

Arts

about town

Fall 2012 Volume 13 Issue 2



World of Threads

Oakville's fibre arts festival looms large

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2302 Bridge Road, Oakville, ON 905-815-5977

www.oakvillearts.com

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Top: "Surf's Up", by Lynn Borysiuk
Middle: "Durer's Rhino" by Emily Jan
Lower: Circle of Harmony

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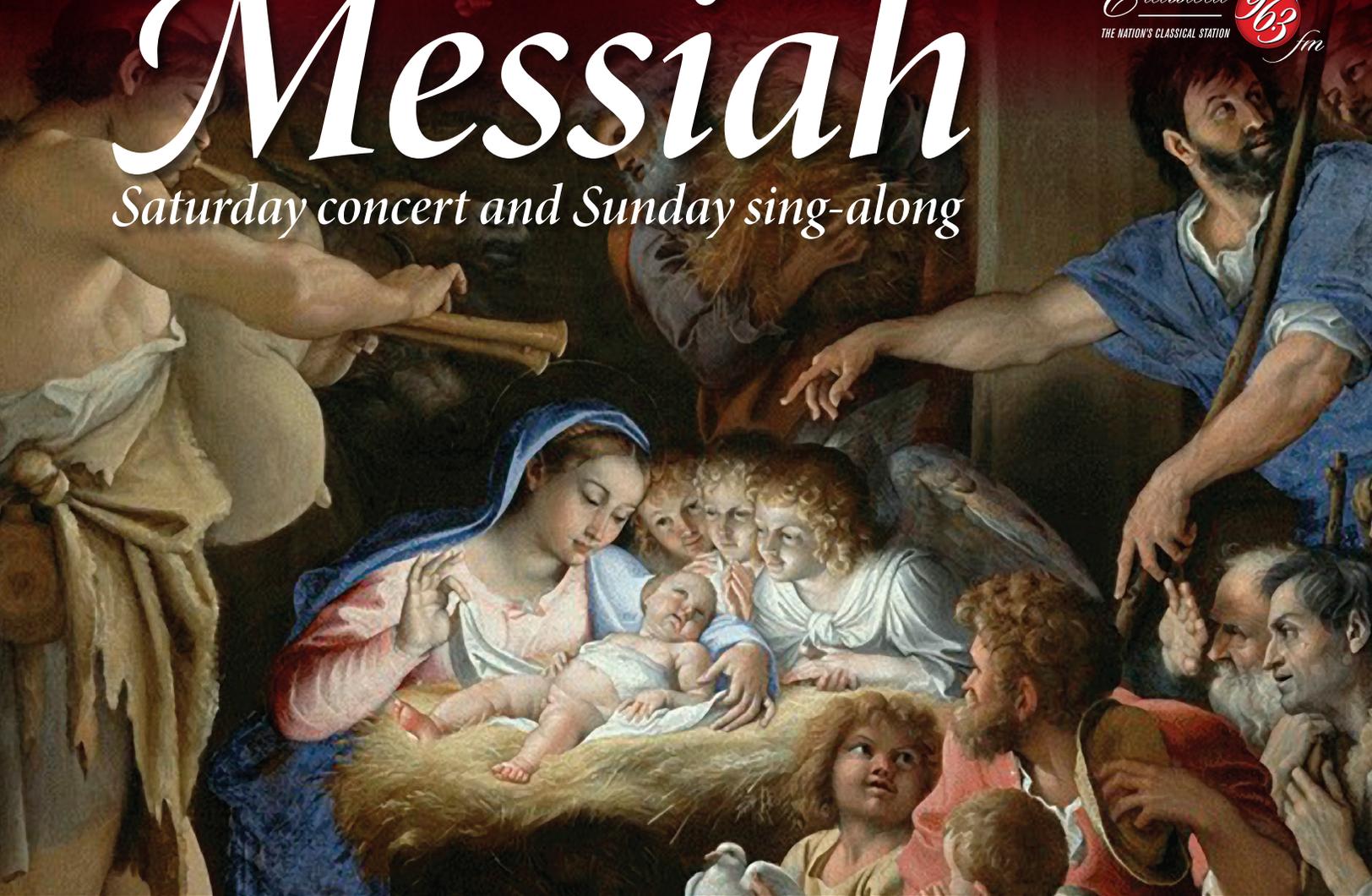
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from the editor

The days go by faster here at the Oakville Arts Council; faster than at any other job I've ever worked. I'm sure in part, it's what keeps me going! The pace is only one part of course, we are very fortunate to have a great team here, one that is dedicated and passionate about the arts sector and the well-being of our members.



It's those members and their amazing diversity of talent that is the real attraction. I'm reminded of it as we pass through the beauty of summer and lakeside painting en-plein air classes into the majestic aural experiences of our member choirs preparing for their high season.

This is also a special year - we are fortunate to have Oakville's bi-annual fibre arts festival, *the World of Threads*, taking place. Once a part of the arts community programming done by the Oakville Arts Council, we are pleased and proud of the festival's continued success and growth. The festival is an excellent example of the economic benefit that the arts sector, largely driven through the persistence and dedication of volunteers, brings to Oakville. The festival draws visitors and artists from far and wide, including Australia, Canada, Ireland, United Kingdom, and the USA: 21 exhibitions in Oakville and Toronto with 196 artists from twelve countries and eight Canadian provinces. Wow!

If you can forgive the pun, fibre arts will be looming large in the month of November. Check our calendar at www.oakvillearts.com for a complete exhibition listing.

Bernadette

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Editor

Bernadette Ward

Cover

"Belcanto", by Kit Vincent. Showing at the 2012 World of Threads Festival of contemporary fibre art exhibition "Variegated Threads" in the Halls at Queen Elizabeth Park Community and Cultural Centre.

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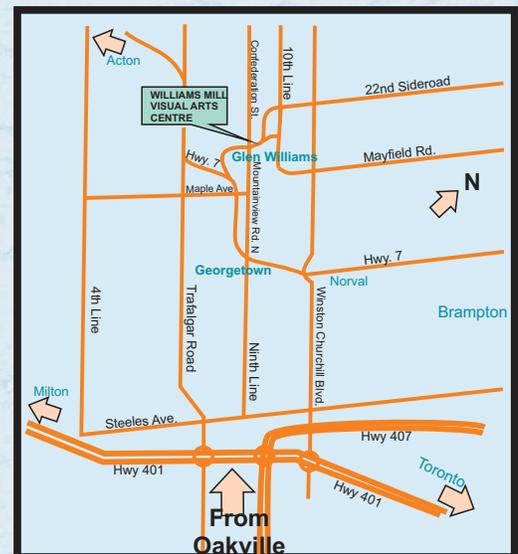


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FOR THE LOVE OF SONG AND SISTERHOOD

Story by Bernadette Ward

In a world gone nearly mad with mean, it is a blessed relief to meet the Circle of Harmony, an award-winning 4 part a cappella women's chorus of women joined by their love of music, dedication to excellence, to one another and to community.

"We support each other, within the membership, that's a big deal," says Denise Van Amsterdam, spokesperson for the chorus. "Women feel valued in our chorus."

Formed in 1998 and based in Oakville, the chorus is a wonderful example of the benefits of arts participation. These "ordinary women making extraordinary music" come from all walks of life and as far as 90 kilometers away. The group is diverse and inclusive. Amsterdam points to their "chorus babies" – women who are still nursing who continue to participate, the members who look out for one another through illness and other difficult moments and the opportunities to share different perspectives and experiences that create

heightened awareness for everyone involved.

While the group is woman-friendly, it is also competitive. Not all are professional musicians but they all strive for musical excellence.

"As a large chorus, we always place within the top five...the top three, last year," says Van Amsterdam.

In 2011, the chorus was 21st of 500 choruses in the world in the Sweet Adelines International regional competition. Their goal is to get to the international stage, in terms of competition.

"We focus on excellence, we compete very well because of it; the hard work pays off," says Van Amsterdam. "It is very satisfying to be a part of."

The chorus does not only sing, but they strive to engage their audience with choreography and performance. They have earned a reputation for professionalism through their many performances and were recently invited to perform at Carnegie Hall.

The chorus loves to perform and is always seeking new opportunities. They sing songs from a variety of genres from standards to Broadway, gospel to pop.

"We're open for hire: corporate events, celebrations – we would love to be a part of corporate entertainment packages," says Van Amsterdam.

They have performed with special guests the Nylons and Leona Boyd as well as local groups, such as the Entertainers and High Rendition Jazz.

"It's where we've wanted to go... to work with more of our Oakville community," says Van Amsterdam.

They may rehearse and perform in many places, but community remains a constant.

"We love Oakville, wherever we rehearse, we always tell people we're from Oakville."

*For more information visit
www.circleofharmony.ca*

More than wine women and song: members of the the Circle of Harmony enjoy performing in the barbershop style along with the additional benefits of camaraderie and friendship.





Work by Lynn Borysuik, this year's winner of the 2012 Cogeco Stars Among Us Visual Arts Award in her preferred medium: top left: "Shady Lane", '08, watercolour 15" x10" by Lynn Borysuik, and top right: "Deserted Farmhouse", watercolour, 25" x15".

Lynn Borysuik: life in full colour

Story by Bernadette Ward

Do I make art or do I make money? Sooner or later, most artists come to rest on this particular horn of a dilemma.

So when Oakville visual artist and the 2012 Cogeco Stars Among Us Visual Arts Award winner Lynn Borysuik says she's blessed, she means that she has found the much sought after secret of making money from her art. She well understands how difficult it is to work all day and try to be creative in your spare time.

"It's a tough thing to do, even if you're disciplined, but I learned a long time ago to treat my art as a business," says Borysuik.

It is a challenge, she confesses. "The arts are not taken seriously."

Borysuik clearly believes this is an error that we make as a whole. She is very interested in how art affects us, how it contributes to society.

"I've always believed that the act of creating is connected to knowledge. Without imagination there is no knowledge," she says.

Raised in Peterborough and Haliburton, Borysuik began her career as a child painting with her grandmother, who was an accomplished oil painter.

"That was what we did together; that

was our thing," she reminisces.

While still young, Borysuik was exposed to artists such as Ethel Curry of Haliburton.

She may have taken to art, but she recalls that her father, a businessman, was aghast at the idea of her going to arts school. He was adamant that she could become a lawyer or a doctor, but starving artist was out.

Borysuik did try, but ultimately, and to her father's chagrin, turned to her true calling and passion and began studies at Ontario College of Art and Design. She has also studied at the Haliburton School of Fine Art.

She has worked as a professional, full-time artist for the last 15 years, ten of them in Oakville. She favours watercolour, but is enjoying a shift to acrylic in order to accommodate her vision of larger works. Like many visual artists, Borysuik creates her paintings in her head before she even sets brush to paper.

She agrees that watercolour is an

unforgiving medium, a challenge made more so by her preference for using strong pigment in her work.

"I like more contrast, more oomph," she says. It's more vibrant, I think and it makes for a more powerful impact."

A member of the Oakville Arts Council, Borysuik is also connected to the Oakville Arts Society and ArtWorks Oakville having participated in exhibitions and juried shows through these local organizations. She likes to exhibit once each year and recently did so at Joshua Creek Heritage Arts Centre.

Today Borysuik is branching out into screenplay writing and teaching visual arts which she currently does on a volunteer basis.

These new experiences only confirm her understanding of how important art is.

"I think it's innate in everyone to be creative, people need to create something every day. When this happens, there's balance within ourselves."

For more information about artist Lynn Borysuik visit the Oakville Arts Council artist directory at www.oakvillearts.com

“Without imagination, there is no knowledge.”



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World of Oakville's fibre arts

If it's sewing and mending that comes to mind when you hear "fibre arts" then you are in for a big reveal - the World of Threads Festival 2012 is not your grandmother's lace doilies, but you will see how her work laid the foundation for the evolution of today's fibre arts.

The World of Threads Festival is a vibrant fibre arts festival that features almost every conceivable media: sculpture, earth works, quilting, paper work, weaving, hooking, knitting, embroidery, lace-making, felting, basketry, plastics manipulation and more. This stunning array of textural work is presented in 21 exhibitions taking place in Oakville and Toronto.

"We've had such fantastic feedback from people, both the artists and those who come to see, they're just blown away," says Dawne Rudman, Chair and Curator for the festival.

Beginning in 1994 as a single Oakville exhibition, the 2012 Festival has now expanded into Toronto reflecting its international scope and ambition. A wide range of media will be on display from Austria, Australia, Canada, Denmark, England, France, Germany, Ireland, Peru, Spain, UK and the USA.

From small town to international standing, Oakville's fibre arts festival is a stunning testament to the dedication and drive of a group of volunteers led by Rudman and Gareth Bate, Festival Curator, who have worked tirelessly over the last three years to bring the festival to life.

Rudman, who has been with the festival for many years, believes World of Threads has at long last realized a much-anticipated goal, one that benefits both the wider Oakville community and the fibre arts as a discipline.

"The festival shows that we're up there with what's happening internationally," says Rudman. "People are recognizing that we have a presence." She is seeing the payoff firsthand.

"People are prepared to come from far and wide to see the festival," she says with well-deserved pride, noting visitors from British Columbia, Alberta, England and the United States have been through the exhibitions. Additionally the expansion into

"We've had such fantastic feedback from people, both the artists and those who come to see, they're just blown away," says Dawne Rudman, Chair and Curator for the festival.



Not your Grandmothers needlepoint: above, "Memories of a Birch Tree", installation by Oakville's own Ixchel Suarez showing at Joshua Creek Heritage Art Centre as part of the De rerum natura exhibition. Below: "Dürer's Rhinoceros", 2011, 84" x 32" x 60", by Emily Jan of Oakland, California. Materials: resin, silicone, recycled textiles, flax.



De rerum natura
(*On The Nature of Things*)
Joshua Creek Heritage Art Centre
November 2 - 18, 2012
A highly eccentric show evoking
the collection of a mad 8th
century naturalist.

Memento mori
The Gallery, Sheridan
November 2 - 18,
Set up on thematic
to De rerum natura
of death, mortality,
quest for immorta

Threads

festival looms large

Toronto is resulting in a net-gain for Oakville, with bus loads of visitors coming in - a reversal of the drain out of the community that sometimes happens.

“By going there (Toronto), we’re showing people that Oakville’s close, accessible and getting them to look at what’s happening here,” says Rudman.

The international status also changes how people perceive this particular arts discipline. Rudman notes that many people see fibre as something women do; an aspect of what is largely seen as women’s work. Artist Maximo Laura — that’s *Mr*: Maximo Laura, Peruvian-born, award-winning, internationally recognized tapestry weaver and one of South America’s pre-eminent textile artists, consultant, designer and lecturer, has a slightly more nuanced view of the discipline.

“Fibre art fulfills an important role in visual arts: it is the patrimony of cultures, an expression of the reality of the people and of nations. It is a mode of political action, as well as a particular aesthetic view,” says Laura in an interview done for the World of Threads Festival website.

And the gender rift is not the only one where the breach is closing.

“There’s always this divide: is fibre art craft or art?” asks Rudman. “Through the

years we’ve moved more away from the craft side. The pendulum is swinging to the art side. It’s obvious when you see the gallery,” she says.

Of course there are several galleries to see. The flagship shows are the Common Thread International exhibitions (listed in the sidebar at the bottom of the page), selected by multiple curators from a pool of international submissions.

Rudman is also pleased with is the festival’s use of a new venue in Oakville. With its size and potential, Rudman feels that Queen Elizabeth Park Community & Cultural Centre has great potential for the festival going forward, but all of the venues are getting rave reviews.

“All of the shows are getting exposure, they are all different, all lovely,” says Rudman.

For more information about the World of Threads Festival dates, times and locations, visit www.worldofthreadsfestival.com

Quiet Zone

The Gallery, Queen Elizabeth Park Community & Cultural Centre
November 2 - 18, 2012

A rich range of fragile, multi-layered work of opposites and complements.

dan Institute
2012
ic opposition
ra with themes
y, grief and the
ality.



Above: “What Looks Like an Elephant”, 20 x 27 x 18 in., wool and found driftwood; needlefelting. By Jodi Colella of Somerville, Massachusetts. Below: “For Dear Life”, 2011, 43”H x 31W” x 7.5”D, knitted wool, fulled and sewn. Artist, Chris Motley of San Francisco, California.



Cogeco Stars

and the winners are...



From top left clockwise: Digital Arts Award Winner Stephanie Faye and award sponsor, Andrew Patrick of Epson Canada;



Arts Group Award winner the Oakville Children's Choir and Oakville Arts Council President, Victoria Behune; Literary Arts Award winner Mike Przysiezny and award sponsor Billy Boucher of TD Canada Trust;



Visual Arts Award winner, Lynn Borysiuk and award sponsor, Ken Nevar of Cooper Construction Limited; Young Artist Award winner, Mira Meikle and award sponsor Angela Blackburn of the Oakville Beaver;



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Among Us '12



Counter clockwise from the top left: 1. Mayor Rob Burton and OAC Executive Director Megan Whittington have a little fun at the podium; 2. Wendy Burton, Mary Chapin and Larry Chapin; 3. Alex Ragazzino and Howard Lopez hold their roles as security for the talent; 4. Jazz 1 Studio Orchestra and 5. singer (last row, right); 6. smiles from our front-of-house volunteers for the evening; 7. Whiskey Epiphany; 8. OAC President Victoria Behune and director, Nick DiRenzo with guests; 9. Krista Earle, not having a bad hair day; 10. Mira Meikle and 11. Andrew Cole. *Photography by Peter C. McCusker*

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World of Threads Festival

www.worldofthreadsfestival.com

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Toronto: Nov 9 - 25, 2012

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