

1-877-2BE-Calm - Artist Biographies



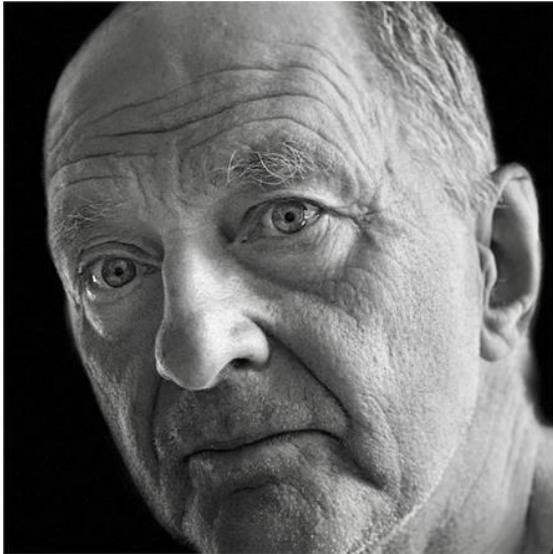
Elder May Sam

May Sam was born in Malahat where she was raised by her father and aunt. Later in life, she moved to the Cowichan Valley. May learned knitting from her father, aunt and then later from her mother-in-law. She has been knitting for 60 years and within her work she tries to challenge herself with new designs and blending in colours. Her work has gone international, with her knitted bags being a big hit at the 2019 Indigenous Language Conference in Victoria. May is a highly respected Elder who is called upon by many people in community. She has done workshops with SD63, Camosun College, UVIC and the Esquimalt weaving group. It is an honour to have her talk with us about her family and her knitting for the 1-877-2BE-CALM project.



Neko Smart

Neko Smart is the founder and former captain turned coach of the Vic High Slam Poetry Team. Her passion for performance was developed through an active role in her local theatre community, where she realized the importance of self-expression through the arts. In her position as the 2020 City of Victoria Youth Poet Laureate, her goal was to emphasize the importance of cultivating open dialogue about mental health in order to reduce stigma and increase safety, particularly in youth. Now, she plans to pursue this objective as she continues to develop her craft, and hopefully, inspire others to do the same.



Normand Hébert

Normand Hébert collabore depuis quelques années à l'émission *Paysages littéraires* à l'antenne de Radio Victoria 107,9 FM. Il y partage ses découvertes, des œuvres d'auteurs/es d'ici et d'ailleurs.

Depuis 2009, ses textes de différents genres sont publiés dans le mensuel de la Société francophone de Victoria, **Le Réverbère**. Également, dans le magazine **l'Entr'aînés** de l'AFRACB (la voix des francophones de 50 ans et plus en Colombie-Britannique.)

Normand Hébert a grandi à Saint-Ours, entre la grande route et la Rivière Richelieu, un milieu semi-rural et pittoresque. Il a complété des études en sciences politiques à Toronto où il a enseigné le français, ainsi qu'à Montréal, pendant 15 ans. Par la suite, il choisira d'étudier en horticulture et adoptera le métier de jardinier-horticulteur pendant une trentaine d'années.

Ses lieux d'inspiration ne sont pas uniquement les jardins ordonnés, spontanés ou à l'abandon. Il aime explorer les zones industrielles historiques de Victoria. Là où la vie sous toutes ses formes, obstinément s'accroche, avec force et fragilité.

For the last few years, Normand Hébert has been a regular collaborator on 'Paysages littéraires', a literary program broadcast on Radio-Victoria 107.9 FM where he shares his discoveries of both local and international authors. His own literary works have been published in the Société francophone de Victoria's monthly newsletter, *Le Réverbère* since 2009, and also in the magazine *L'Entr'aînés* (the voice of the 50 years and older francophone population in British Columbia.)

Normand grew up in Saint-Ours, a semi-rural and picturesque town in Southern Quebec, between the highway and the Richelieu River. After studying political science and teaching French in Toronto and Montreal for 15 years, he decided to turn to horticulture and became a gardener-horticulturist, a profession he embraced for around thirty years. Normand finds inspiration not only in cultivated, wild and abandoned gardens, he also likes to explore historic industrial areas of Victoria, where life in all its forms stubbornly clings with strength and fragility.



Matt Stern

Matt Stern is known for infectious melodies, uplifting energy, and an ability to inspire a sense of community in a diverse crowd.

Born in Montreal and currently based on Vancouver Island, he has been a featured performer at the Campbell Bay Music Festival, twice at the Victoria French Festival, Canadian Music Week, POP Montreal, Enoshima Music Festival in Japan, the 1st World OutGames and on CBC's Home from the Vinyl Café. Recently featured at the Festival d'été de Vancouver, he is slated to appear at the Jeux de la francophonie canadienne in summer 2022.

Praised by Radio-Canada International for promoting body positivity and diversity, Matt has received awards from the LA Film Awards & the KASHISH Film Festival in Mumbai for his original music videos. Published for *Precious and Sacred*, a book dedicated to Indigenous children, and featured twice on Queerty.com, Matt performs in Japanese, French, English and Spanish and has been featured in Exclaim!, Italy's Periodico Daily, and on Let's Go There (Channel Q) in Los Angeles. His music video You're Magic was picked up by Mtl Blog and went viral within 24 hours. Recently, his video Take It or Leave It, compiled during quarantine from clips submitted by fans, was picked up by Victoria Buzz and achieved the same result.

His new album, 'Take It or Leave It', was released in January 2020 on all platforms and its first music video, 'Full Moon', was screened at the Victoria Film Festival in February. That same week, the first single 'Don't Tell Me' was syndicated on CBC and picked up by shows across the country while French singles Dans mes rêves and Droit devant were broadcast on Radio-Canada. A recent feature in *Addicted Magazine* characterized Matt's new album as "beautiful music that makes you feel seen and safe."



Shoko Inoue

Shoko Inoue lives in Victoria, Vancouver Island. She has performed in numerous places. She enjoys being in the great nature. Learn more at shokoinoue.com



Stefanie Miska

Stefanie Miska is a Doctor of Traditional Chinese Medicine, and a Registered Acupuncturist and Herbalist practicing in Victoria, British Columbia. She runs Focus Health Clinic and her practice is focused on reproductive health and perinatal support.



Crystal Dorval

Crystal Dorval is a multimedia artist and has been creating experimental pop and meditative ambient music as White Poppy since 2012. Currently residing on Vancouver Island in a self-made tiny house, she draws inspiration from the surrounding nature and slow lifestyle. With a background in mental health and intuitive healing, her creative work is often a means to problem solve and explore new techniques to help alleviate stress, soothe the mind and nervous system and find healing through feeling and expression.