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forum of diversity

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## Listening in and coming together: Building communities on the air

by LILLIAN LIAO

**“When I first started [in journalism], an editor told me, ‘radio is like theatre in your mind,’ recalls Arndt Peltner, founder and host of Radio Goethe. “You have an open stage, and you can fill the stage however you want.”**

A syndicated show featuring German, Austrian, and Swiss music, Radio Goethe is broadcasted on Simon Fraser University’s CJSF 90.1 FM on Wednesday afternoons and Thursday mornings. Peltner’s show and the Armenian Variety Show of Vancouver Co-op Radio (CFRO 100.5FM) are two of Vancouver’s many community radio programs showcasing radio’s undying power in preserving culture.

### The treasure of radio

“You don’t need a lot of technology to go on the air [with] the radio,” Peltner says, noting radio’s accessibility in comparison to television and print media. “With radio, you need a transmitter, a generator, and a microphone, then you spread your word.”

Based in Oakland, California, Peltner moved to the United States from Germany in 1996 to work as a freelance radio and print correspondent. Prior to journalism, he studied social work, eventually interning at a



▲ Arndt Peltner.

facility for abused children in San Francisco. His care for others and passion for storytelling was then translated into radio journalism.

“I found my way to radio because [it] is the best part of journalism,” he says. “You can have somebody [telling] a story, or you can have sounds, or you can work with music and different voices and effects.”

Peltner’s early connections with radio were heavily influenced by American programs, including American Top 40 with Casey Kasem. Growing up in a part of Germany that had an American military presence, he was part of the large German “shadow audience” listening in on the American forces network. For him, these stations were a

novelty at a time when Germany only had public radio programs. “A lot of people listened in and learned English and got their first direct contact with American culture, language, and how Americans think in some ways,” he recalls, noting how the exposure to different music genres from rock and roll to soul left a lasting impact on his approach

to radio.

Genre diversity is reflected in Peltner’s playlists for Radio Goethe, which features rock, electronic, pop, and even medieval music. First broadcasted through KUSF College Radio at the University of San Francisco, Radio Goethe’s musical selection, particularly the German band Rammstein, soon attracted listeners beyond the Bay area. He then offered the show to other stations in Canada and the United States, spreading his appreciation of German music.

“One of the free spots people had [in government-controlled East Germany] were so-called ‘medieval markets,’” he says, explaining the history behind the medieval genre. “You had these bands playing there with bagpipes and all these old instruments and made songs that were critical of the government.”

Peltner notes that this genre continued to grow after Germany’s reunification, as musicians combined medieval sounds from old instruments with contemporary genres, including rock and electronic. Rather than drawing from commercial charts, his musical selections is guided by personal taste, cultivated from years of research. For Peltner, the ability of radio to capture sounds, inciting emotions, makes it a con-

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## VPL's Indigenous Considerations for Newcomers to Canada

## Indigenous awareness in Cantonese

by XIAO QING WAN

**Vancouver Public Library's (VPL) relatively new (2022) Indigenous Considerations for Newcomers to Canada (ICNC) program is designed to educate newcomers about Canada's Indigenous history and culture.**

Taking the innovative program one step further and hoping to reach out to Vancouver's broader Chinese community, VPL will be hosting the program in Cantonese for the first time on Nov. 26 at the Terry Salman Branch. The library plans to host a Mandarin version in 2025.

"The key point we want people to understand is that [Canada's reconciliation process] is a commitment as a nation," says Gladys Chen, VPL's manager of special projects.

#### The desire to learn

The ICNC is an hour-and-a-half long lecture-based program that covers the various Indigenous communities present in Canada, Indigenous histories, and how participants can honour reconciliation. The program ends with a brief question-and-answer session for participants to clarify any concepts brought up during the program.

"We have a program called ESL (English as a Second Language) Conversation Practice

and many participants in that program have expressed their desire to learn more about Indigenous-related topics," Chen says. "We also received

Although ICNC only covers basic information, it serves as a good starting point for newcomers seeking to learn more about Indigenous culture and

a written language, the translation process involved writing the key points of the program in Chinese first before presenting it in different dialects.

tions help the staff understand what newcomers wish to know about Indigenous culture and tweak the program accordingly to clarify any concepts.

**“As a person, as a settler, [reconciliation] is each one of our responsibilities as well.**

*Gladys Chen, manager of special projects, Vancouver Public Library*

the same request from the Library Champion Program, which introduces newcomers to the library.”

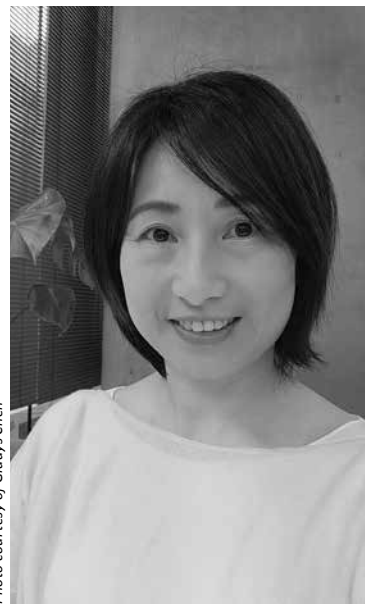


Photo courtesy of Gladys Chen

▲ Gladys Chen.

history. VPL encourages the public to check out its other programs such as the Indigenous Storyteller in Residence. There is also a second step to ICNC called Towards Reconciliation: Start Your Learning Journey, another lecture-based program where locals and immigrants can learn more about the x<sup>w</sup>məθk<sup>w</sup>əyəm (Musqueam), Skw̓x̓ wú7mesh (Squamish), and səilwətal (Tseil-Waututh) Nations.

#### Expanding the program

"There are a lot of immigrants from China at West Point Grey," Chen points out. "That's why we [decided to] translate [the program] into Chinese."

As Chinese and English are vastly different languages, the VPL staff put in extra effort to ensure that the program's translation reflected the facts as accurately as possible. Since Cantonese and Mandarin share

"[Translating the program in Chinese] was very challenging," Chen admits. "We did not want to do a translation on top of a translation, [...] so we clarified concepts with our Indigenous planner, Rick Ouellet, and we figured out how to [translate it] in Chinese. If we just looked at the English version, we might have translated it differently."

Common terminologies like "truth and reconciliation" and "land acknowledgements" are easily understood in English but can be expressed in many ways in Chinese. The VPL staff presented Ouellet with multiple translations to determine which phrase best represented each term and concept.

As the ICNC sees participants from various cultures in each session, all with different concepts of Indigenous culture, the staff receives different questions each time. These ques-

"We are always revising the materials," says Chen. "We always [try to] meet the needs of the community."

#### A nation's commitment

As the Cantonese offering of the ICNC is new, the turnout is uncertain. Regardless, VPL strives to raise awareness among as many people as possible about the histories and cultures of Indigenous communities, either through the ICNC or other Indigenous-related programs.

"As a person, as a settler, [reconciliation] is each one of our responsibilities as well," says Chen. "If the participants were only to remember one thing, we hope this is what they remember." ✍

For more about ICNC and VPL's other programs, see: <https://vpl.bibliocommons.com/events/6707f075e37c5596179fc07b>

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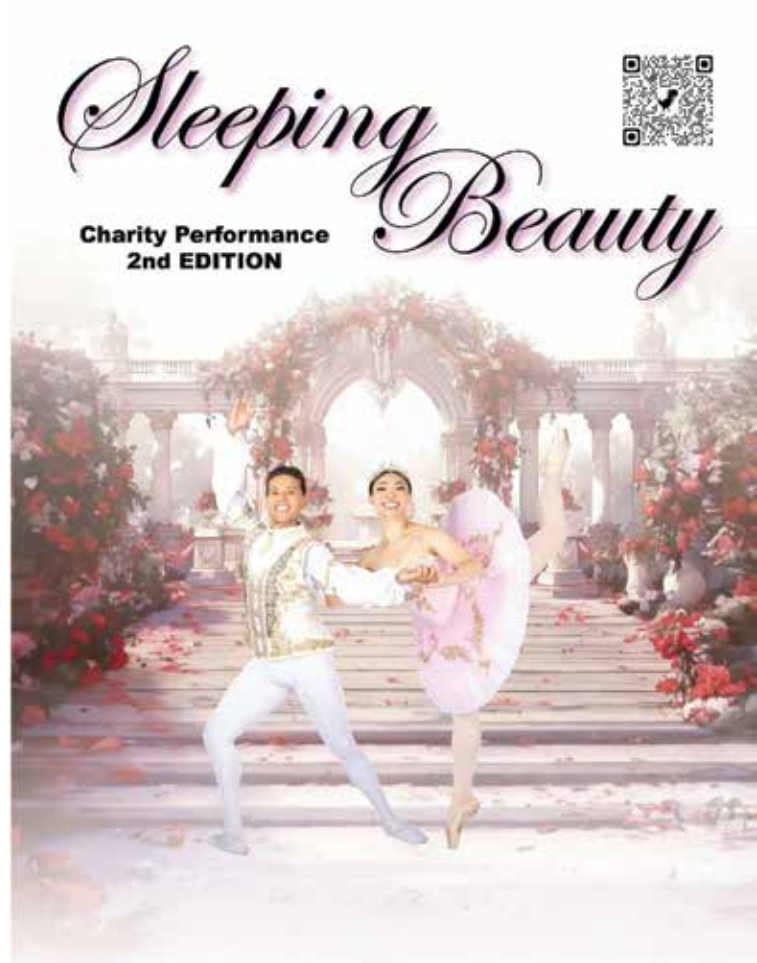
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▲ DiPaola's artwork made with assistance of AI.

Photo courtesy of Steve DiPaola

## Exploring human-centric innovations The future of artificial intelligence

by RILEY BRADY

**How can AI experts come together to dispel the panic around artificial intelligence (AI); and promote an ethical, human approach to it instead?** Simon Fraser University (SFU) hosts a panel discussion Nov. 26, "Shaping the Future with AI: Innovation in Visual and Interactive Computing." The panel will feature experts on AI sharing their thoughts on technology that could affect us all.

"One thing that I would say still very much in the future remains a challenge is translating these advances to the real physical world," says Manolis Savva, associate professor and the co-director of the Visual and Interactive Computing Institute (VINCI) at SFU, which is responsible for organizing the event.

Steve DiPaola, who will be speaking at the panel, says the discussion will delve into ethical matters: the wider philosophical discussions on how AI can contribute to our global society and quality of life as a whole.

### The human in AI

DiPaola intends to challenge the notion that AI is harmful, and only being used to create cheap art to instead center an understanding in AI as a true toolkit for visual creatives.

"You're building a phonograph [or] record player, not for how accurate it is, but what the experience to human is," he says, drawing a comparison to older technology. "I think a lot of the panel will be thinking about that experience."

DiPaola is a professor and director of the cognitive science program at SFU. His past work includes computer-based art (which has been exhibited in galleries globally) and developing 3D facial expression systems for prominent game franchises – like the Sims. When it comes to AI development, he advocates

for an interdisciplinary and ethical approach.

"Some people unfortunately assume that AI is just language model bots like ChatGPT," he explains, noting his interdisciplinary focus. "But there are so many unknown areas."

He further makes a distinction between those that just play around with AI to create images, and graphic designers or computer-based artists who could benefit from AI tools in their works. DiPaola's status as a Royal Society of Canada scholar allows him to talk with all kinds of international AI experts, and he is pleased to have SFU as his "human-centric" home base for his research.

"It isn't just about technical AI, it's about the ethical issues," he elaborates. "It's about working with creatives [and] industry."

### Visualizing artificial intelligence

Savva, an associate professor in the School of Computing Science at SFU, speaks about the exciting future of AI in general across the globe – pointing out the recent

required to ensure that these robots are safe and reliable in the human environment.

"The key thing is that it should involve a broad spectrum of people," cautions Savva. "It shouldn't just be the few who happen to be...the CEOs of the various companies that have all the resources that are developing the tools."

Savva's area of research focuses on AI using 3D graphics to create digital replicas of interior spaces. This data can then be used for AI to understand our lived environments and how they could assist in people's daily lives.

For him, the purpose of the upcoming panel is for the different groups involved in AI to have a chance for a productive conversation with one another. Specifically, the idea is to focus on the visual elements of AI like imagery, videos, and visual data with input from the various levels of expertise in the industry.

"That event is bringing together folks from SFU, faculty members and students who are doing research in AI with local industry, local government, and more generally, folks who are interested in these...recent AI advances with a specific focus on AI as applied to visual and interactive computing," he says of the upcoming panel.

DiPaola also looks forward to the panel as a space to have conversations over various dimensions of visual AI – "AI for social good." Despite exploring the philosophical side of AI, DiPaola emphasizes that his lab as well as his colleagues' work are technical and scientific.

"The great thing [about this panel] is that we're thinking of AI and this much...wider view, and some people would use the word 'human-centric AI,'" he says. "It's like designing something with humans in mind."

For more information, see <https://events.sfu.ca/event/41598-shaping-the-future-with-ai-innovation-in-visual>



▲ Steve DiPaola.

Photo courtesy of Simon Fraser University

successes of Tesla and Boston Dynamics in developing AI-powered robots that can assist in daily human life. But he also gives a general reminder that these are demos and are still in the early phases of development. For him, much more research is



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## Helping newcomer parents navigate language and cultural differences

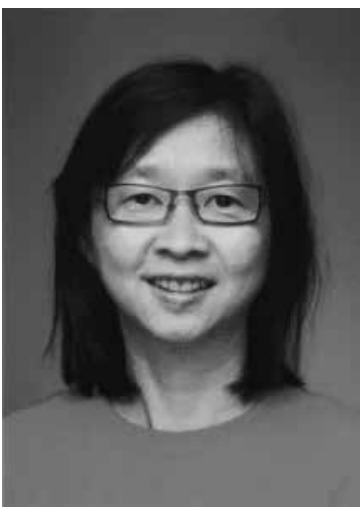
by AMÉLIE LEBRUN

**“It takes a village to raise up a child. In case of newcomer children – it may take more than one village, and also extra resources and support,” says Valerie Lai, manager of Pacific Immigrant Resources Society’s (PIRS) Outreach, Family and Children programs. To help newcomer families adapt to their new home and their children’s new environment, PIRS offers different services around parenting, including parent literacy programs, providing more tools to learn and grow together.**

“Parents have lots on their hands when settling down in a new country,” says Lai. “Most of the time, they are not aware of the needs of the children during this transition time, and when their children act out, they are not able to cope with it.”

### A transitional time

Lai adds that newcomer parents may also be hoping that their children cope well and adapt quickly, causing additional stress. While organizations like PIRS provides information and support during the transition process, Lai notes that parents are often preoccupied with meeting the financial, housing and food needs of their families before considering how their parenting style might evolve in Canada.



▲ Valerie Lai.

“Many immigrant parents are not aware of their child’s social emotional needs,” she adds. “They are not used to [talking] about their feelings and emotions themselves, but [social and emotional learning] is a big part in early years and parenting here.”

According to Lai, another major challenge is unfamiliarity with the education system. She notes how perceptions and expectations of the education system, as well as language barriers, add to the obstacles faced by newcomer parents.

“They are afraid to ask or even approach the school staff, as they have limited English,” she

adds. “[Mothers may] also rely on their husband back home and [are] not used to advocating for themselves and their children.”

The parenting programs offered at PIRS, such as “Nobody’s Perfect” and “My Tween and Me” can help newcomer families feel less alone in their journey. They do so by offering a space for open conversation, exchange, and a cultural understanding of the specific challenges those families might face. By using a sensitivity and trauma informed lens, PIRS offers opportunities for families to grow in a space free of judgements.

“Parenting groups are best to be offered in their own language, or with cultural support, so that parents can understand and be able to share freely without the language barrier,” explains the program manager.

### Celebrating success beyond barriers

The English vocabulary can also be a barrier when discussing different parenting concepts. According to Lai, different interpretations can lead to rich discussions about parenting ideas and understanding of existing cultural differences – as demonstrated through the example of the word “spanking.”

“What’s the difference between ‘hitting,’ ‘spanking,’ ‘patting,’ ‘slapping?’” she asks. “In other languages, it can just be the same word.”

Meeting facilitators and other parents that understand the same language and cultural background leads to culturally appropriate tips and approaches to parenting. These supportive environments also lead to new friendships between parents bonding over a shared language or common struggle, creating invitations for other newcomers.

“Families are reaching out after the group and also refer friends to join future groups, or parents return as volunteers to help out, as they also want to [give] back their experiences,” adds the program manager.

As an immigrant parent herself, Lai finds the work highly rewarding. She advocates for the view that parenting is not black and white – there is “no absolute right or wrong” – and that parents know what is best when it comes to their children.

The small everyday life victories offered by those programs is the success of the organizations that provide them.

“Parents share their success [...] and we celebrate their success together,” concludes Lai, emphasizing the need for more funding and long-term support of these programs. ✍️

To learn more about the Pacific Immigrant Resources Society, visit: [www.pirs.bc.ca/our-programs/#adapt-to-life-in-canada](http://www.pirs.bc.ca/our-programs/#adapt-to-life-in-canada)

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## Voices from the African Diaspora

## Catherine Daniel's musical tribute

by HELEN WU

**Canadian mezzo-soprano Catherine Daniel observes that there is a persistent lack of representation and awareness of diversity within the classical music industry. In her view, composers outside the traditional canon are still often overlooked.**

"We have been slowly discovering that there are composers of different backgrounds composing in this [classical] style, but

Haitian composers, including Carmen Brouard and Édouard Woolley, whose music Daniel has performed in the past.

"When I was living in Montreal, I had worked with this organization called *La société de recherche et de diffusion de la musique Haïtienne* and had done three different recitals with them," she says.

The Montreal-based organization curates and promotes French arts songs by Haitian composers. Brouard and Wool-

white composers, Black composers, Asian composers," she says. "We would just talk about classical, western classical music compositions, and it wouldn't necessarily have this intense focus on race and racial identity."

#### The powerful influence of music

Daniel often performs with orchestra in opera productions. However, she points out that recitals with piano accompaniment give her more flexibility

“...the full impact of Black composers and Black artists within this medium has yet to be shown.

*Catherine Daniel, Canadian mezzo-soprano*

the full impact of Black composers and Black artists within this medium has yet to be shown," she says.

Her upcoming recital, *Voices from the African Diaspora* (Nov. 28), with pianist Gordon Gerrard features a selection of songs written by Black composers in North America.

#### Underrepresentation of black composers

"There are so many composers all over the diaspora, not specifically in Europe, so many more than I ever thought possible," says Daniel. "I simply didn't know about them because they weren't made a priority."

Presented by City Opera Vancouver, her recital came about when a friend challenged Daniel to create a program featuring composers of African descent. The performance will feature works of African American and

ley immediately came to mind when Daniel was curating the upcoming recital. For English-language songs, however, she needed to do additional research.

"I found some clips on the internet... and thought: What's 'Miss Wheatley's Garden'? What are these songs of love? I got attached and hooked," she says.

She went on to explore these hidden gems. Yet despite the ease of research on the internet, Daniel notes a lack of curiosity and openness to a broader range of repertoires, especially in western music education. She believes change should begin by encouraging directors and teachers in music schools, conservatories and universities to introduce students to different possibilities and abandon the eurocentric mindset.

"In the perfect world, we wouldn't even be talking about

and foster a sense of intimacy with the audience.

"Audiences love this idea of exclusivity when there are 50 or 60 people in a room and they get to see an opera singer up close," she says. "It's a great way to share unknown music and music that I'm passionate about."

Daniel brought this curation to stage last year in Steinbach, Manitoba, and one of her favorite composers in the program is Brouard, who often drew inspiration from the Québécois poet Émile Nelligan (1879–1941). Daniel deeply resonates with one of the pieces, *Les Carmélites*, which has religious reference to a cloister of nuns.

"The imagery is these nuns marching in a line, with the sound that their feet create and how they sing modal melodies," she says. "Poetry and imagery inform the music and then the choices that I make as an artist."



▲ Catherine Daniel at the Montreal Opera Gala.

Raised in Canada, Daniel's musical upbringing was diverse, encompassing everything from religious hymns and pop gospel to characters like Anita in *West Side Story*. Later she was introduced to art songs and classical music. These varied musical influences have refined her artistry, and she hopes her audience will experience a wide range of emotions at her recital, from laughter to

introspection, feeling the transformative power of music.

"I hope it allows them to either feel what they haven't felt in a long time or return to a memory," she says. "I want them to leave a little changed, but for the better, as that's what music has the power to do." ✍

For more information, see [www.cityoperavancouver.com/season/voices-from-the-african-diaspora](http://www.cityoperavancouver.com/season/voices-from-the-african-diaspora)

► "Radio" from page 1  
necting force.

"We have community radio stations with a lot of different voices, a lot of different opinions, you hear a lot of music from around the world," he says. "It's a treasure."

#### Preserving culture

Vancouver Co-op Radio's Armenian Variety Show (Tuesdays at 6:00pm) is co-hosted by Meghri Sulahian and her high school-aged daughter, Aya Chapanian—with Sulahian's husband and Chapanian's father, Rafi Chapanian as the operator. The show was founded in 1978 by Ohan Andonian, a board of trustee and member of the Armenian Cultural Association, which continues to be the main sponsor of the program. Committed to preserving culture and building community, the current team volunteers several hours a week to share Armenian culture with their listeners.

"One of the purposes of the Armenian genocide is to annihilate the Armenian people and their belongings and their culture,"



▲ Aya Chapanian.

Rafi says. "So, what we are doing here [is] we are preserving our culture away from our country, which is western Armenia...currently under Turkey."

Sulahian was the first from the family to join the show, reaching out to then host Dr. Harout Tossonian asking to volunteer. She started co-hosting the show with Tossonian in 2013, and Rafi joined as operator two years later. Aya began by making announce-

ments for the radio when she was around 3 to 4 years old. She has since taken a larger role, reciting poetry in Armenian and delivering the health programming.

"The radio never felt like a chore...it always came from my heart," says Aya. "I enjoy going to the community and people coming up to me and appreciating how much they enjoy listening."

True to its name, the Armenian Variety Show covers diverse topics, including culture, health, cuisine, arts, and poetry. It features news from Armenia, Artsakh, and the Armenian diaspora. Delivered in English and Armenian, the show also highlights a quote of the day, community events, and occasionally, games.

"I read an article and there's this very Armenian word, and I ask my listeners, what does it mean in English," says Sulahian. "And whoever wins gets a gift card, just like a nice interaction and engagement with our listeners."

#### A lively community

Rafi creates playlists mixing traditional and modern Armenian

music. According to him, contemporary artists are refreshing traditional Armenian songs with instruments not originally used in its production, such as the guitar and saxophone. He highlights the Duduk, made of apricot wood, as a traditional Armenian instrument.

"Armenia songs are usually about love, telling a love story, upbeat, nice, especially in the contemporary new music," Sulahian adds, noting how each song shares its own story. "We do have lots of patriotic songs as well, given the history."

She also notes that some songs are melancholic, reflecting the Armenian genocide and the recent Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. The show has also featured interviews with members of the Armenian community and the broader Canadian society, including Adrian Dix and Harjit Sajjan. For Rafi, the radio remains a unifying tool bringing together the local Armenian community.

"We have a large number of elderly people in the community who cannot go out of their home, so they wait for every Tuesday at

6pm to listen, to educate themselves of what is going on in the community," he adds.

For the team, the show's impact on their audience is deeply rewarding. Listeners often text them after the show, asking for the names of songs on Rafi's playlist. Sulahian also recalls listeners sharing that they were dancing in their living rooms while listening to the show. As for the show's development, Rafi would like to see more involvement from the younger generation.

"It takes a village to build a community," says Sulahian. "I can't explain the feelings and the satisfaction – that's the only reason I've been doing this for the past 11 years." ✍

For more information on Radio Goethe, see [www.cjsf.ca/contents/radio-goethe](http://www.cjsf.ca/contents/radio-goethe) and [www.radiogoethe.org/en](http://www.radiogoethe.org/en).

For more information on the Armenian Variety Show, see [www.coopradio.org/shows/armenian-variety-show](http://www.coopradio.org/shows/armenian-variety-show) and [www.acaoofbc.com/copy-of-about-us](http://www.acaoofbc.com/copy-of-about-us)

# Changing seasons: The Taoist philosophy of Jackson Chien's art

by MAX WHITEMAN

A commitment to staying true to oneself as an artist will guide you on your expressive journey towards sharing with others, says artist Jackson Chien, Senior in Resident for Coquitlam Heritage's Intergenerational Sharing Project. Chien is hosting two events, Nov. 28–29, at the Mackin House in Coquitlam showcasing his art as part of this project connecting seniors with their communities, the first of which is a bilingual (Mandarin and English) artist talk.



Photo courtesy of Jackson Chien

▲ Jackson Chien.

"I create not for a specific goal or external validation, but for the sake of creation itself," says Chien. Nov. 29 will showcase more on-site displays of creative works, as well as a demonstration on ink sketches, printmaking and an interactive session where participants are invited to fill in a 'Peace Wish' and place it on the display board, as part of the "Let There Be Peace On Earth: And Let It Begin With Me," initiative.

### The artist's early career

As an artist and art educator in Taiwan, Chien became a celebrated painter, printmaker and art educator, winning various awards such as the National Art Exhibition Grand Prize in Taiwan in 1974; first place in the Taipei City Teachers' Art Exhibition in 1979; and a bronze medal at Japan's International New Printmaking Exhibition in 1993. "[My] creations use a variety of media including oil paint, watercolor, colored ink, ceramics and prints, as single pieces and multiple thematic combinations, to present the journey of depicting life through paintings over

the years and in the recent past," the artist says.

One such piece, titled *The Across Time and Space Starry Night*, reimagines Van Gogh's 'Starry Night' with places that Chien has lived and called home. This piece is part of a series called "This place of peace is my hometown."

Art education is a large part behind Chien's immigration to Canada. After representing Taiwan's art education sector at the World Art Education Conference held in Montreal in 1993, Canada stuck to his mind. In 1999, he held an art exhibition in Vancouver, and soon after, his two sons moved to Nova Scotia to attend high school.

"Each stage of life often uses the temporary achievements of the time as a peak," Chien says, reflecting on his early achievements. "Upon reaching it, one realizes the calm after the rapids and that there are even higher peaks [going forward]."

After retiring in 2001, Chien left his professional arts career behind to take care of his sons. He still enjoyed sketching-on-site and says that Canada's

changing seasons and diverse cultural activities has given him "creative energy."

### Artistic philosophy

Chien's art is influenced by traditional Chinese culture, specifically Taoist "Wu Wei" or Taoist inaction.

"Wu Wei – without falseness – [my art] reflects authenticity, and the essence of the art, free from artificial pretense," he says.

The process of creation, for Chien, is guided by the philosophical notion of three stages of life. The first stage requires

seeing mountains as mountains and rivers as rivers, and involves "observing and representing reality" as it appears, placing focus on "skill and sensory perception."

The second stage goes a step beyond what appears to be real, and visualizes mountains as not mountains and rivers as not



Photo courtesy of Jackson Chien

▲ Artwork by Jackson Chien.

rivers – deepening one's understanding. Here, Chien's artistic creation moves into abstract and expressive works, where he borrows "from the essence of landscapes," to express personal emotions.

The third stage completes the cycle and requires a return to seeing mountains as mountains and rivers as rivers.

"[It] embodies simplicity and a return to authenticity. It's a pursuit of innocence, purity, and harmony with nature – creating from an intuitive place of serenity," he says.

Chien adds that after he turned 70, he "used the 'return' of time and the 'fusion' of space to interweave cross-generational and cross-cultural artistic life images."

The Intergenerational Sharing Project is both an opportunity for Chien to return to his art within a professional context and a way to pass on his techniques and philosophies to the generations of artists coming after him.

"The intergenerational sharing program is part of Ritual-Spective integration, a multi-media interactive art series project of the 'Chimerik' ... which combines tradition and technology," he says.

(With translation help from Sammy Chien).

For more information, see [www.coquitlamheritage.ca/events/intergenerational-sharing-project-open-studio-jackson-chien](http://www.coquitlamheritage.ca/events/intergenerational-sharing-project-open-studio-jackson-chien)

THE ROGUE FOLK CLUB PRESENTS

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# European Union Film Festival 2024

Europe without the jet lag!

Sample the latest in Europe's cinematic achievements at the annual European Union Film Festival, celebrating its 27th edition at The Cinematheque this fall. 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 year's festival 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.

Since the 2022 escalation of war in Ukraine, EUFF has concluded with a fundraiser screening organized in partnership with the Embassy of Ukraine to Canada. Proceeds from this year's film, the crowdsourced documentary *The Hardest Hour*, will benefit the Ukraine Harmony Foundation, a non-profit organization dedicated to raising awareness about Ukraine both in Canada and globally.

Be it your first or, heck, 27th EUFF, this eclectic showcase of contemporary European cinema promises a movie or two (or many) suited to your personal cinephilic palate. Enjoy.

Film notes written by Tom McSorley

## 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.

## Media Partners



## Upcoming Screenings



Some Birds



Boléro



Un Amor



Fathers & Sons



Scarborn



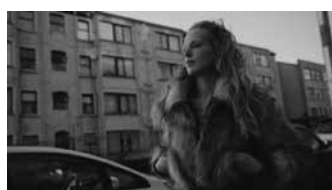
A Blue Flower



Cats of Malta



Freedom



Verdigrisvv

*Reflections on Crooked Walking* at the Firehall Arts Centre

## Friendship at centre stage

by ELAHA AMANI

The Firehall Arts Centre will present Ann Mortifee's *Reflections on Crooked Walking*, a whimsical family musical with a song for every audience member from Nov. 30 to Dec. 22. The musical's main characters—the four heroes—embark on a quest to find a cure for a mysterious sleeping illness plaguing their town, only to discover something far greater hidden along the journey: the unbreakable bond of friendship.

"In *Reflections on Crooked Walking*, the four seekers go on a journey for a cure but also learn to care for and understand each other," reflects Donna Spencer, director of the production. "They confront a lot of painful things but also realize how the friendship between them continues to grow."

### Reflections on reprise

By following the trail of clues left by the magical Doorman, the gatekeeper between worlds, the four seekers soon realize that their journey may have more challenges than they anticipated. Now the manipulative Madame Opia stands in their way, determined to stop them from uncovering the truth, and the four heroes must come together to triumph and save the town.

Spencer finds the way the four protagonists bond through adversity and embrace their differences to be one of the most touching layers of the piece.

Magic Door." For her, this song reflects the musical's theme of unexpected joys, emphasizing how opening a new door is akin to taking a leap into the unknown and how the unknown may surprise in the most delightful way.

"It's very bright, cleverly done music," she reflects. "You come out of the room feeling like life is pretty good."

This cheerful song is contrasted with another musical number, "Work, Work, Work," which is about how life can settle into a routine and become boringly mundane. The diversity of the music and how it resonates with audiences in different ways is an aspect of *Reflections on Crooked Walking* Spencer most adores.

"The music is not all light-hearted, but it's very memorable," she says.

### Cue the creativity

Every production comes with its challenges, both onstage and behind the scenes. For this musical, Spencer found that transitioning between scenes and locations posed a unique obstacle, because it happens in full view of the audience. However, through thoughtful planning and creative resolutions like lighting and costume changes, audiences are effortlessly drawn into the world.

"How things transition is a magical part of the theatre world," she adds.

To Spencer, *Reflections on Crooked Walking* is not only about friendship, but the importance of creativity. In a world with violence and insecurity, she



▲ Jesse Lipscombe and Meghan Gardiner.

"[They] understand that even though they're different, they can still bond, and that's what gives me joy," she says, noting their differences in age, culture and personality.

As the director, Spencer is primarily inspired by the world around her, and scripts that capture joy, glory or tragedy. In *Reflections on Crooked Walking*, themes of friendship and creativity are presented to audiences in the form of sparkling musical numbers, all of which moved Spencer to direct the production.

"I recognize something that I feel should be conveyed and that audiences should have an opportunity to see, and that is what drives my work," she says, noting how she often finds herself humming the uplifting melodies from the musical.

One number Spencer is particularly excited to share with the audience is "Every Door is a

finds that art, along with other expressions of creativity, is often dismissed.

"I feel that people are carrying a lot of weight on their shoulders," she says. "So, I think going to a live performance and having the opportunity to enjoy something outside of your everyday life is a really positive thing."

She is eager to direct future productions that embody the values of the Firehall Arts Centre and to collaborate with artists across Greater Vancouver. Her goal is to produce artwork that not only sparks joy but also introduces new perspectives.

"The Firehall Arts Centre's mandate is to open doors and provoke people's thinking, and I hope we can continue with the support of our audiences," she says. ✍️

For more information, please visit: [www.firehallartscentre.ca/event/reflections-on-crooked-walking-2](http://www.firehallartscentre.ca/event/reflections-on-crooked-walking-2)

November 26–December 10, 2024

## Cultural Calendar

by SIMON YEE  
CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

This is the penultimate cultural calendar before we say goodbye to the year 2024. From engaging theatre productions and enchanting musical performances to the numerous Christmas festivals and charming holiday lights popping up around the Lower Mainland, there's a wealth of events to discover and enjoy as the winter season reaches its peak.

\* \* \*

**Linck & Mülhahn**

Now until Dec. 1  
[www.langara.ca/studio-58](http://www.langara.ca/studio-58)

When charismatic Anastasius Linck meets Catharina Mülhahn, it's love, and lust, at first sight. As Catharina fights against her mother's desire for a traditional marriage in favour of her independence, Anastasius works to conceal their identity to stay alive. As the pair passionately explore gender and sexual identities, rigid 18th century society aims to tear them apart. *Linck & Mülhahn* is playing at Langara's Studio 58 until Dec. 1. For tickets and more information, check out their website.

\* \* \*

**Geoffrey Farmer:  
The Sound of Footsteps  
as Summer Walks Away**

Now until Dec. 14  
[www.westvancouverartmuseum.ca/exhibitions](http://www.westvancouverartmuseum.ca/exhibitions)

This exhibition at the West Vancouver Art Museum presents new works by Geoffrey Farmer, featuring cardboard box dioramas with paper cutouts that explore formative events and memories from his upbringing in Dundarave, West Vancouver. Inspired by Swiss psychologist Carl Jung, the works employ spontaneous play to access unconscious thoughts and emotions. This process reflects how our personal and collective histories are constantly reshaped as new insights emerge. Farmer incorporates de-accessioned books from the West Vancouver Memorial Library into his dioramas. By repurposing these printed materials into intricate, three-dimensional narratives, he transforms discarded fragments into reflections on his experience growing up in a world shaped by dominant forces that have often dictated history and identity. The work explores how these forces influence understanding of our past, suggesting that memory and history are fluid, layered and open to reinterpretation.

\* \* \*



▲ Performers from African Chamber Music.

**Canyon Lights**

Now until Jan. 19, 2025  
[www.capbridge.com/events/canyon-lights](http://www.capbridge.com/events/canyon-lights)

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. Capture an Instagram-worthy photo, sip a decadent hot chocolate to the sound of live festive tunes or get in on all the festive fun of the many kids activities around the Park. Check out the Capilano Suspension Bridge website for more information on Canyon Lights.

\* \* \*

**Lights at Lafarge**

Now until Feb. 28, 2025  
[www.coquitlam.ca/784/Lights-at-Lafarge](http://www.coquitlam.ca/784/Lights-at-Lafarge)

Get into the holiday spirit with family and friends! Enjoy the magic of one of the Lower Mainland's largest free outdoor lights display at Lafarge Lake in Town Centre Park. Free family fun! Dogs, on leash, are welcome. Coquitlam's Lights at Lafarge will run until the end of February 2025. This season's outdoor exhibit features a 1.2-km pathway that includes more lights and reimagined elements.

\* \* \*

**Curve! Women Carvers  
on the Northwest Coast**

Now until May 5, 2025  
[www.audainartmuseum.com](http://www.audainartmuseum.com)

Co-curated by Dana Claxton and Curtis Collins, the *Curve!* exhibition will shed light on a lesser-explored facet of Northwest Coast art – women's contributions to the rich tradition of carving wood and argillite. The exhibition will feature 130 works of art that include poles, panels, masks, bowls, and other sculptures all intertwined

with traditional knowledge. These works will be on loan from public and private collections across Canada and the United States. The exhibition will focus on a selection of carvers active from the 1950s to present day, highlighting the pivotal role of women artists within the larger tradition of indigenous carving along the coast of British Columbia. Check out the Audain Art Museum's website for more information.

▲ Dale Marie Campbell, *Woman who Brought the Salmon*, 2021, alder, abalone and pigment, Private Collection.

\* \* \*

**In the Belly of the Carp**

Nov. 28–30  
[www.burnaby.ca/recreation-and-arts/events/belly-carp](http://www.burnaby.ca/recreation-and-arts/events/belly-carp)

When talented but erratic songwriter Rodney DeCuro has to give a concert, spectres from his troubled past emerge to play tug of war with his well being, torpedo his relationships and plunge him into a battle for his soul inside a giant fish. This hybrid concert/poetry/reading/play includes visual fantasies by award winning shadow puppeteers "Mind of a Snail." For tickets, showtimes and more information, check out the Shadbolt Centre for the Arts website.

\* \* \*

**African Chamber Music**

Nov. 30, 7:30–9:30 p.m.  
[www.caravanbc.com](http://www.caravanbc.com)

A one-of-a-kind musical experience that reimagines the rich traditions of Zimbabwe, Ghana and South Africa through the intimate

sounds of chamber music. This concert offers a reflective exploration of African music, blending traditional instruments like the mbira, uhadi and percussion with the accompaniment of a string trio. With arrangements by Curtis Andrews and accompanied by a talented string trio, this event offers a fresh, engaging perspective on African musical heritage. It's a celebration of culture, history and creativity, inviting audiences to experience these timeless traditions in a new, captivating way.

\* \* \*

**Blessed Echoes:  
Elizabethan Lute Songs**

Dec. 5, 7:30 p.m.  
[www.earlymusic.bc.ca/events/blessed-echoes-elizabethan-lute-songs](http://www.earlymusic.bc.ca/events/blessed-echoes-elizabethan-lute-songs)

Robin Pharo and the Ensemble *Près de votre oreille* ("Close to your ear") offer a fascinating dive into the English lute song during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I. "Blessed Echoes" brings to light other treasures of Elizabethan and Jacobean song in one, two, three or four voices, which still remain unknown or poorly known, composed by famous poets and composers like Thomas Campion or Philipp Rosseter. The intimate setting of eight musicians and a typical instrumentarium of late 16th century England (lyra-viols, cittern, renaissance lute, virginal and four vocalists) allows us to savour the poetry of these works. Check out the Early Music Vancouver website for tickets and more information.

\* \* \*

**Saltwater Hank Trio**

Dec. 7, 7:30 p.m.  
[www.anviltheatre.ca/event/saltwater-hank-trio](http://www.anviltheatre.ca/event/saltwater-hank-trio)

Saltwater Hank is a Ts'msyen musician from Tsalgiw (Hartley Bay) based in Lax Kxeen (Prince Rupert). Saltwater Hank delivers a raucous performance that blends the sound of Rock 'n Roll with the melodies & rhythmic complexity

of his ancestors: the Ts'msyen, all with lyrics written entirely in his language, Sm'algyax. The melodies are a spoon full of oolichan grease – the perfect dose of musical medicine and sure to leave you wanting more. He connects listeners and the members of his culture by reliving his heritage through the music. He creates a bridge between the old and the new, allowing present generations to experience the ancient oral traditions of his culture in a vibrant and powerful way. His stories breathe life into forgotten narratives and revive the power of the traditional language to shape a new generation of storytellers. Saltwater Hank is here to keep the art and sound of his culture alive and growing.



▲ Saltwater Hank.

\* \* \*

**Christmas at the Chan**

Dec. 8, 2:30 p.m.  
<https://chancentre.com/events/christmas-at-the-chan-3>

Trinity Western Choirs and Orchestra, directed by Dr. Benjamin Ewert, returns to the Chan Centre for the 20th anniversary of Christmas at the Chan, an annual festive celebration of the birth of Christ. Come experience the joy of Christmas with selections from Handel's *Messiah* and Bach's *Christmas Oratorio*, and audience favourites by John Rutter and, of course, much-loved sing-along carols. This year they will be joined by longtime Chan collaborators Pacific Voices (formerly Pacific Mennonite Children's Choir), directed by Sonja Hindmarsh.



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