

The Source

forum of diversity

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How accents affect newcomers in the workplace

by MARTINA PETKOV

Accents can be heard all around. For many they are a form of identity. But, when it comes to acceptance and integration into a new society, for some their accent can present a challenge.

“Accent functions as a second skin,” says Isaku Kawamura, researcher. “In Vancouver, almost 50 per cent of people are now people of colour. So they are no longer a visible minority. However, accent can still function as a strong marker of separation, creating an ‘us’ versus ‘them’ rift.”

An accent is part of the richness of someone’s presentation to the world.

What are the challenges

As quickly as visual markers can incite judgement, the linguistic profile of an individual can generate prejudice around their ethnic origin, socio-economic class, and even their intelligence.

Kawamura, a Sociology Honours graduate (2022) from University of British Columbia (UBC), studied under the supervision of Professor Jennifer Berdahl to investigate the impacts of accents on immigrants’

labour market experiences in Vancouver.

As a foreign national himself, Kawamura came from Japan in 2016 to Canada, a personal experience with an airport immigration officer was the catalyst in conducting further research on accent discrimination.

“Having an accent can be seen as a lack of effort to learn the language,” he explains.

His personal interest in sociology was fuelled by his father, a sociology professor in Japan. When he came to Canada, Kawamura found himself in the position of an ethnic minority

and this motivated his interest in sociology further.

The accent can manifest as a marker of foreignness in the labour market. And can interact with race, class and gender when it comes to generating racially motivated biases – even in a tolerant country like Canada.

Lending a linguistic hand

It is important, says Wendy Duke, M.Sc., RSLP, CCC-SLP, the person looking to participate in the accent modification program is personally invested in the process.

“We are looking to make people aware of the sounds of Eng-

lish, where they might be having difficulty,” explains Duke.

Duke, clinic director of Columbia Speech & Language Services Inc., was one of the first practitioners (1987) to offer an accent modification service as part of a private practice in British Columbia.

Duke initially started working with people who wanted to improve their pronunciation of English, usually for workplace reasons. She discovered she loved this area of work. Unlike people who were getting speech and language therapy – as a result of a medical condi-

See “Accents” page 3 ➤



Nothing like history to plunge into a new language
Page 3



Giving refugee musicians a helping hand
Page 4



An ovation to Indigenous women artists
Page 6



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Social media

UNESCO leads global dialogue to improve the reliability of information

As part of its mandate, UNESCO has launched a global dialogue to provide guidelines for regulating digital platforms, to fight disinformation and hate speech and protect freedom of expression and human rights. The high point will be an international conference organized at the Organization's Paris headquarters on 21–23 February. This will result in the presentation by UNESCO, in mid-2023, of global guidelines for governments, regulatory bodies and digital companies.

A flawed business model

Social media and other digital platforms have empowered people all over the world to communicate, share information, and transform their societies. But increasingly, these platforms are also breeding grounds for disinformation, hate speech and conspiracy theories. In recent years, the issue of monitoring and moderating content has been an important factor in violence, insurrection, marred elections and democratic transfers of power in scores of countries.

Studies show that engagement can often be prioritized at any cost. This leads to algorithms favoring the most controversial

languages, with moderation resources sometimes distributed on the basis of financial or political interests, or far too late, in response to public outrage once violence or election meddling has already occurred.

Global issues require global guidelines

Many countries are advancing regulation to respond to these issues, but this has so far been uncoordinated and fragmented,

in new rounds of consultations aiming to finalize and publish the first global guidelines on the topic in mid-2023. They will be used by governments, regulators, digital companies and other groups to implement policies and tools as needed, with UNESCO's expertise and support, while ensuring they are aligned to international human rights norms.

UNESCO's initiative responds to the call from the UN Secre-

“Studies show that engagement can often be prioritized at any cost. This leads to algorithms favoring the most controversial content...

with some countries clearly not in line with international norms on freedom of expression. Given the global dominance of a limited number of players, the need for a consistent global approach has never been more pressing than right now.

As the United Nations agency for communication and information issues, UNESCO is lead-

tary General in “Our Common Agenda” to address the spread of disinformation and the denial of scientifically established facts, which pose “an existential risk to humanity”.

UNESCO's mandate to provide guidelines for regulation

UNESCO has a global mandate, enshrined in its constitution, to promote the free flow of ideas by word and image. It leads UN action to promote freedom of expression and access to information. This includes a decades-long history of providing guidance to and promoting cooperation between broadcast regulators and press councils, including by advancing international standards.

The Windhoek+30 Declaration on Information as a Public Good in the Digital Age, endorsed by UNESCO's 193 Member States in 2021, calls for increased transparency of technology companies, support for the long-term viability of news media and teaching citizens everywhere media and information literacy.

Under the leadership of its Director-General, Audrey Azoulay, UNESCO is specifically working to improve the transparency of digital platforms, including through developing a series of principles for transparency and accountability in the digital age. UNESCO also established the first global standard on the ethics of artificial intelligence, adopted unanimously by its Member States in 2021, which includes a specific call for “appropriate frameworks, including regulation” to address these issues. ✉

For more information visit: www.unesco.org/en/articles/social-media-unesco-leads-global-dialogue-improve-reliability-information
Source: UNESCO



Introducing The British Columbia International Symphony Society

A new local organization The British Columbia International Symphony Society (BCIS) has emerged to introduce a new symphonic opportunity for the region's music lovers, musicians, and composers.

Although symphonic music has been adopted, hailed, and performed around the world, most of the compositions have been developed from the classical European canon. The BCIS and its namesake orchestra have been formed specifically to present programs with music audiences rarely hear in Metropolitan Vancouver's concert halls – the works of indigenous composers as well as those from Asia, Africa, the Middle East, Oceania, Latin America, and other diverse regions.

The BCIS is collaborating with the Surrey City Orchestra to launch a concert series this fall featuring music from the noted under-represented cultures. The series will give the region's diverse composers and musicians performance opportunities that were previously unavailable to them, and to help promote understanding among the communities.

While the series is in development, the BCIS invites the ethnic communities of British Columbia to join in the organization's efforts. Representatives of British Columbia's communities are urged to contact BCIS to ensure their recognition and contribution.

For more information about the BCIS, how to register your interest, and how to participate, call (604) 628-5255 or email info@thebcis.org.



Photo courtesy of UNESCO

▲ Digital platforms are increasingly breeding grounds for disinformation, hate speech and conspiracy theories.

content, because it triggers the most reaction, in spite of the evidence that this content can damage the fabric of our societies, sowing distrust, helping to seed extremism, and undermining fundamental human rights. There appear to be vast imbalances between regions and lan-

ing global consultations on this topic, involving governments, regulatory bodies, digital companies, academia, civil society and UN agencies. This global dialogue will culminate in what is believed to be the first global conference specifically focused on guidance for the regulation of digital platforms, from 21 to 23 February 2023. Thousands of representatives from these groups are already registered to participate.

UNESCO experts will then incorporate the feedback received during these discussions and en-



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Historical Linguistics and second language acquisition

by RAMY KHATTAB

Learning a new language can be a daunting task for many, but a recent study by University of British Columbia (UBC) English professor James Stratton, suggests that understanding language history may hold the key to more effective language learning.

Stratton, a historical linguist who works on second language acquisition, is not alone in finding language history useful. Several scholars have called for the integration of historical linguistics into the second-language classroom for several years. Since few studies had tested its effect empirically, Stratton's study, recently published in the journal *The Modern Language Journal*, investigates the relationship between knowledge of language history and second language acquisition.

"I found that making explicit connections to knowledge you already have can accelerate the learning process," he explains.

His study used two sections of a third-semester university German course. "One section was exposed to English-German cognates through traditional

language instruction following the dominant approach in North America (...) that emphasizes learning through communicative tasks and thus context," he says. "The second section spent the same amount of time learning about the cognates but received explicit instruction on language history."

The study focused on vocabulary learning, focusing on cognates, and words that trace back to the same ancestral form. "For instance, German Hund (dog) and English hound are cognates because they trace back to the Germanic word hundaz. When you look at the words and their meaning, you can clearly see that they are related in some way," says Stratton.

Sounds as clues

Stratton points to sound changes occurring in the German language that didn't happen in other Germanic languages such as English.

The 'th' sound at the beginning of words in English became a 'd' in German. This explains differences such as English 'thing' and German Ding, English 'thistle' and German Dissel, English 'that' and German das. If you know about this sound change, in theory,

you should be able to predict the meaning of German words such as Dorn even if you have never encountered it before. The 'd' was originally a 'th', so, in English it is 'thorn'. All you need to do is 'undo' the sound change," says Stratton.

In addition, Stratton notes that the comparative method is a way to reconstruct languages and show relationships between them. "Because of the comparative method, linguists and philologists have been able to show that many languages spoken today in Europe and parts of Asia, particularly India, trace back to a common ancestor known as Indo-European," he explains.

"For instance, all the words for 'foot' in Indo-European languages start with the 'p' sound – pie in Spanish, pied in French – except in Germanic languages – 'foot' in English, Fuß in German. The original 'p' sound shifted to an 'f' sound in Germanic languages, but not in the non-Germanic Indo-European languages.

"You can do this test for a few thousand other words, such as 'father' and you find same this systematic pattern. If you are a speaker of one of these Indo-European languages, and you are learning another Indo-European language, knowing these types



▲ James Stratton.

of changes can give learners an advantage because you can draw upon your previously existing knowledge," he says.

Benefits of language history

There were several benefits Stratton identifies that allowed learners who undergo historical training to outperform learners in the non-historical group. "Words can change their meaning over time.

I could tell you to learn the German word sterben which means

'to die' and you can memorize that meaning or you can use it or hear it enough times and you may eventually acquire the meaning," he points out. "However, what I found is if you are told explicitly that the word is related to a word you already know, namely English 'starve', you can learn the meaning faster."

Secondly, students in the historical group were able to identify the meaning of significantly more cognates than the students in the non-historical group. Unlike learners in the traditional non-historical, they were also able to use their knowledge of sound change to anticipate the meaning of several words they had not learned about or encountered in their training sessions.

The comparative method and language history can provide second-language students with a deeper understanding of how languages are related.

"You can show to learners that the language you are learning is not as 'foreign' as you may think," concludes Stratton.

For more information visit: <https://news.ubc.ca/2022/12/20/looking-for-a-faster-way-to-learn-a-language-try-historical-linguistics/>

► "Accents" from page 1

tioner or brain injury – these people really wanted to be there, and were really grateful for the service.

Over the years since starting her private practice, Duke has seen a shift in the type of people seeking the service.

"In the 80s, we were seeing people from China and Korea," she recalls. "There were many people whose background language was Cantonese. Now, most of the people who come from a Chinese language background are Mandarin speaking."

"More recently the percentage of Asians in our program has decreased. We have been seeing an increase in Brazilians, which is a relatively new phenomenon."

According to Duke, the people who typically seek the services of the clinic are in their late 20s to early 30s. Around 60 per cent of people are looking to make a career advancement. Whether it's people who

are about to graduate from university and have job interviews, or professionals who really understand the importance of communication in the workplace.



▲ Isaku Kawamura.

"We even had a really puzzling French Canadian who wanted to work on her accent. So it's not just for individuals who are new to Canada," reflects Duke.

The team at the clinic supports participants by helping to identify the pacing of English. For example, where a person might not be pausing, in a place where native speakers of English would be expecting to hear a pause.

"We will not 'get rid' of someone's accent," she reinforces.

By focusing on intonation patterns, which are also very



▲ Wendy Duke.

important. The rise and fall of the voice across a sentence carries a lot of meaning in English that is not present in other languages in the same way. The process really tries to help individuals understand what they can do to make it easier for listeners to understand them.

Duke goes on to say that if someone is going to be discriminated against for being from Brazil or India or China, they will still suffer that discrimination because they will still have an accent.

More research is needed

Ultimately the decision whether a person would like to embark on an accent modification program should be entirely their own, and success is always greater when participation is self motivated.

Employers can suggest or recommend the services. However, it needs to be done in a sensitive way, reducing the

chance of the suggestion being perceived as disrespectful.

"More work needs to be done to objectively compare if some accents are more tolerated, or perceived more positively – as well as comparing accents based on ethnicity," says Kawamura, who is now embarking in a masters program at McGill.

Kawamura points out that even though participants experience negative issues, Canada is still perceived as a fair country and people are satisfied with their new life here.

For more information visit:

<https://sociology.ubc.ca/news/isaku-kawamura-examines-the-role-of-accent-as-a-marker-of-foreignness-in-the-labour-market-examining-its-intersection-with-race-class-and-gender>

<https://columbiaspeech.com/our-team/wendy-duke-bio>

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Thrive Refuge

Bringing joy through music to those in need

by ALEXANDRA
BRADFORD-PATTERSON

Music has the unique ability to bring communities together, elevate and empower the human spirit and help people overcome traumatic events in their lives. This is the philosophy that inspired the creation of Thrive Refuge, a charity organization dedicated to providing access to musical education for refugees arriving in Canada.

Founded by Ray Zhang and Isabelle Wang, two high school students and musicians from Vancouver, Thrive Refuge is a beacon of hope for those in need of comfort and a chance to thrive.

The mission of Thrive Refuge

Thrive Refuge was originally created with the intention of sharing Zhang's passion for music with refugees who had lost access to it, however, after delving deeper into the cause, Thrive Refuge's focus turned to helping individual musicians continue their work in safety.

According to a 2021 census run by the Canadian government, between 2016 and 2021, 218,430 new refugees were admitted as permanent residents into Canada. Forced to leave their homes because of severe instability within their own countries, these refugees came to Canada. Zhang believes that although generous aid is provided to those newly arrived, such as food and shelter, what truly helps heighten the quality of their new lives can often be missed.

"The things that bring us the most comfort and joy in life such as art and music are often overlooked," Zhang shares.

Thrive Refuge's mission is to provide refugees with access to musical education, allowing them to thrive and not just survive in their new homes.

"Music has the ability to strengthen and uplift the human spirit. It is an integral part of life that should not be disregarded but cherished and nourished," Zhang explains.

This feeling of comfort is especially important to refugees who often have experienced traumatic events. One in three refugees experience high rates of depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) according to the American Psychiatric Association. Music can be used as a tool to aid alleviate such issues. Music has the incredibly unique ability to bring solace to those who cannot find it elsewhere.

"In October, I met with a gentleman who fled from Afghanistan. He stated that even though all Afghanistan has been through, he still truly



▲ Ray Zhang, Founder of Thrive Refuge.



▲ Isabelle Wang, Creative Director of Thrive Refuge.

misses his home. He said that music brought him back to his home and gave him a sense of comfort that couldn't be found anywhere else," says Zhang.

Getting Thrive Refuge off the ground

Thrive Refuge's goal for this year is to raise \$50,000 dollars for the Immigrant Services Society of BC (ISSofBC), all of

which will go towards a perpetual bursary program. The organization has already made a significant impact through its initiatives, including aiding in providing a scholarship for Oleksandr (Sasha) Luchkovat at Shawnigan Lake School in Vancouver Island.

Luchkovat, a gifted Ukrainian pianist, was at risk of being drafted into military combat.

The scholarship has allowed him to come to Canada, continue his musical education, and contribute to the community. Luchkovat recently performed a concert in the Shawnigan Lake School chapel.

Thrive Refuge has also run a series of fundraising concert series. Beginning on October 8, 2022, \$12,000 was raised from the event launching the musical education bursary program for refugees and supporting Thrive Refuge's projects. The organization has also received the attention and aid of several public figures, such as entertainer Aylex Tunder and social media personality Ricky Zhang.

"Sasha's Impact Scholarship at Shawnigan Lake School received funding from Ricky Zhang, also known as the Prince of Travel, who sponsored Sasha's plane ticket from Ukraine to Vancouver," Wang explains.

Thrive Refuge is an organization that brings hope and comfort to refugees through music. It is a shining example of the power of community and the importance of providing access to education and the arts.

"The most important aspect of Thrive Refuge would be the message we want to put out. Everyone deserves to pursue what they enjoy doing in life – refugees are not an exception. Thus, Thrive Refuge seeks to provide the vulnerable with the opportunity and platform to do so," Ray Zhang says. ✍

To read more about Thrive Refuge, visit www.thriverefuge.com. To donate to Thrive Refuge's bursary program, visit <https://my.charitableimpact.com/groups/thrive-refuge>.



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Photo courtesy of Solid State Community Industries

Finding community

by ALISON MACDONALD

Community support and economic solidarity are alive in Surrey in a safe, respectful and welcoming space for those committed to diversity, equity, inclusion and challenging traditional concepts of work.

Founded in 2015 and launched in 2017 in the Whalley area of Surrey, Solid State Community Industries is a working cooperative with approximately 19 different cohorts and serves and supports over 100 members and visitors. Solid State focuses on building up racialized youth under the age of 35 and individuals traditionally and/or systemically underrepresented, underserved or without full access to community support.

The commitment to cohorts is in providing support, encouragement and resources to grow their projects with the aim of learning and developing a culture of economic solidarity, new frameworks or paradigms. The objective is to develop and support the cohorts, allow them to grow and flourish and have them become financially self-sufficient and earn for their creative and community support talents.

A shared vision

Solid State, says co-director Mahado Hassan, has enabled her to find confidence and leadership qualities, redefining herself as a creative person.

“I have changed what I envision that I am capable of, what I aspire to do,” she adds.

For staff member WeiChun Kua, Solid State has the appeal of having a caring approach to both staff and cohort members with less hierarchy and a more democratic approach to decision-making.

“[It is a] different way of being. It draws me in and is more attractive than typical work-

really encourages them to pursue their passions. It is like they see something in you, and they say, ‘why don’t you take this on?’ They have the belief in you. It is not always about the next promotion, but they know you can do the job. The encouragement and the confidence building – I have seen similar growth in my-

“ I have changed what I envision that I am capable of, what I aspire to do.

Mahado Hassan, co-director of Solid State

places. People [here] are more focussed on the solidarity economy, a different work model that exists here. Not just a 9-5 or employee/employer. [It’s] of mental benefit without exploitation, feeling supported with a good use of our skills and talents and not taken advantage of,” he says.

Kua was inspired to become involved with Solid State as a result of his interest in pursuing climate activism and economic solidarity with the Climate Re-centered cohort, building upon his work from his SFU student activism as a board member with the SFU Simon Fraser Student Society and SFU350.

The sentiment of mutual support, encouragement and growth is echoed by Kua.

“Solid State believes in people, from the staff to the cohorts, and

self, the growth in my leadership skills and creating capacity to do more,” he says.

The importance of a ‘living experience’

For Arshi Chadha, as a co-director of the Black Arts Centre, her involvement with one of the cohorts has been an eye-opening experience. She emphasizes the importance of the relationships formed through mentorship with Surrey high school students.

“I underestimated the impact that I could have. [Having them] trust me, look up to me as a safe person and having a mark on their personal lives, that I would be there for them, [it felt] gratifying and beautiful,” she says.

Chadha is also a keen believer that, in order for equity, diversity and inclusion to move further along the continuum to widespread appreciation and respect of all by all, it must be the people in those excluded or marginalized communities that do the work or contribute the ‘living experience’ to truly reflect the experience, conditions, challenges and successes of putting their artistry and talent forward.

“We are not as isolated as we think. It takes experience, imagination. You have to build and grow with it. Find your community and nurture it,” she says.



Photo courtesy of Solid State Community Industries

▲ Solid State staff map.

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Matriarchs Uprising Festival

by STAFF WRITER

The 5th edition of Matriarchs Uprising Festival features new contemporary Indigenous dance works from Atamira Dance Company, O.Dela Arts + Pepper's Ghost Media Collective, Kaha:Wi Dance Theatre, Samantha Sutherland, Sophie Dow, Vancouver DTES Grandmother's Collective and more! The week of Feb. 13-18 will include masterclasses, community workshops and Talking Truths circle conversations both at the Scotiabank Dance Centre and online.

"As we witness Indigenous people around the world rise up to confront colonial power structures, I am inspired by these women who use their artistry to hold space for past, present and future in artistic presentations. Matriarchs Uprising creates a platform for Indigenous women to gather to share their work and perspectives among one another as well as with the broader community," says curator Olivia C. Davies in her artist's statement.

Curated by Davies, the festival is a platform for artists and audiences to come together and celebrate connections from across different nations and Indigenous worldviews through dance works. The festival brings together Indigenous women who are both nurturing

By looking to the past for the various ways their ancestors were able to navigate the challenges they faced and retain their cultural practices against all odds, they feel they have a solid base from which they can come together and create the future to carry them forward in a positive way.

The artist behind the festival

Davies is a dance artist, choreographer, community-arts facilitator and emerging curator of Anishinaabe, French-Canadian, Finnish and Welsh heritage. Davies, who trained at York University, also creates and collaborates across multiple platforms including choreography, creative writing, film, improvisation and sound design.

She gained professional experience as an improviser in Toronto's live music and cabaret scene. She also pursued commissions to choreograph for gala presentations, fashion shows, festival stages, burlesque revues and music videos.

As artist-in-residence at The Dance Centre for the 2018-2019 season, she curated CoaxisDance Western Edition 1 (December 20, 2018) and the inaugural Matriarchs Uprising festival (June 19-23, 2019).

Her body of work explores the emotional and political relationships between people and places, often by investigating the body's dynamic ability to transmit narrative, seeking to tra-



Photo courtesy of the Dance Centre

▲ Matriarchs Uprising creates a platform for Indigenous women to gather to share their work.

and advancing the art of contemporary dance.

This year's festival was produced by O.Dela Arts in partnership with The Dance Centre, Dance West Network, Training Society of Vancouver, Dumb Instrument Dance / Morrow.

Looking forward - a positive future

"We gather together to witness these sharings and be enveloped in the experience of all of our heartbeats co-mingling with the rhythm of the earth. Gratitude to all the teams who have helped bring this vision to life and my deepest honoring to the many, many mothers, grandmothers, and great grandmothers seven generations beyond whose dreams we are living now," says Davies' artist's statement.

This year's theme is Indigenous Futurism - Stories of Transformation. Works shared in this year's festival are offered as a way to invite audience-witnesses to consider the aspects of their future selves that can be cultivated today.

verse boundaries and challenge social prejudice by conveying concepts and impressions that open different ways to experience the world.

Davies' work crosses boundaries, challenging social prejudices and weaving concepts and narratives with performance works by a community of practice workshops that point to different ways of viewing and experiencing the world.

Davies' community-engagement practice includes facilitation of Home: Our Way dance and story weaving workshops, Healthy Aging Through The Arts and collective creation labs.

Her work has been presented in B.C., Alberta, Ontario and Quebec since 2011. She is the artistic director of O.Dela Arts, the Matriarchs Uprising Festival and is a founding member of the Crow's Nest Collective (Vancouver), MataDanze Collective (Toronto) and Circadia Indigena Arts Collective (Ottawa). ✉

For more information visit: www.thedancecentre.ca

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MORRIS J. WOSK
 CENTRE FOR DIALOGUE

Starwalker

A beautiful reflection of community

by CURTIS SEUFERT

Musicals are effective at allowing audiences to step into a character's experience. Love, family, growth and community abound in the story of *Starwalker*, a musical created by Indigenous, two-spirit storyteller Corey Payette. *Starwalker* will be performed, Feb. 17 to Mar. 5, at the York Theatre.

In creating the show, Payette says he drew on his background as a queer Indigenous creative in East Vancouver.

"This show is really just an extension, and a celebration, of that really diverse and celebratory community that already exists," says Payette. "So it's really just uplifting those kinds of stories, and saying these places should exist everywhere for everyone."



Photo courtesy of Corey Payette

▲ Corey Payette.

While *Starwalker* is a fictional story about an Indigenous, two-spirit drag queen, Payette says the show reflects the beautiful reality of the community he has found in his neighbourhood.

The means of a musical

Payette says it was exciting to try something new with *Starwalker*. Having written a number of well-received musicals with historical settings, *Starwalker* sees a narrative set firmly in the present day, carried along by its modern pop/rock-focused score.

While the story of Star, the titular two-spirit drag queen protagonist, involves a navigating through the lingering effects of their own challenging past, Payette says the show is fundamentally a celebration, a "warm hug." *Starwalker* allows audiences to see what the queer Indigenous community in Vancouver looks like today.

"It's really exciting to get to write something contemporary that's fun [and] lighthearted. There's some serious themes in it, but ultimately it's about love and joy – and finding family and home," he says.

For Payette, gaining access to Star's internal monologue, through music revelations makes things all the more rewarding when we can see them persevere.

"Even if they say a line where they're speaking in a scene: there's a moment that's musicalized afterwards that helps you to understand why a char-



Photo courtesy of Corey Payette

▲ *Starwalker*, is a new musical written and directed by Corey Payette is an Urban Ink and Raven theatre co-production in association with the Musical Stage Co. actor Dillan Chiblow and art director Andrea Tetrault.

acter said that. What they're feeling deep down that maybe they can't share with everyone yet," he says. "The great thing about the musical form is that when you can no longer speak, you sing."

A love letter to East Van

Starwalker was deeply inspired by Payette's experience of living in East Van. For example, he says the kind of cultural and creative blend in his neighbourhood is like nothing he's ever seen. In this way, the blend of pop and rock, with Indigenous drumming, music that *Starwalker* often employs reflects the unique sound of Payette's community.

"It's like, where else would you have been able to hear something like that? But I do think that sort of thing exists in East Van," he says. "It's such a hugely

populated area with Indigenous people. And you go to events and slam poetry, and you do hear drumming music played after a DJ set. So that actually is the richness of this community."

But beyond the music itself, it's the sense of community, connection and belonging that Payette has found which has inspired this love letter to East Van. The artist points to events hosted by organisations like Van Vogue Jam, a community partner of the show, that hosts diverse queer Ballroom dance spaces, as inspiration for *Starwalker's* spaces where anyone can feel welcome.

"I wouldn't say it's directly lifted, for sure. But I can't help but be influenced by this community because I live here," says Payette. "It is such a welcoming and truly diverse place. And I think that, even though this is

not based on that sort of event, it just sheds light on what exists here. And how this sort of thing is not new, and it's been happening for a long time."

In all, Payette hopes to be able to share that joy and community with audiences through the story of *Starwalker*. It's something he and many others have been able to experience, and something he thinks everyone should find beneficial.

"I think people need a lot of joy right now," says Payette. "That's what I hope people will come away with: is really having a chance to experience new perspectives. And to celebrate this community, and this place that is so special, but then just have a really good time at it as well." ✍️

For more information visit: <https://thecultch.com>

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February 7–21, 2023

Cultural Calendar

by SIMON YEE
CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

February is a great time to get out and see and do new things. As the month of love, it's a perfect time to plan a romantic getaway or a fun-filled adventure with loved ones. Additionally, many cultural events and festivals are happening this month, providing a unique and exciting way to experience different cultures. With the days getting longer and the weather starting to improve, it's the perfect time to shake off the winter blues and embrace new experiences. Why not check out some of the events below?

* * *

Tattoo You

Feb. 1–25
www.outsidersandothers.com/tattoo-you

A tattoo is defined as an indelible mark fixed upon the body by inserting pigment under the skin, and the earliest evidence of tattoo art dates from 5000 B.C. Across time and cultures, tattoos have many different forms and meanings. Since then, tattooing has become very fashionable and there is a huge community of people who work as tattoo artists. And just like most artists, they work creatively in a variety of mediums. This exhibition will show the other creative sides of three practicing tattoo artists: beyon wren moor, Lev Sibilla and Marcel Xin.

* * *



Illustration by Marcel Xin, courtesy of Outsiders and Others

▲ Illustration by Marcel Xin.

STRIDE Burnaby Arts Festival

Feb. 3–12
www.weareburnaby.com

Proudly hosted by North Burnaby Neighbourhood House, Stride continues to build community through the arts from Feb. 3–12. With the 2023 theme of CONNECTIONS, Stride offers online and onstage performances, community art displays, artist talks, discussion panels, workshops, demos and more! Don't miss the Stride Art at the Shadbolt extended exhibition running from Feb. 3–Mar. 3. It's all free, for all ages and all by Burnaby artists and presenters! For a list of events, featured artists and more information, check out the festival website.

* * *

SongBird North

Feb. 9, 7:30 p.m.
www.songwriters.ca

On Feb. 9, *SongBird North* kicks off 2023 with a powerhouse lineup: Shari Ulrich hosts Stephen Fearing, Tariq Hussain and Kate Weekes on the Roundhouse Community Arts & Recreation Centre stage. Bringing together rising stars with established, often iconic artists, and showcasing a



Photo courtesy of Circus 3

▲ Muse attempts to answer the question: what is it to be a woman, circus style.

range of styles and backgrounds, *SongBird North* offers an evening of great songs, funny stories and fascinating insights into the creative process. It's a one-of-a-kind opportunity to get up close and personal with the music and the artists who create and perform it.

* * *

The Baroque Affect

Feb. 10, 7:30 p.m.
www.vancouverchamberchoir.com

The Baroque Affect connects the timeless works of the Baroque era to the choral conductors of today and tomorrow at this season's Conductors' Symposium showcase. Dr. Kari Turunen, an early music specialist, will facilitate advanced training in choral and Baroque performance practice to selected conductors in an intensive week of rehearsals and masterclasses. This year, the Symposium also features Christina Hutten as organist and guest instructor. Come cheer on the skills, talents and musical personalities of the next generation of choral conductors at this event. Please visit the Vancouver Chamber Choir website for more information.

* * *

Muse

Feb. 10–11
www.circus3.com

What does it mean to be a woman? FLIP Fabrique's show, *Muse*, playing at the Vancouver Playhouse, attempts to answer this question circus style! There's hardly just one answer and exploring the question calls for some... acrobatics. The show's collection of eclectic performers will have to choose between a football uniform or ballet outfit, but few actually identify with either of these archetypes. Playing with gender roles, *Muse* offers up a refreshing view of contemporary circus. Get ready to see powerful women, graceful men and every permutation in between. Whether wearing high heels or shoulder pads, the acrobats' bodies are sure to amaze.

* * *

Jewish Book Festival 2023

Feb. 11–16
www.jccgv.com/jewish-book-festival-february

From our most trusted and compassionate authority on stress, trauma and mental well-being, comes a groundbreaking investigation into the causes of illness, a

This event will be looking at the hidden history of Hogan's Alley, Vancouver's only Black community that was destroyed in 1972 when the city built the Georgia and Dunsmuir viaducts. The event will then turn to the future and discuss a housing project that the Swahili Vision International is doing in collaboration with Luma Housing and the City of New West to build housing for Indigenous and Black people in New Westminster.

* * *

VMF Winter Arts

Feb. 16–26
www.winterartsfest.com

VMF Winter Arts is a free, all-ages festival transforming downtown Vancouver into an open-air gallery and celebration of art, lights and entertainment. Over 11 days, their award-winning festival will bring together local and international public art with live experiences – including music, tours, talk, dance parties, food and drink – to connect, reflect and celebrate our city and its diverse communities.

* * *

Vancouver Fan Expo 2023

Feb. 18–20
www.fanexpoq.com

Everyone is a fan of something, and Fan Expo Vancouver, happening on Family Day weekend, is a place to celebrate all things



Photo courtesy of Fan Expo

▲ Fan Expo is the place to celebrate all things pop culture.

pop culture. Get an autograph or a photo with your favourite Guest then get the inside scoop about your favourite movies and TV shows at the celebrity panels! Watch professional comic artists battle it out in popular Sketch Duels, learn from "How To" workshops and take photos with your favourite costumed characters! It's also a great place to buy a unique gift (or treat yourself!) with a huge show floor for shopping madness.

* * *

Mononk Jules

Feb. 22–25
www.seizieme.ca

In 1940 all men in good health were drafted. For Jules Sioui, an Indigenous man, this was a declaration of war; "Indians" did not have the right to vote and were not even considered Canadians. So began an impassioned battle with the Canadian government. His goal: indigenous sovereignty, without compromise, and by any means necessary. In this documentary theatre piece, author, dramaturge and puppeteer Jocelyn Sioui takes us into the archives in search of the erased history of his great uncle. Unknown stories, miniature models and paper shapes come to life before our eyes as he raises complex questions about memory and legacy that will stay with us long after we've left the theatre.

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