

PRESENTED BY



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# Director of the Creative Economy for the City of Barrie - Karen Dubeau

Welcome to the 9th Annual Barrie Arts Awards! The City of Barrie is proud to work together with so many dedicated artists, musicians, performers and arts organizations to grow a vibrant cultural fabric here in our City.

This event is designed to shine a spotlight on the incredible variety of talent in our community, in all art forms – music, visual art, dance, theatre, film, the written word, and digital media. It is a chance to celebrate and acknowledge the many people who have contributed their time, talent, energy and imagination in growing our incredible creative community here in Barrie.

As a newcomer to Barrie, I have been struck by the immense diversity of talent, as well as the impressive degree of excellence and originality of the works that directly reflect our growing City. There exists here a strong spirit of collaboration amongst those in the creative and cultural sectors which enables and supports each of us in our work. This year in particular was an exciting time to be involved with the community, as we acknowledged 150 years of confederation. The fantastic displays of public art, the original performances, and the broad community engagement in the arts, all contributed to a wonderful sense of pride and optimism in our City, and attracted record numbers of visitors at our events.

As Barrie continues to grow and diversify, we will be challenged to maintain a strong, inclusive identity. It is only through story-telling, engaging art, place-making and experiences, that common bonds are built. The role of arts and culture have therefore never been more important to the City of Barrie.

The changing nature of technology is opening vast new opportunities for expressions of creativity as well as opening new channels for audience development – indeed, the global stage has never been closer. The City's Creative Economy Department is a catalyst for bridging arts, innovation, culture and entrepreneurship, one of the only municipalities to bring these elements together. Building on that strong collaboration with artists, businesses and cultural organizations, we are collectively laying the foundation for a vibrant, prosperous, and creative community.

To the artists, businesses, organizations and collectives gathered here this evening, we offer our sincere thanks for everything you do to enhance our City. You are all very deserving of recognition for the contributions that you make!

**Karen Dubeau**

**Director of the Creative Economy  
for the City of Barrie**

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karen Dubeau". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial 'K'.

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# EVENING AGENDA

## 6:30 pm

Cocktails and appetizers provided by Micheal & Marion's

## 7:00 pm

Welcome from MCs: Shelly Skinner and Andrea Murray

### Performance – *Theatre by the Bay*

Scene from *We Must Have More Men! Barrie and the Great War*

### Award Presentation - *Most Promising Youth*

Nominees are Kasey Kohring, Naomi McGuiirk, Molly McNulty and Melina Melle

**Special Presentation** to Georgian College in recognition of 50 years of education

### Award Presentation – *Emerging Artist presented by Georgian College DVA*

Nominees are Amanda Campbell, Brendan Hiles, Amanda Rodgers and Alyssa Tess

### Performance

Thomas Messenger

### Award Presentation - *Artist Without Barriers presented by City of Barrie Accessibility Advisory Committee*

Nominees are Allison Bobbette, Leonora Husveti-Frenette and Grant Vahi

### Performance

Damian Lopes, Poet Laureate for the City of Barrie

### Award Presentation - *Business Champion presented by Pratt Homes*

Nominees are Rod Burns and Anna Small

### Performance *Danny Michel presented by Inside the Music*

### Award Presentation – *Excellence in the Arts*

Nominees are Alex Dault, Natalie Harris, Linda Laforge and John McEwan

### Film Screening by the Barrie Film Festival – *Short Film Award*

3rd place in the Simcoe County Category: *Hills Like White Elephants*, directed by Brendan Hiles

### Award Presentation – *Contribution to the Community*

Nominees are Barrie Art Club, Marshall Green, Claudia Mandler McKnight, Metzger Studio, Darren Roskam, Simcoe Contemporary Dancers and Word Up

### Performance – *Local Indigenous artists showcase*

featuring Plex, Sarain Fox, Aleah Baillargeon, and Rudy Bressette



# PERFORMANCES

# Danny Michel

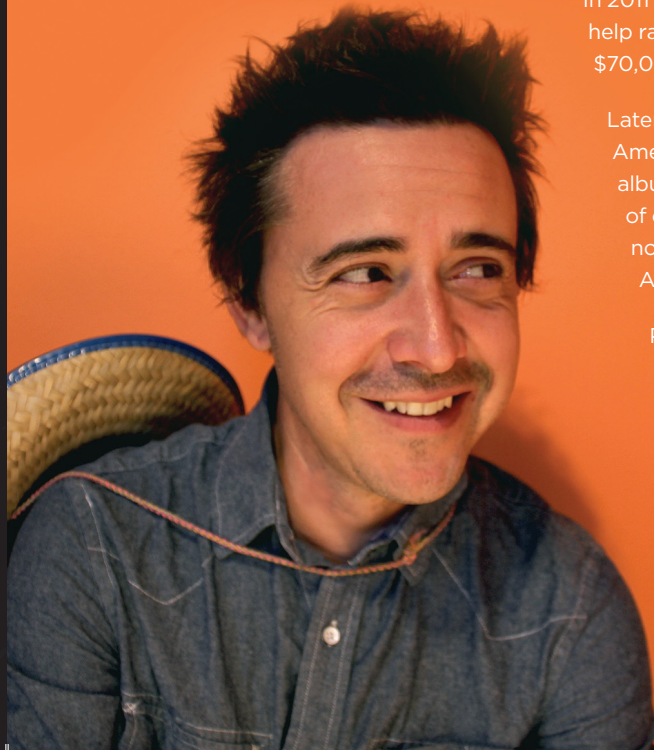
With nominations for three JUNOs, the Polaris Prize, The CBC “Heart Of Gold” and a pile of albums under his belt, Danny Michel is unquestionably one of Canada’s finest songwriters. His thoughtful lyrics & earnest performances have earned him a devoted fan base. A musical chameleon, able to slip into many genres with ease. An adventurous & fearless artist. A master at striking the right balance between unpredictability and meeting expectations, leaving you wanting more as soon as it’s over.

In 2011 he relocated to Belize. There he founded the “Danny Michel Ocean Academy Fund” to help raise scholarships for a small non-profit community high school. To date he’s raised over \$70,000.00 for the school and volunteers there when he can.

Later he tracked down one of his favorite bands; The Garifuna Collective, a unique Afro-Amerindian cultural group and convinced them they should make an album together. That album (“Black Birds Are Dancing Over Me”) was quoted as “One of the finest musical works of our time” By Billboard Magazine’s Larry Leblanc. The album landed Danny a 3rd JUNO nomination (this time in the world music category) and a sold out summer tour of North America with The Garifuna Collective as his band.

Past critics have praised Danny’s lyrics for having “something to say” without coming off preachy. Topics range from the environment (“Feather, Fur & Fin”) to big questions (“If God’s on your side, then who’s on mine?”). Others ask “Who’s Gonna Miss You (when you’re gone)?” a song which explores karma asking “Did you live it right?/Did you live it wrong?”.

At the moment Danny is sitting in front of a blank canvas contemplating where his next album is going to take him. It could go anywhere from here. Knowing Danny, wherever it goes – it will be an adventure.



# Indigenous Arts Showcase **Plex**

Plex (Ojibwe, Peguis First Nations) is an award winning hip-hop artist and producer based in Toronto, Canada. With almost 20 years of experience, Plex has raised the bar amongst his Indigenous peers while building a strong and relevant presence in mainstream Canadian Hip Hop. Since releasing his debut solo album in 2009, Plex has toured across the US and Canada performing, teaching workshops to Indigenous youth and running his independent recording label New Leaf Entertainment.

Since September 2010 his music video for “The Way It Should Be” from his first album “Brainstorm,” has received critical acclaim from across the globe and has been screened at over 30 film festivals worldwide, receiving 7 awards. His sophomore release “Demons” made its debut in June of 2012 and appealed to those who love Hip Hop and deep, thought provoking lyrics over intricate production design. He is a master at his craft and a visionary who is committed to his community and his artistic expression.

In 2016, Plex released “Lucky Stars,” a smooth, hip hop ballad about his life-partner, Jennifer Podemski, who curated this evening’s special showcase of Indigenous expression. Plex is joined by artists Sarain Fox, Aleah Baillargeon, and Rudy Bressette.

A close-up portrait of Plex, a man with short dark hair and a slight smile, wearing a dark t-shirt. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with warm lighting. The text "INDIGENOUS" is partially visible in red at the bottom of the image.

INDIGENOUS

# Sarain Fox

Of Anishinabe lineage, Sarain is a passionate spokesperson for her Indigenous community north of Toronto and wears the beauty of her heritage with pride. Sarain explains that, “through film and acting my goal is to tell the stories that allow us to relearn our self’s as Indigenous people.” Through her pursuit of recognition as a name in the film industry, Sarain hopes to open new doors and opportunities for Indigenous youths. Already well on her way, Sarain has worked on several major projects: she was cast as Sacheen Little Feather in “The Andy Warhol Interview Project” which debuted at the Vienna Film Festival in June 2007 and was involved in the ARG re-release of the CBS TV drama “Jericho”. Of course, she always has lots of new ideas on the drawing board and is currently refining several concepts for projects in the near future. Already in progress are various independent endeavors including the debut of her first play entitled “Ashes” which appeared at the Weesageechak Festival in Toronto and most recently; Sarain completed The New York Film Academy’s, acting for film program.

Just as comfortable behind the scenes as in front of the lens, Sarain is also a distinguished fashion model. She can be seen on the front cover of PIE, Redskin and Spirit magazines, and has also appeared in ImagoZine, Butterfly Unltd. from NYC and Grind magazine. Sarain has modeled in several Imago shows and also for designer Brandon R. Dwyer of Project Runway.

Sarain is strong and nimble not only as an intellect; she has also been studying, practicing and performing as a professional dancer for the past ten years. She has attended the Canadian Children’s Dance Theatre, the Quinte Ballet School and the Alvin Ailey Bachelor of Fine Arts Program in New York City. She has performed at The Canada Dance Festival 2008, The Barrie Jazz And Blues Festival VIII, the 2002, 2007 and 2012 Aboriginal Achievement Awards, and two summers with the Ajkun Ballet Theatre Company in New York City. She is a member of Kahawaii Dance theatre and has attended three indigenous dance residencies at The Banff Centre, which allowed her to work with Neil Iremia of Black Grace and Javier Dezule of Dezule dance. Sarain is currently the newest member of Untitled Collective; a NYC based Australian aboriginal modern dance collective. On and off the dance floor, this stellar entity of artistic expulsion is truly always on her toes.





# Damian Lopes

## Barrie's Poet Laureate

From poetry to fiction, image to text, and print to screen, the current Poet Laureate for the City of Barrie, Damian Lopes' work explores the impacts of emigration and technology on culture, the re-creation of myths after migration, and the interstices that result.

The author of three print books and two electronic works of poetry, he is currently completing his first book of fiction. Lopes is a writer member of PEN Canada, and a member of the Writers' Union of Canada. He also served as the founding chair of the Barrie Arts and Culture Council from 2008-2012.

Lopes was the web editor and a consulting editor at Coach House Books from 1998-2004. During that time, he helped put their full front list online. From 1990-1998, he ran the micro press fingerprinting ink-operated, producing chapbooks, leaflets and broadsides by authors such as Nelson Ball, Daniel F Bradley, Christian Bök, jwcurry, MAC Farrant, Gerry Gilbert, bpNichol, David UU, Darren Wershler, and Alana Wilcox. For a short time in 1995, his brother, Dominic McIver Lopes, and he ran Caju Press.

Born in Aberdeen Scotland and raised in Toronto Canada, Lopes traces his family over much of the globe, including the UK, New Zealand, Tanzania, India and Portugal. He graduated as a music major from the Etobicoke School of the Arts, and English major from McGill University. Having cottaged in Simcoe County throughout his childhood, he now lives in Barrie Ontario with his wife and son, and cottages farther north.



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# Theatre by the Bay

Theatre by the Bay presents a short excerpt from their play *We Must Have More Men! Barrie and the Great War* featuring actors Leah Holder and Andy Perun. Written in 2016 by Danielle Joy Kostrich and Alex Dault, this play looks at the lives of eight people living in Barrie in 1914 and follows their lives over the course of the war.

The play is currently touring in Base Borden and Collingwood; tickets available at [www.theatrebythebay.com](http://www.theatrebythebay.com)

**Photo credit:** Adrienne Callan



# Thomas Messenger

Thomas is a disabled artist and patron of the arts who enjoys using several mediums of expression for his creations. From music, to canvas, to 3D modelling, he composes, records, and creates all of his projects from his apartment studio in Barrie. His song “My Cape Breton Shore” was recorded by Canadian performer John Allen Cameron on his album Glencoe Station.

He has shared music and stages with artists such as John Allen Cameron, Finger Eleven, Kim Mitchell, Rik Emmett, Jimie Jamison (Survivor), and many of the local music community. His art leans towards topics of culture and heritage, as well as diverse world issues.

You can hear his original songs online at

<https://soundcloud.com/thomas-messenger>





# Barrie Film Festival

## Short film Competition – Simcoe County Category, 3rd Place winner:

*Hills Like White Elephants directed by Brendan Hiles*

Every year the Barrie Film Festival has a Short Film Competition that receives film submissions from regional, national and international filmmakers. From these entries a panel of judges selects films that will be screened in a showcase that takes place the opening weekend of the annual ten day festival. Awards are then presented in a number of categories.

At this year's competition Hills Like White Elephants created by local filmmaker Brendan Hiles won 3rd place in the Simcoe County Category. He is a Barrie Film Festival veteran and has been recognized in previous years winning 1st place for both "The Finest Form of Flattery" in 2014 and "A Cascading Metal Adventure" in 2016.

**Film:** Hills Like White Elephants      **Directed by** Brendan Hiles      **4:37 min**

**Synopsis:** A conversation between a man and a woman. Based on the short story by Ernest Hemmingway.

**Awards party photo credit:** Jennifer Klementti





Photography by Luca Ragona

# AWARD NOMINEES

## **MOST PROMISING YOUTH**

*Kasey Kohring, Naomi McGuirk,  
Molly McNulty and Melina Melle*

## **EMERGING ARTIST**

**presented by Georgian College DVA**

*Amanda Campbell, Brendan Hiles,  
Amanda Rodgers  
and Alyssa Tess*

## **ARTIST WITHOUT BARRIERS**

*Allison Bobbette, Leonora Husveti-  
Frenette and Grant Vahi*

## **BUSINESS CHAMPION**

**presented by Pratt Homes**

*Rod Burns and Anna Small*

## **EXCELLENCE IN THE ARTS**

*Alex Dault, Natalie Harris, Linda  
Laforge and John McEwan*

## **CONTRIBUTION TO THE COMMUNITY**

*Barrie Art Club, Marshall Green, Claudia  
Mandler McKnight, Metzger Studio,  
Darren Roskam, Simcoe Contemporary  
Dancers and Word Up*



THE WINNERS

NO PEEKING!

# Most Promising Youth

## Melina Melle

Melina Melle is an 18-year old pop singer songwriter from Barrie, Ontario, Canada. Her music has influences of Ed Sheeran and Selena Gomez and her attitude is reminiscent of Alanis Morissette. Melina Melle has prophetic insight into what teenage girls really go through. From the growing pains of dealing with parents – to having issues with boys – to the scary reality of becoming a young adult, Melina Melle writes songs about their lives.

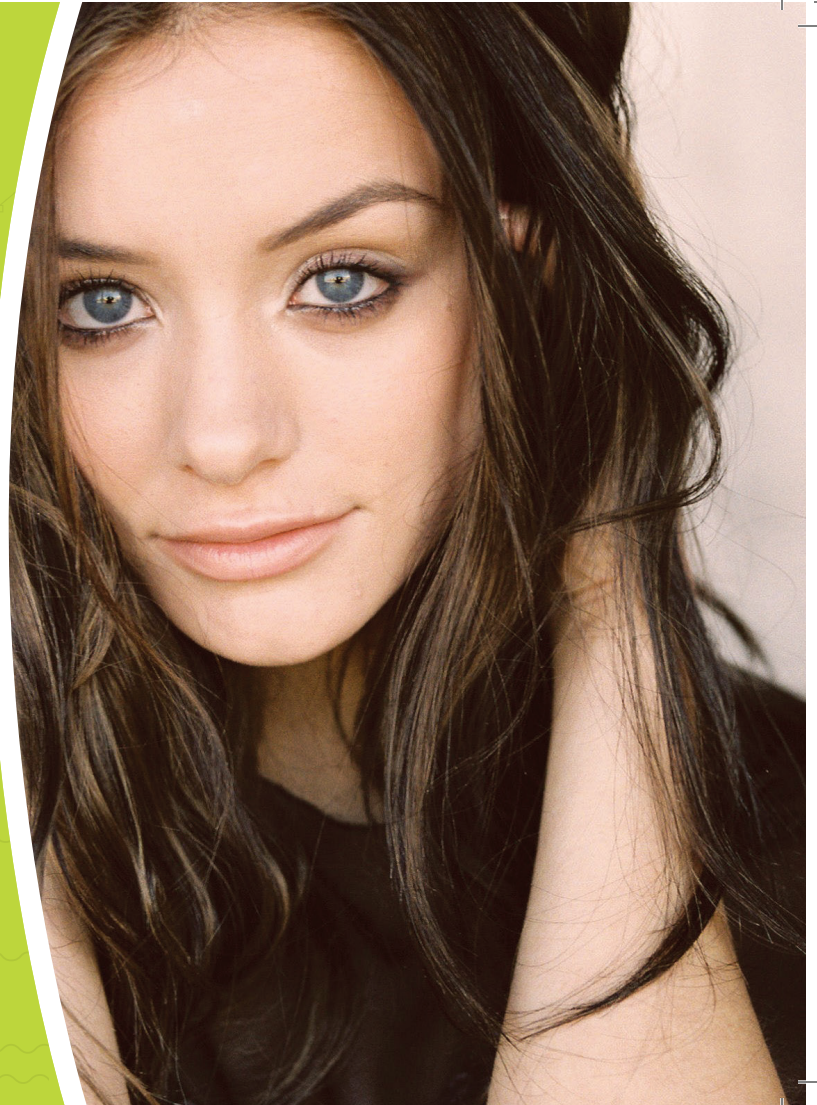
Melina Melle works with songwriters and producers in Barrie, Toronto, Nashville and Los Angeles. Specifically, she has worked with producers Keith Thomas (Celine Dion), Malik Yusef (Kanye West), Vincent Barry (Beyonce) and Carlos “Los DaMystro” McKinney.

*“I have produced songs for stars like Rihanna, Mariah Carey and Usher. Melina Melle has the rare combination of having that ‘it factor’ (Star Quality) and being a young person who works hard at being a thoughtful songwriter and multi-instrumentalist”.*

*~ Carlos “LOS MYSTRO” McKinney*

Currently in her first year at Durham College in the Music Business Program, Melina Melle is self-promoting on social media, has seen an increase of followers on her @MelinaMelleMusic Instagram and received over 230,000 views of her cover of Justin Bieber’s “Cold Water” in a week when it was featured on “The Amazing Singers” Instagram channel.

Melina Melle, who has won various awards and competitions, is most proud of winning the “Northern Ontario Singing Competition” at age 13 (in the 13 - 18 year old category), being chosen as the winner of the “Best Song” at the Songwriter Girl Camp in Nashville in 2015 by a panel of industry professionals and winning the “North of Nashville” Competition at Kempenfest in the summer of 2015. For the past five summers, Melina Melle has been busking (performing covers and originals) in downtown Barrie. She has also performed at Hugh’s Room, The Glenn Gould Studio in Toronto, and Horseshoe and Blue Mountain Resorts. This past August, she was one of the featured performers at the “Muskoka Craft Beerfest” in Gravenhurst, along with Dani Strong and Xtreme. Currently, her manager John Huffman IV is in talks with some publishing companies to secure a publishing deal for the release of a single and music video.



# Emerging Artist **Brendan Hiles**

Brendan Hiles is a writer/director/producer/actor born in, and based out of, Barrie, Ontario. His love of stories came from an early age; acting out fantastical scenarios in woods and fields. It was his love for movies, such as Star Wars, Princess Bride, and the works of Jackie Chan—especially Drunken Master, and it's visceral stunts and imagery—that drove him to discover both the joy and stress of filmmaking with friends and confidants.

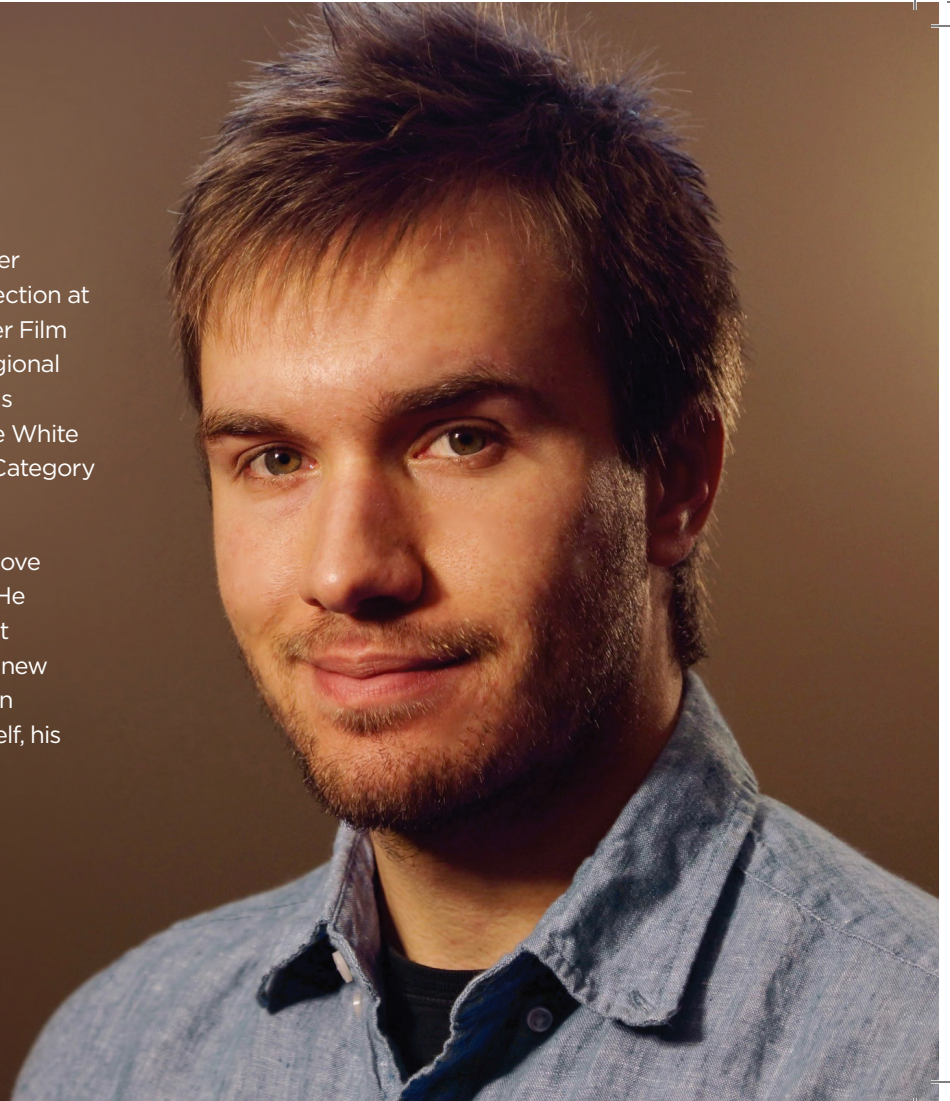
To this day, he has written, directed, produced, edited, and/or shot close to a hundred shorts of different styles and genres. From his first, tender and goofy parodies of his high school days; to the carefully nurtured documentaries, music videos, and narrative works in university and college; to his more introspective and collaborative post-academic works—he has kept his passion for the craft and its didactic and cathartic power. That passion led him to multiple academic institutions, where he was imbued with the knowledge to appreciate the aesthetics behind the craft. He graduated from both

Brock University, with a major in Film Studies, and Fanshawe College, through their Advanced Filmmaking Program. During this time, his short, Who Killed Josh Urochavitz? won 3rd Place in the 48 Hour Brock Film Challenge and another short, Before the Next Day, was an official selection in the First Take Film Festival.

After graduating, Brendan has focused on writing, directing, and producing a prolific output of narrative works. This output includes his award-winning short, One Last Game, about a group of friends who find themselves playing one final game of pick-up baseball before they head on different paths. It won the Homegrown Award and People's Choice at the 2015 Orillia Film Festival. His short, A Cascadian Metal Adventure, about a drummer trying to get his band's big show, was an official selection in both the Forest City Film Festival 2016 and Scenic City Film Festival 2016, and 1st Place in the Simcoe County Region at the Barrie Film Festival 2016.

Another short, Infinite Error, followed an isolated astrologer hunted by something dark and sinister, was an official selection at the Chatham-Kent Film Festival 2017, Finalist for the Shiver Film Festival 2017, and Gold Award Winner in the National/Regional Category at the South Georgian Bay Film Festival 2017. His adaptation of the Ernest Hemingway short story, Hills Like White Elephants, recently won 3rd Place in the Simcoe County Category at the 2017 Barrie Film Festival.

Brendan continues to grow and evolve as an artist and his love for writing and filmmaking has not diminished in the least. He is currently writing a feature film script and hopes to bring it into production sometime during summer 2018. He knows new challenges await in the future, but he will meet them with an unwavering determination, in the pursuit of bettering himself, his craft, and connecting with audiences far and wide.



# Artist Without Barriers

## Leonora Husveti-Frenette

Leonora Husveti-Frenette, B.A. taught Dance at University of Toronto while completing her degree and writing poetry. Later she joined her magician husband in inventing and performing their original illusions at Hollywood's Magic Castle and on luxury cruise ships around the world. The couple headlined for Princess, Holland America, Renaissance Cruise Lines and others. Inventing and manufacturing new effects made them sought after performers at magic conventions. Illusionists from USA, Japan, Europe, and Saudi Arabia perform Magic Makers' inventions on America's Got Talent, Masters of Illusions, Le Plus Grand Cabaret du Monde and unfortunately, on The World's Greatest Illusions Revealed.

The pressures of international travel, show business and worsening Fibromyalgia mounted. Leonora kept her condition secret from employers and family, and continued to aid ill parents. She pushed herself through pain, sleeplessness, fatigue, and a back injury. At times she'd be wheel-chaired around airports and hotels-but through iron will she would perform at night.

2005 brought recognition in the Feile Filiochta international poetry competition and a book publication offer. But, after nursing both parents through life threatening emergencies simultaneously, Leonora collapsed with Myalgic Encephalomyelitis, (a.k.a. Chronic Fatigue Syndrome). With the help of her husband and specialists, slowly, through seven years of debilitation and many setbacks, Leonora fought her way up to semi-functioning. While seriously ill, she wrote her memoir Exorcism. It was a difficult time. Friends left; her mother was dying. Words were insufficient. Emotion needed expression, and found it unexpectedly in visual art.

CFS carries cognitive disruptions including difficulty concentrating. Utilizing sewing skills, "Winter's Grief" finally took form and spoke about the aborted potential of loss, and letting go so transformation can occur. This first work won 2nd prize at South Simcoe Arts Council. Leonora's fourth collage was selected for a juried show at Orillia's Museum of Art and History. Her tenth collage was part of the national Carmichael Landscape show, garnering a newspaper article and magazine interview.

In 2014 South Simcoe Arts Council awarded Leonora the Alice Forestell Award for most promising emerging artist. Leonora's near-perfect acceptance rate was astonishing. She participated in national juried shows at OMAH and Quest Gallery. Her works were exhibited in Toronto's Todmorden Mills and Joseph D. Carrier galleries and others.

Leonora's unique vision and style resulted in invitations from MacLaren Art Centre's Off the Hook and Benefactor programs in her first year. She had a joint feature show with her father at the Barrie Art Club in 2015 which was picked up by Double Door Studios and Gallery. Simultaneously, Barrie's Department of Culture selected Leonora to hold her first solo show at First Floor Gallery. Later, she was one of fifteen artists selected from across Canada to showcase in the CNE.

In 2016 Leonora was selected by jurors for Spinal Cord Injury Ontario's Shades of Ability, an exhibition for Ontario artists with disabilities. Public vote determined winners in 6 categories. Leonora won Best in Mixed Media. She decided to add her voice to those championing people with disabilities. In 2017 she won Best in Mixed Media again, as well as Best in Show.

In less than 5 years, Leonora has participated in 80 juried exhibits, including 7 solo shows. Her passion and dedication can fuel a rocket.



# Business Champion

## Anna Small

Anna was destined to have a passion for the arts, as both her parents were deeply involved in Toronto's cultural community. Anna remembers that, growing up, her house was always filled with music. Her father, Bill (William) Small, was a teacher and multi-talented musician in Toronto whose students included Liona Boyd. Her mother, Muriel Small, fundraised for University Settlement Music School where she helped to raise millions of dollars which provided musical instruments and lessons for those who could not afford them. Anna's parents brought her to see plays from as young as three, as well as operas, The Toronto Symphony Orchestra, and productions at the National Ballet.

Anna's parents also encouraged her at a young age to engage with the arts. Anna became an accomplished musician, singer, and dancer. She achieved grade 8 piano and grade 2 theory, sang in choirs and took singing lessons throughout most of her youth, and was a strong Highland Dancer. A particular highlight was performing with her choir

at the O'Keefe Centre (now the Sony Centre) in Toronto. Anna would not be who she is without the deep artistic emersion her parents provided her with. William and Muriel Small's legacy lives here in Barrie as well, as the grand staircase at the Mady Centre was dedicated to them by Anna. Their love for the arts still fills her soul to this day, and was the inspiration for her to use her business, being a realtor for Keller-Williams Experience Reality, as a means of supporting the arts.

Anna has been a sponsor of various companies and initiatives throughout Barrie's cultural community. Just this year alone, Anna was the sponsor of Theatre by the Bay's monthly playwriting series, The Barrie Theatre Lab, and Talk is Free Theatre's concert The Next Generation Leahy. In previous years, she has supported a range of projects including TBTB's Stars Come Out and Shakespeare in the Classroom program, the Mady Centre's Untapped series 2 and 3, the Barrie Music Festival (for which she was also an adjudicator), and TIFT's Comedy Festival.

She was also a financial sponsor for the creation of the Mady Centre and, more recently, a vocal advocate for the W.A. Fisher Auditorium project.

Anna's commitment to Barrie's artistic community is far more extensive than just her financial contributions. She has served on the board of directors for Theatre by the Bay (2002-2011), the Barrie Music Festival (2009-2014), and is a current Board Member for Talk is Free Theatre. She is also a proud advocate for the Barrie cultural community. Anna often buys large numbers of tickets for performances to encourage new audiences, and, through her extensive travels across the country, spreads the word about the high-calibre art in our community.

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Excellence in  
the Arts  
**Alex Dault**



**Alex Dault has worked as a playwright and director exhibiting immense commitment to the Barrie theatre arts community over the past fifteen years. Alex's plays include The Five Points, Turkey Shoot, We Must Have More Men, The Test, Firebrand, Nine Mile Portage, The Loyalists and The Campbell House Story. His plays express a passion for Canadian history, a fascination with concepts of truth and a yearning for immediacy in storytelling.**

Recently, Alex has been writing about Barrie. His most recent play, The Five Points, was a kaleidoscope of perspectives on Barrie's downtown. The play sourced text from interviews with people living in Barrie's shelters, business owners, politicians, sex workers, ice fishermen and barflies in attempt to showcase the incongruity of viewpoints about downtown Barrie. The show was performed for two weeks at the Mady Centre in July to rave reviews. Alex also wrote We Must Have More Men! Barrie and the Great War alongside Danielle Joy Kostrich. We Must Have More Men! looks at how Barrie was impacted by conscription during the First World War. The play has been enormously popular and sold out its 2016 run. Lastly, Alex's 'walking tour' play about how Barrie came to be, Nine Mile Portage, has been remounted three times on Barrie's waterfront, running for three weeks each year. He is currently in the process of writing a fourth play about Barrie set during the Second World War.

Alex is presently a critical force in Barrie's artistic community, exhibited first and foremost in his role as Artistic Director of Theatre by the Bay. In his role, Alex has produced fifteen shows for

the company, including the world premiere of a new musical based on Goethe's Faust composed by Leslie Arden.

As a producer, Alex has emphasized the apprenticeship and hiring of local professional theatre artists and has since his tenure began employed more than one hundred local actors, directors, composers and designers. Alex has also worked hard to attract more artistic talent to Barrie by creating The Indie Producer's Co-Op, a program that teaches artistic producing to graduating students from George Brown Theatre School and, as of 2017, to Ryerson School of Performance.

Last year, Alex also conceived the Barrie Theatre Lab, a monthly playwriting get-together which now sees more than 30 attendees every month coming together to read work by local playwrights.

In 2016, Alex shifted the focus of Theatre by the Bay's programming to feature work which either tells local stories (be they folklore, histories, or contemporary events) or feature local playwrights. In this, he hopes to showcase a distinct and unique Barrie voice.

Alex is one of the leading advocates for arts and culture in the city, working as one of the founding members of Barrie Arts Capacity, an initiative dedicated to raising a million dollars for arts programming as well as speaking out on critical issues like the renovation of W.A Fisher auditorium. His grant writing and fundraising work has raised almost a million dollars for the arts in Barrie.

# Contribution to the Community

## Simcoe Contemporary Dancers

Simcoe Contemporary Dancers (SCD) is a not-for-profit professional company in Simcoe County that exists to encourage and showcase the development of local professional contemporary dance. SCD works to raise the visibility of contemporary dance, create awareness, build educational opportunities, and reach out to the public to share an appreciation of their art form. SCD are pioneers in this community as the region's first performance-based not-for-profit dance organization. They are an ensemble of highly skilled adult professional dancers and youth apprentices dedicated and invested in growing and developing local talent. Their work has been recognized through support from the Ontario Arts Council, Canadian Heritage, and the City of Barrie. Through their ongoing initiatives and programs, SCD contributes to Barrie's art community through the creation of original performances for the public, training opportunities, by providing a space within Barrie for dance professionals to grow and work, and by bringing established artists into Barrie to perform or create new work for the community.

Simcoe Contemporary Dancers offers a variety of training opportunities in the community. As SCD's Executive Director has said, the goal of their classes is to "...engage students in physically- and developmentally-appropriate technique classes that encourage individual expression, foster curiosity, embrace a sense of community and challenge them towards excellence". This gives youth and adults in Barrie an opportunity to develop as dancers outside of a studio or competition-based learning environment. SCD also provides novel opportunities to learn and engage with dance as part of their ongoing operations. During this year's Carnegie Days at the MacLaren Art Centre, SCD presented a free

demonstration and interactive workshop on the connections between choreography and coding. Working together, the participants built chance-based dances for the audience and artists to bring to life. In 2014-2015, SCD in partnership with the YMCA launched a Creative Dance Program, offering classes for children ages 3-12. In this program students participated in a variety of dance and movement exercises from choreographed phrases to guided improvisations. The focus was to explore elements of dance such as space, time, energy, weight and dynamics, learning movement skills through imagination and stories. The Creative Dance Program aimed to develop each child's expressiveness through movement.

SCD has produced a number of shows within Barrie, each offering different opportunities to engage the community with dance. The most recent examples, both from 2017, are Dusk Dances Barrie presented at Lampman Lane Park, and Trajectory, staged at the Mady Centre for the Performing Arts.

Dusk Dances Barrie was an outdoor pay-what-you-can dance festival that brought high-quality contemporary dance to Lampman Lane Park in August. Produced in partnership with Dusk Dances Inc., and made possible in part by the Government of Canada and the City of Barrie, audience members enjoyed a guided tour through the park leading them to eclectic, site-specific dance works from acclaimed national and local dance artists. The festival tours nationally, and through SCD's efforts Barrie residents were able to enjoy an iteration performed in their own backyard. Additionally, the festival included a piece choreographed and performed by approximately 16 community members, as well as nightly free dance workshops. In early October, SCD staged Trajectory, a mixed program show, at the Mady Centre for the Performing Arts. The performance included new contemporary dance works created for the company by Shelby Thoms and Dora Award winning choreographer Mairéad Filgate, as well as the workshop premiere of Dream Another Day created and performed by visiting artist Meagan O'Shea. Both Mairéad Filgate and Meagan O'Shea are established artists who were given an opportunity through SCD to bring new creative works to Barrie. Filgate

grew up in Barrie and this commission was her first opportunity to work creatively in her hometown. This is complementary to SCD's Welcome Home Workshop Series which invites back to Barrie artists who grew up in the region and have gone on to establish careers in the arts. These two examples are only the most recent executions of SCD's mandate to animate spaces with choreography for local enjoyment of a professional level of dance. Other examples are SCD's free admission performances and workshops presented at Carnegie Days and Winterfest in partnership with the MacLaren Art Centre,

holiday performances at the Innisfil Public Library and Holly Community Centre, and a Simcoe County library tour. Through these performances, workshops and more, SCD have facilitated numerous opportunities to collaborate as a community in a non-competitive atmosphere - providing a platform to be expressive, creatively engaged and challenged.



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## UPCOMING EVENTS

Friday, Dec. 1  
**THE GOOD LOVELIES**

Saturday, Feb. 3  
**VALDY**

**MONTHLY OPEN STAGE**  
Last Thursday of the month  
at the Barrie Public Library

MORE DETAILS AT  
[BarrieFolk.com](http://BarrieFolk.com)



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