

Issue Thirteen **THE** Spring 2023
**SKELETON
PRESS**



**NEIGHBOURHOOD
MUSIC**

WHY IS SKELETON PARK IMPORTANT TO YOU?

The 2023 Skeleton Park Arts Festival will proudly feature mural paintings once again and this year, in partnership with the City of Kingston Arts & Cultural Services, festival muralists will be painting **three crosswalk murals at three intersections around the park:** Redan and Balaclava Streets, Patrick and Balaclava Streets, and Alma and Ordnance Streets. The murals will be painted inside the crosswalk white lines — directly onto the pavement.

Festival muralists are seeking your input for artistic direction and possible mural visual themes!

Please **e-mail spafmurals@gmail.com** and describe why the park is important to you, and/or share a brief story that helps demonstrate its importance.

This information will provide ideas for what kind of Crosswalk Murals will be painted.

If you have any other questions or concerns about the Crosswalk Murals Project, please e-mail: spafdirector@gmail.com.

SKELETON PARK ARTS FESTIVAL

MASTHEAD

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

We are interested in your thoughts and opinions about stories that appear in *The Skeleton Press*, and we invite you to contribute by writing a letter to the editor.

SEND EMAIL TO:
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skeletonparkartsfest.ca/the-skeleton-press

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The Skeleton Press
PO BOX 222, Kingston Main
Kingston, Ontario K7L 4V8

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MANDATE

The Skeleton Press was initiated by the Skeleton Park Arts Festival to create a free print publication that captures the vibrancy and diversity of the neighbourhood. We are interested in how print media can communicate and build relationships differently than digital publishing, and in how the act of consuming and distributing the physical object can build community. We hope copies of *The Skeleton Press* will be passed from hand to hand, sparking conversation with neighbours over the fence or at the corner store, and strengthening our sense of place and each other.

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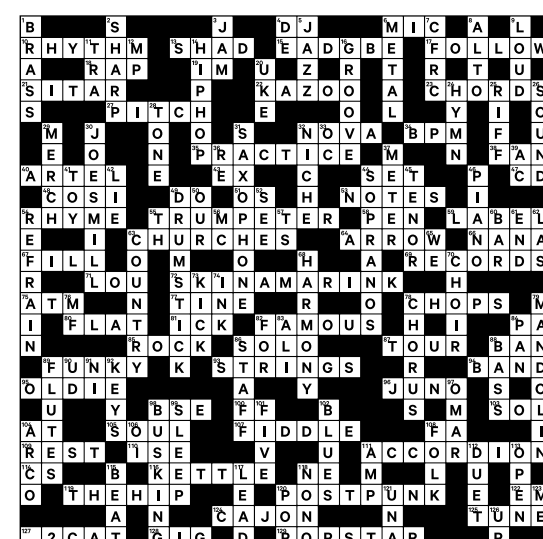


Canada Council
for the Arts



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to the Skeleton Park Arts Festival and help keep this newspaper in print, please visit our donation page at **CanadaHelps.org**



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Jay Middaugh
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Pierre Collet-Derby

From Limestone City



To Music City BY ANNE KERSHAW & GREG TILSON

Kingston has been known as many things: a university town, a military town, a prison town. But to those who live and visit here, there is another dimension to the city worth nurturing and celebrating. Along with its undeniable institutional character, the city possesses an irrepressible creative energy.

The City of Kingston has now set about attempting to harness this attribute by developing a strategic plan, recognizing the connection between Kingston's economic strength and the vibrancy of its music scene. The Music Strategy, a component of the city's broader Creative Industries Strategy, is to be presented to City Council this summer. This formal recognition of the importance of music to Kingston, at a time of exploding local musical talent and entrepreneurship, is highly welcome.

This issue of The Skeleton Press puts a spotlight on just some of the many ways music is making life richer for Kingstonians. That includes music as joyful entertainment, music as healer, and music as solace.

Two new venues for enjoying music are the beautifully renovated Hotel Wolfe Island (the former General Wolfe Inn), already attracting top-notch talent such as guitarist Bill Frisell, and the Royal 2.0, an exciting revival of one of the city's most historic taverns with a live music stage.

For some other music lovers, the Kingston Integrated Care Hub has introduced a music program that brings people together weekly to play and sing. Its popularity is testament to the power of music to comfort and uplift those experiencing hard times.

Perhaps nothing speaks so poignantly to the spiritual power of music as Soulful Singing, a community singing meditation practice that brings song to those in the process of dying.

Our interviews with local musicians point to some current weaknesses in the local music culture, including a recommendation for a guaranteed annual income and elimination of the "emerging artist" category, which is too often an excuse to undervalue the work.

Organizers of the annual Skeleton Park Arts Festival have now begun planning what has evolved into the city's award-winning and best-attended arts and music festival. Timed to coincide as closely as possible with the summer solstice, this celebration of art, music, and community argues well augers well for Kingston's bid to become 'a music city.'

Our community's love of music is evident in its numerous creative performance venues (large and small), its performers (some more famous than others), and its many creative businesses determined to provide the facilities and venues to produce and enjoy a wide diversity of musical entertainment.

While the city's music scene has flourished of its own accord over many years, it is now being looked at through a new, more official lens: what is its potential to create jobs and become an even greater economic force for the city? Let's hope this also includes adopting concrete means of truly valuing and incentivising the artists, producers, businesses, and caring community groups who so greatly enrich our lives.

ATTENTION WRITERS & ILLUSTRATORS

The Skeleton Press invites pitches for articles of relevance to the neighbourhood and welcomes both new and experienced writers. To pitch, send a short (max 150 word) statement of what you'd like to write about and a writing sample if you have one available. Most articles are limited to 800 words. We pay \$0.30 a word (\$240 per 800 word article). The theme for the next issue is neighbourhood love.

We also welcome new illustrators. If interested, please send us a letter of interest and samples of your work. We pay market rates for illustrations.

Send pitches and letters of interest to: skeletonpresseditor@gmail.com.

WHAT'S INSIDE

Neighbourhood in Transition

Citizen watchdogs bark warnings about City Hall secrecy BY LINDA WILLIAMS	4
Desperately seeking a family doctor BY ANNE KERSHAW	5
Getting creative about meeting housing needs BY MELANIE DUGAN	6
Graphic reminder: The Path Home BY BRIAN DODO	7
UPDATE: Vinnie's makes peace with neighbours BY JAMIE SWIFT	8

This Be the Verse

Coda BY NANCY JO CULLEN	9
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Body and Mind

Dancing without judgement BY SOL CASTAÑEDA	10
Rise in racking of dragons, bams, and dots BY VALERIE ASHFORD	11
Music Crossword BY HALEY SARFIELD	12

ArtBeat

BOOK REVIEW: The key is having a home to go to BY LAWRENCE SCANLAN	13
ART REVIEW: Body image is reconciled and renders art BY ULRIKE BENDER	14

SPECIAL REPORT:

Let There Be Music

Island dreamers manifest new venue for music, dining, and more BY ANNE THÉRIAULT	15
Royal 2.0: Old Royal Tavern gets impressive sequel BY HARVEY SCHACHTER	16
Shopping for music BY DANIELLE HOPE EDWARDS	17
Kingston gets serious about music BY JANE KIRBY	18
Five Big Ideas from local musicians BY JANE KIRBY	19
Celebrating a crescendo of new local music / Comic BY COLTON FOX	20
Integrating music and mood BY ARIC MCBAY	21
Singing to the dying BY LAURA CHAIGNON	22
Troubleshooting for the Doobie Brothers and Joe BY CLAIRE LESAGE	23
Lemon Bucket Orchestra performs for Ukraine BY IRYNA VIVCHAR	24
Sweeping new vision for The Broom Factory BY ROB HOWARD	25
Luella at North of Princess Studio BY JAY MIDDGAUGH	26

SPAF News

Resonance as connection, humour as resistance BY AARA MACAULEY	27
Dragging attitudes about story hour BY MATT SALTON	28
Growing up with festivals and giving back BY DEVON RUNIONS	29
Another graphic reminder: Follow the waste diversion arrows BY GABY DEE	30
Trumpeting the jazz porch parade BY DAVE COON	31
Festival line-up for Summer 2023	32

Who Will Plan Our Neighbourhoods?

Elected City councillors and City staff?
Or the pro-development Ontario Land Tribunal?

STORY BY **LINDA WILLIAMS**

ILLUSTRATION BY **CHANTAL ROUSSEAU**

As the City moving toward a less transparent method of deciding significant zoning bylaw amendments to the Official Plan. If so, why? The closed-door planning approach used for the proposed development at 275 – 283 Queen Street and 364 Barrie Street clearly gives rise to such questions.

In this case, which has sparked anger and concern in the community, the City followed standard Planning Act procedures in reviewing applications but stopped short of making a decision on zoning amendments. This enabled the developer to appeal to the Ontario Land Tribunal (OLT) for a decision and moved City planning out of the hands of the elected Council.

Podium Development and Fotenn Consults Inc. and owner Keilty Realty propose to construct a sixteen-storey apartment building that significantly contravenes the City's Official Plan and Zoning Bylaws. It is considerably higher (sixteen stories, zoned for four), denser (227 units, zoned for twenty-four), and under-served in parking spaces (thirty-nine, zoned for one space per unit). The developer's Urban Design Study fails to provide evidence of an acceptable level of shadowing from the sixteen-storey building onto the nearby two- or three-storey homes, compatibility with the surrounding neighborhood, and suitable transition between existing land uses. The August 2022 City-funded peer review by EVOQ Architecture concluded Keilty's Urban Design Study was flawed and lacking critical information. But the City made no argument to justify violating its own zoning bylaws.

The City's Planning and Development Department actively reviewed the Keilty Realty/Podium Developments' application when it was received in September 2021. Technical discussions exceeded the Planning Act's maximum ninety-day decision time period. But the City failed to allow for public debate on the re-zoning decision, a breach of planning procedure that resulted in an Ontario Land Tribunal (OLT) appeal in late fall 2022.

The OLT is an independent adjudicative tribunal for resolving appeals related to an Official Plan and Zoning Bylaws. Its authority takes precedence over the Planning Department and Council. City accountability is bypassed.

The OLT strongly favours development, as documented by a *Hamilton Spectator* story of September 2022 showing that "of the 178 decisions released by the OLT in 2022, only 6 [3%] have gone against developers".

A sizable not-for-profit community group formed to oppose the massive re-zoning appeal. The Friends of Queen Street Kingston recognize the need for affordable housing and support intensification responsive to the neighbourhood and in accordance with the Official Plan. But the group wants to ensure that developers and the City are held to account.

"I am very worried about how decisions regarding 275 Queen Street will be reached," says Friends' president Lea Westlake. Three parties attended the first OLT meeting on February 22: Keilty Realty/Podium Developments, the City, and the Friends. The conference was not productive. Neither the City nor the developers presented a list of issues to be resolved. Only the lawyer for the Friends, David Donnelly of Donnelly Law, arrived prepared. Another meeting was set for May 12 to settle procedures and time frames, with the OLT offering to mediate the three parties to develop a list of issues.

Many questions arise. Why the secrecy? Why must citizens pay heavily with their own after-tax dollars to hire expert witnesses and a lawyer to argue at the OLT in support of the City Official Plan and Zoning Bylaws? The OLT has the authority to bill expenses to the losing party; who will it charge for proceedings?



The City's position on 275 Queen Street is unknown. In defiance of its own policy on open meetings, City Council moved behind closed doors in December to consider the matter, identified as agenda Item 1(b) regarding "Various Ontario Land Tribunal Appeals". Presumably, this refers to the 275 Barrie Street proposal. The Municipal Act 2001 lists exemptions to its open meeting policy and criteria for mandatory closed meetings, but they don't apply to planning discussions *per se*. Council must justify use of an exemption. Finally, why does the City refuse to publicly state whether it will support or oppose the developer's re-zoning application?

In mid-April, City staff and the developer again met behind closed doors and excluded the Friends in negotiating minutes of settlement. The secret meeting led to significant precedent-setting zoning amendments. In this case, Council directed staff to re-open talks and include the Friends. The outcome is uncertain.

Councillor Greg Ridge wouldn't comment on the City's stand on the initial proposal, citing the confidentiality of the December meeting. He says the in-camera approach is "to protect the City's ongoing operations and position during the process. If legal strategies and arguments were to be presented to the public in an open meeting it runs the risk of damaging any potential leverage the City and Council may have due to this information also being available to the appellant."

But Friends' lawyer Donnelly believes Council has cast too wide a net over what is justifiably discussed behind closed doors. "The law is very clear," says Mr. Donnelly. "Council has complete discretion to decide when it makes deals with developers in secret, and when it does so in public. Kingston Council needs to

stop doing business behind closed doors and start listening to residents." Why care?

Kingston needs a robust Planning Department to advise Council and create a sustainable livable city. Our local government must weigh a developer's goals with those of the Official Plan to protect the integrity of neighbourhoods. This includes evaluating increased demand on services and infrastructure (roads, utilities, schools, recreation, etc.).

Kingstonians expect Council to be transparent and accountable to its constituents. We count on our Councillors to ensure legislation around closed meetings is upheld. Open deliberations and decision-making are fundamental aspects of democracy highlighted in an official 2023 guide for municipalities by the Ontario Ombudsman. Residents have the right to know the voting history of their elected official.

"A city that makes decisions in the absence of public input cannot claim they are operating in the best interests of the people," says Bill Woods, the Friends' treasurer. Kingston, not the OLT, should plan its development.

Council could build the faith of the electorate by opening the doors. Councillor Ridge recommends "that advocates continue their impressive outreach on this issue to all Councillors."

NOTE: Donations for legal and expert witness fees related to the OLT hearing are accepted by the Friends and can be made by e-transfer through the Kingston Credit Union at foqskingston@gmail.com

LINDA WILLIAMS lives and plays in the Skeleton Park neighbourhood, and loves the variety and complexity of this active community. She encourages you to engage with issues affecting us.

Trying to Fix Kingston's Doctor Shortage Like "Sticking a Finger in the Dyke"

Some 32,000 locals are looking for a family physician

STORY BY ANNE KERSHAW

Long queues are common at walk-in medical clinics in downtown Kingston PHOTO CREDIT: iStock



Will Fisher got an email in mid-2020 informing him his family physician would retire in four months. He was advised to start looking for a new doctor.

Three years later, he is still looking. The Patrick Street resident has made numerous enquiries at family medical clinics and signed onto Health Care Connect, a provincial website designed to pair patients with family physicians who are accepting new patients. So far, no luck.

Will is getting increasingly worried as he sees the growing shortage of family doctors in Kingston. He has been diagnosed with sleep apnea and has learned there are hereditary signs of high cholesterol in his blood work. He has a hernia issue and an injured arthritic ankle. "If you had asked me ten years ago, I would have been more nonchalant. But now at 43, it's getting pretty stressful."

John Street residents Annie Wilcox and partner Derek Rogers, a stroke survivor, are losing their family physician of almost forty years on May 12. "We were born in Wales in the 1950s and grew up with the National Health Service. We then came to Canada to this similar system. It's a scary experience to be in our later years and cast adrift into a system which is just not robust any longer," says Ms. Wilcox.

There are currently an estimated 32,000 Kingston residents in search of a family physician. A study commissioned by Kingston City Council in 2019 put the figure at closer to 29,000. But there's every reason to believe that number has increased in three years and will continue to grow, says Craig Desjardins, Director of Strategy, Innovation and Partnerships at the City of Kingston. At one downtown Princess Street practice, about 6,500 patients will be affected when six family physicians retire at the end of May 2021.

A soon-to-be-retired physician described the wrenching situation. "The generally pleasant concept of retiring has definitely been dampened by the reality of leaving 1,200 patients without a doctor in circumstances where finding a new doctor will be difficult."

The city's waiting list includes some of the community's most medically vulnerable, with more than 300 being cancer patients. "You can only imagine how horrible it must be to have to deal with the medical system and not be able to get a referral for blood work or a prescription renewed for pain medication. It's a serious business," says Desjardins, who is leading an aggressive recruitment effort for the City.

Enticements approved by City Council and launched in 2022 include a \$100,000 incentive for prospective Kingston doctors along with help in connecting them with a patient roster, finding housing, and aiding partners in finding employment. This has already attracted nine new family physicians and several other potential recruits.

But the situation remains dire and especially challenging given a vast overestimation by the Ontario government of the number of family physicians practicing in Kingston. Of the 312 Kingston physicians surveyed by the City in 2019, 173 were identified as not practicing family medicine but engaged in activities such as teaching or research. This leaves only 139 family physicians actively practicing primary care. These were "significant and eye-opening

statistics" that have hampered Kingston's efforts to gain a fair share of government financial support, says Desjardins.

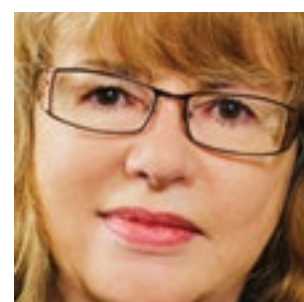
At the same time, about sixty per cent of those identified as currently practicing family medicine plan to retire in the next three to ten years. Another complicating factor is that close to 44,000 patients from outside Kingston are seeing local family physicians. "It's like sticking your finger in a dyke trying to plug the hole of a pretty big ocean on the other side," says Desjardins. "Unless we can continue to plug the hole of doctors retiring, that figure [of doctorless patients] will continue to grow."

The family doctor shortage is being felt in many ways. Since 2021, Kingston's Trellis HIV & Community Care on Princess Street has been providing badly needed drop-in services to Trellis clients needing standard medical services. Serving Kingston and south-eastern Ontario, the Clinic's one physician, Dr. Kathy Pouteau, and administrative volunteer Joanne McAlpine have seen a steadily growing number of patients, some of whom haven't seen a doctor in up to ten years. Trellis, which operates in collaboration with Queen's Family Health team, hopes to have a resident join Dr. Pouteau to help meet these patients' primary care needs.

It's difficult to discount conspiracy theories that the Ford government is starving the public health system as a means of clearing the path for more privatized services. Health-care workers are exhausted by the pandemic; family physicians are scaling back unmanageable workloads or retiring in large numbers; the Ontario government continues to ignore a longstanding call from nurse practitioners for a funding model that enables them to play a bigger role in primary care; and registered nurses remain underpaid.

The mounting crisis has given new impetus to ongoing calls for a major overhaul of the health-care system. A new Taking Back Health Care report by an expert panel led by Queen's Dean of Medicine Dr. Jane Philpott calls on provincial and federal governments to create a more accessible health-care system with a team-based approach. Commissioned by Canada's Public Health Forum and released four months ago, the report notes that "coordinated care includes doctors but is not exclusively about doctors . . . There simply needs to be more choice and access points to primary-care services."

Dr. Rosemary Wilson, a nurse practitioner and Associate Director of Graduate Programs in Queen's School of Nursing, says it's time to redefine the problem from being a shortage of family physicians to a shortage of primary-care providers. "There is enough work for all of us, for family physicians, for nurse practitioners, and for physician assistants. And registered nurses should be able to play a bigger role in primary care. Then we would be able to deal with some of the problems we are now facing."



ANNE KERSHAW is a multiple national award-winning journalist, author, and former communications director at Queen's University. Please see more about Ontario's health-care system and other stories on her website at defundthepatriarchy.ca.

A Place of Safety: Novel Initiatives Reimagine Housing Possibilities in Kingston

Two different populations struggling with housing insecurity, two innovative approaches to a complex problem.

STORY BY MELANIE DUGAN / ILLUSTRATIONS BY GRACE DIXON

“I’m tired of writing letters — let’s try and do something,” says Irene Watt, describing the frustration that prompted her and a small group of people to begin organizing what grew into Luke’s Place Kingston (LPK).

Homelessness and affordable housing in Kingston are real and visible problems. As multiple levels of government struggle to safely house individuals who, for a variety of reasons, are unhoused or living in substandard conditions, two very different organizations have stepped up to offer new ways to help those needing support.

LPK began in 2018 when Jeffrey Neven, the CEO of Indwell in Hamilton, Ontario, came to Kingston to address a class at Queen’s University. Indwell describes itself as “a Christian charity that creates affordable housing communities that support people seeking health, wellness, and belonging,” and offers housing with supports to marginalized people in Hamilton, Mississauga, and London. Neven expressed interest in speaking to other Kingstonians, so Watt organized a meeting at St. Mark’s Lutheran Church, which was attended by more than thirty people.

Inspired by Neven’s talk, a group of local people decided to “see if we could find a plan that could work for us in our city,” says Watt, and thus LPK was born. They’ve been exploring ideas ever since. Board members and advisors bring a wealth of knowledge to the table, including practical experience in landlord tenant issues, an understanding of the realities of life on the Ontario Disabilities Support Program (ODSP), and years working for the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation.

LPK is a secular organization that proposes a new model of housing for adults with intellectual disabilities. This group of people, aged fifteen or older, often faces discrimination when searching for housing, and struggles to find suitable housing they can afford. LPK is working to offer them permanent places to live, along with the support required for independence.

Currently, ODSP provides recipients with \$522 a month for housing. As of 2022, the cost of an average one-bedroom apartment in Kingston was \$1,212. After paying rent at those rates, individuals have little left for necessities such as food and medication; many are forced into substandard housing.

LPK envisions a different possibility. A registered charity incorporated as a non-profit housing group, LPK plans to buy an apartment building outright to quickly provide independent housing and support. They will rent one-third of the units at market rent; one-third at eighty per cent of market rent; and one-third will be rented to Community Living Kingston and District, an organization that promotes inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities, which will select tenants from among their clients and provide support to them at no cost to the building’s owner.

Luke’s Place

613-546-5791 | lukesplacekingston@gmail.com

Donations can be sent by e-transfer to lukesplacekingston@gmail.com; cheques payable to “Luke’s Place Kingston” can be mailed to treasurer Greg Westlake, 37 Elizabeth Ave. Kingston, ON K7M 3G9. Donations over \$25 will receive a tax receipt.

The Adelaide Emergency Shelter

613-483-8580



LPK is already more than halfway towards its initial goal of raising \$50,000, with long-term plans to eventually construct a building suitable for the specific needs of the populations being housed. As Irene Watt points out, “Individually, most of us are not able to do very much about the housing crisis among our most vulnerable people, but together we can.”

The City of Kingston, in conjunction with Lionhearts Inc., took a different approach to begin addressing the housing crisis. Lionhearts, which began as a food rescue organization, is a registered charity with a stated mission, “to bring visibility to those feeling invisible, hope to the hopeless, unconditional love without judgement encompassed in compassion and humility.”

On December 29, 2022, the former Frontenac Public School at 38 Cowdy Street opened as The Adelaide Emergency Shelter. It has thirty-six beds and can accommodate up to forty homeless people from 9 p.m. to 9 a.m. seven nights a week. Decommissioned as a school six years ago, the building subsequently housed an alternative learning centre until summer 2022. With funding from the City and the United Way of Kingston, Lionhearts now rents the space from the Limestone District School Board and manages the shelter.

Volunteers worked for ten days to transform four former classrooms. Sleeping areas, with a chair and bed each, have been installed where previously there were rows of desks. Brenda Moore, special coordinator with Lionhearts, says, “We’ve got a bedframe, mattress off the floor, a nicely made-up bed. That gives our guests a sense [that] we welcome them . . . and we care about them having a good night’s sleep.” Lionhearts also provides dinner and breakfast for guests who spend the night in the shelter.

Moore acknowledges that with 300 people currently on the named unhoused list — “100 more than we had last year” — this is only one part of “a critical situation” the City is seeking solutions for, but she notes that The Adelaide Emergency Shelter works “really well logistically for people to be able to come in off the street.”

At the time of writing, the shelter had sufficient funding to remain open until March 31, 2023. As of mid-February, it had accommodated 189 unique individuals.

It is early days yet for both projects, but Irene Watt quotes early twentieth-century social activist Dorothy Day, “People say what is the sense of our small effort. They cannot see that we must lay one brick at a time, take one step at a time.”

MELANIE DUGAN is a writer who lives in Kingston. The author of four novels, she lived in Boston, Toronto, and London, England before settling in Kingston. She has an abiding interest in history.



You can't see what someone's overcome at a glance.

The causes of homelessness are complex—and they're different for everyone. Often, they include generational poverty, trauma, abuse or mental illness. Solutions need to be tailored to the individual. Sometimes it can take a few tries to get it right.

All community members have worth, no matter where they are on their path.

We can all support our most vulnerable neighbours. We can combat loneliness with meaningful connections, we can advocate for trauma-informed programs and services, we can listen and reach out.

**If you or someone you know needs support call 211.
To learn more visit pathhomekingston.ca**

Deitrea & Marshall live in Kingston and this is their journey.

Path Home Kingston, Photo: Bernard Clark, Designed by BmDodo Strategic Design for City of Kingston & United Way of KFL&A. www.pathhomekingston.ca



St. Vincent de Paul Update

A “nasty bit of business” at Vinnie’s is avoided

STORY BY JAMIE SWIFT

Last fall *The Skeleton Press* published a story about a looming conflict between the local St. Vincent de Paul Society (SVDP) and a group of neighbours. Certain property owners were objecting to the charity’s plans to build a new facility at Bagot and Charles Streets. It would house the charity’s overcrowded meal program and “warehouse,” where people could get free clothing and furniture.

The plan hit a wall when opponents filed an appeal with the Ontario Land Tribunal (OLT). They claimed that “Vinnie’s” would create traffic chaos and disturb the neighbourhood.

Appeals to the OLT can be expensive. SVDP retained the law firm Cunningham, Swan, and Executive Director Judy Fyfe further reported that they had retained an Ottawa traffic consultant, all for \$11,439. Board member David McConomy calculated that the charity was out of pocket to the tune of 15,000 meals.

The dust-up wasn’t just about planning technicalities. It exposed class cleavages in a rapidly

gentrifying area not far from the encampment next to the Integrated Care Hub. “One of the things that they seemed clear on is that they didn’t want to have to see the poor people,” said Ms. Fyfe.

The whole thing was shaping up to be a nasty bit of business. Then, a few short days before the OLT hearing was set to begin in November, the opponents of the SVDP plan withdrew their appeal. The Society had adjusted the direction of traffic flow within its property as a part of a compromise. The minor tweaks involved little in the way of substantial change. A courtyard will be surrounded by a privacy fence.

The delay means higher construction costs. Ms. Fyfe says that though the process was “hard, costly and uncomfortable,” it turned out well. Many neighbours support the project.

The settlement means fundraising can continue again, and planning details finalized. When completed — maybe by year’s end but most likely sometime in 2024 — the 15,000-square-foot building will include a dining room for 120 people and

ample space for informal gathering. Five thousand square feet will be rented to agencies sharing the SVDP mandate.

“At the end of the day, we reached a compromise,” Ms. Fyfe concluded. “That’s better than a win.”

Meanwhile, the SVDP property on the west side of Bagot Street (Bennett’s grocery store once stood there) has the potential to address Kingston’s crying need for non-market housing. The Society has no mandate to support affordable housing, but hopes the land could be of use.

“We know that the city is desperate for additional affordable housing,” said David McConomy, adding that SVDP is open to suggestions from interested parties.



Kingston writer **JAMIE SWIFT** showed his daughter Sonya how to ride a bicycle on the soft turf in Skeleton Park. He’s hoping that Nora Swift will become a keen cyclist.

SPRING REVERB 2023

DIZZY ELECTRIC SIX
GORD SINCLAIR STATUS/NON-STATUS
FUCKED UP RYLAND JAMES NOELLE
HOUSEWIFE BELVEDERE ZOOM TEXAS KING
'THE WILDERNESS NEW FRIENDS HOTEL MIRA
OAKRIDGE AVE. CAM KAHIN MOON KING
ALL THE TIME EVERYWHERE ALMOND MILK AUTOMATIC JOY
BELLS LARSEN DJ JUNO DJ LK EVAN JACKSON FAST FAST
FRAUD PERRY GOOD FORTUNE GREG MACPHERSON HATERS
JEN CALDER JON MCLURG JUKEBOX COUNTY JULIA FINNEGAN
JUSTIN BIRD & THE THORNS OF VENUS KAKAO KEATON LAUREN CARSON
LEE PARADISE LUELLA LUSCIOUS MASTER NAITE & THE REPROBATES
MAT ALMEIDA MEGAN HAMILTON MINT SIMON MONACH NICE ON PINE
92RARE RECKLESS & BANDED TAYLOR ADAMS THE ASTROS THE BACKSTEPS
'THE CODAS THE GERTRUDES THE MERINGUES THE MILL RIGHTS
'THE WINTER IN CANADA TOM SAVAGE VIKKI MINOR

JUNE 1 - 4, 2023
DOWNTOWN KINGSTON

MORE INFO:
KPPCONCERTS.COM

plus free panels + talks
designed to assist musicians
+ music fans!

Coda

I sang, let's call the whole thing off
My mother sang, don't do that to the poor pussycat
Some do-gooders sang, be here, be here now
And I said, you know, whatever
My daughter ordered lingerie on our joint account
And I said, I'm sex-positive
But my mother is a ghost who
Wanted me to marry a white man
And I tried; I wanted to go to heaven
When it was impossible to be here now
If you wanted to go to heaven
Must everything draw toward a conclusion?
One day I'll be a ghost inside my children's heads
Perhaps I will be singing—

NANCY JO CULLEN's fourth collection of poetry is *Nothing Will Save Your Life*. Her novel, *The Western Alienation Merit Badge* was shortlisted for the 2020 Amazon Canada First Novel Prize.

THIS BE THE VERSE is *The Skeleton Press's* new poetry page. Each issue will feature an original poem by a local poet, selected by Kingston/Katarokwi Poet Laureate Sadiqa de Meijer. Submissions are now open for the summer edition, themed LOVE. Please send your work to ygkpoetlaureate@gmail.com.

Dance, Community, and the Power of Movement

An Interview with Kay Kenney

STORY BY SOL CASTAÑEDA

My favourite part about movement is just seeing how people can let go and trust these strangers who turn into collaborators, friends in a space in such a short time.



Kay Kenney dancing in alley way PHOTO CREDIT: Liz Cooper

It's March 9, and after a failed attempt to meet at Juniper Café, I have finally managed to meet online with Kay Kenney, Director of the Kingston School of Dance and the founder of Movement Market Collective. * Thank you, technology!

Several thoughts come to mind. First, the interview is taking place one day after commemorating International Women's Day (March 8). Second, the visual image of Kay and me together makes me think that it would be easier to be octopi, with many arms to hold our babies, reach for that cup of coffee, schedule appointments, answer emails...The list goes on. It's 10:30 a.m, and amid Cheerios, babbles and smiles from Freddie (Kay's son) and Leonora (my daughter), Kay and I manage a conversation where we mix topics such as motherhood, community bonds, dance as therapy, and supporting local festivals.

SOL: Kay, how do you feel about promoting dance in your hometown?

KAY: I feel humbled to be a supporter through this community. In the past five years a lot more dancers and artists have moved to Kingston with an interest in pursuing their passion for dance, creation, and development. So, we have started building a tight-knit community here. It is very near and dear to my heart.

I moved back here in 2016. At the time there wasn't anything really happening, or any options to practice in a professional dance setting. So, now we're in a space where you're running into dancers, choreographers, and there are events happening on an annual basis, and I'm so grateful for that.

SOL: What role do you feel that dance plays in creating community bonds?

KAY: Well, it's interesting now, because we're able to get back into this world of touch and trust with other's bodies and personal space. Once you go into a dance class, you're very vulnerable. My favourite part about movement is just seeing how people can let go and trust these strangers who turn into collaborators, friends in a space in such a short time.

We have a lot of dance classes at the Kingston School of Dance, and I would say most of the adult classes — specifically ballet and contemporary — are full. People who have never danced before are getting beside people that have danced professionally at the National Ballet School or for contemporary companies or hip hop. Everyone is just forming this collective goal to finish the class, sweating and smiling, learning some new movements and just feeling good.

SOL: What do you think about the impact that dance has as a therapy to balance the mental health of children, adults, and the elderly?

KAY: I'm seeing younger dancers and how uninhibited they are, free in their movement and without judgment. But as we get older a wall starts to build. I think we need to ask, how do we return to that, the ability to be okay with failing, be okay with succeeding and changing the next day? As for therapy, absolutely. Some of my favourite classes to teach are adults, because they haven't moved their bodies this way in a while. The feedback that I get is how much more confident they feel in their body — they're able to conquer more in their life.

I always say to my students, 'Dancers are some of the smartest people in the world because you're doing so much in your brain, in your body, and making it look seamless, or you're really showing the work and showing how you are processing your thoughts on stage.'

SOL: You have been in charge of the programming and given workshops in previous years at the Skeleton Park Arts Festival. What do you think is the importance of carrying out this type of dance project in the community?

KAY: It just showcases what Kingston has to offer and that we're interested in seeing more dance in the city. It started with a very small group in a very specific style, and I was choreographing a lot. Now, I can watch all these other artists and be inspired by them — things like the Skeleton Park Arts Festival offering a dance platform, Movement Market Collective creating pop-ups through the city, Kingston Freestyle Dance, which is another amazing dance initiative that celebrates breakdancing and hip hop. We also launched the first professional dance festival last year called the Ground Up Dance; it all comes together and it's just creating a reason for people to stay and enjoy Kingston for all it has to offer.

SOL: Can you tell us about "GROUNDED 3.0" by Movement Market Collective, which is scheduled for Friday, June 23 at The Broom Factory as part of the 2023 Skeleton Park Arts Festival?

KAY: We haven't released who is presenting yet. It's going to be a surprise for the event! Every year it's kind of shape-shifted into something a little different. If we give it all away, then everyone is going to know what they're going to see. When you come to dance, specifically when it's contemporary dance involved, just come with an open mind, no expectations. And that will give you the ability to interpret it in whatever way it suits you and what you're feeling at that moment.

We decided to do it at The Broom Factory because we wanted to amp up the production level. This idea of having lighting gives it more of a performance atmosphere and supports the artists in their creation.

*Movement Market Collective is a group of pre-professional and professional artists that come together to support and celebrate local, professional dance in Kingston. They are focused on building community, exposing dance as its own art form and celebrating the possibilities of movement through amateur, youth and professionals alike. For more information visit: MovementMarketCollective.com



SOL CASTAÑEDA was born and raised in Mexico. She is a cultural manager who has transited from the big city to the Caribbean jungle and all the way to Prince Edward County. In 2021 she and her husband Jared moved to the Skeleton Park neighbourhood where they are raising their daughter, Leonora.

Chinese Tile Game Clicking with Players Across Kingston

The rules, rituals, and rewards of mahjong **STORY BY VALERIE ASHFORD**

Mahjong is unequivocally not the matchy-matchy game you play on your phone or laptop. It's either an ancient Chinese game or a late nineteenth-century invention, depending on the version at play. Said to have gained global attention after being featured in the 2018 movie hit *Crazy Rich Asians*, the game continues to see an expanding network of players in McBurney Park neighbourhoods and across Kingston.

Some say mahjong is like bridge, but without the need for a partner. Some say it's like the card game gin rummy, but significantly more complex. Whatever it is, mahjong is a great tonic for those whose lives have been altered over the past three years. Like, all of us.

The reputed benefits of playing mahjong are legion: improved memory, concentration, hand-eye coordination, stress relief, and increased IQ, to name a few. I'm not aware of any such changes in me, but I've only been playing for a little more than two years.

Mahjong is a splendid game for introverts. The player is paradoxically alone even while cozied up at a table with three other people. Thinking hard is a quiet business. Some players absent-mindedly mumble or sing to themselves while thinking. That's pretty adorable so we let it go, but silence is the rule, generally.

And mahjong is definitely a game of both rituals and rules. It begins with a quirkily named process called the Charleston, a complicated series of trading tiles amongst players. While gaining and losing tiles throughout the Charleston, the player decides which pattern, or perhaps just which category of patterns, they will aim to achieve. Then the play begins and continues until someone calls "mahjong."

It can be ridiculously challenging. Imagine trying to understand a game with terms such as thirteen

orphans, and a pong of each wind, plus eyes. Full disclosure: I don't even know what those are. You learn more as you play, and there is always more to learn.

A LOT OF THE MAHJONG LEARNING EXPERIENCE IS ABOUT ACCEPTING THE BIZARRE AND ENDLESS LITTLE RULES AND RITUALS THAT COMPRISE THE GAME.

But in the beginning? Yikes. Even the tile designs can test a beginner. Imagine tiles called "Flowers" that depict, instead, apartment buildings. Or a tile that looks like a bar of soap, and is called "Soap," but is also a white dragon, a zero, and goes with the dots suit even though dots are round and the soap is not. Imagine that the number one in the bamboo suit is a stylized bird for no apparent reason.

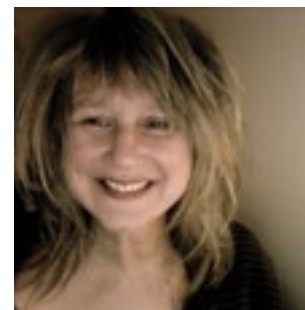
A lot of the mahjong learning experience is about accepting the bizarre and endless little rules and rituals that comprise the game. It all makes sense eventually. For example, players are required to "rack" a tile before deciding to accept or reject it, a seemingly arbitrary requirement that many new players question. But it soon becomes obvious that the sound of a tile hitting a player's rack cues others to the need to break concentration to grab a desirable tile while there's still time. There is also a prescribed move when just dealing out the last five tiles, one that took me six months to get. So much for gaining in IQ.

In the eternal debate about whether skill or luck determines how many games you win, sometimes you'll experience an uncanny anomaly. Bagot Street resident Susan Anderson learned the game recently and won the first four games she played, news of which swept through an incredulous network of Kingston mahjong players. Neighborhood resident Dawn Clarke has been playing for about three years and, like me, relishes the feel and sounds of the clickity-clack tiles and the play of movement with them. "I like to drink tea out of fine-china cups and saucers. I find the tactility of the tiles appealing in that same way," she says.

The smooth white little rectangle blocks, once ivory or bone (verboden) now plastic (newly verboten), are a key feature of the game. Then there are the cards, a universal source of terror when first introduced to a new player for their seeming mind-boggling complexity. The (American) National Mahjong League (NML) issues a new card every year, each listing fifty-six patterns, one of which must be replicated with the tiles to win the game. The cards themselves are an anachronism: you simply cannot find an image of a card online. The mysterious NML seems to have an almost dark-webby capacity to elude publication. Players must order new cards directly from the League.

Mahjong is an anti-tech game; players are not to answer texts or calls while playing; nor can they Google something in the middle of a game. The game costs \$200 for tiles, racks, and cards. That's about \$50 a person for, in my case, about ten hours a week of play when I'm not buying expensive coffees out or paying an arm to a Megaplex for a dusty bag of dry popcorn while watching a bad movie.

If this appeals to you, ask around and you will inevitably soon tap into the Kingston mahjong community. Mahjong makes you feel better. That's the only thing about the game that is simple and predictable.



A writer, editor and academic coach for decades, **VALERIE ASHFORD** can be found at the lake in summer and in winter drawing cartoons for friends, playing mahjong, and rearranging furniture.

PHOTO CREDIT: iStock



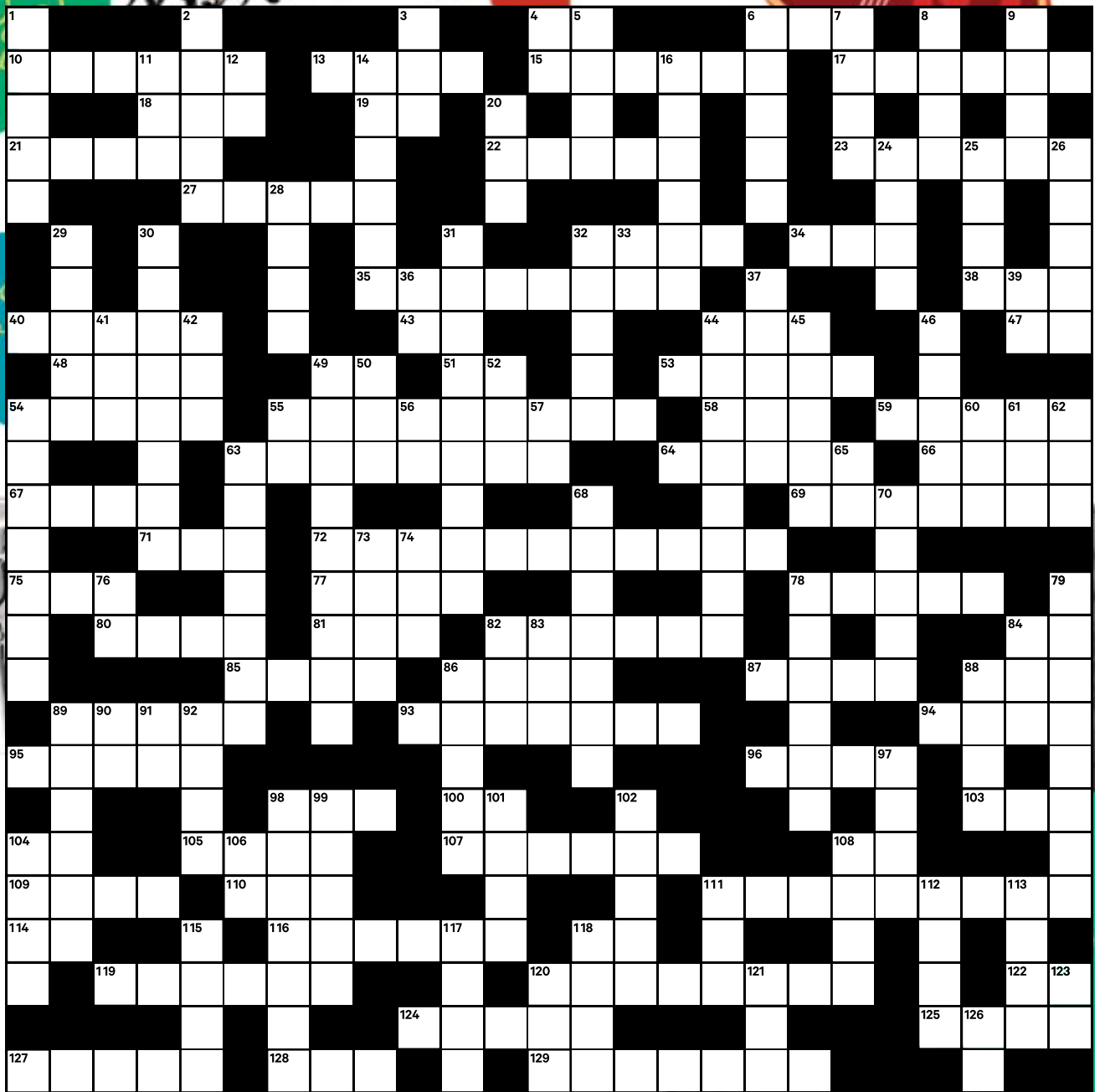
Musical Squares

PUZZLE BY HALEY SARFELD
ILLUSTRATION BY JILL GLATT



ACROSS

- 4 The person to go to with song requests
- 6 With 113 down, an event where anyone can perform
- 10 The R in R&B
- 13 Headlining rapper at SPAF 2022
- 15 Standard guitar tuning
- 17 "Did we play well?" "You'll be a tough act to _____"
- 18 After recording a hip hop vocal track: "That's a _____"
- 19 "r u coming 2 band practice tn?" "sorry, _____ sick :("
- 21 Stringed instrument with a long neck and movable frets
- 22 Buzzy instrument you can sing into
- 23 "Can you play this song?" "Sorry, I don't know the _____"
- 27 To run an idea by someone
- 32 Bossa _____
- 34 Measure of tempo
- 35 The best way to improve your musicianship
- 38 I'm your biggest _____
- 40 Former live-in artist-run gallery and music venue at 205 Sydenham Street
- 43 In 2015, Zayn Malik became an _____ - member of One Direction
- 44 I hope we'll have time to play every song on the _____ list
- 47 Post-cassette, pre-MP3 listening technology
- 48 Mozart opera _____ fan tutte
- 49 Action verb or first scale degree
- 51 The _____ Project played at Skeleton Park Arts Fest in 2022
- 53 You might get in trouble at school for passing these
- 54 Without _____ or reason
- 55 If Louis Armstrong were a bird, he'd be a _____ swan
- 58 "Can I have your autograph?" "Sure, I'll find a _____"
- 59 "Is she your girlfriend?" "We don't like to _____ things"
- 63 Sites of gospel music
- 64 At a rehearsal: "Do you know when to come in?" "Yep, I marked it with an _____"
- 66 Syllables found in the Batman theme and "Hey Jude"
- 67 Little drum solo in between melody bits
- 69 Something Else _____ on Wellington Street
- 71 _____ Reed of the Velvet Underground
- 72 This Sharon, Lois, and Bram song shares its title with a horror movie that played at the Screening Room in January
- 75 "Do you have cash to pay the band?" "Not at the moment; I'll run to the _____"
- 77 A tuning fork has two _____s
- 78 Slang for embouchure; you might also find this in karate
- 80 The joke wasn't well-received; it fell _____
- 81 Hipster's response to hearing a pop song on the radio?
- 82 At the corner of York and Barrie, you'll find the Store _____
- 84 Amplified audio system
- 85 _____ and roll
- 86 Han from *Star Wars*
- 87 When a band plays in multiple cities
- 88 Public radio _____s swear words before 9:00pm
- 89 Old cheese smell
- 93 Pinocchio loses these when he becomes a real boy
- 94 Could be made of rubber or string
- 95 Nostalgic listeners may favour the _____s station
- 96 Pregnant teen Elliott Page
- 98 Skate shop downtown that's hosted some music events on their back patio
- 100 *Fortissimo*, for short
- 103 "Ground" in French or "sun" in Spanish
- 104 "_____ Last" was sung by Etta James in 1960
- 105 _____ Shakedown parties aim to bring the best in rare dance grooves to our city
- 107 Hey, don't _____ with that, it's delicate!
- 108 Fourth scale degree; also the syllable repeated by David Byrne in "Psycho Killer"
- 109 Give it a _____!
- 110 _____ the b'y that builds the boat
- 111 Squeezebox
- 114 What was the operatic pirate's favourite pastime? Singing the high _____
- 116 The timpani is also called a _____ drum, but I wouldn't use it to boil water
- 118 Édith Piaf: "Non, je _____ regrette rien!"
- 119 Joined at _____
- 120 When the letter carrier listens to Joy Division or The Cure?
- 122 E minor abbr.
- 124 Box-shaped percussion instrument from Peru
- 125 "Do you sing?" "I can't carry a _____"
- 127 Arts collective that once gathered in a warehouse on Cataraqui Street
- 128 A one-off job
- 129 Last fall, Vivek Shraya performed her solo show *How To Fail As A _____* at the Kingston Grand Theatre

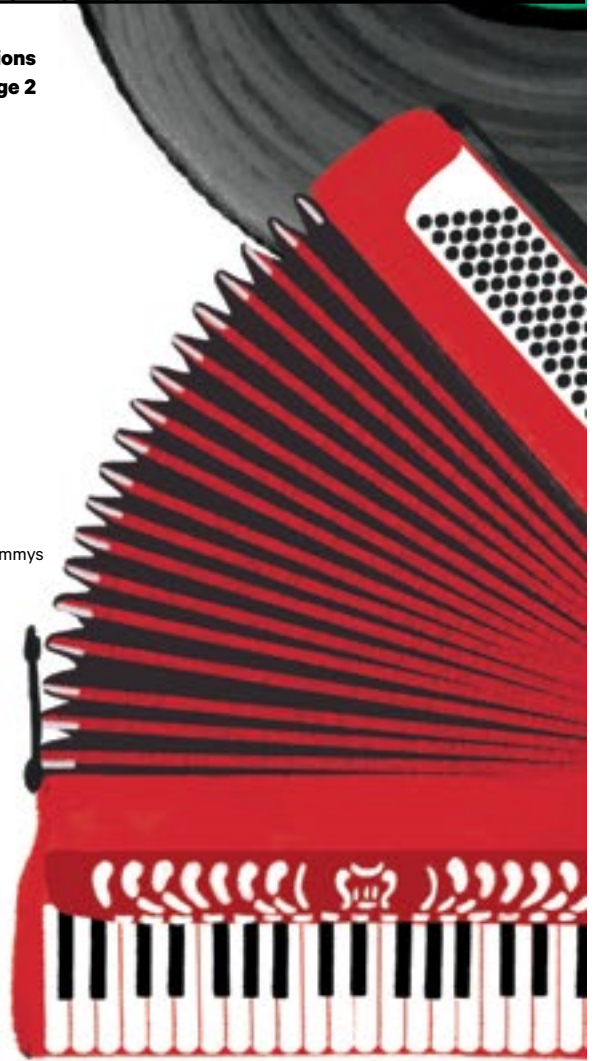


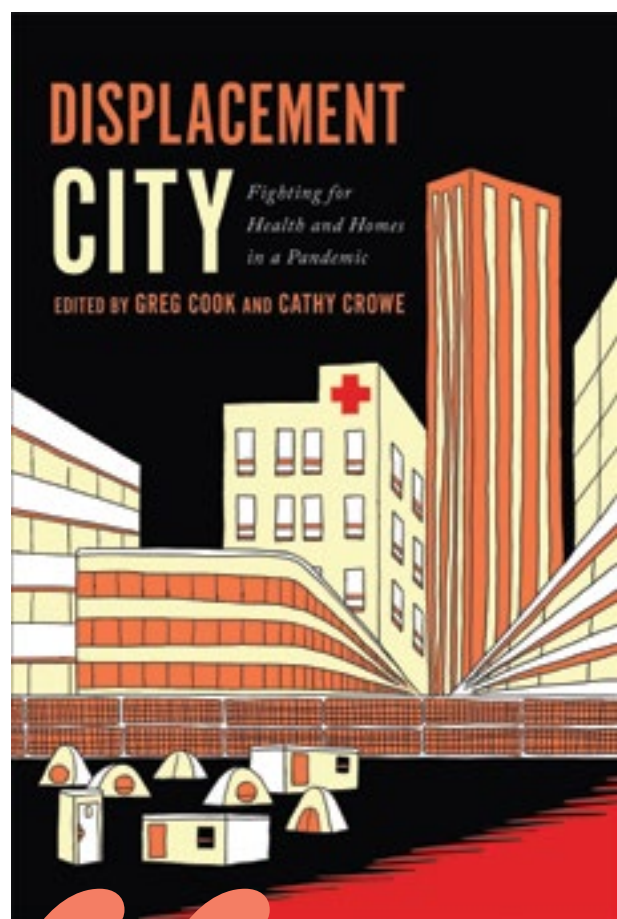
DOWN

- 1 Skeleton Park had a Halloween visit from Urban Science _____ Band
- 2 A gasp; a _____ intake of breath
- 3 Goes well with peanut butter
- 4 French-Canadian singer-songwriter Coeur _____ Pirate
- 5 *All That _____* (1979), dir. Bob Fosse
- 6 Copper, silver, mercury, lead, iron, etc.
- 7 Station where you may hear local music
- 8 Italian for "high"
- 9 Neighbours might complain if your music is too _____
- 11 How someone might sing without words: "_____ la la"
- 12 *Mezzo piano*, for short
- 14 Genre that originated in New York City in the early 1970s
- 16 A long, narrow cut or depression
- 20 Nickname for a small, four-stringed instrument
- 24 "Have you seen the guy who sings church music?" "No, but I've heard _____"
- 25 To improvise on a subject
- 26 Reliable, sensible; your argument is logically _____
- 28 "Did you print the sheet music?" "I ran out of _____r"
- 29 You can support local bands by buying this
- 30 Place to borrow musical instruments at the Tett Centre
- 31 "Careless Whisper" riff instrument
- 32 "You haven't heard of that band? I'm not surprised, they're pretty _____"
- 33 Original content abbr.
- 36 Subject line starter or second scale degree
- 37 When you park downtown, you might have to put money in one of these (American spelling)
- 39 Going to an indoor summertime concert? Let's hope the venue has _____
- 41 In *Peanuts*, Schroeder plays a _____ piano
- 42 Def Leppard, "Love Don't _____" (2002)
- 44 American crime drama from 1999 to 2007, *The _____*
- 45 "How many men are in the choir?" "Maybe _____ twenty?"
- 46 Sing us a song, you're the _____ man
- 49 Chicken, ice cream, or noise-making implement
- 50 "_____ Song" from Taylor Swift's self-titled 2006 album
- 52 Which piano key is most visible? Middle _____!
- 54 When we wouldn't stop singing the chorus over and over again, they asked us to _____
- 55 "Ode to Joy" is the text used in Beethoven's 9 _____ symphony
- 56 Master of ceremonies
- 57 After a bad pun: Ba dum _____

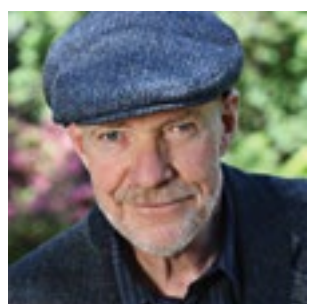
- 60 Musiikki is a popular music venue, café, and _____
- 61 At the _____ of a show, the audience might ask for an encore
- 62 "I don't know the words to this song" "Just sing some _____"
- 63 A nation with its own government
- 65 _____ built this city on 85 across
- 68 Barbershop quartets sing in four-part _____
- 70 "Do you like choral music?" "It's an a-_____ed taste"
- 73 Bass drum played with a pedal
- 74 The band had signed with a record label but they broke up before the _____ was dry
- 76 A little louder than 12 down
- 78 The new music director faced a _____ of complaints
- 79 I just took up an eight-stringed instrument; I think I' _____ it well
- 82 Bon Iver album _____ *Emma, Forever Ago* (2007)
- 83 _____ Gatie, Iraqi-Canadian singer and songwriter
- 84 To distribute an audio signal into a new stereo or multi-channel sound field
- 86 This word might be on the back of your T-shirt at work
- 88 In 2014, Meghan Trainor was all about that _____
- 89 Long, tall champagne glasses
- 90 "I can't make it 2 the show" "but u said _____ b there!"
- 91 "Vous détestez la musique country-western?" "Eh bien, je n'aime _____ le country _____ le western"
- 92 There are 88 of these on a piano and there's also one at 182 Sydenham Street
- 97 _____ Apollo, R&B singer and songwriter nominated for Best New Artist at the 2023 Grammys
- 98 Playing music in a public space for money
- 99 "Do you like classical music?" "It puts me to _____"
- 101 Dave Brubeck Quartet's "Take _____" is in 5/4 time
- 102 Limestone City _____ Festival
- 104 Playing with a bow
- 106 Opening shout of "T.N.T." by AC/DC
- 108 That's all, _____s!
- 111 "Are you excited for the show tonight?" "Yeah, I'm _____ed!"
- 112 "Want to sing a song with me?" "Let's _____!"
- 113 See 4 across
- 115 If you can't _____em, join 'em
- 117 That's a _____ing question
- 118 Talking during an orchestra performance is a _____
- 120 _____ goes the weasel
- 121 Latin for "one"
- 123 It's _____, hi, I'm the problem, it's _____
- 126 Nigel Tufnel of Spinal Tap is the proud owner of an amp that goes _____ to eleven

Find solutions on page 2





HOUSING IS THE KEY TO ADDRESSING ADDICTION AND MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES. UNTIL THE DISPOSSESSED HAVE SAFE AND SECURE ACCOMMODATION, NOTHING IN THEIR LIVES IS GOING TO CHANGE.



LAWRENCE SCANLAN is an author, journalist, and playwright. His play on greed versus generosity, *The Lion's Share*, is a work-in-progress.

Wanted, and Wanting: A Place to Call One's Own

New book on Canada's homeless paints a raw picture

REVIEW BY **LAWRENCE SCANLAN**

Displacement City: Fighting for Health and Homes in a Pandemic.

Edited by Greg Cook and Cathy Crowe, University of Toronto Press, 280 pages, \$29.95

The plight of the homeless in Canada is painted in searing detail in a new anthology called *Displacement City: Fighting for Health and Homes in a Pandemic*. The editors are Greg Cook, an outreach worker in Toronto, and Cathy Crowe, the first of the frontline health-care workers who have come to be known as “street nurses.” Although published by an academic press, *Displacement City* is a brave and raw book, with nothing academic or policy-wonkish about it. What the book offers — via prose, poetry, and photography — is the unfiltered voices and day-to-day experience of vulnerable individuals either living on the street or in the crumbling shelter “system,” along with the testimony of beleaguered outreach workers trying to keep them alive.

Plague-induced lockdown made everything on the street so much worse — “this fresh hell,” Simone E. Schmidt calls it in her essay. Zoe Dodd describes a park where Naloxone kits were hung in trees to help deal with all the overdoses. This long-time harm-reduction worker rails against “the indifference to human life . . . it’s like a horror movie, really. . . None of this is normal.” The book offers the vivid accounts of those in tent encampments who were set upon by baton-wielding police.

Some essays are heartfelt letters to the dead, and while there is much sorrow and even astonishment at the lack of political will to ease the torment, there is also much evidence of solidarity and resilience among the unhoused — and even hope. Hope that one day housing in this country will be seen as a human right, putting an end to so much suffering.

I feel a personal connection with this book and I should disclose my friendship with Cathy Crowe, who grew up in Kingston. Fifteen years ago, I was researching a book on generosity that saw me at times offering what help I could to anti-poverty organizations — including the Toronto Disaster Relief Committee (TDRC), which Crowe had co-founded.

A word on bloodlines. Cathy is the daughter of Jean Anne Crowe, a long-time triage nurse at KGH. Jean died in 2019, at the age of ninety-five, but in her later years we three became friends and lunch-mates. A grand-daughter of Jean Crowe’s wrote a Lives Lived column in *The Globe and Mail* about her that was subtitled “Nurse. Dog lover. Reader. Opinion holder.” The headline? “Jean Crowe had a big heart and felt it was her civic duty to speak her mind.” From such a block was Cathy Crowe chiselled.

I have long admired this woman. Now seventy, she only recently stopped working as a street nurse — after *fifty* years of providing health care to men and women living in tents, sleeping atop grates, or cheek by jowl in shelters. Along the way, she won the Order of Canada, was awarded an Atkinson Charitable

Foundation fellowship that fuelled her advocacy work for six years, and wrote two books — *Dying for a Home*, and *A Knapsack Full of Dreams*.

Displacement City focuses on Toronto but the circumstances of the displaced are the same in cities and towns across Canada. Here are some telling figures from the book: some 235,000 individuals experience homelessness in this country every year. To experience chronic homelessness is to cut your life span in half. In the past forty years, more than a thousand people have died on Toronto streets. The number of homeless in Toronto has steadily skyrocketed (ten thousand and rising), but the pandemic, the opioid crisis and the steep decline in affordable housing have all conspired to put more people on the street, including a disproportionate number of Black and Indigenous people.

Roxie Danielson — a young street nurse in Toronto — laments in her essay that many of her patients died “as a direct result of homelessness. I never imagined that as a nurse I would be dealing with this level of death; nothing prepared me for this. Living without a home kills. Poverty kills . . . It really is social murder.”

We in Kingston know the drill, the relentless fall of dominoes. Renters lose accommodations to real estate investors, the numbers of individuals at the mercy of the street grow, tent encampments appear and disappear, and drug users hoping to get through one more night or one more day fall prey to opioid overdose. Our community kitchens and food banks keep expanding while struggling to meet soaring and unprecedented demand. The city’s marginalized cannot make ends meet, for their wages are too low or government support too meagre, and the cost of food, clothing, accommodation and the rest, too great.

What my time with Cathy Crowe and other activists has taught me — and what *Displacement City* confirms — is this: housing is the key to addressing addiction and mental health issues. Until the dispossessed have safe and secure accommodation, nothing in their lives is going to change. As the example of Finland has shown, when governments at every level co-operate to end homelessness, the suffering dramatically declines (and so does the financial cost to society). We all require a decent place to live. Without that, there is no dignity.

Cathy Crowe has long believed that we should treat catastrophic homelessness as if it were an earthquake, flood or war: an epic disaster meriting an epic response. We have to light a fire in ourselves and in our elected representatives. For starters, read *Displacement City* and absorb its harsh truths.

Art as a Love Letter — Written to Oneself

Introducing Savannah Shea

REVIEW BY **ULRIKE BENDER**

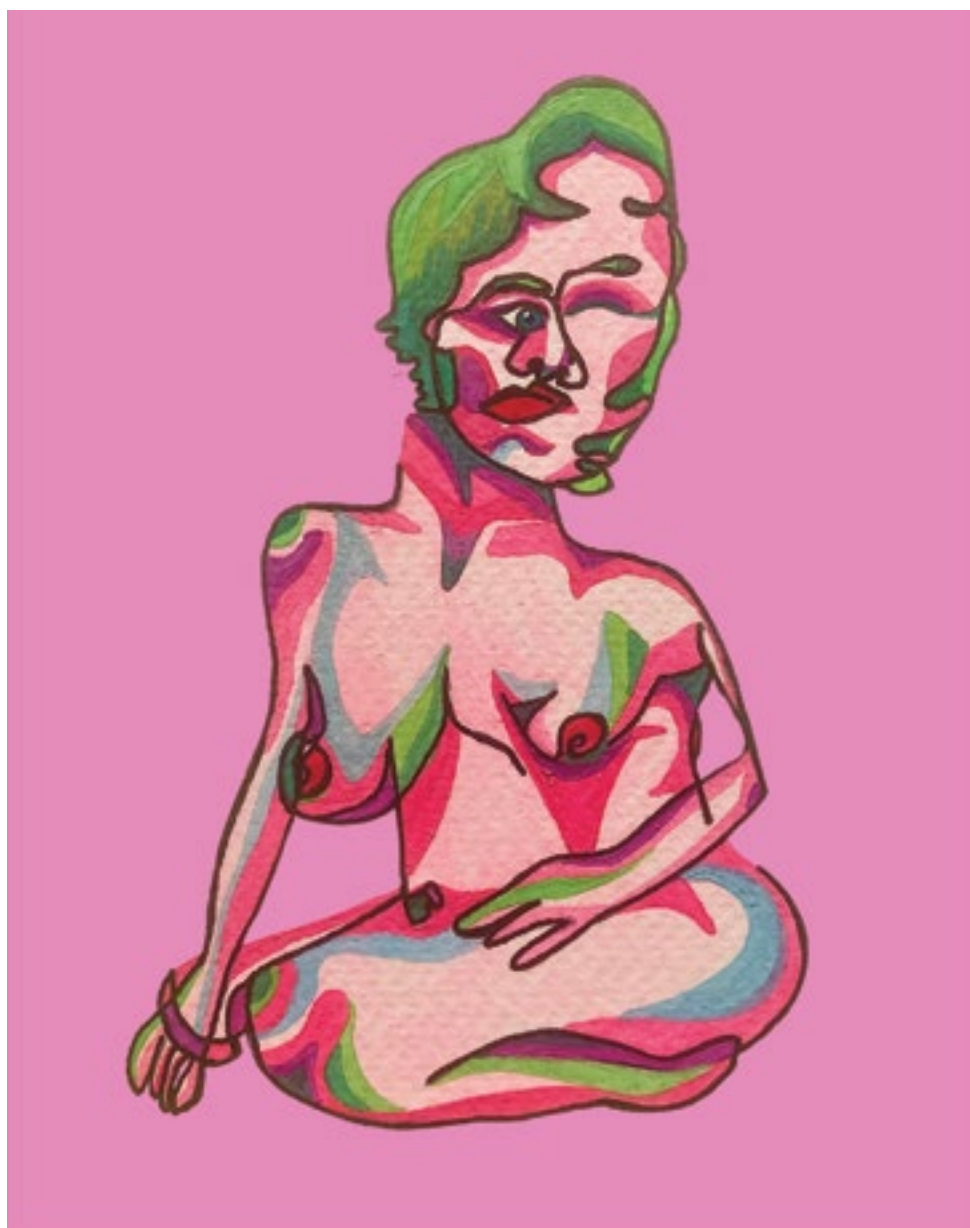
RIGHT: Savannah Shea
at The Elm Café
BELOW: *Resting*

One evening last February, musician and artist Savannah Shea found herself at The Elm Café with a couple of friends, mounting her first solo exhibition, *Summer Bodies*.

“I feel excited and nervous,” she told me as we looked over the colourful work arranged in groupings on the café walls. The unframed images represent Savannah’s creative output since the spring of 2022, when she rediscovered blind contour drawing, a technique taught in high schools to encourage students to really look at a subject, to follow its outline without glancing at their paper and without lifting their drawing implement from the page. To define her contours, Savannah uses black pen or pencil crayons. She then fills the outlines with watercolour washes, sometimes in wave-like patterns. For this exhibition she scanned the drawings and in some cases digitally added coloured backgrounds, then printed them on 8-1/2” x 11” paper.

Savannah also posts her work on Instagram (@savannahsheamus), where she has about 2,000 followers. The anonymity of her followers on the digital platform appeals to her. Exhibiting in a physical space, on the other hand, makes her feel more vulnerable, especially since the pieces on view at The Elm are a departure from her usual subject matter of landscapes influenced by the Group of Seven.

In the majority of the prints Savannah has concentrated on the human form — her own, as it turns out. She confided to me that over the years she has struggled with body image, and by using photographs of herself as reference for this series, she has undertaken a kind of self-love. The blind contour technique suits this purpose admirably because, although the results can be surprising and sometimes even weird, the outlines remain true to the subject. No trickery or judgement clouds what the eyes see. Furthermore, tracing the contours of



DISCOVERING A NEW WAY OF DOING SOMETHING FEELS LIKE A TINY DOOR OPENING IN YOUR HEART AND ON THE OTHER SIDE IS HOPE.

small details reveals otherwise unnoticed beauty. Savannah described the effect as letting her body be for herself rather than for the observation of others.

Although she has been making art since childhood, Savannah’s working life since 2016 has centred on music, both as a singer-songwriter — performing locally and further afield — and as a teacher of voice, piano and guitar. During this period she has continued to depend on visual art as an alternative creative outlet. When, last spring, her full-time career in music was starting to become “work” and she felt the need to play, she began to draw blind contours of her bandmates for fun. These elicited a positive reaction and launched her current series of drawings.

At a recent concert at Next Church, where she opened for Rocket Surgery, I had the chance to experience Savannah Shea’s musicianship. As I looked at her work in the Elm Café, I was struck by how her images mirror her music and her lyrics — sinuous, meandering, expressive. Both are delicate but confident.

When asked about her favourite pieces in the show, Savannah pointed to two. *Open* shows the artist’s body at ease, seated, on a purple background, with legs pulled up and arms in a relaxed pose behind her head. *Turn Towards* also has the artist seated, this time on a pink background, with legs folded under her, and gaze focussed toward her left. Looking at these prints, Savannah remarked on the energy that she feels flowing from the moment these poses were photographed.

For this viewer, the pieces showing figures floating on a white background stand out. The thinner, more delicate black contours give the shapes and colours more prominence, while the white ground allows them to pop. Veering on abstraction, the drawings become more intriguing and even symbolic. *Sit*, for example, indicates rootedness, while *Resting* conveys languid acceptance, albeit with an element of surprise. In this drawing, because the body takes on a simple wave-like form, the viewer is drawn to the interestingly disconnected facial features. Also successful is *Move*, in which we feel the body’s energy coiled to burst and enhanced by colour choices that are not dimmed by the pale green background.

“I want to take the energy and freedom of these drawings,” said Savannah, “and apply them to landscapes.” Indeed, blind contour offers the artist a route to expression that transcends the literalness of photographs and the constraints of pictorial reality. Perhaps a post on Savannah’s Instagram page best describes where her artistry is headed: “Discovering a new way of doing something feels like a tiny door opening in your heart and on the other side is hope.”

Summer Bodies is on view until June 1.

ULRIKE BENDER is a community docent at the Agnes Etherington Art Centre and a writer for the Kingston School of Art gallery website. She favours the white mochas at The Elm.



PHOTO CREDIT: Courtesy of Wolfe Island Hotel

FOR THE PERFECT NIGHT OUT: COMBINE A MAGICAL CROSSING AND A LIVE MUSIC STAGE

At the Hotel Wolfe Island, a music hub is blossoming

STORY BY ANNE THÉRIAULT

There's always something a bit magical about stepping onto the Wolfe Island ferry (for a mainlander, anyway), but in winter it can feel downright otherworldly, with several inches of glittering ice coating every outdoor surface and a fog rolling in. Crossing the water always feels like setting out on an adventure.

I get the same feeling whenever I'm going out to see live music — that sense of stepping into another world, of not knowing what the night will bring. So, it seemed fitting that my trip to Wolfe Island on a mid-March Sunday was to check out the music hub blossoming in and around the Hotel Wolfe Island, formerly known as the General Wolfe Inn.

My host for the day is one of the hotel's new owners, Tom Carpenter, an editor, writer, and builder (deliciously on-the-nose for someone with his last name). He picks me up from the ferry's winter dock, and it's from his car window that I get my first glimpse of the revamped hotel, with its colourful new siding that gives off a cheerful maritime vibe. We don't stop at the hotel, though; we're headed to hotel co-owner Hugh Christopher Brown's home/recording studio, an old converted post office that doubles as the headquarters for Brown's record label, Wolfe Island Records.

Inside the studio, we curl up by the woodstove with mugs of tea to talk music, community, and sustainability while various cats weave in and out of the room and between our legs.

Brown grew up in Toronto and was drawn to music from a young age. When his older sister took piano lessons, he would reach up and imitate what she was doing with the keys. In 1985 he formed indie

rock band The Bourbon Tabernacle Choir with several of his high-school classmates, and the list of musicians he's worked with since then is astonishing — highlights include The Barenaked Ladies, The Tragically Hip, Neil Young, and BB King. Brown has long split his time between Manhattan and Wolfe Island. He's the kind of guy who knows everyone, exactly the person you'd want booking shows for your venue.

Neighbours' studios look like unassuming garages and sheds outside until you step inside to find worlds of artistry and music.

The story of how Brown and Carpenter came to own the hotel is a long and winding one, but the short and sweet version of it is this: when it went up for sale a few years ago, the pair worried that it was vulnerable to speculation and the type of development that would be harmful to the wider community. Both strongly felt that the space should serve the local population, not a tourist market. They realized they had what Brown refers to as "similar values and complementary talents," with a vision for the hotel — and larger waterfront — that aligned. Brown talks a lot about dreams, about how one of the risks of having them is that they might just come true, but also about the luxurious "dreaming space" of the island. There is a certain quality to the

place that makes you feel like anything could happen, and I could see that quality reflected in what Brown and Carpenter showed me that afternoon.

After leaving Brown's studio, we visit several of his neighbours' studios, spaces that look like unassuming garages and sheds outside until you step inside to find worlds of artistry and music. This theme continues as the afternoon unfolds, the sense that nothing is quite what it seems — that everything can be cracked open to reveal some new wonder inside. Our last stop, the hotel, is no different.

The wood-paneled interior has been renovated just enough to give the rooms a vintage ambiance without feeling outdated. There are two main spaces, each with their own bar: a larger room, and what they're calling the "piano lounge," which comes complete with a mid-century Steinway. These rooms are used as performance spaces, but also as a restaurant with a chef who formerly ran the kitchen at the Chateau Lake Louise (Carpenter remembers a time several decades ago when the General Wolfe Inn was a dining destination and he'd like to make that happen again). The walls serve as a gallery space, and when I visit they're hung with a collection of paintings by Heather Haynes, an internationally-acclaimed artist based out of The Thousand Islands.

The hotel property includes a stretch along the waterfront across the street where there are two more stages, and another commercial kitchen along with a patio. In the summer, the outdoor stages are used for musical acts as well as live theatre and film screenings. The parking lot transforms into a farmer's market, which Carpenter tells me has led to the creation of twenty-two new businesses on the island. The fact that all this has happened in just two years defies belief and is a testament to the hard work of Carpenter and Brown, but also, maybe, to the fertile dreaming space of the island.

The weekend before my visit, jazz guitar legend Bill Frisell played two sold out shows at the hotel, and its calendar logs many more shows to come. Once the new ferry dock in Marysville opens, and it's a mere fifteen-minute trip from the Kingston dock to the hotel's front door, Carpenter hopes that people will come to see the Hotel Wolfe Island as a downtown venue.

In my opinion, though, they've got a leg up on the other downtown venues in that a night out at the hotel starts with the magic of a ferry ride. What better way to set off into the unknown of a night out?

ANNE THÉRIAULT is a Kingston-based writer with bylines in *The Walrus*, *Chatelaine*, *Broadview Magazine* and more. She's a big fan of both skeletons and parks.

Royal 2.0 Revives History and Music

A Princess Street watering hole is granted new life

STORY BY HARVEY SCHACHTER

For Sir John A. Macdonald, it was Grimason House. He drank there and talked politics, surrounded by farmers and local Tories. For a while he even owned the place. Most of us knew it as the Royal Tavern, and either loved it or spurned it. The place was historic, but history seemed to end with the pandemic, when the tavern's doors were shut and mementoes of the past, other than a broken pool table and six broken chairs, were hauled away.

History can always add another chapter, however. The pub has been revived, renamed Royal 2.0, and reopened with the area closest to the door featuring a new l-shaped bar and tables for drinking and chatting with a connected, doorless separate room near the back for live music and its aficionados. "To me, 2.0 means exactly the same but better — newer and up to the times," says Kimberley Allan, the Kingston entrepreneur who leases the building from Toronto realtor Brad Lamb, who purchased the building early last year.

Allan opened and sold a series of convenience stores before turning her attention to bars, including the Plaza Hotel from 2010 to 2015 and Little Texas on Days Road, which she had to shut down when COVID-19 struck. She had never been in the Royal but had a look when asked to consider taking it over: "It's a unique building. There's a sense of history in it. You can feel it." Also appealing as she tries to scale back work towards retirement was that — at a capacity of 140 people — it's about half

“THE CHARM IS THE HISTORY. CANADA WAS CREATED IN THAT ROOM.”

the size of her previous venues but still allows her to offer music as in her previous ventures. "Business in the front and party at the back," a sign on the wall declares.

Long-time local musician Spencer Evans is impressed: "The layout is amazing. I love it." In the past, when he played in the old tavern's Blues Jam, there was no stage, he was surrounded by people often more interested in drinking than listening to his music, and was at risk of getting hit by an errant pool ball from the nearby table. Now there's a stage, a PA system, and even a Green Room where the old bar used to be, a place for the band to chill out and review the upcoming set list, something no similar venue in the city has. "I like the feel and the vibe. It's still a real bar," Evans says.

Allan renovated it with her friends, keeping the original floor and some of the traditional decora-

tive mouldings, as well as cleaning up the bathrooms and painting. It was still a significant investment, which will be recouped down the line. Allan has seen profits from the day she opened, last September. "It has a piece of the old Royal Tavern but newer. I don't like to change things too fast, as it shocks people," she says.

On her first call to musician Jeff Dunn, Allan opened with these no-nonsense words: "Guess what I have done and here's what I need you to do." Dunn now plays monthly with both Hellhound Trail Blues Band (formally the Royal's house band), and the Soul Motions. He also advises Allan on other bands to book and fills in when needed. "If I need him to play solo tonight, rock and roll, he can do it. Or if I have two hockey teams coming in and I need country, he can do it or find someone," says Allan.

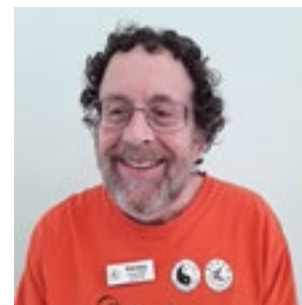
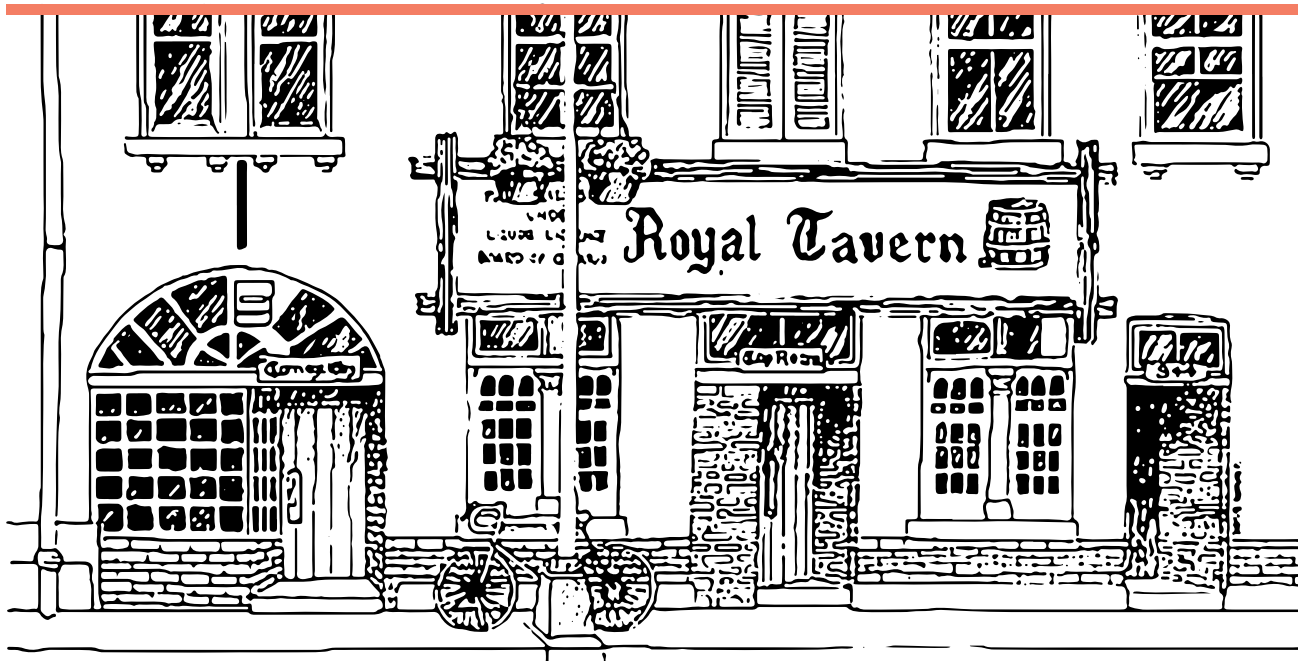
The walls are festooned with posters of various famous musicians and she aims to keep everything eclectic. There are drag shows, karaoke, and music from all genres. Allan wants everyone to feel welcome at the Royal 2.0. It opens at 3 p.m. with people coming for drinks and chatter, and then when the music starts, some of those folks moving closer to the band. "I don't rely on bands and entertainment to fill the place. I tell them 'I will bring people in. You need to keep them here.'"

The Royal's somewhat negative reputation from the past as rundown and attracting a rougher crowd hasn't deterred bookings today. Dunn has found new bands eager to play as word spreads of the venue's charm, with more established local musicians such as Evans taking their turn. In summer, well-known Montreal singer-songwriter Dwane Dixon will perform. "It's a music bar — no bones about it," he says, noting that it can be tough for musicians when playing a bar where drinking and socializing are the focal points. "You perform better when you are surrounded by people paying attention, fully engaged."

Because the tavern was bought by a realtor, some worried that the property was destined for immediate redevelopment. Lamb's office declined to comment on his plans but the City's planning department says the property's heritage designation does not preclude future development, including additions and expansion. However, the heritage characteristics of the property would need to be considered.

Spencer Evans appreciates the tavern's revival — the history, and the dedication to music. "The charm is the history. Canada was created in that room," he says. "Offering music, which they don't have to do, is part of their modus operandi. There are a good number of people rediscovering the Royal."

IMAGE CREDIT: Illustration adapted from a 1982 advertisement



HARVEY SCHACHTER is a Kingston author, a freelance column writer for the *Globe and Mail*, and former editor of *The Kingston Whig-Standard*.



Stops at Local Music Shops

Passion launched them, community support keeps them going

STORY BY DANIELLE HOPE EDWARDS / PHOTOS BY JAY MIDDLEAUGH

When I first came to Kingston, I was pleasantly surprised by the neighbourhood music within the local community. As a young musician in Kingston, I've been exposed to music festivals, street music, live music in local shops, and even musical seesaws that were part of an outdoor art installation.

Here I am highlighting a few local music shops and their integral role in our music community. As a musician who distributes music digitally, I saw it as a unique experience to revisit the physical and tangible world of music distribution. Chatting with a few music-shop owners, and having the chance to step into a few stores, opened a world of nostalgia in me. Happy childhood memories flooded my mind, kindled by the smell of records, CDs, and cassettes, along with a sense of shared love of music.

How to describe that smell? Slightly old — like a familiar fragrance you can't put your finger on yet you recognize it immediately. It's warm, like newspaper, with a slight humidity in the air. I can't quite put my finger on it, yet it's all so familiar.

It is no secret to many folks in the music scene how scary and fun it can be to start out. Tanya and Matt Robinson, owners of Something Else Records on Wellington Street, came to Kingston in 2006 with the dream of owning a record store. When I spoke to them recently, they described how humbled and blown away they've been by the community's supportive response. Personally, I found it very impactful to hear their journey of how they got to where they are, particularly how they still managed to remain engaged with the community during the height of COVID-19.

"Art is a form of communication," Matt chuckled to me during our conversation. "[We] really believe in art and culture. We are doing this out of passion." Many of the other owners of local music shops shared a similar sentiment, telling me that their shops began with a dream and a genuine love for music and art.

Gary LaVallee, of Zap Records, certainly fits that profile, saying earnestly, "I'm not a businessman, I'm just a man who loves music and has a passion." It seemed clear to me that LaVallee wanted his store to be a space where others could dwell on their passion for music. He told me about how welcomed he has felt by the Kingston community. I was intrigued by his gentleness and fascinated by the stories of his music journey over the years.

Brian's Record Option is known as a Kingston icon, a store that owner Brian Lipsin described to me as "a happy place." Along with the Robinsons and LaVallee, Lipsin understands that community plays a huge role in the music scene in Kingston. When Brian's Record Option flooded about five years ago, he was pleasantly overwhelmed with support from the community. Brian sees his store as not only a place to purchase records, but to talk, share stories, and be in a positive space. Though Lipsin has been running his shop for forty-three years, he still wakes up every day to a job he enjoys.

I believe that music artists would love to have a vinyl, CD, or other type of physical copy of their own music, to be able to hold the very creation of their art in their hands and see it displayed in shops such as ones mentioned above. As these music-shop owners shared their wisdom with me, I gained more understanding of the importance of community. Music shops play an integral role in the music scene, but they also support those around them, by doing things such as having posters and artists' music displayed, holding space for gigs, storing music gear, and so much more.

There is a lovely group of folks who would be happy to share their passion for music and art in their music shops in Kingston. I invite you to take a look.



DANIELLE HOPE EDWARDS, otherwise known as Danni, is a singer/songwriter of Jamaican heritage from southern Ontario. Danielle Hope is in her fourth year at Queen's University in the Concurrent Education (teaching) program. She creates art with the intention of bringing awareness and hope to others.

TOP TO BOTTOM:

Tanya and Matt Robinson with staff at Something Else Records
207A Wellington Street
somethingelserecords.ca

Gary LaVallee at Zap Records
20 Montreal Street
zaprecordskingston.com

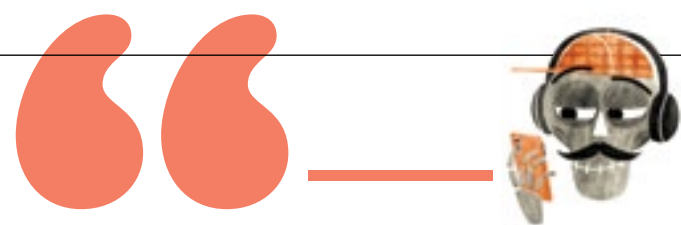
Brian Lipsin at Brian's Record Option
381 Princess Street
facebook.com/briansrecordoption/

What Makes a Music City?

The City of Kingston develops its first music strategy

STORY BY JANE KIRBY

Noelle performing at The Broom Factory PHOTO CREDIT: Randy DeKleine-Stimpson



WE'RE HEARING A NEED FOR SPACE AND INFRASTRUCTURE, FOR FUNDING FOR ARTISTS FOR CREATION AND CREATIVE PRACTICE.

Kingston may need to overcome its reputation as just a rock-and-roll town if it is to become recognized as a music city. But its rich musical talent and attractive geographic location are clear strengths.

Considerations such as these are on people's minds as the City of Kingston develops its first music strategy. The Department of Arts and Culture Services hopes the strategy will provide a comprehensive plan to strengthen support for the local music scene and better resource the sector. "We're looking to create an ecosystem that prioritizes musicians," says Danika Lochhead, the manager of arts and sector development at Arts and Culture Services. "This includes supporting the businesses that support musicians."

The Kingston Music Strategy is in line with the City's broader Creative Industries Strategy, which identifies music as a key area for more investment and growth. The hope is that an official strategy will allow the City to build its support for musicians from existing isolated opportunities — such as the YGK Music playlist and the local arts residency at the Grand Theatre — to creating a city that is demonstrably music friendly. This could involve everything from reconsidering city noise bylaws to how Kingston brands itself as it evolves beyond its historic rock-and-roll image. Following a procurement process, the City hired Nordicity, an economics consulting firm with offices in the U.K., Vancouver, and Toronto to oversee an initial period of research and consultation.

The development of the City's "artist-centred" strategy involves a three-phase consultation process. The first phase included twenty interviews with musicians and other stakeholders. The second phase included an online survey,

gathering 456 responses; an open house attended by approximately 150 people; a focus group with ten musicians and other stakeholders; and twenty additional interviews. "The first report felt like a reflection of what other musical communities are grappling with and what is being discussed elsewhere," says Lochhead, referring to similar music strategies developed in cities such as Victoria, Hamilton, and Toronto. "At the same time, Kingston is unique. We're hearing a need for space and infrastructure, for funding for artists for creation and creative practice."

The third phase, which will culminate in a list of recommendations for the sector and set to be released in June/July, will also include the opportunity for public feedback on the draft strategy. Given the artistic diversity of Kingston's music scene, a major challenge for the project will be balancing differing needs and competing priorities.

These tensions are already visible in artists' reactions to the *Initial Findings* report, released after the first phase of the project. The report identifies Kingston's strengths: its existing talent and musical reputation, its location, its tourism market, its postsecondary institutions, and its "equitable reputation in terms of artist pay."

"Whenever you have statistics about what artists are being paid, these are based on situations where there are contracts," says Michael Broadhead, an executive member with the Union of Professional Musicians local who plays bass in local bands. "The problem is that there are no contracts for many gigs, especially in the bar scene."

"Very few clubs and bars make an effort to pay reasonably," says Ryan Lewis, artist mentor, music producer, arranger, recording artist, and owner of Elevation music studio. "I'm from the Caribbean; I got paid way better when I was doing full-time music there."

The *Initial Findings* report acknowledges that the statistical picture of artist pay may not be valid. While the City itself has a reputation for paying fairly, this experience doesn't necessarily extend across the sector. Tourism is identified as both a strength and an opportunity in the *Initial Findings* report, and certainly represents the interests of restaurants and bars — interests that may be difficult to reconcile with those of musicians.

The weaknesses identified in the initial findings include Kingston's reputation as just a rock-and-roll town, the absence of a mid-sized venue, limited (affordable) rehearsal spaces, and lack of business skills among creatives. There is broad desire among artists for more dedicated spaces.

An assertion that artists "lack industry-specific business skills" was not well received by many. "It seems like such a classic way of telling people to pull themselves up by their bootstraps," says Haley Sarfeld, a singer and composer/lyricist. "What if instead of only identifying a 'lack of business skills for creatives' we looked at businesses' lack of skills in valuing creatives?"

Broadhead shared a similar sentiment. "It depends what kind of business skills we are talking about. Musicians could use support in developing skills in negotiating contracts and wages."

Lochhead acknowledges these tensions, suggesting the City's role is to distill different needs and priorities into something with the potential to be embraced by different groups. "Our job is going to be to guide strategy development, so that what comes back to the community reflects what is being shared," says Lochhead. "We're focused on being accountable to those conversations."

JANE KIRBY is a writer, editor, and circus artist.

Five Big Ideas to Support Kingston Musicians and Build a Thriving Music Scene

STORY BY JANE KIRBY

Sarah Harmer performing at SPAF PHOTO CREDIT: Jay Middaugh



What would help make Kingston a music city where musicians can thrive? I spoke with five artists with varied musical trajectories and goals about the measures and resources that would best support them and their projects. These are just a few of their big ideas.

PROVIDE GUARANTEED BASIC INCOME AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

For musicians, whose income is often dependent on poorly paid gigs without guarantees, notoriously low royalty fees, and day jobs, the benefits of a progressive basic income are clear: “Guaranteed livable basic income would go a long way in allowing musicians in Kingston to thrive,” says singer-songwriter and composer-lyricist Haley Sarfeld. She suggests that having a basic income, combined with a strong social safety net and genuinely affordable housing would help keep focus on the fact that “the commercial angle isn’t the heart of music.”

Jazz singer-songwriter Chantal Thompson likewise suggests that “affordable live/work zoning would solve a lot of issues. I once lived in an art hub in Toronto that was managed by Artscape. Artists could present a portfolio and proof of income, which indicated that you were a full-time artist to be ap-

proved for subsidized studio/housing through Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC). This worked well for many years, for all kinds of art disciplines.” Thompson points out that such arrangements would also help support music production and help address the local dearth of rehearsal spaces.

CREATE ACCESSIBLE VENUES

“A good venue is somewhere that can support a party and a listening audience, and that can support more of a subterranean music scene. You don’t have a vibrant music scene without that subterranean foil to the more status-quo stuff,” says Michael C. Duguay, a composer and producer whose next album is due out in April. He points to the now-defunct 12-Cat Arts Collective as an example of the kind of venue Kingston is lacking. Other artists pointed to the need for venues that are dry, all ages, accessible to parents with kids, and wheelchair accessible.

THERE ARE TOO MANY TALENTED MUSICIANS AND ARTISTS IN KINGSTON TO BE SEEING THE SAME BANDS AT THE SAME EVENTS.

BOOK AND PROMOTE DIVERSE AND LOCAL TALENT

“All the festivals always book the same people every year,” says Ryan Lewis, an artist mentor, music producer, arranger, recording artist, and owner of Elevation Music Studio. “I am very fortunate to be heavily exposed to lots of really exceptional talent. There are too many talented musicians and artists in Kingston to be seeing the same bands at the same events.”

Highlighting the range of talent that exists would require bookers to take risks and to promote even lesser-known local talent as heavily as they do out-of-towners. It also means supporting local artists across the music ecosystem:

“The other very frustrating item is having a bunch of local radio stations that don’t make an effort to play good local music. The mandate is eighty per cent international and twenty per cent Canadian content. Why can’t a part of that twenty per cent be local music?” asks Lewis.

DITCH THE “EMERGING ARTIST” LABEL

“People call things ‘emerging artist showcases’ when they don’t want to pay people real rates,” says Michael Broadhead, a musician’s union executive member and musician. He suggests that such events promise exposure rather than decent pay, but that “there’s nothing tangible about more connections, nothing you can put in a contract.”

If Kingston wants to retain talent and support professional musicians, the emerging artist label and the promise-of-the-exposure economy needs to be dropped completely. “One problem is that in Kingston people can end up stuck in that category. When are you fully emerged?” asks Broadhead.

STICK TOGETHER AND DEMAND DECENT PAY

“People need to know their own worth and fight for musicians to get paid fairly,” says Broadhead, for whom fair pay includes contracts and guarantees, even for bar gigs. “You might be okay not making much money if you have a day job, but not asking for fair pay means someone else doesn’t have the opportunity to do this professionally.”

Broadhead points to Seattle’s Fair Trade Music Campaign, which aims to raise the standard of living for that city’s musicians, as an example of what Kingston musicians might collectively aim for. The campaign certifies venues that pledge to adhere to fair trade principles, and also won music loading zones at several clubs after artists fought against the parking tickets they were receiving when loading gear.

Working together also translates into better music and stronger artists. “We are so much stronger together,” says Lewis. “Most of the big names in music, especially urban music, started in circles that supported each other; they pushed out the music that was primed and ready, and continued to nurture the ones that weren’t ready.”



JANE KIRBY is a writer, editor, and circus artist.

Six New Releases by Kingston Musicians

TOP ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT:

Blue Skies by Danielle Hope

Youth by Kasador

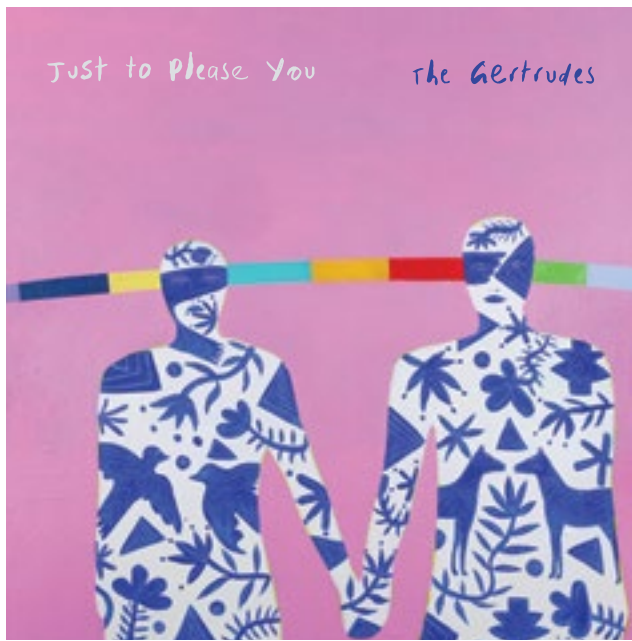
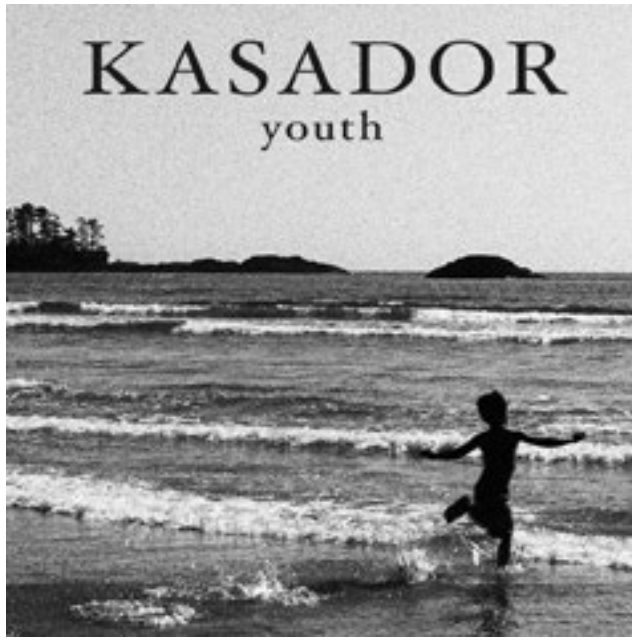
Luna by Luella

BOTTOM ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT:

A Netherworld by Piner

Just to Please You by The Gertrudes

Remastered in Stereo by Princess Towers



COMIC

BY COLTON FOX
HOWLIN FOR YOU



©COLTONTHEFOX



Joy and Connection from ‘Magical’ New Music Program

Growing Kingston’s design community **STORY BY ARIC MCBAY / PHOTO BY AL BERGERON**

A new music program at the Integrated Care Hub (ICH) on Montreal Street has struck a chord with service users at the site, which provides low-barrier supports — including addictions and mental-health support, harm reduction, primary care, access to meals, and a drop-in and rest zone.

At its heart, the music program is simple: participants meet weekly at the ICH to play music and sing together. Instruments are provided — a key part of the program since many of the participants don’t have stable housing.

Diane Kearnan, volunteer and facilities coordinator at Trellis HIV and Community Care, explains: “People who are homeless, who do not have places to store their instruments, get ripped off constantly.” So musical instruments, including guitars, drums, and a keyboard have been provided by the Joe Chithalen Memorial Musical Instrument Lending Library, and by private donors.

Kelli McIsaac, events coordinator, is grateful to those donors: “It would be hard to do this if those people didn’t step up.” Singer Sue Morrison, who works at Martha’s Table, is also part of the team leading the music.

Many of the people who use ICH services are excellent musicians, says McIsaac: “We have so many talented and gifted people here. They’re a little shy though, right? When you live in poverty, your self-worth, your self-confidence, take a hit.”

“We started a music program to connect with people,” explains Kearnan. “Music is such a wonderful way to connect with different people and everybody has a talent to share. There are a lot of hidden, amazing musicians here, either singers or players.” One program participant and guitarist I will call Broden (to protect his identity) began teaching himself to play music about four years ago when he didn’t even have an MP3 player. “Music! I need it,” he says. “It has to be in my life. If not, I can’t control my emotional state. I’ve always loved music, since I was a kid.”

For Broden, playing music is a way to cope with the challenges of life, and it dramatically improves his mood. “It’s my antidote. It’s like day and night.” He describes playing together as “magical,” and the program as a path to new opportunities. “Music is the key to a lot of doors in life,” he says.

For Kearnan, the program is a way for people who face a lot of challenges to experience joy and common humanity. “Music allows people to see people beyond their addiction or being homeless. We’re talking human beings! They all have something to offer and share. It’s a nice way to connect with



ARIC MCBAY is an organizer, an organic farmer, and the author of seven books. His latest book is the novel *Kraken Calling*, a story of activists in a future wracked by climate change. www.aricmcbay.org.



MUSIC IS THE KEY TO A LOT OF DOORS IN LIFE.

people.” As the program develops, Kearnan and McIsaac plan to invite more guests, including professional musicians and performers.

The new music initiative is one of many programs offered at the Hub. In addition to meals and health care, there is a visual-arts program called Create @ Concession. “We provide all the supplies,” explains Kelli. “It’s peaceful, it’s quiet, and some of the people who have started to come see the value in that peace.”

The programs at ICH are particularly urgent because of the combined impact of the pandemic, the housing crisis, and the drug-poisoning crisis. Indeed, the ICH has received a lot of public attention, especially due to the City of Kingston’s efforts to evict people living in the tent encampment located nearby.

But Broden says the ICH offers critical services to the community: “Everybody should be in support of this place.” Broden is concerned about Kingstonsians who make assumptions about the people who use the ICH, even when they don’t know what actually happens there. “What’s really going on here is a bunch of hurt, broken people trying to find a way to get out of a hole.” And they have overlapping barriers, Broden explains. “Try doing anything without money.”

As for the City’s eviction attempts? “Bullying, is what it is, at the end of the day.”

For Broden, the community that’s offered by the ICH — and particularly the music program — is part of a path to a better life. “We’re stuck,” he says, “but we’re helping other people.” And people help-

ing others at the ICH, he says, is how to get unstuck. “That’s what gave me strength to push myself.”

For critics of the ICH, Kearnan suggests: “People forget this is not a moral issue. It’s a health issue. This is health. This is people’s mental health, addiction, health. It’s about health.”

Please join us for a unique collaborative community drumming event, brought to you by Skeleton Park Arts Festival and the Integrated Care Hub (ICH). This event is presented as part of the 2023 Skeleton Park Arts Festival and aims to raise awareness and help educate the community about the services and people of the Integrated Care Hub.

This event is free, and open to the general public, although please note the site is not necessarily appropriate for young children, so please use your own judgment. No drumming experience is needed to join. This is a rain or shine event.

When: Thursday, June 22, 5:30-8 p.m.

Where: Outside at ICH, 661 Montreal St.

What: Drumming event, facilitated by artist and drummer Yessica Rivera Belsham. There will also be light refreshments as well as visual art and information booths about the ICH.

For more event information, and/or if you want to support the ICH music program through volunteering or by donating an instrument, please contact Kelli McIsaac: kelli.mcisaac@trellishiv.ca.

Sing to Me When I Am Dying

Death doulas and the role of song in safe passage

STORY BY LAURA CHAIGNON

ILLUSTRATION BY FLORIANA EHNINGER-CUERVO

YOU FEEL VERY LOVED AND CARED FOR, WITH ALL THESE VOICES SINGING OVER YOU . . . IT'S QUITE POWERFUL.

“I’m going to give you a song with a story.” I closed my eyes and Wendy Luella Perkins’ beautiful voice reached me through the computer speakers. She had turned a line from a Mary Oliver poem into a meditative song, and by the time she invited me to sing the line with her, I was undeniably tearful.

I had just experienced the magic of “soulful singing,” which Perkins, a local Unitarian Universalist minister, defines as “a community singing meditation practice that connects us more deeply to ourselves, one another, and all the forces that sustain and uphold us.” She has been leading in-person soulful singing gatherings for more than twenty years and has continued the practice online through the pandemic.

Through her ministry and life, Perkins has the opportunity to bring soulful singing to people who are in the process of dying. In 2019, she co-founded Encircle: Soulful Singing at the Bedside with Aileen Stewart, a local deathcare guide (someone who assists in the dying process). Encircle — which unfortunately had to close at the beginning of the pandemic — was a group of amateur singers and deathcare workers. Its goal was to support people nearing the end of their lives by creating a holding space with song, and by offering companionship and warmth during their transition.

I recently had the pleasure of meeting with Stewart for breakfast at The Elm Café. Sitting on the couch there, she leaned in and sang quietly to me: “May you have safe passage, safe passage on your way.” She repeated it a few times, adding my name to it. I imagined being held in that song, being the recipient of it. Nothing had ever felt more natural, or more sacred.

Sue Lyon, another former Encircle member who is also an Elder at Next Church and the co-founder of Green Burial Kingston, spent some time talking to me about loving attention, about how we don’t want to wait to be on our deathbed to feel that warmth. She remembers with awe a time during a practice session when they all took turns “being the dying person” and lying down on a couch to be sung to by the rest of the group. “You feel very loved and cared for, with all these voices singing over you. It’s some-



thing really special, and it’s for you, you are the centre of what is happening. It’s quite powerful.”

Encircle’s work had to come to a halt when, as Stewart puts it, “singing became the most dangerous activity on the planet.” Before it did, though, they got to sing to Encircle member Nancy MacMillan’s mother as she was dying. Nancy MacMillan, a registered therapist, natural deathcare advocate, and writer, is working on a book titled *The Far Shore: Tending Dying, Death, and Our Ancestors*. She kindly agreed to share an excerpt from her manuscript,

in which she describes the experience of bringing song to her mother as she was dying.

Mum is in a semi-conscious state, curled up on her side like a small child — her knees drawn up, and her hands tucked under the thin flannel sheet. I ask Sher, “Will you sing something for her? Something old and familiar?” We think for a few moments, and “Away in a Manger” comes to mind. In a beautiful soprano voice, Sher quietly and slowly starts singing Mum’s favourite Christmas carol. Mum turns her head, trying to hear better. When Sher finishes, Mum whispers, “More, more.” Sher sings it again, and pauses, Mum looks rapturous, and so she goes on to sing “Silent Night.” At the end, Mum reaches her arms out, crying, “Mummy.” It was the sweetest moment, for all of us. That sweetness now becomes a pool of water in front of me. I feel myself lean over, stirring it with my own aged hand, while the currents of time swirl achingly together.

I was moved to read about this return to infancy in MacMillan’s mother, that sweetness. As Perkins justly reminded me, “Dying and being born are the two most important thresholds of human existence.” It made sense, then, that just as you might need a birth doula, you might also need a death doula.

Lyon also noted the parallel when she told me: “It is work to be born, and it is work to die.” I don’t remember my first threshold, and my last threshold is still unknown. But when it happens, I hope there is singing all around me, and I hope I feel the loving care, the sweetness.

Visit deathcarekingston.ca for more information about natural deathcare. If you’d like to learn simple songs to accompany the thresholds of life, go to [tiktok.com/@wendyluella-perkins](https://www.tiktok.com/@wendyluella-perkins), and/or contact Wendy Luella Perkins for details to join a soulful singing group: info@wendyluella-perkins.com. Green Burial Kingston will have a booth at the Skeleton Park Arts Festival where the curious can find more information.



LAURA CHAIGNON (she/her) is a queer white femme and arts worker living in the Skeleton Park neighbourhood. She was honoured and delighted to be in conversation with the four wonderful women in this article, and is forever grateful for their generosity and the work they do.

The Doobie Brothers Rocked the Barn

All in aid of a musical instrument lending library

STORY BY **CLAIRE LESAGE**



The Doobie Brothers in performance **PHOTO CREDIT:** Courtesy of The Doobie Brothers

Back in February of 2005, my husband Doug and I faced a significant challenge. It all began when The Doobie Brothers — the classic American rock band — played a show in Kingston to raise money for the Joe Chithalen Memorial Musical Instrument Lending Library, or Joe’s MILL, as we’ve always known it.

The week before the concert, Doug and I volunteered to transform one of the dressing rooms at the Kingston Memorial Centre into a Green Room for the performers to hang out in before and after the show. We had done this before. As volunteer board members of the MILL we’d helped stage numerous memorable *Joe Shows*, which included acts such as Serena Ryder, Ronnie Hawkins, Stephenwolf, and Jeff Healey.

The challenge with The Doobie Brothers’ show was to convert an odorous cinderblock-lined change room ordinarily reserved for hockey players into an inviting place for world-famous music legends. As with other *Joe Shows*, we relied on the kindness of local merchants to loan items for the Green Room in return for a mention of thanks on stage. Canadian Tire provided string lights, James Reid Furniture provided gently used furniture, and Mc Mahon’s House of Flowers provided greenery. Doug and I drove around town in a pick-up truck to collect the items. Back at the Memorial Centre, we unloaded the truck and then took a good look at the room. To say the challenge was daunting would be an understatement.

We laid a colourful carpet borrowed from our own living room. We placed plants around the room. The cinderblock, though, was cold and grey. Doug came up with what I thought was a brilliant idea: we had a large roll of antique upholstery fabric at home, and Doug inserted stiff wire along the top of the fabric and hung it on hooks that surrounded the room. With the twinkly lights and some air freshener, the room became welcoming and fun.

And then there was the rider. For those unfamiliar, a rider is a list of items requested by performers ahead of the show. The Doobie Brothers’ rider included a six-pack of beer, twelve pairs of white cotton socks, Lever2000 Soap, raw shrimp, and water. We left the items in the Green Room and waited backstage.

Concert goers began to arrive. The excitement was palpable. About half an hour before the show there were two separate emergencies: the band required a carpet under the drum kit and the string that held the bells for the song “Blackwater” was broken! I was on the phone frantically calling around town for someone to loan us a twelve-by-twelve-foot carpet. My son, who was into dreadlocks at the time, gave us some hemp cord for the bells. We found a local merchant to loan us the carpet.

Guests that night were treated to the classics: “China Grove,” “Jesus is Just Alright with Me,” “Rockin’ Down the Highway,” and of course, “Black Water.” I called my father from backstage and

“The challenge with The Doobie Brothers’ show was to convert an odorous cinderblock-lined change room ordinarily reserved for hockey players into an inviting place for world-famous music legends.”

held up the phone while the band was playing the hit “Takin’ it to the Streets.” Dad and I laughed together. It was a special memory for us, as he’d taken me to my first concert ever — The Doobie Brothers at Maple Leaf Gardens in 1976!

The next day Doug and I loaded the borrowed items back into the truck. Not everything went back, though: the band left behind some bars of soap, and to this day Doug refers to Lever2000 as Doobie Brothers soap!

Two local Kingstonians had a part in bringing the Doobies to town. Wally High (now deceased and formerly known as Kingston’s Unofficial Mayor) and Dan Aykroyd were friends of the band. When Mr. High and Mr. Aykroyd told The Doobie Brothers about Joe’s MILL, the band offered to play a fundraising concert in Kingston. The day after the show, MILL volunteers and the band were invited to dinner at Chez Piggy, courtesy of Mr. Aykroyd.

The MILL was created in honour of Joe Chithalen. Joe was an extraordinary human and an exceptional bass player. Sadly, Joe passed away from anaphylactic shock while on tour in Amsterdam. Joe was known to say: “Wouldn’t it be great if everybody had the opportunity to play an instrument?”

Today, Kingstonians have those opportunities. Joe’s MILL continues as a not-for-profit registered charity dependent on the generosity of donors. If you’ve ever wanted to try to play an accordion, clarinet, violin, or virtually any other instrument, there are more than 4,000 instruments available to borrow free of charge at Joe’s MILL. The Tragically Hip, Sarah Harmer, and many other Kingston musicians have donated time and talent in support of the MILL. Oh, and The Doobie Brothers, too!

The Joe Chithalen Memorial Musical Instrument Lending Library — Joe’s MILL — is located in The Tett Centre at 370 King St. W. Visit and be inspired!

CLAIRE LESAGE is a survivor and a firm believer in the adage “Be Good to One Another.” She has a fondness for music, laughter, trees, flowers, and animals.

Marichka and Mark Marczyk on Music, Family, and Resilience in Ukraine

“We are the warriors on the culture frontlines” **STORY BY IRYNA VIVCHAR**

On June 24, The Lemon Bucket Orkestra will perform at the Skeleton Park Arts Festival. Over the past ten years the self-described “guerrilla-folk party-punk” band has gained a reputation for their eclectic mixing of Balkan, Klezmer, and Romani sounds, and their famously rambunctious live shows. Founded in Toronto, LBO has gathered musicians of different cultural and ethnic backgrounds who present their bright, fun and passionately played live shows worldwide.

Recently, The Lemon Bucket Orkestra has been putting their efforts towards supporting the Ukrainian war resistance — a subject close to the hearts of the band’s founding members. A year ago, the small town of Borodyanka in Ukraine became a bloody mark on the map of the Russian war, with hundreds killed and more than 1,500 buildings destroyed or damaged. Recently, Borodyanka appeared in international news for one more reason: world-renowned artist Banksy had left his artwork on one of the town’s shelled walls. For Marichka and Mark Marczyk, two members of the Toronto-based LBO, Borodyanka will always be a wound. It was here that they lost two family members in one of the bombed-out apartments. “Their names were Roman and Valentyna,” Marichka tells me via video call. Her brother, along with Mark’s cousins, is fighting in Ukraine.

The couple’s days are now just like those of many Ukrainians — a mosaic of war and the incredible normality of life, with its busy schedules, work, love, and joy. I can’t wait to tell Marichka that I was in her beloved Borodyanka just a couple of days ago, and that spring has already come there, and the lights are on in the surviving parts of damaged buildings.

Mark, whose grandmother and grandfather immigrated to Canada from Ukraine decades ago, met Marichka, his music and life partner, while in Ukraine in 2014. Eight years later he is going to his ancestors’ land with a special mission: to deliver humanitarian aid to a country at war and to celebrate a birthday on the frontlines.

“My younger brother, Max, serves in a battalion called ‘Karpatska Sich,’” Marichka says. “In October he was in positions close to Izyum. We managed to get there, deliver a birthday cake, and celebrate his birthday together.”

On their way back to Canada, The Lemon Bucket Orkestra witnessed firsthand Russian crimes against civilians. It was early morning when the band woke up to the sound of explosions in Kyiv. “Our drummer, Oscar, was on the balcony. He saw a missile in the sky. It targeted a building probably 500 meters from our apartment,” Mark says. Marichka adds: “We had to meet our friend and colleague that morning. We did, finally, in the shelter in the subway, where we spent half the day with coffee and sandwiches.”

“There was a moment of fear,” Mark adds, “but it turned to anger. And the anger turned to action. Ukrainians in the shelter know: right now, my task is to be here for some time, and then go back to my job. The same goes for volunteering: nobody asks ‘How can I help, what should I do?’ — people just do it.”

This couple doesn’t just hope for peace; since the first day of the full-scale invasion, Marichka and Mark have been actively collecting money for military and humanitarian aid for Ukraine. “Sometimes it’s hard to explain that it’s not just about current times,” Mark says. “The Russian Empire should be destroyed. Finally, Ukrainians have a chance to do that, after centuries of genocide. We need to treat this disease, and only afterward will we live our peaceful life.”

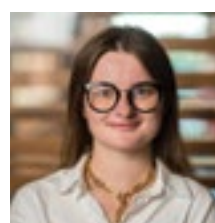
The Lemon Bucket Orkestra recently completed their international tour after performing in Australia, the United States, and Canada. Their concerts were not only about music but also aimed at building empathy and sharing the Ukrainian story with the Western world. Mark proudly declares, “We are the warriors of the culture frontline.”

The Lemon Bucket Orkestra has no doubts about the Ukrainian victory, just like the people of Kyiv, who can see missiles from their balconies, and the people of Borodyanka, who have returned home and turned on the lights in their homes.

UKRAINIANS IN THE SHELTER KNOW: RIGHT NOW, MY TASK IS TO BE HERE FOR SOME TIME, AND THEN GO BACK TO MY JOB. THE SAME GOES FOR VOLUNTEERING: NOBODY ASKS ‘HOW CAN I HELP, WHAT SHOULD I DO?’ — PEOPLE JUST DO IT.



Marichka Marchyk visiting her brother Maksym in the Kharkiv region, Ukraine in autumn of 2022.



IRYNA VIVCHAR, a communications specialist and journalist from Kyiv, Ukraine, relocated to Kingston in July 2022 and is now working at Queen’s University. This conversation with Mark and Marichka was recorded on Zoom while Iryna was traveling back from Ukraine after visiting her family.

A New Home at The Old Broom Factory

From derelict building to arts hub

STORY BY **ROB HOWARD**

PHOTO CREDIT: Viara Mileva



For Marc Garniss, finding a year-round home for the Kingston Canadian Film Festival had always been the goal. Back in 2021, Garniss and other members of the KCFF staff and leadership — who run programming and host events year-round — first found themselves needing a more amenable work environment. So Garniss, Executive Director at the KCFF, sought out Jon Jeronimus at RAW Design Inc., who had recently renovated the old Bailey Broom Factory site, to inquire about renting the space.

“I’d been introduced to Jon at RAW years before and was aware that the place would be available to rent in 2021,” Garniss explains. “He liked the idea of having KCFF in the space and offered us a beautiful [place] to work from at a cost we could afford. We needed a new office space, so we moved to The Broom Factory with the idea that we’d just be office tenants.”

Located on a fully remediated brownfield site, The Broom Factory represents an innovative re-use of a derelict structure, and the building itself has been designated Net Zero Energy Ready (such buildings can produce as much clean energy as they consume). As Garniss explains, “The intent [is] to install solar panels in the coming year... The building is completely electric with no reliance whatsoever on fossil fuels.”

The early days at The Broom Factory were quiet for Garniss, who was often the only person on-site. It was then that he began to envision a more substantial use of The Broom Factory for KCFF. “Spending all that time in the mostly empty [building] got me thinking how it could be used beyond just office space.”

After some brainstorming sessions with Jeronimus’s team at RAW Design, plans emerged to turn The Broom Factory into a year-round arts hub for showcasing film, live music, and other performances. “My interests and expertise are in film and music, so I offered to help make the space conducive to screenings, music, live shows, and [for it to become] a space that’d work well for filmmakers and musicians,” said Garniss.

Working collaboratively along with Garniss’s concert promotion company, KPP Concerts, RAW Design and KCFF secured a grant to purchase equipment and other resources, including the build-out of additional washrooms and storage spaces that allowed the venue to function as a modern event space.

Over the past year, KPP Concerts and KCFF have been slowly breathing new life and energy into The Broom Factory. They’ve hosted around a dozen events so far, and all of this while work continues on the building itself. “We’re still installing equipment. And it’s still very, very new. But the feedback on the events we’ve had has been positive.”

So far, the space has already hosted a mix of different events. Poet Shayne Koyczan, comedian Kevin McDonald of The Kids in the Hall, and musician Ria Mae have all performed in the space. A local artist, Luella, held her album release party at The Broom Factory, and the opening night party of this year’s Reelout

I hope it can be a hub where musicians and filmmakers want to hang out, network, learn, perform, and it can be a good spot for touring artists to also stop off and play an all-ages show for a different audience.

queer film festival was held there, along with the City of Kingston’s Music Strategy Open House, the Courage Across Canada drag show, and many other events.

Moira Demorest, Kingston’s Music Commissioner, whose office is also located at The Broom Factory, shares Garniss’s enthusiasm for the space. For Demorest, the site offers an alternative to other live music venues in town, and she hopes The Broom factory will serve as a “welcoming [and] all-ages friendly venue.”

“Often [people] under 19 are left out of the concert options [for] emerging indie artists’ tours,” Demorest explains. “The price point of tickets that are open to all ages is often much higher, making access to artists much less feasible.”

She adds, “Merch sales are also so critical to indie artists’ success, and folks that aren’t consuming alcohol tend to purchase more merch. It’s a win-win for artists and the community.”

Garniss looks forwards to The Broom Factory — located near the McBurney Park neighbourhood — becoming a part of the community. “I hope it can be a hub where musicians and filmmakers want to hang out, network, learn, perform, and it can be a good spot for touring artists to also stop off and play an all-ages show for a different audience.”

The Broom Factory is located at 305 Rideau Street. Anyone interested in event space is encouraged to inquire by email at info@kingcanfilmfest.com



ROB HOWARD is a marketer who co-founded Kingston Live in 2018 to help forge a destiny for Kingston as Canada’s First Capital of Music.

Luella at NOP Studio

North of Princess, and the song-writing process

STORY BY JAY MIDDLEAUGH

Luella (Olivia Whitfield) lays down an acoustic guitar track at NOP recording studio with her father producer Zane Whitfield. PHOTO CREDIT: Jay Middaugh



“ I SORT OF WANTED TO SEE WHAT I COULD DO WITH THE ALBUM. I FELT LIKE I WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO GIVE IT ITS PROPER RELEASE, AND BALANCE SCHOOL.

Olivia Whitfield, better known to her fans as Luella, strums lazily on a plugged-in acoustic guitar in the control room of North of Princess Studio (NOP). Her father and producer, Zane Whitfield, is busy messing with the maze of controls on a vintage tape-echo machine. The sounds of the guitar bounce and warble around the room as he moves the dials and switches, twin tape heads copying and twisting the notes as Olivia plays. “Part of why this is taking so long is that I don’t actually know what these buttons do,” Zane jokes.

The atmosphere in the room is light, playful, but the work is serious and getting this guitar sound just right requires a careful approach. One vintage echo tape machine is swapped out for another; more adjustments are made. Finally ready, Zane plays back a previously recorded track while Olivia lays down a new one, pulling the song together perfectly.

Luella’s debut album, *Luna*, is the product of two years of meticulous writing and recording. Its delicately layered, ultra-catchy bedroom pop songs arrived courtesy of pandemic lock-downs. While the rest of us might have been re-acquainting ourselves with the rules of Monopoly (no cash on Free Parking, unless you want to play all day), Olivia and Zane got down to work. “That’s what writing in the pandemic was,” Olivia reflects. “We had all the time in the world. We didn’t have an end goal or anything. It just slowly kind of built into an album, and then we were like ‘we spent two years on this’ so we might as well share it with the world!”

When it came time to plan the album release show for *Luna*, Zane’s top-shelf instincts kicked in. “It’s so easy to just do what everybody else is doing,” he says. “Why not just care a little bit more and curate something? What kind of show would I enjoy? What kind of experience would I want going to see an artist. It sits with people. Just like anything I’m involved with — think about what the dream would be, what would be the best thing?”

Working with Kingston Punk Productions, Luella sold out back-to-back shows at Kingston’s newest ultra-hip music venue, The Broom Factory. Accompanied by local guitar hero Dylan Lodge, and with Zane on bass guitar, Luella put on a show complete with smoke-machines, lasers, choreographed lights by Peter Pharand, and top-tier sound designed by Zane and Geoff Chown. When I asked if it was awkward for her to play with her father on stage, Olivia said, “It’s good. I think it’s comforting for me.” Zane added: “It’s pretty sweet that my kid is okay with me playing in the band. I feel like at some point it will make sense

to have someone else. Somebody younger and cooler. And I could be the house tech/tour manager.”

To make time for all the promotion of *Luna*, Olivia is on a gap-year following her graduation from Loyalist Collegiate & Vocational Institute last spring. “I sort of wanted to see what I could do with the album,” she explains of her decision. “I felt like I wouldn’t be able to give it its proper release, and balance school.”

Part-way through today’s session, Olivia brings out an application form to Bishop’s University, where she is applying to an Arts Administration program for the fall. There is a debate about an audition video, whether the filming of it can be executed creatively enough to work as content for Luella as well as fitting the requirements for Bishop’s. Deciphering how her creative dreams and practical career plans can mesh, along with writing more songs, is keeping Olivia busy. “My big thing is, the last album we put out, those songs have a special place in my heart. But I’m kinda looking forward to making music that is more like the music I listen to. I want more songs in the soul kind of genre, especially for this new project.”

Olivia describes her writing process for her next album: “I feel like most of my songs start with my guitar. Chords come first and then I’ll add a melody with the chords and then turn that into lyrics after. If I’m really on to something, it won’t take me very long to have the complete song. They all start as GarageBand demos; I have an interface and a little microphone in my room. We bring the assets into the Cubase session [in NOP Studio] and then my dad helps building past something bare-bones into something cooler.”

You can see Luella’s newest music video, “Old Conversations,” produced by Happy Kid Productions, and featured at the 2023 Kingston Canadian Film Festival, and listen to her acclaimed album *Luna*, by visiting: linktr.ee/luella_music.

Watch for Luella performing live at the 2023 Skeleton Park Arts Festival in McBurney Park this June.



JAY MIDDLEAUGH is a downtown filmmaker who is lucky enough to frequently collaborate with some of Kingston’s best musicians and artists. You can check out his stuff at www.happykidproductions.com

Reflection, Resonance, and Resilience:

A conversation with Leanne Betasamosake Simpson

STORY BY AARA MACAULEY



Leanne Betasamosake Simpson

Leanne Betasamosake Simpson is a renowned Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg of Alderville First Nation scholar, writer, musician, and artist. She is the author of eight books, including *Islands of Decolonial Love*, *This Accident of Being Lost*, *Dancing on Our Turtle's Back*, *As We Have Always Done*, *Noopiming: The Cure for White Ladies*, *A Short History of the Blockade*, and her latest, *Rehearsals for Living*, written in collaboration with Robyn Maynard. The book is a vital dialogue between two friends, writers, activists, and thinkers about intersecting crises of pandemic, police killings, slavery, colonization, and climate catastrophe — and how to find a way forward.

Quill & Quire calls it “a balm for despair . . . a powerful argument that communion is both necessary and generative, and that the possibility of a better world exists as long as we are able to imagine it together.”

The Los Angeles Review of Books calls it “a critical contribution to radical scholarship that organizers, scholars, and activists pushing for decolonization, police and prison abolition, climate justice, and the end of racial capitalism could all benefit from reading.”

Her albums include *Noopiming* and the critically acclaimed *Theory of Ice*, which was shortlisted for the Polaris Prize and described by *Pitchfork* as “an inviting manifestation... turning seven of Simpson’s poems about water and our inborn relationship to it into sophisticated folk-pop.”

AARA MACAULEY: Thank you, Leanne, for agreeing to this interview. Your career spans many disciplines, all with their own audiences. Can you speak about the different approaches you take in your academic writing, your creative writing, and your music? What are the unique rewards of each discipline and the voice you use in each?

LEANNE SIMPSON: In a simple way, I just make things that are meaningful to me and don’t worry about what genre or what discipline. I try and make things that say something or connect in a certain way. I try to embody specific ideas and concepts in my practices. This has meant that I think and make alongside different artists and thinkers in different ways and in different sites of knowledge production. For me, they all come from a similar, deeply relational place. The shorelines, or interstitial space, are generative spaces for me. The only reward in any of this is when an idea or a thought or

a feeling has resonance with others, and meaning then travels and transforms.

AM: Meaningful and profound. Your work often touches upon urgent, serious and heavy subject matter. You’ve spoken before about the importance of humour in your process. Humour seems to be a common thread in Indigenous writing, with authors like Eden Robinson, Cherie Dimaline and Lee Maracle speaking of the same thing.

LBS: My work in some ways is a reflection of the present moment, writing for, with and to Indigenous peoples. The ongoing apocalypse of colonialism means that our lives and our ways of living are something we have to insert, assert and defend. My work is a reflection of that reality. Humour is ever-present in Indigenous life and community. The sound of laughter is a way of connecting to each other, melting present circumstances and resisting the forces that are continually trying to erase and destroy.

AM: The literary landscape seems to be waking up to the fact that a wide breadth of voices and experiences have not had access to the opportunities of the stereotypical CanLit roster. What is the future of writing and creative voice that you would like to see?

LBS: It is extraordinarily difficult for most writers and musicians, for most artists to make a living in Canada, and that struggle is even greater for Black and Indigenous artists and writers of colour. It often feels like Canada hates the arts, and I think the past three years, particularly for independent musicians, has been devastating. I think creative practice is extremely important and I’d like to find a way to properly and fairly support those of us making work in these times.

AM: What artists working today excite you?

LBS: Always [author] Dionne Brand’s work excites me. Always Rebecca Belmore [interdisciplinary Anishinaabekwe performance and installation artist — see the striking cover of *Noopiming*] excites me. Marek Tyler’s [nêhiyaw/Scottish musician] new project ASKO is a beautiful thing. There is a new anthology of Palestinian writers from Haymarket Books called *Light in Gaza* [Edited by Jihad Abu-salim, Jennifer Bing, and Mike Merryman-Lotze] that is close to my heart. Oh, and I’m really enjoying Elisapie’s new single, “Uummati Attanarsimat (Heart of Glass).”

AM: Thank you, Leanne. It’s been a pleasure speaking with you. I look forward to seeing you perform and speak here as part of the Skeleton Park Arts Festival.

LBS: We are very much looking forward to playing live and in person in Kingston in June.



AARA MACAULEY is the Artistic Director of Kingston WritersFest and has been involved in the fundraising, event planning, and promotion committees for various local cabaret, film, and arts festivals. She is a proud member of the LGBTQIA2S+ community and served as Chairperson on the Reelout Arts Project Board of Directors for eight years. She currently sits on the City of Kingston Arts Advisory

Committee and the Art in Public Places Working Group, chaired the Poet Laureate Working Group, and was a founding member of the steering committee for the Canadian Association of Literary Festivals.

Drag Storytime Aims for Campy, Family-friendly Fun

SPAF's first storyhour in 2015 was at the forefront of a trend

STORY BY MATT SALTON



Drag Storyhour builds bridges between the queer community and the larger community.

On a chilly mid-December day in 2022, I found myself at the Brockville Public Library with a few dozen 2SLGBTQ+ folks and allies, all of us facing a group of protestors from across Ontario. They had come to holler about human trafficking, child porn, and the grooming of minors.

Inside the library, Kingston-based drag performer Dare DeLaFemme led toddlers in singalongs and read picture books to children emphasizing kindness and respect for differences.

This is Drag Storytime, a family-friendly trend that has inspired much organized resistance. Just recently in Canada, there were clashes with right-wing groups outside the Moncton Library. A branch in Calgary postponed its scheduled Drag Storytime after an affiliated branch had seen an “aggressive protest” the week before. There have been countless angry protests at these events across Canada in the past year, not unlike far-right protests in the U.S. As I listened to impassioned pleas to save the children of Brockville, I wondered how a small local event *introduced* at the Skeleton Park Arts Festival some eight years ago had come to this.

In May of 2015, I received an email asking all community groups with tents at the Skeleton Park Arts Festival to come up with family-friendly activities. I run Reelout, a queer film festival, and I started

to think about what we could do to appeal to children of all ages. Our office has a lending library, and just the week before I had picked up some new books from the Glad Day Bookshop in Toronto, including some that same-sex parents might enjoy reading with their children. There was a burgeoning drag scene in Kingston at the time. I asked some friends to do a sort of *Polka Dot Door Drag*, and we transformed the Reelout tent into a children’s educational oasis with throw pillows, tiaras, and signs promoting diversity.

And so on June 20, 2015, a Drag Storytime took place at the Skeleton Park Arts Festival. Drag performers from the Mohawk First Nations — Patrick Brant (as Fabula Queen of the North) and single-dad John Bryant (Lily Landers-Divine) — read *10,000 Dresses* by Marcus Ewert plus *And Tango Makes Three* by Justin Richardson and Peter Parnell. Patrick Brant recalls that innovative event well:

“I remember going to see children’s performers when I was younger [with all] the bright colours and exaggerated shapes. I knew drag was a perfect reflection of these things but I wanted to make sure my look was family-friendly, so I opted to wear bright tights and a more conservative dress. I remember seeing the tent set up on the grass, with a chair adorned in pink and ribbons awaiting me as a modest crowd grew. My nervousness was compounded [because] I had never read a book in front of a crowd and hadn’t had a chance to read the book beforehand. I gave the book a quick study and my nerves abated once I was introduced. The growing audience’s initial applause grew silent. I began reading *And Tango Makes Three*, watching my pac-

ing to make sure the audience had time to take in the words and pictures. It was my joy to bring *And Tango Makes Three* [because] it brings awareness about, and normalizes adoption in, same-sex families. It introduces these concepts in an easy-to-understand medium parents may otherwise have a hard time explaining.”

That first Drag Storytime was a sensational hit. Reelout began to receive emails from librarians who had seen our “Drag Queen Storytime” event on Facebook. We answered questions, offered advice, and wished everyone luck. We have since organized many of these events at the Skeleton Park Arts Festival.

Drag Storytime builds bridges between the queer community and the larger community. It provides representation to same-sex parents and children, and it is also just family-friendly, campy fun. Those who object are fighting against equity and diversity, and the implied but imaginary threat to white, cis heterosexual lives.

Near the end of the Brockville protest, I spoke with one of the protesters. She asserted that children don’t need to know about sex and gender, and that drag performers were putting ideas in children’s minds and therefore grooming them. Such arguments are neither new nor credible, but marginalized communities have always been under attack in one way or another. We will always fight back with intelligence, creativity, and bravery. Sylvia Rivera and Marsha P. Johnson started the Stonewall Riots and instigated what is now the current Pride movement. Tarana Burke is credited with coining the MeToo Movement and inspiring a revolution against misogyny. And now, the Mohawk First Nation’s Patrick Brant and John Bryant can and should be recognized as Canada’s first public drag storytime performers.



MATT SALTON is a proud neuro-diverse creative who loves camp, kitsch, and cats. Formerly the festival director for Calgary’s FairyTales LGBT Film Festival, he is now the executive director of the Reelout Queer Film Festival and has been programming and curating queer film for more than twenty years.

Piner to Perform in Free Matinee Concert Series

Skeleton Park's own
Claya Way-Brackenbury

STORY BY DEVON RUNIONS

Piner, Claya Way-Brackenbury's musical project, bloomed in Kingston. Now she wants to give back to the local music scene in the same ways it nourishes her.

Piner is headlining at Next Church — 89 Colborne Street, at 2 p.m. on June 3 — as part of the Skeleton Park Art Festival's free matinee concert series. Piner feels especially sentimental about this show and its line-up.

I asked Piner about her time growing up in the Skeleton Park area, going to the Skeleton Park Arts Festival (SPAF), and the meaning behind some of the lyrics on her new album.

"I grew up on Redan Street," she explains. "We used to have a Redan Street street party when I was a kid. There would be a pig roast on the street, and people would come for free music. It was a festival, in my mind." Since Redan Street funnels into Skeleton Park, Piner's memories of the Redan Street street party filters into her memories of the Skeleton Park Arts Festival.

"I think the first SPAF was around when I was eight or seven... It was always so fun. My cousins lived across the street, we loved having this fun music festival to go to in the summertime... to hang out and run around together." Piner talks about this feeling in her song, "A Part of It", which is a single off her most recent album, *A Netherworld*. Though she prefers to leave the title line open to interpretation, she says to her it refers to "realizing you're a part of a community, a part of something bigger, and that your actions as a person really affect people and affect the greater whole."

In the second verse of "A Part of It", she asks the listener, "with these empty community halls, how do you stand tall?" Piner explains these lyrics were inspired by her leaving the Skeleton Park area to head east for university. "Growing up, I feel like there were so many community events and so many things going on. I was very much surrounded by a sense of community. Coming to university and getting involved in a new community, I realized how important it is to be a part of something."



“WE USED TO HAVE A REDAN STREET STREET PARTY WHEN I WAS A KID. THERE WOULD BE A PIG ROAST ON THE STREET, AND PEOPLE WOULD COME FOR FREE MUSIC. IT WAS A FESTIVAL, IN MY MIND.”

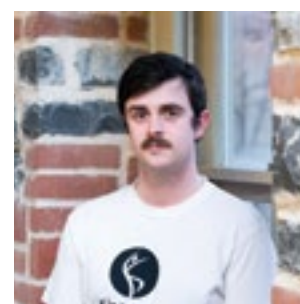
Piner also reflects more broadly upon the role of community to the youth of today: "With my grandparents, I think about how important it was to have community halls, and places where people would gather, and I think how evident that was in their youth." Her generation, she says, sees these empty buildings and community centres and knows that something is missing.

I was curious to know why Claya Way-Brackenbury — who is studying nursing at Saint Francis Xavier University in Nova Scotia — had chosen the name "Piner." Turns out the word references all at once a family cottage at Pine Lake (near Sharbot Lake), an old Lead Belly song called "In the Pines" that she and her father (John Brackenbury) have sung together since she was four, and finally, her longing — for something. Five years ago, she told *The Whig-Standard* that her music represents someone who is "pining for simpler times in history and the past." But now that sentiment has shifted. "I don't want to diminish what sixteen-year-old Claya had to say," she explains, "but I have changed what I'm pining for. I'm pining for a new world of critical thought and inquiry, a place of connection and care. What must we do to get there?"

SPAF's free matinee series, started last December, has featured artists such as Charlotte Cornfield, Jil-

lian Glatt, Savannah Shea and Anna Sudac, Rocket Surgery, and most recently the Moskitto Bar. The energy Piner describes in her early neighbourhood memories lives on at Next Church. During the concerts, children still dance through the aisles, and family members cheer one another on.

"I think it's beautiful when you have a young person who you have known for a while, and then you're playing music with each other. For instance, whenever I see George (a nine-year-old neighbour) dancing at my shows, like at SPAF this past year, it is a beautiful and touching thing. I was that kid dancing at their parent's show. Now we're playing together, and we have a different relationship. I think there is something really beautiful about that." Come on out on June 3 to see Piner, to experience her storytelling and intergenerational collaboration in action. Bring your kids. Bring your parents. If you're lucky enough, bring your grandparents, too.



DEVON RUNIONS is an educator currently teaching out of Frontenac Secondary School and Kingston School of Dance. He does his best to show up and show out for his students each day.



IN PREPARATION FOR THE JUNE 21- 25 SKELETON PARK ARTS FESTIVAL . . .

OSKAR (Off Site Kingston Area Recycler), the City's mobile diversion trailer, helps keep recyclables and compostables out of the landfill.



**Join us as we continue
our journey to greater
sustainability . . .
We have got the recycling
and composting gig down.**

BUT REUSE AND REDUCTION ARE ALWAYS THE MOST SUSTAINABLE OPTIONS!

New this year:

- **Bring your reusable containers to our food vendors for sandwiches, coffee, or even gelato!**
- **Bring your own cutlery. We are asking our vendors not to provide any plastic cutlery.**

How can you join the waste reduction journey at home?

The easiest places to reduce plastic packaging are the kitchen, bathroom, and laundry room.

Look for plastic-free packaging or purchase products in bulk. Ask your vendors if you can bring reusable containers into their stores. Try out alternatives such as laundry strips, shampoo bars, or toothpaste tablets.

Keep in mind that there are two wonderful local shops with amazing staff that can help you find sustainable alternatives to what you may currently be using: Harlowe Green on Brock and The Keep Refillery on Princess.

**Join us on this
journey . . . and
see you soon in
Skeleton Park!**

Porch Jazz Parade

Dancing in the Street

STORY BY **DAVE COON**

Kingston has a long history of parades. Gordon Dueck, Assistant Professor of History at Queen's University, has discovered through his research that a century or so ago, parades were regular events in this city. Queen's students, the military, local business, as well as church and community groups, all used parades to promote themselves. Whenever a circus came to town all of the animals and performers would march through the streets to the fairground, and it was common for new businesses or touring theatre groups to hold parades in an effort to drum up business. Even the Humane Society would hold a regular parade to celebrate the important role working animals played in day-to-day life.

The Porch Jazz Parade fits well into this long tradition. The idea for the original parade back in 2011 was to bring the music to the people, and then bring the people to the music. So on a sunny Saturday, a group of spirited local musicians, headed by the incomparable Washboard Hank, led a crowd of revellers from McBurney Park down to City Hall. The parade made a number of stops along the way to enjoy front porch performances by the likes of local jazz legends Dave Barton and Greg Runions. The Sounds of Jazz Big Band had swing dancers bopping in front of Food Basics and the whole crowd finished up by partying with The Downtown Trio in Market Square. The parade was an immediate success and became a regular part of the Skeleton Park Arts Festival.

The event provides an opportunity for local musicians to showcase themselves to a new audience of local residents who are in turn given the chance to experience the wide range of styles that all somehow seem to be called jazz. From Dixieland and swing to bebop and beyond, each porch hosts a group of talented local players, each with their own personal take on this incredibly diverse and wide-ranging musical genre.

In the twelve years since that original parade, the route has changed annually in an effort to help spread the word and include all the downtown neighbourhoods. Besides Washboard Hank, the parade has been led by a variety of joyful and entertaining street bands, such as The What Cheer Brigade from Rhode Island, Torontonians acts The Heavyweights Brass Band and The Woodshed Orchestra, as well as Kingston's own Spencer Evans and The Goat Steppers Parade Band. The parade is kept running smoothly and safely by a group of volunteers, who can be recognized by their brightly-coloured t-shirts.

As the parade winds its way through the streets, the crowd goes from porch to porch, often stopping at lemonade stands that children have set up along the way. The spirit of the occasion is ramped up by the inclusion of acts such as The Kingston Stilts, street dance groups, and even puppeteers. One memorable year saw some of the nuns at Providence Manor dancing to Greg Runion's music on the steps outside.

The annual tradition now regularly includes local bands of multi-generational performers, such as Spencer Evans and his son Oscar leading the Goat Steppers, guitarist Dave Barton playing alongside his son Paul, and porch regulars Val Hamilton and Brant Peppley performing with a variety of ensembles. The family vibe extends to the crowd — parents with babies in strollers and toddlers trailing along, teens showing off their dance moves, and couples of all ages swaying together while holding hands.

This year's parade — to be held from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Sunday, June 25, on Ordnance and Alma Streets around Skeleton Park — will be led by Toronto's Bangerz Brass Band, and will give the neighbourhood the chance to get back where it belongs: dancing through the streets of Kingston.

“
ONE MEMORABLE
YEAR SAW SOME
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AT PROVIDENCE
MANOR DANCING
TO GREG RUNION'S
MUSIC ON THE
STEPS OUTSIDE.”

DAVE COON is president of The Kingston Jazz Society and has been the host of Swing Swang Swung on CFRC-FM for almost twenty-five years.



SPAF! 2023 FESTIVAL PROGRAM

June 21- 25 2023
All SPAF!
Programing
is FREE
ADMISSION



**PLEASE BRING YOUR
OWN WATER BOTTLE
& UTENSILS FOR A
WASTE-FREE FESTIVAL**

7:00AM - 5:00PM DAILY
The Elm Café (303 Montreal St):
Central Public School Art Exhibition

WEDNESDAY JUNE 21

The Screening Room, 120 Princess St.
(Advance registration recommended)
6:30pm - 9:00pm (Doors 6:00pm)
**An evening with Leanne
Betasamosake Simpson**
Including film screenings, a live music
performance and moderated discussion
Co-presented by Kingston WritersFest

THURSDAY JUNE 22

Integrated Care Hub (ICH),
661 Montreal Street (outside)
*(Please note the site is not necessarily
appropriate for young children)*
5:30pm - 8:00pm
**Community Drumming Circle,
with Yessica Rivera Belsham**
No drumming experience necessary.
This is a rain or shine event.
ICH art and info tents with light food
and beverage provided.

FRIDAY JUNE 23

In Skeleton Park

7:30am
Yoga by Jeb Thorley
With music by Dave Barton

The Broom Factory, 305 Rideau Street
(first-come, first-serve due to limited capacity)
7:00pm - 9:00pm
Movement Market: Grounded 3.0
A curated evening of dance performances

SATURDAY JUNE 24 IN SKELETON PARK

7:30am
Yoga by Jeb Thorley
With music by Dave Barton

10:00am - 5:00pm
**Artisan Fair, Food Vendors, Mural
Making (Side Stage 1),
Dancing Workshops with Movement
Market (Side Stage 2),
Face Painting, Arts & Crafts (Side Stage 3),
Community Info Booths**

10:00am
Kyoko Ogoda Taiko Drumming
(Main Stage)

11:00am
Ariko (Main Stage)

12:00pm
Square Dance (Main Stage)

12:00pm
The Gertrudes (Main Stage)

2:00pm
The Codas (Main Stage)

3:00pm
Princess Towers (Main Stage)

3:00pm
Solstice Games! (Side Stage 3)

4:00pm
Emilie Steele and the Deal (Main Stage)

4:00pm
The Lemon Bucket Orkestra
(Sounds on Sydenham Street
Side-Stage #182 Sydenham St.)

5:00pm
Kasador (Main Stage)

6:00pm
Remesha Drums (Main Stage)

7:00pm
The Lemon Bucket Orkestra (Main Stage)

SUNDAY JUNE 25 IN SKELETON PARK

7:30am
Yoga by Jeb Thorley
With music by Dave Barton

10:00am - 5:00pm
**Artisan Fair, Food Vendors, Mural
Making (Side Stage 1),
Dancing Workshops with Movement
Market (Side Stage 2),
Face Painting, Arts & Crafts (Side Stage 3),
Community Info Booths**

10:00am
Kyoko Ogoda Taiko Drumming (Main Stage)

10:00am
**Learn a short "Dance Choreography" with
Movement Market Collective Members, that
will be paired with the Porch Jazz Parade!**
(Main Stage)

11:00am
Drag Queen Storytime (Main Stage)

11:30am - 1:00pm
**Porch Jazz Parade on street porches
surrounding Skeleton Park**

1:00pm
Bangerz Brass (Main Stage)

2:00pm
Luella (Main Stage)

2:30pm
Alex Cuba
(Sounds on Sydenham Street
Side-Stage #182 Sydenham St.)

3:00pm
Ombiigizi (Main Stage)

4:30pm
Alex Cuba (Main Stage)

7:00pm
**Daft Brewing After-Party, featuring
members of Kasador, The Codas, Princess
Towers, Emilie Steele & The Deal**
(768 Princess St.)

SKELETON PARK ARTS FESTIVAL

SKELETONPARKARTSFEST.CA