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mathematics
for all
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The Source

forum of diversity

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Hot Docs Film Festival

The Taste of Desire: Pearls of wisdom

by VICTOR VAN DER MERWE

The humble oyster is the centre of attention in Director Willemiek Kluijghout's film *The Taste of Desire*, which will be streamed as part of this year's Hot Docs Film Festival running from April 29–May 4. The film follows five individuals who seem to have nothing in common aside from their connection to the oyster.

Angie Pontania, is a burlesque dancer in New York, trying to juggle her growing family and

a well-known stage act that involves a giant oyster shell. The two-Michelin-Star Chef Olivier Roellinger has made seafood his life's work. Japanese artist Chitose Chi works with pearls that are not always perfectly round. Lotta Klemming is a young Swedish woman who found purpose in her life when she decided to become an oyster diver. Finally, psychologist Nigel Moore, who is dying of cancer, has decided to write the ultimate book on oysters.

While the film focuses on each subject's personal relation-

ship with the oyster, Kluijghout points out that, "Everything is connected. The oyster is fed by the sea and we eat the oyster. So, everything we do to do the waters will come back to us. Chef Olivier Roellinger therefore calls the oyster the barometer of the world. Chitose Chi explains how the pearl is as alive as everything else in the world".

How to treat oysters

Kluijghout herself has a long personal history with oysters. Her grandparents lived in the Dutch seaside town of Yerseke, famous

for its oysters. "I used to swim between oysters while visiting them. And I played with oyster shells. That is my first love of oysters," she recalls.

She was also motivated by the range of emotions that this seemingly simple sea creature stirs up in people around the world. "People seem to either love them or hate them, and there are so many connotations about oysters being healthy, an aphrodisiac, pure nature, decadent, glamorous, and so on," says Kluijghout.

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Verbatim

My COVID life – celebrating the wins

by RAMAN KANG

In 2019 (which seems like it was five years ago), I was working at a job that wasn't reflecting my worth. I had gained all I could from my position and instead of learning anything new, the lessons began repeating themselves over and over again like I was stuck in some sort of time loop. I began resenting the mornings I had to go to work, trying to squish my way into a bus that felt more like a can of sardines and finally clocking in at my job. My mental, physical and emotional health were screaming at me. Quitting my job without a backup was far too terrifying – being in a place of uncertainty – not knowing how much time it's going to take until someone else hires you – the thought alone made my heart pound and tailspin into a pit of anxiety, especially since I had been applying for months and had heard nothing. I figured if I wasn't having any luck now, who's to say I would have any luck after quitting, so, I stayed.

Cue the pandemic. In March of 2020, I was forced to do what I couldn't on my own – leave my job. With no official date of return, I was caught off guard – it was freedom but with heavy restrictions. On one hand, I got the break I desperately needed; on the other, a virus was working its way across the globe leaving devastation in its tracks. With the stay-at-home orders in place, I was now in a different kind of time loop, the kind where I had to take a good, hard look at myself every day. Without a job, not being able to see friends and hardly leaving my house, I had no distractions from the baggage that had built up within me. So I started listening. Working on myself hasn't been easy – more like walking on jagged rocks, but I've come out of it a much happier person. As I continue to do the work, the ground un-

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Cultural Spotlight

Building fish traps, building community

by TINA QU

Brazilian mathematics educator Marcelo C. Borba once compared the visualization of ethnomathematics to a forest 'in which each tree would be considered as a different expression of ethnomathematics, socio-culturally produced.'

"The definition of ethnomathematics that I prefer was stated by Ubiratan D'Ambrosio, another Brazilian mathematics educator and historian of mathematics," says Veselin Jungic, teaching professor at Simon Fraser University (SFU)'s Department of Mathematics.

He says D'Ambrosio defined ethnomathematics as the mathematics which is practiced among identifiable cultural groups, such as national-tribal societies, labour groups, children of a certain age bracket, professional classes and so on.

"I like to think about mathematics in the sense of D'Ambrosio's definition of ethnomathematics," Jungic says. "I like to think of the term as one that includes an extensive range of human activities, which, throughout history, have been formalized into academic mathematics."

to create mathematical models based on certain Indigenous traditions.

"Of course, a key part of the initiative is that we work very closely and in a mutually respectful way with our Indigenous collaborators," he says.

Stone fish traps; a longstanding tradition

Following his first project on traditional basket designs created by the Tla'amin Nation, Jungic's latest initiative

fish and more factors that affect the trap-building process.

"Optimization, another mathematical notion, may be used to describe some other components of this kind of project," Jungic adds.

According to Jungic, knowing how to optimize available resources and outcomes is crucial to securing a reliable source of food for the community over a long period.

"The fish traps were sustainable ways to support a

“Constructing such a large and important project would not be possible without having Indigenous tradition, ethnomathematics and two-eyed seeing coming together.

Veselin Jungic, mathematics professor

involves modelling stone fish traps.

"While talking with members of the Tla'amin Nation and through our research, we learned that across the Pacific Northwest region, First Nations used stone fish traps as

First Nation's food supply over many decades," he says. "Our Tla'amin collaborators shared with us recent photos that display the clearly visible remains of old fish traps on their traditional territory. The fact that these structures are still there, after many decades of general disuse, is a testament to the skill and knowledge of the ancient Tla'amin builders."

Two-eyed seeing

Building stone traps is often a collaborative process. In the same way, many important concepts contribute to the idea behind ethnomathematics.

According to Elder Albert Marshall of the Mi'kmaq Nation, two-eyed seeing refers to the ability to see with the strength of Indigenous knowledge from one eye and see with the strength of Western knowledge from the other.

"Using these eyes together, we see for the benefit of all," he explains.

Two-eyed seeing is also essential to Jungic's initiative. "Constructing such a large and important project would not be possible without having Indigenous tradition, ethnomathematics and two-eyed seeing coming together," Jungic says.

A free online learning resource is available, in order to communicate cultural, engineering, environmental and mathematical ideas at the high school level on a global scale.

For more information, please visit www.sfu.ca/sfunews/stories/2021/03/pi-day--how-indigenous-stone-fish-traps-contribute-to-mathematic.html



▲ A view of the Tla'amin Nation's fish traps, located on the Sunshine Coast.

He says these concepts, however, also remain alive in culturally identified groups and constitute routine in their practices. Jungic's current work uses mathematics and modern technology

a traditional way of harvesting fish," he says, explaining that constructing these stone traps required detailed designing and planning, just like any other engineering project.

One must have a complete understanding of the trap's location, type, shape, size and configuration before construction, the professor explains. In addition, one has to understand the periodicity of the tidal changes, the behaviour of the



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Climate change is already affecting the city

by GEOFF RUSS

Angela Danyluk's work and research has given her a clear picture of how environmental changes will impact residents of Vancouver, and the local effects of climate change cannot be avoided much longer. As a senior sustainability specialist in the City of Vancouver, Danyluk states the impact of climate change on Vancouverites will go beyond merely physical damage.

"Humans are part of nature. We can do damage, but we also have the capacity to repair and create conditions where nature thrives," she says, adding that climate change will have unavoidable consequences for Vancouver and its residents.

On Apr. 28, the Stanley Park Ecology Society will be hosting *Action for Climate Change*, an online webinar conducted by Danyluk alongside Kayah George, who is a Tsleil-Waututh youth and environmental activist, as well as Naomi Leung and Hannah Wicki, two youth from Climate Education Reform B.C.

Climate change inevitability

"I do think it will soon be impossible to ignore. Climate change is not so obvious in Vancouver right now since it is mostly felt in these big events like heatwaves and forest fires," says Angela Danyluk.

Having conducted a substantial amount of research on how climate change will affect Vancouver, Danyluk says to look no further than the last five to eight years for evidence of those effects.



▲ Drought and sea level rise will cause great harm to our nature and ecosystem, says Angela Danyluk, a senior sustainability specialist in the City of Vancouver.

"Droughts, forest fires and extreme rain will become more regular in the next 30 to 50 years," says Danyluk.

Since 2015, Vancouver summers have been accompanied by massive smoke clouds covering the city as a result of wildfires in the interior and the United States. Rapidly warming climates have also resulted in droughts throughout the province. Water use is annually restricted by the City of Vancouver to protect the city's water supply.

"Drought and sea level rise will cause great harm to our nature and ecosystem," says Danyluk.

Vancouver is a city known for its large number of greenspaces and urban nature, the biggest example being the 405-hectare Stanley Park. Danyluk believes climate change will affect more than just weather in Vancouver and B.C. as a whole.

Financial impact of climate change

"Over the past five years, house insurance costs [have gone] up," says Danyluk. "Strata insurance is going up because of the effects of climate change."

Danyluk notes that Vancouver is already one of the world's

most unaffordable cities even without the costs of insurance.

In Canada, the risk of flooding has caused insurance premiums related to flooding and other water damage to increase dramatically. Higher levels of rainfall pose another risk for people living in B.C. Metro Vancouver experiences some of the heaviest annual rainfalls in Canada. Richmond sits below sea level and is already vulnerable to flooding. According to Danyluk, however, climate change is already financially felt beyond merely the costs of insurance.

"Folks should already know that they're being impacted by climate change through our food, fuel and even the cost of consumer goods," says Danyluk. "A couple years ago, there were droughts in California that caused the collapse of grain sales needed by Canadian beef farmers to feed cattle which impacted prices here."

In 2014, prices for imported California produce skyrocketed over 20 per cent as a result of drought.

"These incidents are happening in different systems. We don't always tie them together and not all the stories are being shared," says Danyluk.

The goal of weathering climate change and maintaining environmental sustainability is more than just a job for Danyluk. She has always felt a connection to nature and the lands and waters of Vancouver.

"It's personal for me and something I'm very passionate about," says Danyluk. "It's my assumption that it's personal for most people in Vancouver too. We all benefit when nature thrives; we know this to be true. Why wouldn't we take action to help nature out?"

For more information about Danyluk, visit www.expertfile.com/experts/angela.danyluk/angela-danyluk

For more information about Action for Climate Change, visit www.eventbrite.ca/e/action-for-climate-online-tickets-149955335445?mc_cid=da8f5df2fc&mc_eid=062419b740

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Leena Manro: transforming a corporate and community culture through arts

by SIMRYN ATWAL

The YWCA has released the inspiring nominees for the Women of Distinction Awards and will announce the winners on June 7 at their virtual gala. One of this year's nominees, Leena Manro, truly embodies the essence of the Arts, Culture and Design category, by making a corporate and social difference through her media endeavours and performative arts work.

As a co-founder and media director for the design company All Purpose, a founder of a sketch comedy troupe I Can't Believe It's Not Butter Chicken, and a Leonominated actress, Manro has an extensive and impressive background in the art sector. However, her path into this field was anything but ordinary.

An unconventional journey

Manro initially started off by working in the legal field as a lawyer, but she didn't find her true purpose there.

"We all have an inner calling, a voice that speaks to us ever since we were really little," she says. "Mine was to become an artist."

Manro decided to move to Vancouver to become an actress but ran into the issue of being pigeonholed due to her ethnicity. It was during this period of time she found her love for storytell-

ing. Her initial work as a contracted producer for IBM training videos led to co-founding All Purpose in 2017.

"I took a meandering path, but when I look back at my past and

“ We all have an inner calling, a voice that speaks to us ever since we were really little.

Leena Manro, co-founder and media director of All Purpose

what led me to do my work today, I draw on so many of these experiences. However, it all started with me becoming courageous, having faith, working hard and never losing hope," she says.

Social action through the arts

Through her work with All Purpose, Manro has been able to use an amalgamation of video production, creativity and storytelling to shape socially responsible projects for corporate clients.

"For example, in order to stop human trafficking, you need technology, website building, and media to help educate others. Through the clients we work with we were able to contribute to the creation of a human trafficking analysis tool," she explains.

Manro has also been able to work on other corporate citizenship initiatives, working in the di-

versity and inclusion arm for corporations to change their work environments.

"We look for projects that fit that socially responsible category and are looking to do more

than just make money," she adds. "These are projects that are looking to make the world better, either by designing the technology or creating a media platform. We play a small but important role in these projects. Part of the reason that we were named All Purpose is we believe that we are a purpose-driven organization."

I Can't Believe it's Not Butter Chicken is another example of how Manro uses creativity to address diverse social and cultural issues. Through the sketch comedy group, she was able to write, direct and act in pieces that used humour to focus on real issues regarding the South Asian Community. The accessible nature of the performative arts medium allows it to resonate so widely, Manro explains.

"I wrote a trilogy focused on domestic violence for South

Asian women. Because it was a form of entertainment, it exposed more people to the message," she says. "People that you wouldn't think were absorbing the message were confronted

head on in a way that shines light on community problems."

A current project Manro is working on for the Creative BC JEDI's series also focuses on equity and inclusion.



▲ Leena Manro.

"The episodes use comedy to address diversity and inclusion issues in the workplace with topics like harassment," she says. "By having recurring characters, we are hoping to tell a story that's a little different from something that's more cookie-cutter. Our goal is to tell the story in a way that gets people interested in seeing things differently without even realizing it."

A vision of light and joy

The YWCA Arts, Culture and Design Award nomination has been a profound acknowledgment of the efforts Manro has done in this area.

"Arts, culture and design is all about adding love, light, joy and voices to the world. It means the world to me that this body recognizes the intangible, very vital and deeply important work that's done in the sector," she says.

She hopes that others take an important insight from her nomination.

"Don't ever give up; whatever your dream is hold steady to it and keep at it. You don't need a sequential logical path. Continue forging ahead and you will create your own. As you do that you make a path for others to follow in your footsteps," says Manro. ✍

For more information, please visit www.ywcavan.org/women-distinction-awards



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Photo courtesy of NFB

▲ In the documentary *Someone Like Me*, when a queer group of strangers unite to support a gay Ugandan man seeking asylum in Canada, unexpected challenges lead them down an emotional road together in search of personal freedom.

Someone Like Me

The challenges of queer solidarity in Vancouver

by RAFAEL ZEN

Drake, a 22-year-old gay man from Uganda, leaves his country behind. In Canada, he is welcomed by a group of strangers from Vancouver's queer community united under the banner of Rainbow Refugee, a non-profit that connects LGBTQ+ asylum claimants with sponsors. *Someone Like Me*, a documentary released in 2021 by the directing duo Sean Horlor and Steve J. Adams, tells his story. It is part of the line-up from the 2021 edition of DOXA Documentary Film Festival.

"We wanted to make this film to show that it's possible for one person to move the needle on issues like the global refugee cri-

live in one of the 70 plus countries around the world where they can be imprisoned or murdered because of their sexuality or gender identity, it can be difficult to escape to a country like Canada, Adams points out.

"You most likely won't be out to your family and can't rely on them to immigrate. If you aren't wealthy enough to get a visa and fly to a safe country, you have to get an asylum claim, and wait years for resettlement. The pandemic made this worse in many ways because the borders closed, leaving thousands of queer people trapped and in danger around the world," he says.

"There's this idea that once you arrive in a new country, all your problems are going to be solved the moment you touch

organization in your community. Other countries are studying what we're doing here, and we hope this film helps inspire similar programs elsewhere in the world," Horlor says.

Political cinema and youth dialogue on social issues

Someone Like Me will be featured online at the DOXA's Rated Y for Youth program with the intention to foster an appreciation for cinema while also giving young audiences an opportunity to engage in open dialogue on social issues.

During times of racial reckonings, the film can be a launchpad for ongoing discussions on what effective support, solidarity and allyship could look like, both individually and collectively, according to Dharra Budicha, the festival's programming coordinator.

"*Someone Like Me* also bears witness to the intersectionality of issues in Drake's new life in Vancouver: the power dynamics of care vs. personal autonomy, struggles of unemployment and economic freedom, and racial alienation," she says. "We see Drake flee persecution in Uganda for his sexuality only to face blatant racism in Vancouver, effectively throwing a wrench into the notion that all is well once a refugee arrives in Canada."

As the unexpected complication of a global pandemic compounded problems, the film traces the ways that the group asked themselves difficult questions about their capacity, commitment, and conditions of support.

Budicha also says that political cinema has the capacity to disrupt because it challenges norms and narratives; and it offers critical insight and thought. In her words, engaged art can change lives – viscerally, painfully, and empathetically.

Someone Like Me streams online May 6–16. The documentary will discuss how engaged communities can help the global persecution of queer people in a concrete way. ✉

For the event's film guide, access www.doxafestival.ca

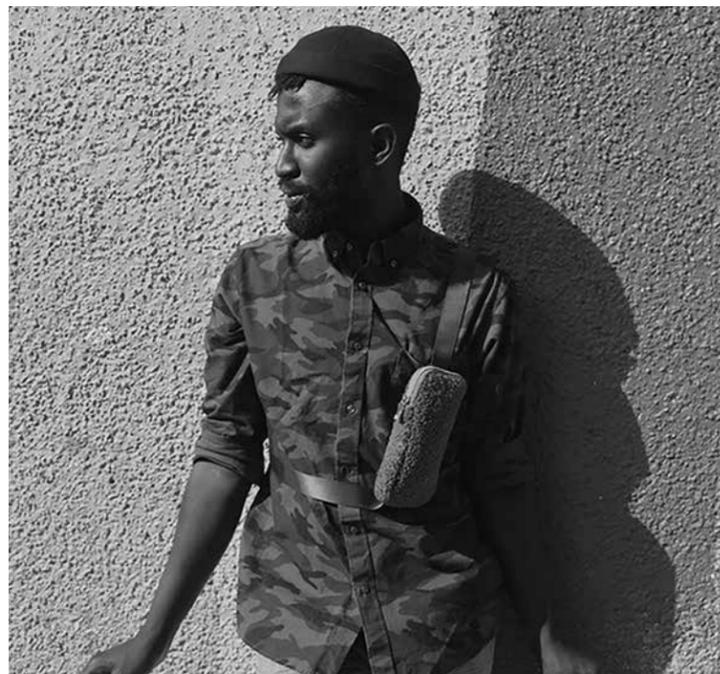


Photo courtesy of NFB

▲ Drake, a queer refugee from Uganda, arrives in Vancouver full of hopes and dreams for a career in fashion, and then the pandemic hit.

sis or the persecution of queer people around the world in a concrete and meaningful way," explains Horlor.

Empathy for refugees

For the directors, one of the takeaways they hope people get from the film is a greater sense of empathy for asylum seekers, refugees, and immigrants. For queer people who

down at the airport. That's not true at all. It's the start of a new chapter with all of its own challenges," says Horlor. "As queer people, we have a responsibility to do this for other queer people whose lives are in danger".

"In Canada, anyone - queer or straight - can start a sponsorship circle. You can also donate money to organizations like Rainbow Refugee or a similar or-

Firehorse and Shadow

An interactive virtual performance

by LIANGMEI LI

A personal journey of four generations of Chinese Canadian women seeking their own identity takes on a creative format to engage audiences as the Dreamwalker Dance Company presents a virtual performance of *Firehorse and Shadow*.

"The experience is very sensory based, and we like to shift perspective through using perception and imagery that lead you to the sensation of your own internal organs and your body, your physical self as a way to tap into some of the places of memory and identity," explains Andrea Nann, a contemporary dancer and founding artistic director of Dreamwalker Dance Company.

Vancouver Asian Heritage Month Society (VAHMS) is partnering with the Dreamwalker Dance Company for explorASIAN 2021 (May 1–31), addressing historical and current social issues related to gender inequality and anti-Chinese racism.

An immersive web presentation

The *Firehorse and Shadow* performance invites the audience to interact with a variety of elements and to uncover stories, ideas and sentiments at their own pace. Beyond verbal expression, the audience can expect to

my line found different ways to push against the barriers that they were faced with, and found ways to stretch and straddle two cultures," says Nann.

As stereotypes of being agreeable, hardworking, and silent perpetuated for Chinese women, the historical context exacerbated the hardships felt by those women: they struggled with discrimination and assimilation in Canada in the last century, including the difficult period they had to endure when the Chinese Immigration Act banned immigration from China for 24 years.

"My mother and my grandmother, and my great grandmother, all have very significant roles in the community, shaping and changing the definition of what they were born into," recalls Nann.

Storytelling as empowerment

Nann points out the mediums within the presentation, notably dance and shadow performance, are carefully chosen to reflect and highlight the emotions or messages in the story.

"As a dance artist, I transform all of these experiences and the grief, the anger or the sorrow and even joy into action. And for that action to be expressed in art is really extraordinary," says Nann.

The shadow performance, brought to life by the shadow



Photo courtesy of Dreamwalker Dance Company

▲ So much can be expressed in the shadow that cannot be said, says Andrea Nann.

see contemporary dance, shadow puppetry, interactive web design, animation, documentary film and photography.

According to Nann, the content consists of multi-layer storylines that can be accessed in any order. The journey is a customized experience depending on the interests of the audience and their input at the very beginning.

The sections are framed in a way that sheds light on traditional Chinese concepts, such as the twelve zodiacs, five elements, yin/yang and the body organ clock rooted in Chinese medicine. All of these elements are believed to determine one's destiny.

Lived experience of a family

The web performance tells a family story of four generations of Chinese women growing up in Vancouver. Under the influence of their predestined existence and cultural identity, they experience personal growth and rebirth in their own unique way.

"I was really curious about how each of those women in

artist Annie Katsura Rollins, is a key component describing the culture of silence lived by many Chinese Canadian women.

"So much could be expressed in the shadow that couldn't be said. And especially as it came from that felt experience; more internal experience could be expressed in this medium," explains Nann. "The screen the shadow was projected on becomes a way for us to cross time as well, with these multiple images and aspects of a single person or story."

Issues of discrimination, racism, and identity has been historical and ongoing, not just in Asian communities says Nann. By sharing this presentation at this time, she would like to recognize what is happening to people facing discrimination, and empower them to tell their personal stories and fight against social injustices. ✉

For more information on the event, please visit www.dreamwalkerdance.com/firehorseandshadow

When the student becomes the master: Maria Avila

by ISHA OHRI

“Flamenco has kept me invested and interested because it is constantly challenging, and this is what drives me to continue. It’s a lifelong pursuit,” says Maria Avila.

A Vancouver-based flamenco dancer, Avila is currently offering online courses to further people’s passion for this dance form amidst the pandemic.

Avila started dancing as a young child when she liked hip-hop the most. In her teens,

Myriam Allard. When thinking back on the lessons she learnt from Allard, Avila recalls her top three: dedication, unlikely inspiration and show more than beauty.

Allard pushed Avila by encouraging her to think outside the box and to show the complexity of the human condition which is deeper than beauty. Showing what she calls ugliness, anger, sadness, strength and vulnerability on stage was her way of achieving that.

“[Allard’s] dedication to her craft is inspiring,” she says.

“Many flamenco song forms are heavy and involve themes of sadness, grief, struggle, defiance and survival.

Maria Avila, flamenco dancer

her friend shared a video of her mother dancing flamenco and her love grew from there. She was studying Spanish at the time and wanted to further her learning through dance. Her first flamenco dance teacher was Rosario Ancer.

Her journey from a young child to a teen to an established choreographer, dancer and teacher is a lesson for all that dedication and perseverance are key ingredients to success and happiness.

“I am driven by a curiosity to explore and push boundaries,” says Avila.

Deeper than beauty

Once engrossed in the world of flamenco, Avila decided to pursue a Master of Fine Arts because her dream was to teach flamenco. She wanted to help mold future generations of dancers

Avila decided to travel to Spain, Mexico and Greece to gain more perspective on flamenco dancing. She was able to study in all three places and had the opportunity to perform in Greece.

“[I was] very fortunate to do this and fully recommend others [try it], if able. Studying in other places with other teachers opens up your perspective, and the insight gained is invaluable,” she says.

Studying in Spain was surreal to her as she was able to immerse in the culture where flamenco was derived from.

Embodying music with dance

Using all of these experiences and lessons from York, Allard and travelling, Avila has been able to create pieces that reflect her emotions and her approach.

“Many flamenco song forms are heavy and involve themes of



Photo by Danielle Plourde

▲ Maria Avila is driven by a curiosity to explore and push boundaries.

ers like her first flamenco teacher, Ancer helped shape her. She also wanted to ensure that there was diversity in the forms that were being taught in Canada, and she believed that exposing more dancers to flamenco was essential to that. She chose York University because of these goals. She also loved the fact that York allowed her to refine her dance thesis which took a long time and she got the opportunity to make connections with fellow professors, classmates and the Toronto flamenco community.

She also looked for opportunities outside of university to refine her dance skillset. She was able to gain a mentorship with acclaimed flamenco dancer,

sadness, grief, struggle, defiance and survival,” she says.

As a dancer, Avila believes it is her duty to embody this, noting that the cante (song) is everything. She is currently part of a flamenco group called Calle Verde. Michelle Harding, a fellow dancer, and Avila work with Vancouver-based guitarist Peter Mole to create original pieces. Mole sends the dancers heavy emotional pieces which are aligned with the flamenco norms.

“Identifying the emotion initiates the creative process. My aim is to leave a piece of myself onstage,” shares Avila. ✉

For more information, please visit: www.mariaavilafamenco.com

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Festival du Bois

Sirène et Matelot's Acadian roots run deep

by CURTIS SEUFERT

Lennie Gallant and Patricia Richard tap deep into their Acadian roots, as their music balances a sincere concern for global and environmental issues with the spirit of modern upbeat Acadian music.

Maillardville's annual Festival du Bois (Apr. 16–30) goes virtual this year holding host to a wide range of Canadian and Franco-phone musical performances.

One such performance is that of Sirène et Matelot, (the Siren and the Sailor), consisting of Prince Edward Island (P.E.I.) natives Gallant and Richard.

"Our concerts are very lively," says Gallant. "We like to have a lot of fun as well while touching on some very serious subjects. I think people come to our shows so that we take them on a journey. We touch on some serious stuff but we like to have a lot of laughs and a lot of humour."

A connection to the land

Gallant's and Richard's roots to both P.E.I. and Acadia run deep. And being performers and songwriters, having such a deep connection to the land and its history has informed the duo's approach to music just as much as their values and concerns in life.

"The [name] 'Siren and the Sailor' stems from being here. I look outside right now and I see the water. It's always an inspiration for us. And not coincidentally a lot of our songs centre on that theme as well," says Richard. "I grew up right by the water... and I guess the sea means a lot to me and Lennie. Most people don't know but he's done a few Atlantic passages so he's had his share too."

Having that connection to nature and to one's surroundings has fostered a level of care and reverence for the environment, and for Richard and Gallant that care has translated into a number of songs which speak to the importance of being continually mindful and conscientious of humanity's relationship with the land.

For example, their song "Trois hommes en noir" [Three Men in Black] pays tribute to the environment as well as to Acadian folklore. In it, the duo invokes a trio of wary characters traditionally known in Acadian folklore for presaging or causing havoc upon others. But in Richard and Gallant's own modern twist, they use these characters as a means of speaking to the dangers of complacency and apathy on an environmental, political, and global level.

"We take an old tradition and we try to bring it into a broader

perspective and a bit of a warning, because these three characters, they always were a bit of a warning in folklore. And so we kind of think it's a warning to the world, what's going on with the state of politics and the state of the environment, the state of how we treat each other on the planet," says Gallant.

Acadian identity

Indeed, between their growing prominence, their concern for issues affecting P.E.I. and the world, and their celebration of traditional folklore, Gallant and Richard have become somewhat of ambassadors for Acadian heritage and culture. Naturally, this has caused the pair to reflect on what it means to be Acadian or what constitutes 'Acadian music.'

And as strongly as it might manifest in the form of writing songs in French, a liberal usage of the traditional foot-stomping "podorythmie" technique, or a care for the ocean and the environment around them, for Gallant and Richard, it's important to have an open-minded and broad view of what can constitute Acadian culture and music.

"Being an Acadian is who you are. I think it just happens naturally to express being Acadian in what we do. Some people when they hear the words 'Acadian



▲ Sirène et Matelot.

Photo by David Brosha

music,' they might think of traditional fiddling and that type of thing," says Richard. "It's not only that for us, it's the language, it's the people, it goes deeper than that. I just think it's a matter

of being authentic and your roots are going to come out through your music." ✍

For more information, please visit www.festivaldubois.ca.

► "Verbatim" from page 1

derneath becomes smoother and softer. My mental, physical and emotional health have improved tremendously, quieting the screams.

My world has really opened up during the pandemic. As someone who is immunocompromised, I still don't leave my house a lot, but my local library has become my second home; books are my friends. Through reading, I've gone hitchhiking around the galaxy with Arthur Dent and Ford Prefect, learned how completely unfine Eleanor Oliphant was in Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine and discovered one of the most significant women to be forgotten by medical history in The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks. My best friend also brought me along on a new adventure with her - a musical one - by introducing me to BTS. If you're reading this and you are ARMY, I'm so sorry I was late to the party. It's not just their music and steady stream of amazing content that has helped pick me up, it's getting to share all of the things I've learned throughout this pandemic with the people closest to me that has brought joy and fun back into my life. Celebrating the wins of myself and my friends, whether it's getting a new job, taking up a new hobby or just taking a shower that day isn't a bad thing we should feel guilty about because the world is on fire: it's a great thing because we could all use some wins and some good news. Most of all, through this pandemic I've been confronted with the unknown and have had to learn to become content with uncertainty, with not knowing what's next and that's a huge win. ✍

Jocelyn Pettit: spreading joy through Celtic music

by XI CHEN

After spending two years in Glasgow to complete her Master of Music Degree from the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, Jocelyn Pettit is back home in Squamish again. She will be sharing her joyful Celtic music with the Canadian audience at Coquitlam's Festival Du Bois this year.

For over 30 years, Festival du Bois has been showcasing the music and culture from the francophone world in the community of Maillardville, Coquitlam. This year's festival

runs online from Apr. 16 to 30, 2021, bringing together musicians from all over the country.

"It is one of my favorite festivals and I am grateful for them to organize this event," says Pettit. "With my band, we recorded a full-length set at the Evergreen Cultural Centre in Coquitlam - it was the first time [in a while] we were all together in the same room... performing on stage."

Weaving different influences

With a multicultural heritage from Scotland, Ireland, France, Switzerland and Malaysia on her mother's side, Pettit says she

loves all kinds of music and is inspired to weave different music influences into her own compositions. Both her father, Joel Pettit, and her mother, Siew Wan Khoo, are in her five-person band and play multiple instruments.

Pettit started playing the fiddle when she was eight years old after first hearing east coast Canadian music.

"I was really drawn to the energy and the joyful spirit of the music. It is a lot of fun and it is very danceable. I also dance, so they really go hand in hand," she says.

After learning more about Cape Breton and French-Canadian music, Pettit also explored music from other Celtic regions including Brittany, France and Galicia, Spain.

"What makes Celtic music special is that it is dance music; it is all about the rhythm. It is about playing music that is traditionally for those celebratory occasions," says Pettit.

A musical prodigy

The young musician released her first self-titled album debut when she was just 15 years old, the same year she played fiddle for the 2010 Winter Olympics. Since then, she has toured across Canada and all over the world including across the U.S., the U.K., Europe and Malaysia.

Pettit released her second album, *Caravan*, in 2015, an album inspired by memorable people and experiences from her travels. Both albums received multiple award nominations including World Artist of the Year at the Canadian Folk Music Awards.

She is currently working on her third album, *Wind Rose*, which is expected to be released later this year.

"This coming album is inspired by the two places I call home, Scotland and B.C. It is on the theme of navigation, a continuation of the same travel theme from my previous album. It is more original music," says Pettit.

The musician says she usually begins with an initial seed of an idea that can come from any experience in life, maybe from traveling or even a long walk. She will then write the basic melody and from there expand to more in-depth musical arrangements, incorporating what other instruments are doing.

"Celtic music is definitely a living tradition; it does change and evolve, and I want to do more and more original materials and continue along that path to weave influences from my travels and other styles of music," Pettit adds.

Aside from writing and performing, Pettit is also an educator, who teaches fiddle and step dance in her community and online. The young artist says she is trying to make the most out of the COVID-19 downtime. She is also working on an EP with American cello player Ellen Gira while learning new skills to create online shows for events. ✍

To learn more about Pettit and the festival, please visit the following sites: www.festivaldubois.ca www.jocelynpettit.com



▲ Jocelyn Pettit.

Photo by Audrey Thizy

April 27–May 11, 2021

Cultural Calendar

by SIMON YEE
CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

With the new province-wide B.C. lockdown restrictions in place, many in-person cultural events have been curtailed or cancelled and several events have moved online. Adhere to COVID-19 protocols and maintain social distancing when going out – stay at home if you are feeling sick. Stay safe everyone and let's get through this!

* * *

**Context is Everything:
Monique Martin**April 24–June 5
www.seymourartgallery.com

In *Context is Everything*, on display at the Seymour Art Gallery, Saskatoon-based artist Monique Martin exhibits hundreds of realistic paper dandelions in a sprawling installation that carpets the gallery floor. They create an immersive environment that uses symbolism to inspire joy, hope, and optimism. Sometimes considered a weed, dandelions defy the order imposed around them; a golden infringement on a carefully manicured lawn, a cheerful intervention in a crack in the sidewalk, a silent protest against monoculture, disrupting the status quo. Martin's dandelions are a hopeful symbol of resilience that encourage us to persevere. Interspersed among her dandelions are multicoloured silk screened butterflies, a symbol of metamorphosis in Martin's work. She reminds us that throughout our lives, we too are in a constant process of transformation, and that tomorrow we will not be the same as we are today.

* * *

International Dance Day 2021April 29, 11 a.m.–6 p.m.
www.thedancecentre.ca

Initiated in 1982 by UNESCO, International Dance Day is marked annually on April 29 across Canada and around the world. The Dance Centre's annual International Dance Day events move online for 2021, celebrating the art of dance through a program of digital events. There will be six

short dance films, a discussion exploring ideas of the traditional and contemporary in dance and an informal sharing of work by contemporary dance artists and choreographers using Instagram Live. For more information and list of events and performers, please check out the Dance Centre's website.

* * *

KutapiraApril 29, 7 p.m.
tickets.shadboltcentre.com

Kutapira is a marimba and percussion ensemble formed in 2005 in East Vancouver. The band is made up of five musicians, ages 25 - 30, who started playing this fusion of world music when they were kids over 15 years ago. At the core of this band is the marimba music of Zimbabwe, fused with West African djembe, Afro-cuban congas and timbales and traditional drum kit which provides a steady driving groove. There will also be a pre-recorded dance performance by Amber Funk Barton/the response: How To Say Goodbye. For tickets and more information, check out the Shadbolt Centre's website.

* * *

**Shakespeare Beyond
the Proscenium**April 30, 12 noon
www.bardonthebeach.org

For many, a night of Shakespeare is the archetypical Western theatre experience – but these artists draw from a variety of inspirations to take the classics beyond the proscenium. In this online webinar hosted by Bard on the Beach, hear from Eva Barrie (former co-Artistic Director of Toronto's Shakespeare in the Ruff), Rodrigo Beilfuss (Artistic Director of Winnipeg's Shakespeare in the Ruins) and Christopher Gaze (founding Artistic Director of Bard on the Beach) about accessibility, art and making art in the great outdoors.

* * *

**Carmen: Up Close
and Personal**May 1, 7:30 p.m.
www.vancouveropera.ca

Photo by Matt Rezek

▲ *The Boy in the Moon* tells the difficult story of a family's struggle to raise a child with a severe disability.

Inspired by French arthouse film, stage director Brenna Corner adds a nontraditional lens to French composer Georges Bizet's beloved masterpiece. Playing with the conflicting ideas of fate and choice, *Carmen: Up Close and Personal* is an alluring, intimate and stripped down cinematic adaptation, focused on the four principal characters, with a few twists and turns along the way. Starring members of the Yulanda M. Faris Young Artists Program with members of the Vancouver Opera Orchestra. For tickets and more information, please check out the opera's website.

* * *

iHumanMay 3–5
www.kaymeek.com

The Kay Meek Arts Centre will be streaming *iHuman* to Canadian audiences from May 3 to 5. *iHuman* is a political thriller about artificial intelligence, power and social control. With unique deep access to the booming industry this film shows how the most powerful and far-reaching technology of our time is changing our

lives, our society and our future. *iHuman* follows pioneers at the frontline of the invisible AI revolution to see how this technology is developed and implemented. Through some of the brightest minds in the AI industry *iHuman* draws the roadmap to where we are going. Who punches in what codes for our future? How does AI impact who we are? Please visit the arts centre website for tickets and more information.

* * *

**Exploring Asian Heritage
in Vancouver**May 6, 5–6 p.m.
www.asia.ubc.ca/events/event/exploring-asian-heritage-in-vancouver

According to the Cambridge English Dictionary, heritage means features belonging to the culture of a particular society, such as traditions, languages or buildings, that were created in the past and still have historical importance. Through a virtual panel conversation, members of the Vancouver Asian Heritage Month Society would like to explore the significance of Asian Heritage

Month to Asian-Canadians today living in Vancouver. This virtual event will feature a moderator and four panelists who will respond to various pre-recorded audio, video and written submissions from UBC and Vancouver community members who have self-recorded responses to a series of questions.

* * *

The Boy in the MoonMay 6–9
www.thecultch.com

Based on Canadian journalist Ian Brown's memoir of life with his son, *The Boy in the Moon*, live streaming from The Cultch, tells a deeply moving story about a family's struggle to raise a child with a severe disability. Ian and Johanna Schneller's son Walker was born with a rare genetic disorder, Cardiofaciocutaneous (CFC) syndrome. It made him unable to talk, eat properly, or take care of himself. The family must face complex issues most of us do our very best to avoid. They say things which in other contexts might seem unforgivable but here are brave and critically necessary. The show is a story of pain and beauty that asks vital questions about family, frailty and the values we ascribe to human lives, our own and those around us.

* * *

**DOXA Documentary
Film Festival**May 6–16
www.doxafestival.ca

DOXA is celebrating its 20th Anniversary Festival this May! That's 20 years of championing documentary cinema that is curious, inventive and bold. Between May 6–16, you will be able to watch all films in the DOXA 2021 film program from the comfort of your own home. Films will be available to watch on-demand for the duration of the aforementioned festival dates. Select screenings will include pre-recorded filmmaker Q+As and extended discussions. Please see the film description on the festival website for more information.

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The filmmaker discovered a lot about oysters along the way, including how people eat them, their habits and cultural differences.

"Oysters have to be eaten at the same temperature as the sea they're picked out," says Kluijfhout, noting that some restaurateurs do their oysters a disservice by serving them on ice.

"Chef Oliver Roellinger explained that you should never put oysters on ice. That destroys the taste," she shares.

The oyster connoisseurs in the film respect the natural seasons of the oyster too.

"The people in my film do have a lot of respect for the oysters and the natural way of collecting them," adds Kluijfhout. "No triploid oysters and no oysters out of the season when they are mating."

Oysters and over consumption

The Taste of Desire was filmed before the pandemic. One of the

points Kluijfhout wants to get across is the culture of over consumption and greed. "The contrast between the handpicked oysters in Sweden and the mountain of oysters eaten without thinking on a decadent party, I hope raises the question about what is really important in life," she argues.

She also hopes that one of the lasting impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic is reassessment of how we consume resources. "Do

we need to fulfil all our desires? Isn't it sometimes enough to desire? I guess that COVID-19 has raised that question in an extreme way for everybody. I hope local products and nature and beauty will stay important when we are not under Covid restrictions anymore," says Kluijfhout.

She explains that when she watches the film now, she can really appreciate how she was able to travel the world with such ease. She also admits that

when the restrictions are lifted, she will have to rethink how she has interacted with nature.

"But I am optimistic. I tend to film what I love. To give that attention. So, the people in my film give me hope. Like Oliver Roellinger. He emphasizes the ethics of the chef. The restaurant of his son Hugo Roellinger doesn't serve any meat or fish anymore. Only shellfish and algae. Even not a chicken broth (that is so important in the French kitchen). More initiatives like that are important to switch our thinking. And I believe that will happen," says Kluijfhout.

Challenges while filming

Filming five people with a passion for the oyster might seem like something that is easy to do, but there were some challenges during production.

"First of all, it was difficult to find the right protagonists. I really wanted them to have something special with the oyster, but also existential questions

in their life. I have spoken to so many people and researched a lot," says Kluijfhout.

The people she followed in this movie also makes it tough to label this documentary with a specific style. "It is a bit of a strange film. It doesn't fit in standard documentary definitions. It is not a nature film, not a food film, not an activist or informative film. Luckily, I had a wonderful producer, who really believed in it," says Kluijfhout.

Even though this film has a very specific subject, Kluijfhout hopes the larger themes speak to the audience. "I hope it resonates with their own lives. That they have the feeling they have been on a journey. That they feel for the people they see. It is the voice of desire that speaks to them and I hope that makes people think about their own desires and what they find important in life." ✍️

For more information, please visit www.hotdocs.ca.



Photo by Heidi Film & Photography

▲ *The Taste of Desire* leads viewers to see life through the eyes of oyster lovers.