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Fostering an integrated society through English language support for Canada's newcomer population

by LUC MVONO

In a news release from January 2023, the Government of Canada credited the nation's pandemic recovery "in large part to [their] approach to immigration". Statistics Canada's 2021 census revealed that more than 90 percent of recent immigrants settled in a metropolitan area (urban centers with more than 100,000 residents), with Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver listed as the most popular locations.

The 2021 census also revealed that 41.8% of people living in

Metro Vancouver were born outside of Canada.

For many within this group, acquiring permanent residency was the result of years spent in the immigration process in hopes of securing a better life for applicants and their children.

Yet, integration remains a challenge for many as they struggle to adapt to the norms of their new environment, navigate its many systems, and compete for vital resources such as housing, and income. Various organizations and institutions offer their services to newcomers to help their settlement and integration. At Vancouver Com-

munity College – the province's largest and oldest community college – newcomer support is currently extended through their LINC program.

VCC's Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada

In 2014, VCC launched its current language support program, LINC (Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada). According to the VCC website, the program offers beginner to intermediate English speakers who are permanent residents and Convention Refugees Abroad the opportunity to learn English "while gaining knowledge

about community resources for newcomers to Canada". To enroll, prospective students must be over the age of 17 and are required to complete the Canadian Language Benchmarks Placement Test (CLBPT) to assess their English language skills.

Vancouver Community College offers the LINC program as one of more than 40 schools across Metro Vancouver, the Fraser Valley, and other areas in the province. Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) funds the LINC service and offers it through the National Settlement Program. According to the Government of Canada website, it

aims to "[assist] immigrants and refugees to overcome barriers specific to the newcomer experience so that they can undertake their longer-term integration on a similar footing to other Canadians", per the Government of Canada website.

Three times a year, VCC welcomes a cohort of new immigrants at their Broadway Campus for a three-month program with the aim of supporting them according to their unique goals.

"Every student in the VCC LINC program brings with them a unique story", says Jen Hill, communications manager for VCC.

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Collaborate on Columbia River Treaty to face today's challenges

Building ecosystem and community resilience amid the climate crisis

Negotiators representing federal, provincial and First Nation governments gathered recently in Seattle, Washington to continue efforts to modernize the Columbia River Treaty in an 18th round of negotiations. Further talks are expected in the months ahead. Much has changed since the original Treaty was ratified in 1964, and negotiators have an opportunity now to hammer out an agreement reflecting today's values and priorities, equipping this region – the size of France – to meet diverse challenges now rapidly approaching.

Although this latest round of negotiations took place outside the Columbia Basin, we hope our compelling lived conditions in the Basin – wildfire, hot water, extreme heat – help focus the negotiators on two collaborative tasks.

Make the Treaty a sturdy tool for supporting the health of the Columbia River through the precarious decades ahead. And make a more just Treaty, beginning to remedy grievous harms Indigenous peoples have suffered through almost a century of dams and reservoirs built and operated without their consent. Both tasks are served by the restoration of ecological benefits arising from a healthy, functioning river.

An important timeline faces the negotiators. In the 1964 treaty, mutual cooperation between the U.S. and Canada created the Columbia's present system of coordinated flood

Nations have long proposed that ecosystem function – health of the river – be included as a new treaty purpose. Taking this step would make the Treaty a tool that can help restore and sustain the well-being of the Columbia River and its major sub-basins and to collaboratively integrate river health alongside hydropower and flood protection. In official documents and public statements, negotiators on both sides have already mes-

“ In the colossal but intricately connected Columbia Basin, deep collaboration is the only viable path forward with much chance of success through the hot grinding times we have entered.

saged the importance of building ecosystem values into a modernized treaty.

We ask the negotiators to now publicly support this as an additional purpose and fully integrate river health into the Treaty.

Portland, Oregon, and the scattered rural towns represented by British Columbia's Local Governments Committee, are about as far apart on the Columbia River as it is possible to be. Portland depends on the coordinated, dam-based flood management that could soon change. The Local Governments Committee seeks flexibility to

voirs and increase resilience and capacity of U.S. floodplains to enhance their inherent protection of communities and infrastructure.

Early in the negotiations, a joint Canada/U.S. hydrologic modelling team pursued a coordinated exploration of future Treaty options. Although discontinued in 2017, this type of scientific collaboration could again be established to restore damaged processes in Canada in aquatic

areas and their adjacent riparian zones and to increase the potential to return salmon to the upper Columbia River.

Such positive outcomes would also promote reconciliation, since Indigenous cultural survival depends upon a healthy river.

Changes in Treaty governance are also needed so First Nations and Tribes can participate in the operational management of reservoirs and river reaches affected by dams. First Nations and Tribes offer unique contributions to river restoration given their integrated knowledge systems, enduring experience in collaborative processes, and close association with river ecosystems.

Columbia River Treaty issues are many and complex, so there is much to renegotiate. While monetary decisions about Treaty benefits matter, health and justice decisions will matter more to the river from here forward.

Cross-border collaboration and cooperation can expand far beyond what now exists. In the colossal but intricately connected Columbia Basin, deep collaboration is the only viable path forward with much chance of success through the hot grinding times we have entered. As the negotiators draw mental lines in the sand, and imagine win/lose outcomes, may they also imagine a more collaborative Treaty, for all corners of the Columbia Basin. ✍

MARTIN CARVER is the Lead/Facilitator of the Upper Columbia Basin Environmental Collaborative in Nelson, British Columbia. <https://kootenayresilience.org/columbia-river-treaty>

JOSEPH BOGAARD is the Executive Director of the Save Our Wild Salmon Coalition in Seattle, Washington. www.wildsalmon.org

Source: Quoi Media



▲ The Columbia River Treaty renegotiation is an opportunity for reconciliation.

management. But soon – on September 16, 2024 – that system will change to an uncertain “called-upon” arrangement.

While there is justified pressure to reach an agreement swiftly, the main goal must be to get it right.

The 60-year-old Treaty is about power production and flood control. Tribes and First

operate Canadian Treaty reservoirs for local objectives and improved ecological outcomes as outlined in its 2021 Recommendations Update.

Geography and history puts these parties in different corners with different stakes. But both the Local Governments Committee and the City of Portland support making the health of the river a new Treaty purpose. Improving river health provides a fertile ground for collaboration.

With ‘river health’ a full Treaty purpose, our agencies and communities can widen their collaborative vision to both reduce flooding of Canadian reser-

A note from the new Deputy Editor for the English section, Curtis Seufert

Hi there! As someone whose writing you may have seen throughout the last few years in this paper, I'm honoured to be chosen as the new Deputy Editor for the English Section of The Source/La Source. With this role I hope to serve the communities that read us by seeking out and sharing exciting and important stories that highlight diversity with each edition.

I also want to thank Monique Kroeger dearly for her help in putting together this edition, as well as for the guidance she's given me as I take on this new role, and throughout my time at The Source. I have big shoes to fill, but I'm eager to do my best. So, thanks for having me, and hello!



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Page 3: A Black Lives Matter Mural Project by artist Ejiwa Edge Ebenebe mural displayed on the Britannia Centre. Photo by Alison MacDonald.

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Indigenous Cultural Programming at Britannia

Building a safe, comfortable place, cultivating Identity, belonging and respect for all

by ALISON MACDONALD

As we move forward to a new season, the Fall 2023 Program Guide is out for the Britannia Community Services Centre in the Grandview-Woodland area of Vancouver. The centre is a space aiming to promote values of fostering identity and belonging, diversity, social justice, reconciliation and sustainability for residents of its locale and the larger Metro Vancouver region.

This season, those values are apparent through a wide range of Indigenous cultural programming like the Weaving Community Together cedar weaving program or other programs focused on practises such as traditional regalia-making, beading, weaving and dance and drums.

Leading the goal of cultivating accessible and inclusive programming is Ms. Annie Danilko of the Haida Nation, President of the Britannia Board of Management. Being of the Haida Nation and growing up in Masset and Haida Gwaii, Danilko identifies coming to Vancouver and finding a home at Britannia as a pivotal point in her life. When moving to Com-

mercial Drive when her mother was ill, the neighbourhood and Britannia were important to her as it was like a small village.

"I became involved at Britannia and found the atmosphere to be so welcoming, so many dedicated volunteers, with staff so incredible and helpful. It made a really good first impression, as a who to go to in the community," says Danilko.

Today, some of the Indigenous programming on offer this fall even holds a special connection for Danilko. She shares that Cedar Weaving is one her favourite events, having had the opportunity to make cedar hats with her mom before she passed away.

"Cedar, a part of our being grounded, part of our culture, the culture of calm and getting back to our ancestors. Or carving, the mind cleansed and bringing good intentions to the work," she says.

Community Partnerships as a Britannia ethos

Britannia also looks to foster partnerships, like its Carving Centre partnership with the Vancouver School Board which helps students connect with Master Carvers, allowing them



▲ The Britannia Centre offers a range of Indigenous cultural programming this fall.

Photo courtesy of the Britannia Centre

the opportunity to ask questions, build contacts and learn. But it is not just youth and students that are learning and connecting with their culture.

"We have workshops and people in their mid-life, [in their] 30s and 40s, and also those in the Senior Centre, connecting with their culture," says Danilko. "Their comments are 'I'm so grateful to connect with my culture. I didn't know I was missing my culture so much.'"

For Danilko, the way the programming is created is just as

important as the programming itself. When it comes to communication with others at the centre, whether they are master carvers, instructors or Indigenous program assistants, community-building and equity is always front of mind for Danilko.

"It's organic how we develop [programming]: 'The community wants that. How do we make it happen, and how do we advocate for that?' It's very community-driven," she says.

According to Danilko, Britannia's committees and partner-

ships give the centre a voice from the community, where people can bring their ideas and advocate for new initiatives and new programs together, including an Anti-Racism Anti-Oppression Committee.

"It really is organic growth: how do you get there, where do you meet those people, how to find those mentors? How we can get back to our culture, how can we help each other?" says Danilko. "It is a working machine, not siloed. There is an interconnectedness."

Overall, Danilko says it's an ongoing process, that the Centre has to work hard to realize this dream everyday through challenges, through reconciliation.

"It's a journey, we want to have inclusion. We are a space all the time for Indigenous and non-Indigenous," says Danilko. "Britannia is like a family, with a positive attitude that asks if someone is having a bad day. They care enough to ask. There is a very human aspect. Getting along, making space, using our humanity to come together as a group and enjoy." ✨

For more information, please see: www.britanniacentre.org

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Microplastic pollution: Plants could be the answer

Could plants be the answer to the looming threat of microplastic pollution? Scientists at UBC's BioProducts Institute found that if you add tannins – natural plant compounds that make your mouth pucker if you bite into an unripe fruit – to a layer of wood dust, you can create a filter that traps virtually all microplastic particles present in water.

While the experiment remains a lab set-up at this stage, the team is convinced that the solution can be scaled up easily and inexpensively once they find the right industry partner.

lets from utensils, containers and packaging. By taking advantage of the different molecular interactions around tannic acids, our bio-Cap solution was able to remove virtually all of these different microplastic types."

Collaborating on sustainable solutions

The UBC method was developed in collaboration with Dr. Junling Guo, a professor at the Center of Biomass Materials and Nanointerfaces at Sichuan University in China. Marina Mehling (she/her), a PhD student at UBC's department



Photo courtesy of UBC Forestry/Jill van der Geest

▲ UBC postdoctoral researcher Dr. Tianyu Guo is part of a team that developed a wood dust-based filter for removing microplastics from water.

Microplastics are tiny pieces of plastic debris resulting from the breakdown of consumer products and industrial waste. Keeping them out of water supplies is a huge challenge, says Dr. Orlando Rojas, the institute's scientific director and the Canada Excellence Research Chair in Forest Bioproducts.

He noted one study which found that virtually all tap water is contaminated by microplastics, and other research which states that more than 10 billion tons of mismanaged plastic waste will be dispersed in the environment by 2025.

"Most solutions proposed so far are costly or difficult to scale up. We're proposing a solution that could potentially be scaled down for home use or scaled up for municipal treatment systems. Our filter, unlike plastic filters, does not contribute to further pollution as it uses renewable and biodegradable materials: tannic acids from plants, bark, wood and leaves, and wood sawdust – a forestry byproduct that is both widely available and renewable."

Captures a wide variety of plastics

For their study, the team analyzed microparticles released from popular tea bags made of polypropylene. They found that their method (they're calling it "bioCap") trapped from 95.2 per cent to as much as 99.9 per cent of plastic particles in a column of water, depending on plastic type. When tested in mouse models, the process was proved to prevent the accumulation of microplastics in the organs.

Dr. Rojas, a professor in the departments of wood science, chemical and biological engineering, and chemistry at UBC, adds that it's difficult to capture all the different kinds of microplastics in a solution, as they come in different sizes, shapes and electrical charges.

"There are microfibrils from clothing, microbeads from cleansers and soaps, and foams and pel-

lets from utensils, containers and packaging. By taking advantage of the different molecular interactions around tannic acids, our bio-Cap solution was able to remove virtually all of these different microplastic types."

"Microplastics pose a growing threat to aquatic ecosystems and human health, demanding innovative solutions. We're thrilled that the BioProducts Institute's multidisciplinary collaboration has brought us closer to a sustainable approach to combat the challenges posed by these plastic particles," said Dr. Rojas. ✉

For more information, visit <https://news.ubc.ca/2023/08/16/microplastic-pollution-plants-could-be-the-answer>

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Food is My Teacher

A new documentary showcases our cultural and spiritual ties to what we eat

by CURTIS SEUFERT

Food is about satiating more than just hunger for SFU Food Labs co-founder and research director Tammara Soma. In *Food is My Teacher*, a new documentary streaming on CBC Gem as part of its Absolutely Canadian documentary series, Soma, alongside co-director Brandy Yanchyk, explores how communities across Western Canada use food to connect with their culture and themselves.

“I see a lot of beautiful ways that different cultures approach food, different community organizations, different leaders. But I don’t often see their voices represented,” says Soma. “I want to give viewers a bit more of that, a glimpse of what we can offer to Canada.”

Reconnecting with food

For Soma, learning and teaching about food systems has involved a deep process of reconnecting with her culture. Growing up in Indonesia, Soma says her passion for understanding food germinated from an early-life cultural relationship with food that involved a breadth of food-focussed stories, teachings and traditions.

But after coming to North America for high school, she says that her connection to food became much more complicated.

“I grew up where you could pick mangoes from the front yard and [there were] bananas and papayas everywhere,” says Soma. “[But], as I was growing up, I grew increasingly discon-

But during her time at university in Canada, Soma says that it was her Indigenous friends and Elders whom she met along the way helped her see food in a new yet familiar

enous, Sikh, Muslim, Chinese-Canadian and more – that are helping improve access to, and understanding of, food.

“They always said food is medicine, food is your rela-

exists in North America on the whole. Rather than food sharing, much of North America’s culture of ‘food hoarding’ means many people in the country don’t have enough food, while others have

“Just sharing food, making food together, being part of the community. I think that is so beautiful.

Tammara Soma, co-founder and research director at SFU Food Labs

nected from food and the food system. It came to the point where I saw food as kind of like my enemy, as a young woman really being influenced and worrying so much about calories.”

way and unlearn the notion that food is disposable.

It’s lessons like these that Soma explores in *Food is My Teacher*, as she highlights leaders and communities – Indig-

tions,” says Soma. “That’s a very different approach to food that is not at all based on the commodity model.”

Coming together

Speaking to community after community throughout the documentary, one of the most common cross-cultural themes that Soma found is a tradition of food-sharing.

“Just sharing food, making food together, being part of the community. I think that is so beautiful,” says Soma. “In the documentary I went to a gurdwara, and I, as a Muslim woman, sat down and they fed me. It didn’t matter what my religion was, even though I was in a religious temple.”

Soma notes that these pockets of community stand in stark contrast to the more commoditized, unequal food system that

far too much, often leading to a great deal of food waste.

Because of this, Soma looks to showcase the individuals and organizations that are thinking about food differently and encourage audiences to do the same.

“This documentary is like a little love letter to all of the great heroes without a cape that are doing amazing work on food and to celebrate them and to see that these people exist out here and that there is hope,” says Soma. “There are folks that are doing good work, and we need to support one another. I think the more that we grow the network, the stronger we will be.”

For more information about the documentary, visit <https://gem.cbc.ca/absolutely-canadian>



▲ Tammara Soma.

► “English language” from page 1

“Some have strong language skills, some struggle with literacy issues, some want to get their Canadian citizenship, and others want to improve their employability skills. Our students are generally relatively new to Canada and come from various countries around the world. Lately, we have had a number of Ukrainian students studying under the Canada-Ukraine Authorization for Emergency Travel program (CUAET) study with us.”

Through the LINC program, VCC delivers in-person and on-line classes covering topics including ‘Canadian Culture and social conventions’ and ‘Human Rights and the Law’.

“Within all topics grammar is embedded and shown in context” states the program website, “LINC classes recognize that learners have diverse needs, and students undergo needs assessment in their classes to determine what the most relevant and meaningful topics are for the group.”

At the end of the program, students receive a certificate of completion from the college.

Regardless of their aspirations, improving their language skills through the LINC program is a fundamental step that can hopefully lead to new opportunities.

“Some move to the English as an Additional Language (EAL)

program for more English language skills, some take other LINC programs like Culinary or Hospitality as a next step to employment,” says Hill.

The growing need for language support

Between 1991, and 2021, the number of allophones (persons whose first language is not an official language) in Canada nearly doubled; in 2017, the IRCC reported that more than half 63% of refugees arrived with “no knowledge of an official language”; in 2022, Canada welcomed a historic number of newcomers; and by 2036, the Government of Canada estimates that immigrants will rep-

resent up to 30% of Canada’s population.

Research by the Journal of Immigrant and Minority Health, and the International Organization for Migration reveal that many of the barriers faced by Canadian newcomers are deepened by low language proficiencies. Common obstacles such as isolation, limited access to social and health-related services and support, and underemployment are linked to low language proficiency.

The impact of low proficiency in Canada’s official languages on newcomers is not new. In 2001, Health Canada identified language barriers as “the most significant barrier to initial contact with health services.”

As Canada’s immigrant population continues to grow, so does the demand for language and integration support that enables all newcomer classes to settle into – and contribute to – society at large.

For more information on Vancouver Community College’s LINC program, please visit: www.vcc.ca/programs/linc--language-instruction-for-newcomers-to-canada/

For general information about the LINC program, please find the information sheet at: <https://issbc.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/LINC-Information-Brochure-Jun-2021.pdf>

Miyo the Storyteller

Unpacking cultural differences through humour

by CURTIS SEUFERT

Miyo Yamauchi, performing as Miyo the Storyteller, uses laughs at Vancouver Fringe Festival to ease into cultural conversations in her show “How To Be Japanese: Your Normal Is Not My Normal.”

“I think that my humour is self-deprecating. So if I put myself lower than everybody else, everybody can laugh at me. And then eventually they think that, ‘Oh, that applies to me, too.’ They can be more accepting,” says Yamauchi.

In her performances (running until September 15) – allowing for an entertaining glimpse of her own experience, along with an opportunity for self-reflection – Yamauchi takes audiences through curious cultural observations as a Japanese immigrant to North America.

A love of language

Yamauchi has long been fascinated with language and how we communicate with one another. In university, she majored in Swahili. She’s also taught herself web development – which is now her day job – because she enjoyed deciphering the various languages of computer programming. And in 2004 she moved to Los Angeles with the goal of

studying Spanish, and has lived there ever since.

But after a few years of living in California, and despite her love of language in general, Yamauchi found that it was hard enough to improve her English, let alone learn Spanish.

“As a computer programmer, although I’m fascinated with learning languages, I don’t talk much. And as a computer programmer, I don’t need to,” says Yamauchi. “So then I thought I have to force myself to speak more. Then I joined Toastmasters.”

Toastmasters is a long-running non-profit that helps people develop skills such as public speaking. It’s also where Yamauchi found her love of storytelling that would culminate in “Your Normal Is Not My Normal.”

After finding some success in her improved language abilities with that club, Yamauchi joined the non-profit’s more storytelling-focussed club, StoryMasters, and was immediately taken with the creative potential of the medium.

“When I visited the [StoryMasters], I was blown away with the power of stories. That’s how my storytelling journey started,” says Yamauchi.

Such is the basis for her current show, a collection of humorous stories that Yamauchi



Photo courtesy of Fringe Festival

▲ Miyo Yamauchi.

has written over the years, reflecting on her own thoughts and experiences around culture and language.

The power of storytelling

As the show’s title suggests, much of her stories emerge from, or are at least characterized by, cultural differences. For example, one of the seven stories that make up the show includes reflections on drinking culture

which, at least from a Canadian or American perspective, is a lot more intense.

“In Japan we drink a lot, and that’s normal. But when I moved to LA I thought that was universal. When I talked about drinking, everybody was like, ‘Oh my gosh, you drink a lot! Are you okay?’ I didn’t realize that oh, this is not normal.”

Yamauchi navigates these kinds of cultural difference

stories through humour, which means audiences can find entertainment even if they’re not thinking about the stories too deeply.

“When they hear my story, if they start thinking about [something] other than my story, then that means they are bored. So I need to keep their attention,” says Yamauchi. “One thing I’m excited to hear always is people saying something like, ‘Oh my gosh, one hour passed away like a blink’... That kind of reaction I always enjoy.”

But as Yamauchi notes, the stories often do have layers to them, layers that can be unpacked depending on how engaged a listener is in the story. So for Yamauchi, taking a self-deprecatingly humorous approach allows her to unlock another level of storytelling: as she reflects on stage about her own cultural experiences, she allows audiences to do the same.

“If the people cannot see that deep layer, they can still enjoy my story. [But] if they think a little bit more, or if they see my shows a couple of times, then they may start seeing the other side of the story,” says Yamauchi. ✍️

For more information about the show visit www.vancouverfringe.com/events/how-to-be-japanese-your-normal-is-not-my-normal



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CULTURE DAYS MARK YOUR CALENDAR **SEPT 22–OCT 15, 2023**
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RACISM AND HATE HURT US ALL

The music of community and culture

Come Toward the Fire’s celebration of Indigenous musicians

by LILLIAN LIAO

Music’s universal connection allows people the chance to explore another nation’s cultural heritage. UBC’s Chan Centre, situated on Musqueam territory, hosts *Come Toward the Fire* – a Sept. 16 daylong celebration of Indigenous cultures with artisan showcases, food vendors, and musical performances.

Amongst the line-up of Indigenous performers set to take the stage are Black Belt Eagle Scout and Francis Baptiste. For both, the love of music began in their childhoods and remains rooted to cultural heritage.

Musical imageries of cultural heritage

Black Belt Eagle Scout, the stage name of Katherine Paul who also goes by KP, is a Swinomish and Inupiaq musician well recognized for her indie rock songs.

Paul’s connecting of music with cultural histories and familial roots is highlighted in her latest album, *The Land, The Water, The Sky*. Focused on themes of family, personal identity, and returning home, this album’s debut song and one of its singles poignantly illustrates how music grounds Paul to her hometown, Swinomish.

“My song *My Blood Runs Through this Land* is about connecting to my family and ancestors, and quite literally just the feelings I have when I am in that connection process: being on the beach, touching the rocks, holding the waters,” says Paul.

Growing up in a musical family, Paul participated in cultural singing and drumming at a young age. She then decided to explore other types of music, including rock and jazz. The feelings of rootedness, says Paul, are best depicted through a hectic and strong guitar solo that takes place in the middle and end of her latest album’s first song, bringing forth the energy of her ancestors connecting with nature.



▲ Black Belt Eagle Scout.

Black Belt Eagle Scout is scheduled for the ticketed nighttime concerts.

The language of music in cultural preservation

Baptiste is an Indigenous singer-songwriter celebrated for featuring Nsyilxcən in his songs.

Learning and using the Syilx people’s language (Nsyilxcən), says Baptiste, which is also his own native language, in his songs has not been an easy feat.

While there are online language resources available, Nsyilxcən remains an endangered language, making Baptiste’s musical contributions to cultural preservation and revitalization all the more important.

“I like to incorporate a lot of storytelling these days,” says Baptiste, while highlighting how some of his songs are titled in Nsyilxcən. “I like to tell people and educate people about the language and vocabulary.”

Growing up in a musical household, Baptiste was 14 when gifted his first guitar by his family. From the beginning of his connection with music, it has been a source of emotional support and expression – even through difficult times, including a separation that got him to focus on thinking about family and heritage, themes of his first album.

“I’ve always used music as a form of therapy,” says Baptiste. “It’s one of the only ways I can accurately express my own emotions and work through [them].”

For his performance at *Come Toward the Fire*, attendees can look forward to storytelling, humour, and of course, music. According to Baptiste, despite the heavy themes his music explores, he tries to have fun on stage and hopes people will do the same.

“For me, the purpose of writing is to get through hard times of my life,” says Baptiste. “I always hope that people in the audience will be able to relate to it.”

Baptiste performs at the free admissions daytime stage.



▲ Francis Baptiste.

“Essentially, the sound is meant to reflect a scene – my ancestors running through the woods, on the beach, on water – I meant to put the energy in the guitar line, to emulate what that visual is for me,” says Paul.

For Paul, inspiration does indeed arise from sounds, and she will bring this creative power to her set at Chan Centre.

“We’re planning on a beautiful melodic set that is heavily guitar focus,” says Paul. “I hope people have fun, and we’ll be able to talk and share space with one another.”

For more information, see www.cometowardthefire.com

September 12–26, 2023

Cultural Calendar

by SIMON YEE
CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

As the vibrant hues of summer transition into the warm embrace of autumn, Vancouver comes alive with a tapestry of events and festivals. Crisp air carries the promise of cozy sweaters and pumpkin-spiced delights as the streets echo with the laughter of friends and families gathering to enjoy the myriad of cultural happenings. Whether you're wandering through the art exhibitions, immersing yourself in the drama of the theatre or dancing the night away at a seasonal festival, September is a time to revel in the magic of transition and embrace the essence of community and togetherness.

* * *

Christine Mackenzie:
All My Relations
Sept. 8–Oct. 26
www.placedesarts.ca

This exhibition, being held at the Place des Arts and curated by First Nations artist and educator Christine Mackenzie, intends to uplift Indigenous and Métis artists of various backgrounds and celebrate different styles of Indigenous and Métis art in a variety of mediums. Each exhibiting artist is on their own artistic path. For some, Christine is a guide and mentor on their journey and for others with an established style, she is a connector and curator. The theme of this exhibition is Mother Earth. We can all identify with the natural world regardless of our culture or background. Through this exhibition, they also hope to inspire self-exploration, dialogue, learning and sharing.

* * *

Classification Crisis
Sept. 9–Nov. 5
www.richmondartgallery.org

For thirty years, Victoria-based artist Sonja Ahlers has been making books in her distinct visual idiom that is equal parts collage and poetry. Classification Crisis, a major survey of her career, emerged from Ahlers's project of the last half-decade to prepare her archive. The exhibition includes her Riot Grrrrl zines of the nineties, one-of-a-kind chapbooks spanning thirty years, a decade of unseen work after she "quit art" in the wake of the Vancouver art boom, and other artworks and ephemera from a career of collecting images and scraps of language. Check out the Richmond Art Gallery's website for more information about the exhibit.



▲ *Sonja Ahlers, Rabbit Queen, 2020, mixed media, 16" x 16 1/2".*

* * *

Intimacy and Distances
Sept. 9–Nov. 10
www.centrea.org

Intimacy and Distances, Tokyo based interdisciplinary artist Maiko Jinushi's first solo exhibi-



▲ *They Found Us by Christine Mackenzie.*

tion in Canada, consists of four short video works and preliminary drawings. For over a decade, Maiko Jinushi has been creating video works internationally, as a visual form of literary experience, exploring the relationship with others in unique ways through dialogue and collaborative performance with various artists. Jinushi's distinctive work reflects the exchange of invisible energy that is not directly spoken or seen, through intimate conversations and exchanges of actions between herself and others. The video works in this exhibition, composed of shorter pieces, poems and essays, describe her unique intimate gaze and the insurmountable distance between her and others.

* * *

Cultural Humility in an Age of Growth
Sept. 14, 6–7:30 p.m.
www.thepolygon.ca

The current "psychedelic renaissance" has seen both renewed interest in the therapeutic potential of traditional plant medicines, and a rise in cultural appropriation and infringements on Indigenous Peoples' rights in this burgeoning industry. Potawatomi Woman and Truth and Reconciliation Consultant Kim Haxton will join Sussan Yáñez, Mapuche, Andean, Euroamerican Cultural Facilitator, in a discussion on culturally respectful approaches to Indigenous knowledges and concrete actions that can be taken to curtail harm. Drawing on their ongoing research, they will share insights into walking with plant medicines, and how this can diminish the collateral damages to Indigenous Peoples and communities.

* * *

stalew pow wow
Sept. 15–17
www.stalewpowwow.ca

The stalew Arts and Cultural Society will be hosting the second annual stalew pow-wow from Sept. 15 - 17 at the Langley Events Centre. The purpose of the pow-wow is to celebrate Indigenous culture, traditions, music, regalia and art. It is a time to celebrate and preserve the rich heritage and keep traditional Indigenous ways alive. They welcome you to share in the experience of learning the important role tradition plays and how these traditions define Indigenous culture. For more information, check out their website.

* * *

Car Free Vancouver
Sept. 16 & 24, 12 noon to 7 p.m.
www.carfreevancouver.org

Since 2008, Car Free Vancouver Society has hosted Car Free Days along various main streets to nurture and grow the car free culture. By blocking off major thoroughfares, Car Free Days gave people the chance to experience what cities could be like with more space for pedestrians, not cars. In 2023, Car Free Vancouver Society is committed to car free spaces that grow inclusivity and diversity, making our communities healthier and more vibrant. The upcoming Car Free Days include Main St. on Sept. 16 and Denman St. on Sept. 24.

* * *

Emicida AmarElo
Sept. 22, 10 p.m.
www.showpass.com/emicida-amarelo

The highly acclaimed Brazilian musician, Emicida, will be mak-

ing his debut on Canadian soil as part of his first-ever Canadian tour on Sept. 22! Emicida's fusion of hip-hop, rap and Brazilian rhythms is a musical journey like no other. His thought-provoking messages and socially conscious themes resonate with audiences of all backgrounds, making him one of the most important contemporary Brazilian musicians. For tickets and more information, please visit the ShowPass website.

* * *

Culture Days
Sept. 22–Oct. 15
www.culturedays.ca

Culture Days is a national celebration of arts and culture. At the end of each September, millions of people attend thousands of free participatory arts and culture events across the country both in-person and online. Culture Days programs invite the public to get hands-on and behind-the-scenes to highlight the importance of arts and culture in our communities. The next Culture Days celebration will take place Sept. 22 through Oct. 15 for three glorious weeks of colour, creativity and community.

* * *

12th Annual Mushtari Begum Festival
Sept. 23, 7 p.m.
www.masseytheatre.com

The 12th Annual Mushtari Begum Festival of Indian Classical Music and Dance returns to Massey Theatre as one of the premiere

festivals celebrating Indian Classical Music and Dance. The MBF features Kathak/Harmonium maestra Amika Kushwaha, dazzling the audience stupendous footwork patterns and blinding pirouettes, Ghazal/Tabla Wizard Cassius Khan who combines the Classical styles of Ghazal/Thumri singing and the Tabla. He is the sole disciple of the late Malika e Tarranum Mushtari Begum and Tabla maestro Ustad Rukhsar Ali of the Delhi Gharana of Tabla playing. This year's Mushtari Begum Festival features Pt Salil Bhatt, the amazing Satvik Veena maestro from Jaipur, India, and Dr. Kamaljeet Gill, the classical Khayaal/Thumri/Ghazal artist from Edmonton.

* * *

Family Fun Mid-Autumn Celebration
Sept. 24
www.gatewaytheatre.com

Celebrate the Mid-Autumn moon with an afternoon of fun activities for the family. The Mid-Autumn Festival is often referred to as the "Mooncake Festival" because of the delectable treat that takes center stage. These sweet pastries, with their rich fillings and intricate designs, symbolize unity and family togetherness. To learn more of these traditions in a fun, playful way, bring your whole family to Gateway Theatre for a joyful experience listening to a live reading of the fourth episode of A Year of Blessings audio play series celebrating the Mid-Autumn Festival, followed by craft activities and mooncakes!



Surrey Local Immigration Partnership (LIP) is a community partnership bringing diverse voices together to build an equitable and inclusive city where all immigrants, refugees and citizens thrive.



The Surrey Local Immigration Partnership invites you to join us for #WelcomingWeek2023!

Our Newcomer Open Houses are designed to provide you with essential information, introduce you to key community partners and help you feel at home in Surrey. Organizations from across Surrey will be providing resources for their wide range of services and programs.



Open House #1

Monday, September 11
10 am – 2 pm

Guildford Recreation Centre,
15105 105 Avenue, Surrey,
BC

Open House #2

Tuesday, September 12
10 am – 2 pm

Surrey Libraries – City Centre
Branch, 10350 University
Drive, Surrey, BC

Open House #3

Thursday, September 14
10 am – 2 pm

Newton Recreation Centre,
13730 72 Avenue, Surrey,
BC

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