



Cycling in Calgary offers challenges and rewards

Curtis Wolff
Sports Editor • @CBWolff

The most convenient way of getting around Calgary is undoubtedly by car. As the city has expanded outwards, the need to own a vehicle as an efficient and reliable mode of transportation has increased. But lost in the commute up and down Crowchild or Deerfoot Trail is a way of seeing and getting around Calgary that is often ignored by motorists. The City of Calgary claims to have some of the best cycling routes and facilities in North America, although this largely depends on whether one is using these paths for recreation or transportation.

Cycling is not a popular mode of commuting in Calgary. According to the 2011 City of Cal-

gary Cycling Strategy, while the number of Calgarians that commute downtown via motor vehicle has decreased in the past decade, and public transit usage has increased, the number of Calgarians who ride their bike to work has stayed constant. The cycling share of traffic into the Central Business District only slightly increased from 1.7 to 1.9 per cent between 1999 to 2010.

Lonny Balbi is a Calgary lawyer and founder of Bike to Work Day, an event that encourages people to leave their vehicle in the garage for a day and try cycling to work instead. According to Balbi, the top concern for cyclists in the city is safety.

"People are worried about getting hit by a car or getting stuck in traffic," said Balbi. "That's the number one concern we see com-

ing up most constantly in surveys."

According to a survey from the Cycling Strategy, 79 per cent of Calgarians are not comfortable sharing the road with motor vehicles without a designated bike lane. Balbi sees the expansion of bike lanes in the city as the key for easing the concerns of both cyclists and motorists.

"The motorists want to use the road because it's built for cars," said Balbi. "Cyclists want to share the road and sometimes they use more of the road than they should. That's why having dedicated bike lanes and paths that are strictly for cyclists are good answers to those kinds of concerns."

Balbi cites Vancouver as an example of a city that has managed to successfully integrate more designated bike lanes into

their streets. Due in part to this added infrastructure, Vancouver's cycling commuting share is at a healthy 3.7 per cent, double that of Calgary's.

While the City of Calgary is constantly constructing new pathways and exploring ways to make the city more bicycle friendly, building new infrastructure takes time and money. In the meantime, cyclists can plan out a safe route prior to starting on their journey using the route maps provided on the City of Calgary website. Once commuters find a safe way to ride their bike to work, the benefits can be tremendous.

"It's fun to do and it's healthy," said Balbi, noting that cycling to work or school eliminates the costs of parking, gas and the price of a motor vehicle itself. "It's just great to be able to ride along the

bike paths and see the trees on a crisp beautiful morning."

Although not everyone is willing to ride their bike to work, Calgarians can still enjoy Calgary's vast pathway network for leisure purposes. While the infrastructure for commuting via bicycle may not be as advanced in Calgary compared to other cities, Calgary still offers a tremendous selection of world-class urban cycling pathways for recreational purposes.

For example, the Elbow River Pathway takes recreational cyclists from Prince's Island Park in downtown Calgary to Fish Creek Provincial Park in the southwest is a meandering route that shouldn't be used by cyclists hoping to get to work on time, but the pathway is a prime option for those looking for a scenic ride in the city.

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editorial

Peewee is not the pros

There is no pastime that unites this vast and diverse country under one national identity quite like hockey does. Canadians see hockey as a way of taking the curse of six cruel months of winter and turning it into a blessing. The rugged and resilient nature of the Canadian spirit is reflected in the signature physicality of our game.

Like many cultural institutions, changes in hockey are not always well received. From overcoming the stigma of wearing a helmet in the 1960s and '70s to the crackdown on illegal hits and contact that has come to define the post-lockout NHL, the evolution of hockey has always had its detractors.

Earlier in May, the governing hockey bodies in Nova Scotia and Alberta became the second and third provincial associations after Quebec to ban bodychecking in the 11- to 12-year-old age group, known as the peewee division. These decisions were influenced in part by a recent University of Cal-

gary study that shows that allowing bodychecking at the peewee level more than triples the risk of injury for the young athletes. Now Hockey Canada has decided to adopt the ban country wide.

While concerned parents have praised the decision, others have viewed the changes as an attack on the game itself. Comment sections on websites like TSN and CBC are filled with people bemoaning the loss of bodychecking at the peewee level. Popular comments draw comparisons to NHL issues such as players receiving concussions due to not being taught to keep their head up as a kid. Concerns about the decline of the hard-nosed brand of Canadian hockey are a common theme.

This initiative meant to protect the long-term health of children playing hockey in local rinks has triggered a debate on the state of professional hockey. While making sweeping comparisons between the state of professional and minor hockey may be tempting, the main issue must not be ignored: kids are

sustaining severe head injuries, and these injuries are scaring them and their parents away from Canada's treasured pastime.

Bodychecking proponents have made the mistake of putting the needs of an extreme minority of



players that will play hockey at a highly competitive level ahead of the vast majority that won't. They often argue that bodychecking needs to be taught at a young age so that players can learn to make and take a hit safely in the future. But

considering that all but the most elite players will be playing in non-contact leagues by the time they are young adults — if they are even playing at all — some important questions are raised. Why should all players risk injury to learn a skill most won't end up needing?

Hitting will always have a place in hockey. When the players' skills and awareness have been sharpened enough and their bodies have matured to take the punishment, bodychecking becomes an exciting addition to hockey. The young players will just have to wait a few years to decide if they want to engage in that aspect of the game.

In the meantime, the Canadian identity will be just fine. As science has come to understand the consequences of bodychecking in minor hockey, the true Canadian spirit has shone through. We may be a rough and tumble nation of Canucks, but we don't need to risk concussing our kids to prove it.

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Cover design by Evangelos Lambrinouidis II

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WE ARE OPEN FOR PATIO SEASON

Join us and try our new summer menu

U of C observatory hosts open house

Innovative technologies and professors help guests explore the cosmos

Louie Villanueva

Gauntlet News

On May 25, the Rothney Astrophysical Observatory hosted its fourth open house of the year. The RAO is owned and operated by the University of Calgary's department of physics and astronomy. It offers educational programming together with outreach events geared towards those interested in astronomy. The observatory is located south west of Calgary, just outside the town of Priddis.

"Initially the observatory was strictly for teaching and research," said RAO director Phil Langill.

When it was founded in 1972, the RAO was not open to the public and has only offered educational programming for the last seven years. After a donation of the land from the Rothney Farm and the Ann & Sandy Cross Conservation Area, the observatory

has grown into one of the most technologically-advanced university-run observatories in Canada.

"We've got one of the largest telescopes in the country, infrared detectors, radio telescopes, spectrographs, photometers, cameras and a lot of really fantastic teaching equipment here," said Langill. "Every year, we graduate a handful of astrophysics students and many have gone on to do some really cool stuff at observatories around the world."

At the recent open house event, RAO volunteer and Royal Astronomical Society of Canada member Roland Dechesme introduced the attendees to the spring sky — the visible stellar objects present at night.

"I started off with star families or star clusters that are prominent this time of year," said Dechesme.

The introductory presentation was held in the Interpretive Centre, adjacent to the main observa-



Louie Villanueva

Guests admire one of the observatory's many telescopes.

tory building. It included a presentation featuring 3D animations and diagrams by observatory associates. A question and answer period followed.

Those in attendance included second-year German studies student David Clark, a frequent visitor of the observatory.

"I came to a previous open house last winter and really liked

it. This is my fourth time here," said Clark.

Fifty people came out to the event. They explored the observatory grounds during the open house which included peeking through several telescopes with the aid and commentary of observatory volunteers. A second presentation by assistant professor of physics and astronomy Chris-

topher Cully concentrated on his work regarding the Earth's radiation belts.

"This is what I've been working on for about the last eight years. I've also been working on building spacecraft and building instruments for spacecraft for exploring the radiation belts," said Cully.

After the two presentations, the sun had set and the crowd was greeted by a relatively clear sky, highlighting the multicoloured northern lights together with a spectacular moonrise.

The RAO will host the next open house on June 22. During this event, Langill will discuss solar research appropriate for the nearby summer solstice.

Along with open house events, drop in observing nights are regularly scheduled and include a special science-fiction night in October, consisting of readings, trivia, music and a costume contest.

Food trucks return to campus for the summer

Riley Hill

News Editor

Hungry? Starting May 31, food trucks will return to the University of Calgary campus, bringing an eclectic mix of meals for hungry students and staff outside the MacEwan Student Centre. These diners on wheels first appeared in Calgary in 2011 following a campaign targeted at city officials by YYC Food Trucks creator James Boettcher.

A long-time restaurant owner, Boettcher first took interest in creating food trucks when he was looking to expand his gelato business outside his shop.

"It started with my parent company, Fiasco Gelato," said Boettcher. "We were keen on doing it for our company for our outdoor events every summer. It was a little bit more efficient and had a little bit more of a profile."

He had seen similar food truck programs in other cities and noticed it brought together a diversity of people.

"When I traveled, I saw the community that revolved around these food trucks being in these cities," said Boettcher. "It became more than just food in a truck, it became about the community around it."

His travels began a process, starting in 2010, that looked to legalize

food trucks in Calgary. Many city officials were skeptical, forcing Boettcher to educate them on the issue.

"It's pretty complicated when you want to go through the City to change bylaws. There were so many different people who were involved in the process, like Alberta Health Services, City Parks and City Roads," said Boettcher. "In the end, it just came down to a bit of an education in the fact that it wasn't as difficult as it maybe first appeared to be. In the end, we were able to answer their questions."

Food trucks were given the green light in 2011, with an initial fleet of seven trucks on Calgary roads.



Louie Villanueva

Folks gather around a downtown food truck during a festival.

That number has since expanded to 35, with 20 of them owned by YYC Food Trucks.

The different trucks have diverse menus, with dishes ranging from greasy french fries to more upscale items like steak sandwiches.

Boettcher said that the community revolving around these trucks is the most important part of sustaining his business.

"The more we're mindful of our community, the greater goals we can achieve," he said.

If you discovered a planet, what would you name it?

campus quips



"After myself.
Liztopia"

– Elizabeth Pinto,
fifth-year
business



"Bacon."

– Dasha Taikh,
sociology
graduate



"AK-47."

– Doina Rusu,
first-year
economics



"McDonald's."

– Mark Paul,
second-year
education

Former SU executive grows new business

Scott Weir creates a number of new urban farms in Calgary

Riley Hill
News Editor

Since leaving office, former Students' Union vice-president operations and finance Scott Weir has been a busy man. He has a new business, Growing Gardeners: Calgary Urban Farms, which grows fresh food in the city in innovative ways.

Weir is a long-time gardener, but only took interest in urban farming in the last few years. Since then, he has created his business, GGCUF, and expanded it to multiple locations across the city.

"I have four different plots in the city," said Weir. "One is in Dalhousie, that's where my greenhouses are going up. The others are just off of 16th Avenue, one is in West Hillhurst and one is in Parkdale."

What makes his farms unique is his use of aquaponics, a growing system that uses tanks of fish to fertilize the plants.

"Imagine a fishtank full of tilapia or trout — heck, it could



Louie Villanueva

Weir's largest plot is located in Dalhousie.

even be goldfish if you're not going to eat them," said Weir. "The fish produce the waste by doing their daily thing. That waste gets cycled up to the plants, the plants take up those nutrients, clean the water, then it goes back down to the fish."

This system uses the waste of the fish to keep the plants growing.

"It's just a natural, biological cycle. It's really just creating an ecosystem," said Weir. "It's com-

pletely organic. Throughout the growing process, nothing unhealthy goes into the system."

In addition to the aquaponics system, his Dalhousie plot has around half an acre of farmland, which when fully operational, should produce enough food to support 300 people throughout the growing season.

Weir sells his food through various avenues.

"I sell it at Parkdale farmer's market on Wednesdays," said

/// I think we need sources of local, healthy, fresh food that are as accessible as possible on an economic standpoint and a quality standpoint.

– Scott Weir, GGCUF creator

Weir. "Also, I sell through CSA, which is community supported agriculture. This is where people buy into a food box at the beginning of the year and during the harvestable season, I bring them a box of produce."

These boxes are available throughout the city, including the university.

"I do deliveries to the university. There's a bunch of people who have bought into it," said Weir. "It's a win-win. They get fresh local food and in the process they get to support the farmer."

Weir said one of his goals with GGCUF is to create an aquaponics setup that could be used by students to grow their own food.

"I want to make it so it would be feasible for students who have

a limited budget, limited space, not a lot of time and limited technical knowledge," he said. "My current system could be built for \$500. It takes up a very small amount of space, it's all self contained and it uses a very small amount of power and water."

In the end, what drives Weir is his love of farming and the positive role he sees it playing in the community.

"I think we need sources of local, healthy, fresh food that are as accessible as possible on an economic standpoint and a quality standpoint," he said. "Even if Calgary seems barren and cold half of the time, we can all still grow stuff."

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New engineering competition

Michael Grondin
Photo Editor

The first ever Canadian-hosted international engineering competition will take place at the University of Calgary from Sept. 11-15.

The Shell International Engineering Competition will bring the brightest minds from top engineering schools around the world to showcase unique solutions to environmental issues and find new energy delivery strategies.

The competition was founded by the Canadian Federation of Engineering Students, Shell Canada and Beakerhead.

Beakerhead is a program that hosts an annual arts and science exhibition in Calgary.

At an announcement on May 28, Daily Planet co-host and co-founder of Beakerhead Jay Ingram expressed excitement for the new international competition.

"Innovation and creativity are inextricably linked — you can't

have either one without the other," said Ingram. "We all — Beakerhead, Shell, engineering students and the citizens of Calgary — should be looking forward to this."

U of C engineering alumnus and competition operations lead Sean Heisler said the event will provide a unique opportunity for engineering students looking to expand their classroom knowledge.

"The experience of a competition is hard to describe," said Heisler. "As a student, you get extracted from your normal engineering day, you don't have assignments or midterms, and you head out to some new school you haven't been to before for three or four days [for the competition]," said Heisler.

He added that when representatives from many schools come together, the pond of innovation grows and an international competition will be beneficial to take young engineers to the next level.

"What we want to do is take

that pond and make it one step bigger," he said. "Take the top in Canada and put them against the top in the United States and the top in Europe and see what new solutions come out of these top minds."

Heisler said the competition will help encourage students to explore new ideas.

"We want to make sure that engineering students feel they are ready to take that next step and have another opportunity to prove everything that engineers can do for society," he said.

Manager of technology development at Shell Canada in Calgary Rob Birkholz said that the pursuit of sustainability is an important part of the competition.

"We are about the continuous pursuit of better and more sustainable ways to deliver energy. That's why we champion open innovation and work together with partners far beyond the boundaries of our industry," said Birkholz.

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40 years of Alberta Theatre Projects

A look back at the growth of one of Calgary's theatre companies

Sean Sullivan
Entertainment Editor

Alberta Theatre Projects recently celebrated its 40th year on May 28, with an evening of staged readings and festivities at their home in the Martha Cohen Theatre in the Epcor Centre for the Performing Arts — a theatre that was designed for ATP when the Centre for the Performing Arts was constructed in 1985. The Martha Cohen Theatre is a big move from where the company began 40 years ago at the Canmore Opera House in Heritage Park, the log cabin that seated an audience of 198 people.

“We started as a scrappy little theatre company that did shows for young audiences about Alberta’s history,” Vicki Stroich says, interim artistic director at ATP.

Stroich, who has been with the company since 2001 and interned with them in 1999, says ATP is a flexible and forward-thinking institution that always needs to grow, change and take risks, but Stroich warns that ATP is very cautious and careful about strategizing the right time to take those risks. The company has learned in the past 40 years when it’s the right time to take a risk, having enjoyed immense success and having almost closed down in 2000.

“There’s always an ebb and flow in terms of the life of a theatre company,” Stroich says. “There are moments where there’s great excitement and energy, when the economy is aligning with what you want to do. And then there are always moments when it’s less so. When one is as bold and brave as

ATP you take some risks and those risks put you in an interesting position.”

The company has been constantly changing since it began in 1972 in the Canmore Opera House where they presented plays about Alberta’s history to children. Few plays existed about Albertan history at the time so the company had to begin producing them. Over the next 13 years, before moving to the Epcor Centre, ATP began introducing more and more adult contemporary plays. Their fostering of Canadian talent continues today with the Enbridge playRites Festival of New Canadian Plays.

“Premieres of new work have always been a part of our history all the way back,” Stroich says. “There’s always been a real sense of developing and nurturing artists who are creating new plays since the very beginning.”

Much of the attitude and feel of the old Canmore Opera House continues today in the Martha Cohen Theatre. The theatre was designed with the opera house in mind.

ATP producer Dianne Goodman, who has been with the company since 1983, says the architects designing the Martha Cohen Theatre were charged with recreating the warm atmosphere and the close relationship of the audience with the stage. The back row of the Canmore Opera House was 50 feet from the stage, and no seat in the Martha Cohen Theatre is further than 50 feet from the stage.

“I think they did that quite beautifully with the Georgian

“// There are moments where there’s great excitement and energy, when the economy is aligning with what you want to do. And then there are always moments when it’s less so.

— Vicki Stroich, ATP interim artistic director

courtyard design — the horseshoe shape,” Goodman says.

In 1987, the artistic director at the time initiated what is now the Enbridge playRites Festival. Two years later they premiered Brad Fraser’s *Unidentified Human Remains and the True Nature of Love* — one of the most infamous productions from ATP — a play about young people in Edmonton fighting, having sex, and trying to survive and live together.

“It was a pretty bold piece of theatre and the audiences responded very strongly,” Stroich says.

Goodman said that sometimes Canadian theatre companies underestimate their audience and what their risk factor is.

“The word of mouth got out like a shot,” Goodman says. ATP had put up a sign warning about the play’s content, a sign which Goodman says became a part of the hype.

However the company’s embracing of change and risk took its toll during the 1999–2000 season when the company faced dire financial challenges. ATP changed its fall and spring lineup to a repertory format with their plays playing over the same period of time rather than consecutively.

“We thought that it would give [our audience] more choice and flexibility in when they could see the shows,” Goodman says, “but, in fact, what happened was they told us clearly, by not coming through our doors, that it was too much of a change.”

Goodman says they lost ground over a couple seasons until, by the end of the 1999–2000 season, they realized they were in trouble.

The artistic director at the time, Bob White, started the Million for the Millennium fundraising campaign to dig the company out of their financial shortfall, hoping to raise \$1 million for their 2000–2001 season.

As with most fundraisers, there were different levels of donations and they were named after angels, representing one of ATP’s largest and boldest productions: *Angels in America: A Gay Fantasia on National Themes* — a play which also includes nudity.

“*Angels in America* was a huge part of our history and certainly our recent history,” Stroich says.

Stroich says that Tony Kushner’s play was a huge turning point for the company during its 1996–1997 season.

“It was a huge undertaking,”

Stroich says. “And to me a great example of this company’s boldness, our ability to take on huge risks — the size, scale and content of that show was a bold statement to make and a lot for a theatre company to take on.”

“We wanted to honour that in the Million for the Millennium campaign with those names,” Stroich says. “And also because we needed some divine intervention at that moment.”

Supporters rallied, with money being donated from subscribers, old board members and theatre companies across Canada.

And ATP quickly reverted to a non-repertory season.

“When I talk about learning something from that period,” Stroich says, “it’s recognizing that the world evolves. Theatre has changed, the theatre ecology we live in currently is much different than it was 40 years ago in 1972.”

Looking ahead, one of Goodman’s passions is mentoring youth interested in becoming actors, directors, producers and stage crews.

ATP has a university internship program, which is how Stroich began at ATP in 1999, and a junior apprenticeship program that takes two students out of high school to work for a season with the company.

But Stroich admits options for young interns and junior apprentices are diminishing in light of recent cut backs in the province.

“How we contribute to making [this career] seem like a possibility in someone’s life, that’s something we’re going to have to certainly think a lot about,” Stroich says.

Coming up for Alberta Theatre Projects’s next season

*The Motherf**ker with the Hat*
Oct. 15–Nov. 21, 2013

Stephen Adly Guirgis’s play about love, jealousy and a mysterious hat that the main character discovers in his girlfriend’s apartment.

Around the World in 80 Days
Nov. 21–Dec. 29, 2013

Playwright Toby Hulse adapts Jules Verne’s famous novel about the voyage of Phileas Fogg and his servant Passepartout around the world.

Do You Want What I Have Got? A Craigslist Cantata

Jan. 22–Feb. 1, 2014
Veda Hille and Bill Richardson’s hilarious look at the characters behind Craigslist ads.



courtesy Take Aim Media

Artist crowdfunds new album

Sean Sullivan
Entertainment Editor

Canadian singer-songwriter Matt Epp's latest album, his second with The Amorian Assembly, exists because fans want it to exist.

Their album, *Learning To Lose Control*, is the result of a crowdfunding campaign in spring 2012 through the website Kapipal — a money collection site similar to the more well known Indiegogo and Kickstarter — where fans could pre-purchase their album and various levels of bonus material for larger donations.

"I was extremely humbled and encouraged by that experience," Matt Epp says. "We, the band, our community's listeners, our audience and our fans raised \$20,000."

Epp did not only want to raise enough money to produce the album but to increase community involvement in the record.

"I wanted to give people another reason to be more invested in it," Epp says, "so that when it actually came out they would look to their friends and say 'Look what I was a part of. They couldn't have made that record if I hadn't been a part of that.' Then it's theirs too."

Epp says that crowdfunding is a good solution for them. The bands get to retain full rights to their work and see the full amount from their album sales while avoiding the need to obtain bank loans or incur credit card debit while working in a rapidly changing and uncertain industry.

"It allows a band like us to survive long into the future," Epp says.

Epp and The Amorian Assembly aren't new to the benefits of crowdfunding — they ran a smaller crowdfunding initiative for their first album together, *At Dawn*, released in April 2011.

"We did it very quietly on the first album through our newsletter. We set up our own crowdfunding page on our webpage and appealed to our existing fans," Epp says.

The money for the first album helped pay for time in the studio. This time they wanted to make it a very public endeavour.

Epp says by putting it on a site like Kapipal the fundraising felt more legitimate, which involved more people.

For Epp and his band, everything has fallen into place with a kind of providence over the last couple years. The Winnipeg-born artist had produced four solo albums before putting together The Amorian Assembly in 2010 after meeting bass player Joel Couture in Winnipeg and Antonio Lomas during a trip to Spain.

"I thought if I could get those two guys together as a rhythm section I'd have the world's best group," Epp says.

After appearing on Sirius Satellite Radio's Backstage Pass in May 2011 Epp received an email from Serena Ryder, who had seen the short interview segment in front of a couple of movies, saying that she liked his sound and they should meet.

"I said, sort of in a cheeky way, that I'm going to be in California next week if [she] wanted to go write songs and she's like 'Shut up, I'm going to be in California

next week!' " Ryder was in Los Angeles writing for her new record and Epp was meeting with producer Jamie Candiloro, whom the band ended up working with on the album. They met up and collaborated on the song "When You Know," which is a duet with Ryder that appears on *Learning To Lose Control*.

This year, Epp put together a video of him covering the song "Unuttun Mu Beni" by famous Turkish singer-songwriter Sezen Aksu for Toronto's Musideum. When he attended her concert at the Sony Centre for the Performing Arts in March he got called up on stage to sing with her.

Through his career, Epp says his tastes and the sound of his music haven't changed too much, though they now include Couture and Lomas's propensity for rock. However, they have changed their approach to songwriting since the first The Amorian Assembly album.

Epp explained that their first record together was a piece of art on its own that didn't necessarily translate well to the stage — Epp points to a lengthy rock song from their first album which they collaborated with the Weber Brothers on.

"I think in that way we were a lot more aware of it," Epp says of the new album. "This record we can play all of the tracks on the stage. We can give it more life when we bring it live."

Learning To Lose Control is available June 4.

Epp and The Amorian Assembly are touring Canada throughout June and will be playing at the Ironwood in Calgary on June 6.

New Info for 2013 Sled Island

Compiled by Michael Grondin

- New build your own schedule at sledisland.com
- 280 bands
- 15 film screenings
- 12 art shows
- East Village Block Party returns
- Flames Central, Golden Age Club and Alexandra Centre added as new venues this year
- 30+ venues
- 20+ independent films
- 35+ visual artists
- 2 comedy venues
- 1,000 additional bike parking locations
- 75 per cent projected waste diversion rate
- 1st year of organized panel discussion series over three days
- 1st year of Wimbledon Wednesdays table tennis tournament at Commonwealth
- 80+ bands playing all ages shows at 15+ venues

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FURTHER YOUR PASSION

Film Review: *Now You See Me*

Matthew Parkinson

Gauntlet Entertainment

Now *You See Me* is a film that plays out with a disdain for its audience, always keeping them at arm's length in hopes that the viewers will never figure out what secrets are hiding beneath its surface.

In some respects, it's like real magicians, who always hope to hide the secrets to their tricks. However, the difference with *Now You See Me* is that when all the cards are on the table and the final reveal has occurred, the audience is far more likely to feel cheated than amazed. When a magician tricks the audience, they're often given the chance to figure out how he or she did it. This is a film that conceals everything and doesn't offer the audience that opportunity.

The basic plot of the film involves four incredibly talented magicians — played by Jesse

Eisenberg, Woody Harrelson, Isla Fisher and Dave Franco (no, their character names aren't important as they're only mentioned a couple of times) — who rob banks and the rich while performing their magic shows and give the money to others.

Their thefts draw the attention of both the FBI, led by Mark Ruffalo's Dylan Rhodes, and Interpol, who assign Mélanie Laurent's Alma Vargas to aid Agent Rhodes in his investigation. The audience might remember these two names because they're actually in the movie far more than the magicians. The trailers don't show this but Ruffalo and Laurent are the real protagonists of *Now You See Me*.

What is the result? A movie where magicians are chased by people who have no hope of catching them, all while a big twist waits in the wings.

If movie-goers are hoping to see a lot of magic, they're going

to be disappointed. Save for three shows — two of which consist of exactly one big trick — and a couple of short bursts during chase scenes, *Now You See Me* contains far less magic than one would expect given the way it has been advertised.

The director, Louis Leterrier (*The Transporter* and *Clash of the Titans*), has shot and edited this movie frantically, in a way that will likely make the viewer more nauseous than they'd expect. This works in direct opposition to the movie's overall slow pace and not the quick, snappy heist movie that many are hoping for.

The action beats are all pathetic — the obligatory fist fight and car chase are almost unwatchable because of the way the film was shot and put together — and there are no characters, save Ruffalo's, with even a hint of depth or character development — the magicians, for instance, get a single note and play it throughout.



courtesy Summit Entertainment

Now You See Me is likely to wind up as one of the worst movies of the blockbuster season. It doesn't offer a chance to figure out its secrets, it doesn't have a single character to root for, its action scenes are terribly shot and edited and it's overlong and rela-

tively boring — especially for the first hour.

Now You See Me functions as a reminder that even with the most talented cast in the world — and there are definitely some big names in this film — a movie can still be very bad.

Acting a play of one

Sean Sullivan

Entertainment Editor

Urban Curvz Theatre is bringing Quebec playwright Jennifer Tremblay's award winning play *The List* to Calgary from May 30 to June 8 at the Epcor Centre's Motel.

The List is the story of a woman who writes lists to desperately attempt to control and order her daily life after a tragic event.

Tremblay received the Governor General's Literary Award for French Drama in 2008 for *La Liste* and Shelley Tepperman's translation was nominated for a Governor General's Literary Award for Translation in 2012.

The English translation of the play is being directed by Micheline Chevrier and performed by Esther Purves-Smith. Chevrier and Purves-Smith have worked together before on three different productions including *The Glace Bay Miners' Museum* (2000), *Perfect Pie* (2001) and *Hay Fever* (2003).

The play focuses solely on The Woman who is the only character on stage.

Purves-Smith says what attracted her to the play was the 'The Woman's exploration of responsibility, of striving for a perfection that doesn't exist, comparing herself to everyone else and feeling judged, isolated, lost and alone — feeling that she lives a life she landed in accidentally.

"I think that those feelings are probably more universal than many of us are willing to talk about," Purves-Smith says.

For Chevrier, who's spent 30 years directing plays across Canada, the greatest attraction to direct the play was the language.

"I wanted to hear it, not only read it but hear it," Chevrier says, "because of its rhythm, its lyricism and the images it evokes."

For Purves-Smith, who has never done a solo performance before, the challenge she says is in the different relationship with the audience.

"I need them in a different way than when I'm doing a scene or interacting with other actors on stage," Purves-Smith says, describing it as a more intimate hug.

Chevrier says the process of developing the production and rehearsing the play is different with only one actor as well.

"I always believe as the director that I partner with the actors in presenting the show," Chevrier says. "In this case it's a far more intimate collaborative process, because the actor is alone on stage and therefore embodies practically the universe, the world you're trying to portray. You have to have a great amount of complicité — a real partnership, an intimate partnership in all the decision making"

Chevrier says she works together with Purves-Smith to develop the little details of the world they are bringing to life in a way she wouldn't necessarily do with a larger cast.

"I don't feel like having a discussion with 17 people about 'does the chair belong there?'" Chevrier jokes. "But with one person you do. It's different."

spun

ALBUM REVIEWS



Belle Starr

Belle Starr

April 2, 2013 (Sony Music Entertainment Canada)

While listening to country radio last weekend I was generally disenchanted with the new, repetitive music I was hearing. However, one song, "New Girl Now," kept coming on and I began to enjoy it more and more every time I heard it. The DJ said it was by Belle Starr, whom I had never heard of. I looked them up on YouTube and found a number of songs with strong, haunting fiddles, and moving, three-part harmonies. They have a folksy, root vibe to them, while still being modern.

I downloaded their first full-length album *Belle Starr* and their debut EP *The Burning of Atlanta*. I've listened to both relentlessly and have greatly enjoyed their sound. They don't feel like just another modern country band,

singing bland music that is too often heard on country radio today — they feel original, yet classic, with a new spirit that Canadian country music has been missing.

Belle Starr is comprised of Stephanie Cadman, Kendel Carson and Miranda Mulholland. Alberta-born Carson sings the lead in "New Girl Now." Cadman, from Ottawa, does percussion, offering her step dancing skills to songs such as "Cry Love." Mulholland, from Guelph, Ontario, wrote the instrumental "Charity Kiss." All three women play the fiddle, and bring together a range of styles.

Along with covering songs like Springsteen's "Tougher Than The Rest" and John Rutledge's "Be A Man" — both which have a great feel with the three-part female harmonies — the album has three instrumental tracks mixed in. Although I do like instrumental music, I usually skip these tracks when listening to a predominantly lyrical album. But these instrumentals felt like a natural flow for the album and I found myself looking forward to them.

Overall I loved the blending of the voices and the fiddles.

If you get this album, don't miss their EP. The song "Summerlea" has been stuck in my head for days and it's a track that I replay once, twice or three times while listening to their music.

Susan Anderson

Exploring Alberta's highways by bike

Susan Anderson

Editor-in-Chief

Road cycling is becoming a more popular sport. While some motorists may curse at the cyclists they see pedaling down a highway on the narrow shoulder, the cyclists who are out there know the benefits and enjoyment that they experience while riding on the highway.

Road cycling has grown in popularity in recent years because it is an enjoyable, yet minimal impact activity.

Sales associate and bike fitter at Bow Cycle in Calgary, Dave Gruninger is an avid cyclist with over 18 years of experience. He said that there has been roughly a 15 per cent increase in road biking sales at Bow Cycle over the past five years.

"There's definitely an increase in sales every season," said Gruninger. "I think it's so popular because it's a safe sport to get into. You don't need a lot of bike skills like in mountain biking where you could get hurt. It's minimal impact on the body. People with hurt knees or backs can get into it."

Based on what they sell, he believes road cycling is becoming more popular than mountain biking.

"Health wise, it's good for your cardio and everything that comes along with that," said Gruninger. "If a bike is fit properly to a person, rid-

ing a road bike is basically like doing physio and cardio at the same time."

Riding a bike can help meet fitness goals, while enjoying scenic routes or accomplishing many kilometers in a day. However, cyclists do need to keep some things in mind.

"The most common injury with riding a bike is your knee, but the number one way to rehab your knee is riding a bike, which is why we stress bike fit so much," said Gruninger.

Bikes can be custom fit to match the rider, because there is a lot of variation in body type and size.

"If we're standing side by side and we're the same height, our leg length could be different, and our arm length could be different," explained Gruninger.

Gruninger stresses the impor-

tance of always wearing a helmet and learning the rules of the road, including how to ride with groups of people.

Traffic can be a problem, but Gruninger said that he has never felt unsafe. He suggests joining a riding group or club to learn about road safety. Joining a group will let new riders mix with more experienced riders.

"It's people learning how to be comfortable while riding on the highway and taking the right highway. Some highways, like Highway 1 are very busy, but other highways are a lot quieter."

Cyclists need to bring water bottles, high-energy snacks and an emergency kit consisting of a spare tube, multi-tools, patch kit and a way to inflate a tire if it becomes flat.

Wearing padded shorts and proper shoes also helps.

Gruninger recommends cleaning a bike regularly and using chain lubricant for maintenance, but stresses not to use WD-40. Bikes also benefit from a yearly tune-up.

Road biking can be expensive though, especially for students.

"A road bike starts at around \$1,000 and the sky is the limit from there," said Gruninger. "You're probably looking at about \$1,500 in start up costs." Yet once the initial equipment is purchased, not a lot of additional funds are needed to keep cycling.

However, this initial price might not be affordable for students, so Gruninger recommends getting a used bike at a reasonable price. Road bikes tend to wear fairly well, and can be used for years.

There are many scenic road rides outside of the city. A popular one is Highway 66 out of Bragg Creek. The route is fairly simple: from Bragg Creek, take either Highway 22 or Highway 758 a short ways south to Highway 66 and follow this highway west until it ends — a distance of about 30 kilometres one way. The attraction of this ride is the winter gate, located more than half

way along the highway. The gate is closed until May 15, although the highway can still be very busy as hikers, other cyclists and day picnickers flock to the gate or day use areas. Once at the gate, cyclists can lift their bikes through the gate, and continued riding on a car-free highway. Cyclists can enjoy great views of the Rockies and the Elbow River without the noise of vehicles.

Highway 66 can be a demanding ride if it's one of your first times out in the season. There is an elevation gain of about 500 metres from the Bragg Creek town site to the end of Highway 66. The route climbs steadily after the winter gate, and it can be windy, but the sense of accomplishment of getting to the end of a ride can't be beat. The fun part about this ride is that coming back, it's all downhill and the kilometers fly by.

Other popular rides include Highwood Pass and Highway 1A from Lake Louise to Banff. Highwood Pass is especially popular before the winter gate opens on June 15 when cyclists have complete domain over the road. If you're struggling to climb the steep hills, at least the scenery will be awe-inspiring.



Cycling in the city can be dangerous.

Bonnie Chuong

City cycling, cont'd from cover

The route swings around the east side of Stampede Park, offering a unique view of the chuckwagon races during Stampede time, before heading back across Macleod Trail into the heart of the city. Cyclists can follow the Elbow River down to Stanley Park or further down to Sandy Beach where they can stop for lunch and watch the rafters float by.

From Sandy Beach cyclists can climb up and out of the river valley. The steep incline offers a stiff challenge for even the fittest of cyclists, but the view of the Elbow River from the top of the bluff makes it worth the effort. From there cyclists can head south towards the Glenmore Reservoir and hang a right to go the long way

around, which includes a leisurely ride through the wetlands in the Weaselhead Natural Area that feels far detached from the bustling city streets.

From Weaselhead, cyclists can head due south, following a path that straddles the border between suburban Calgary and the T'suu Tina Nation. After a few kilometres the pathway dips down into Fish Creek Park, which offers a variety of routes that wind south and east towards the Bow River. Cyclists wishing to finish their ride in style can reserve a table at The Rancho Restaurant, a historic ranch house that is now one of Calgary's most critically acclaimed dining spots. For cyclists on a budget, or those who simply don't want to dine in

their sweaty athletic gear, there is an adjacent house that sells ice cream and desserts.

Making use of the bike paths and lanes that are available helps fight many of the problems that modern urban centres face. As the roads get more congested, the sky more polluted and the population more obese, developing a culture of cycling for either transportation or recreation can be a small part of the solution. As Balbi has learned during his involvement with Bike to Work Day, the first step is to be willing to give cycling a chance.

"The idea is just to get on your bike and try riding," said Balbi. "When people try it once or twice, they say it's something they could do more often."

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