aiken has also known Arias, Couto and Layne for years. The three would join to complete the band.

“It’s fun to bring all these really talented people together that also have a long history of working together,” says Aiken. “You have to develop [the chemistry] over a long time and I feel very lucky that we have that as a group.”

Music with a message

“As the group’s front man and lyricist, I tend to focus our message towards being socially responsi-

ble, spreading the message of love, unity and perseverance,” says Lopez.

As a father, Lopez wanted to show his kids the importance of spreading positivity, even in small ways.

“When you have an audience, it’s a good opportunity to tell people to follow their dreams,” says Lopez.

Lopez explains that Mazacote’s sound is in the Afro-Caribbean realm, which lends itself well to a party and a family atmosphere.

“We have a chance to display positive messaging and some ideas that could provoke thought but also have a good time,” says Aiken.

This allows the audience to take what they will from Mazacote’s music.

“Whether that’s the party vibe or maybe they’re going to start latching on to some of those ideas we’re bringing forth,” he says.

Those ideas include issues such as immigration, missing home, starting a new family and what it means to maintain a connection to where your family is originally from.

“All in all, we want people to have a great time and put a smile on their face and if we can do that, our job is done,” says Aiken.

World Music Festival

The World Music Festival was

founded in 2014 by bandmates Tom Landa and Robin Layne. Layne just so happens to also be a member of Mazacote.

“We had an inside scoop,” says Aiken.

The band played at the festival when it first opened and is returning for a second time.

“As a group we get a chance to change people’s minds and mood and create a great environment for people to have fun, dance and let loose a little bit,” says Aiken. ☞

For more information on Mazacote and tour dates, please visit www.mazacoteband.com.

► “DOXA Festival” from page 1 grandeur. *Cielo* is an invitation to slow down, reflect and rediscover our world, offering – I hope – the audience an evocative space in which to think and imagine for themselves. Or even experience a moment of transcendence, what photographer Robert Frank calls, ‘the poetry behind the surfaces of things,’ she says.

McAlpine hopes that *Cielo* will be back with a theatrical run in Vancouver mid-August.

A six-dollar cup of coffee

Mexican producers Ibañez and Diaz tackle the behind the scenes, rarely talked about events from the growing of beans to the pouring of a cup of coffee. In *A Six Dollar Cup of Coffee*, an innovative coffee co-op founded by Indigenous producers in Chiapas, Mexico had the idea of selling processed coffee instead of the raw green bean



▲ Behind the scenes of coffee culture.

and when a Japanese company buys most of it, life seems to be on the up and up.

“When we started with the coffee co-op it was to show the struggle they endure to commercialize their coffee,” says Diaz.

Both Ibañez and Diaz admit to drinking a lot of coffee, up to five or six cups a day. Yet they had no

idea what sort of work was behind the production of what they drank.

“Also as a gastronomic ingredient – I think a lot more people are drinking coffee, especially in the North West in places like Seattle, Portland and Vancouver there are a lot of roasters. It is important for people to know the origin of their coffee crop,

not just the finished product. If you know about your food you will drink better coffee,” adds Ibañez.

Then tragedy strikes in the film as a fungus destroys 70 per cent of the crop. Soon the Japanese company sell their chain restaurant and the co-op has to go back to the drawing board. The filmmakers said the struggle of making the film was to adapt to the change.

“We shot for a very long time – five years,” says Diaz.

They faced challenges with funding and filming was difficult, but Diaz says editing the footage was the hardest.

“We had to take all the footage and put it into a narrative we designed, but this is real life and we had to adapt to life sometimes,” says Diaz.

Diaz says that working on the movie taught the filmmakers patience, awareness of natural cycles and different ways of life.

“When you work with food you have to be patient. You have to wait for the agronomical cycles and respect the way the people live. Since we lived with this co-op for four years, we wanted to tell their human story too. How to balance the information with the dramatic story-telling was a great challenge,” says Diaz.

The film has many messages Diaz and Ibañez hope to deliver to audiences, but there is one in particular the filmmakers hope stays with Vancouver audiences: “Every coffee you purchase helps a certain system to prevail. We invest in the future we want and if you see not just the gastronomical side of it, but the faces and people whose lives are impacted by a one-dollar cup of coffee, not just the roasters and baristas, but the growers too.” ☞

For more information on the DOXA Film Festival, visit www.doxafestival.ca.



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Cultural Calendar

April 24–May 8, 2018

by SIMON YEE

Happy May Day everyone! May Day is an ancient spring festival, traditionally happening on May 1. Dancing, music and good food are a common part of these festivals. In that spirit, why not check out some of the many festivals happening around town!

Sheldon Elter's *Métis Mutt*

April 25–May 5
Firehall Arts Centre, Vancouver
www.firehallartscentre.ca

Métis actor, writer, stand-up comic, musician and director Sheldon Elter's *Métis Mutt* will be presented at the Firehall Arts Centre from April 25 to May 5. *Métis Mutt* recounts the story of Sheldon's coming of age under extremely difficult family and cultural circumstances. The child of a violently alcoholic father, Sheldon struggles to come to grips with his feelings about being the eldest child in an abusive household. Experiencing bigotry from both sides of the racial fence, he attempts to understand both what drives him psychologically and what is important to him culturally. Through stand-up comedy, original songs, storytelling and brilliant multi-character vignettes, audiences are invited to share the journey of this young Métis man and watch him pull himself out of a destructive cycle and carve out a creative life for himself.

Vancouver World Music Festival

April 26–29
Various venues around Vancouver
www.worldmusicfest.ca

The Vancouver World Music Festival is dedicated to presenting local and international artists playing traditional music from around the globe. This year's festival features groups playing Mexican fusion, alternative soul, modern Afrobeat, Latin flamenco, Brazilian rhythms and more. Most performances will be held at The Imperial, but there will be an opening night at Guilt & Co., and further performances at Trout Lake Community Centre. For more information, check out the festival website.

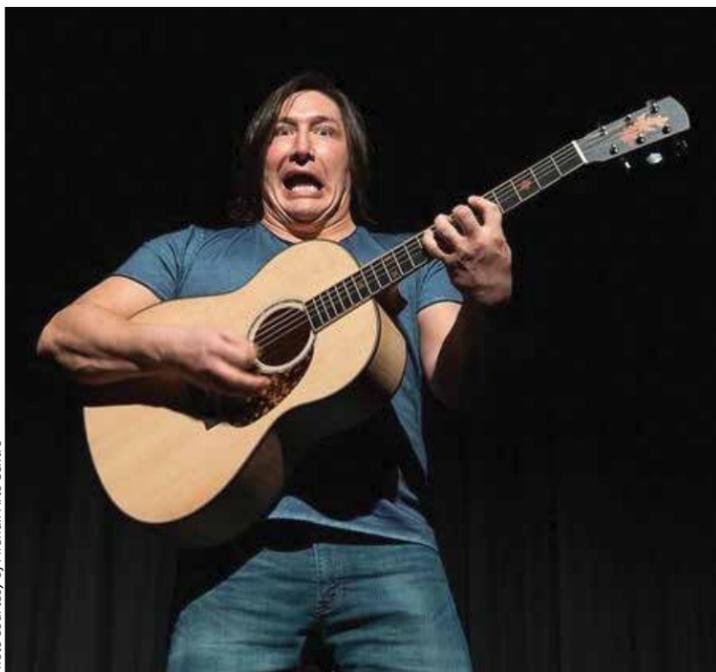
Vancouver Opera Festival

April 28–May 6
Various locations around Vancouver
www.vancouveropera.ca

From April 28 to May 6, under the banner of the Russian White Nights, the second annual Vancouver Opera Festival will celebrate Russian composers with a Russian classic opera, a much anticipated opera premiere, a series of instrumental and vocal chamber music concerts and much more. Performances based on the works of Russian cultural giants like Nikolai Gogol, Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky and Sergei Rachmaninoff will punctuate this festival. Please visit the festival website for a complete list of events.

International Dance Day 2018

April 29, 12–7 p.m.
Various locations around Metro Vancouver
www.thedancecentre.ca/international_dance_day_2018



▲ Sheldon Elter strumming out his story in *Métis Mutt*.

In 1982 the Dance Committee of UNESCO's International Theatre Institute founded International Dance Day, to be celebrated every year on April 29, the anniversary of the birth of Jean-Georges Noverre (1727–1810) who is regarded as the creator of modern ballet. Its goal is to celebrate dance around the world, to revel in the universality of this art form, to cross political, cultural and ethnic barriers and to bring people together with a common language – dance. In that spirit, the Vancouver Dance Centre will be putting on performances celebrating the dance form. Check out their website for more information.

Pan Asian Routes Art Exhibition – Dimasalang Turns 50

May 1–30
Vancouver Public Library, Central Branch
www.dimasalang.org

2018 marks the 50th anniversary of the Filipino artistic group Dimasalang, whose artwork and inspired artworks will be on display in May at the Vancouver Public Library, Central Branch. The group was co-founded by SYM Mendoza and late artist-writer E. Aguilar (Abe) Cruz in Manila, Philippines in 1968 in honour of the Philippine national hero and freedom fighter, Jose Rizal, a revolutionary writer who used Dimasalang as his pseudonym during the turn of the 19th century when the Philippines was under Spanish rule. In 1981, SYM moved to Canada with his family where he formed a new set of "Canadian Dimasalang Artists," continuing to teach the Philippine artistic style to Vancouver artists. There will be an opening reception on May 3. Check out the website for more information.

EMMA Talks: Feminist Muslim Voices

May 3, 7–9 p.m.
SFU Goldcorp Centre for the Arts, Vancouver
www.emmatalks.org

The Goldcorp Centre for the Arts will be hosting the ninth annual EMMA Talks, featuring the voices of Muslim feminists. Feminist voices have been instrumental in shaping, reforming and defining Islamic thought and Muslim identity. The spirit of social justice and the tradition of activism within Islam continues to inspire

Christ Church Cathedral,
Vancouver (May 5)
www.elektra.ca

Every three years, the Elektra Women's Choir welcomes up to three choirs from around the world to its Tapestry International Celebration of Women's Choirs. Singing separately and as a massed choir with Elektra, our guest choirs will spend four days together sharing, rehearsing and giving public performances. In May, Elektra will welcome choirs from Japan (Frisches Ei), Iceland (Gardabaer Women's Choir) and the United States (VOX Femina Los Angeles) to Vancouver. For tickets and more information, visit Elektra's website.

Ganito Kami Noon, Paano Kayo Ngayon?

May 5, 2 p.m.
Vancouver Public Library, Central Branch

As part of explorAsian 2018, the Vancouver Public Library will be hosting the 100 Filipino Film Series as they present one of the best films of classic Filipino cinema: *Ganito Kami Noon, Paano Kayo Ngayon? This Is How We Were Before, How Are You Doing Now?* This is a romantic musical drama film set in the era of Spanish colonization in the Philippines. The film will be presented in Tagalog with English subtitles, and a panel discussion will follow. Check out the library's website for more information.

Rhododendron Festival

May 6, 11 a.m.–3 p.m.
Deer Lake Park, Burnaby
www.burnaby.ca/rhodofest

The City of Burnaby will be hosting Rhodofest on May 6 at Deer Lake Park, a festival promoting the long-term sustainable, ecological health of communities and providing a venue for art and horticultural groups. There will be a ceremonial tree planting event, tours of the Burnaby Art Gallery, a variety of entertainment, rovers, mini-workshops, plant sales, a silent auction and interactive arts activities. Admission is free!

Bears

May 8–12
The Cultch, Vancouver
www.thecultch.com

A new Indigenous-led Canadian play told through dramatic storytelling and choreography, an eight-person chorus, enchanting projections and an evocative electronic soundscape. *Bears* is an emotional, empathetic performance experience, which will be performed at The Cultch, May 8 to 12. Unapologetically political, *Bears* gives a voice to the voiceless animals and vulnerable landscapes desecrated by the insatiable human desire for industrial expansion, while striving to increase dialogue about the devastating effects on Canada's First Nations peoples. For tickets and more information, please check out The Cultch's website.

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FLIPINO FILM SERIES

Ganito Kami Noon, Paano Kayo Ngayon?
This is How We Were Before, How Are You Doing Now?

May 5, 2018
2pm - 5pm
Alice Mackay Room
Central Library
350 W Georgia St, Vancouver, BC

Partners:
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The Vancouver Asian Heritage Month Society
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A Filipino romantic musical drama film set in the era of Spanish colonization in the Philippines. In Tagalog with English subtitles.
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