



Winnipeg Free Press | Newsletter 

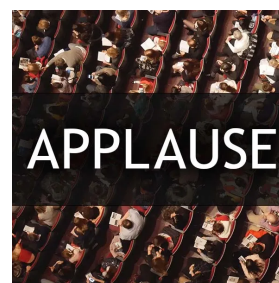
Jill Wilson | Applause

WEEKLY

A weekly look at what's happening in Winnipeg's arts and entertainment scene.

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Canada's screen industry basks in a brighter spotlight

A couple of weeks ago, I was in Toronto for the Canadian Screen Awards, which annually honour the best in our country's film and television productions.

I was on the red carpet, interviewing celebrities about their favourite books and reading habits for the *Free Press*'s new BookTok videos.

It was a weirdly high-stress but also very exciting situation; people really like talking about books, I discovered. (Check out *Heated Rivalry* star Robbie G.K. talking about Agatha Christie and *Project Hail Mary* [here](#).)

And *Heated Rivalry* was one of the reasons (along with comedian Mike Myers, who received the Academy Icon Award) it was the most highly attended media room/red carpet in CSA history; the packed press room can probably largely be attributed to the appearance of key players from the internationally popular *Crave* show.



Cast and crew of *Heated Rivalry* pose on the red carpet at The Canadian Screen Awards in Toronto in May. (Chris Young / The Canadian Press files)

The queer hockey romance — [which broke the record for CSA wins](#), taking home all 16 of the awards it was nominated for, including Best Drama, Best Writing and Best Directing — catapulted the awards into the limelight to a degree probably never before experienced.

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But it isn't just *Heated Rivalry* that's captured attention outside our borders. The night's other big winners, Arctic-set comedy *North of North* and time-travel buddy film *Nirvana the Band the Show the Movie*, have both garnered substantial notice in the U.S.

North of North (which won Best Comedy as well as Best Lead Performer in a Comedy for Anna Lambe) is a co-production of CBC, Netflix and APTN, giving it a broader reach than many Canadian sitcoms.

Nirvana, from director Matt Johnson (*BlackBerry*) was rapturously received by American critics, who called it "an instant cult-classic comedy" and "an early contender for the funniest and most charming movie of the year."

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Paul Gross and his 2004 Gemini Award for Best Performance by an Actor in a Continuing Leading Dramatic Role probably did not sneak out the theatre back door to avoid a throng of

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And what makes these three examples particularly meaningful is that all of them are set quite prominently, even defiantly, in Canada.

Toronto is not standing in for New York in *Nirvana the Band...*; as a matter of fact, one might argue the city is partly the star of the film.

North of North, created by Inuit filmmakers Stacey Aglok MacDonald and Alethea Arnaquq-Barilis, is filmed in Nunavut, despite the logistical difficulties that can present, and features a cast and crew that is almost entirely made up of Indigenous Canadian people.

And the micro-budgeted *Heated Rivalry* — which was passed on by HBO until the U.S. streamer realized the error of its ways and picked it up for distribution (the show is now the company's most popular scripted acquisition) — has created a cottage industry (**pun intended**) for tourism in Hamilton and Guelph, Ont., where the series was shot.

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Jill Wilson



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Did you know we have many other free newsletters? You can gorge yourself on food and beverage news from my Arts & Life pals Eva Wasney and Ben Sigurdson, who write the bi-weekly [Dish](#) newsletter, or you can follow a weekly exploration of Indigenous voices, perspectives and experiences in Niigaan Sinclair's [Biidaajimowin / News from the Centre](#).

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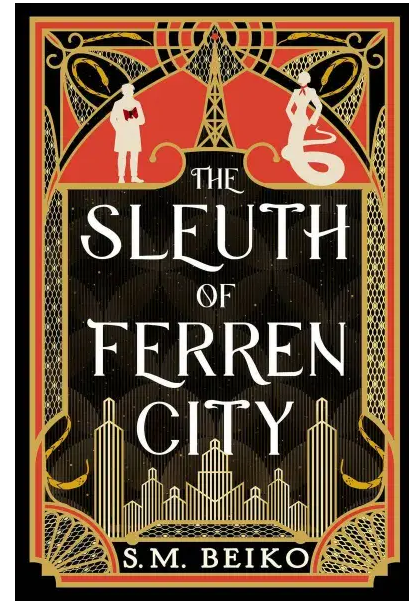
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What's up

Free Press staff recommend things to do this week [READ MORE](#)



Ben Waldman:

Passion play

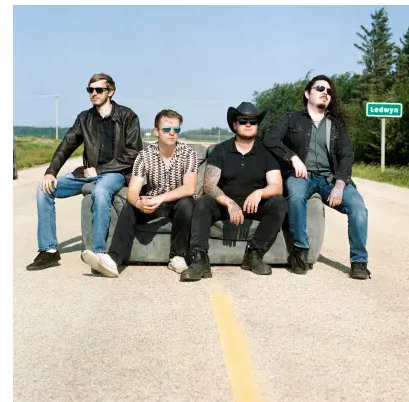
Rainbow Stage takes biblical rock opera to its outdoor stage [READ MORE](#)



Eva Wasney:

Rockin' the country

Dauphin festival continues to grow beyond its core [READ MORE](#)



Ben Waldman:



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NEW IN MUSIC

Tiago Resko:

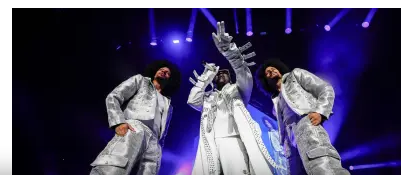
Blues-rocker, storyteller Billy Joe Green channels rage into art

After spending more than a decade in a residential school, musician Billy Joe Green has spent his life channelling his trauma into his songs, using them to heal while spreading awareness about the injustices Indigenous Peoples have faced. [READ MORE](#)



Eva Wasney:

Hip-hop heavyweights share top billing at sold-out show



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NEW ON STAGE

Ben Waldman:

Chorus of voices defines WJT's upcoming season

A drama about circumcision, a Tony-winning musical and an abbreviated history of the Jewish people from the pen of a Manitoban performing arts legend are being served up next season by the Winnipeg Jewish Theatre, artistic director Dan Petrenko announced Wednesday. [READ MORE](#)



Holly Harris:

Epic performance, but Shakespeare in the Ruins' The Iliad suffers from identity crisis

War is hell. But it's also, as playwrights Lisa Peterson and Denis O'Hare pointedly remind us in their stage adaptation of Homer's The Iliad (translated by Robert Fagles), all too sadly predictable; bloodlust has run in the veins of humankind from time immemorial. [READ MORE](#)



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NEW ON SCREEN

Conrad Sweatman:

Documentary puts affordable housing centre stage

Winnipeg co-ops among models examined in film [READ MORE](#)



Alison Gillmor:

Supergirl? More like So-so girl

DC outing has its positives, but sloppy script weakens its punch [READ MORE](#)



Denise Duguay:

Cutting comedy, frilly diversions

A look at five notable new productions on your TV screen or streaming apps [READ MORE](#)



NEW IN BOOKS

Allan Levine:



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Reviewed by Craig Terlson:

Literary legend waxes poetic on treasured Mexican village

If you travel a lot, there's usually one place that resonates with you more than all the rest — a place that isn't home, but it feels like it. [READ MORE](#)



Reviewed by Susan Huebert:

Sask. Métis village grapples with child abductions, North-West Rebellion

Major events and big personalities can overshadow the lives of ordinary people, but even the youngest and seemingly least important members of a society can help shape communities. In *Treat Them as...* [READ MORE](#)



Reviewed by Nyala Ali:

Pioneering partners

In choosing each other, same-sex couple in 19th-century Vermont defied convention [READ MORE](#)



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Reviewed by Bill Rambo:

Making it work... almost

Despite success in Canada, Doug and the Slugs couldn't break through in the U.S. [READ MORE](#)



Reviewed by Alison Gillmor:

The art of passion

Story of real-life Scottish painters turned lovers told in joyful, moving prose [READ MORE](#)



Reviewed by Dave Williamson:

Clandestine connection

Adulterous couple adrift in life in Mackintosh's moving new novel [READ MORE](#)



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Ben Sigurdson:

Lauded author Whitehead to visit Winnipeg

Two-time Pulitzer Prize winner and bestselling author Colson Whitehead visits Winnipeg for the first time this summer in an event to celebrate the release of his forthcoming novel *Cool Machine*, which publishes July 21. [READ MORE](#)

Harriet Zaidman:

Serpent's sadness stymies monster doc

Dot is a monster mender — a different kind of veterinarian — in Christine Baldacchino's *Monster Mender* (Groundwood, 32 pages, hardcover, \$22), treating gryphons with broken beaks and chimeras with the sniffles. [READ MORE](#)

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