

## DOWN THE RABBIT HOLE



A CAMOSUN STUDENT TALKS ABOUT THEIR JOURNEY WITH EPILEPSY

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# NEXUS

camosun's student voice since 1990  
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## editor's letter On disappointment

It's a deep penetrating ache that weighs the body when unfortunate news is told. Unlike the hours that precede, awaiting results of good or bad that dictate the future, which electrifies one's limbs with an uneasy zip, the aftermath is a long, dull, final punctuation that's imposed on the body. It's then when one is most present, stuck in the torso and brain of the least welcome of times. And to be asked to carry on is an offensive act that one still must obey. In fact, everything is an offensive act when one is subjected to disappointment—the blue sky is antagonized and the birds are shunned.

It was during October I learned news that put my efforts into question and was perpetually disappointed, most notably in myself. While I do claim to have some perspective, it's easy to slip away from self-assurance and

## It was during October I learned news that put my efforts into question and was perpetually disappointed, most notably in myself.

fall into the dark hole of defeat, finding new titles for ourselves beyond our Christian names—bad wife, bad daughter, bad friend, bad writer. And when still others disagree with those names, hoping to prove you innocent, there is little that may revive you but your own will.

Sometimes bad news twists and warps into good as opportunities arrive, available for the taking. And in hindsight, it can be obvious that the correct fate was laid out for you all along. Of course, the idea of fate is selfish and artificial, but in moments of gratitude, there is often faith in some guided path that leads us out into triumph.

During October, I waited for this stage to creep in with regret as I antagonized the blue sky and shunned the birds, but it never did come. And as I creep into November, I'm still yet to hear them sing. I'm still stuck with the lingering "if only"s that are followed by hundreds of variations of the "smarter" move that would guarantee my success, shaking my head that I could ever be as ridiculous as to have made all the small and large decisions that would eventually lead to my disappointment.

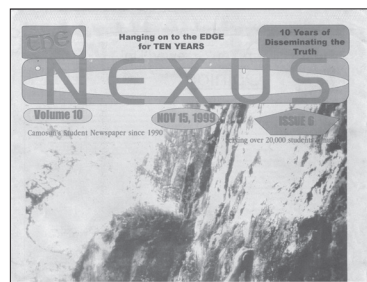
To keep us afloat, we look for the lessons during this time, a method to the madness, to change the narrative into the ones CEOs and presidents tell during long speeches about meritocracy. "I was just a man with a dream," they say, of course, skipping over the parts about rich uncles and friends in the field. And yet, still aware of this fact, it's with no trouble that we blame ourselves so deeply for any and all setbacks.

The agency one has over the outcome does not matter in the end. But the truth of the matter is that often we are not the ones in the driver's seat. Sometimes disappointment is just another blip only to find ourselves back out of the dark hole.

Lydia Zuleta Johnson, student editor  
lydia@nexusnewspaper.com

## flashback

## 25 Years Ago in Nexus



LYDIA ZULETA JOHNSON  
STUDENT EDITOR

**Freedom torches:** There is nothing more effortlessly cool than a cigarette. It's true, however, that the cigarette is a dangerous drug that possesses lingering effects beyond Rita Hayworth allure. On a two-page spread in our November 15, 1999 issue, we covered the hows, whats, and whys of smoking. Writer John Overall says in his article "Let them drink smoke" that, come 2000, new anti-smoking regulations will be implemented across BC, preventing cigarettes in all workplaces. While for some this may have been welcome news, writer Wendi Davies shared in her article "Up in smoke" how difficult it already was as a smoker on the decline of the cigarette zeitgeist. While smoking may be glamorous, all it's really good for, writer Erika Whitmore says, is population control.

**The art of vandalism:** In the bathroom is where philosophy manifests, claims Davies in her piece "Philosophy from the head" in this issue. Davies details what defines a modern philosopher and how one may be found in men's washrooms scribbling affirmations onto stalls—the *nouveau* meeting ground for discussion. Whereas the media and killjoys portray graffiti as a gang-related expression of violent disrespect, Davies says graffiti artist Chaz Borjóquez sees graffiti as "a personal voyage seeking self-esteem." It is easy to blow this off as farce, however, there's a claim to be made about its sincerity. If you're curious, look to the craproom for more information.

**Devout Humanist:** The unholy temple of Humanism welcomes all who follow its three pillars, however, in this issue, we covered how even Humanists can't seem to get along. Interviewed for the story, former British Columbia Humanist Association president Theo Meijer shared that while it may be a small organization of around 130 members, it's rarely united on its ideologies—often tense between some dogmatic characters of radical secularism. Well, what can you do? They're only human.

## open space

## The Canadian medical-school system needs to change

JASMINE WAGSTAFF  
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

It's almost impossible to see a doctor in BC.

We've all seen the long lineups at walk-in clinics at 7:00 am, all the people waiting since before the sun was up to get the chance to see a general practitioner. Almost everyone has been stuck waiting in emergency because a small medical issue has gotten way out of hand and now we need the hospital instead of having a family doctor to see in the first place.

like myself, end up going to school in other provinces or different countries all together. However, if you leave Canada for medical school, you apply for residency as an international student, which makes things so much harder. This is why so many students leave and don't return to practice medicine here.

Obviously, medical school is going to be competitive and hard to get into. We can't let just anyone be a doctor, I understand that grades and extracurriculars are important. They are also expensive

Many blame the doctor shortage on the pandemic, because so many medical professionals quit during the height of COVID-19. This had an effect—we've all seen the increase in healthcare professionals quitting over the last four years—but I blame something else entirely: the medical-school system in this country. Specifically, this province.

This desperately needs to change.

Many blame the doctor shortage on the pandemic, because so many medical professionals quit during the height of COVID-19. This had an effect—we've all seen the increase in health-care professionals quitting over the last four years—but I blame something else entirely: the medical-school system in this country. Specifically, this province.

Most people I talk to are unaware that we have one medical school in BC: the University of British Columbia (UBC). It accepts 328 students a year maximum, split up in four locations around the province. Their Island Medical Program, held in the Medical Sciences building at UVic, can have up to 80 students a year.

Yeah, 80 students a year for the entire Island Medical Program. That's not nearly enough for Vancouver Island, or even Greater Victoria.

Last year, UBC accepted only 308 students. It's absurdly competitive to get in: the average GPA was 89.63 percent and the average MCAT score was 514.2/528.

Prospective medical students,

for the government to fund, which explains why there are only 16 medical schools across all of Canada.

This is why the entire system needs an overhaul. Two big changes need to happen and fast.

First, we need to build and staff more medical schools in this province. Let UVic and VIU run their own instead of lending a single building to UBC. I understand this would be a difficult and expensive project to start, but it's worth it for the well-being of this province.

Second, residency standards need to change. A Canadian citizen coming back to the country after leaving for four years for school shouldn't be considered an international student. They should be able to return and apply to residency spots like any other Canadian.

This would open up so many more seats for prospective doctors, which we need right now. It would also make admissions a little less competitive, which I believe is a good thing. The fact is this: we need more doctors and we need more schools for them to go to.

The system has been broken for a while; it's about damn time we do something about it.

Something on your mind? If you're a Camosun student, get in touch with us with your *Open Space* idea! Email editor@nexusnewspaper.com. Include your student number. Thanks!



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OVERHEARD AT NEXUS: "If I put my hands on your neck, you'll scream."

post-secondary

## Camosun College Student Society reacts to international post-graduate work permit program changes



FILE PHOTO

The Camosun College Student Society feels the new changes will have “significant impacts” moving ahead.

LYDIA ZULETA JOHNSON  
STUDENT EDITOR

A federal announcement on September 18 introduced tighter restrictions on international student study permits, causing concern at a number of Canadian post-secondary institutions, including Camosun College.

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada announced it will be limiting eligibility to Canada’s post-graduation work permit program, allowing only for international students studying within 966 programs in five eligible areas of education: agriculture and agri-food; health care; science, technology, engineering, and mathematics; skilled trades; and transportation. (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship of Canada Marc Miller declined to be interviewed for this story.)

Beginning Friday, November 1, the most recent policy changes add an additional 10-percent decrease to all intakes from a previous reduction, capping permits at 437,000 for both 2025 and 2026 enrolments. The cap now includes graduate and

doctoral students, who were exempt from the former restrictions.

Camosun College Student Society (CCSS) executive director Michel Turcotte is unsurprised with the new rules, however, he worries certain areas of the restrictions will have major impacts on Camosun.

“We were almost expecting the further decrease in the quota amount, which may have some effect on Camosun, but that is by far not the most serious program change that will impact Camosun. That change is the post-graduate work permit requirements being restricted to particular programs in college environments,” says Turcotte. “And that, I think, will have significant impacts for the most part moving forward.”

Turcotte says the government’s new policy to better target Canadian labour market needs ignores sectors that are still in demand. Additionally, he says current Camosun infrastructure is not equipped for what fields of study the government is looking to prioritize.

“[T]hings like early childhood education are not included in the

current listings of codes that will qualify for the post-graduate work permit,” says Turcotte, “but that is something that is highly needed in our community and other communities across the country. But also, most of the other ones seem restricted to agriculture, health care, and some science and technology, which we think is an arbitrary view of the needs within the Canadian economy in general. I mean, while we certainly need more people in those areas, some of those areas are not traditionally the ones where institutions are equipped to handle larger numbers of international students.”

Camosun international student enrolments have already seen a decrease of roughly 400 students in the 2023-2024 year (director of Camosun International Christiaan Bernard declined to comment for this story). The college ran an opinion piece on its website on October 2, written by BC Colleges president Colin Ewart, speaking out against the changes. Turcotte says, if enforced, the restrictions could cause numbers to decline further.

“The CCSS calls on governments at all levels to respond appropriately to this crisis and to make the decisions that are actually in British Columbia’s and Canada’s best interests going forward.”

MICHEL TURCOTTE  
CAMOSUN COLLEGE STUDENT SOCIETY

“If these policy changes actually get implemented fully,” he says, “we can lose hundreds, if not potentially well over a thousand students for sure... When you take away the post-graduate work permit, as an attraction, that makes it a lot more difficult to attract students.”

Turcotte says he understands the flaws of the current post-secondary system, relying heavily on international student tuition as means of financially supporting colleges and universities in Canada. He says the new policy’s solution to the issue is insufficient.

“[R]elying on international students to fund your domestic post-secondary education opportunities is a problem and probably a strategy that is being called into question right now,” he says. “It’s almost like ripping the Band-Aid off all at once because the solution here may be slightly more damaging than if we had progressively worked our way to a different model within Canada.”

Turcotte says the CCSS is concerned about what financial availability Camosun has left. Coming out of COVID, he says, the college has depleted much of its reserves, as instructed by the government.

“[The college] has not had the opportunity to really replenish its reserves after facing that challenge and has very little money left. So if, barring some sort of provincial financial intervention, Camosun would have to cut costs significantly, and it only has a few levers to do that, that would be to reduce programming, which we oppose. It would

also be to reduce its staffing levels in some ways, because just like any other public-sector organization, the majority of the money is spent on human resources... So, those are the very limited options available to the college, and none of them are good, I would say,” says Turcotte. “We want students to be able to continue their pathway.”

Turcotte stresses a re-evaluation of the policy changes. He says the implication of the restrictions impact everyone involved in post-secondary education.

“I think it’s important to recognize that it was inappropriate for governments to use international students as a means of funding post-secondary education in British Columbia and in Canada generally, that acting so dramatically in this way in response to perceived political pressure actually hurts domestic students and the international students already here. This will have huge ramifications for training domestic students in the programs of their choice or the ones that will meet Canada’s various labour market needs,” says Turcotte. “The CCSS calls on governments at all levels to respond appropriately to this crisis and to make the decisions that are actually in British Columbia’s and Canada’s best interests going forward.”

The Camosun College Faculty Association, along with other college faculty associations, lobbied in Ottawa after this issue went to press, seeking to mitigate potential damage to the college sector. Look for our full story next issue.

## NEWS BRIEFS

### Camosun Coastal Centre gets \$5.26 million grant

The Dennis & Phyllis Washington Foundation in conjunction with Seaspan have announced a \$5.26 million grant to go toward building a new trades training centre at Camosun College’s Coastal Centre, as well as allocating \$200,000 to scholarships. Adopting an “Indigenous first” approach, the new training centre—which will support maritime trades education—will be prioritizing Indigenous students. Camosun

seeks to provide a culturally responsive environment with the facility, which will feature shop spaces adaptable for the evolving demands of the marine trades industry.

### Decolonizing Camosun’s library

The Camosun library is conducting a survey to learn what it can do to decolonize and form a more equitable and inclusive environment online and within the building. All students, faculty, and staff are able to participate in the survey to share ideas. Open until March

2025, the survey will be available to be filled out in the library or online. Results will be reviewed and considered in the summer of 2025. Head to [camosun.libwizard.com/f/decolonizing](https://camosun.libwizard.com/f/decolonizing) to fill out the survey.

### Camosun and Malahat Nation partner for learning opportunities

In partnership with the Malahat Nation, Camosun College will be providing learning opportunities within the nation to better support learners for continued post-secondary education. The adult

education program for Supporting Opportunities, Achievement, and Resilience (SOAR) seeks to reflect the college’s commitment to reconciliation with tailored learning in STEM, trades, clerical, and management. First launched in September 2024, the program holds 14 students and is currently at capacity.

### Saanich developing road safety plan

The District of Saanich has developed a new road safety plan seeking to eliminate traffic fatalities and injuries. The Road Safety Action Plan (RSAP) is a

10-year strategy designed with a holistic approach focused on safe road users, safe speeds, safe vehicles, road design, post-crash care, and urban planning. Over the next decade, the execution of the safety plan will require an estimated \$21-million investment, including \$13.5 million for new capital projects, \$5 million from standing resources, and \$2.5 million for non-infrastructure strategies.

—LYDIA ZULETA JOHNSON,  
STUDENT EDITOR

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student politics

## Camosun College Student Society talk fall elections, referendum, diversity

“This year’s board is very diverse and it is very important to be having a diverse board because the more diverse we are, the more students we are able to reach out to.”

PRINCE SOLANKI  
CAMOSUN COLLEGE STUDENT SOCIETY

they [should] have all the information that they need to know,” he says. “We [have] students from many different cultures... and we are trying to let them know that they matter. We try to [help] all of the students.”

Solanki says the CCSS is committed to creating an inclusive environment where students feel supported, informed, and valued. He says that this year’s board is unique and will be able to connect with the students in a meaningful way. He also stresses the importance of having a diverse board, saying that representation from different cultures is important when connecting with students.

“This year’s board is very diverse and it is very important to be having a diverse board because the more diverse we are, the more students we are able to reach out to,” says Solanki. “If we compare it to last year, this year we have people from very diverse cultures, and that makes it easier for the student society to stay in touch with students and with certain communities as well.”

The referendum to raise the Nexus student levy by 30 cents a month did not pass. Referendums need 51 percent of students to vote yes to pass, and only 49 percent of students voted yes. It was 15 votes away from passing, which Solanki says is “heartbreaking, actually.”

“I think maybe students aren’t

that would love to step up to them. Also, for Solanki, being part of the board is deeply meaningful, as he says he is able to make a difference on campus.

“It means a lot to me to be part of [this year’s board],” he says. “We can see how to help students, how to make it safer for students, how to help new students coming to campus... We help provide lots of information that they need to know. I feel like the student positions are very important.”

Jaspreet Kaur was voted in as Lansdowne executive, David Vazquez Covarrubias as the off-campus director, and Arshdeep Singh as Lansdowne director.

The four elected Interurban directors were Gurleen Kour Nagra, Hector Campoy Peralta, Manvi Chona, and Pedro Jose Gudiel Pineda.

Solanki says the board’s goal is to help more students and fight for student rights.

“Students [should] feel safe,

SANTIAGO VAZQUEZ-FUERTE  
SENIOR WRITER

The Camosun College Student Society (CCSS) held its fall student elections from October 21 to October 23.

A total of 688 students voted in the elections. That’s down from last year’s fall election turnout of 784 students, but CCSS external executive Prince Solanki is still happy with the turnout.

“It was a successful voting this time. We got around 688 students that participated, but we are still missing some positions which we are planning to fill up,” says Solanki. “There are three positions still left... for the Lansdowne directors. I have been talking to students from both campuses and I will talk to all the board members so we can still hire some students that still want to run for these positions.”

Although some of the positions remain vacant, Solanki says he believes there will be many students



PHOTO PROVIDED

Some of the current Camosun College Student Society board members.

aware of this thing,” says Solanki. “I think *Nexus* is doing an amazing job letting students know about what’s happening in the campus and that is very important. I think we will also try our best to let students

know more about *Nexus*. So, they will look into the newspaper and see how important it is.”

See [camosunstudent.org](http://camosunstudent.org) for more information on the student society.

CAMOSUN COLLEGE STUDENT SOCIETY SPONSORED CONTENT

## Camosun College Student Society helping students dealing with food insecurity

The Camosun College Student Society (CCSS) operates a food bank at both campuses—with help from its partners at the Mustard Seed and Capital Region Food Share Network—where Camosun students in need can access non-perishable food items for free.

The CCSS food banks are located at both CCSS offices. At Lansdowne, the food bank is in the Fisher Building, and at Interurban, it’s in the Campus Centre. The CCSS asks that students limit themselves to two items daily to accommodate the high demand for the service.

Last winter, the CCSS was also able to offer pop-up food markets at both campuses. This initiative was made possible by student fundraising led by the hospitality management students, who have contributed greatly to the food bank.

The CCSS also partnered with the Criminal Justice program last month. The students held a stone soup day by donation, as well as a food drive. This event was met with enthusiasm and raised \$1,200 to fund continuing food bank efforts as well as receiving many non-perishable donations.

The food bank also operates with help from community donations—those wishing to donate can do so through the

Camosun Foundation by visiting [webservices.camosun.ca/foundation/camosun-cares](http://webservices.camosun.ca/foundation/camosun-cares) (donors will receive a tax receipt).

Foodbank initiatives are also ongoing. A current group of students in a Business 485 class are hosting a food drive as part of a class project. Likewise, this month the CCSS will be hosting a college-wide food drive in all departments. This drive will run from the week of November 18 until the week of December 9. This is the third year that this food drive has been running, and the CCSS hopes to see the same passion to help students yet again.

“This past spring, the CCSS conducted a food insecurity survey which revealed what we already knew—a lot of students, both domestic and international, go hungry in order to pay for their education,” says CCSS food bank coordinator Christine Desrochers. “We’re fortunate to have some amazing partners, but there is still so much unmet need here at Camosun.”

The results of that survey indicated that the need was spread across both domestic and international students. 14 percent of students indicated they had trouble accessing adequate food every day, and 38

percent of students indicated they knowingly made poor nutrition choices every time they shopped due to cost.

The CCSS offers other food-related services as well, including the bread and produce program. Every Thursday, alternating between Lansdowne and Interurban, the CCSS offers free bread and produce—donated by Jenece Place and The Food Share Network—to students. The CCSS asks that students please respect the limit of one loaf or one bag of bread and produce each week to make sure there is enough bread for everyone.

This program is made possible with the assistance of our wonderful volunteers. If you are interested in volunteering with us and are available on Thursday mornings from 10 am to 12 pm, please email [ccssplan@camosun.ca](mailto:ccssplan@camosun.ca).

The holidays can be a particularly difficult time, but the CCSS hopes to lighten the load with its holiday food hampers. Every December, the Student Society assembles and distributes holiday hampers to students in need. This year the student society has decided to distribute the hampers via lottery. This is due to the fact that last year all the hampers were snapped up in less than three



PHOTO PROVIDED

The Camosun College Student Society giving out food to students.

hours; the CCSS hopes this will make distribution more accessible and fairer to students. If you’re a Camosun student in need of a food hamper, keep an eye on the CCSS social media the week of November 18 to register. The CCSS will open up the registration link for two days and will then notify students who will receive a hamper. Hampers will be available to pick up in the first week of December.

For more resources, visit the CCSS website at [camosunstudent.org](http://camosunstudent.org) and navigate to “food-bank” under the “services” tab.

Here you will find a link to the Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness’ *Street Survival Guide*, which includes a list of community resources for students facing food insecurity.

You can also drop by the CCSS office at either campus to pick up a copy of the *Food Security Programs for Students* brochure. This is a great resource for students facing food insecurity.

If you have any questions about the CCSS food bank and related programs, contact the CCSS benefits officer at [ccssplan@camosun.ca](mailto:ccssplan@camosun.ca).

## event

## CCSS Christmas Market back to spread cheer and offer break from exams



PHOTO PROVIDED

The Camosun College Student Society holds a Christmas Market every year.

RAY NUFER  
STUDENT EDITORIAL ASSISTANT

Tuesday, November 26 marks the third year of the Camosun College Student Society (CCSS) bringing its Christmas Market to the Lansdowne campus. With over 30 student vendors participating, the market gives students the opportunity to sell their creative and culinary works, and it gives students the chance to support each other and connect over a cup of hot chocolate.

Along with the main market at Lansdowne, this year there will

also be a mini market happening at Interurban in the annex next to the cafeteria on Tuesday, November 19.

Former CCSS Indigenous director Katie Manomie had the idea to create the market in the first place in 2022.

“She created these activities to bring people together on the campus and also have some Christmas vibes,” says CCSS international director Polly Tran.

In 2023, former pride director Emily Lam carried on with organizing the activity, making some

adjustments based on the feedback received in 2022. One difference between last year’s market and this year’s is the name change—last year it was called the Holiday Market. The CCSS changed the name to Christmas Market to make students feel more Christmas spirit—when it was the Holiday Market, Polly felt that students didn’t really know it was a Christmas event. Interurban executive Sean Leyland says he is excited for the event, as it’s his first year on the board and being behind the scenes in the planning process.

“The fact that we got to showcase what students are passionate about just piqued my interest,” says Leyland. “I’m looking forward to seeing everything that students bring, and I’m excited for the community to come and see it and get excited, and support them.”

Leyland says that the market will be a nice change for students who have been ruthlessly studying for exams and trying to keep on top of work and other responsibilities.

“There’s so much that we have going on as students—work, trying to pay our bills—that I think it’s such an amazing opportunity for people’s passions to come out,” says Leyland.

Tran says that as international director, she has met international students who feel like there isn’t much of a Christmas spirit on campus, and she wants them to make good memories on campus and gain

“There’s so much that we have going on as students—work, trying to pay our bills—that I think it’s such an amazing opportunity for people’s passions to come out.”

SEAN LEYLAND  
CAMOSUN COLLEGE STUDENT SOCIETY

new experiences while also feeling at home or being reminded of home. In the midst of exams, the dark and dreary oncoming winter season, and student mental-health issues potentially worsening, this becomes even more important.

“We want to bring Christmas vibes for them, motivate them to finish exams, and have fun,” says Tran.

There will also be a QR code available that links to a form so students visiting the market can give any feedback about what they liked or didn’t like in order to make the market even better next year.

“One of the things I think is really cool about this is we’ve integrated an opportunity to collect non-perishable foods for the Student Society food bank, because as students we all know how hard it is to make ends meet at the moment,” says Leyland. “So this is one of those initiatives to try to help students bridge that affordability gap, while having a fun

Christmas holiday opportunity to get together with the community.”

Overall, the Christmas Market will be a chance for students to spread some holiday cheer and fun during the crunch of exam season.

“We’ll have a hot-chocolate station, Santa will be there, we’ll have a photo booth, and hopefully an elf or two kicking around,” says Leyland. “It’s a really nice way to break the exam and assignment monotony.”

CCSS Christmas Market  
3 pm to 6 pm Tuesday,  
November 26  
Sherri Bell Hall,  
Wilna Thomas Building  
11 am to 1:30 pm Tuesday,  
November 19  
Cafeteria Annex,  
Helmut Huber Building

## music

## Camosun student learns to let go through upcoming album

“I spent a lot of high school feeling lonely, and that was a big inspiration for my music, that allowed me to write the [upcoming] album.”

COLE FAIRFIELD  
CAMOSUN COLLEGE STUDENT

MACKENZIE GIBSON  
SENIOR WRITER

Cole Fairfield is a first year Arts and Science student at Camosun, but he has his eyes set on building a music career.

Fairfield—who goes by the name nothing. when performing—has been creating his sounds for about six years, taking inspiration from bands like Twenty One Pilots, Woodkid, grandson, Metric, and My Chemical Romance, among others. Like many other artists, Fairfield found that time spent at home during the pandemic ramped up his creative process.

“I’ve been making music since around 2018, so it’s been quite a while, but I think it feels like things started to pick up a lot during COVID,” he says. “I had a bunch of free time to just mess around and experiment.”

Fairfield—who describes him-

self as being a multi-instrumentalist—has been using the time to experiment by incorporating new instruments into his work.

“My main instrument right now, I’m taking guitar lessons at the Victoria Conservatory,” he says. “I’ve also been playing ukulele a lot since my parents got me a ukulele for a graduation present from high school.”

Although Fairfield has a few songs on Spotify right now, his aspirations are set on a bigger project: his debut full-length album. He’s already writing for it and has the name ready.

“The album’s called *New Year’s Farewells*,” he says. “It’s about a kind of letting go. I just wrote a bunch. I started it... Actually, I was inspired to write during my grandma’s funeral. So, yeah, it’s dark and sad.”

The young musician has man-

aged a lot in his life, including fighting brain cancer when he was barely old enough to be considered a toddler.

“I survived a brain tumor I suffered at two years old,” he says. “And, yes, every couple of years, I go in. So I graduated from BC Children’s [Hospital] but every couple of years I’ve been going to BC Children’s at Vancouver for just long, long care follow-up.”

While he’s healthy now, Fairfield is still managing the long-term impacts that cancer can have. One of those impacts is on mental health, which is something Fairfield deals with through his music.

“I struggle sometimes with anxiety, and, I don’t know, I talk about it a lot in my music,” he says. “Cancer, maybe it affects your mental health. I don’t know... I don’t know. But yeah, I’ve had experiences in high school that were really difficult for me and affect me a lot.”

But Fairfield has found anxiety to be motivating for his music. Pulling from heavier emotions has been a consistent source of inspiration, starting back in high school.

“I spent a lot of high school feeling lonely, and that was a big inspiration for my music, that allowed me to write the album that I was telling you about,” he says. “I think now I struggle sometimes with anxiety. And writing about and making... I write a lot of songs that are personal to me [and] help me

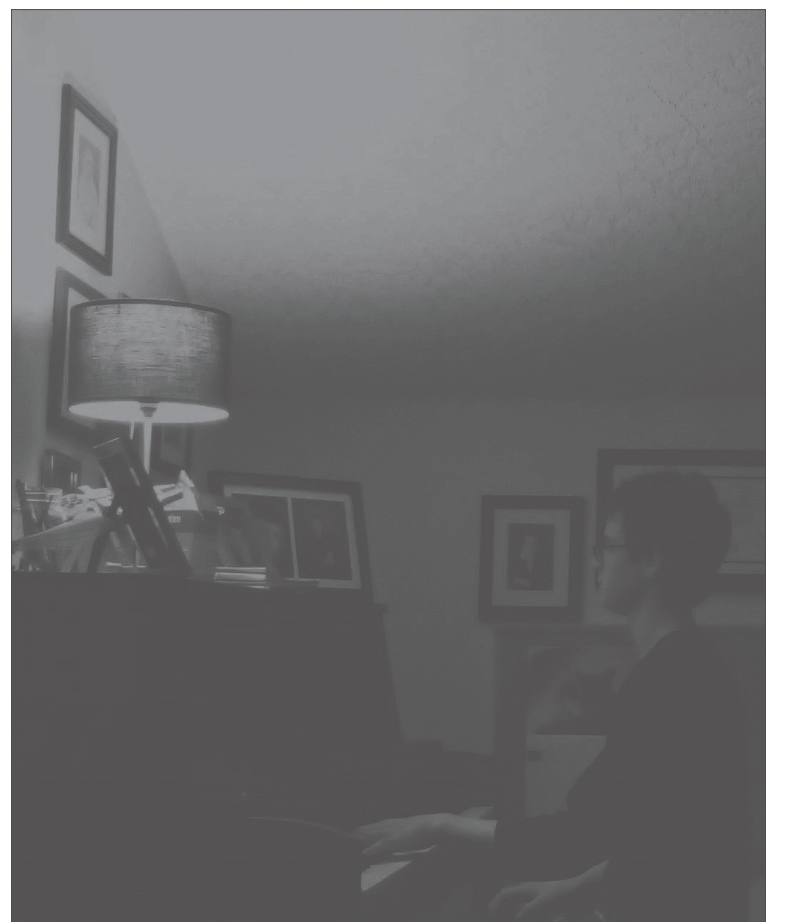


PHOTO PROVIDED

Camosun student Cole Fairfield uses his music to express his feelings.

with that. And that’s what I write a lot of.”

Fairfield is excited to see where his music-making journey takes him, and wants to create something that Camosun students—and other listeners in general—can connect to.

“My plans are just seeing where

everything takes me, how much of an audience I can build for myself,” he says. “And I just want to make music that people can resonate with, really.”

Find nothing.’s latest single, “Sing Me to Sleep,” on Spotify now, and find him on Instagram at colefairfield\_music.

# I am a purple Life as a Camosun s

Story by Katelyn Linda  
Art by Camila Ñop

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My story started on a morning in the spring of 2006 when a furry white rabbit led me down the rabbit hole; it was my first seizure.

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**W**e all know the story of Alice falling into the rabbit hole on her way to Wonderland, where she encounters an entirely unknown world. Like Alice, I also stumbled into a strange place full of curiosity and fear, unexpectedly seeing a different world I was unfamiliar with. But, unlike Alice, I did not meet a Queen of Hearts, a Mad Hatter, a Cheshire Cat, or a caterpillar; I crossed paths with doctors, tests, MRIs, CAT scans, and EEGs—the test does not hurt, sometimes it can be relaxing, I mostly sleep through the test.

It also came with struggles and odd, hazy medications. It is my new life—my own scary Wonderland. My life would never be the same.

**E**pilepsy is a neurological disorder that involves the brain, with recurrent seizures. A seizure may take many forms, including a blank stare, muscle spasms, uncontrolled movements, and convulsions. Epilepsy is one of the most common chronic neurological disorders: 1 in 26 people are diagnosed with epilepsy, and 1 out of 100 Canadians live with this disorder. There are different ways to get epilepsy: genetics, strokes, tumours, head injuries, drugs or alcohol, to name a few.

Animals can also have epilepsy. An epileptic animal could be unsteady and confused, then flop to the floor. It could twitch, drool, and move its legs like trying to tread water. One of the hardest things to remember is that this too shall pass. Most of all, stay calm, talk softly, ensure that the animal does not hurt itself, and take it to a veterinary hospital after the seizure to keep it safe.

November is Epilepsy Awareness Month. To help the public understand, you can wear purple, raise money, and assist in epilepsy awareness. This month's goal is to dismiss myths and increase support for people with epilepsy, which will inform the public's understanding and eliminate the fear and stigma surrounding it.

Throughout history, before epilepsy was understood and known about, there was a belief that those who have epilepsy could be a witch or affiliated with evil.

Also, March 26, Purple Day, is a day to learn more about epilepsy. I invite you to wear purple to support and discover the extraordinary world of epilepsy.

**M**y story started on a morning in the spring of 2006 when a furry white rabbit led me down the rabbit hole; it was my first seizure. I was 14, in my first year of high school, and school had already given me obstacles. But then everything changed; It was the start of epilepsy and seizures and the loss of my father.

I have a learning disability, and it was already hard for me to get through school since I learned differently. I did not need this—it was the cherry on top. It was hard to get through school, but I completed high school and graduated in 2009, which I'm proud of.

After the frightening seizure, I only remember bits and pieces of that day. The only thing I recall is waking up lying in a hospital bed in a foggy and hazy swirl of wonder: What happened? Where am I? How did I get here? Why? And what will my life be like?

I didn't even know what the word "epilepsy" meant or what it was. I only knew of something called "seizures" since I witnessed my father having them growing up, although he never let epilepsy get him down. He always said, "Don't let it run your life, you run your own life," which I try to live by now. He was a very positive, intelligent, driven man. He had a heart of gold; he would give the shirt off his back if he could. He would do anything for anyone. He was the best father a girl could ask for.

But seizures were scary enough and I did not expect I would be going down the same rocky path as my father did when he was alive. I was informed that I had to deal with unexpected seizures called tonic-clonic (formerly called grand mal) and absence seizures throughout my life. Sadly, I do not have the luxury of a sign to let me know that

I will have a seizure; it just happens out of the blue. Listening to music gets me to calm myself down.

When I was first diagnosed, I was terrified. I had seizures as my father did; my dad followed the same path as I did. I had a seizure when he was 13. That's when doctors and family members found out.

I was informed that my seizures were not dangerous and that I had more knowledge about epilepsy, and I have a better understanding of my condition.

After I had overcome the shock of my new world, I needed to learn about myself. I was scared, but I was determined to move forward.

As time passed, I found the drive and strength to keep going. It was hard; it was a roller coaster ride. I was epileptic and without a father. Life will always be a struggle.

After my world turned upside down and everything fell apart, returning to school; it took me a while to go back. I had a seizure at school and no one would know. I was worried about it. After some time, I found strength and courage to return to conquer my fear, which I did.

It was hard to go back, as nothing had changed. I was alone in school; my mind just wondered if I was still there with my disorder, and my mind ached with worry. I had judgmental friends. But, to my surprise, when I opened my arms; they wanted to learn more about my condition. They were about nothing; it was just me, Katelyn; nothing more. Trusting the school, teachers, and friends was a relief.

**W**hen you have a seizure, you don't know that you even had one. Every part of your body because of all the things that happen during a seizure.

There are many myths about how to help someone having a seizure. Anything, such as an object or hand, in the person's mouth can clamp down on the object, bite on the object, or not prevent the person from choking on their tongue. Do not hold them down when seizing. The nurse should call an ambulance and move things that they are in the way of the person until they are fully alert and thinking clearly. Do not touch the person that they are okay and safe.

There are many different types of seizure: focal aware tonic-clonic seizures (jerking of the body), focal impaired awareness seizures (staring or repetitive movements), partial seizures, and generalized tonic-clonic seizures (shouting or shouting).

**A**t the time, I had numerous questions about it, but I have found answers. I have learned to live with it.

At 33, I feel more comfortable with it. It makes me feel safer at work and school. The public does not know a lot about the disease, but I have learned to live with it.

It was hard to understand at a young age what a seizure was and when or if a seizure will show its wrath; it can be scary.

Animals helped me with all my struggles. I had a dog named Scooter, and she was with me throughout my life. She was beside to join my father when she was 16. She was a great friend.

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I only knew of something called "seizures" since I witnessed my father having them growing up, although he never let epilepsy get him down. He always said, "Don't let it run your life, you run your own life," which I try to live by now.

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# ple warrior tudent with epilepsy

hl, contributing writer  
oo, contributing writer

he blue. My triggers are stress and lack of  
y anxiety to avoid a seizure.

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the chance to have help.

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sideways, I was frightened at the idea of  
back, and my worst fear was that I would  
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on't know where you are, who you are, and  
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ease.

. It's scary going through life not knowing  
n happen at any time, anywhere.

While growing up, I was around dogs and  
my best friend. She had to go to the other  
had a wonderful life.

Now, I have a dog named Quinn, named after the comic-book character Harley Quinn, who she acts a lot like in her doggy way. She is a Shih Tzu Maltese cross; she is three. Animals have always helped me get through the daily life of having epilepsy. She is my little diva princess, my little girl. Animals are essential to my heart; having a dog that loves me makes me whole again.

Some dogs can help people with epilepsy in any way that fits their needs; seizure-alert dogs or emotional support dogs can be trained to perform various tasks, including lying next to someone having a seizure to prevent an injury, placing their body between the handler and the floor to break a fall at the beginning of the seizure, and staying with the handler during a seizure to provide support and comfort. The animal will let the person know before the seizure happens.

When I was younger, I thought I was alone and that no one would understand my hurdles, which brought on depression, isolation, and social anxiety.

I try to keep moving forward by writing and listening to therapeutic music, which can help me endure life's struggles. I have a group of songs that I call My Soundtrack of Life. I like to listen to things I can relate to; the songs are essential to my everyday life and help me through difficult, depressing, angry, or dark times. They've helped me throughout my life. Also, writing always helps me express my emotions since it's hard to show and say how I feel because I cannot find the right words.

Epilepsy has been a rollercoaster of emotions that brought on additional social anxiety, stress, and feelings of isolation and shyness. I feared the world of being epileptic and worried I would have the same seizures as my father, but my seizures now are controlled, for the most part, with medication.

Throughout the years, I found the spirit to find ways to help others feel that they are not alone, like when I was first diagnosed. I believe I'm no longer alone and that others are on the run, walking, stumbling, tripping, and falling down the path of epilepsy.

**I**n the past, I just wrote for myself in my journals. I thought my story could help someone. I always felt that I couldn't write because of my learning disabilities, but however I discovered that many famous people, such as poets, writers, singers, and actors, have the same issues.

There are even people from history rumoured to have epilepsy, such as Beethoven, Joan of Arc, Napoleon, Sir Isaac Newton, Leonardo da Vinci, and Harriet Tubman. They did what they loved to. Self-confidence is within.

Learning about these famous, well-known people taught me that you can do anything you want with your life, no matter your battles. And it gave me the confidence to keep doing what I love: writing my hardships and poetry to express my emotions on paper.

Today, I reflect on my bittersweet, harsh times in life. I was lucky enough to find a small job and go to school with a learning disability, depression, social anxiety, and epilepsy, and after all these ups and downs, I found who I am. It made me stronger, and I could be whoever I wanted. I saw there was a world of dozens of people with epilepsy online, and that's when I started to figure out how I wanted to write my story.

I learned that I was not alone when I found other stories like mine. Knowing someone is going through the same thing can make life easier. All I want to do now is to make epilepsy known and tell my own story so others will know they aren't alone either, that there are others out there in this wild world, and that epilepsy is not as scary as we think—the unknown might not be as frightening.

Self-love is the most essential thing in life. I am and will always be proud to call myself an epileptic. I am the daughter of an epileptic and life is an epic epileptic life.

I am a purple warrior.

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When I was younger, I thought I was alone and that no one would understand my hurdles, which brought on depression, isolation, and social anxiety.

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I am and will always be proud to call myself an epileptic. I am the daughter of an epileptic and life is an epic epileptic life.

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stage

## Improvised murder coming to Craighdarroch Castle



PHOTO PROVIDED

*Murders on Paper St.* runs at Craighdarroch Castle until November 16.

LANE CHEVRIER  
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

The Craighdarroch Castle, with its regal stone towers and polished red oak interior, transports the visitor into the posh life of a wealthy coal baron, and also serves as a perfect setting for a mystery, such as Paper St. Theatre Co.'s *Murders on Paper St.*, which combines improvisation with drama to create a wholly unique experience.

Paper St. Theatre Co. artistic director Dave Morris says that unlike a traditional theatre show, his troupe creates a brand new story with new characters during each performance. Styled off of classic murder-mystery novels, they strive

to capture the spirit of old media, rather than reproducing the stories themselves.

"None of it is pre-written, and that's something that often surprises people when they see the show twice, that they expect it to be more similar," he says. "When we break down a style and study it, we're trying to find the grammar of the style, like how do they speak, what kinds of characters do they have, what are the themes they tend to explore? We make our choices through the lens of Agatha Christie, instead of trying to take those stories and recreating them."

Morris focuses on creating memorable characters with dis-

tinct personalities, physical traits, and pasts. He says that the beauty of improv lies in its transient nature, in the magic behind creating something that will only ever be seen once by one small audience, and never again.

"I enjoy theatre, but the thing I love more about improvisation is that we get to create a play for that audience, for that night, that is just for them, and nobody else ever gets to see it again," he says. "Some people treat improv like it's tissue paper, it's just one use and then disposable, whereas I think of it more like Halley's Comet, like it happens once, it's a unique event we're only ever witnessing in that moment together, and then it's gone, so you want to be as present as you can to enjoy it. There's something about an experience that only lasts this one time that is so important, and so beautiful."

People often think of improv as purely a frivolous comedy gimmick, but Morris believes that utilizing the vitalizing and powerful energy of improvisation holds boundless capacity for real, meaningful drama.

"Improv is a joyful light that we can take with us into darker places. When you're watching someone make something up, it's a joyful experience, even if they're doing something sad," he says. "I find that my favourite type of improv is that joyful drama, where the story we're watching is really serious and really moving, and really powerful, and yet still, as I'm watching it, I'm happy because I know I got to watch you come up with that idea. We can take

that joy and go into these serious issues, and explore them, and why would we waste that?"

Morris refuses to record his shows, because he feels that exciting the "live" aspect from a live performance is antithetical to the very principle of improvisation.

"I think capturing it is kind of against the beauty of the medium," says Morris. "The medium is meant to live only in that moment, and if you try and capture it then you add this other layer of, 'If it's good, then we'll share it, but if it's bad, then we won't.' And now you're no longer improvising, you're editing, and that to me goes against the whole ethos of improv."

Unlike regular theatre, the audience and the performers are in the same boat, figuring the story out as they go along. Morris says this is what makes improv theatre so unique and enjoyable.

"We're making it up. We don't know anything you don't know. If you're ever watching an improv show, and you don't know what's happening, then the improvisers also don't know what's happening," says Morris, laughing. "That's the fun of improv, is that we're all in this together, and this is our one chance to make it amazing."

*Murders on Paper St.*  
Various times and days,  
until November 16  
\$32, Craighdarroch Castle  
thecastle.ca

stage

## The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee gets collaborative



MEGAN FARRELL

Director Jacques Lemay and *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* cast.

DANIEL ELLERTON  
STUDENT EDITORIAL ASSISTANT

*The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* is a comedy that centres around six teens who must battle each other in a spelling competition while struggling to find their place in the world, and it brings the audience into the performance in a very unique way. Jaques Lemay is directing and choreographing the play at Phoenix Theatre in an effort with other creatives to bring a collaborative play to life here in Victoria.

Chiara Power, who plays Olive Ostrovsky in *The 25th Annual Put-*

*nam County Spelling Bee*, says that being part of the play itself was as community-based and collaborative as the performance is for the audience.

"Well, it's not just a community event for the audience and the show," says Power, who is also the music captain for the performance. "Because the show has so many improv aspects... the playwright and the collaborators who masterminded this production have given the actors more freedom to play around and add their own takes and make their own jokes."

*The 25th Annual Putnam County*

*Spelling Bee* engages the audience by having them volunteer to participate in the spelling bee. The uniqueness inherent to every crowd ensures that the audience, as well as the actors, have an opportunity to engage with each other, while the audience is guaranteed to see something nobody but those who are present get to experience.

"Different people, different spelling abilities," says Power. "Actors and designers and technicians have to be on the balls of our feet the whole show because we kind of take what is thrown at us. It makes a kind of fun community event because there's a point on stage where nobody knows what is going to happen."

While being quirky and whimsical, *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* also navigates emotions that we've all experienced at some point in our lives. This poignant subtext allows the play to discuss what is normally serious in a way that we can all engage with and laugh about.

"I think it's a real look at the necessity, as humans, to not take surface-level interaction at face value. Kids have such rich emotional lives, and adults tend to discredit the intensity of the lives kids sometimes have to live, because bad things

happen to kids, too," says Power. "So here are all these kids striving to be accepted and find their place in this world."

The theatrical play may not be the mainstream mode of entertainment that it enjoyed prior to film or computers, but the format remains relevant. Some may see the play as being fully within the exclusive domain of fine art, however, it does remain accessible to a general audience.

"I don't think any audience member will walk out after and not see a glimpse of themselves in at least one character, if not all of them," says Power. "It serves as a mirror to reflect the situations and emotions that all of us navigate through our whole lives. Not only is it holding up a mirror in that sense, but also to gather together as humans face-to-face."

*The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*  
Various times and days,  
until Saturday, November 23  
Various prices, student rush  
tickets \$20 30 minutes before  
each show  
Phoenix Theatre, UVic  
finearts.uvic.ca/theatre/  
mainstage

New Music Revue



Enforced

*A Leap Into the Dark*  
(Century Media)  
3/5

I was promised thrash metal and Enforced delivered with their new six-song EP *A Leap Into the Dark*.

Sadly, I'm not very moved by the songs here. Although well mixed and the pacing is great for head-banging, the songs themselves are fairly standard-issue thrash; other than some well-executed guitar solos, the EP ends up blending together a lot between songs.

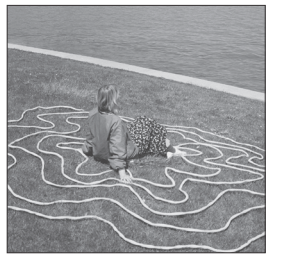
The title track has a really great rhythm and is the best song on *A Leap Into the Dark*, certainly going into some of my own playlists.

The lukewarm vibes may be due to how short the EP is, and the songs are not substantial enough to combat it (of the six, two are Obituary and English Dogs covers and one is a 2024 remaster of 2021 *Decibel Magazine* flexi track "Casket"). I do hope they plan to continue experimenting, as they have very skilled musicians in their roster, unless this brand of consistent thrash is their goal.

This is a solid EP, but it's not particularly ambitious.

—Ash Barnard

New Music Revue



Morpho

*Morpho Season*  
(Hit the North Records)  
3/5

Chicago-based guitarist Kristyn Chapman, also known as Morpho, releases her debut EP *Morpho Season*—a blend of alt-rock and soft lyrics—on November 15.

The EP is great to listen to when walking through nature or when sitting on a beach. Songs feature beautiful poetic lyrics and soft instrumentals, and her voice is soft-spoken, setting a certain type of mood as soon as you put the first song, "Prism," on. It's reminiscent of older Silversun Pickups and a little bit of Metric.

The beats in *Morpho Season* are very understated, and lead mostly with the guitar, with a little snare coming through. It sounds like she does prioritize the vocals and the guitar.

In short, Morpho to me is cozy rainy-day rock.

—Ally Martindale



## music Victoria Choral Society to celebrate 90th anniversary with Mozart

“The fact of the matter is that there’s mystery behind [*Requiem*], but audiences come to hear the music, to hear the setting of the text, in such a way that they want to hear it over and over and over again. It’s a very gripping and magnetic work.”

BRIAN WISMATH  
VICTORIA CHORAL SOCIETY

LANE CHEVRIER  
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Considering a requiem is meant to honour the dead, it’s intriguing to speculate on Mozart’s state of mind as he was allegedly dying of kidney disease while he wrote *Requiem*.

Victoria Choral Society will be performing *Requiem* alongside Mozart’s *Laudate Dominum* and *Ave Verum Corpus* at the first concert of their 90th anniversary season. *Requiem* is a particularly interesting story, shrouded in mystery and intrigue, because Mozart died before he could complete it, says Victoria Choral Society music director Brian Wismath.

“You’re 35 years old, you’re Mozart, you’re not imagining you’re going to die, but you’re obviously sick, and you’ve been asked to write this work by a mysterious person, in which you’re essentially going to be paying homage to death, while you are dying,” says Wismath. “At what point did Mozart realize he was dying? Did he make a connection

with this piece that he was writing? Did he end up ultimately writing this piece for his own funeral?”

*Requiem* has had many attempts at completion over the last 233 years, so it’s interesting to note that the finished piece was not written entirely by Mozart. The most widely respected version (which will be performed at this concert) was finished during the year after his death by a close colleague. About a quarter of the work was fully completed, around half was roughly sketched out, and the final quarter was unwritten, says Wismath. However, despite it technically not being a “pure” work by Mozart, every effort is made to replicate his style and intent while finishing the piece.

“When it comes to who we credit this work to, there’s no question that it’s Mozart,” says Wismath. “Even the sections that were completed by other people, we can hear the elements that we know belong to Mozart’s unique and incredibly gifted approach to writing music.



JON-MARK PHOTOGRAPHY

Victoria Choral Society music director Brian Wismath says Mozart’s *Requiem* is brilliantly written and has a mystery to it.

This version was completed in 1792 by Franz Süssmayr, who worked very closely with Mozart throughout his career, and arguably, Süssmayr was the person who knew Mozart’s music and style of writing the best. He knew this guy inside and out.”

Wismath says that it does pose an interesting conundrum for the conducting, interpretation, and performance of the piece, because the intent of the composer is unclear.

“I think that musicians are always considering what is the right way to do this, and the right way, the majority of the time, is answered by, what was the composer’s intent,” he says. “When you can’t answer that

question, it leaves you guessing a little bit, and that is a really interesting place to be in when you’re used to being able to figure out exactly what the composer intended, and interpreting the music within that lens.”

*Requiem* is a popular work, not only for its enigmatic history, but also for its quality, and Wismath is confident that patrons will enjoy the performance.

“There’s a lot of mystery about it, and I think that’s one of the reasons why this work is so widely performed to this day, in addition to the fact that it is brilliantly written, and you can’t get around that,”

he says. “The fact of the matter is that there’s mystery behind it, but audiences come to hear the music, to hear the setting of the text, in such a way that they want to hear it over and over and over again. It’s a very gripping and magnetic work.”

Mozart’s *Requiem*, *Laudate Dominum*, and *Ave Verum Corpus*

2:30 pm Saturday,  
November 16

\$10 student tickets,  
Christ Church Cathedral  
victoriachoralsociety.ca/  
concerts

## opinion

### The end of the Victoria Event Centre a reminder to stay loud and united



ACACIA TOOTH

The last night at the Victoria Event Centre was full of smiles and tears.

ACACIA TOOTH  
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

The Victoria Event Center (VEC) has given Victoria a space for its locals in the music and art communities for 21 years. But, facing a 40-percent rent increase, the venue is now closing its doors, leaving a massive hole in the city’s art scene, with people struggling to find a new home to host and curate their shows.

The VEC has given stage space to local drag shows such as Man-Crush Monday by King Fling and the forever empowering burlesque shows such as Melanin Magic by Diosa De La Luna Entertainment and Thick: An Evening of Fat Celebration by Brick & Lavender. There

were musical performances by, among many others, OKGB, Ryan Harris, and All Together Now. This was a place for weirdos to thrive, pride parties to kick off, a safe space for kink, and was always available to become a place to celebrate those in the community that passed on a legacy, and to fundraise for those who may have had a rough go lately.

Sunday, October 27 was the final night of events at VEC. Not a dry eye was in the house as multiple people took the stage to perform one last time and express gratitude for the home away from home. Laughs were had with comedian Emily Woods, a cheeky performance from Holly Shirt and Hazel Nunez, and music from Hello Luna Land and

Without the VEC, I would have spent many nights with anxious thoughts, struggles and feelings.

Daisy Scorsese. Many shared stories of the VEC being where they first performed, met their significant others, hosted their own shows, got their start, and found a place they needed to be in those moments of unknown. The happiness, fear and warmth that surrounded all those who attended felt like a hug right when you walked in.

Without the VEC, I would have spent many nights with anxious thoughts, struggles and feelings. Nowhere to see myself in others who shared in my struggle to belong. It became a place for me to celebrate with my friends, find—and perform—my love of burlesque and drag, discover the community that has grown to become my chosen family.

On the outside it may be seen as four walls and a stage, but for us, it was a home. It was a place to belong, thrive, and, for a moment, forget the turmoil of the world. Melting into one being if just for a night or event.

Victoria Mayor Marianne Alto has expressed that we should support local venues and pride ourselves on being a city of art and music. With the purchase of

Hermann’s Jazz Club earlier this year by the city, the space was saved from closing its doors. But it makes me wonder if we saved the right spot in the community. Hermann’s was great for live music and comedy events, but what about inclusive spots for drag and burlesque performances and 2SLGBTQIA+ events as a whole?

Where does that leave us as students? If you’ve enjoyed any space that has made you feel free to express yourself, made you feel safe, has given others you care about a place to thrive, then you have been in a space that is now under attack. Increased rent, lack of grants and funding, and pure greed advertised as “affordable housing” continuously shutting down or demolishing these magical places is happening right under our noses.

We are left with the duty to make some noise and write to our mayor holding them accountable for their supposed shared values. We must continue to show up, support, and share events that are happening around the city.

We are stronger together than on our own.

## New Music Revue



Joy Buzzer

*Pleased to Meet You*  
(Wicked Cool Records)  
1.5/5

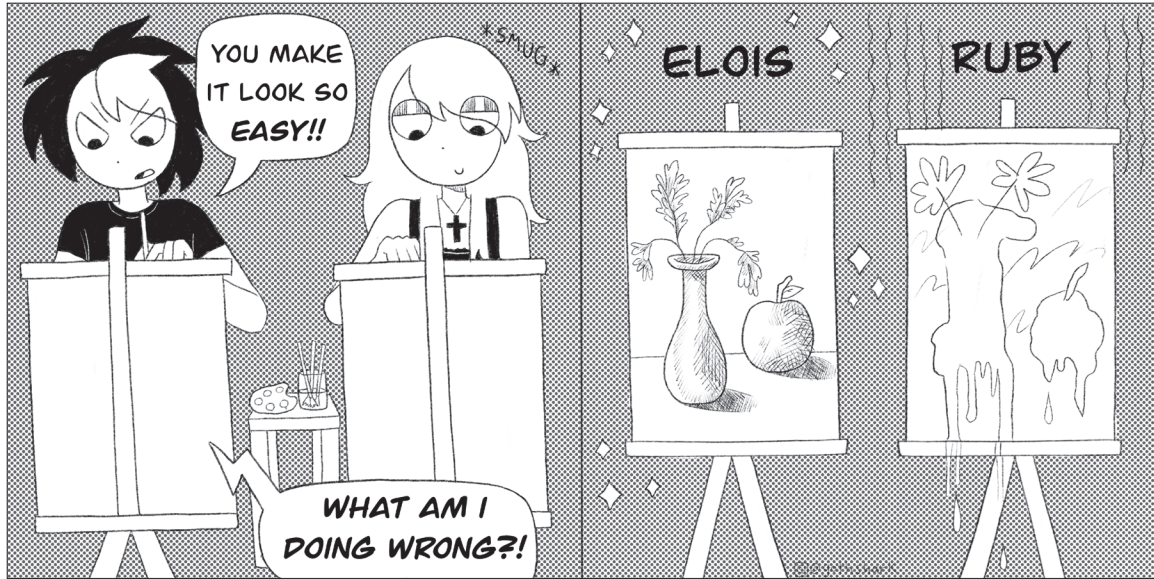
Joy Buzzer is a New York City power pop band formed in 2021. Since then, they’ve received high appraisals for some of their singles, with “You Don’t Even Know My Name” being given the weekly “the coolest song in the world” title on Little Steven’s Underground Garage. However, their first studio album, *Pleased to Meet You*, is rather disappointing.

The band is very clearly inspired by the 1960s pop-rock that made The Beatles and Chuck Berry famous. However, that type of music is outdated. The album attempts to sound like the pre-psychedelic Beatles and fails to contribute anything new.

Moreover, the songs sound the same and you’re left wondering if you just listened to a 31-minute-long song by the end of the record. The only songs that stand out are “Mamaroneck” and “Vicki Loves a Garden” because of their deeper lyrical meaning, although the sound is pretty much the same as the other songs.

—Santiago Vazquez-Fuertes

Ruby Rioux and the Bats from Saturn - Ray Nufer



Natural Selection - Emily Welch



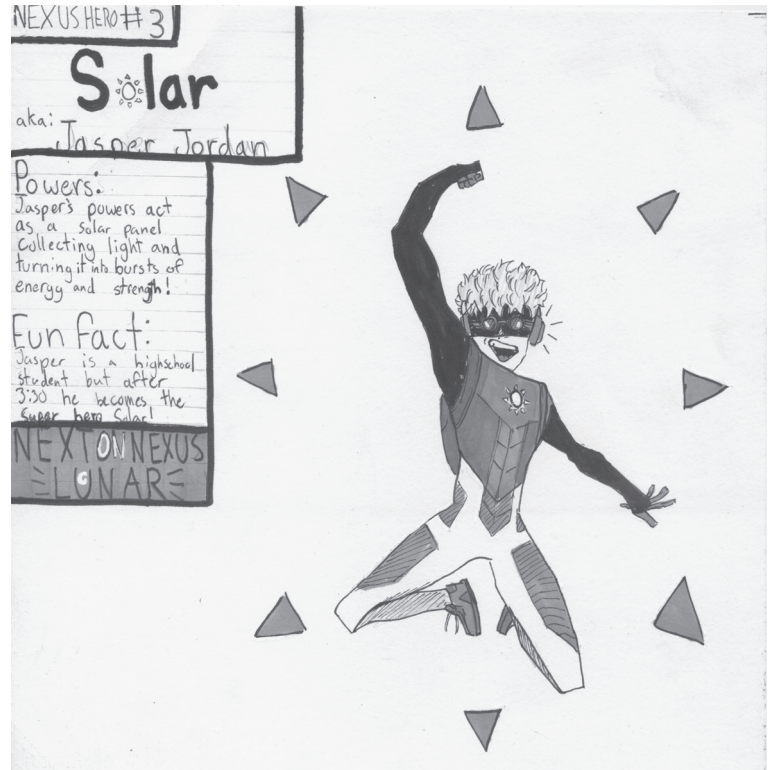
Localtoast: The Daemon That Lives at Localhost - Ben Belland



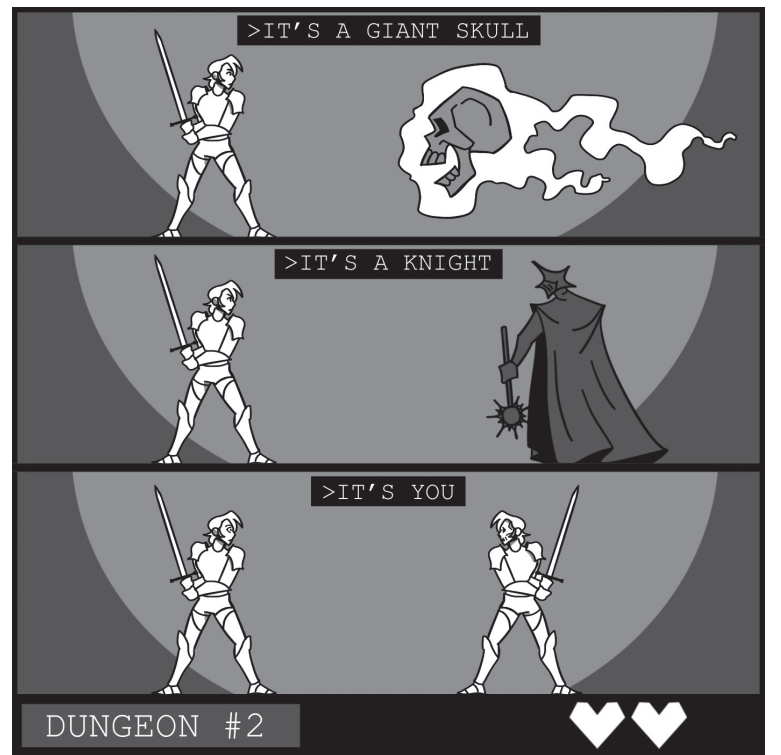
Weird Dog Ink - Felix Best



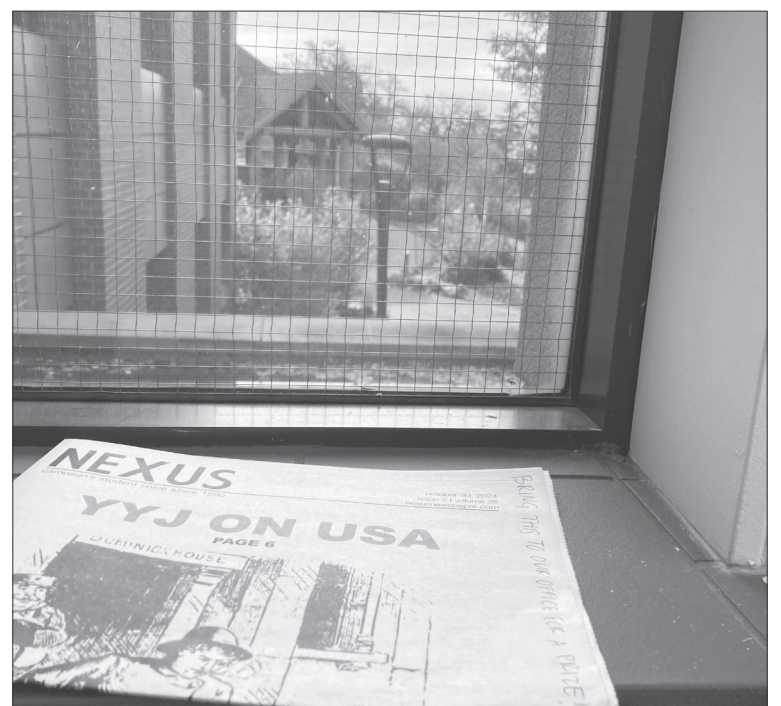
Nexus Hero - Declan Reilly



Tile Crawler - Jay London



contest  
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LYDIA ZULETA JOHNSON/NEXUS

We've hidden this copy of our last issue somewhere at the Lansdowne campus. Bring it in to our office to claim a prize from contest sponsor Arsenal Pulp Press, who have donated an assortment of books for you to choose from. Nexus HQ is located at Richmond House 201 at Lansdowne.

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Lydia's Film Critique

by Lydia Zuleta Johnson

## Meantime

The film is loose in structure, with no definite beginning, middle, or end, allowing one to enter the family's lives as a participant, not a bystander. The cinematography is almost entirely loyal to brown, washing the screen with a miserable glow.

The period between the end of one act and the beginning of another is called the meantime, a dull and aching stretch of patience and irritation.

The meantime is where the Pollock family lives, in the company of three million other unemployed Brits under 1980's Thatcherism, while they scrape by and grow restless.

There is a defining moment in Mike Leigh's *Meantime* (1983) where Mavis Pollock (Pam Ferris), mother of two pitiful sons and wife to cynical Frank (Jeffrey Robert), is seated in front of a bingo card crowded by a sea of sweated women, pens at the ready to circle each subsequent number. Inside the haze of the bingo hall, stuffy with anticipation, Mavis' pen loses ink. Panicked, she finds another as quick as one can while the numbers slip by. Finally, three pens are attempted with no luck as a woman off screen yells "bingo." Nothing, including her self-esteem, is functioning. It is there, across Mavis' face: the

mechanics of how one loses hope and surrenders oneself to tragedy.

Every character's face molds similarly at some point during the film, a powerlessness of each individual exposed. If not in such shape, they are in perpetual scornful glares, darting around for any or everything to release them of pent-up resentment, looking for something new to blame.

Leigh is sensitive to the small and large aggressions with which one roars their angst. Brothers Mark (Phil Daniels), a delinquent smartmouth, and Colin (Tim Roth), a hopeless neurotic, navigate the economic degradation that keeps them in lines of unemployment offices the best they know how: drinking and smoking days away, looking for trouble around London's East End. With a racist skinhead (Gary Oldman) on the edge of lunacy, they loiter in bars and around construction sites. Meanwhile at home, their mother and father are equally jobless, swearing and yelling in a symphony around the flat. Money



is the objective and nothing is satisfying about the means they hope to achieve it with, not the brooding nor the begging.

The film is loose in structure, with no definite beginning, middle, or end, allowing one to enter the family's lives as a participant, not a bystander. The cinematography is almost entirely loyal to brown, washing the screen with a miserable glow. The score is composed of only a frantic single piano weighing scenes down with minor chords and tension.

What truly shapes the film, however, is a dialogue untethered to momentum, only to a cause: an increasing atomization and disaffection of the working class.

By the end of Leigh's *Meantime*, little has changed, most remains, and the stagnant fury carries on.

Until the meantime passes, this is how they must weather the economic storm.



Fellas, Let's Figure It Out by Jaxson Smith Peterson

## Don't get burnt out

Burnout can sneak up on you, and next thing you know you're down the rabbit hole.

"Burnout" has become somewhat of a buzzword in the last few years; it's a concept we've all almost certainly heard thrown around but may not truly know what it means.

Burnout is when your body and mind have worked past the point of exhaustion, signalling that you need to rest.

I'm willing to bet that most of you reading this have experienced some level of what the definition above describes. It's okay—I have, too.

It's all too common for us as college students to throw way too much on our plates without an understanding of how taxing it may become on our future selves. Sure, a full course load, part-time job, internship, exercise routine, and volunteer commitments sounds like a great resume-building semester, but it only takes one domino for them all to tumble.

During periods of life when we are extremely busy, it becomes vital to self-monitor. Take out a journal and check in with yourself.

Some signs you might be feeling burnt out are headaches, major changes in sleep patterns, getting sick, low motivation, anxiety, irritability, difficulty concentrating, and feeling overwhelmed.

Burnout can sneak up on you, and next thing you know you're down the rabbit hole.

There are a couple ways you can try and get through this—some healthy, some not so healthy. The biggest tip I can give you is to make time for rest.

As you probably already know, sleep is crucial to learning, yet we so often push it to the back burner when things get busy. Try not to compromise on eight hours, even if you have a ton of assignments or midterms. The work you do rested will be better than the work you do exhausted.

It may seem counterintuitive, but if you know that you are feeling burnt out, prioritize rest. Schedule it in, take Sundays off of schoolwork, whatever you need to do. Burnout is your brain begging for rest—listen to it.

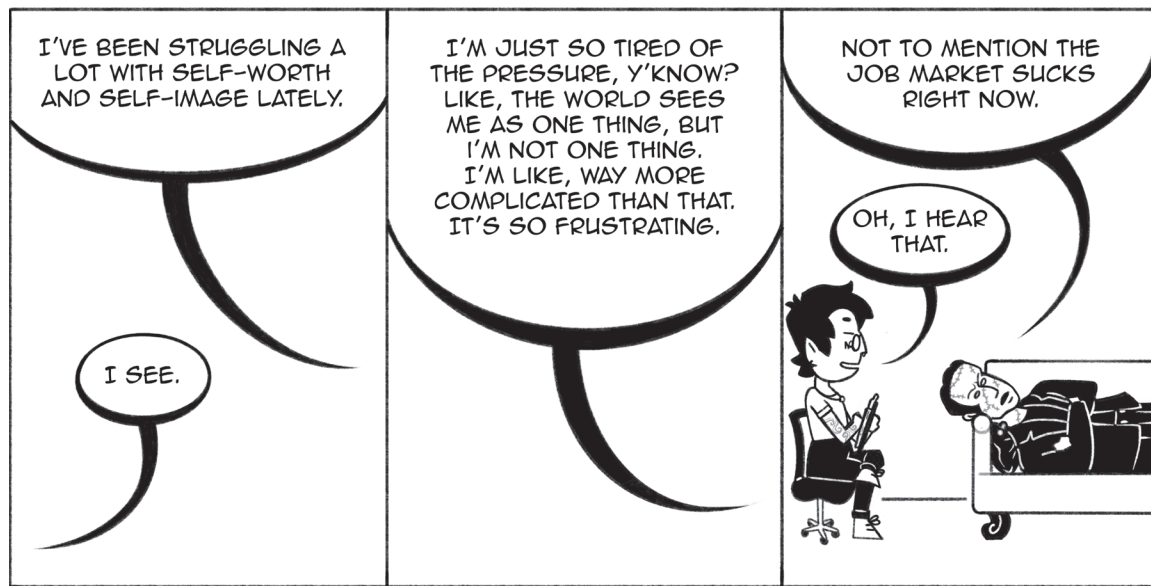
Side tangent here, but rest isn't very restful when it's in front of a screen, so do your best to unplug for a few hours a week.

Like we talked about last time, work/life balance is key and can help mitigate symptoms of burnout. Sometimes, grabbing lunch with your friends can do way more for you than an extra hour of studying.

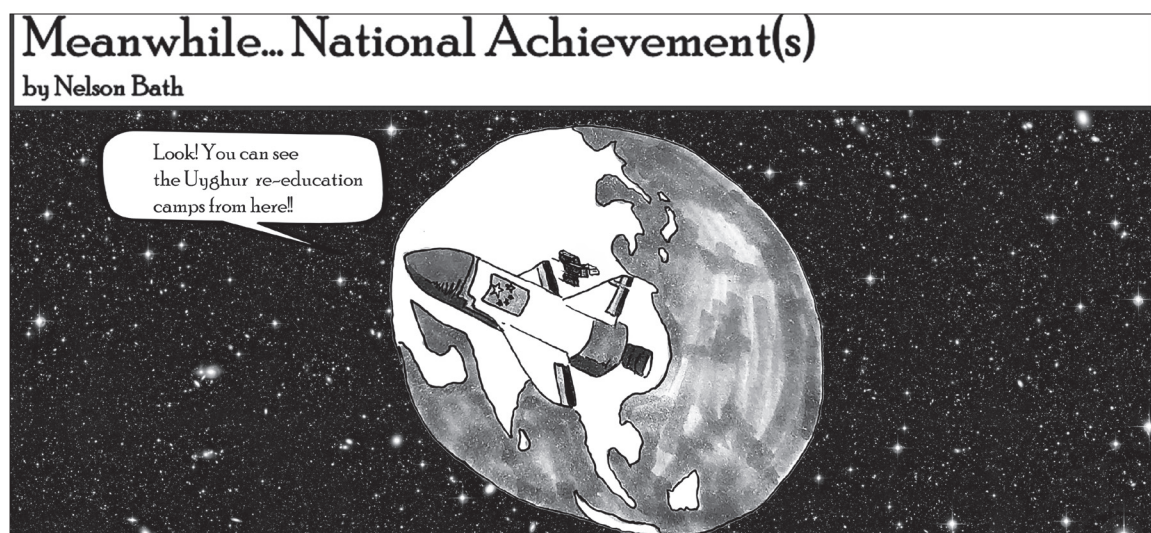
Finally, if you are experiencing burnout don't be afraid to ask for help. Camosun has plenty of resources to help you if it all feels like too much.

Take a breath, talk to someone; it's going to be alright.

Dr. Mythic - Miles Roever



Meanwhile... - Nelson Bath



Gay as in Happy by Mackenzie Gibson

## You are enough

I think every queer person I've ever talked to has worried about the word "enough" a lot.

I don't know where we all got it, but as sure as all third graders magically know how to draw that pointy S, all queer people seem to develop the idea that queerness is something you can possess in a measurable quantity. What's more, everyone seems to have an idea of how much of it you need in order to be considered real. Real enough to talk about it, to use a certain label, to receive care, or real enough to be accepted by a community. "You must be at least this X to call yourself Y," we imagine, as if it's a measuring tape before getting on a roller-coaster.

But here's the kicker: since you invented this prerequisite, you also get to move the goal post, and most people do.

I first had this anxiety when I was 14 and realized I was bi, and I still have this anxiety now, even as a polyamorous nonbinary person who's had gender-affirming surgery and is currently dressed in a fairy outfit while eating brunch with a flamingo I met on Grindr. The anxiety doesn't actually care what you're doing, because it's not about that.

What are we actually worried about? What do we risk if we are or are not "queer enough"? Well, I only have 400 words in this column,

so you're going to have to forgive me for generalizing, but I think one of the main reasons is that we all have the platonic ideal living in our heads of what it means to be queer. This idea of a person might be informed by any number of things (media, our parents' ideas, our social circle, etc.), but that person is only queer. They're just an idea, they don't have a whole life to focus on, or other aspects of themselves to embody—they only exist to represent a concept in your head. Then the puritan who also lives in your head (probably Margaret Thatcher) says you don't meet this impossible standard and so you should deny yourself community and resources and respect because you are imperfect.

I'm here to remind you, and myself, that the Margaret Thatcher who lives in your head cannot dictate who you are; she can only invalidate you. It's not a good policy. Whether you're joining me and the lawn flamingo at brunch or just letting yourself explore new feelings, you're enough just as you are. Tell Margaret to scram, since you never voted for her anyways.

I don't have a media recommendation that relates to this specifically, but I would highly recommend giving a listen to the podcast *A Bit Fruity* with Matt Bernstein to hear eloquent queer voices on the issues of the day.

review

## The Belfry's *1939* as clever as it is brave in its portrayal of residential schools



DAHLIA KATZ

Grace Lamarche (L) and John Wamsley in *1939*, which runs until Sunday, November 24 at the Belfry Theatre.

MACKENZIE GIBSON  
SENIOR WRITER

Art about trauma is hard, and art about atrocities still being reckoned with by the people who experienced them is even harder. Despite that difficulty, *1939* gracefully and powerfully shows the diverse and peopled history of residential schools in a way that honours the horror endured while taking pains to celebrate the hard-earned triumphs and complex feelings of those enduring it.

The play has instilled in me the

deepest understanding of what it was like to survive a residential school of any art I've seen on the topic. It's a brilliant thing with a brilliant cast and truly spectacular set design and lighting. *1939* is a masterclass in theatre and in art about traumatic history.

The story follows five of the school's students as they're drafted into putting on a Shakespeare play to be presented to King Edward VI on his first tour of Canada. Over the five months of rehearsing *All's Well That Ends Well*, the students

keep finding more of themselves in the play than they expected was possible. But seeing yourself in something can be dangerous when the whole reason you're being kept at the school is to erase your sense of self. The teachers the audience gets to see are bumbling and could be mistaken for comedic, except for the constant reminder of the power they exert over these kids with the express purpose of destroying their cultures.

The experiences these kids have isn't uniform either, with each of

them coming from a different cultural background and each choosing a different way to engage with being trapped: a Métis boy feeling isolated from white and Indigenous spaces; a girl who can't remember where she came from; a proud Mohawk girl fighting to maintain and use her medicinal knowledge; siblings disagreeing on how to make space for themselves in the world. Their perspectives are all honoured and their decisions understood.

Despite their grim situation, the play is often legitimately funny. It's a gallows humour, but the jokes do not dismiss the students' situation; rather, they highlight the strength of their spirit. Jokes are often brought to a halt when a teacher arrives, or when their laughter brings down swift and callous punishment, but no matter what, they keep finding ways to make each other laugh. And always, no matter the risk, there is the indelible mark of who they are, which they are constantly—often quietly—fighting to keep alive. Be it doing iambic pentameter in a circle dance or tending each other's lashing wounds with plants, they are taking every hard-won triumph they can, even at great risk.

The set design further shared

the inner worlds of the kids in an ingenious way. Massive and imposing blackboards make up the backdrop of the stage, and in scene transitions the students write out their thoughts and feelings. Sometimes words in their languages, short letters to their parents, quotes from the play they were rehearsing, or, hauntingly, "I WAS HERE." It didn't matter what they wrote, whether it was a cry for home or engaging with what the teachers wanted them to engage with—it was all erased as soon as possible. Co-writer and director Jani Lauzon put it best when she said the set was indicative that "the walls held memories and could talk."

I think I could truly go on for hours about this show and I would never touch on everything. But one way to see everything I might talk about is by going to see it, which I strongly encourage everyone to do. I can't recommend it enough.

1939

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