

The Source

forum of diversity

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Amplifying the language of inclusion

by LILLIAN LIAO

A well-known staple of Vancouver’s literary festivals, LiterAsian returns for its eleventh season from May 4–27. This year’s festival examines how literature contributes to the cultural and social understanding of inclusivity.

With the theme, “finding our voices and sharing our stories,” LiterAsian 2023 will take discussions of Asian Canadian representation in literature off the pages and into community dialogues, encouraging festival attendees to recognize how inclusion is tied to representation and rooted in language.

Literature and inclusion

While past iterations of the festival have showcased a similar theme, this year’s line-up of writers with diverse styles and genres hopes to bring fresh perspectives to the connections between literature and inclusion. The 14 featured storytellers’ fields include poetry, fiction, and documentary writing, including memoirs and other narratives of the past.

As with the diverse genres showcased, the writers themselves embody a rich variety of lived experiences that will contribute to discussing how literature can be a tool for countering racism.

One of the featured writers is Hieu Pham-Fraser, author of *The Little Girl* (Friesen Press, 2022) and a school administrator. She welcomes this gathering of Asian voices, particularly in an industry where such voices still struggle with being heard.

“Traditional publishers tend to favour more ‘palatable works’ that appease and appeal to the mindsets of the dominant culture,” Pham-Fraser says, highlighting the challenges Asian Canadian writers face when trying to get published.

Similarly, David Ly, author of the poetry collections *Mythical Man* (finalist for the 2021 Re-Lit Award) and *Dream of Me as Water* (Palimpsest Press, 2023) points out that even when minority writers are given space to express themselves, they may still be limited in what stories they can share.

“One of the greatest problems that any marginalized writer faces is being pigeonholed into a box where readers only want them to write about their trauma,” Ly says.

These challenges underline the importance of this festival in providing a space for examining and diversifying practices of inclusion.

An education in empathy

Pham-Fraser, along with fellow writers Sharon Lee and Winnie L. Cheung, will be part of the panel “Words and Borders: Common Threads of Migration and Resilience” on May 14 at the Vancouver International Centre for Contemporary Asian Art. By focusing on themes of migration, memory, and home, this panel will investigate how narrating memories, including intergenerational ones, can lead to communal healing of past injustices.

See “LiterAsian” page 3 ➤



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Photo courtesy of African Ancestry Project

An African youth dialogue project

by STAFF WRITER

As youth transition into adulthood, to find their place and to contribute within society, they actively develop their ideals and personal values. The African Ancestry Project continues its Youth Dialogue series on May 6, and is open to the public.

The Youth Dialogue, using the contents of the *Worlds Within* report, is a series of three virtual youth dialogues curated to engage 40 youth between ages 15–19.

The organisers recruit youth as follows: 20 Black youth and 20 youths of Indigenous, Asian, and other racialized backgrounds.



Photo courtesy of African Ancestry Project

BC Black History Awareness Society provides educational, social activities and much more.

This year’s theme is Identity and belonging in multicultural British Columbia.

About the project

Through storytelling and dialogue, the African Ancestry Project brings awareness to the diversity of Black people in British Columbia. People of African ancestry represent a rich diversity evident in varied histories, identities, and experiences.



While schools are important avenues to guide youth in this process of reflection, many things are left out of classrooms.

Seen as a critical demographic – because these youth may be treated as a single homogenous group, categorized as Black because of darker skin tones – the first session was open only for Black youths to freely share their unique reflections.

The youth dialogues not only engage youths in conversations about the diversity of Black people in BC, but also promote their active and engaged participation in their sense of place in the context of Canada’s multiculturalism values.

It will create a youth-friendly space for open and positive conversations and reflections on the diverse histories, identities, and experiences of people of African ancestry in British Columbia.

Worlds Within, a report of the African Ancestry Project, showcases the diversity of

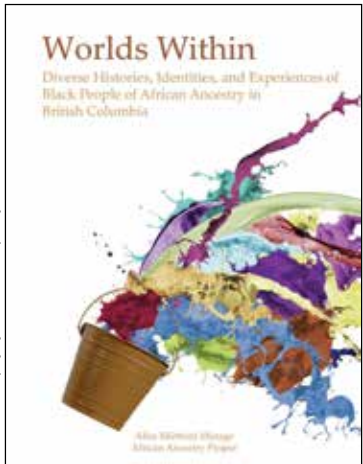


Photo courtesy of African Ancestry Project

Worlds Within highlights the diversity of Black people in BC.

Black people and communities through stories shared by project participants. This report is a resource for knowledge sharing and a tool to inspire important conversations around our visions of genuine multiculturalism and social justice.

Participants will receive a physical copy of the *Worlds Within* report, three virtual dialogue sessions, workshops on multiculturalism and dialogue engagement & facilitation (as

part of the dialogue sessions) will also be offered. Following successful attendance of the dialogue series, participants will receive a certificate of participation.

How to participate

This project particularly targets Black, and other racialized youth, as this is a priority population which does not often come together in safety to engage on issues affecting them.

While Black youths will attend all three dialogue sessions, the other youths will only attend the last two sessions.

Youth participation will include attending three dialogue and training sessions, approximately three hours each, totalling nine hours. In reflecting on the *Worlds Within* report, participants will be asked to use a creative medium of their choice to share their reflection.

Participants will also have an opportunity to put their learnings into practice by hosting a virtual community dialogue event together with the African Ancestry Project (on a voluntary basis). Other opportunities would be presented to the participants depending on their interest and availability.

Youths (or their parents/guardians) wishing to participate to the event can register at: africanancestryprojectbc@gmail.com

Recruitment will continue until spots are filled.

The first dialogue took place last year (Nov. 26); the second dialogue (Feb. 11) listened to Black and to other racialized youth; and the third dialogue (May 6) will be led by youth participants.

The Youth Dialogue Series is directed by Alice Mürage and implemented in partnership with Dr. Maureen Kihika, the BC Black History Awareness Society, and the SFU Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue.

For more information visit: www.bcblackhistory.ca/african-ancestry-project-youth-dialogue

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“Community Brain Art” – understanding and engaging with research findings

by MARTINA PETKOV

Many dream of breaking down barriers and making academic research more accessible. This is exactly what Lianne Cho and colleagues are doing at the University of British Columbia, with the ‘Community Brain Art’ programme. Cho is looking at depressive symptoms in the homeless and precariously housed populations of Vancouver’s Downtown East Side (DTES). The Community Brain Art project is meant to deliver the quantitative findings from UBC Professor William Horner’s longitudinal Hotel Study, begun in 2008, to a wider audience in a more relevant and easily digestible way.

In Horner’s continuing Hotel Study, participants were recruited from the single room

there, how they developed the mental health and the physical conditions they have, and how those things changed over time. The underlying idea is that understanding the relationship between all these factors might enable solutions on how to best support this population.

Participants have monthly health assessments through questionnaires about depressive symptoms they experience, potential psychosis, and substance use. They are asked if they have seen a doctor in the past six months, have had any head injuries, and if their social supports are sufficient.

The team on the Community Brain Art program that grew out of the Hotel Study includes researchers, medical students, doctors, social workers, and occupational therapists, enabling them to reach community members, peer support workers, and service users. Team members are as diverse as possible, better to reflect the needs and the values of their community.

Cho, and Jake Stubbs who are in the MD/PhD program at UBC, collaborated with several others in designing the Community Brain Art programme. They were awarded the Public Scholar Initiative given to doctoral candidates whose work

community about the people’s struggles with mental health, and promote the importance of mental wellness within all communities.

“The program is made up of three core branches or pillars,” explains Cho.

says a high school science fair project sparked her interest in science. At Brown University in the USA with its liberal arts curriculum, she recalls, “I got to learn about wellness from all sorts of different perspectives, biology, chemistry, economics,

“It’s vital to recognising the importance of tackling mental health from all the different angles.

Lianne Cho, PhD candidate, Department of Psychiatry, University of British Columbia



▲ Lianne Cho.

occupancy (SRO) hotels from the DTES, the downtown community court, and St Paul’s Hospital emergency room. The study’s objectives are: to understand the people who lived there, how they came to live



▲ Mural by Jesse Gouchey.

must contribute directly to the public good.

The importance of mental health and wellness

The vision for the ‘Community Brain Art’ program is that it becomes a continuous stand-alone project which shares important results and information from the Hotel Study with working professionals and the public. The goal is to inform the

Pillar one consists of informative infographics aimed at physicians and front line and healthcare workers, eventually to be expanded to the larger community.

The second pillar is the community brain art sessions, drop-in group sessions, where people can make art related to their experience with brain health. Participants join facilitated conversations about brain health to help break down barriers and promote understanding.

The third pillar, a mural, was created based on the themes generated by the community workshop conversations about of childhood experiences, the importance of keeping in touch with one’s cultural roots, and the significance of having a sense of safety, to name a few. Cree artist, animator, and film maker Jesse Gouchey painted the mural, titled *Pimohtêhon* (passage, travel through life).

Improving brain health and mental wellness

Cho, who grew up in Toronto, hopes to become a physician and have that face-to-face interaction with patients. She

history, anthropology, education, urban studies, all of which gave me a really well-rounded look at health and well-being.”

She wants to develop research initiatives further, so she can drive process change and contribute to improving brain health and mental wellness. She believes it is important to work towards a more integrated system of healthcare with multiple disciplines working together to address all the issues and causes of mental health, and collectively to facilitate assessment, diagnosis, and treatment.

“It’s vital to recognising the importance of tackling mental health from all the different angles. Whether it’s housing, community, addressing childhood trauma, or access to medication, these are all equally important,” she says. “For me it feels like all roads lead to here and most of all I really felt like I wanted to give back to the community.”

More about the Community Brain Art project can be found here: <https://hotelstudy.med.ubc.ca/cobra>

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The ongoing commitment to ensure women’s voices are heard

Women are being silenced, violated and gaslit. And not just in Sarah Polley’s brilliant, Oscar-nominated film, *Women Talking*.

In recent weeks, New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern and Scotland’s First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon announced their resignations, citing, in part, the toll that being viciously trolled and attacked was taking on their lives. Here at home, Governor General Mary Simon’s office announced the closing of all comments on her social media accounts due to an increase in abusive, racist and violent threats. And BC MLA Melanie Mark cited similar treatment in her decision to resign.

Like the dilemma faced by the women on whom Polley’s film and Miriam Toews’ equally powerful book was based, the decisions these women are making are not free choices: they are lesser-evils necessitated by self-preservation.

Watching the film, it’s crystal clear that the women being driven from their homes by abuse do not enjoy basic democratic privileges. But we need to understand the continuing exodus of women from public life in Canada as a threat to our own democracy.

Decades of research make clear that ensuring women’s voices are integrated into decision-making in every arena – from science to business to



▲ *Women Talking* raises issues that should not only be talked about but acted on.

policy-making – delivers better outcomes.

Women Talking complements that research with rich emotional context. Although the story reflects the particular circumstances faced by a colony of isolated and illiterate Mennonite women, its message – demonstrating the heartbreaking consequences of being denied influence and autonomy – is universal.

At a time when violence against women, both online and off, is rising, the story’s broader relevance is impossible to miss. And the power of this explicit “act of female imagination,” as both Polley and Toews labeled it, comes from

privileging women’s perspectives in every frame.

Many of the vivid scenes of sexual assault or domestic abuse written and shot by men reinforce and normalize the violation of women’s bodies. But this film’s depiction is completely centered on the women’s emotional sense-making and the consequences they’re trying to survive.

The violence is evoked solely through aftermath: footage of women and girls shot from above, awakening in their beds bruised, bleeding and disoriented, calling out to, and then being comforted by one another. And it’s utterly devastating.

Some viewers raised on a diet of action flicks may spurn a movie so-up-front about its focus on talking. But they would be wrong to conclude that watching a group of oppressed women discussing, debating and coming to consensus by envisioning a shared future would merit a pass. Because the film is, in fact, a riveting and emotionally-gripping roller-coaster.

In contrast to the world it depicts, women in Canada do have a voice. But we still hold less than a third of the seats in Parliament. And we’ve had to march in the streets, to demand every bit of equality: to be able to vote... to

own, versus be, property... to be paid what we’re worth... to be protected from sexual harassment or assault, whether we work in mining or the military, health care or high-tech.

As recent events make clear, we’re not remotely there yet.

Canada currently lags dozens of other countries for women’s representation in elected office. We rank 61st in the world because governments from Sweden to Mexico have taken deliberate measures to ensure women hold a balance of power.

Informed Opinions, the organization I lead, recently conducted research to document the paths they’ve taken to achieve parity. It’s not rocket science; the steps are clear and replicable. What’s required is political will.

Women Talking surfaces issues we should all not only be talking about but acting on. We need a balance of power in this country. And to achieve that, politicians need to adopt measures that will deliver meaningful change. ✍

SHARI GRAYDON is the CEO and Catalyst of Informed Opinions, a charitable non-profit currently campaigning for women to hold a BalanceOfPower in politics.

For more information visit: www.quoiimedia.com/the-ongoing-commitment-to-ensure-womens-voices-are-heard/

Source: Quoi Media

► *“LiterAsian” from page 1*

For Pham-Fraser, the language of inclusion begins with protecting some of the most important but overlooked words – names. Inspired by her work as an educator, *The Little Girl* portrays how being forced to anglicize one’s name contributes to the painful experience of identity loss. To counter such practices, Pham-Fraser’s work highlights the power of literature in developing the core skill involved in empathy: imagination.

“It is through the medium of stories and storytelling that we all can be introduced to another perspective and way of being,” she says. “We need literature to be the springboard for reflective and critical thinking; otherwise, we will only perpetuate the racist structures we are born into.”

While *The Little Girl* was written as children’s literature with illustrations by Akemi, its use as an anti-racism teaching tool has expanded beyond kindergarten classrooms and into intermediate and post-secondary settings. Pham-Fraser attributes this broad application to the book’s wide-ranging themes, including identity, courage, implicit bias, and microaggressions.

Finding inclusion in the difficult

Discussion on inclusion will also take place in the panel “How Do You Feel?” The Aesthetic and Rhythmic Kindness of Poetry” with Vancouver’s Poet Laureate Fiona Tinwei Lam moderating

and four other poets, including Ly, participating. The focus of this panel, which takes place on May 6 at the Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Classical Chinese Garden, is how poetic forms generate different worldviews, perhaps ones that are kinder and more empathetic.

Not only does Ly’s poetry express kindness as self-care, but he also believes that the slowness of the poetic form generates kindness towards oneself.

“The slow, drawn-out pacing of my poems emanates how

being kind to yourself isn’t a process that is to be rushed or achieved quickly; rather, an experience you have to be generous enough to yourself to have,” Ly says.

For Ly, the way in which poetry requires time is also how it can foster an inclusive attitude.

Rather than turning away from the difficulties of understanding poetry, Ly suggests that being accepting of such challenges is itself a practice of inclusion.

“Isn’t one of the bases of being more inclusive taking the time to understand what you think is ‘different’ or ‘too difficult?’” Ly asks. “Poetry has the potential to allow readers to sit with a text and read and work through it at their own pace to see what conclusions they themselves can draw from it.”

In addition to a third panel on craftsmanship in storytelling, LiterAsian also welcomes attendees to book signings, writing workshops, and a fundraiser

event, “Wine & Words: Dimsum with the Authors,” that involves indulging in food, readings, and auctions. Celebration is, after all, just as important as earnest discussions when it comes to diversifying the literary world.

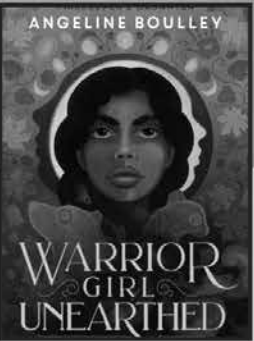
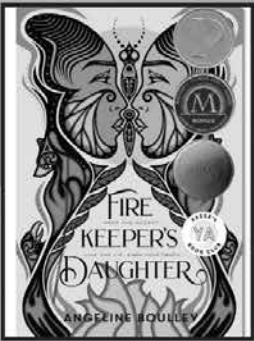
“I believe if people can find joy in their time at the event, the possibilities are endless, so let’s start with fun and joy,” Pham-Fraser says. ✍

For more information, visit www.literasian.com.



Angeline Boulley

in conversation



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A newcomer's appreciation of Canadian values

by ALISON MACDONALD

Speaking with Veronika Kotyk about her recent work, *A Nest in the North*, revealed the kindness, unexpected support and welcoming hospitality of Canadians to new immigrants, refugees and displaced people. It is immediately apparent that Kotyk is both surprised and grateful for the welcoming support and assistance she received when arriving in Canada and every day since.

A Nest in the North, a children's book sponsored by Tim Hortons and the United Nations High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR), discusses the search for safety and comfort and belonging from the perspective of a goose and its travels. All proceeds from the sale of this book go towards funding and supporting refugees, the displaced and stateless people. The images and illustrations depict the safety and peace of beautiful birds: the goose, the owl, the eagle, the heron, the dove, the bluejay, the robin and some others.

"When the war started, my husband worked for a Canadian company, and they suggested we come to Vancouver," she says. "We did not know where we would go. We were on a tourist visa in Turkey and didn't imagine being here. Everything was completely different, but the most important thing is the people – very polite, kind, understanding. I [met] a refugee from Iran, and we talked a lot. The country is on fire, and we come from different backgrounds. The feeling is we're different and very similar. It is impossible to understand what they feel, but you do what you can, if you feel you need to help others, if you have the empathy."

credit score. He understood our situation and was happy to help us. I was extremely grateful and did not expect so much support," Kotyk explains with regards to some of the challenges they faced in finding housing.

When asked about what this meant to her to be honoured or showcased in an article on the UNHCR website, her answer was shy and modest.

"I'm just a children's book illustrator. I am honoured. I told my story, did what I am good at. This work was extremely emotional and hard. So much sup-

“ So kind, how Canada works. Canada is very unusual. I was a bit shocked – what do they want from me?

Veronika Kotyk,
Ukrainian illustrator

port and help for many people in Canada," says Kotyk.

Going forward, Kotyk is working on another book – a children's book that is due out in September/October.

"It is about the celebrations and traditions of Halloween in different cultures compared to in Ukraine and other celebrations [in other countries]," she says.

100 per cent of the proceeds from the sale of her work, *A Nest in the North*, go to supporting and assisting refugees and dis-



Illustration by Veronika Kotyk

▲ The Nest in the North tells Veronika Kotyk's personal experience of coming to Canada.

This echoes her sentiments shared from the UNHCR's article about how she respects and admires that in Canada, people with differences – culture, religion, gender, etc. – all seem to peacefully coexist.

Newcomers' challenges

"We arrived and found a host family where we were allowed to stay with others they don't know. So kind, how Canada works. Canada is very unusual. I was a bit shocked – what do they want from me? I was so stressed. But the building manager was also a newcomer, and he explained the process, the

placed people through the UNHCR, described by their website as "a global organization dedicated to saving lives and protecting the rights of refugees, forcibly displaced communities and stateless people."

For more information and to learn more about Veronika Kotyk, please see her website: <https://kotyk.art>

From the United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees, UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), please see: www.unhcr.ca/?s=veronika+kotyk&lang=en

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Queer love, marriage, friendship and modern motherhood

by STAFF WRITER

Written by emerging Vancouver playwright Bronwyn Carradine and directed by Zee Zee Theatre’s artistic and executive director Cameron Mackenzie, *Unexpected* is a fully staged female-led comedy, will have its world premiere and run from May 5–21, 2023 at Studio 16. Set design is by Lachlan Johnston, costume design by Carmen Alatorre, lighting design by Sophie Tang, sound design by Shawn Sorensen and props design by Carol MacDonald.

Inspired by Carradine’s adolescent affection for romantic comedies, *Unexpected* is a love letter to female relationships in our modern world with relatable characters, a familiar setting and an uplifting message about the courage and vulnerability it takes to hold on to your loved ones.

The earnest play explores the challenges and successes of modern day female relationships, as queer partners – with the support of a lifelong best friend – while navigating careers, finances and the desire to build a family with love, ambition and compassion.

Parenthood first

Set in East Vancouver, the play tells the story of married couple Annie and Josephine who have



▲ Cameron Mackenzie.

been trying to start a family for the past five years. Annie is a struggling writer with a decade-old bestseller to her name. Jo is a painter who longs for motherhood. By now, both start to second-guess themselves and their relationship as their patience and finances reach rock-bottom.

Complicated by the presence of Annie’s brash lifelong best friend, Pam, the couple is tested when presented with the sudden opportunity to adopt a baby.

“While *Unexpected* is a joyful and insightful celebration of queer love and the intricacies of relationships, this play is truly for anyone who has struggled with their decision to become parents,” says Mackenzie. “Written by one of Vancouver’s most compelling new playwrights and full of quick-witted humour and enormous heart, *Unexpected* offers Vancouver audiences a fresh perspective on love, loss, commitment and the unpredictable journey towards modern motherhood.”

Initially developed as part of the Arts Club Theatre Company’s Listen to This Series and first presented as an audio play in February 2021, *Unexpected* was praised for its “humour, warmth, and fast-moving dialogue” (Stir Vancouver). Zee Zee Theatre’s production of *Unexpected* is the first time this play will be performed in front of a live audience.

About Zee Zee Theatre

Founded in 2008 by Cameron Mackenzie, Zee Zee Theatre has shared individual stories that provoke, inspire and foster common understanding and empathy across our diverse human experiences. For 15 years, Zee Zee Theatre has been devoted to telling diverse stories and amplifying the voices of those on the margins with a focus on LGBTQ2SI+ communities. They explore intimate moments through which the infinite complexity of human character can be revealed.

From their first production, *Whale Riding Weather*, to this season’s hits *In My Day* and *My Little Tomato*, Zee Zee continues to drive unique and provocative conversations with audiences on stages across Vancouver. They believe that theatre is for everyone and that performance can encompass more than mainstream voices on large stages.

In honour of their 15th anniversary, Zee Zee Theatre is offering an accessible pricing option. Each performance of *Unexpected* will have 15 reduced barrier tickets options, available at \$15 each, excluding the May 5 pre-view performance. ✂

For more information visit: www.zeezeetheatre.ca

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Eastern and Western, a contemplation of identity through music

by CURTIS SEUFERT

Award-winning composers and musicians Layale Chaker, Kinan Azmeh and Dinuk Wijeratne share a worldly musical mix that reflects on the ephemeral meaning of home at the Chan Centre on May 5.

The show, titled *The Journeyed Compass*, takes listeners through original compositions by the trio, blending Middle Eastern, South Asian and Western Classical music, as well as both composed and improvised elements.

For Wijeratne, the music is meant to allow the audience to reflect on home not as something constant, but instead as an ever-changing experience.

“Home is a kind of ephemeral window in time. And once you realize it has passed, then you feel that kind of bittersweet quality that people associate with the notion of home,” he says. “The Dubai that I grew up in is a very different place from the Dubai now, and I wouldn’t be able to get that back. And that’s just the way it is. I think that home is a kind of an ever-shifting definition.”

Moving through notions of home

Born in Sri Lanka, raised in the Middle East, and having lived in

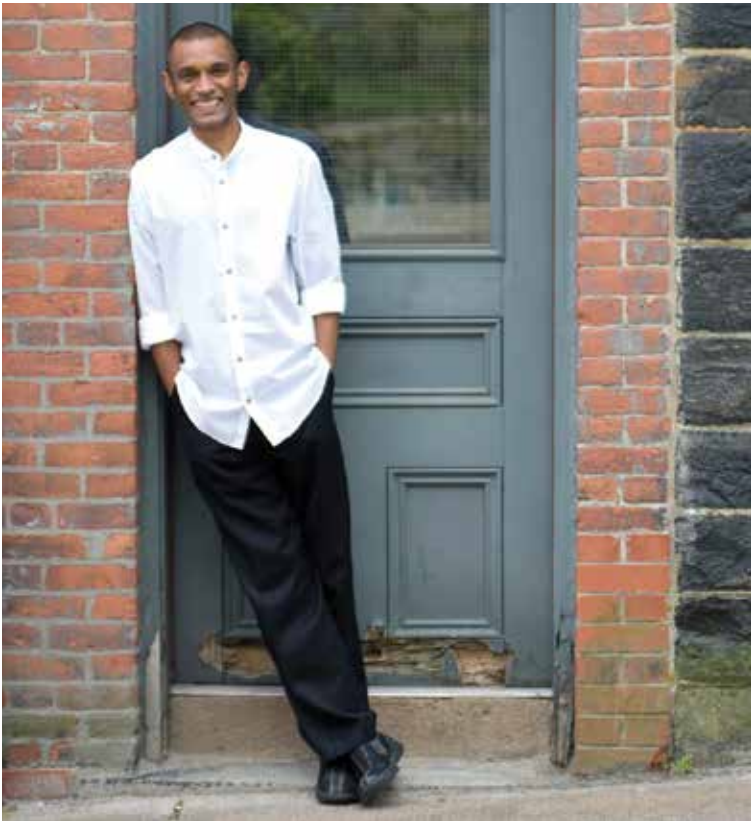
both the U.K. and the U.S. before settling in Canada, Wijeratne has had a breadth of cultural and geographical life experience. Since the places he has lived have informed his identity and sense of home, Wijeratne says it hasn’t been simple to understand his cultural identity. Or at least, he hasn’t felt able to fit neatly into one cultural category or another.

For him, music has been essential to navigating these complicated cultural questions.

“Not a day goes by where I feel either fully Eastern or fully Western. There’s a permanent conflict, and I feel blessed that I’m able to find a certain balance through my art-making that possibly eludes me in daily life,” says Wijeratne.

In addition to being surrounded by South Asian and Middle Eastern music in his early years, Wijeratne studied Western Classical music growing up. He says that moving away from home, or at least one of his earlier homes, was the thing that prompted him to explore non-Western music further.

“South Asian and Middle Eastern music was going into my ears, and it had to come out at some point. And it sort of came out in the West,” says Wijeratne. “When you move away



▲ Sri Lankan-born Canadian Dinuk Wijeratne is a JUNO and multi-award-winning composer, conductor, and pianist

from where you come from, you start to sort of explore the notion of home.”

Off the beaten path

Speaking of moving off a set path, Wijeratne says his music aims to strike a balance between impro-

visation and composition. For him, composition is a great tool for music-making, but he feels a need for more freedom and room to explore things moment to moment in his performance.

“When I was being trained as a classical musician I was dying

to get off the page,” he says. “We have, as humans, the need to improvise and go off the map.”

That spontaneity allows for an even greater level of expression in such a highly emotive topic like home. For the audience, Wijeratne says the performance is meant to create a space to tackle questions of identity through the emotions and nostalgia the music evokes.

“I think the music kind of creates the virtual space for you to contemplate,” he says. “Having heard the other pieces that [Azmeh and Chaker] are bringing as well, I know that kind of music will create that space for the audience.”

And as a performer, Wijeratne says he’s able to tap into those emotions and memories for himself, just as much, through the shared music-making process.

“I can travel to a city I’ve never been to, to play with people for one night, and feel at home,” he says. “So I think art gives you a different window into how you feel at home as well.”

For more information about the performance, visit: www.chancentre.com

For more on Wijeratne, visit www.dinukwijeratne.com



explor**ASIAN**
May 2023

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MONTH SOCIETY

Join us from May 1 - 31, 2023 to celebrate Asian Heritage Month as we showcase pan-Asian Canadian arts and culture, with local communities. Be sure to visit www.explorasian.org for the upcoming online program!

April 25–May 9, 2023

Cultural Calendar

by SIMON YEE
CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

Hopefully the spring season is going well for everyone! With so many cultural events and festivals happening these days, there's never been a better time to explore the vibrant and diverse city of Vancouver. Whether you're interested in film, music, art or history, you're sure to find something to satisfy your interests.

Bring Back the '90s!
April 20–May 27
www.theimprovcentre.ca

Let's go back to a simpler time of boy bands, lava lamps and mix-tapes where your biggest worry was which VHS to rent on a Friday night! I think we can all agree – WE MISS THE '90s! This nostalgic, energy-packed improv show will transport you to the good ol' days of dunkaroos and Bop-Its. So, throw on a neon scrunchie, join the 'live studio audience' and help The Improv Centre create the ultimate '90s Improv Comedy Show! For tickets and more information, check out The Improv Centre's website.

Bright Futures
April 26, 2023–January 14, 2024
www.billreidgallery.ca

Bright Futures brings together the innovative art of Bill Reid with new works by contemporary emerging and established Indigenous artists of the Northwest Coast. To celebrate the life of Bill Reid 25 years after his death, contributing artists were invited to ponder and critique the question: How is Bill Reid continuously inspiring contemporary Northwest Coast artists? *Bright Futures* is both a retrospective on how Northwest Coast art has evolved over the past 25 years and an invitation for the next generation of Indigenous artists to continue to create bright futures for Northwest Coast art. There will be an opening celebration on April 25 from 6–8 p.m.

Party for the Planet 2023
April 29, 11 a.m.–7 p.m.
www.partyfortheplanet.ca

The Party for the Planet returns to the Surrey Civic Plaza on April 29. Sit and learn about various environmental topics in their Speaker Series. The Environmental Workshops encourage active participation and inspire you to learn about different sustainable topics. There will also be many performers, food trucks, exhibitors and a plant sale. For more information about the party, please check out the City of Surrey's website.

The Flying Dutchman
April 29–May 7
www.vancouveropera.ca

Based on a European maritime legend, *The Flying Dutchman* tells the haunting story of a sailor and his daughter who encounter a ghost during a storm on the sea. The Dutchman, who has been condemned to wander for eternity, is searching for a bride to finally bring him peace. This tragic tale of love and sacrifice is the composer's first masterpiece and



▲ Yin Yang by Viven Chiu on display at Peace Arch Park.

features magnificent orchestration of Wagnerian proportions. This will be a new production for Vancouver Opera. For tickets and cast information, please visit the Opera's website.

Peace Arch International Sculpture Exhibit
May 1–Oct. 31
www.blainebythesea.com/events/peace-arch-celebrates-100-years

Come and see the work of international artists at the 25th Annual International Peace Arch Art Exhibit in beautiful Peace Arch Park straddling the U.S./Canadian border. The International Peace Arch Association hosts this event, open to all park guests. Artwork is selected through a juried panel that selects the art based on its artistic impression, quality, durability, aesthetics, and community appropriateness. So come out and enjoy some amazing artwork! And don't forget to pick up a sculpture brochure while you're there.

Art Vancouver 2023
May 4–7
www.artvancouver.net

Art Vancouver's international art fair kicks off at the Vancouver Convention Centre, West from May 4–7, 2023. This year, Art Vancouver hosts new artists and galleries from around the world, celebrating a multitude of voices from a diverse cultural breadth. The representation of artists from Asia, Africa, Europe and the Americas emphasizes Vancouver as a destination city for artists, collectors and art lovers alike. Featuring 37 artists from across the country, connecting local and national artists who are selling their work to an international audience of collectors and galleries. With the emergence of artificial intelligence this year's Art Talks assembled a panel of experts in Artificial Intelligence to discuss this new era of technology, exploring the future of art and how artificial intelligence will instigate a shift in the current paradigm.

DOXA Documentary Film Festival
May 4–14
www.doxafestival.ca

DOXA Documentary Film Festival, Western Canada's largest

documentary film festival, returns to present the 22nd edition, screening in theatres May 4 through May 14, 2023. DOXA will screen its roster of crucial and thought-provoking documentaries in theatrical venues across the city, bringing filmmakers and audiences together for a communal cinema experience. And for folks who prefer to view from the comfort of their own homes, a selection of festival films will be available to stream online after festival dates, between May 15 and 24, 2023.

The Sacrifice – Dada Masilo (South Africa)
May 5–6, 8 p.m.
www.dancehouse.ca

With *The Sacrifice*, choreographer Dada Masilo explores the minimalism and connection with nature and animals of Tswana dance through the lens of Pina Bausch's interpretation of Igor Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring*. Masilo, who grew up in South Africa in a Xhosa environment, and rose to the highest heights of European ballet, explores her own origins with her trademark combination of traditional, contemporary, and classical dance. *The Sacrifice* is an exploration of the pain and suffering humans can inflict on each other. What must we sacrifice? How can we start again differently? Is sacrifice essential for change? On the stage, four musicians and 10 dancers form a community whose humour and ritu-

als make cruelty bearable – just. For more information, check out the DanceHouse's website.

Unexpected
May 5–21
www.zeezeetheatre.ca

Married couple Annie & Josephine have been trying to start a family for the past 5 years. As their patience and pennies have dried up, and they start to second-guess themselves, their chance at a baby literally bursts through their front door. *Unexpected* explores marriage, friendship and modern motherhood. Playing this May at Studio 16 of the Zee Zee Theatre Company. Check out the theatre's website for more information.

Star Wars in Concert: Revenge of the Sixth
May 6, 8 p.m.
www.chancentre.com

Hear your favourite music from a galaxy far, far away, performed live at The Chan Centre for the Performing Arts at UBC. Jaelem Bhate leads the orchestra through *Imperial March*, *Across the Stars*, *Battle of the Heroes*, *Duel of the Fates*, *Princess Leia's theme* and much more! Celebrate the music of John Williams and his inspirations in this one-night-only event. For tickets and more information, check out the Chan Centre's website. Come in costume, enter to win prizes and may the force be with you...

Recruiting BIPOC youth (ages 15 to 19) in BC!

Attend events held specifically for youth of racialized backgrounds. Make new friends and connect virtually to explore the theme of:

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BC Black History Awareness Society
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