

UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

gauntlet

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The end of Beija Flor

Stephen van Kampen's solo
project rises from the ashes

pg. 6

City hall turns secondary suites into sweet nothings

Calgary City Council has finally moved forward with changes to Calgary's complex and lagging secondary suites policy. This past Monday, Council voted unanimously to erase zoning restrictions on narrow lot secondary suites, but this doesn't mean that City Council has the public interest at heart.

Council has spent years divided on whether or not to ease regulation of secondary suites — typically redeveloped basements with a separate entrance from the rest of the house — so that they can be legally rented out to tenants. Motions brought before council to reexamine the issue have failed consistently.

A large contributor to the failure of motions has been the concern expressed by various community organizations, stating that the suites could potentially alter family neighbourhoods and congest parking with more cars.

These fears are ill-founded. A large number of secondary suite

inhabitants could and do rely on transit and would not exacerbate current parking congestion. In addition, a city as big as Calgary cannot support suburban neighbourhoods forever. At some point the population will

be forced to become more dense — especially in urban areas. This is in many ways for the best: shorter distances between destinations are both community and environmentally friendly. While community concerns have been part of the issue, existing public policy further frustrates it. A lack of land is cur-

rently designated for secondary suites and there are difficulties in zoning more — rezoning is a tedious process involving property owners going before council to have individual proposals approved. This not only deters

people from developing suites in general, but also deters homeowners from developing legal suites that are up to code. This is a continuing threat to the safety and security of student renters. There is no doubt that secondary suites constitute one of the largest student issues in the upcoming municipal election.

In fact, the election is likely the only reason the issue was pushed through with little to no resistance in this rare instance. Last Monday, Council voted unanimously to allow suites in districts designated for narrow properties, affecting about 18 per cent of Calgary's residential areas, in one of the last City Council meetings before the election. The overwhelming change of heart passed amidst aldermen who didn't understand the issue at hand or didn't want to make an issue of it right before a tight mayoral race involving a significant number of candidates.

A properly designed City of Calgary policy would reduce regulations on the number of affordable and safe secondary suites. City council should develop sound policy based on the public interest instead of individual political aims.

.. Gauntlet Editorial Board



Editor-in-Chief: Sarelle Azuelos 403-220-7752 editor@thegauntlet.ca
News Editor: Brent Constantin 403-220-4318 news@thegauntlet.ca
Entertainment: Andrew Williams 403-220-4376 entertainment@thegauntlet.ca
Sports: Noah Miller 403-220-2298 sports@thegauntlet.ca
Opinions: Eric Mathison 403-220-2298 opinions@thegauntlet.ca
Features: Emily Ask 403-220-4376 features@thegauntlet.ca
Photography: Sydney Stokoe 403-220-4376 photo@thegauntlet.ca
Production: Isaac Azuelos 403-220-2298 production@thegauntlet.ca
Business Manager: Evelyn Cone 403-220-7380 business@thegauntlet.ca
Advertising Manager: John Harbidge 403-220-7751 sales@thegauntlet.ca
Graphic Artist: Ken Clarke 403-220-7755 graphics@thegauntlet.ca
Network Manager: Ben Li
Contributors: Amy Badry • Michelle Cheng • Crystal Jardine • Annalise Klingbeil • Julien Testa • Remi Watts
Golden Spatula: Michelle Cheng came back.
Furor Arma Ministrat: Room 319, MacEwan Students' Centre University of Calgary 2500 University Drive NW Calgary, AB T2N 1N4 General inquiries: 403-220-7750 http://thegauntlet.ca

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The Cover
Photo and design by Sydney Stokoe

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Program shows international students the city

Michelle Cheng

Gauntlet News
with files from Brent Constantin

International students will receive a warm welcome and a chance to explore Calgary thanks to the University of Calgary International office.

This year 2,500 international students from 117 countries are attending the U of C. International exchange is often the highlight of a student's academic career, but entering a new country without local contacts can be an intimidating experience. To help with the transition, U of C International offers the International Community Friendship Program which matches international students with a local host family.

"It started because students would come to the U of C and usually hang out on campus," said program coordinator Lucia Kovacikova. "Being part of a campus is a great thing but at the same time they come to Calgary to experience Calgary."

Kovacikova came to Canada

when she was 14. She said many international students, upon arrival, tend to stick together and not experience the wider community. The program helps international students branch out from their safety net of others sharing the same experience.

"I really wish that there was a program for me like that," said Kovacikova. "You get to make friends and actually see the city. I didn't get to have that; I had to figure it out all on my own."

"I think the program is really fun," said Ginny Wong, a masters of biology student who took part in the program last year. "I got to experience the Canadian culture firsthand."

Meeting at least once a month, families help the student adjust to their new home by taking them off campus and around the city. All U of C students, alumni, faculty and staff members can sign up to have their family matched with an international student. The monthly meetings are flexible and the ac-

tivities are up to the host family.

"Local families can really benefit because they get to meet people from around the world," said Kovacikova. "Really there is nothing better than sharing stories about how things are done differently and where they're from and where they've traveled."

Families are not expected to provide accommodations or expensive activities, which can range from a tour of the city to an invitation to dinner. The program's only requirements are that friendship and cross-cultural communication are upheld during the activity.

Kovacikova participated in the program's first year of operation with her family taking on two students. She said the experience left a lasting impression.

"We invited them for Thanksgiving dinner and the stories that came out of that were just fascinating," said Kovacikova. "It was just incredible really."

Kovacikova said Calgarians can help to share events, music and culture unknown to newcomers.

"I think there is always that sort



Sydney Stokoe/the Gauntlet

Friendship Program coordinator Lucia Kovacikova.

of barrier between international students and regular students," said Kovacikova.

"If you're new to this country, if you don't know anyone, that's a friend for you right there," said Wong. "Especially if you don't speak much English, then it's really tough."

Programs similar to the International Community Friendship Program are common in universi-

ties across the world and are vital to lessen culture shock. This program is touted as a great opportunity for individuals attending, having attended or employed by the university to learn more about the global community.

"You get to meet people from around the world," said Kovacikova. "And really, there's nothing better."

Interested hosts can learn more at www.ucalgary.ca/uci/involve.

U of C hopes to raise \$60 million for new engineering building

Brent Constantin

News Editor
with files from Emily Ask

Students in the Schulich School of Engineering can look forward to more construction if the University of Calgary obtains funds for a new engineering building on campus.

"Serious discussions started around four years ago," said U of C executive director of development Jolene Livingston. "It's pretty obvious that the buildings are 40 years old and the space is not up to the standard that it should be."

The school is in the third year of a five-year fundraising effort that hopes to bring in \$60 million, with a large portion going toward the new building. Livingston said the school has collected more than half their goal to date.

"We publicly launched our campaign on June 8 and we're having some very promising discussions in the community," said Livingston. "We are very optimistic that we'll make our goal."

The school still needs the support of the provincial government for the facility to go forward as fundraising will only cover a small part of the total infrastructure costs. The U of C hopes that with the project as the school's number one priority, the proposal will be a success.

"Our big push is to find capital funding," said Livingston. "It has been submitted for the last couple of years to the government."

While Livingston said there is no set timeline for construction until funding is secured, the project will likely take anywhere from 18-24

months after ground is broken based on similar projects.

The new building's planned location is on the south side of the fire sticks, outside the current Schulich Engineering building.

"We're just going into the design schematics," said Livingston. "Right now we're planning for new teaching and learning spaces, two lecture theatres, new classrooms equipped with undergraduate and graduate labs and specialized computer labs, research space, an engineering career centre, our student activities centre and smaller spaces for student clubs and teams to work together."

"It'll be a multi-purpose building. We're just moving through detailed design right now so we'll have specifics laid out hopefully within the next six to nine months," said Livingston.

Schulich School of Engineering Students' Union faculty representative Vien Nguyen said the new building will provide a front door to the engineering area of campus. He felt there was little cohesion within the current building and looks forward to what the larger space will mean for students.

"There's not enough space to be honest," said Nguyen. "There's so many professors and research projects going on, space is pretty limited. There's not very much space for club activities."

Livingston said the U of C took this concern into consideration when planning the new space.

"We're not big enough for the number of students that we have," she said. "We've done a cross country assessment and we know that."

"We're actually meeting with the

architects this September to talk to them about their plans for student spaces and stuff like that," said Nguyen. "We really want the new building to have a lot of spaces for clubs and teams to work and just get together and eat and study together."

The Schulich School of Engineering is currently in the first phase of a three phase renovation and expansion project.

The building's current renovation project is aimed for completion by March 2011, before expansion can begin.

Phase one was jointly funded by the provincial and federal government for a combined \$25.5 million.

Funding for phases two and three, which include the new building, is still in development.

What do you think is the hardest thing about being a newcomer to Calgary?



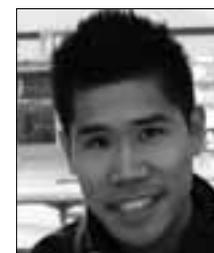
"The weather. It's too cold in the winter."
- Seun Mejule,
fourth-year
engineering



"Being away from home and not knowing anyone."
- Pamneet Brar,
fourth-year
zoology



"Finding a job would be really hard."
- Sabah Ramath,
fourth-year
sociology



"The communication barrier and culture shock."
- Darren Lam,
fifth-year
bioscience

campus quips

Career Services' tips for landing a job

One student's attempt to find work helped along by the university



Sydney Stokoe/the Gauntlet

Annalise Klingbeil
Gauntlet News

Broke? Bored? Blaming it on a bad economy? If you're a current student or a recent grad looking for a job, the University of Calgary's Career Services can help.

I visited the Career Services centre and went over my resumé with Communication and Culture career advisor David Cataford. From formatting to font, skills to sections, Cataford spent close to 30 minutes examining and discussing my resumé and I left with a polished version that shortly thereafter landed me a job.

Cataford and his four fellow career advisors do more than just look over resúmes. The advisors practice interview skills with students, give advice about negotiating salary and help students find jobs to apply for.

"Anything and everything career related I will help [students] with as best I can," said Cataford, joking that he draws the line at attending interviews.

"We're really here to create connections and relationships between students, industry and the university community," said Martina Payette, director of Career Services.

"A key thing in our mission is to link passion with purpose and the students with employers."

Students may have already used Career Services without even knowing it. The centre hosts career fairs, company information sessions, networking workshops

and even career education programs.

Before my session with Cataford, I was instructed to watch an online workshop about resúmes and cover letters and to bring a current resumé and any job posting I was interested in to the session. The online workshop, despite being lengthy, was incredibly helpful and ensured my resumé was ready to be torn apart.

Cataford views resúmes as a marketing tool to help you get an interview, while he sees cover letters as a way to show your passion for a desired job.

"You can't really show a lot of passion and why do you want that job in a resumé. You can in a cover letter."

Cataford had a lot of good information and tips to offer me about my resumé, beyond the typical "don't have spelling mistakes."

He also emphasized the need to target resúmes and cover letters for every single job applied for.

"There are three reasons why you are going to get a job. One is your education, two is your experience but what's more important than

those two is, 'Who are you? What are you like away from the office?'" said Cataford.

According to Cataford, having unique interests on a resumé can be a good ice breaker and helps to give employers a glimpse at who you are.

"Have some funky stuff that you maybe snowboard or mountain climb or maybe you do yoga or maybe you cook or maybe you make cards or maybe, I don't know, maybe you take care of feral cats or something," said Cataford.

If you're applying for jobs but not getting them, Cataford offered the unorthodox advice to find out who got the job you wanted and take them out for coffee, a practice that once landed him a job.

"Get some mentors . . . when they leave, they might recommend you," he said.

Cataford also encourages students to get in contact with companies they want to work for and ask questions.

"Don't call Human Resources unless you want to work in HR. Call the communications department if that's what you want to do. Say, 'I'm exploring my career options and I'm interested in learning more about your company. Could I ask you some questions?'"

RESUMÉ TIPS

- Use a sans-serif font
- Your home address on a resumé is optional, just make sure you have a phone number and e-mail address
- Use a professional e-mail address
- Target your resumé for each job you apply to
- Be descriptive
- State detailed accomplishments for each job you've worked
- Include a targeted skills section that includes computer skills
- Include interests that show your personality

Students shouldn't be afraid of applying for jobs they may be under qualified for, he added.

"We live in Canada right, so what's the worst that can happen? The worst that can happen is they will chuck your resumé in the garbage."

In his three years as a career advisor, Cataford's seen just about everything. From a graduating student "who had never had a job in his entire life, not even baby-sitting" to students who simply don't know what they want to do, Cataford is willing to help.

"Jobs aren't going to come to you. You have to ask yourself, 'Where do you want to work? What do you want to do? What would be fun to try next?'"

Cataford said students who can't find a job should stay positive and keep their resumé up to date with volunteer work or even "survivor jobs."

"If you sit around doing nothing for two years it's going to be a lot harder for you to overcome that barrier and land a job . . . It's okay to have the survivor job in the meantime if you have to pay your bills. Don't be ashamed of that."

Cataford encourages all students to come visit their faculty career advisor, especially those frustrated by a difficult economy.

"I'll motivate them. I'll get them pumped up. That's why I'm here," he said.

Cataford recommends checking out the University of Calgary's Job Link website (www.ucalgary.ca/careers), Monster.ca, Workopolis and even LinkedIn for job openings.

Council's definition of secondary suites too narrow for Students' Union

Brent Constantin
News Editor

Even if it isn't where the Students' Union wanted it to happen, Calgary will potentially see an in-

crease in secondary suites.

In June, a motion asked city administration to look at the potential effects of relaxing zoning restrictions on secondary suites. The areas examined are designated R-1N

and R-CN1 — single-family housing communities with the 'N' standing for "narrow" lots.

City administration brought the requested information and recommended bylaw changes to city council.

Council voted unanimously to approve these land-use bylaw amendments which will allow for more secondary suites in these areas. The new bylaw affects about 18 per cent of the housing stock in Calgary, many of them newer suburbs.

"There's a couple problems with this," said su vice-president external Hardave Birk. "A community with more lots is already more dense than one without narrow lots. Sec-

ondly, parking is more of an issue in these communities."

Birk pointed out that many of the lots now zoned for secondary suites don't meet the established size regulations to construct a secondary suite. He would have liked to see a relaxation on restrictions in areas with regular sized lots.

"The Students' Union is always happy when they take a step to relax the restrictions that are currently on secondary suites," said Birk, whose own proposal brought to City Hall in July calling for secondary suite zoning around LRT stations was rejected. "I don't really understand the rationale behind making this change."

"It's going off the track of what they've done over the past three years," said Birk, who couldn't remember a time the council has voted on something like this together. "And this was a major change. I mean, they made a change that affects 18 per cent of Calgary. It doesn't seem like the smartest growth strategy."

The changes won't be revisited until after the fall election. The su expects secondary suites will continue to be an important issue for the city and students as the campaign gears up.

The su plans to hold candidate debates on campus before the October 18 election.

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Yoga's future depends on its flexibility

Crystal Jardine
Gauntlet Opinions

My uptown Calgary condo is within easy walking distance of at least eight yoga studios, possibly even more. This is not unique — in most major Canadian and American cities the ubiquity of the yoga studio is commonplace. Clearly, North Americans love yoga. But are we truly in love with the ancient Indian art or are we just trying to twist, bend and sweat our way to a super-hot yoga body (and justify the purchase of ultra-trendy, \$86, poly-blend yoga pants in the process)?

Over 2000 years ago, the great sage Patanjali wrote the Yoga Sutras. In this text he outlined the eight limbs of yoga which chronicle the devoted yoga practitioner's inward journey to bliss. The third limb along this path is "asana," which refers to the physical postures of yoga. In the Western world, asana often becomes synonymous with yoga, as this is usually what we are referring to when we talk about yoga. The other limbs of yoga, which pertain to such ideas as universal morality and inner aware-

ness, tend to fall by the wayside. In our media-driven, capitalist society we seek outer beauty rather than inner peace. Let's face it, the image of a downward facing dog is a whole lot sexier than balancing the seven chakras.

The Yoga Sutras encourage a minimalist, if not ascetic, lifestyle. Bikram Choudhury, the king of hot yoga, drives a Rolls Royce. The contradiction is blatant. Bikram is not the only one capitalizing on the yoga craze — billions of dollars are spent every year on yoga retreats, bootcamps, workshops, clothing-lines, DVDs, books and \$15-\$20 classes. Brilliant entrepreneurs have marketed yoga to the masses, claiming it will cure everything from hemorrhoids to heart disease. Despite the so-called economic recession, people from all walks of life are lining up to be a part of the yoga revolution, whatever the price may be. Patanjali would be rolling over in his grave if he could see the commercialization of what was once a simple practice meant to liberate the soul.

But is it really all bad? Yoga philosophy teaches us that everything is made up of the interdependent dualities of yin and yang and

this is how I view our challenge of balancing new-age yoga with the original real deal. Neither is all good, neither is all bad. We do not practice yoga as it was in ancient India but why should we? We are not living in ancient India. Rather than criticize we should celebrate the progression of yoga and how we have managed to merge it with our modern-day lives. Besides, traditional yoga was not as flawless as we are made to think it was. For thousands of years it was only available to high-cast males — that is, it was classist and sexist. It wasn't until 1937 when the first woman of yoga, Indra Devi, was admitted into this bendy boys club. (Hey, better 4900 years late than never!) At least in Canada's version of yoga everyone is welcome regardless of gender, class or race. Yes, it is expensive to practice in a studio but many places offer karma classes (based on donation) and, if you search hard enough, you can even find the odd free class.

A modern-day yogi's journey may begin with the most superficial of intentions but this is unimportant. It is not what brings us to our mat that matters, it is what keeps us coming back. Once the novelty wears off



and we surrender to the practice, just breathing, just being, we start to gradually see the light. Just little glimpses here and there, but that is enough. Feeling lighter and calmer we keep coming back. Bit by bit, life gets a little bit simpler. Though separated from the founding fathers by time and space, maybe we really aren't that different after all. Maybe yoga is the lowest common denominator of humanity.

But, if you still think "Western yoga" is not "real yoga" then call it something else. For me, a pose by any other name would feel as sweet.

After WikiLeaks, Afghanistan is the same but international law must change

Eric Mathison
Opinions Editor

Loose lips used to sink ships, but now they work in more mysterious ways. When the founder of the whistleblower website WikiLeaks received 91,000 classified U.S. documents, he must have known a jackpot had arrived. The military records were published on the WikiLeaks website July 25. Despite withholding another 15,000 documents at the request of the source, there is no doubt that the leak has endangered the lives of individuals previously protected.

Immediately the American government denounced the release of the files. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates stated that Julian Assange, the WikiLeaks founder, and those responsible for the leak are morally culpable for the harm caused. Assange, an opponent of the Afghanistan war, maintains that the public deserves to have access to the classified materials as they give a detailed description of how the war has unfolded. WikiLeaks is an important interlocutor, he claims, and free speech justifies its actions.

Whistleblowers play an important role in a democracy, but only if valuable information is gained. In certain cases, like corporate fraud, whistleblowers are legally protected or obligated to alert authorities to the wrong-doing

of their employers. Despite the actions of NATO forces detailed in the released documents, the principle wrong-doing implied is seemingly the war itself. Defenders of the leak might claim that harmful effects aren't as important as the freedom of the information, but this is irresponsible when lives are risked.

The International Security Assistance Force, run by NATO, has been upfront about how the war is running. David Petraeus, the American general in charge of ISAF, has been clear that Afghanistan's outlook is uncertain. The amount of information useful to the public remains similar to before the leak. The war is going badly and we know that. Many have compared this leak to the Pentagon Papers, an official history of Lyndon Johnson's strategy in Vietnam, which showed that the administration lied. The comparison is mistaken because the public was aware of the situation in Afghanistan before the leak, whereas they were led to believe Vietnam was going much better than it was.

In the past, leaks were most often made to newspapers. Editors would typically contact the government to inform them of the information possessed and to allow them to make their case for why the information should be kept secret. Ultimately, the decision rested on the editors. They had to weigh if the material

was worth the harm that might come to those affected by the leak. They took on that responsibility and avenues existed to hold them accountable.

Things are much less clear now. WikiLeaks hosts its website in Sweden, where it is illegal to investigate a source. International Internet law is far behind where it needs to be. When an organization releases classified material from a server in another country stolen by an American soldier, the jurisdiction of each government is very grey. Some American politicians are calling for the website

to be shut down, but Sweden isn't obligated to change its own laws at the request of another country. WikiLeaks claims they contacted the Pentagon before they released the files, but the Pentagon denies it.

WikiLeaks has accomplished some important things in its past.

Shutting down the website will only produce others like it, and it does a valuable service. Information comes at a cost, however. The website's editors are responsible for deciding when that cost is justified, but legal channels must be established to determine when they go astray.

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Sydney Stokoe/the Gauntlet

Stephen van Kampen discusses his past with Beija Flor and future with Savk

Andy Williams
Entertainment Editor

In 2005, Beija Flor was poised to be the band to bring Canada's attention to Calgary's often overlooked music scene.

Unfortunately, it didn't unfold quite as expected. In April of this year, Beija Flor dissolved after six years of hard work. The band produced two acclaimed albums and played countless local shows, but a myriad of factors undermined their attempts to gain success on a broader level and ultimately led to the band's dissolution.

"We were our own worst enemies in a lot of ways," former frontman Stephen van Kampen says. "We definitely had some vibrant years. We put out that record in 2007, we sold out the Marquee Room, we played Folk Fest in 2008, we did collaborations with Jim Cuddy. All these big, fun things were happening and it was great."

But like any band struggling to make it, things get in the way, especially with eight members contributing to a six year run.

"Things started to deteriorate. We had a guitarist move to Van-

couver, because he wanted his solo projects to do better, and then we lost our drummer of four or five years and things just started to chip away," says Kampen. "That's part of the deal. When you're trying to keep volunteer artists together and all working towards the same thing, there's no pay to keep them there . . . it just didn't happen quick enough and people started to lose interest and move on and do other things."

It isn't all bad though. Out of the ashes of Beija Flor new projects have risen. Former pianist Paul van

record for Beija Flor and it had been sitting on blocks for six or seven months and the songs were getting stale," says van Kampen. "I was thinking, 'Fuck, I want to put out another record, but these songs are losing fire for me.' That's where this [Savk] record came from. The songs were all pretty much destined for Beija Flor that just never materialized."

It may sound like van Kampen's new project is just Beija Flor 2.0, but that definitely isn't the case. Those familiar with Beija Flor may recognize certain

“If I did bring in a back-up band, I'd just have to be ruthless with saying, 'There are times when everyone needs to shut the fuck up.' There are times when I need to shut the fuck up.”

— Stephen van Kampen

Kampen — Stephen's brother — is the lead singer for The Magnetic North and former bassist Henry Hsieh is now a member of local up-and-comers Friendo. Stephen van Kampen has started his own solo project, Savk, which is continuing where Beija Flor left off.

"I had written an entirely new

elements, but van Kampen's newly acquired freedom has led to a stripped-down approach. His self-titled album, *Savk*, is worlds away from the sound the band was known for.

"The songs have been really minimized down to their core message," says van Kampen.

"One of the things I liked about Beija Flor was that we were able to reach pretty epic arrangements because we had so many people in the group. But one of the things I didn't like is that, I love epic arrangements, but I like minimalism sometimes too. We had a bad tendency to have everyone playing at the same time."

Savk is only six months old and van Kampen already has the aforementioned album out, but he's still putting together pieces and fleshing out his live performances. Most of his shows have been acoustic sets — him and his guitar or banjo — which can be somewhat problematic. Despite a riveting performance during Sled Island at the Arrata Opera Centre, Van Kampen laments that he finds it more difficult to capture attention in crowded bars without the energy and volume of a full band. With his Beija Flor experience in mind, van Kampen considers adding a back-up band for live performances.

"If I did bring in a back-up band, I'd just have to be ruthless with saying, 'There are times when ev-

everyone needs to shut the fuck up.' There are times when I need to shut the fuck up. You have to be economical with what you are doing and make sure the shoe fits every time. You listen to bands that have been around forever like Wilco . . . from a songwriting perspective and an arrangement perspective they all know how to serve the project. When they should be playing, when they shouldn't be playing."

Despite the occasional gripe, van Kampen is not at all negative about his time spent with Flor. He recognizes and appreciates that the band had the liberty to avoid one of those tragic clichés of the music industry — they escaped with their dignity intact.

"I look back at those heydays of Beija Flor with a lot of fondness and there was some promise there, but that's partly why we called it quits when we did. We were still strong and still pretty well-respected and I said, 'You know what? Let's cut this while we're decent, rather than fizzling.'"

Stephen van Kampen brings Savk to the CJSW Summer Concert Series at Olympic Plaza on August 14. He also has a free show at Pages Bookstore on August 19. More information can be found at www.myspace.com/savk.

Historical, but not quite epic

Julien Testa
Gauntlet Entertainment

Although epic in its ambition, *Agora* is ultimately a disappointing experience due to a scattered and disconnected plot and a series of disorganized narratives. Although visually rich and full of beautifully designed sets, the film still suffers from a lack of a clear direction.

Agora is written and directed by Spanish director Alejandro Amenabar (*Vanilla Sky*, *The Others*) and takes place within the transitional period between Paganism and Christianity in the Roman empire. The story loosely revolves around two main figures: the philosopher Hypatia (Rachel Weisz) and her slave Davus (Max Minghella). Rome is on the verge of civil war as the newly legalized Christians aren't exactly co-

existing peacefully with their fellow Pagan citizens. The Christians insult the Pagan gods and the Pagans then retaliate by attacking an unarmed crowd of Christians.

What follows is the story of the struggle for religious control of the city of Alexandria, as the Christians become a threat to the actual government of the city. The problem with this plot is that there's a lot going on but very little indication of why some story elements are present. Each subplot — be it the story of the prefect trying to balance his loyalty to Hypatia with his ability to effectively rule or Hypatia's search for a theory of the cosmos — is too shallow to pull us in or make us invested in the individual plights. Too little time is spent on each element so they blend together in an awkward mess. Although the plot has some relation to

modern themes of religious turmoil, it is constantly being interrupted by a surprisingly dull love story between Hypatia, the servant Davus and the city's prefect. The plot is overly ambitious and ultimately ends up falling flat.

Despite the messy plot, the film is beautiful. The ancient city of Alexandria comes to life as buildings are lively and colourful and the streets are full of people amidst the hustle and bustle of their daily lives. Amenabar is very good at framing shots in interesting ways, using a combination of long shots and bird eye views that give the viewer a good grasp on the situation during the more chaotic scenes. However, dramatic zoom shots that pull back until the earth is in full view are a little confusing and the score is also mediocre. All in all, there is nothing really outstand-



courtesy E1 Entertainment

Rachel Weisz contemplates the cosmos in *Agora*.

ing or unique in terms of directorial and productional prowess to save the film from its convoluted plot.

If you're a history buff then you might find this film an interesting look at an often forgotten part of European and indeed world history. However, if you're looking for something more like *Gladiator*, you'll be bored quickly as ac-

tion is sparse and the dialogue is wooden and mechanical. An interesting attempt to say the least, but unfortunately an awkwardly written script and a poorly constructed story doom the film to being a lackluster and unsatisfying movie.

Agora plays at The Plaza Theatre until August 12.

What's left? The *Gauntlet* guide to August festivals

Andy Williams
Entertainment Editor

It's been a tough year for festivals. The all-women Lilith Fair had to scale back a few events and in some cases even cancel shows due to weak ticket sales. The fear of low ticket sales also forced Canada's Virgin Festival — the event that brought Pearl Jam, Tokyo Police Club and Metric to Calgary's Olympic Park last year — to take a hiatus. Financial problems caused Calgary's Jazz Fest's cancellation two days before it was set to start, leaving attendees, bands and venues scrambling to find alternate arrangements. Finally, Van's Warped Tour decid-

ed to migrate north to Edmonton for the year.

That may seem like a daunting list, but there's still a lot going on in Calgary this month. Let the *Gauntlet* be your guide to what's left.

Calgary Fringe Festival (July 30 to August 7, various locations in Inglewood)

Calgary Fringe Festival has returned for its fifth year and still boasts being Calgary's only summer theatre festival. Though the festival is already in full swing, it runs until this Saturday.

The 101 Naked Calgarians photo exhibit should be worth a visit as long as you don't see someone

you know and on Saturday you can catch the Best of Fest 2010 winner at 1 p.m.

Calgary International Blues Fest (August 5–8, Shaw Millennium Park)

Calgary's International Blues Fest returns for another year, albeit in a different locale. The Fest has moved from Pumphouse Park to the more central Shaw Millennium Park.

Little Feat are the darlings of this year's show, though true blues fans will have to accept that they are more rock than blues. Locals Bob Deutscher and Kelly Kavanagh are worth keeping an eye on as well.

Afrikadey (August 9–14, Prince's Island Park)

Afrikadey returns for another year with a cornucopia of cultural offerings for Calgarians to enjoy. The festival tackles every aspect of African culture, from music to literature and from fashion to food. Though there are many great events to attend, one of the highlights is definitely K'Naan's appearance on the mainstage on Saturday.

Taste of Calgary (August 12–15, Eau Claire Market)

Everyone knows Calgary's got great cuisine, but sometimes it can be hard to find exactly what you are craving. Enter Taste of

Calgary. This year's festival boasts over 30 restaurants and offerings from 20 unique alcoholic beverage providers from Big Rock to Dr. McGillicuddy's — which is good, because it's bad to eat on an empty stomach.

Calgary ReggaeFest (August 21, Shaw Millennium Park)

You should probably leave your Paul Rudd impressions at home if you plan on attending Calgary's ReggaeFest. Though the festival is only one day long, it's going to be full of entertainment. Musical performances start at 11 a.m. and run 12 hours straight. There's also youth activities, arts and crafts, beer and food.

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TOP 20

* canadian artist ** local artist
for the week of July 26, 2010

- 1 **THE FLAMING LIPS & STARDUST AND WHITE DWARFS** *The Dark Side Of The Moon* (Warner)
- 2 **THE PROVINCIAL ARCHIVE*** *Maybe We Could Be Holy* (Bedrooms & Basements)
- 3 **BARE WIRES** *Seeking Love* (Castle Face)
- 4 **JAILL** *That's How We Burn* (Sub Pop)
- 5 **LIONS AND TIGERS AND BEARS**** *Concocted By Fiends* (Self-Released)
- 6 **WOLF PARADE*** *Expo 86* (Sub Pop)
- 7 **THE BLACK KEYS** *Brothers* (Nonesuch)
- 8 **DEAN & BRITTA** *13 Most Beautiful: Songs For Andy Warhol's Screen Tests* (Double Feature)
- 9 **ZEBRASSIERES*** *Goody Zoo* (Going Gaga)
- 10 **THE LOVE LANGUAGE** *Libraries* (Merge)
- 11 **FIVE ALARM FUNK*** *Anything Is Possible* (Self-Released)
- 12 **THE ORPHEANS*** *Ellison's Tomb Single/ Turn Out The Lights EP* (Neptoon)
- 13 **MENOMENA** *Mines* (Barsuk)
- 14 **THE STREETS ON FIRE** *This Is Fancy* (The Currency Exchange)
- 15 **THE BOOKS** *The Way Out* (Temporary Residence)
- 16 **BATHS** *Cerulean* (anticon.)
- 17 **STARS*** *The Five Ghosts* (Soft Revolution)
- 18 **COCOROSIE** *Grey Oceans* (Sub Pop)
- 19 **MINDKONTROLULTRA**** *Kill The Mall* (Severed Digit)
- 20 **JOHN HORNAK**** *A Needle, A Feather And A Rope* (Self-Released)

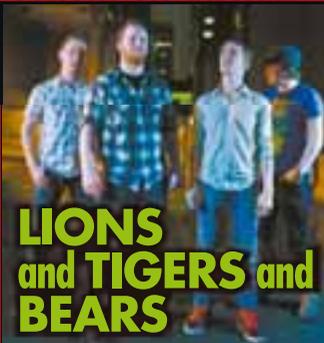
WORLD

- 1 **ETRAN FINATAWA** *Tarkat Taje/Let's Go* (Riverboat)
- 2 **BALUJI SHRIVASTAV** *Goddess* (Arc Music)
- 3 **NAS & DAMIAN MARLEY** *Distant Relatives* (Universal Republic)
- 4 **CUCHATA** *Amor. Cambio. Y La Verdad* (Elegua)
- 5 **LUISA MAITA** *Lero-Lero* (Cumbancha)

JAZZ

- 1 **SUN RA** *College Tour Volume One* (ESP Disk)
- 2 **SUNNA GUNNLAUGS** *The Dream* (Sunny Sky)
- 3 **MICHAEL GREGORY JACKSON** *Clarity* (ESP Disk)
- 4 **HILARIO DURAN TRIO*** *Motion* (Alma)
- 5 **BOB SZAJNER TRIAD II** *Live At The Montreux-Detroit Jazz Festival 1981* (Cadence Jazz)

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Fringe finds itself close to the core

Brent Constantin

News Editor

Now in its fifth year, the Calgary Fringe Festival hopes to carve out its own unique market in the city and southern Alberta.

Festival director Michele Gallant says Calgary Fringe began after she and her husband were involved in a production of the Rocky Horror Picture Show at the Edmonton Fringe Festival in 2004.

"We were walking through the site and both of us noticed the artistic atmosphere," says Gallant. "It was so open, it didn't matter what type of theatre you had on stage, it was great. Calgary doesn't have something like this, this is ridiculous, we need to bring something to Calgary."

So they did. In 2006, the Calgary festival was hosted along 17 Ave, but attendees had difficulty finding the different venues. The festival moved downtown in 2007 before finally settling in its new Inglewood home the next year.

"Ever since we came to Inglewood, it's now our home. Patrons



Gauntlet file photo

and artists and volunteers, everybody has loved it," says Gallant. "It's the oldest neighbourhood in Calgary. It has a very small hometown feel and it's very artistic."

"Ever since then it's been growing like hotcakes."

Gallant says the festival hopes to develop its own unique vibe that sets it apart from its bigger counterpart up north in Edmonton, where Fringe has been running for almost 30 years. The Cal-

gary organizers pride themselves on putting on a great show that is still accessible to the average person.

"[Edmonton] is the second largest festival in North America, for me personally I don't know if I want to get that big," says Gallant. "I think it loses the whole camaraderie festival atmosphere in terms of people being able to find shows."

This year the festival hosts

27 different fringe artists and a variety of genres including kid shows, musicals, puppetry, dance and comedy.

"We have not heard one bad thing about any of the shows," says Gallant. "A lot of the patrons say the quality of shows this year, for whatever reason, are exceptional."

With such praise she finds it hard to choose between any of the shows to recommend.

"I will tell you that our Best of Fest winner that we announced today is 'The Honeymoon Period is Officially Over,'" says Gallant, adding the show will have a special performance this coming Saturday at 1 p.m..

"There's just so much going on, this is an opportunity for people to come and check out really great acts for really cheap price," says Gallant. "None of the shows are over \$15 and most of the shows are only an hour. For the price you would normally pay to see one theatre show you can take in three or four different acts."

For more information on show times and tickets, visit calgaryfringe.ca.

SPUN ALBUM REVIEWS



The Black Keys
Brothers
 (Nonesuch Records)

With the simple but stomp-worthy opening track, "Everlasting Light," it's clear that The Black Keys have taken a step back for the better. After *Attack & Release*, their big studio misstep with its overindulgent Danger Mouse production, the Keys have stripped their music back to the bare essentials. The fact that they've returned to producing their own work is another welcome move.

The Black Keys are a down and dirty

blues duo at heart and *Brothers* never loses sight of that. The songs center around women, loved and lost. Songs like "She's Long Gone," "Howlin' For You" and "Too Afraid to Love You" give a clear indication of the subject matter, and frankly, that's all you really need with blues music. Dan Auerbach's vocals stretch further than they ever have before here and he employs a powerful falsetto on two tracks to great effect.

It's likely the Keys will never be as heavy

and gritty as their early days and even this stripped-down album suffers occasionally from the slickness of the production. But more dirt is allowed to creep in and it's a worthy release, on par with Auerbach's 2009 solo release, *Keep It Hid*. You've got a strong batch of songs, fuzzy wailing guitars, floor-shaking percussion and a snarling bluesy wail.

..Richard Lam



Frazey Ford
Obadiah
 (Nettwerk Records)

Are you currently searching for some music that is simultaneously refreshing and soothing? Well then look — and listen, of course — no further than the likes of Frazey Ford. As a child of the Kootney Mountains and a founding member of the Be Good Tanyas, Miss Ford's debut solo project *Obadiah* is certainly something to marvel at. Once you and your ears make contact with the soul-filled voice of Miss

Ford, both her piercing peacefulness and the trembling emotional depth that she strikes, will haunt you long through the week.

From the opening single "Firecracker," straight through to the rich twang of the banjo and lonesome ring of a harmonica which close "Mimi Song," the album manages to achieve that rare melding between meaningfulness and melancholy. If this

album is any indication of the potential of Frazey Ford, I feel safe to say that we can expect tremendous things from her in the future.

All-in-all, *Obadiah* is an essential album for those Sunday afternoons in which we relax, watch the sun set, pour a few drinks and revive old stories and old loves.

..Remi Watts