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Cooling off the Persian way

by ELAHA AMANI

Cool off this summer and celebrate Persian culture with traditional and tasty drinks and desserts. Vancouverites Soroush Amiri and Mahdiyar Biazi, Iranian-born Canadians, share their personal expertise and experiences on their favourite Persian drinks and desserts.

Amiri and Biazi both immigrated from Iran in the early to mid 2000s and fondly remember the desserts and drinks they had in their youth, such as *doogh*, *faloodeh*, *khak-e-shir* and more. These delights are delicious, easy to make at home and will be sure to provide relief on a humid summer day.

Something to drink

Doogh is one of the most popular summer beverages Persians drink, and it is enjoyed across Europe and Asia. It primarily consists of greek yoghurt, chilled water and salt, with optional toppings of mint and diced cucumbers. Its salty, cold taste perfectly complements grilled meat and rice, but it can also be served on its own on a hot day. Not only is *doogh* refreshing, it is also an excellent source of probiotics, calcium and B vitamins. *Doogh* is served at many Persian restaurants and eateries, but it can also be made at home in under 15 minutes.



Photo courtesy of the Caspian Chef

“I really like *doogh* because it has a salty and milky taste that you cannot find in any other drinks,” Amiri muses. “I really enjoy seeing the reaction of non-Persians when they try the drink. Try it!”

Biazi also praises *doogh*, not only for its taste but for nostalgia’s sake.

“My mom used to make me and my brother all kinds of tasty drinks during summer. I still drink *doogh* every chance I get, whether with a meal at a Persian/Iranian restaurant,” Biazi says.

Another treat to beat the heat is *sharbat*. *Sharbat*, or *sherbet*, is

a cold Persian drink that is not only popular in Iran but in various other parts of the world such as Turkey, South Asia, Afghanistan and more. The basic ingredient in *sharbat* is syrup made from sugar, and the flavour is up to personal preference. There are dozens of flavours utilized

by Persians to concoct this syrupy, fragrant delight, such as saffron, rose water, fresh rose petals, cardamom and mint. Amiri favours *sharbat-e-ab limoo*, Persian lemon *sharbat* (or lemonade), and recommends it too all this summer.

Rose water *sharbat* is particularly valued by Persians because of its health benefits. It is mostly known for its ability to reduce stress and calm the mind, but it can also help slow ageing by keeping the skin and hair healthy, as well as prevent bloating and indigestion with its anti-inflammatory properties.

Speaking of medicinal benefits, Biazi recommends *khak-e-shir*. *Khak-e-shir* is a mixture of flixweed or herb-Sophia seeds and water, sugar and, optionally, rose water. It is often served during the summertime to quench thirst, but is also consumed year-round for its ability to improve one’s skin by clearing it of blemishes and for its liver-detoxing qualities. *Khak-e-shir* is also known for reducing fever, making it a common herbal remedy during the cold and flu seasons.

“*Khak-e-shir* has many medicinal benefits and makes for a great summer drink to satisfy one’s thirst,” Biazi concludes.

Cool desserts

At the end of a Persian meal, it is customary to eat something

See “*Persian Meals*” page 2 ➤

Girls, activism and social media
Page 3

One BUILDING BONDS
Creating Community Online

Imaginarium: Storytellers regroup
Page 5

Postcard from the capital
Page 7

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British Columbia's Polish community stands in solidarity with Ukraine

by STAFF WRITER

The Polish community has been diligently working to help Ukrainian refugees by raising funds via different means. Polish organizations under the Canadian Polish Congress have done some incredible work fundraising for Ukraine.

In the month of March, the St. Casimir's Polish Catholic Parish in Vancouver raised a remarkable \$22,000 for Ukraine.

The White Eagle Polish Association held a Concert on May 1, raising over \$6000 for humanity relief. In addition, on April 9, they held a bake sale with the Ukrainian community which raised over \$2700.

On May 29, the B.C. Polish festival in Port Coquitlam, held by Polonez Tri-City Polish Association, organized a silent art auction in support of Ukraine. Polish-Canadian artists donated their works of art in support of this initiative. The fundraising initiative raised over \$6000.

On June 18, the Canadian Polish Congress BC organized A Concert for Peace – Fundraiser for Ukrainian Refugees. Polish, Ukrainian and Canadian artists donated their musical talents for this concert. Held at St. Patrick's Parish in Vancouver, the concert raised over \$4000.

"The strong support of the Polish community in BC is inspiring to see. Since the unjust invasion of Ukraine in February, the Polish community has stood with the Ukrainian people. We feel an absolute need to help. This is our

moral obligation," says Michael K. Dembek, President of the Canadian Polish Congress BC.

Ukrainian refugees in Poland

"It's incredible to hear that Poland has no refugee camps. We are talking about over four million refugees pouring into the country, and, simply put, the Polish people have opened their

for our freedom. In this matter, we are obligated not just to show appreciation and gratitude – it's our moral debt. This is the reason why we feel obligated to help and support the Ukrainians who are fighting for their lives. It is also our war against Russian tyranny. It's great to see Polish-Canadians in Vancouver standing with Ukraine too,"

“ We know that the heroic defense of a brother country is also a fight for our freedom.

Andrzej Mańkowski, Consul General of Poland

homes and their hearts to the Ukrainian people," says Dembek.

Over four million Ukrainian refugees have escaped into Poland. They are being housed by locals, non-profit organizations and government entities. To date, Poland has no refugee camps. The Government of Poland has assisted Ukrainians by giving them free travel passes on public buses and trains, putting over 150,000 Ukrainian children into the Polish school system and giving them Pesel numbers (similar to Social Security Numbers) in order for them to apply for jobs and social assistance programs.

"We understand that today Poland is safer thanks to the heroism of [Volodymyr] Zelensky and the entire Ukraine. We know that the heroic defense of a brother country is also a fight

says Andrzej Mańkowski, Consul General of Poland in Vancouver.

Belweder North Shore Polish Association is the latest Polish organization in B.C. planning to raise funds for Ukraine. Belweder is hosting the famous 8th annual Polish Festival in North Vancouver on September 4th. They are planning a lottery to fundraise for Ukraine.

"The Polish community is continuing the momentum forward. Every Polish event that is

being organized always has a Ukrainian element in it. We know that every bit helps. I'm glad that Belweder is planning the next fundraiser for Ukraine. The solidarity in our community between Poland and Ukraine is remarkably strong," Dembek adds.

For more information please visit: www.belweder.org

► "Persian Meals" from page 1 sweet. Unique flavours, such as saffron, turmeric, rosewater and cardamom are expertly incorporated into many Persian desserts to give it a strong and crisp flavour.

"My favourite dessert is *faloodeh*, a noodle-like, white dessert usually served with lime juice," says Amiri.

Originating from Shiraz, Iran, *faloodeh* is an ancient dessert that resembles ice cream. It consists of thin, rice noodles and semi-frozen rose water and sugar syrup. It is usually served with lime juice, making this frozen dessert refreshing, sweet and citrusy. *Faloodeh* can be found in many ice cream shops in Iran, along with saffron ice cream called *bastani*.

Also known as *bastani sonnati*, meaning 'traditional ice cream,' this dessert is widely popular in



▲ Doogh has a salty and milky taste that you cannot find in any other drinks says Sroush Amari.

Iran. It can be traced back to the Achaemenid Empire of Persia, and was a delicacy for figures such as the Macedonian leader, Alexander the Great. Its defining flavours are saffron and rose water, and it is sometimes topped with crushed pistachio. *Bastani* is a must-try Persian dessert, perfect for those who enjoy sweet and floral treats.

On the other hand, there are many Persian desserts that have a milder taste, suited for those who do not have that big of a sweet tooth. *Kolocheh*, Persian

cookies, is a delicacy enjoyed primarily during special occasions such as *Nowruz* (Persian New Year's Day), but is also a treat that perfectly accompanies *chai* (tea) and *sharbat*. These golden buttery biscuits are decorated with indented circles that are pressed into the dough before baking, usually in the formation of a large outer circle and a few in the middle. Despite these cookies being on the simpler side, they are a satisfying and exquisite mid-day snack for any season.

Another cool dessert to try is *fereni*, a creamy rice pudding accented with rose water and decorated with crushed pistachio. *Fereni* usually contains notes of cardamom, making it taste warm despite being served cold. Although commonly offered at weddings and parties, *fereni* is a delicious snack that can be easily prepared and enjoyed to combat the heat.

This summer, be sure to try some of the local Persian delicacies and drinks. They are tasty, refreshing and healthy, and a perfect way to rejoice and acknowledge Persian culture.



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Better Connected Girlpower in the age of social media

by ALEXANDRA
 BRADFORD-PATTERSON

Social media is being re-defined by younger generations as a tool for positive activism, and the movement inspired mother-daughter team, Tanya and Julia Kyi, to write the children's book *Better Connected* (Orca Books Publishers, 2022).

"The good things I saw Julia and her friends accomplish on social media sparked the idea for this book," explains Kyi.

The project tells the stories of the brave young girls around the world who are using their profiles as tools for activism.

Power of the personal profile

The project began when Julia was in grade 10. When she started on social media, like so many others in her peer group, she used it to socialize.

Now in grade 12, she has learnt much through the project. She woke up to the power of the use of personal profiles for activism.

She hopes the book will be able to share this knowledge, and jumpstart a new generation of girls to use it to encourage social change.

to connect people from different parts of the world who were affected by rare disorders.

Barrow launched her app when she was 13.

Since then, mother and daughter have effectively used the stories of these young girls to build moving examples for other youngsters who may be inspired to follow in their footsteps.

"[The book is] a really positive optimistic look at what girls can accomplish on social media," explains Kyi.

Better Connected uniquely focuses on the good that social media can do in the world, in contrast with the negative rap social media usually gets in the news. It demonstrates the positive and inspiring ways young girls can make their mark, and how they do not have to be limited by their age and gender. Furthermore it showcases some truly extraordinary girls who have made a difference already in their young lives.

And Kyi wants young girls to use it.

"[It's a tool] to build community with others from around the world, who have your passions to achieve pretty great things," she says.



▲ Mother-daughter team, Tanya and Julia Kyi, wrote the children's book *Better Connected*.

The five chapters in *Better Connected* include profiles of girls worldwide and their activism, while incorporating tips for youngsters interested in lobbying for change using social media. Each chapter focuses on an important type of social action the girls are undertaking, these include: Education, Activism, Creativity, Diversity, and Community.

Social media, hope and change

Better Connected tells the stories of real girls around the world who used social media to bring about change. Julia, a soon-to-be University of British Columbia (UBC) freshman student, speaks fondly of one girl who she found particularly inspiring: Helena Gualina, an Indigenous teen activist from Ecuador.

Gualina was able to use social media to advocate for land protection, and reach very influential people through the online world in a way she could not have done without social media.

Kyi also recalls the story of a young entrepreneur, Claire Barrow, who was diagnosed with a rare bone disorder when she was eight. She didn't know anyone who was struggling with similar challenges, so she created an app



▲ *Better Connected* a guide to empower girls on social media.

The book is a fresh take on empowering young girls in our a new rapidly advancing technological age. Pushing the boundaries, the young girls in the book inspire the old generation and the new.

"The way that the girls in the book are able to collaborate and amplify each other's voices to make themselves heard by adult leaders and politicians, gives me hope for the future of the world," says Kyi. ✍️

For more information visit:
www.orcabook.com/
 Better-Connected

Photo courtesy of UBC School of Creative Writing

Photo courtesy of Orca Book Publishers



Photo courtesy of Indian Summer Festival



Documenting “The O-Show”

by JUSTIN LEE

Fascinating stories and people are a true passion for director Sharad Kharé, and his award-winning documentary film *The O-Show* will be screened as a part of this year’s Indian Summer Festival on July 8, 2022. The documentary showcases the life and works of Orene Askew, also known as DJ O Show, a highly sought after DJ with several identities that inhabit many intersections.

Kharé, a documentarian and the founder of Human Biography, a content agency that showcases the biographies of incredible people around the world, follows a simple rule: “to work with people I love and admire.”

“I work with some of the most incredible people in the world,” he says. “I’ve documented the Dalai Lama, Meryl Streep, Val Kilmer, Maye Musk, and Susan Sarandon, to name a few, and I love fascinating stories.”

After seeing Askew speak at an event, to Kharé, she was certainly no exception.

“When I first met Orene, I saw her speak at an event,” says Kharé. “I walked up to her and asked her to work together, and she just inspired me with her en-



Photo courtesy of Indian Summer Festival

▲ Filmmaker Sharad Kharé.

ergy and her fantastic story. We clicked right away, and when you click with someone so well, you know that the work is going to be fantastic.”

Human Biography

For Askew, working with Human Biography was both a great experience and an opportunity to showcase her business.

“It was a lot of fun and actually exactly what I’ve been looking for since I started my business about ten years ago – it’s hard when you are the sole proprietor and you are trying to get footage of what you do,” he says. “The crew was very understanding; it was a breath of fresh air finding a crew that let me tell the story.”

Additionally, Human Biography showed him the importance of embracing one’s story.

“What it justified for me was to keep it real – don’t change or modify your story for anyone because your story is unique and people want to hear your story,” says Askew. “From my Indigenous cultural background, that’s how we learn – through story telling – and that’s just something that has carried on for me without even thinking about it, and I really wanna thank Human Biography for letting me keep it real.”

For Kharé, the key message that he wants viewers to take away from the documentary is how Askew remains positive when faced with difficulties.

“No matter what adversity Orene has gone through in her life, she has risen above it all with class, dignity, and true spirit; she’s always smiling and elevating others even in tough times, and that’s the most admirable quality of any human,” he says.

In addition, he notes how when faced with biases and adversity, Askew continues to celebrate her identity.

“Orene grew up with a lot of bias. Yet, she said no – I’m going to use these biases to my advantage, and that is incredible: I’m proud of being Black, I’m proud of being Indigenous, and I’m proud of being Two-spirited,” he says. “You know, some people might think that being different is going to hurt you in life, but actually, Orene has shown everybody that it’s supposed to be celebrated in life, and we should be celebrating all our communities by looking at where we come from.”

Joy in identity

When asked about what she’d hope viewers would take from the documentary, Askew says she’d like them to be inspired.

“I want them to be inspired – something I’ve been talking about a lot lately is that having joy is almost an act of rebellion, and we don’t stop and just smell the roses,” she says. “A lot of the time, people will focus on the negative of my people, but we have so many joyful stories that are being put out there, and that’s what I want people to do. I’m not the only Afro-Indigenous person out there, but I want to put it into people’s heads that we exist and we have stories to tell.”

To learn more about the screening of *The O Show* taking place on July 8 visit here: www.indiansummerfest.ca

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Imaginarium

Creating a magical space for storytellers

by XI CHEN

“The world needs good storytelling because we have huge crises created by humans. That means we’ve been telling bad stories and we need the ones that call us to a better place,” says Sirish Rao, co-founder and artistic director of the Indian Summer Festival.

Imaginarium, a new live event/podcast program created and hosted by Rao and Indigenous broadcaster and curator Jarrett Martineau, hopes to create such a space where the magic happens for storytellers, be it through conversations or through music.

The program was born out of a need to imagine a better or different way of living and thinking through the creative dialogues between Rao and Martineau. It will debut on July 9 as part of the Indian Summer Festival and explore this year’s festival theme of *Inner/Outer Climates*.

“Both of us have been really interested in stories that are either left out or maybe don’t exist in the way that we think they should. We are looking at the world and thinking that there is a need for good storytelling,” Rao says. “And I think the best way to explain what

we’re after with *Imaginarium* is we’re not creating a predetermined map or structure. We’re creating the conditions.”

The inaugural issue

The inaugural edition, titled *Parables for a Planet in Crisis*, will discuss the personal and political forces that shape our lives and the world around us with a line-up of world-renowned thinkers and writers.

“The first half of the evening, the conversations with Naomi Klein and Amitav Ghosh and the music that goes with it will be around the idea of outer climate and then the second half of the evening we move into a more intimate space with Robin Maynard and Leanne Simpson that kind of looks inward to the inner landscape,” says Martineau.

The evening will also open with a story from Sun Dance Chief Rueben George of the Tsleil-Waututh Nation and it will feature live musical performances and accompaniment by Juno award-winning jazz guitarist Gordon Grdina and sitar maestro Mohamed Assani.

“Music is a big part of it. The sound gives way to the possibility for words to be formed and shared. And I think that that to me is such an integral element of what we’re doing,” Martineau adds.

Imaginarium also marks the launch of a new book by Maynard and Simpson, *Rehearsals for Living*. The book was born during the pandemic time when the two talented writers wrote letters to each other about the state of the world.

“It is a book about pretty difficult things, but it’s also imagining beautiful futures,” Rao comments. “All those books written by our guests are very clear about the great problems that face us, but they are also deeply hopeful, they are calling upon us to really imagine something better.”

The creative vision

Having met through a common friend, Rao says they quickly found out that they both share a similar sense of what he describes as “abundance.” “When we program, we like many options and many different perspectives,” explains Rao.

“And we thought it would be really interesting to come together to work on a project where we acknowledge those commonalities and also those differences,” adds Martineau. “We could then also invite into dialogue with us people that are way smarter and way more interesting than we are to guide us into the world of their work.”



▲ Indigenous broadcaster and curator Jarrett Martineau.

Born in India, Rao moved to Vancouver in 2010 and co-founded the Indian Summer Festival. He is a cultural innovator who has worked with a wide range of international art institutions. He also wears several other hats – writer, publisher, artistic director, public speaker, and moderator.

Equally talented is Martineau, who has worked extensively at the intersections of music, art, media, technology, and social movements. He is the host of *Reclaimed* on CBC Radio and was recently appointed the curator-in-residence at the Chan Centre of the Performing Arts at UBC.

They both share a common vision for *Imaginarium* as an act of travel – both in the mind and in the physical world.

“In our roles, we are accustomed to bringing people to us. So, one thing that is really exciting about the idea of *Imaginarium* is taking this idea out on the road to other people and bringing that concept to places where we can go meet people where they are,” says Martineau.

“It is a space of provocation, but also a space of invitation to wander around; it is an invitation to storytellers to bring their stories. I think we will just follow the story,” Rao says. ✍

For more information visit: www.indiansummerfest.ca

Finding a purpose in climate change reform

by GEORGE SUN

Climate change is a problem that is both multifaceted and universally impactful to the current and future generations of society. Learning about this ongoing crisis and drawing lines to minimize our community’s carbon footprint is what the Vancouver Public Library and UBC Climate Hub’s workshops are all about.

“We believe connection is crucial for bringing more youth into the climate movement,” says Esmé Decker, the Youth Climate Ambassadors Project (YCAP) coordinator at UBC Climate Hub.



▲ The Youth Climate Ambassadors Workshop in action.

The Vancouver Public Library will host the Youth Climate Ambassadors Workshop in collaboration with the UBC Climate Hub on Aug. 3, 2022, at the Central Branch. It will be an engaging afternoon of exploring ways to become a climate ambassador around the community. The session will introduce youth to concepts of cli-

mate justice through storytelling and peer-to-peer interactions.

Finding purpose and community

The Youth Climate Ambassadors Workshop brings awareness to climate change issues around the community. The project is a collaboration between UBC Climate Hub and Be the Change Earth Alliance, a climate education charity based in Vancouver.

“The goal is to foster hope and agency by empowering participants with the knowledge, resources, and confidence to become ‘Climate Ambassadors’ in their own communities,” says Decker.

line events, one of which was the virtual pilot version of the YCAP workshop. After arriving at UBC that fall, Decker started volunteering with the UBC Climate Hub. Ever since then, she has been on the YCAP admin team and is helping to organize more workshops around Vancouver.

“This workshop aims to add a climate justice lens to youths’ views on their experience of the world and how they personally can use their voice to change the world for the better,” explains Decker.

Whether in-person or virtual, YCAP workshops consist of climate storytelling sessions in community settings, including high school classrooms around Vancouver. As a coordinator, Decker connects with teachers and community leaders to plan workshops. These sessions centre around several prompts to guide a storyboard format, encouraging people to reflect on images and emotions about our changing climate, and also the resistance efforts associated with it. In these workshops, university student volunteers lead and facilitate honest, vulnerable conversations regarding climate justice and community-based climate solutions.

For over two years, these workshops have engaged participants from elementary school, to high school, to university. YCAP is an eye-opening experience for many. Through collaboration, finding solutions and learning ways to make an impact in a community has become easier.

“Many students have said the workshop helped them move from a place of hopelessness to

feeling a new sense of hope and realizing the power they have to use their own voices to speak up for climate action and justice,” says Decker.

Long-lasting impacts

YCAP is a safe space to find community with other climate change advocates. Oftentimes, current climate narratives focus on the hopeless aspects of the crisis, which is demoralizing for students.

“The Youth Climate Ambassadors Project offers an alternative perspective that highlights how the climate movement can be filled with hope, community and purpose,” says Decker.

Most students are aware that climate change is a serious problem, and UBC Climate Hub’s workshops aim to have students find their voice and enact change for the better. The workshop lets youth discover personal stories to connect with others and tackle issues together.

“We want youth to know that taking action as a community is ultimately the most powerful thing you can do,” Decker explains.

In the past, a few YCAP alumni have spoken at the City Council and created real policy change in Vancouver. The workshop instills hope in the next generation of youth-participants feel more together. Through these discussions, youth lead the charge for a vision of a better future. ✍

For more information please visit: www.vpl.ca/program/youth-climate-ambassadors-workshop

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On stage: modern Bharatanatyam

by CURTIS SEUFERT

Indian Canadian dancer and choreographer Sujit Vaidya explores queerness, sensuality, and movement in his performance of *Off Centre* at Performance Works on July 12, as part of the Indian Summer Festival.

The performer has challenged himself to express his queer identity within a very traditional dance form. *Bharatanatyam* is said to be the oldest classical dance form in India and the mother of many subsequent Indian dance forms. Originally performed only by women in Hindu temples, it is characterised by fixed upper torso, bent legs and flexed knees. These are combined with spectacular footwork, and sign language based on gestures of hands, eyes, and face muscles.

Vaidya's performance looks to push beyond the traditions and expectations of *Bharatanatyam* to create an ar-

tistic expression that's truer to himself and his identity.

"There is a place for all of those things, but I wanted to see what happens if we do away with these familiarities," says Vaidya. "I feel like I'm sensing the possibilities that are all around the

in his thirties. He mentions that *Bharatanatyam* wasn't even a very prevalent style of dance in the part of India where he grew up.

But amid making some significant career decisions later in life, Vaidya surprised himself with

The practice of modern *Bharatanatyam* comes with some historical baggage for Vaidya. He notes that it used to be led by a hereditary community of dancers in a way that centred sensuality. But once it was appropriated by the nation-

a gay man. In *Off Centre*, Vaidya performs with fellow dancer Arun Mathai, taking hold of narratives around queerness and sensuality.

"I wanted to delve into eroticism, sensuality, intimacy, and also claim the gaze on a body,"

“ I wanted to delve into eroticism, sensuality, intimacy, and also claim the gaze on a body.

Sujit Vaidya, Indian Canadian dancer and choreographer

centre, and we are needing to go in those directions and explore them more."

Making art of your own

Sujit Vaidya came into *Bharatanatyam* dance relatively late in life. Whereas many dancers in the style develop their abilities from childhood onwards, Vaidya only began his formal training

how inspired he was by the form and decided to take a chance on a whole new direction.

"To be able to... do any justice to the form and myself, I needed to release 200 per cent of my energies into the form, just to see where that went, without any expectations. I was fortunate to have had enough support for me to have taken that leap," he says.

alist movement in India around the 1940s, it became a higher caste tradition.

For Vaidya, devoting oneself to a traditional, but ultimately appropriated form, can be a challenging thing to navigate, especially for a relative newcomer.

"The way the form that came to many of us, came devoid of its history... but we also have a very deep connection to the kind of form we inherited," says Vaidya.

While still interested in learning and understanding this form of *Bharatanatyam*, it is because of this complicated history that Vaidya also sees an opportunity to break away, giving himself a chance to explore and perform in a way that's truer to himself.

"I would almost begin by challenging the word "tradition" itself. At this point, whose tradition is it that we're practising?" says Vaidya. "The form that I've been given is already an appropriated form, so it gives me a sense of freedom to come to that space and have an expression of my existence."

Up for interpretation

This curiosity has led Vaidya to reconnect with that older history of *Bharatanatyam*'s sensuality, and to do so in a way that reflects his own experiences as

says Vaidya. "Because it's always this taboo and shame that is attached with sexuality, sensuality and intimacy, especially in a homoerotic context."

But Vaidya says that he is aiming to explore these themes and ideas in a way that's open to interpretation, in part by forgoing the typical use of lyrics or words in *Bharatanatyam*'s performance to guide the narrative.

"I've made a narrative in the way that we embody the idea of intimacy, stillness, sensuality, whatever that may be. But we keep the space very open and quite abstract so that the viewer gets to come into this space and have their own experience with whatever it is that they're viewing," he says.

In this way, Vaidya's hopes the audience's interpretation of the piece might reflect his own approach to art: allowing yourself to embrace what resonates with you most.

"Sometimes as a dancer trained in *Bharatanatyam*, I don't understand what is happening, but I definitely get an essence of what they're trying to convey," says Vaidya. "And that was what I was keeping in mind while making *Off Centre*."

For more information visit: www.indiansummerfest.ca



Photo by Paul Elliott, courtesy of Indian Summer Festival

▲ In *Off Centre*, dancers Sujit Vaidya and Arun Mathai work in perfect harmony.



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Postcard

Onwards to

In June, my wife Sherry and I travelled to Ottawa, the capital of our great country, for the first time. A domestic Canadian trip after a two year hiatus from travelling due to the pandemic felt like a breath of fresh air. Julie, my wife's best friend, had also moved to the Ottawa area so that also played a role in us choosing to visit that city this year.

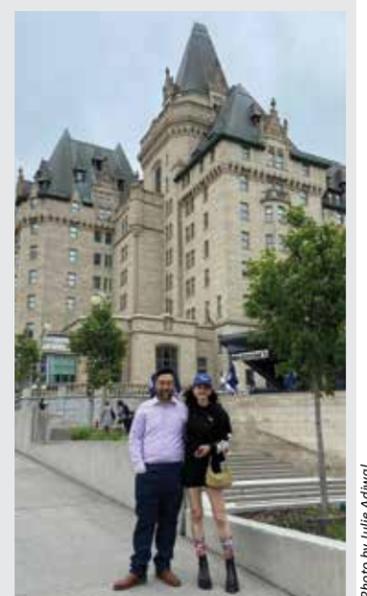
We flew into Montreal and spent a night to rest and enjoy a refreshing dip in a hotel pool. Afterwards, we rented a car and drove up the Autoroute 50, passing through and stopping by small Quebec towns along the way, like Lachute, to sample some rural authentic Quebec cuisine and take in the small town atmosphere. At night, we arrived in Gatineau, a suburb across from Ottawa, to stay at Julie's place for the rest of our vacation. We tried to be the best houseguests we could!

June was a great time to visit Ottawa with the hot and sunny weather and interesting things to do and places to eat. The city had an amazing array of cuisine from casual eateries like Kettleman's Bagel and LOCAL Public Eatery to fine dining at Tosca Ristorante and Thali. The Ribfest on Sparks Street was happening at the time, so we enjoyed some delicious smoky barbecue ribs, pulled pork and corn on the cob. We had afternoon tea at the Fairmont Château Laurier and walked around the nearby Rideau Canal, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. At night, we experienced the nightlife at the Byward Market and The Glebe.

No first-time visit to Ottawa would be complete without touring the Parliament of Canada. Julie, Sherry and I booked tickets to tour the House of Commons at West Block and the Senate of Canada at Ottawa's historic train station. Currently, both institutions are working out of these temporary locations since Centre Block, Parliament's main building, is currently undergoing renovations. Seeing and walking around Parliament in-person was an awe-inspiring feeling; amplifying the sense of pride I have in living in a stable and prosperous democratic country.

We also visited several of Ottawa's national museums. The size and scope of these museums felt truly grand and captured Canada's history, geography and story well. My wife was impressed with the various exhibits on display. For instance, the War Museum displayed some of the military equipment used in Canada's wars and peacekeeping missions. The Science and Technology Museum had several vintage locomotives with restored interiors recreating what it would have been like to be on a train of the early 20th century. All the museums we visited told an intricate story of how the Canadian struggles of yesterday laid the foundation for the modern country we live in today.

Ottawa is an enchanting mid-size town whose charm lies in the fact that as the nation's capital, it serves as a place where Canadian history, democracy and achievements are dis-



▲ Simon and Sherry on a domestic Canadian trip.

played and celebrated. While walking around Downtown Ottawa and Parliament Hill, my wife and I were awe-struck to be surrounded by the buildings of our country's democratic institutions. Monuments to the Canadian people adorn its streets and there was always something to learn and reflect on. One day we'll return and see more of Ottawa, perhaps when the Centre Block renovation is complete! ✍

SIMON YEE

Photo by Julie Adiwari

Photo by Julie Adiwari

July 5–August 23, 2022

Cultural Calendar

by SIMON YEE
CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

The long summer season is here and I hope everyone has a great summer planned! There is a sampling of events to check out below as well as many outdoor summer activities to do. Whatever your plans, make the most of it! Create some amazing summer memories and I'll see you in late August!

* * *

Shifting Articulations of Asian-ness in Contemporary Canada

July 1–August 29
<https://intersectionsinart.com/shifting-articulations>

This online exhibition broadens the conversation around "Asian-ness" and complicates what it means to be part of Canada's Asian diaspora today. Highlighting diverse perspectives within Canada's Asian communities, this exhibition features twelve artists of Asian heritage who work in a variety of artistic mediums. Their work engages with intersecting narratives, communities and discursive contexts that connect with different points in place and time, which shape the complexities of "Asian-ness" and Asian identities. Although these artists come from diverse backgrounds and contexts, their works reveal shared concerns and connections that are inspired by their personal experiences or those of their respective cultural communities.

* * *

Dancing on the Edge Festival

July 7–16
www.dancingontheedge.org

One of the most eagerly anticipated events in British Columbia's contemporary dance scene, the 34th annual Dancing on the Edge Festival will kick off on July 7th. Canada's oldest and longest running contemporary dance festival will host live performances both indoor and outdoor for eagerly awaiting audiences. This year's festival will once again deliver high calibre, challenging and gorgeous dance delivering innovative and spell-binding works featuring World Premieres, North American and Western Canadian debuts, and works-in-progress from some of the most sought-after contemporary choreographers. Check out the festival's website for more information.

* * *

Carnaval Del Sol

July 8–10
www.carnavaldelsol.ca

Vancouver's own Carnaval del Sol Festival, the biggest Latin American event in the Pacific Northwest is back for the 14th time to promote all the diversity of Latin American culture. Come enjoy an exciting Latin experience: artists, music, food exhibitors, beer garden and family fun. For a complete list of events during the festival, please visit their website.

* * *

Khatsahlano Street Party

July 9, 11 a.m.–9 p.m.
www.khatsahlano.ca

The West 4th Avenue Khatsahlano Street Party is Vancouver's largest free Music + Arts Festival! Created in 2011 by the members of the Kitsilano West 4th Avenue



Photo courtesy of Dancing on the Edge Festival

▲ *Dancing on the Edge Festival will once again deliver high calibre, challenging dance, delivering innovative and spell-binding works.*

Business Association, Khatsahlano features multiple stages showcasing more than 50 of Vancouver's top musical performers as well as the eclectic work of local artisans and street performers. This 10-block street fair, spanning from Burrard to MacDonald Street also features a wide variety of food options, bustling patios, giveaways, special activities and licensed beer gardens!

* * *

Vancouver Folk Music Festival

July 15–17
www.thefestival.bc.ca

The 45th Annual Vancouver Folk Music Festival lets festival-goers experience the music and culture of more than 40 international, national and local acts. Listen to diverse styles of music, from Cajun tunes and soul jazz-funk to Cree/Irish trip-hop and Arabic musical ensembles, at this internationally renowned festival. Be sure to check out the artisan market and folk bazaar, enjoy the many food vendors set up around the beachfront and have fun at the Little Folks Village for children 12 years and younger. Check out their website for a complete list of performers.

* * *

Diyan Achjadi: Carried Through the Water

July 15–Sept. 18
www.burnabyartgallery.ca

Carried Through the Water, a solo exhibition held at the Burnaby Art Gallery by Vancouver-based artist Diyan Achjadi, features the beautiful stop motion watercolour animation Hush, alongside new and recent works on paper that explore the impact of human activity on the ecosystem, including shifting of shorelines due to climate change and land reclamation. Through visual storytelling, Achjadi's work also considers how activities in one location might impact multiple other locations. An ash-cloud from volcanic activity on one island might change the colour of the sky thousands of miles away, and the movement of people, objects, stories, and memories, can have profound effects that reach across oceans.

* * *

2022 Vancouver Bach Festival

July 26–Aug. 6
www.earlymusic.bc.ca

This year's Bach Festival by the Early Music Vancouver team explores new territory by fusing Scottish traditional music with Baroque masters. It is well known that Johann Sebastian Bach employed instrumentalists for his church performances who often also played in taverns. We also know that Baroque dance-forms, such as the gavotte and

Harmony Arts Festival

July 29–Aug. 7
www.harmonyarts.ca

For over 30 years, the Harmony Arts Festival has been one of the North Shore's most popular cultural events. The free festival draws crowds from all over the city to celebrate a harmonious balance of visual, culinary and performing arts on the spectacular West Vancouver waterfront. The festival will feature world-class musical performances, inspiring art exhibitions and demonstrations, mouth-watering culinary events, Indigenous showcases, outdoor movies and more!

* * *

Maple Ridge Caribbean Festival

July 30–31
www.caribbeanfest.ca

For more than 22 years, the Caribbean Festival has drawn musicians from around the world to the Albion Fairgrounds in the tranquil and beautiful nature in Maple Ridge, British Columbia. Full of music, mingling, good tunes and great times. There will be a launch party on July 28. For a complete list of performers and the event schedule, check out the festival's website.

* * *

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Powell Street Festival

July 30–31, 11:30 a.m.–7 p.m.
www.powellstreetfestival.com

Powell Street Festival, returning to the city for the 46th time, is one of the largest and the longest-running community arts festivals in Canada, located in Vancouver's historic Japanese Canadian neighbourhood, Paueru Gai – today known as the Downtown Eastside. Celebrate with a weekend of exciting programming, musical and theatrical performances, a bustling marketplace and your favourite festival foods. Check out the festival's website for a full schedule of events and booths.

* * *

Ambleside Music Festival

Aug. 12–14
www.amblesidefestival.com

The GSL Group is excited to announce their three-day Ambleside Music Festival is taking place at Ambleside Park in West Vancouver from Aug. 12 to 14. Combining the striking mountain and waterfront views, the seaside landmark will transform into one of the city's premiere open-air concert and festival venues. For a complete list of events and performers, please visit the festival's website.

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