

# The Source

forum of diversity

The Source – www.thelasource.com – Since 1999

## Disability advocacy: the power of lived experiences



▲ Jake Anthony.

by LILLIAN LIAO

**There still remains a continued need to better understand the struggles of those with disabilities, and to build inclusive societies that dignify their experiences. On Dec. 3, the UN's annual International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD) returns with the theme of sustainable development.**

"You can learn a lot about what other people need by listening to one person's story," says Jake Anthony, a local disability rights

advocate. "Don't just listen to the louder ones like myself – every person with a disability is a great resource of knowledge."

### Moving forward together

Amongst the UN's SDGs are commitments to promoting transparent institutions, fostering sustainable innovations, and ensuring equitable education. The latter of which is deeply personal to Anthony, whose mother's advocacy years ago led to him receiving one of the first individualized educational plans in British Columbia.

"I really saw the work that my mother and other people

experience and having courage to speak out against injustices.

"Using your voice, and your lived experience, as a person with a disability is something that is invaluable," says Anthony. "You have an understanding [and] willingness to learn about other people's experiences, and be a champion for others."

Guided by the popular disability community saying, "nothing about us, without us," Anthony's work emphasizes the need to consult persons with disabilities in urban planning and policy design. As governments create new

“ You can learn a lot about what other people need by listening to one person’s story.

*Jake Anthony, local disability rights advocate*

advocate. "Don't just listen to the louder ones like myself – every person with a disability is a great resource of knowledge."

For Anthony, honouring everyone's lived experiences has indeed been the foundation to his championing for more accessible communities – a career that has now spanned over 15 years.

By valuing storytelling, including his own experience living with autism, Anthony's cross-disability advocacy involves making the physical and informational structures of institutions more accessible, a commitment that aligns with the UN call to consider persons with disabili-

ties within its 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs).

did to make my life better, and to improve the lives of so many people with disabilities," says Anthony. "I saw that this is an area where I can make a difference, moving forward to creating a more inclusive, equitable, and diverse society." Inspired by his mother, Anthony has worked with various nonprofit organizations, including BC Council for Families, Kickstart Disability Arts and Culture, and Disability Alliance BC. He has also served on advisory committees for TransLink and the City of Burnaby. For Anthony, advocacy involves being vulnerable enough to share one's own

policies, that may bring further challenges to persons with disabilities – such as the banning of plastic straws (to adapt to environmental concerns) – such consultations are even more important nowadays.

"I think it's important, whether it's government or other agencies, to have more of a connection with the disability community; and figure out how these policies will affect us, and other equity seeking groups," says Anthony.

When it comes to identifying accessibility barriers within a building, Anthony advises that both visible and invisible disabili-

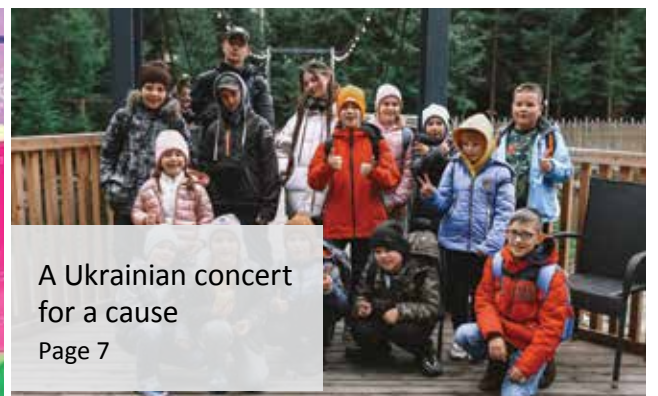
See "Disability" page 7 ➤



Highlighting Indigenous Scandinavian culture  
Page 4



A Christmas tradition with an East Van twist  
Page 6



A Ukrainian concert for a cause  
Page 7

The Cinematheque

2023 NOV. 16-30

European Union ★ FILM FESTIVAL

FESTIVAL DU FILM DE L'Union européenne



Photo courtesy of the Blue Cabin project



# Germaine Koh Creation that threads the needle of what's possible

by CURTIS SEUFERT

**Breakthroughs happen when people push the boundaries of what's allowed. This December, Vancouver-based artist and organizer Koh will be one of this year's recipients of the Governor General's Award for Visual and Media arts.**

Despite being winning various awards and holding many official titles over the years, Germaine Koh's work has a distinctly grassroots, D.I.Y., and non-specialist theme to it – one that she hopes can inspire new ways of thinking, and inspire others to think about the changes they can create for themselves and their community.

"I've gone to this institution of higher learning in order to advocate for amateurism," says Koh about her Jack and Doris Shadbolt Fellowship at SFU. "All the theorization that I do around my work has to do with showing the value of traditional forms of knowledge, talking about the satisfaction... the magic that happens when you solve problems yourself."

## Creating beyond boundaries, and the importance of amateurism

It can be hard to assign Koh with a singular label any narrower than "creator." She's created traditional art pieces for galleries. She has worked as a general contractor and construction manager to create a floating artist residency by transforming a historic squatter cabin. And from 2018 to 2020, she also served as Vancouver's first-ever Engineering Artist in Residence, leading the creation of various projects, like an interactive public display to visualize the city's environmental impact data.

But 'first-ers' and 'hard-to-pin-downs' are kind of the point for Koh. Boundary-pushing is often both a tool in her arsenal, and the purpose of a lot of her work. For example, Koh's Home Made Home is an initiative that has built, exhib-

ited and advocated for alternative forms of housing beyond what is currently allowed.

"The City of Vancouver, for example, has resisted allowing tiny homes as a form because they're not going [to] meet building codes, et cetera. And yet in the places where people have just made it happen, it's worked," says Koh.

But Koh says she's aiming to, and is often able to, "thread the

of Koh – despite not being a bespoke specialist in home-building – and her team's multidisciplinary background.

"I had done enough building at that point, and went and did some full-on training in building constructive technology," says Koh. "That project managed to exist, even though it's like a pretty hefty building... But, the way that we threaded the [regulatory] needle is that thing exists as

**“If city planners and governments were honest, they would recognize that a really big part of how things get done in cities is by amateurs.”**

*Germaine Koh, artist*

needle" of regulations and standards by using out-of-the-box thinking. That thinking comes from having experience in, and drawing inspiration from, many different realms.

"I've had to learn the language of engineering and so on. So I feel like a lot of what I do is, over the years, is building up enough fluency in these various fields of operation that I'm able to sort of translate them to each other," says Koh.

The floating artist residency, for example, only exists because

a vessel. So we're not totally tied to building codes and to using a full-on home builder."

Indeed, a through-line in much of Koh's recent work is promoting the value of non-specialists and 'amateurism.' Much of her work also focuses on bringing together people with different backgrounds one might not expect.

"We don't have people on our crew who [are] only carpenters. So everybody tends to be able to do a little bit of everything. To me this is demonstrating viability of a mode of operating less specialized, [more] problem solving," says Koh.

But while Koh is far from being "anti-expert", she thinks it's important for individuals and policy-makers alike to give more credit to the change-makers who might not have a distinct title or certification.

"If city planners and governments were honest, they would recognize that a really big part of how things get done in cities is by amateurs," says Koh. "The role of the non-specialists and the amateur, the person that's not authorized to do the things that they do, has always [been] really important." ✍



▲ Germaine Koh.

## Le plaisir of the words

by Le Stylo à mots

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L
1												
2												
3												
4												
5												
6												
7												
8												
9												
10												
11												
12												

### Horizontally

- 1- Nominat for an election – personal pronoun
- 2- Warning – higher quantity
- 3- Risk – insect – trees
- 4- Slow animal
- 5- Use the eyes – sells ice
- 6- Unskilled worker – find location
- 7- Possibility of a choice – degree owner – International System
- 8- Northeast – American soldier – group of persons
- 9- From Southern Africa – article – true
- 10- Develops – travel on water
- 11- Day before
- 12- Put in action – leaseholders

### vertical

- A) panier – numéro
- B) blonde à boire – tests
- C) tressée – enroulé
- D) docteur – possède des ongles
- E) huard
- F) aide à unir – ventile
- G) faisons mieux
- H) plat africain – panneau protecteur – ordre de départ
- I) longue période de temps – oiseaux appréciés pour leurs plumes
- J) usé – convenable
- K) tranches de vie – avoir
- L) nécessaire

For answers, see page 8

## Errata

### Vol 24, Issue 9 – A Vancouver author using words in a "Beautiful Beautiful" way

This story stated a character's name as Derik Mormon. The character's actual name is Derik Mormin.

### Vol 24, Issue 9 - The Vancouver Turkish Film Festival brings women's voices and stories front and centre

The story stated that the showing of the film *Suddenly* at the Vancouver Turkish Film Festival would be its North American premiere. The film's North American premiere had already taken place at the Vancouver International Festival in October of this year.

We apologize for these errors.

THE SOURCE – LA SOURCE MEDIA INC.

THE SOURCE NEWSPAPER

**Mailing Address**  
Denman Place PO Box 47020  
Vancouver, BC V6G 3E1

**Office**  
204-825 Granville St., Vancouver, BC

**Telephone** (604) 682-5545  
**Email** info@thelastsource.com

**www.thelastsource.com**

Founding Publisher and Editor-in-Chief  
**Mamadou Gangué**

Deputy Editor (English section) **Curtis Seufert**

Deputy Editor (French section) **Luc Mvono**

Art Director **Laura R. Copes**

Project Consultant & Local Journalism Initiative Desk **Marc Béliveau**

Copy Editors (English) **Frank Abbott, Deanna Choi,**

**Melodie Wendel-Cook**

Senior Copy Editor (French) **Louise T. Dawson**

Executive Assistant & Local Journalism Initiative Desk **Kevin Paré**

Website Coordinator **Pavle Culajevic**

Website Sepand **Dyanatkar, Vitor Libardi,**

**Silvia Pascale**

Social Media **Nathalie Astruc, Sava Rozsnyai**

Editorial Content Advisors **Denis Bouvier,**

**Alexandre Gangué**

Contributing Editors **Nathalie Astruc, Simon Yee**

Illustrator **Joseph Laquerre**

Writers **Nathalie Astruc, Marie-Paule**

**Berthiaume, Chaimae Chouiekh, Élodie**

**Dorsel, Alois Gallet, Lillian Liao, Jiratchaya**

**Piamkulvanich, Megavarshini G. Somasundaram,**

**Élisabeth Saulnier, Drew Stewart, Simon Yee,**

**Robert Zajtmann**

Translation **Barry Brisebois, Louise Dawson,**

**Monique Kroeger, Luc Mvono**

Distribution **Joseph Laquerre, Kevin Paré**

Photo credits for front cover

Page 4: Photo by **Antti Saario**

Page 6: Photo by **Emily Cooper**. Illustration by **Cindy Mochizuki**.

Page 7: Photo courtesy of **Ukrainian Canadian**

**Advocacy Group**

### LEGALITIES

The Source shall not be liable for slight changes or typographical errors that do not lessen the value of an advertisement. The Source's liability for other errors or omissions in connection to any published advertisement is strictly limited to the repeat of the advertisement in future publications or for the refund of any monies paid for the advertisement. We welcome appropriate, unsolicited editorial submissions if accompanied by the author's real name, address and telephone number. The author should retain the original as we cannot return submissions without prior agreement, nor does submission guarantee publication.

For advertising call: (604) 682-5545





## Let the European Films... CharmEU!

The European Film Festival returns in a new hybrid edition! Experience the richness of Europe through 27 unique films from 27 countries.

Join the 2023 edition and embark on a cinematic journey across the European continent. Experience exceptional stories from prestigious competitions, including heartwarming friendships and strong women journeys. Get ready for an unforgettable experience, navigating narratives across all genres, documentaries, captivating drama, and delightful comedies! This year also features a special fundraiser screening for Ukraine adding an extra film to the lineup.

To add a special touch to the big-screen celebration of great storytelling, special guests honour us by joining for Q&A sessions—talented directors Maria Douza ('LISTEN', Greece) and Martin Bonnici ('A VIPER'S PIT', Malta), alongside promising actor Miklos H. Vecsei, the lead in 'SEMMELEWEIS' (Hungary).

As introduced since 2020, the EUFF offers a selection of online screenings. These films will be available online across Canada. While not every film will be online, a substantial part of the Festival line-up is, giving anyone anywhere in Canada the chance to see the best of contemporary filmmaking in the European Union. So, if you see a film you like during the Festival in person, you can watch it again online and, better still, you can tell your friends about it – wherever they live – and they'll be able to watch it, too. The cross-Canada online EUFF will take place after the in-person Festival concludes, from December 1 to 17, with all films available during that entire period. Grab your tickets at [www.euffto.com](http://www.euffto.com)!

In-person or online, the goals have remained the same:

- Reflect the excellence and innovation of European independent cinema
- Give award-winning films their Canadian premieres
- Give voice to relevant European filmmakers in Canada
- Foster collaboration and engage in cultural dialogues between Canadian and EU communities
- Promote diversity

Participating EU countries include: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden.

Not to be missed: "The Charming Taste of Europe wine tasting event at Spadina Theatre, on November 19th, just before (7:45pm - 8:15pm) the screening of the Italian film "The Spring of my life".

See you at the movies!

### About the Charming Taste of Europe

The Charming Taste of Europe is a special project that introduces exquisite items to the United States and Canada, such as Italian and French wine and fresh fruit from Greece, that showcase all of Europe's charm, beauty, culture, history, art, heritage, and unmistakable tastes.

The mission of The Charming taste of Europe, co-funded by the European Union, is to increase awareness of the merits and quality standards of select European wines and fresh fruits with promotional activities in the competitive markets of the United States of America and Canada.

The Charming Taste of Europe project is promoted by the Consortium for the Protection of Wines of Abruzzo, the Union of Agricultural Cooperatives of Kavala (Kavala COOP), Agricultural Cooperative of Rachi Pieria "AGIOS LOUKAS," and the Union of Sweet Bordeaux Wines. These European agricultural products, famous around the world for their outstanding properties, will continue to promote with initiatives and events dedicated to consumers, journalists and professionals. Through the superb high quality Italian wines, the juicy kiwis and cherries from Greece, and the melodious French golden wines produced with the artistry of agricultural traditions, this campaign will awaken the senses and a new culinary consciousness by connecting food, cultures, and territories and will undoubtedly bring European charm into the lives of many.



Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Research Executive Agency (REA). Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.



KAVALA COOP  
SINCE 1927

SWEET BORDEAUX



Co-funded by  
the European Union

THE EUROPEAN UNION SUPPORTS  
CAMPAIGNS THAT PROMOTE HIGH  
QUALITY AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS





## Rap and Reindeer at EUFF online

# A documentary about Indigenous people in Finland through the self-discovery journey of a young rapper

by JIRATCHAYA PIAMKULVANICH

**Inspired by the connection between Sámi people, an Indigenous and often-marginalized people of Scandinavia, and their land, known as 'Sápmi' or sometimes 'Lapland,' Petteri Saario produced Rap and Reindeer, a documentary that follows the life of an 18-year-old Sámi rapper Mihkku Laiti. The film aims to take the audience on a journey with Laiti as he makes a decision between his dream career and the reindeer herding tradition of his family.**

Rap and Reindeer will be screened at The Cinematheque in Vancouver on Nov. 28 as a part of the European Union Film Festival (EUFF) 2023 and streams online as part of EUFF's online lineup from Dec. 1–17.

### Saario's career in film

Film director, producer and wild-life cinematographer Petteri Saario runs an independent production company, DocArt, whose work explores the changing relationship between man and nature. His career is driven by an interest in outdoor activities he developed from such a young age.

"Even in the winter time and when I am inside, I try to find the nearest window because I want

to see what's there outdoors," says Saario.

Saario has not always worked in the film industry. While he started as a journalist specializing in environmental issues and nature, Saario later felt that this way of delivering information based purely on facts was not effective. That was when he decided to change his approach.

"So I turned to creative documentaries. I want to tell stories that have a strong emotional background," says Saario. "I believe that a good film or a creative film is the best way to motivate one to find more facts."

### Mihkku Laiti – The Young Sámi

Saario has known Laiti long before he directed Rap and Reindeer. Around 15 years ago, he made a documentary called Beckhams of Utsjoki that featured a Sámi family with three different generations. Laiti, he recalled, was only five years old back then.

"I remember when I was filming that documentary, Mihkku said to his mother that 'now that Petteri has made a film about our family, he has to make the next film about me,'" says Saario.

Although Saario did not promise anything to young Laiti, the two have crossed paths again in Rap and Reindeer. The little boy that he knew from many years ago

has now grown into a charismatic and strong young Sámi man.

Saario says he chose Laiti to be the protagonist this time due to the persistent lack of Sámi-focused documentaries targeting a young audience.

"Nowadays, when we talk about media and the youth, we very often talk about TikTok and YouTube. But I personally believe that there is a need for longer stories and feature length documentaries for children and the youth," says Saario.

Saario had also developed a plan for Rap and Reindeer to reach the young audience. For instance, he and his team worked with a Finnish organization to produce an educational package for schools to teach students about Sámi people and culture. Moreover, Saario and Laiti also went on a tour to small communities in Lapland, or Sápmi, after the movie premiere. They screened the film and held a Q&A session with Laiti afterward. The young Sámi had once again amazed the director.

"He gave very good hints to those Sámi youngsters about how to make music and he encouraged them to show their own talent. I was really impressed how he captured the audience wherever we were in Lapland," says Saario.

Besides being a role model for youth, Laiti represents young

Sámi who want to redefine their culture. Saario notices that this reflects a gap between the old and the young generation of Sámi people.

"I have noticed that in the Sámi community, the older generation doesn't necessarily know very well what is going on among the younger generation," says Saario. "So it is important to show the Sámi community that this kind of change [made by the young] to the culture is going on all the time."

### Creating ethically and respectfully

One of the reasons Saario wanted to make a documentary about the Sámi people is because people in



▲ Petteri Saario.

Finland barely know anything about them. But he acknowledged the ethical difficulties that came from him being a non-Indigenous director.

"It is really important that Indigenous people make films about themselves," said Saario. "But I think that it is also important for people who are not native themselves to make films about native people because then the angle is a little bit different. You can see things that you perhaps can't see when you are inside the culture in a small community."

Saario went on to emphasize the need for collaboration between a non-Indigenous director and Indigenous people during the filming process.

"When you make a film about native people, you always need to make it together with them," he says.

Overall, Saario hopes the film can encourage Canadian audiences to consider their cultural relationship with Indigenous people here in Canada.

"I hope you enjoy the film. I hope that it gives you something to think about your own relationship with your country's Native people," Saario says. "I also hope that this film encourages people to think about and take better care of disappearing cultures and nature." ✍

"Durational, monumental, and archival in nature"

## From Slander's Brand explores history, transformation and trauma

by MEGAVARSHINI G. SOMASUNDARAM

**From now until Feb. 4, 2023, the Polygon Gallery will host a three-person exhibition titled Slander's Brand, showcasing the works of artists Rachel Khedoori, Ron Terada and Hannah Darabi who engage with trauma and history in their artistic medium and whose work focuses on themes of duration and archive.**

Khedoori's work assembles historical news articles featuring the words 'Iraq' and 'Baghdad' and arranges them in a continuing fashion for her work, while Terada's work entails a collection of numerous paintings reflecting on the crucial moments during the COVID-19 pandemic, like the police killing of George Floyd to the electoral victory of Joe Biden, into historical paintings.

Meanwhile, Darabi's piece, *Enghelab Street, a Revolution*

*Through Books, Iran, 1979–1983*, aims to create in-depth conversations about Iran's Islamic revolution among the public by assembling archival materials which include documentary photographs and cultural magazines.

"I can talk about my lived experiences; we have witnessed the consequences of both pre-and post-revolutions," says Darabi. "I thrive and gather materials – text, photographs and music records – from various sources, assemble them and exhibit them for the public to decide, relate to and interpret."

### The history and process

While Darabi is currently using photographs for her art, earlier in life she was more inclined towards seeing photographs as simple propaganda.

"I grew up seeing photographs of political leaders across the streets and conceived the ideology that photographs acted as a propaganda machine," says Darabi.

As years have gone by, however, she has come to see the process and significance of photography. As such, Darabi became an artist that has seen the potential that art can hold, believing that art can resonate with reality. But she remains wary of how that power can sometimes be dangerous.

"I am concerned about the medium and aware my work is subjective, and my job as an artist is not to reveal truths," says Darabi. "I am aware I am not a sociologist or an anthropologist."

Darabi's piece for this exhibit came to life while she was visiting thrift bookstores in Tehran, inspired by a photography book by Iranian photographer Shahrokh Hatami.

Darabi wanted the timeline in her exhibit to hold significance. Therefore, Darabi chose the years of 1977, "the year the Islamic revolution emerged victorious," and 1983, "the year of the inauguration of Islamic office and censorship was institutionalized." These two years are the temporal bounds for her work, creating a narrative of events through images that took place during that time.

"Since I wanted to build a narrative of my generation, I rephotographed certain pages. I arranged in a way, thereby creating conversations and linkages between archival materials and the works I reshot in a contemporary style," says Darabi.

### Two kinds of public

As an Iranian artist based in Paris, Darabi says that it is

complicated to talk about Iranian history as it holds multiple points of view. Because of this, however, she's interested to see the different reactions between the two kinds of public she has in mind for this piece: Iranian and Western.

She says the Iranian audience possesses preconceived thoughts and ideologies as they are well-informed about Iran and its history, while the Western public brings in their "own cultural upbringings and interpretations." She is astonished, and sometimes perplexed, at how the Western audience observes unique details that the Iranian audience fails to notice.

"Interacting with Western audiences allows me to get exposed to their cultures. This experience enriches my artistic practice and presents me with the necessity of revisiting my culture," says Darabi.

But perhaps due to all the complications that come with how art can be interpreted, Darabi believes honesty, a deep sense of self-realization that artworks can be fictional or non-fictional, and being concerned about how artists treat their subjects are the core responsibilities of an artist.

"I kept asking myself, how do you want to express yourself as an adult? Art was the answer," says Darabi. "Art is the best thing I can do with myself and for myself." ✍

For more information, please see [www.thepolygon.ca/exhibition/from-slanders-brand](http://www.thepolygon.ca/exhibition/from-slanders-brand)



▲ From Hannah Darabi's *Enghelab Street, A Revolution through Books, Iran, 1979–1983*.

**Place your ad in The Source newspaper or on our website**

Email: [info@thelastsource.com](mailto:info@thelastsource.com)





November 16–30, 2023

# European Union Film Festival 2023

Europe without the jet lag!

Our perennial showcase of contemporary European cinema returns this fall for another best-of-both-worlds hybrid edition! Proudly presented in partnership with the Canadian Film Institute (Ottawa) and the European Union Film Festival – Toronto, along with the member states of the European Union and the Delegation of the European Union to Canada, this 26th installment of the festival in Vancouver features in-theatre offerings from all 27 EU members. A selection of films will also be available to rent online at [euffonline.ca](http://euffonline.ca) following the conclusion of our in-person festival.

Like last year's edition, EUFF 2023 will include a fundraiser screening for Ukraine, organized in partnership with the Embassy of Ukraine to Canada. Proceeds from our presentation of Antonio Lukich's celebrated comedy *Luxembourg*, *Luxembourg* will benefit the Maple Hope Foundation, a Canadian not-for-profit organization committed to helping people suffering from the war in Ukraine.

Whether on our screen or yours, we hope you enjoy this year's survey of recent cinema from across Europe.

Film notes written by Tom McSorley  
Additional notes by The Cinematheque

## Acknowledgments

For assistance in making Vancouver's European Union Film Festival possible, The Cinematheque is grateful to Diodora Bucur, Press Officer, Delegation of the European Union to Canada (Ottawa); Tom McSorley, Executive Director, Canadian Film Institute (Ottawa); Jérémie Abessira, Executive Director, European Union Film Festival – Toronto; and the Embassies and Consulates of all European Union member states. Program subject to change.

## Media Partners



## Upcoming Screenings



Till the End of the Night



Carbide



Riders



Miss Viborg



Double Blind



Freestyle



Man with the Answers



Soviet Milk



Remains of the Wind

## Issues and Ideas

## Geroscience could transform aging

Thanks to advancements in healthcare and public health, Canadians are living longer than ever before and our senior population is rapidly growing.

However, increased longevity also means that many people are living longer with multiple chronic diseases resulting in reduced function, reduced quality of life and need for increased support from caregivers and the healthcare system. This is not how Canadians want to spend the years approaching their life's end.

We need to find ways to ensure that people remain healthy for as long as possible as they get older.

Scientists in the field of geroscience are working on this and their research could have a profound effect on how Canadians age. Geroscience seeks to understand the genetic, molecular, and biological mechanisms of aging and their relationship to age-related diseases. Knowledge of these mechanisms could enable scientists to manipulate or slow the aging process.

Advancing age is a major risk factor for many diseases, including cancer, dementia and heart disease. Research has already shown that healthy aging behaviours, such as exercising and eating a healthy diet, can decrease the incidence of these diseases by changing the mechanisms of aging.

Expanding on this, the promise of geroscience is that medications and other interventions can alter the mechanisms of aging, reducing the occurrence of chronic disease with age and producing more years of good health during our lifespan. A byproduct of this may also be increased lon-

such as cancer, when taken for the long term. This is especially important for medications that would need to be taken for the rest of an individual's life. Ethics committees will need to be vigilant that participants in these types of trials are not lured by potential benefits while possible downsides are minimized.

Although it is too early to say if these drugs will ever meet Canadian government regulatory approval, geroscience has the potential to transform how we age. Through pharmaceutical interventions, we could remain healthy, active, and productive throughout much of our older years, with fewer people needing long-term care. The potential benefits to individuals, society, and the economy are enormous.

However, there are social and ethical implications that need to be addressed before we proceed much further.

We need to consider issues such as who will get access to age-slowing drugs. Should governments cover potentially very expensive age-slowing pharmaceuticals under their public health plans? While it might be expensive, it could help reduce costs related to treating and caring for older adults who are ill or living with frailty. On the other hand, these may just delay the development of frailty which will just move the costs down the road. If governments did not opt for full coverage, access would be limited to only those who have the means to obtain them, raising important equity issues.

We must also guard against those who would seek to hijack legitimate geroscience work and exploit it for their own financial gain



▲ Geroscience could transform aging but we must address its social and ethical implications.

gevity. Once the realm of science fiction, the field is rapidly advancing with extensive study in laboratories and early phase trial in humans starting in countries around the world.

In addition to novel compounds, researchers are also examining whether medications currently licensed to treat specific illnesses could also work to slow the aging process. An example of this is a trial planned in the United States assessing whether the diabetes drug metformin can delay the development or slow the progression of aging related chronic diseases. Another drug, rapamycin, currently used to prevent rejection in organ transplants, is also being studied for its anti-aging effects.

There are many challenges that need to be overcome before anti-aging therapies are widely available. These include developing the frameworks of how they are studied in humans starting with how they are judged to be effective. A key consideration is how long should the trials be? A drug may have short term benefit but may cause adverse effects,

by marketing unproven health interventions to reverse aging.

These issues were discussed at the Canadian Frailty Network and the Canadian Institutes of Health Research's Institute of Aging's Geroscience Summit which took place in Toronto on October 26, 2023. The event brought together experts from across Canada and around the world to investigate how to further geroscience research in this country such that the promise of geroscience is reached for the benefit of all Canadians. ✉

JOHN MUSCEDERE is CEO of the Canadian Frailty Network and a Professor in the School of Medicine at Queen's University.

JANE RYLETT is Scientific Director of the CIHR Institute of Aging, a Professor in the Schulich School of Medicine and Dentistry at Western University, and a Scientist at the Roberts Research Institute. (The views expressed herein are solely those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of CIHR.)

Source: Quoi Media



# An East End Holiday Tradition

East Van Panto presents Beauty and the Beast

by DREW STEWART

**Grab your pitchforks and prepare your most questionable French accent, as flurries of wonder and whimsy blow into the York Theatre. The 11th annual East Van Panto is reimagining a classic: *Beauty and the Beast*.**

“Panto” – short for pantomime – is a participatory form of family-oriented musical comedy developed in England that has spread to many English-speaking countries. Loosely based on fairy or folk tales, a panto is usually performed during the Christmas-New Year season.

From Nov. 22 to Jan. 7, the Cultch and Theatre Replacement are bringing audiences an updated

“The fact that the stories are rooted in East Van is quite a special thing, even if you're not from here.

Anita Rochon, director of Beauty and the Beast

version of the classic tale which removes the original's more troubling undertones and thrusts its modernised characters into the heart of East Vancouver.

## Representing a community

The East Van Panto's annual fairytale adaptation has become a tradition for many Vancouverites and provides some important representation for the diverse East Vancouver community. Anita Rochon, the director of this year's show, says that representation is part of what makes the show great.

“The fact that the stories are rooted in East Van is quite a special thing, even if you're not from

a member of the community for many years. Davis says the show helps represent the community, and that the community itself helps to make the show special.

“There are certain iconic East van people, East Van businesses, East end archetypes that people are going to be pleasantly surprised by in the show,” says Davis.

Davis also points out the importance of the pantomime format (which usually involves audience engagement, singing, and satire) in popularising the show.

“It's immersive, people get really excited when they figure out the rules of panto,” says Davis. “In terms of the callback system, I think it gives, especially kids, this permission to be included in a way that they can't sometimes when they go and see other kinds of theatre.”

Although it is a welcoming show for children, Davis says the panto is fun for the whole family.

“I think it's the same for the adults. It makes you feel connected and included, you're part of something,” says Davis.

## The East Van of it all

Some of the more significant East Van style choices for this year's show are directed at Belle, who, according to Davis in this version, is more independent and self determined than her princess predecessor. This Belle is also business minded and finds herself at odds with her community as a result.

“She ends up kind of being the oddball out because she's prioritising going to school and studying and getting perfect grades,” says Davis, “Then also being met with the kookiness and the fun energy that is Commercial Drive.”

While this is the first year in the panto for Davis, this will be the third time Rochon has directed an East Van Panto. Rochon says she is happy to return to the team to help make something that is so beloved



Photo by Emily Cooper, illustration by Cindy Mochizuki

▲ East Van Panto's take on Beauty and the Beast gives the classic tale a local twist.

here. These stories are happening within your city and speaking to the realities of your daily life.”

The panto integrates aspects of life in East Van not only into the setting and plot, but directly into the characters.

“Belle's father Maurice is a found materials artist, and so we go okay, we've seen guys like this on the Drive, what does their outfit look like?”

For newcomer Steffanie Davis, who is leading the cast in the pivotal role of Belle, the show displays “Certain East-Vanisms that only East Van people really know about.”

## A show everyone can enjoy

Davis became involved with the panto after being a fan and

and such a positive force in the community.

“We spend our day trying to figure out the silliest, funniest way to make a moment work. It's a really wonderful way to spend your day, it's a huge show to get up on stage with a small amount of people and a small amount of time with an East Van kind of budget,” says Rochon. “It requires everyone to be inventive and incredibly committed. But the undercurrent in the room is joy and laughter and happiness to all be together to be making something that we know the audience will enjoy.”

For more information, visit [www.thecultch.com/event/east-van-panto](http://www.thecultch.com/event/east-van-panto)

**OPEN HOUSE**

315 Walker Street  
Coquitlam BC V3K 4C7

**VOUS ÊTES INVITÉ!**

- Wednesday, December 6<sup>th</sup>
- 9:30am-11:30am
- Kindergarten to Grade 7  
English/French Immersion

Applications can be found on our website:  
[www.fatimaschool.ca](http://www.fatimaschool.ca)

**ÉCOLE NOTRE DAME DE FATIMA**  
**OUR LADY OF FATIMA SCHOOL**

**Witches, Bitches, and Canny Women**

An Exhibition of Artworks by  
Lynne Taylor Fahnestalk and Melissa Mary Duncan

November 14 - December 2, 2023

Opening Reception: November 18 - 1:00 - 4:00

Rock Family Gallery, Mission Arts Centre  
33529 1 Ave, Mission, BC V2V 1H1





## The Perfect Gift for Anyone at Any Age

This holiday season, when finding the perfect gift is a challenge, consider a truly meaningful solution. Not sure what to give to a teenager, someone with limited space, or the hard-to-please person in your life? What about those who prefer experiences over “stuff”, or those celebrating a different winter holiday? Project Amhara Foundation ([www.projectamhara.com](http://www.projectamhara.com)) has the answer.

Sponsor a book for a child in rural Ethiopia through PAF with a \$25 donation. Your contribution supports reading and learning in a community where young minds are eager to flourish. “Reading changes lives”, says founder Eyerus Felek of Burnaby. “Unfortunately, many schools in this region lack access to essential reference books and materials for recreational reading, making the learning journey challenging.”



This season, give the gift of knowledge and make a lasting impact by sponsoring a book through PAF. Your generous gesture can bring joy and learning to children in need - and it doesn't require gift wrapping or postage.

“PAF actively supports the local economy by purchasing books from Ethiopian publishers and sellers. These vital reading resources not only benefit students but also empower teachers and

parents. Your book sponsorship donations directly fuel our educational projects, ensuring every dollar you give creates positive change.”

Contribute today through e-transfer to [proamhara@gmail.com](mailto:proamhara@gmail.com) or by sending a cheque to PAF at 6589 Randolph Ave., Burnaby, BC V5H 3W3. Be sure to include “to sponsor books” in the message line. Enjoy a simplified gift-giving experience while you bring the joy of reading to a child who hasn't yet had the chance to embark on the magical journey of learning through books. Your donation can make a world of difference!

## Carol of the Bells

# A Celebration of Ukrainian Culture and Aid for Displaced Children

by CHAIMAE CHOUIEKH

**Carol of the Bells is a Ukrainian Christmas concert that is set to both entertain and make a difference on Dec. 5, at the Annex. Presented in part by the Ukrainian Canadian Advocacy Group (UCAG), the benefit concert represents a significant effort by the Ukrainian Canadian diaspora to aid displaced Ukrainian children while showcasing the rich tapestry of their culture. Proceeds from the show will go towards funding a rehabilitation retreat program for grieving Ukrainian children for trauma, art therapy, and other extracurricular experiences.**

“I felt I had a responsibility to do everything that I could to raise awareness about the war and the suffering and to raise money for programs that are helping displaced Ukrainians,” says Sabrina Furminger, director of development for UCAG.

### A concert for a cause

Founded in February 2022, Furminger says UCAG's goals are threefold: preserving Ukrainian culture, honoring Ukrainian heroes, and healing children. These objectives resonate deeply within the Ukrainian Canadian diaspora, which Furminger describes as a “sleeping giant” now awakened by the current Ukrainian crisis.

Recognizing the far-reaching impact of their efforts, Furminger and her team at UCAG sensed the urgency of the stolen childhoods and the sense of safety of Ukrainian children and felt the need to step in and help.

Their rehabilitation program, which takes place in the Ukrainian Carpathian Mountains, is a testament to that effort. The program, founded in the summer of 2022, aims to provide emotional and psychological support to over 150 children of “fallen heroes” who have been directly affected by the war. The program seeks to give back a piece of lost childhood

through experiences in nature and therapeutic activities.

“I am doing this [out of] passion and from love. We want to help these children stabilize emotionally, psychologically, and physically and get some of their childhood back,” Furminger says.

### A celebration of Ukrainian culture

In addition to being a charitable event, the concert is also a cultural showcase.

the community together,” says Furminger.

Anna Pidgorna also reflects on the significance of showcasing Ukrainian culture in Canada. With Ukrainians having immigrated to Canada for over a century, she feels it's crucial to exhibit the richness of Ukrainian culture beyond what is commonly known in Canada.

“What's important for me is to showcase the Ukrainian culture in a little more depth. [This show] kind of shows a greater



▲ The Carol of the Bells benefit concert will support the Ukrainian Canadian Advocacy Group's retreat for grieving and displaced Ukrainian children.

Anna Pidgorna, the composer, vocalist, and musical director for the concert, intends to immerse the audience in Ukrainian musical heritage. The program includes familiar tunes like 'Shchedryk', known in North America as 'Carol of the Bells'. This piece, originally Ukrainian, was adapted and popularized in the West, reflecting the cultural exchange and influence Ukraine has had globally. Pidgorna will be joined by the guitarist Denys Panchenko and the Kolo Ukrainian Choir.

“We wanted to show Ukrainian talent and as much Ukrainian music as we thought we could,” Pidgorna says.

Furminger emphasizes that the benefit concert dual looks at supporting children affected by the war while celebrating Ukrainian culture. For Furminger, it's a festive kickoff to the holiday season, uniting the community for a common cause.

“This concert is a lot of things. It is helping kids. It is bringing

range of Ukrainian culture than a lot of people in Canada know,” says Pidgorna.

With 70% of the show already booked, the event looks to be a significant milestone in the Ukrainian Canadian community's efforts to support their homeland.

All in all, Furminger hopes it will serve as a powerful symbol of cultural pride and a crucial step towards healing for the Ukrainian community, and invites all to enjoy the show and support the cause.

“In the diaspora in Canada, we have not forgotten Ukrainians,” says Furminger. “If you are not Ukrainian, you are welcome to attend as well and to stand with us.”

For more information about the event, visit [www.vancouvercivictheatres.com/events/carol-of-the-bells-a-ukrainian-christmas-in-music-dec-5-2023](http://www.vancouvercivictheatres.com/events/carol-of-the-bells-a-ukrainian-christmas-in-music-dec-5-2023)

## Kyle McKearney

A ROGUE FOLK CLUB PRESENTATION

Kyle is a Metis artist from Calgary who won the 2023 Canadian Folk Music Award for Contemporary Singer of the Year. His album Down-Home received a 2022 Canadian Country Music Association award nomination for Alternative Country Album of the Year. He has received two Western Canadian Music Award nominations.

Thursday, December 7 at 8pm

Live in the Hall and Livestreamed

Mel Lehan Hall at St. James - 3214 West 10th Ave

[www.roguefolk.com](http://www.roguefolk.com)

### ► “Disability” from page 1

ties must be considered. An example of a building that failed to meet these requirements is Burnaby's C.G. Brown Memorial Pool.

“The wheelchair lifts, to get people into the pools, were really not working properly; the pool deck wasn't wide enough, if they were wheelchair users or needed a bit of extra space,” says Anthony. “A lot of people that are neurodivergent sometimes need more space to be away from people, to not be overloaded.”

### Getting rid of insiders' secrets

For Anthony, accessibility means creating spaces that are welcoming and enjoyable to everyone – a value that is currently still missing from some government services. Throughout his advocacy work, Anthony has observed how being able to access and navigate social services, such as income assistance, remains a key issue for persons with disabilities.

“That's a big thing – having the resources and tools available for people to move forward, under-

stand the system at least enough to access the services they need,” says Anthony.

According to Anthony, red tape combined with the lack of user-friendly resources on how to navigate these services currently leaves persons with disabilities reliant on those who are already well-versed in the system. While Anthony's mother, who worked for the government, was able to teach him about the system, the bureaucracy involved with accessing social services leaves many frustrated.

“Sometimes people get so fed up, they get to the point where they just give up, and they don't get the support they need,” adds Anthony.

According to Anthony, another accessibility issue lies in the stringent criteria used to determine whether someone is eligible for disability assistance, a process that fails to account for some individuals' needs. In addition, Anthony also notes that gaps in sensitivity training for government workers further leave applicants vulnerable.

“If you don't check every single box, then they'll say you don't qualify – even if you're not able to work because of your disability, and you have no other way of getting income,” says Anthony.

For Anthony, these concerns have become even more pressing as the Canada Disability Benefit, a new federal program, is expected to be rolled out next year, leaving many concerned that it will be just as difficult to navigate as provincial services. To break down these barriers, Anthony would like to see more sensitivity training for workers assisting persons with disabilities, creation of easily accessible tools making these processes transparent, and formation of advisory groups reflecting the diversity of lived experiences.

“More people with disabilities need to be hired into government. To not only advise but work with people with disabilities, and the frontline workers that are working one-on-one with clients,” says Anthony.





November 28–December 12, 2023

## Cultural Calendar

by SIMON YEE  
CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

I hope everyone enjoyed their Black Friday and Cyber Monday weekend. But now that that's over, the holiday season is upon us. Metro Vancouver cities and parks are adorned with twinkling lights setting the stage for enchanting holiday markets, festive songs and seasonal treats. As winter coats the surroundings in a gentle chill, the warmth of community and the spirit of giving permeate every event, making it a truly special time to revel in our city's cultural richness and festive cheer. Whether strolling through dazzling displays or immersing oneself in the arts, the city's events and festivals during this season promise an unforgettable celebration of joy and togetherness.

\*\*\*

**Canyon Lights**

Nov. 17, 2023–Jan. 21, 2024  
[www.capbridge.com/events/canyon-lights](http://www.capbridge.com/events/canyon-lights)

Canyon Lights returns to Capilano Suspension Bridge Park this holiday season. Cross the world-famous bridge, lit end-to-end with a changing multi-colour display and sway high above the illuminated Capilano River. Journey into a glittering rainforest and walk high above the forest floor on a transformed Treetops Adventure. Finally, walk along the twinkling cliffside pathway of Cliffwalk. For tickets and more information, check out their website.

\*\*\*

**Under 60 Tons**

Nov. 24, 2023–May 20, 2024  
[www.vanmaritime.com/under-60-tons](http://www.vanmaritime.com/under-60-tons)

The Vancouver Maritime Museum will be hosting a beautiful series by photographer Reave Dennison. Working exclusively in black and white film, Reave finds most success photographing at night and prints and develops his own work. Capturing an industry seldom discussed in the art world, the series is based on Reave's own experience working on tug boats. With shifts generally running two weeks on, two weeks off, Reave started documenting the extreme conditions – weather, seasickness, solitude – of this forgotten world. For more information on this exhibit, check out the museum's website.

**Answers:**

- |                     |                     |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| 1- CANDIDATE – ME   | 7- OR – GRAD – SI   |
| 2- ALARM – MORE     | 8- NE – GI – ONES   |
| 3- BET – BEE – ELMS | 9- ZULU – AN – REAL |
| 4- TURTLE           | 10- EVOLVES – SAIL  |
| 5- SEE – ICEMAN     | 11- EVE             |
| 6- PEON – ORIENT    | 12- USE – TENANTS   |



▲ The Gingerbread Men will perform at the Arts Club.

\*\*\*

**Gathie Falk: Revelations**

Nov. 25, 2023–May 6, 2024  
[www.audainartmuseum.com/exhibitions/gathie-falk-revelations](http://www.audainartmuseum.com/exhibitions/gathie-falk-revelations)

If you and your family or friends are heading up to Whistler for the winter or early spring season, why not check out the Audain Art Museum's current exhibit on Canadian artist Gathie Falk. Gathie Falk: Revelations investigates the career of the legendary Canadian artist. Now in her nineties, Falk was born in 1928 of Russian Mennonite heritage in Brandon, Manitoba. She settled in Vancouver, where she established herself as one of the country's most visionary and experimental artists. The current 2022-24 touring exhibition, with over 90 works and only two venues in Western Canada including the Audain Art Museum, underlines the incredible range of her creative output in ceramic and bronze sculpture, acrylic and oil on canvas painting, photography and video, as well as multi-media installation.

\*\*\*

**Third Edition of the Vancouver International Black Film Festival**

Dec. 1–4  
[www.vancouverblackfilmfest.com](http://www.vancouverblackfilmfest.com)

After two successful editions, the Vancouver Intl. Black Film Festival is back once again with a hybrid version to amplify the voices of Afro-descendants in British Columbia and to foster accessibility across the country. The

In-Person screenings and events will take place at the VIFF Vancity Theatre and Studio Theatre. The opening night is a red-carpet event happening on Dec. 1 at 7 p.m. and opens with Ellie Foubi's Our Father the Devil at the Vancity Theatre. An ethical and psychological thriller about an African refugee working as the head chef at a retirement home in small-town France whose quiet existence is upended by the arrival of Father Patrick (Souleymane Sy Savané), a charismatic priest with whom she is convinced she shares a heavy past in her homeland. Marie must now confirm his identity and decide if settling an old score is worth sacrificing the new life she has built. For tickets, showtimes and more information, please check out the festival's website.

\*\*\*

**The Gingerbread Men: A Holiday Cabaret**

Dec. 1–17  
[www.artsclub.com/shows/2023-2024/the-gingerbread-men](http://www.artsclub.com/shows/2023-2024/the-gingerbread-men)

Come cozy up with The Gingerbread Men this winter at The Arts Club! Prepare to be whisked away on a dough-lightful cabaret of classic holiday songs and merriment. Fresh out of the pan with their signature golly-gee charm, toe-tapping tunes and buttery-smooth harmonies, these crooners are the perfect recipe for a holly jolly good time. This dashing, debonair, cookie-crazed quartet is served with a side of ham & cheese. They gleefully infuse their performances with witty banter, heartfelt nostalgia, and a celebration of festive traditions, while their playful twists and surprises add a dash of excitement to the mixing bowl. The Gingerbread Men are sure to gingersnap you into the Christmas spirit!

\*\*\*

**...wreckage upon wreckage...**

Dec. 2–3  
[www.vact.ca/wreckage-upon-wreckage](http://www.vact.ca/wreckage-upon-wreckage)

The Vancouver Asian Canadian Theatre (vAct) will be presenting ...wreckage upon wreckage..., created by A Wake of Vultures under the artistic leadership of award-winning sound artist Nancy Tam. In this durational performance installation, Tam documents her existence by encasing her body with cling film and tape to create translucent skin-like creatures from dawn to dusk, accompanied by an immersive soundscape. Each human-shaped chrysalis is then moulted, and the process begins again. The installation is a meditation on history, time and the body – a constant movement toward the future while leaving behind corporeal traces of the past.

\*\*\*

**Make It: The Handmade Revolution in Vancouver**

Dec. 7–10  
[www.makeitshow.ca/vancouver](http://www.makeitshow.ca/vancouver)

Since 2008, Make It has grown to become one of the most popular and well-attended craft fairs in Canada, with biannual shows in Vancouver and Edmonton. This massive growth would have never been possible without the support, enthusiasm and love from the amazing community. Each year, more and more conscious shoppers buy from Makies, which in turn allows them to do the work they love. From Dec. 7 to 10, the show will be at the PNE Forum with hundreds of your favourite Makies, with clothing, accessories, art, home decor, gourmet goodies and more!

\*\*\*

**Handel's Messiah**

Dec. 8, 7:30 p.m.  
[www.earlymusic.bc.ca/events/the-messiah](http://www.earlymusic.bc.ca/events/the-messiah)

Early Music Vancouver (EMV) and the Vancouver Chamber Choir celebrate the festive season with the highly anticipated return of Handel's Messiah, on Dec. 8 at 7:30pm at The Orpheum. EMV and the Vancouver Chamber Choir's rendition of Handel's Messiah offers an intimate, baroque styling of the seasonal favourite, reminiscent of the period instruments and display of virtuosity with which Handel would have been acquainted. Featuring an orchestra of 21 period instrumentalists, a chorus of 24 chamber vocalists and four international soloists specializing in baroque ornamentation performance practice, audiences will be transported to the concert halls of 18th century England, further illuminating the transcendent legacy of this universal treasure.

\*\*\*

**In Winter's House**

Dec. 9, 7:30 p.m.  
[www.musicaintima.org/winters-house](http://www.musicaintima.org/winters-house)

musica intima exists to create incredible moments – to share the power of music with their audiences, and invite them into their circle of sound. They will be presenting In Winter's House on Granville Island on Dec. 9. You'll experience the whole gamut of seasonal music including new arrangements of well known carols and music from your favourite TV specials. In this season of warmth and tradition, the connections to you and to each other create a beautiful intimacy. Together, we'll all learn what Winter's House means to the Storyteller-in-Residence, T'uy't'tanant-Cease Wyss, as well as experience diverse viewpoints through composers from a variety of cultural backgrounds.

\*\*\*

**Vancouver Erhu Quartet in Concert**

Dec. 10, 4 p.m.  
[www.vancouvercivictheatres.com/events/sound-of-dragon-vancouver-erhu-quartet-dec-10-2023](http://www.vancouvercivictheatres.com/events/sound-of-dragon-vancouver-erhu-quartet-dec-10-2023)

The Vancouver Erhu Quartet explores the sonic possibilities combining the erhu (Chinese violin) with western strings. The quartet consists of Vancouver erhu players Lan Tung and Jun Rong, violinist/violist Parmela Attariwala and cellist Sungyong Lim. Their interpretation of contemporary works is fused with the sensitivity and sense of breath from Asian traditions. At the same time, the musicians have performed/studied various musical styles to explore innovative approaches. Together they bring expertise in various genres, from traditional, contemporary, classical, avant-garde, to world/cross-cultural music. For tickets and more information, please visit the VCT website.



Reach the growing  
**FILIPINO COMMUNITY**  
in British Columbia!

Advertise in Dahong Pilipino  
THE FILIPINO CANADIAN COMMUNITY DIRECTORY  
[www.dahongpilipino.ca](http://www.dahongpilipino.ca)

