

ARTS / CULTURE / EVENTS

InStudio

SPRING/SUMMER 2017



THE REVISIONARIES

A Tribe Called Red breaks cultural boundaries

PLUS
Spring and Summer events guide inside

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CENTRE FOR ARTS AND CREATIVITY

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InStudio

SPRING/SUMMER 2017

Banff Artist in Residence Jane Burton working on a painting. To see more glimpses into our artists' spaces, check out Open Studio page 44.

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Exploring the creative work space of Jonathan Goldstein

PHOTO CREDIT: KATY WHITT



hear from the artist how their piece was created, what inspired it, and how it fits into their body of work.

As well as celebrating Banff Centre's history as an arts training institution, in this inaugural issue we're looking forward to the next 150 years of arts and culture and asking what the future holds for Canada. In a Q+A with Wanda Nanibush, Banff Centre Literary Arts faculty member and Art Gallery of Ontario curator, you'll learn why visibility for Indigenous artists needs to be front and centre for Canada's artistic and social future. We also hope you enjoy a feature story on *Against the Grain* Theatre which reveals the new faces and forms of contemporary Canadian opera.

In addition to these informative, in-depth stories, you'll find all the information you need to plan your spring and summer activities at Banff Centre. In May we'll be hosting our fourth annual Children's Festival. This will be followed throughout the spring and summer by an outstanding talks series featuring Indigenous voices from our *Future Narratives* program; a glimpse into Banff's summer classical music programs with performances of works by Beethoven, Xenakis, Stravinsky, and more; Banff's opera program presenting the iconic Canadian opera *Kopernikus* by Claude Vivier in partnership with *Against the Grain* Theatre and the Canadian Opera Company; and much more.

I hope you enjoy exploring our new Banff Centre magazine as you discover the exciting lineup of artists and artworks we have in store for you here.

I look forward to welcoming you to Banff Centre, and hope you will share with me your experiences of our presentations over this upcoming season and your thoughts on this new publication.

Janice Price
PRESIDENT & CEO
BANFF CENTRE FOR ARTS AND
CREATIVITY

those experiencing Banff Centre's programs for the first time?

In this first edition of *InStudio*, you'll read about Banff Centre's plans to celebrate Canada's 150th birthday with an epic and immersive art installation, which will be exhibited first in Banff, Canada's first national park, then a few weeks later in Rouge, Canada's first urban national park. This installation is created by visual artist Sarah Fuller and Montreal's acclaimed multimedia collective Moment Factory and will not be one to miss.

In a feature story we connect with A Tribe Called Red about how they are reimagining relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous cultures through music. You can catch them and other outstanding Canadian artists in our Shaw Amphitheatre series this summer.

In the *From the Vault* section, you'll see works from Banff Centre's permanent visual arts collection, and

DEAR ARTS LOVER,

Welcome to the new biannual magazine of Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity. In this magazine you'll find interviews with artists in residence, behind-the-scenes looks at new artistic works, information about the hundreds of public events that take place at Banff Centre every season, and highlights from what Banff alumni have been doing since leaving Banff's mountain campus.

InStudio was launched to share with you what Banff Centre witnesses every day in our artistic spaces and training facilities. As Canada's home for arts training and creation, we host some of the world's finest emerging and established artists on campus year round, and welcome faculty from the finest organizations in Canada and throughout the world. Who better to share these stories, programs and activities with than you, our audiences, supporters, and

EDMONTON OPERA

17/18 SEASON NORTHERN ALBERTA JUBILEE AUDITORIUM

Michel Marc Bouchard & Kevin March
LES FELUETTES
(LILIES)

Based on the acclaimed Québécois play
OCTOBER 21, 24 & 27, 2017

Conductor: Giuseppe Pietraroia • Originating Director: Serge Denoncourt

The production and designs for *Les Feluettes* were originally created by Opéra de Montréal and Pacific Opera Victoria for productions in 2016 & 2017



Photo by Yves Renaud

W. S. Gilbert & Arthur Sullivan
HMS PINAFORE

Set sail on a hilarious musical adventure
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NEW PRODUCTION

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Set Designer: Camellia Koo • Costume Designer: Deanna Finnman



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DON GIOVANNI

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APRIL 14, 17 & 20, 2018

NEW PRODUCTION

Conductor: Christopher Larkin • Director: Oriol Tomas
Set Designer: Bretta Gerecke • Costume Designer: Deanna Finnman



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3 from \$99

PHOTO CREDIT: COLIN WAY



Summer Highlights



LEFT: Parker Thiessen, *Midnight Oscillations (an excerpt)* (2017). Audio and video. Thiessen is part of the 2017 Alberta Biennial of Contemporary Art.

Hedley with special guest Ria Mae
Friday, June 9, 6:30 P.M.
Cascade Gardens | \$35

Walk o the Earth with special guests Amistad and CBC Music's 2017 Searchlight Contest Winner
Friday, June 10, 3 P.M. | \$35

Summer Music Series In Performance: Claire Chase and Steven Schick
Tuesday, June 20, 7:30 P.M.
Rolston Recital Hall | \$25 Senior/Student \$22 | Child \$12.50 | Summer Music Programs co-artistic directors kick o

the season with an eclectic program of works for ute and percussion.

Summer Music Series In Performance: Radhe Radhe: The Rites of Holi and The Rite of Spring
Friday, June 23, 7:30 P.M.
Eric Harvie Theatre | \$25 Senior/Student \$22 | Child \$12.50 |

Walter Phillips Gallery Opening Reception: for the time being 2017 Alberta Biennial of Contemporary Art
Saturday, June 24, 6–9 P.M.
Walter Phillips Gallery | Free

for the time being is an analogy of thinking about what it means to be in between spaces and times. Speci cally the exhibition focuses on our present and our relationships to perceptions of reality.

Summer Music Series In Performance: Faculty and Participants from Summer Music Programs
Friday, June 30, 7:30 P.M.
Rolston Recital Hall | \$25 Senior/Student \$22 | Child \$12.50 |

April

Contemporary Indigenous Voices: Wanda Nanibush Talk
Wednesday, April 5, 7 P.M.
Walter Phillips Gallery | Free

Indigenous Arts

Tanya Tagaq
Friday, April 28, 7:30 P.M.
Margaret Greenham Theatre
\$32

May

Ban Centre Children's Festival
Saturday, May 20
Featuring free or low-cost activities and live shows including: storytelling, creativity rooms, circus school, family dance, and more!

Ticketed Events Include:
De Temps Antan
Saturday, May 20, 9:30 A.M. and 12 P.M. | Rolston Recital Hall | \$7

Sheldon Casavant: Exploring the Impossible
Saturday, May 20, 10 A.M. and 1 P.M. | Margaret Greenham Theatre | \$7

Dancers of the Damelahamid: In Abundance
Saturday, May 20, 11:30 A.M. and 2:30 P.M. | Margaret Greenham Theatre | \$7

June

Performance in the Park
June 9 and 10
Cascade Gardens, Parks Canada Administration Building | Both days Bundle: \$52.50 | Child \$25
Celebrate Canada 150 and the arrival of summer with highly-anticipated performances from some of Canada's top contemporary music acts!

PHOTO CREDITS: COURTESY THE ARTIST. WADDELL, DEREK DIX, DAMELAHAMID

ABOVE, LEFT: Walk o the Earth performs June 10 in our Shaw Amphitheatre with special guests Amistad and CBC Music's 2017 Searchlight Contest Winner. RIGHT: Dancers of Damelahamid





CLOCKWISE,
FROM FAR
LEFT: *Noetic*
performed in
2014 at The
Göteborg
Opera. Author
Naomi Klein.
The Rolston
String Quartet

July

Summer Music Series Music in the Pines

Saturday July 1 | Time and locations to be announced on banffcentre.ca on June 29
Free

Celebrate Canada's 150th birthday with a kaleidoscope of grand and intimate performances in Banff.

Outdoors Concert at Banff Centre's Shaw Amphitheatre

BrassFire Featuring Jens Lindemann
Sunday, July 2, 1 P.M.
Shaw Amphitheatre | \$25
Senior/Student \$15 | Child \$10

Opera in the 21st Century *Kopernikus*

July 6 and 8, 7:30 P.M.
Margaret Greenham Theatre
\$25 | Senior/Student \$22
Child \$12.50 |

Outdoors Concert at Banff Centre's Shaw Amphitheatre

Blue Rodeo
Friday, July 7, 6:30 P.M.
Shaw Amphitheatre | \$55

**Summer Music Series
In Performance: Miro
Quartet and Imani Winds**
Tuesday, July 11, 7:30 P.M.
Rolston Recital Hall | \$25
Senior/Student \$22 | Child \$12.50 |

Literary Journalism Talk Gabrielle Hamilton

Wednesday, July 12, 7:30 P.M.
St. George's-in-the-Pines
Anglican Church, 100 Beaver
Street, Banff | Free

Environmental Reportage Naomi Klein

Thursday, July 13, 7:30 P.M.
Margaret Greenham Theatre
\$25 | Senior/Student \$22
Child \$12.50 |

**Outdoors Concert at
Banff Centre's Shaw
Amphitheatre**
**Corb Lund with special
guest Leeroy Stagger**
Saturday, July 15 6:30 P.M.
Shaw Amphitheatre | \$50

Summer Music Series In Performance: Faculty and Participants from the Summer Music Programs

Friday, July 21, 7:00 P.M.
Outdoors in front of Music
and Sound Building & Rolston
Recital Hall | \$25 | Senior/Student \$22 | Child \$12.50 |

Outdoors Concert at Banff Centre's Shaw Amphitheatre

Sarah Harmer
Sunday, July 23, 1 P.M.
Shaw Amphitheatre | \$35
Child \$20

PHOTO CREDITS: BENGT WANSELIUS, NOETIC, MARIE PIERRE TREMBLAY, ROLSTON



The Creative Gesture Noetic

July 27 and 29, 7:30 P.M.
Eric Harvie Theatre | \$25
Senior/Student \$22 | Child \$12.50 |

August

Outdoors Concert at Banff Centre's Shaw Amphitheatre

A Tribe Called Red
Sunday, August 6, 6:30 P.M.
Shaw Amphitheatre | \$30
Child \$20

Summer Music Series

In Performance: Faculty and Participants from the Summer Music Programs

Friday, August 11, 7:30 P.M.
Rolston Recital Hall | \$25
Senior/Student \$22 | Child \$12.50 |

Saturday Night Jazz

Saturday, August 12, 19 and
26, 7:30 P.M.
Margaret Greenham Theatre
\$25 | Senior/Student \$22
Child \$12.50 |

September

Banff Centre International String Quartet Festival

September 1-3, 2017
Individual tickets: \$25
Senior/Student \$22
Passports: \$120 | Senior/
Student \$105
Introducing the Banff Centre International String Quartet Festival! Borne out of Banff International String Quartet Competition, this three day festival led by Barry Shi man showcases the next in international classical music to audiences through a completely immersive experience. ▲

Art Online

There's more to watch, read, and listen to online

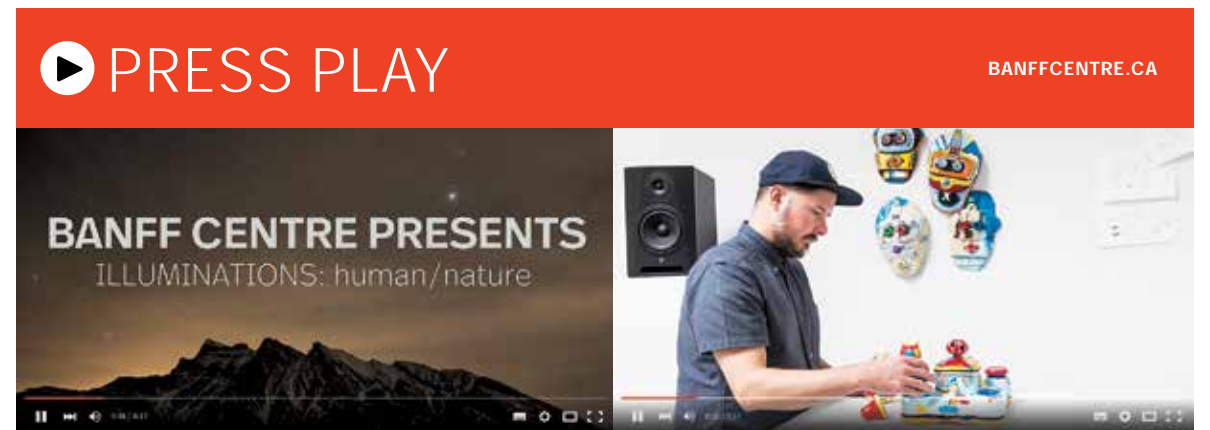
Get involved with Banff Centre online to see even more from *InStudio*. Every time you see the plus symbol (+), it means we've got more in store for you with videos and articles available online.

You can also explore some of our series to give you an in-depth view of studio practice in Open Studios, artists' inspiration in Spotlight, and hear directly from some of the world's finest in Artist Voices where we commission artists to share their thoughts on contemporary art. Banffcentre.ca



Get your fix of the finest performances of string quartets from the Banff International String Quartet Competition, including the Rolston String Quartet. Visit Banffcentre.ca/bisqc

PHOTO CREDIT: TIANXIAO ZHANG - QUARTET, DONALD LEE - ARTIST VOICES



BANFF CENTRE PRESENTS In this video series, you'll get the exclusive on the creation of new works at Banff Centre. In advance of the October presentations, see how Sarah Fuller and Moment Factory are creating an immersive light installation in two of Canada's iconic parks for Canada's 150th.

SPOTLIGHT In this video series, we focus on exploring artists and the projects they work on at Banff Centre. Step inside the studios of artists like James Kirkpatrick, who circuit-bends kids' toys to create electronic music, and more amazing creative ventures.



In this article series, hear from artists and Banff Centre faculty from all disciplines. This summer you'll find articles from Brian Quirt, Artistic Director of the Banff Playwrights Colony on the importance of Theatre for Young People, and Emily Molnar on what being a dancer in 2017 requires. For all this and more, visit Banffcentre.ca/banff-centre-stories

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Subscribe to keep in touch, stay up to date on programs and events and artistic practice



Timeless work

Art from Ban Centre's permanent collection

SVEA FERGUSON

Extreme Calm, 2015

CALGARY BASED artist Svea Ferguson's *Extreme Calm* was created in 2015 as part of a Ban Centre self-directed visual arts residency, and was acquired into Ban Centre's permanent collection Spring 2016. It's made of marble-printed linoleum flooring, layered directly onto the wall space, held in place by pegs carved from rock.

For Ferguson, the creation process is an organic one. "It's really about that process of building it, and the call and response between my body and the material," she says.

Extreme Calm is part of a series of linoleum and vinyl work by Ferguson, whose background in textiles caused her to first become interested in the material. "It has that soft skin-like quality, but it is an industrial material—it's so resilient."

Ferguson is creating a new commission for the 2017 Alberta Biennial of Contemporary Art, presented jointly by Ban Centre's Walter Phillips Gallery and the Art Gallery of Alberta, where similar materials and draping techniques will be used.

"If I can let go of some of that control and be open to what gravity is doing and what the physicality of the material is doing, then that's generally when I'm most pleased in the end."

sveaferguson.com



I'M ALWAYS FORGETTING THAT GRAVITY EXISTS.

PHOTO CREDITS: COURTESY OF THE ARTIST. EXTREME CALM: KATY WHITT. AYUM-EE-AAWACH OOMAMA MOWAN: SPEAKING TO THEIR MOTHER



REBECCA BELMORE

Ayum-ee-aawach Oomama-mowan: Speaking to Their Mother, 1991

ANISHINAABE ARTIST Rebecca Belmore wanted to make art that would spark conversation between Indigenous people and the Canadian government—and she wanted to make something that would help people speak for themselves.

Ayum-ee-aawach Oomama-mowan: Speaking to Their Mother is six feet wide, seven feet long and made of all-organic materials. The conical shape further amplifies the megaphone that is sometimes inserted into its mouth. It was acquired into the Ban Centre's permanent collection in 2007, and now sits in an alcove in the Kinneer Centre for Creativity and Innovation on the campus.

The piece was a response to the Oka Crisis of 1990—a protest against a proposed golf course on Mohawk territory in Quebec. But after its 1991 debut at the *Between Views and Points of View* exhibition at Ban Centre's Walter Phillips Gallery,

it was used to address the land at political demonstrations from coast to coast.

"I was particularly interested in locating the Aboriginal voice on the land. Asking people to address the land directly was an attempt to hear political protest as poetic action," says Belmore.

The piece is well travelled, having spoken to a clear-cut forest, Indigenous land claims, and even making it as far as Parliament Hill.

Belmore was the first Indigenous woman to represent Canada at the Venice Biennale in 2005. She won the 2013 Governor General's Award for visual art, and has exhibited at many national and international venues.

"Ban is naturally the best place for this artwork to reside," says Belmore. "I hope that by leaving it in the care of the collection that it will continue to have a life of its own." ▲

rebeccabelmore.com

ASKING PEOPLE TO ADDRESS THE LAND DIRECTLY WAS AN ATTEMPT TO HEAR POLITICAL PROTEST AS POETIC ACTION.



THE LEIGHTON ARTISTS STUDIOS, opened in 1985, are nine unique studio spaces for artists working in all genres. It's located on campus, but nestled in the forest in a world all its own.

Each of the eight original studios was named for the distinguished Canadian architect who designed it, and each space is unique in its look and feel. The beautiful, secluded spaces have housed writers, composers, singer-songwriters, visual artists, screenwriters, playwrights, translators, curators, theorists and more. It's the perfect place to escape into your thoughts and focus on creation.

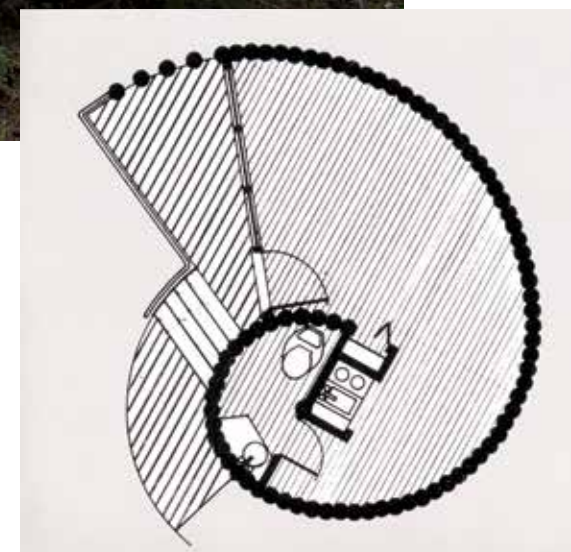
One of those original eight, the Cardinal Studio, was designed by Ottawa architect Douglas Cardinal and was originally intended as a space for composers. It takes the spiral form of a nautilus, which serves to provide privacy for whomever is working inside. Cardinal himself is Indigenous and often looks to nature to inspire his designs, like the Canadian Museum of History in Quebec. In recent years, the Cardinal Studio has housed artists like k.d. lang, and many other composers, writers, and artists looking for a little time and space. ▲

Maintenance of the studios is supported by the Leighton Artists Studios Facility Renewal Endowment.

A Room in the Woods

Renowned Canadian architects designed artist retreats that are perfect spaces for creation. Here's the first in a series exploring Banff Centre's Leighton Artists Studios.

PHOTO CREDIT: DON LEE



LEFT: An original drawing of the Cardinal Studio from the Paul D. Fleck Library and Archives. The studio is often described as an inner ear, with a piano nestled right in the middle.

Finding Freedom Through Song

Vocalist Measha Brueggergosman digs into her family history for her most personal album yet **BY JENNY SPURR**

AS THE DAUGHTER OF a pastor, Canadian soprano and Banff Centre alumna Measha Brueggergosman began singing in the choir of her local Baptist church. But instead of the soulful melodies of American folksongs filling her parish hall, Measha grew up with the classic hymns of Mendelssohn and Handel, which later inspired her to pursue a career as an opera singer.

For Measha, classical music has always had a certain rigour to it—with not much room for improvisation.

“Most of the time a song is what it is,” she says. “You infuse as much of yourself as you can into the existing classical work, but at the end of the day that piece will be there long after you’re gone, and it was there long before you got to it.”

That’s why, for her latest album, Measha dug deep into her ancestry—uncovering her family history and challenging her classical training—to create a collection of African-American spirituals. “My father always wanted me to do an album of old hymns and spirituals, and I couldn’t have done it before now because I don’t think I would have really understood the context,” says Measha.

Featuring songs like “Swing Low, Sweet Chariot,” “Go Tell It on the Mountain,” and “Blessed Assurance,” *Songs of Freedom* is an emotional, spiritual, and musical journey through the turbulent chapters of North American history.

“It’s by far my most personal album.”

With eight studio albums under her belt, the Juno Award-winning, Grammy-nominated musician finally felt ready to create something a bit more immediate, although she admits the recording process wasn’t always comfortable.

“Classical musicians do not improvise will-

ingly,” she says. When making a classical record, “You know exactly what the repertoire is and exactly how long you have to record it.”

Spirituals, on the other hand, allow for more interpretation—in fact, they demand it. The genre emerged out of Africa during the slave trade, at a time when the oppressed needed a way to communicate and express themselves. With this in mind, Measha worked with composer Aaron Davis to co-create new arrangements steeped in her personal style, layering vocals tracks and weaving in spoken word. The result is powerful and provocative.

“As Lauryn Hill as my witness, I know that having spoken word woven throughout an album can make people really think about what it is they’re hearing,” she says. “The voice is such a universal instrument that touches people on a visceral level.”

That’s why Measha believes it’s so important for artists today—and tomorrow—to use their voices to the fullest extent. “I think art and culture is part of the narrative that is meant to influence policy. And if you don’t think that as an artist, then you’re underestimating your power.” That also means allowing all voices to be a part of the conversation.

“We can’t keep thinking that silencing dissenting opinion is a way forward, because all it does is push them further away and make them feel more marginalized,” she says. Artists must keep pushing boundaries, exploring new works, and questioning society.

“Otherwise, we might find ourselves in the same place again.” ▲

Measha’s time in Banff was generously supported by the Paul D. Fleck Fellowships in the Arts Endowment.

Measha performed from her newest album, *Songs of Freedom*, at Banff Centre on February 18 as part of Black History Month and Banff Centre’s Canada 150 event series celebrating Canadian artists. measha.com



For more in Banff Centre’s 150 series, visit banffcentre.ca/150



My father always wanted me to do an album of old hymns and spirituals.

PHOTO CREDIT: IHEP.VU

Sarah Fuller.
Dubois Residence
(2013). Permanent
collection of
Walter Phillips
Gallery, Banff
Centre.

ILLUMINATIONS: HUMAN/NATURE

Celebrating the 150th anniversary of confederation, Ban Centre works with Canadian artists to shed light on the stories of two iconic national parks.

BY DEVON MURPHY

PHOTO CREDITS: COURTESY THE ARTIST. DUBOIS RESIDENCE

THEY TRUDGE THROUGH the forest in pitch black, in the dead of winter, in a place without light pollution, or people, or much of anything. Because of the darkness and the cold in the air, the stars are bright and there's a thin outline of light illuminating the tops of the surrounding mountains. This is Lake Minnewanka in Banff National Park in the dead of January.

There are a dozen people or so, all bundled up against the cold winds blowing across the frozen lake, and they're here to figure out how to tell the story of a place that contains so many histories – that of Canada's first national park, that of Canada's sesquicentennial, and those of the people who lived here long before.

This is *ILLUMINATIONS: human/nature*, a large-scale, immersive artistic project commissioned by Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity. It takes place not just in Banff National Park, but also in Toronto at Rouge National Urban Park, the first and only park of its kind in Canada. The project will attempt to create a single narrative shared between two locations – the oldest national park in the country, and something entirely new.

The team of artists behind the project comprises visual artist Sarah Fuller, Montreal multimedia entertainment studio Moment Factory, and a group of researchers, who studied both spaces intently in order to provide necessary context for the development of the piece.

"There are so many different perspectives and narratives and histories and just diversity in each place," says Sarah Fuller, who works with photography and site-specific installation pieces. "To try and bring that all together in a meaningful and respectful way is a really good challenge."

Because of the sheer scale of the project, that feeling is shared group-wide. "This is not a normal project for Moment Factory," says the group's creative director, Gabriel Pontbriand. One of Moment Factory's similar signature shows, *Anima Lumina* (next page), was "a 1.5-km multimedia night walk that [paid] tribute to the rich biodiversity of the Boreal Forest," using light, sound, and projection.



LEFT: A glimpse into the creative process from the team's residency at Banff Centre in January.
BELOW: A detail of one of the conceptual sketches.

PHOTO CREDITS: DYLAN TOOMBS. CREATIVE PROCESS - ADRIEN WILLIAMS. COURTESY OF MOMENT FACTORY



Anima
Lumina
A Night
Walk at
the Zoo
(St-Félicien,
QC Canada)



Free ticket registration for *ILLUMINATIONS: human/nature* will be available on banffcentre.ca starting Summer 2017. Pick up the next issue of *InStudio* to learn more about the project.

"For me, entertainment is all about goosebumps, it's very accessible – you leave an experience and you're amazed," says Pontbriand. "An art installation is meaningful – you need to dig a little bit to understand."

"To me, this is a great bridge between an art installation and entertainment."

Their stage is at once a dream playground for artists and one near-impossible to improve upon. And while it may seem contradictory to fill these beautiful, natural spaces with lights and speakers, the effects are applied with a nod toward preserving natural space and unearthing sometimes-invisible histories. In many ways, says Fuller, *ILLUMINATIONS: human/nature* is about dissolving boundaries between nature and human existence, "because they're really not there."

Because nature plays a leading role in the work, an important question the team grappled with was, "How can we bring multimedia into nature and be respectful?" says Pontbriand. The goal isn't to disrupt the natural beauty of the space. "What we want to do is enhance and amplify nature with the magic of multimedia."

Indeed, one of the goals of the project is to get people to reconnect with nature in a meaningful way – to think about their place within it, and the role they have to play in preserving it for the next 150 years and beyond.

But before they could look forward, the team needed to look back into the thousands of years and stories that these two parks are built upon. That's where the research team came in.

Jessie Short is an artist and filmmaker from Calgary and she focused her research on the Lake Minnewanka site. "It's a place that I've come to quite a bit throughout my life, but haven't thought a lot about what's happened here and how it's come to be," says Short, who is of Métis heritage.

In her work, she discovered new things about the space that was in some ways familiar to her, including the varied and expansive history of the many Indigenous communities that have

lived there over time. "I was trying to not privilege one history, but to look at as many as I possibly could," she adds.

Creating an artistic piece with a backbone of this kind of research makes the project that much stronger, as it helps people question what they think they know about places and the stories they contain. "People probably do think a little bit about where they are living, but on such a limited scale. I think you really have to be prompted to look further than that," says Short.

While in Banff in January, Fuller, Moment Factory, and the research team – which also included Zo Antonia Lepiano and Simon Jérémie Montplaisir Benedict, who researched the Rouge Park site – spent five days looking further into these worlds. They spent 12 hours a day together in an intensive creative residency finalizing the narrative that will guide people through the sites. "The narratives are coming out of that research," says Fuller. And they came out in the form of presentations, listening parties, conceptual sketches, and more.

Come October 5-7, 2017 in Banff and October 19-21 in Ontario, visitors will be able to walk the very same path that Fuller, Pontbriand, and the team did in January, in a truly immersive and awe-inspiring experience that is discovery-driven and poses the question: *What's the future of wild spaces?*

To be able to do that in two national park sites is an added layer for the people who will be able to walk the path this team will create. "Being able to create an artwork in a park and have it speak to that environment is really special," says Fuller.

"We would love to understand this vastness," adds Pontbriand. "And I hope Mother Nature will help us." ▲



This project is generously supported by the Department of Canadian Heritage, Mackie Family Creation Endowment and Gay Mitchell and Archie McIntosh Creation Endowment Fund.



INDIGENOUS FUTURE NARRATIVES

Curator, writer, and educator Wanda Nanibush joins Ban Centre as faculty for the Literary Arts program *Future Narratives*. She spoke with us about Indigenous visibility in the art world and Canada post-150. BY DEVON MURPHY

DM: You're lead faculty for the Ban Centre program, *Future Narratives: Contemporary Indigenous Artistic Practice*. The program will employ Indigenous contemporary thought and artistic practices to try to answer some questions about the next 150 years of Canada—what kind of conversations do you hope to have?

WANDA: I think that placing Canada within an Indigenous context automatically means that you have to think beyond 150 years. It places the project of Canada as a question as opposed to a statement; it allows the artists in the room more freedom to think creatively about what it could be.

You're the first person to hold the title Assistant Curator: Canadian and Indigenous Art at the Art Gallery of Ontario. What kind of pathway do you hope to forge?

There are a few things that I want to accomplish. By having "Indigenous" in the title, [the position] creates an area of commitment. Part of the area of commitment is that we have to acquire more contemporary Indigenous work for the collection. It also means that we should be exhibiting more Indigenous art, both on its own and also in Canadian and special exhibitions. I'm always

a two-pronged approach kind of person—we have to have shows that are just Indigenous work in order to ask questions that are important to Indigenous people, but then we also need to place the work alongside international artists and Canadian artists.

What does it mean to you that the AGO considers this a priority?

As far as going forward, it means that they're living up to their responsibilities as an institution on Indigenous land.

Why is greater visibility for Indigenous artists important in Canada?

Indigenous artists are some of the best artists in Canada and the world, so there's no reason for them not to be here—I think that's important to say. Some of the work does deal with the history of colonization; it deals with Indigenous philosophies; it deals with a certain kind of location that an Indigenous artist might be working from. And these kinds of things help audiences have new ideas about what Canada is, what it has been, maybe about who they are. It helps them ask questions about their relationship to Indigenous people, land, history. So I think there's a social transformation that can happen with that visibility.

PHOTO CREDIT: ANDREW WILLIAMSON



The 150th anniversary of confederation means we're likely to encounter a lot of narratives about Canada's past this year. How can people keep Indigeneity and context in mind while celebrating the anniversary?

Whenever we're looking at a situation of injustice for a group of people, I think it's possible to look at the good stuff that's come out of a project like Canada, while also understanding it as an unfinished project that needs to take the path of justice going forward. It's like when somebody dies: we're sad, we're in mourning, and we have a sense of loss, but we're also celebrating that person's life. I don't think they're mutually exclusive – criticism and celebration.

Why is it important to you to be outspoken on these issues?

I have a responsibility to my ancestors who fought for me to have the space that I have. So it's my responsibility to carry that on for the next generation to have the space that they need. ▲

CONTEMPORARY INDIGENOUS VOICES: SPEAKER SERIES

Featuring talks and performances by:

Wanda Nanibush | April 5, 7 P.M.

Lee Maracle in Conversation with Drew Hayden Taylor | April 8, 7:30 P.M.

Santee Smith | May 4, 7 P.M.

Jolene Rickard | May 30, 4 P.M.

Kiviuq Returns | June 10, 7:30 P.M.

See page 50 for more details



Images are taken from the exhibition *The FIFTH World*, presented at the Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery and curated by Wanda Nanibush. The show celebrated the 20th anniversary of Tribe, a Saskatoon-based centre for evolving Aboriginal media, visual and performing arts.

OPERA IN THE 21 CENTURY

How Toronto's
Against the Grain
Theatre is turning
the classical
form on its head

BY JENNA DOUGLAS

Rachel Marshall
plays Adanya
Dunn in *Against
the Grain's*
workshop
of *No One's
Safe* at Ban
Centre, 2016



PHOTO CREDIT: RITA TAYLOR

W

E ARE IN AN era where opera looks very different from the stereotypes which pervade popular culture: any fan of the genre knows that the days of large, helmet-horned women and parking-and-barking are gone. It is through partnership, and through the sharing of resources, that opera can be well represented in the twenty-first century.

As a young Canadian pianist gaining a love and skill for working with singers, Ban Centre's Opera program became one of the earliest goals I distinctly remember pursuing. In 2007 I got in, and had an unforgettable summer; I played and rehearsed my first full-length opera, and made lasting relationships with people who are still friends and colleagues today.

But since that summer, there has been a significant shift in the shape and function of opera at Ban Centre, a shift that makes the program less about a finished product and instead more process-oriented. The Centre has now partnered with two of Canada's most influential opera companies: the Canadian Opera Company (COC) and the seven-year-old "indie opera" company, Against the Grain Theatre (AtG). Joel Ivany, co-founder and artistic director of the Toronto-based AtG, sees it as a merging of "the biggest in Canada, and maybe the most different."

It might not be surprising that the COC and Ban Centre, two of Canada's major artistic institutions, have decided to work together to foster and develop the current generation of opera. Yet the collaboration with Against the Grain is something that is rare and new within the opera industry. I remember feeling a sense of pride when I learned that AtG would be a major part of the new approach to opera at Ban Centre. Having always found its shows creative and novel, I and my fellow enthusiastic Toronto opera fans finally had proof that Canada's artistic giants felt the same way.

The reason for the symbiosis is simple: the COC offers resources and space to help AtG create better and better work, and AtG brings to the COC its creative license and loyal following—full of the young demographic which large companies court. "[The COC] is well aware of the press that AtG gets and gets for them," says Ivany, who is candid about what

makes the relationship work. "They brought our level to national exposure."

I've been lucky to see most of Against the Grain's productions over the years, and I got to work as music stand—playing rehearsals, leading the chorus, even playing some harpsichord—on a few of their fun projects, like the premiere production of *#UncleJohn*, a modern-day take on Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, and two iterations of *#AtGMessiah*, a staged, choreographed version of Handel's most famous oratorio. To see the team in action is to see a clear vision enacted with enthusiasm, humour, and sharp focus.

"What Joel has in spades," says Paul Curran, stage director and a past mentor of Ivany's, "is a passion for redefining and retelling opera in its present form, in a new way—without corrupting." Rehearsals with Ivany are spent questioning every choice, every tradition that comes with the idea of attending an opera. He finds unorthodox venues, writes his own librettos—or "transladaptations," to use AtG's coined term—of Mozart and Da Ponte, and now, he has redesigned the mission of opera at Ban Centre.

Open Space: Opera in the 21st Century is the name of the five-week residency of AtG and the COC, held on campus in Banff. This summer will be Ivany's fourth spearheading the program. Through staged opera and chamber music, roughly a dozen singers and apprentice pianists work with Ivany, AtG Music Director Topher Mokrzewski, and an impressive faculty of teachers and coaches.

Young singers, mostly post-academic and eager to gain professional experience, audition from across Canada to work with Ivany and his team. They arrive as prepared as they can be, and open themselves up to the type of operatic deconstruction that *Open Space* is all about. The tight-knit creative team of AtG



Joel Ivany



Learn more about Against the Grain's performance of *No One's Safe* by watching our Banff Centre Presents video banffcentre.ca/banff-centre-stories



The cast of *No One's Safe* discovers the scene of a crime in the lobby of Ban Centre's Walter Phillips Gallery, 2016.

PHOTO CREDITS: NIKOLAJ NOVAK (IVANY); RITA TAYLOR (OPERA)

is small and communicative; I've seen them put up amazing shows in mere days, and I'm convinced there's a sort of alchemy about their process that turns deconstruction into a truly stunning finished product.

With its high-profile presence at Ban Centre, AtG has the resources to develop a new generation of versatile artists. Perhaps more exciting is their opportunity to further validate the power of small, chamber-sized opera. Ivany knows from experience that "leaner and smaller—you can still get a lot of attention that way."

Curran, who joined *Open Space* in 2016 to direct Benjamin Britten's *The Rape of Lucretia*, believes that supporting chamber opera also helps to support large-scale opera at major companies. "Nobody is saying, 'I am not going to see *Tosca* at the COC because I'm seeing *#UncleJohn*,'" he explains. "I think what Joel does, and what AtG does, is entice people in a different way."

Part of that difference is the absolute consideration that Ivany gives his audiences. He

keeps listeners in mind at every point during his rehearsal process, and advocates for the audience's operatic experience from the moment they arrive at the venue.

"I've always got the idea that he very much feels he's serving a greater need or a greater good," says Curran. "He has a need to do this, rather than 'me, me, me.'" It's a sentiment that echoes the mission of Ban Centre as a whole; the Centre can play a pivotal role in an artist's development, yet it's a stepping stone that inevitably leads to great work outside of Banff.

With *Open Space*, everybody seems to win: Ban Centre stays close to its own vision of supporting emerging talent and fostering artistic creation; the Canadian Opera Company extends its influential reach to the novel and mobile face of opera; and Against the Grain Theatre has begun to earn the large audience it deserves. ▲

Opera at Ban Centre is generously supported by the David Spencer Emerging Vocalists Endowment.

OPERA AT BANFF CENTRE

In honour of Canada's 150th birthday, Against the Grain Theatre is staging *Kopernikus*, an opera by Canadian composer Claude Vivier, at Ban Centre.

Thursday, July 6, 7:30 P.M. and Saturday, July 8, 7:30 P.M. See event listing on page 60 for more information.



A performance from the 2016 residency *Concert in the 21st Century*, where performers explore innovative ways to present music.

This centuries-old form is only getting better with age BY ARTHUR KAPTAINIS

Classical Music on the Rise



ABOVE: Gregory Kozak and ScrapArtsMusic's unique "power-percussion" style was developed during a three-month residency at Banff Centre.

LOCATION, LOCATION, location: So goes the old real estate cliché. The triptych for today's classical musicians, I propose, is integrity, integrity, integrity. Integrity is what assures the survival of classical amid widespread and unsupported claims of its decline. After decades of listening, I am still astounded by how earnestly musicians believe in what they do and how earnestly listeners wish to share their joy in doing it. Equally astounding is the immediate connection performers and listeners alike can feel with music written either 400 years ago or last month. "My my, hey hey," sings Neil Young. But classical is truly the music that is here to stay.

Integrity, of course, is made of parts. It incorporates awareness of the need to practice and the good judgment—typically provided by a teacher—of what to work on and how much. For auditioning violinists, a thorough acquaintance with Strauss's *Don Juan* is famously necessary. But I should like to think that that daily routine is animated by a touch of adventure. The transcendent piano mastery of Sviatoslav Richter (1915-1997) cannot be unrelated to his early attempts at being a painter and his habit

in youth of playing spontaneous reductions of Wagner operas from their score. Possibly this restless intellect also turned him into the only A-list recitalist who regularly performed with sheet music in front of him. Classical could not thrive in a world full of Richters, each playing in a darkened hall, refusing to y across the ocean, deciding on repertoire at the last minute, and so on. Individualism has its limits. Where to place those limits is, in some respects, the central question.

Most agree that Glenn Gould (1932-1982) carried his contrarianism too far in Mozart. His ultimate act of individuality was to cease public performance altogether. If a world full of Richters would be hard to sustain, imagine the desert that would be a world full of Goulds. Yet this Canadian's impulse to be different was supported by a savagely brilliant insight into everything he played. No one did "bad" better. The lesson for the aspiring recitalist is not to become a Gould, but to let a little Gould—a little individuality—find its way into every performance. Standard repertoire comes back again and again, not only because audiences want

to be reassured but because they want to be surprised. And every pleasant surprise is the result of a little outburst of integrity.

Good intentions are not enough. Talent might be hard to define, but it is inescapably mandatory. No regimen of practice would produce from me a performance of a Bach prelude and fugue worth hearing. Arthur Rubinstein (1887-1982), to jump to the other extreme of giftedness, admits to laziness so often in his memoirs that one has the impression that, by confessing to his sin, he thinks he can expiate it. Yet, as the rehearsal pianist in 1907 for the Paris premiere of Richard Strauss's *Salome*, Rubinstein—whom we think of as a master of Chopin nocturnes and mazurkas—quite naturally learned the opera by heart.

But if in some respects things ain't like they used to be, in many ways the evolution of performance has been strongly positive. "The level of mediocrity is constantly rising," the pianist and educator Leon Fleisher commented in an interview for the *Montreal Gazette* several years ago. And it has surely risen since. Fleisher told me that while the mountain is becoming more massive, the altitude of the summit remains the same. Good performances might be far more common, but stellar interpretations are as rare as ever.

Perhaps Fleisher was thinking of solo performers of the Richter and Rubinstein class. But there is a sub-superstellar level in which the standard is now much too high to be labelled mediocre. Think of strings. No longer is a second violin a player who did not make the firsts; and a viola, one who did not make the seconds. The rise in quality all around can be seen in the profusion over the last decade of fine string quartets. It was not always so. There are certainly some recordings of the 1950s and '60s that stand as classics, but to listen today to recordings by the Amadeus Quartet (the premier ensemble of the U.K.) and the Budapest Quartet in its later years

(ditto North America) is to be astonished by the sort of execution that was then thought not to need a retake.

This dynamic is at work also in orchestras. The gap between a world-famous ensemble and your friendly local symphony is much narrower than it once was. An orchestra of the sort we once might have considered middling can, under the right conductor, produce a great night of Mahler. The best student orchestras are now so accomplished that listeners might wonder where the professional advantage resides. There is a subtle balance: Students can be rehearsed *ad infinitum* without losing their edge. Pros cannot. And students become pros.

No one needs to be told that the compact disc is in its sunset. Even downloading is passé in the era of streaming. The effect of these convulsions on classical consumption is hard to predict.

One of the prevailing ironies of the opera world is that the surging popularity of *Metropolitan Opera Live* in HD cinema broadcasts is giving companies who present truly "live" opera the jitters. But there is no parallel phenomenon in the concert world. My sense is that as cellphones and earbuds proliferate as the main media of music appreciation, the allure of live performance in an uplifting, communal and acoustically rewarding setting will increase accordingly. There is more good news in the continued popularity of baroque music and the widespread, if exaggerated, belief that specialists are required to play and sing it well. Another growing niche is contemporary music, which is no longer weighed down by 12-tone karma.

Undergirding all of this activity is integrity: belief in the music, willingness to devote years to its study, and eagerness to communicate it to as many people as possible. There are easier ways of making a living. But none that provides greater rewards. ▲

THE EVOLUTION OF CLASSICAL MUSIC AT BANFF

At Banff Centre, we value examining a variety of disciplines and perspectives. We caught up with Co-Artistic Directors of *Summer Classical Music*, Claire Chase and Steven Schick, to discuss why they're starting a dialogue about the term "classical music."

CLAIRE CHASE: For us, it's not so much about what we call it, it's about how musical communities cross-pollinate and evolve one another. We're in favour of just calling what we do "music," which worked just fine for thousands of years.

STEVEN SCHICK: I think the more we make those labels permeable, the more likely it is that people will find something interesting in a form they thought they didn't like before.

CC: It doesn't mean that we're doing away with any tradition—in fact, I think the most rigorous way of honouring a tradition is by being inclusive of all the things that, musically, we do.

SS: We want to think of the label as some place to start and not some place to finish.

Visit banffcentre.ca/banff-centre-stories to read our series on the Summer Classical Music program.

SUMMER MUSIC IN BANFF

As part of Banff Centre's programs, Co-Artistic Directors of *Summer Classical Music*, Steven Schick and Claire Chase, have put together a suite of programs to advance today's classical musicians. Their focus: the creation of new music; re-nement of traditional and contemporary practices; and the amplification of music in public spaces.

Experience these programs in one of the many public events and performances throughout this summer. See event listing on page 50 for more information.

Claire Chase and Steven Schick
June 20, 7:30 P.M.
International Contemporary Ensemble
June 22, 7:30 P.M.

Music in the Pines
Celebrate Canada's 150th birthday with a kaleidoscope of grand and intimate performances all around Banff, all day Saturday, July 1.

Times and locations to be announced on banffcentre.ca on June 29

Miro Quartet and Imani Winds | July 11, 7:30 P.M.
Vicky Chow and Winston Choi
August 1, 7:30 P.M.

Reverbs & Reconciliation

A conversation with Bear Witness, of A Tribe Called Red BY LISA CHARLEYBOY

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HERE IS ALWAYS EVOLUTION in revolution, and A Tribe Called Red (ATCR) is testament to that. The internationally-acclaimed DJ group, made up of Bear Witness (Cayuga), Ian “DJ NDN” Campeau (Nipissing First Nation), and the most recent addition, Tim “Zoolman” Hill (Mohawk First Nations), rose to prominence in Ottawa after Bear Witness and DJ NDN created club nights aimed at the urban Indigenous crowd dubbed “Electric Pow Wow.” When they first started in 2008, the pair simply played sets of hip hop and dubstep to mostly Native crowds, but in 2008 when they added Dan “DJ Shub” General (Mohawk from Six Nations) to the mix, the then-trio created an entirely new genre of music dubbed “Pow Wow Step” which attracted attention from the mainstream music industry.

Both their self-titled first album and their second, *Nation II Nation*, received Polaris Music Prize nominations in 2013 and 2014 respectively. In 2014, the group won a Juno Award for Breakthrough Group of the Year—the first ever Aboriginal group to win an award outside of the Indigenous music category. During the acceptance speech, DJ NDN gave a special shout-out to Native youth, urging them to chase their goals and “aim high,” as the group was proof that anything is possible.

Shortly after that big win, the group shifted again as DJ Shub exited for personal reasons and Zoolman came on board. This set the stage for a new creative process, as they geared up from making club bangers to creating an entire concept album, *We Are The Halluci Nation*. Released in the fall of 2016, it features artists Tanya Tagaq, Lido Pimentia, Yasiin Bey (formerly Mos Def), Saul Williams, and Shad, to name a few.

I caught up with Bear Witness over the phone while he was at home in Ottawa on a rare tour hiatus.



PHOTO CREDIT: RITA TAYLOR



OUTDOOR CONCERTS AT BANFF CENTRE'S SHAW AMPHITHEATRE

Experience A Tribe Called Red this summer in the Shaw Amphitheatre series, along with some of Canada's best musicians:

BrassFire featuring Jens Lindemann | July 2, 1 P.M.

Blue Rodeo | July 7, 6:30 P.M.

Corb Lund with special guest Leeroy Stagger | July 15, 6:30 P.M.

Sarah Harmer | July 23, 1 P.M.

A Tribe Called Red | August 6, 6:30 P.M.

LC: So I'm just wondering where you feel the band is right now – how have you evolved from when you started?

BEAR WITNESS: It's changed a lot. This album was a three-year journey. In the beginning of production, I was trying to write a storyline for it. We started off talking about us as a band of superheroes who were going off to find other allies, then that story evolved to us being bandits. But once John Trudell gave us the *Hallucination* poem, it was like, *Okay!* Now we have this idea of a nation that we can invite people to be a part of.

Was it one member that led the vision along the journey, or was it collective?

We collectively decided to do it. I took on a lot of the writing part of it and was inspired by John's poem and

used a lot of ideas I had around Indigenous science fiction to fill in the gaps and flesh it out a bit. But the way that the album itself gets to tell the story is largely due to our new member, 2oolMan. He has a different style of working and was able to pick up the challenge of creating this concept album, have a story-arc through the music, and also work with all these different people and include their collaborative elements. If you want to talk about evolution, taking that step of collaboration was so huge, and something we all learned a lot from and grew a lot from.

Tribe's been great about introducing Indigenous music to the mainstream. How has the acceptance changed since you started touring as a trio back in 2010?

One thing I've noticed is how Indigenous people and non-Indigenous people come to our shows and experience the same thing at our shows, together.



We've always had an abundance of talent within the Indigenous community, but we've largely only been talking to ourselves because people outside of the community weren't willing to listen. But there's been this massive shift in the last decade in Canada. You see it with the Polaris with both Tanya [Tagaq - Inuk throat singer] and Buffy [Sainte-Marie] winning Polaris Music Prizes, and us winning a Juno outside of the Indigenous category. These are massive changes in the way that people are seeing the culture and are willing to interact with the culture [...] in a way that doesn't seem so voyeuristic as in the past. We're actually getting to exercise our voices. The fact that Indigenous artists can be outspoken about the things they care about and remain successful – now that's really different.

We've got these celebrations of culture – not just within our own people – but with everybody celebrating. For me, this feels like a part of moving forward, and a part of reconciliation. Within the changing landscape in Canada, and all this talk about reconciliation, do you feel like you're a part of that?

I have mixed feelings about the idea of reconciliation, in the way it's being used and played out in Canada, particularly. It's one of those things I feel does a lot more for the colonialists than it does for Indigenous people.

So you don't feel a personal connection to the concept as it stands now?

I don't really have a personal connection [...] but the overall idea of reconciliation is really difficult. There's a lot of work to be done before we can even start that conversation.

Do you feel like A Tribe Called Red can be a part of that conversation?

I think A Tribe Called Red is a part of

trying to begin the conversation that would bring us to a place where we can start talking about reconciliation. One thing I've noticed is how Indigenous people and non-Indigenous people come to our shows and experience the same thing at our shows, together. That's the common ground. That's a common experience that's being created here in Canada. Trying to find common ground to even begin having a conversation about Indigenous issues – which attack the heart of the colonial construct – is one of the hardest things to do between Indigenous people and settlers. What we've been able to do with Tribe is to begin to give people the opportunity to have a shared experience. That can lead to better understanding of each other, that will then lead us to a place to have a critical conversation, to help put things in order on this continent.

So what's the next big goal for Tribe?

I always find that such a hard question because we're constantly blowing our own minds in terms of how far this is going to go, or how it's going to grow, or what's going to be possible next. We're always being told by the people around us to dream bigger because we have a hard time seeing how far this can go. Every time we seem to dream up something bigger than we did last time, it happens. I mean, we got a track with Yasiin Bey ["R.E.D."]. So, we've just got to keep challenging ourselves to grow more and see where this is going to take us. But I'm really getting to a point where what I'm excited about is who's going to come next. I want to see what this next, younger generation of Indigenous artists has to offer. We're already starting to become the 'old guys'. I want to see what's going to come up. I want to help foster that next generation of artists to have more opportunities than the rest of us had. ▲

This interview has been edited and condensed. Lisa Charleyboy (Tsilhqot'in - Raven Clan) is a First Nations writer and social entrepreneur living in Toronto. She is the Editor-in-Chief of Urban Native Magazine, which focuses on pop culture with an Indigenous twist. lisacharleyboy.com



Canada's Next Generation of
CULTURAL LEADERS

PHOTO CREDIT: ERIK PUTZ/JOSIAH GORDON

What does the next century hold for cultural institutions and how do we bring leaders together to respond to these challenges? As Ban Centre launches a new training program for cultural leaders, **Russell Willis Taylor** discusses the importance of training homegrown talent for leadership in Canada and abroad.

OVER THE PAST YEAR, there have been a number of public discussions in the cultural community about Canadian leadership for Canadian institutions. *The Globe and Mail* and *The Toronto Star* have written insightfully about the mixed emotions that Canadians feel when a great job in Canada is awarded to someone from abroad—even while being proud of the fact that Canada and Canadian institutions attract the very best and the very brightest.

When I think about this issue of Canadian talent needed for a Canadian job, especially in the cultural sector, I'm reminded of what my sociologist friends would call a "category error" when we worry too much about filling all our jobs with homegrown leaders. Perhaps we should be more concerned with the diversity of voices we encourage to become leaders in the first place. Surely not all of our leaders must have the same experiences, the same gender, the same ethnicity that today's leaders have. Rather than being concerned with local or provincial recruitment, I wonder if we shouldn't be turning our energy toward actively identifying and nurturing that next generation of leaders, who will bring radically different viewpoints to our cultural institutions and our governing boards.

Their vision of the future may not be ours, but the future that they face is very different from the world in which those of us who have led cultural organizations matured and grew into our jobs. They will need an appetite for uncertainty and complexity that exceeds our own, and they will need to build institutions that offer value to a society that is rapidly changing. Their governing bodies will need to be committed,

focused, and wise to create the kind of institutional resilience that the future, and indeed the present, requires.


In 2016, Prime Minister Trudeau and Minister of Canadian Heritage Mélanie Joly pledged an unprecedented \$1.9 billion to foster the creation of Canadian content and to increase the international audiences for Canadian creative professionals. This support is a clear and welcome message that creative expression is not ornamental, it is fundamental—to who we are and how we see ourselves. They form part of a Canadian cultural diaspora of which we can all be proud, and we need to seek out the next generation of leaders who will take their places, both home and abroad.

At Ban Centre, our Leadership programs integrate the power of the arts, the wisdom of Indigenous practice, and the extraordinary beauty of Ban National Park to prepare and empower the next generation of Canadian leaders. As part of these programs we will be launching a cultural-leadership training program in 2017, in partnership with other leading artistic organizations across Canada. In a time of unexpected change, public leaders have noted that the world needs Canada now more than ever.

Around the world, from the International Society for the Performing Arts, led by David Baile, to the Bank of England, headed by the renowned Mark Carney, Canadians are taking on global leadership challenges—and succeeding. They form part of a Canadian cultural diaspora of which we can all be proud, and we need to seek out the next generation of leaders who will take their places, both home and abroad. ▲

Creative expression is not ornamental, it is fundamental – to who we are and how we see ourselves

Russell Willis Taylor is currently serving as interim Vice-President of Arts and Leadership at Ban Centre for Arts and Creativity. Previously Taylor was the President and CEO of National Arts Strategies in the U.S., and Executive Director of the English National Opera in the U.K. For more information about Leadership programs at Ban Centre, including the newly launched Cultural Leadership program, visit ban-centre.ca.



Newworld
Theatre's
Artistic
Director
Marcus
Youssef

Diversity on Canada's Stages

The amplification of many
voices is the hallmark
of new Canadian theatre

BY STEPHEN HUNT

PHOTO CREDIT: SIMON HAYTER

MARCUS YOUSSEF is a Canadian theatre artist who's also a person of colour, and he's wondering where—in 2017—the representations of people like him are on our Canadian main stages. "There's more talk of inclusion than historically there has been," says Youssef. "But still more talk than action."

Youssef grew up in Vancouver, the son of an Egyptian immigrant. He's the artistic director of Newworld Theatre, a mainstay of Vancouver's theatre community, and the playwright-in-residence at Banff's Playwrights Colony. While large regional theatres lag in terms of programming content that reflect Canada's people, there's a flipside to that equation that he's discovered working with Colony Director Brian Quirt and Associate Dramaturg Jenna Rodgers at Banff.

"The Playwrights Colony in particular, under Brian's direction, has just quietly gone ahead in a way I believe a national institution should," says Youssef, "which is to quietly and unassumingly represent the country that it is part of."

At the 2016 Playwrights Colony, that representation included a collaboration between Youssef, Theatre Replacement Co-Artistic Director James Long (with whom Youssef also co-created the play *Winners and Losers*), and Niall McNeil, an actor with Down Syndrome, along with a cast of performers of mixed abilities.

What was unique for Youssef about working on his latest retelling, *King Arthur's Night*, was that a lot of his creative journeys involved sitting back and taking notes while McNeil and the other cast members took on flights of creative fancy.

"We've been working at the Down Syndrome Research Foundation here for three years," Youssef says, "and we've hired three folks from there to be in the show whose lives include Down Syndrome."

McNeil, a professional actor who grew up on the Caravan Farm Theatre outside of Kamloops, plays Arthur in the show, workshoping at Banff Centre this summer. "But [co-star] Tiffany King is playing Guinevere and she's never acted before. Her parents told me she had been acting out movies and stories by herself at home for many years, and this was the first time she

Newworld Theatre's Niall McNeil as King Arthur. The company is back in Banff this summer workshopping the piece on the campus.



This spotlight on amplifying diverse voices is an extension of a new brand of Canadian theatre

found the opportunity to do this thing she loves with other people." says Youssef. "And she's amazing."

In lieu of enlisting the performers to act out an existing script, Youssef created a number of situations and a theme, then watched and listened as the performers shaped the show, rather than the other way around.

"There are whole sections of the show," he says, "where we ask questions, aesthetically. We all have LAV

mics on, but [Niall and Ti'anya] know the subject matter, and they know what the theme is. They just improvise."

It's an example of what Banff's Associate Dramaturg Jenna Rodgers says is one of the moments when inclusion evolves into equity.

"Inclusion is a [first] step," Rodgers says. "But what I think is unique about the *King Arthur* process is that it wasn't just about including Niall, it was also about including his ideas in

a more holistic way throughout the whole process.

"It's not just about saying our doors are open," she adds, "but about making space for the practices that might be necessary for diverse artists to emerge or feel safe."

King Arthur's Night, meanwhile, is on the fast track to a world premiere in mid-2017, with hopes that it will tour the country a year that and on into 2018.

This spotlight on amplifying diverse



Go to our website to read more about the importance of diversity and inclusion in Canadian theatre from the director of the Banff Playwrights Colony, Brian Quirt banffcentre.ca/banff-centre-stories

voices is an extension of a new brand of Canadian theatre. Shows by writers such as Anita Majumdar, Youssef, and others are tackling Canada as it looks now, rather than developing work that presents an imaginary Canada, from a mythologized past that doesn't exactly apply to how we live now.

"Often it's those kinds of intersections I'm really interested in," Youssef says. "Where it doesn't conform to our kind of media or social media-driven or ideological expectation. Because real life is often a lot more complicated and nuanced than those mass-communicated kinds of stories."

Or, as Rodgers puts it: "Why here? Why now?"

When Brian Quirt first took over as director of the Banff Playwrights Colony five years ago, the first thing he considered was what defined a play.

If playwrights wanted to work with a dramaturg to shape a text, that was fine. If they wanted to work with a choreographer to incorporate dance into the storytelling, that was fine too. Quirt soon found himself welcoming puppeteers, a Banff dog trainer, and others into the retreat.

When it comes to the Playwrights Colony, "I've chosen," Quirt says, "to define playwriting extremely broadly."

That includes everything from Canadian theatrical legends like

Victoria playwright Joan MacLeod, to Vancouver's Majumdar and her funny, smart *Fish Eyes Trilogy* for young audiences, all the way to *King Arthur's Night*.

For Quirt, who doubles as the artistic director of Toronto's Night-swimming Theatre, the issue of creating a theatre ecology that's diverse and inclusive first is simply that it helps foster the creation of better plays.

Majumdar, whose recent work was developed through a number of Banff residencies, is a prime example.

"She's one of many artists whose voices have been underrepresented on our stages and who have not necessarily been well represented at Banff—to a certain degree—over the years," says Quirt.

"I'm not here to say it didn't happen in the past," he adds, "[just that] I'm just going to make it happen in the present."

"It makes a huge difference to the work," he continues, "and we hope it makes the work stronger, more powerful, more effective—and also more producible."

Those sorts of stories are also the kind Quirt hopes emerge from the 2017 Playwrights Colony, which will focus on developing stories for theatre for young audiences, including several Indigenous creation companies that combine dance, music, and text to tell their stories—all of which fits comfortably within Quirt's definition of what a play is.

"It was really important for me," Quirt says, "that these Indigenous companies, that work with dance and theatre equally, be part of the conversation that we conduct at the Colony, about which stories we tell, but [also] how we tell those stories."

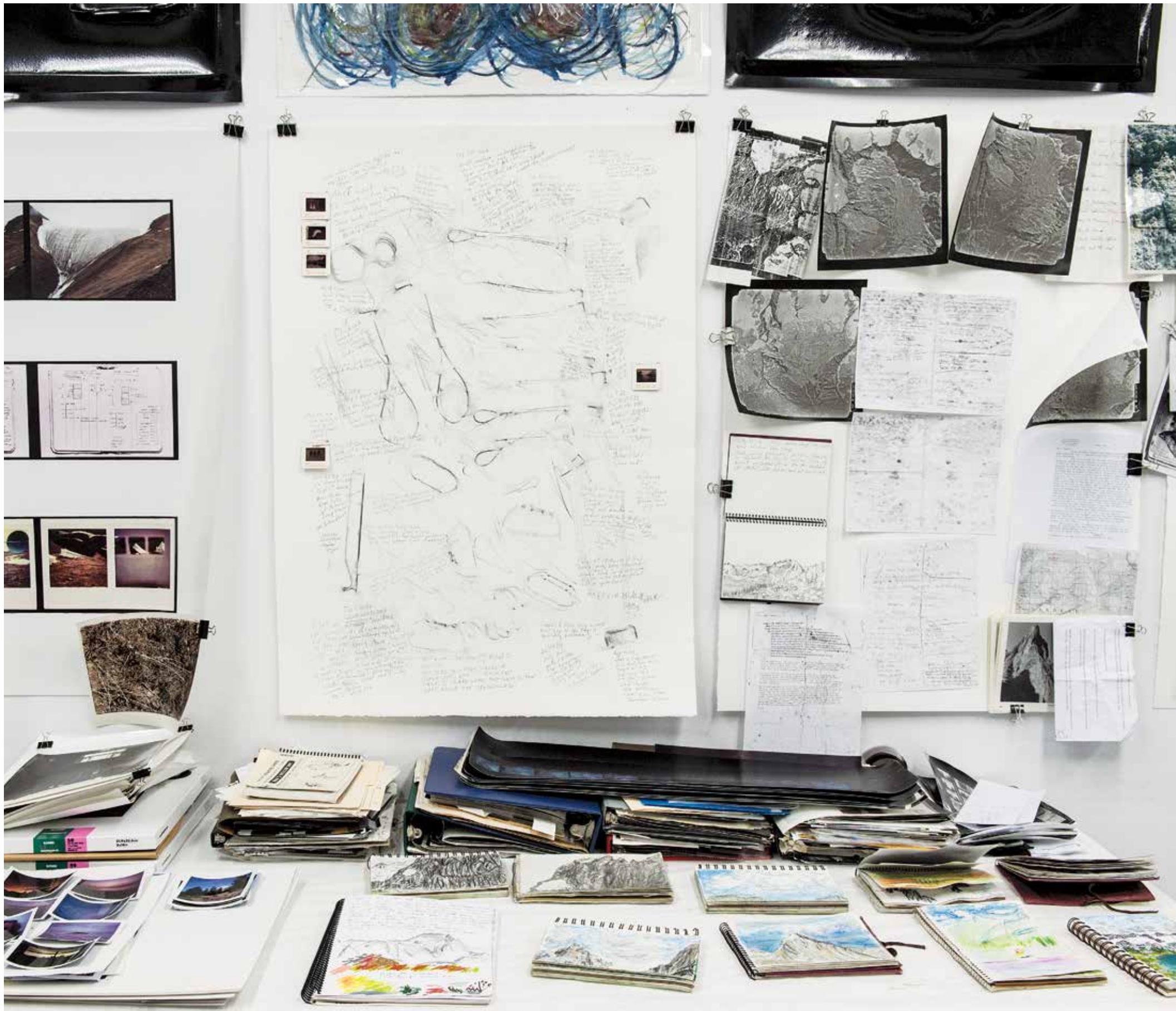
Youssef says that very devotion to developing stories that are diverse and inclusive—not to mention unorthodox and original—isn't a luxury, but a cultural necessity.

"If a country's culture does not reflect its social world," says Youssef, "then it's not going to survive." ▲

King Arthur's Night is generously supported by the Mackie Family Creation Endowment and the Maclab Enterprises Endowment.



PHOTO CREDIT: TRISTAN CASEY MCNEIL



THE ARTISTS ARE PRESENT

Artists pull back the curtain on their workspaces for our regular Open Studio events. Take a look inside...

Banff Artist in Residence Diane Colwell's studio walls are covered in her findings from the summit register books and boxes at the tops of Canadian mountains. Photo by Rita Taylor

+ See the full photo gallery of the artists and their open studio spaces, at banffcentre.ca/banff-centre-stories and follow our Instagram [@banffcentre](https://www.instagram.com/banffcentre) to get a behind the scenes look inside our Open Studios events.

RIGHT: Pianist Mikolaj Warszynski performs during a piano showcase for the Banff Musicians in Residence program in 2016. Photo by Rita Taylor; BOTTOM: *Body as Site* participant Susannah Mira shows off her Visual Arts studio in 2017. Photo by Rita Taylor; New pottery just out of the kiln at the ceramics Open Studios 2016. Photo by Katy Whitt.



TOP: Artist Evan Halter at Banff Centre in 2016, during Open Studios for the *Still Alive* residency, which explored the still life genre. Photo by Rita Taylor; LEFT: A look at Fall Banff Artist in Residence participant Erin Hayden's studio during 2016. Photo by Rita Taylor



CLOCKWISE, FROM ABOVE: Artist Viviana Cárdenas staging her work in 2016. Photo by Katy Whitt; Broken Social Scene's Brendan Canning was lead faculty for the Independent Music residency in 2016. Here he leads a listening party where each participant played a song they'd produced at Ban Centre. Photo by Don Lee; Maryse Larivière takes a photo during the 2016 Visual Arts residency, *Still Alive*. Photo by Rita Taylor.



CHECK OUT SOME OF OUR OPEN STUDIOS EVENTS THIS SPRING AND SUMMER

Readings from the Writing Studio
 May 3, 7:30 P.M.,
 Bentley Chamber Music Studio
Classical Music with Claire Chase and Steven Schick
 June 20, 4-6 P.M.,
 Bentley Chamber Music Studio
Visual + Digital Arts, Ban Research in Culture and Ban Artists in Residence
 August 10, 4-7 P.M.,
 Jeanne and Peter Lougheed Building, Room 204