the reflector

FREE
October 1, 2026
www.TheReflector.ca



A Reflector referendum exclusive with NDP leader Nenshi (pg. 3)

News Editor
Karra Smith
newseditor@thereflector.ca

Sharing is caring: Becoming an Inclusion Week speaker

Past presenters encourage students to bring their experiences and ideas to MRU's annual Inclusion Week

Sofia Ibrahimi, Contributor

Having something worth sharing does not always mean being an expert–sometimes, it starts with an experience, an interest or something you simply care about.

Mount Royal University's (MRU) Inclusion Week is returning January 2027, giving students another opportunity to turn their ideas into real-time discussions across campus.

Organised by MRU's Office of Community and Belonging, Inclusion Week features talks and activities focused on fostering a sense of kinship. Eleven students participated as speakers or co-presenters during the week's 29 sessions in 2025.

Inclusion Week is overseen by Narissa Jessa, an education and development professional in the Office of Community and Belonging.

For Jessa, getting students involved is especially important as they don't always have a platform to be heard.

Giving a typical lecture in front of an audience is not the only way to become a presenter. According to Jessa, exhibitions can take many forms, such as panel discussions, fireside chats, and artistic approaches, as long as they connect back to inclusion and community.

Bringing stories to the stage

For sociology students Sam Boutin and Bunny MacLean, that contribution came through preserving the stories of older members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community.

Alongside their fellow presenter Gabi DiGioacchino and David Aveline in 2025, the group collected oral histories to preserve them in the university's archives. Boutin conducted interviews for the project, while MacLean assisted with transcribing the stories.

For Boutin, preserving those experiences gives often overlooked perspectives a chance to be heard and remembered.

Inclusion Week gave the group an opportunity to take those stories beyond the archive.

They presented through a panel discussing both their work and what drew them to it. MacLean says that sharing something personally meaningful can help others connect with an experience beyond their own.

"Anyone could read them and gain a little something. Gain a little perspective–feel connected to humanity," MacLean says.

But deciding something is worth sharing does not necessarily make getting in front of an audience easy. For Boutin, MacLean and DiGioacchino, what came from pushing past that fear made it worth facing.

Boutin says that, initially, public speaking made her nervous, but presenting at Inclusion Week helped ease some of that fear. Instead of facing an uninterested room, she found an audience that had intentionally showed up to listen.

Around 30 people attended their panel, but their connections grew beyond the audience.

Boutin says the experience helped her build skills and introduced her to people who shared similar interests, turning the presentation into an opportunity for community beyond being a panel presenter.

The connection and belonging created during this event extends across Inclusion Week. The 2026 event drew 1,260 attendees across virtual and in-person sessions, with students making up 35.4 per cent of registrations.

For Maclean, those connections can begin with students recognising that the topics can resonant with many of their peers.

"If you have something that's really important to you, it's going to be important to other people."

Students also do not have to figure everything out on their own. Jessa notes that the Inclusion Week committee is full of support for interested potential presenters who have an idea but are unsure where to take it.

For students questioning whether they have anything meaningful to contribute, Jessa encourages them to recognise the value of their ideas and what they already bring.

Presenter applications for Inclusion Week 2027 remain open until Oct. 9.



Inclusion Week at MRU creates a space for open conversation and connection through community. Photo courtesy of Narissa Jessa

Naheed Nenshi breaks down upcoming Alberta referendum questions

What do the referendum questions really ask?

Anais Loeppky, Web Editor

For Albertans opening their referendum ballots this fall, the quantity and length of questions may come as a surprise.

The Oct. 19 provincial referendum will ask voters to answer 10 questions covering immigration, voting requirements, constitutional changes, and Alberta's relationship with Canada.

Questions 1 through 9 are yes-or-no questions, while question 10 offers voters two options.

The questions are written in complex language, making it important for Albertans to research them ahead of time so they know exactly what they are voting for.

Nenshi breaks down what's on the ballot

Naheed Nenshi, leader of Alberta's NDP and the province's official opposition, spoke with The Reflector about the questions to help give students a more solid understanding.

"I think the critical thing for voters to remember is the motivation behind them," Nenshi said.

He shared that during his time door-knocking this summer, he found that nearly 30 per cent of people he spoke to were unaware of the upcoming referendum.

Furthermore, many Albertans did not know there were nine questions in addition to the separation question.

He also highlighted that this referendum alone will cost Albertans nearly $200 million and ultimately asks whether we should have another referendum.

"Think of what you could do with $200 million. You could build a whole bunch of schools, you could hire a whole bunch of teachers, you could fund programs at MRU," he added.

With such polarising questions being posed, it is essential that Albertans take the time to vote.

So, what exactly is on the ballot?

Questions 1 to 5: Immigration and voting

The first five questions focus largely on immigration policy and provincial programs.



With requests for mail-in ballots now closed, Albertans are bracing for long voter lineups ahead of the Oct. 19 referendum. Photo courtesy of James Willamor /Flickr

Question 1 asks whether Alberta should take increased control over immigration, with the goal of reducing immigration to what the question describes as more "sustainable" levels, prioritising corporate staffing needs over families and refugees, while stating local workers will get first pick of employment.

Question 2 asks whether Alberta should introduce a law limiting eligibility for provincially funded programs, including health care, education, and other social services, to Canadian citizens, permanent residents, and people with Alberta-approved immigration status.

Question 3 asks whether people with non-permanent legal immigration status must live in Alberta for at least 12 months before becoming eligible for provincially funded social support programs.

Question 4 asks whether people with non-permanent immigration status should be charged a fee or premium for services.

Nenshi points out the potentially detrimental effects of the direction these proposals are taking, particularly regarding their possible impact on people with temporary immigration status.

"This is particularly important for international students," he said, pointing to questions involving access to public health care and education.

For students at Mount Royal University (MRU), those questions could be particularly relevant because they address provincial services and people living in Alberta without permanent immigration status.

Question 5 asks whether Alberta should require people to provide proof of citizenship, such as a passport, birth certificate, or citizenship card to vote in provincial elections.

Some Albertans are concerned that this would create barriers for senior citizens, students and people with lower incomes who may not have access to these documents.

Questions 6 to 9: Constitution changes

The next four questions move away from immigration and focus on the relationship between Alberta and the other provinces.

Question 6 asks whether Alberta should work with other willing provinces to make it so that provincial governments, rather than the federal government, select judges appointed to Alberta's King's Bench and Court of Appeal.

Question 7 asks whether Alberta should work with other provinces to amend the Constitution to abolish the federal Senate.

Question 8 asks whether provinces should be able to opt out of federal programs in areas such as health care, education and social services without losing the federal funding associated with those programs.

Many Albertans are concerned that this could be a first step in the privatisation of these services.

Question 9 asks whether provincial laws should have priority over federal laws when the two conflict in areas of provincial or shared constitutional jurisdiction.

The important distinction is that these questions do not themselves change the Constitution.

They essentially ask Albertans whether they support the Alberta government pursuing these issues. Any actual amendment would require the federal government and potentially other provinces to participate in the constitutional process.

Nenshi characterised questions six through nine as constitutional questions that would not be straightforward for Alberta to implement on its own.

Question 10: Stay in Canada or pursue separation?

Question 10 has undeniably received the most attention.

Unlike the other proposals, it is not a yes-or-no question. Instead, Albertans will choose between two options:

"Option 1: Alberta should remain a province of Canada.

Option 2: The Alberta government should begin the legal process required under the Canadian Constitution to hold a future binding provincial referendum on whether Alberta should separate from Canada."

An important distinction here is that a vote for option two would not separate Alberta from Canada. It would support beginning the legal process toward a future referendum on separation.

Elections Alberta also states that the result of question 10 is non-binding.

For many Albertans, including Nenshi, the question represents more than a step in the process.

"There are what I call head arguments, and there are heart arguments," he said, pointing to both economic concerns and the emotional significance of Alberta's relationship with Canada.

"So many Albertans are just really worried right now," he said, adding that the mental strain of the possibility of losing the country as Albertans is really hard.

"The head arguments are critical, but the heart arguments also really matter."

Nenshi emphasises the importance of taking the time to vote. Democracy is not a guarantee. The rules that govern our schools, courts and voting booths are on the ballot right now. If you want a say in where Alberta is headed, showing up to vote is where it starts.

"Most Albertans are just proud Canadians, and we want to continue to be proud Canadians."

Communist conversations on campus

Protests at MRU have left many students questioning why the RCP is on campus

Nathan Bergen, Contributor

The start of the fall term not only marks the start of the new school year, but also offers an opportunity to see what's new on campus. And what's new isn't in your usual cougar blue.

The first day of the 2026 fall term saw protests at Mount Royal University's (MRU) East Gate by members of the Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP), not to be confused with the Communist Party of Canada (CPC).

While the CPC aligns its party views more closely with Marxist-Leninist perspectives and generally more traditional communism, the RCP rejects the ideas of traditional communism, with a greater focus on socialism.

Who is the RCP?

According to their website, the RCP is a political organisation in Canada whose focus is on "lay[ing] the foundations of a mass communist party."

Over 600 communists across Canada gathered together to launch the RCP on February 17, 2024.

Shortly after, the group announced their establishment at their first annual congress in May 2024.

The congress drew almost 400 attendees in Montreal, and was opened by Fred Weston, the international secretariat of the Revolutionary Communist International (RCI).

Since their first meeting in 2024, they've been pushing for advocacy through protests, demonstrations, podcasts and digital media.

The RCP's website highlight their 10-principle program for achieving their political goals—emphasising a desire to fight for the principle of "from each according to their ability, to each according to their need."

The RCP's members are associated with the RCI, calling themselves the "Canadian section" of the RCI.

Why are they protesting at MRU?

Keely, a member of the RCP who protested on MRU's Main Street says the organisation is here to connect with students on campus about current events and why "socialism is the way forward."

As they continue to organise on campus, Keely says they eventually hope to establish a club at MRU.

"We have a student club on the UofC campus, and we're fairly well established there," Keely says. "There's just a lot of students here, and I think the youth these days, if you talk to anyone in this generation, they feel like the world is on fire and something needs to be done about it."

Members of the RCP hope that this in-person, boots-on-the-ground activism will spark student interest and discussion about the ideals of their organisation.

They don't consider themselves to be outright "communists" but rather use the term "revolutionary communists," knowing that a pivot to communism can't just happen with the snap of a finger.

"So as revolutionary communists, we fight for socialism," Keely says. "We say that socialism, if successful, will naturally flow into communism." However, Keely contends that should society stay in the status quo, the RCP wouldn't be able to succeed in democratically planning production and outcompeting capitalism on a world scale.

Though working towards a communist society in Canada, they don't always see eye-to-eye with others who have "communist" in their name.

"We're not affiliated with the Communist Party of Canada. They are unfortunately a completely Stalinist organisation that also, frankly, is just pretty much non-existent at this stage of things," Keely says.

The RCP emphasises that Stalinism is a "privileged bureaucracy" with which the party does not align.

How do students feel about the recent protests?

Students across campus expressed a common feeling of being uninformed about the RCP's presence at MRU.

Other students are opting out of the conversation.

"I've never really been fond of protests on campus. There's been a lot of controversial ones," one student says.

As the semester progresses, MRU may expect to see more demonstrations by the RCP on Main Street as they continue to spread their message to students across campus.



The Revolutionary Communist Party have popped up at MRU, with the party's goal being to create a socialist society. Photo by Serena Kanji-Ramji

THE REFLECTOR

Issue 3, Volume 66

EDITORIAL STAFF:
Publishing Editor: Bella Coco
Managing Editor: Ivar Bergs
News Editor: Karra Smith
Features Editor: Emma Voelpel
Arts Editor: Rylie Perry
Sports Editor: Julia Finot
Photo Editor: Serena Kanji-Ramji
Layout Editor: Acacia Carol
Web Editor: Anais Loeppky
Cover: Serena Kanji-Ramji

Contributors: Lacey Holowaty, Noah Mulhern, Sofia Ibrahimi, Deya Mirkov, Abby Weidman
Staff Writers: Nadoo Abaagu, Naomi Campbell, Katrina Ebuenga

The Reflector, with an on and off-campus circulation of 2,000, is the independent voice of the students of Mount Royal University. It is published fortnightly during the academic year (Sept. to April).

The Reflector is editorially autonomous and financially independent from all other governing bodies at Mount Royal University.

The Reflector welcomes newsworthy submissions from all students and community members. While the right of editorial comment is reserved for editors of The Reflector, opinion pieces may be submitted as letters to the editor, and may be published on the editorial page as such. The Reflector reserves the right not to publish submissions deemed by the Publishing Editor to be offensive.

Complaints arising from the content of the paper should be directed to the Ombudsboard. This board has been established as a mediator between the Reflector Publications Society staff and its readership.

All decisions of the Ombudsboard are final and binding on both parties. Letters to the Ombudsboard must be sent in confidence, care of the Reflector Publications Society, to the Reflector Publications Society office.

Submissions and letters to the editor should be a maximum of 500 words, typed, double-spaced, and contain the writer's name and phone number. No unsigned letters will be published. Only in exceptional cases, at the discretion of the Publishing Editor, will writers' names be withheld. The Reflector reserves the right to edit submissions for brevity.

Contents are copyright © 2026. No material may be reproduced without express written consent.

All opinions contained within this paper are those of the individual authors, and not necessarily those of the Reflector Publications Society. For more information, contact The Reflector office at:

the reflector

Wyckham House
Mount Royal University
4825 Mount Royal Gate SW
Calgary, AB T3E 6K6
All depts.: 403.440.6268
Fax: 403.440.6762
TheReflector@TheReflector.ca

features

Features Editor
Emma Voelpel
featureseditor@thereflector.ca

A wild September at Calgary Zoo

The wildlife park continues to teach the importance of conservation

Nadoo Abaagu, Staff Writer



The Calgary Zoo runs community events all year, such as the Teddy Bear Clinic. Photo courtesy of Wilder Institute's Calgary Zoo

The Calgary Zoo celebrated September with many conservation-focused events. They say their work helps to educate the public and protect Alberta's precious wildlife and parklands.

Every September, Wilder Institute's Calgary Zoo hosts several conservation-themed events. These include the Alberta Biodiversity Festival, Teddy Bear Clinics and the Fall Garden Globes Dinner. The zoo says these events help educate the public about nature in their own backyard.

A look into the 'wild'

The Alberta Biodiversity Festival took place from Sept. 11 to 13. In partnership with the Government of Alberta and the Bow Habitat Station, the zoo created a weekend of fun around Alberta's diverse nature.

The festival explored Alberta's wetlands, prairies and forests. It focused on industries like fishing, logging and, most importantly, highlighted Alberta wildlife. From bears to moose to hatchling fish, the festival invited kids and adults to cherish Alberta's wildlife.

After that, the zoo held two Garden Globes dinners on September 25 and 26. These events took visitors through a nighttime tour of the zoo and a private dining experience under the stars.

Lastly, the month ended with a Teddy Bear Clinic. Kids brought their stuffed animals for premium medical treatment at the zoo. It was a patchwork event that educated kids about human and animal health.

Conservation beyond the gates

All admission to the Calgary Zoo contributes to the Wilder Institute's conservation work, but the zoo's various themed events are a dual opportunity for learning and public education.

"The purpose behind it is we want people to know what's in their own backyard and what is in Alberta. So that they will be more inclined to learn more about what is there and take care of Alberta, so that we have these habitats and these species for [the] future," said Gillian Cardwell, the manager of special experiences at the Calgary Zoo.

The Calgary Zoo has been running events like these for a long time. Cardwell has been working at the zoo for 35 years and says she can not remember a time when they did not exist.

Some of these events are relatively new, like the Alberta Biodiversity Festival, which is in its fifth year, but Cardwell says it's been a steady evolution.

The essential ethos behind the zoo's conservation-themed events is education. What Cardwell calls being a "good zoo."

Zoos are fun attractions, opportunities to see extraordinary wildlife, but first and foremost, they are scientific institutions dedicated to conservation and animal welfare.

Good care shows

In an article on the benefits of zoos, the Association of Zoos and Aquariums spoke of their ability to rehabilitate wildlife, help restore endangered species, and fund ecosystem repair.

For Cardwell, what makes a good zoo is the ability to inspire people to love wildlife.

"I'm really proud of the stuff that we have done and the programs that we've done in order to get people to understand what a good zoo is, what our purpose is," said Cardwell.

"It's not just about a zoo; it's about caring for nature. And this is just one way to learn about how to do that and how to care and to get inspired."

Good zoos are really needed right now, especially in Canada.

Loss outpaces recovery

According to Canada's 2030 Nature Strategy, the scale of biodiversity loss in and around urban and developed areas is extreme. Wetlands, prairies, and bodies of water are threatened by careless human interactions, and so is their wildlife.

The Species at Risk Act, established in 2002, tracks endangered, extirpated or threatened plant and wildlife species. As of December 2024, 671 plant and animal species are at risk in Canada.

On the world stage, life looks similar. Nature is deteriorating, unable to support the immense extraction by human beings. Biodiversity is degrading due to a range of factors, from climate change to pollution.

Amid this, Canada is a cornerstone.

It is the second-largest country in the world, containing 20 per cent of the world's fresh water. With its boreal forests and wetlands, it is also an essential carbon sink. Canada's importance extends beyond its borders.

In its Canada Action Plan, the Wilder Institute is focusing on more than 200 species in need of conservation and protection. Their plan of action includes research, applied conservation and species recovery.

But one still important avenue is the Calgary Zoo.

"Where connection inspires action," as the Wilder Institute describes it.

Zoos teach us to love our wildlife and, better yet, to protect it.

"In order to really love something and want to conserve it or take care of it, you have to understand what it is, and know more about it," said Cardwell.

"And really, the purpose of a zoo is to teach, because if we cannot do anything for our own backyards, if we can't do anything to conserve habitats and species, what is our reason for being here?"



A look at the bighorn sheep, located in the Wild Canada habitat at the Calgary Zoo. Photo by Nadoo Abaagu

Why we love to reinvent ourselves from time to time

Reinvention in the beauty space has a price

Anais Loeppky, Web Editor



Events like the start of a new semester gives students the need to reinvent themselves.
Photo courtesy of cottonbro studio / Pexels

Nothing feels better than an annual—or even seasonal—rebrand. Whether it's for a birthday, the start of a new semester or a way of bringing in the new year, there's something satisfying about reinventing yourself from time to time.

But why does it feel so good? Maybe it's large corporations convincing us that every new season requires a new wardrobe.

Or maybe there's something deeper at play.

The concept of 'eras'

These mini reinventions can manifest in many ways—a new haircut, a change in your wardrobe or picking up a new hobby. In the age of social media, these little changes have become part of our online identities. We often call them eras, or new aesthetics, turning an ordinary fresh start into something we can publicly share and occasionally shop for.

As it turns out, this is more than a social media trend. There are actually psychological reasons we love the occasional rebrand.

This is commonly known as the 'fresh start effect.' A variety of studies have shown that people are most inclined to pursue goals following significant events.

These events are referred to as temporal landmarks. Events like the start of a new semester can create a psychological separation between who we were before and who we want to become in our next chapter.

These temporal events provide a sense of division between two points in time. They allow us to create mental distance between our current selves and our past mistakes or habits.

The beauty industry's role

It is undeniable that the beauty industry has a central part in this rebrand culture. It is well established that we are drawn to a fresh start, and the beauty industry offers an easy, public way to express it.

Sometimes the easiest way to represent a personal rebrand is through a simple change in appearance. This could be a haircut, a tattoo, a wardrobe refresh or even something as small as a new manicure.

The beauty industry has practically built an entire empire around this feeling.

Research on consumer behaviour suggests that people are particularly drawn to new products when they are thinking about their future selves, making the idea of a fresh start surprisingly easy to turn into a shopping opportunity. A new semester suddenly becomes the perfect excuse for a new makeup routine, just as a new year can make an entirely new skincare regimen feel necessary.

We can see this at play on campus all the time. For many Mount Royal University (MRU) students, a new semester comes with a few trips to the mall and a variety of cosmetic appointments.

The Reflector asked 25 MRU students about their own seasonal rebrands and what the recent back-to-school season entailed for them.

One student shared just how much goes into rebranding yourself.

"The week before school I got my hair done, nails done, lashes done, a spray tan, I went shopping and I don't even know what else," she says.

"Honestly, I probably spent over a thousand dollars, but that's the best part of back to school."

Many of the students talked about the excitement of these seasonal resets. Another student shared that she likes to create mood boards ahead of a new season.

"I feel like the planning and anticipation is the best part of a new school year," she says.

Brands love a rebrand

Brands are well aware of this too. We see the autumn decor hitting the shelves in July, and sip our first pumpkin spice latte in August.

Social media plays a substantial part in this. Beauty trends can become a personality. 'Clean girl' or 'coquette' style can easily go from a trend to a part of identity.

Social media has made beauty unusually good at creating this sense of urgency. Trends move quickly, and our feeds constantly show us new ways we could present ourselves.

Suddenly, the lip product we were obsessed with three months ago feels dated, and the skincare product we had never heard of yesterday feels like something everyone has always owned.

We reinvent ourselves because a new season permits us to change, and the beauty industry is ready with a product for every possible version of who we might become next.

The underlying pressure

For some students, a seasonal rebrand is simply fun. For others, social media can make the pressure to keep up with whatever is currently trending a little harder to ignore.

One MRU student said she notices herself gravitating toward certain products after seeing them repeatedly online.

"I'll see something on TikTok five times, and suddenly I'm convinced I need it," she says.

Ultimately, the appeal of a seasonal rebrand is not entirely about following trends or buying something new.

Studies show that the fresh start effect suggests that temporal landmarks can change how people think about their goals and give them a stronger sense of separation from past behaviour.

The beauty industry and social media have simply created more ways to act on that feeling. A new semester can become a reason to change a routine, or experiment with different aesthetics.

For MRU students, seasonal rebrands seem to be a popular way of giving yourself a reason to try something new.

The psychology behind the fresh start effect helps explain why these moments can feel so motivating, while social media and beauty culture give students countless ways to express that change.

Reinventing yourself from time to time can be a fun way to mark where you are now and look forward to where you are going next.

Sunshine, lollipops and heaps of trash

What's the current scoop on Calgary's landfills

Noah Mulhern, Contributor

A fire still burns at ECCO Recycling and Energy Corporation's Calgary facility.

Landfills are causing problems and Alberta is trying to retaliate with recycling programs. Starting Oct. 1, Alberta is launching North America's first solar panel recycling program.

Calgary is the sunniest city in Alberta with 333 days of sunlight a year. It's an ideal location for solar energy, and it's already becoming more mainstream. Prices went down by 93 per cent between 2010 and 2020. Alberta produces 3,800 megawatts of wind and solar energy and has the second-largest solar capacity in the country.

Sun power, silent end

By 2045, over 95 per cent of the solar panels currently installed in Alberta will reach the end of their lives. It's estimated that over 72,000 tonnes of waste will be generated.

The materials within the solar panels — like silicon, aluminium, glass, silver and copper will be collected and used for new products rather than buried under heaps of garbage.

"Responsible solar energy growth means considering environmental responsibility throughout its lifecycle. By planning ahead to ensure expired panels are properly collected, and materials are reused where possible, we're protecting taxpayers from future cleanup costs and keeping power affordable and sustainable for generations to come," said Minister of Affordability and Utilities RJ Sigurdson in a press release.

Starting Oct. 1, each solar panel comes with a $14 environmental fee. The fee ensures that when the panels begin to reach the end of their lives, transport and removal will be provided. It also ensures that Albertans decades from now are not stuck paying the bills.

No retroactive fees will apply to solar panels installed before Oct. 1. The fee applies to all residential, commercial and industrial solar panels that are one square meter or larger.

Recycling programs

Alberta has an abundance of recycling programs to help with the amount of waste we put into landfills.

Too Good to Waste is a waste management strategy that began in 2007. It provides a framework for the next two decades of recycling programs and environmental conservation. One of the proposed outcomes of Too Good to Waste is the development of resource recovery and waste management systems.

The Alberta Recycling Management Authority (ARMA) first began an electronic recycling program in 2004. Since then, the program has expanded to accept more than 500 materials not present when it began. The program has enabled the recycling of over 290,156 tonnes of electronic waste since its launch.

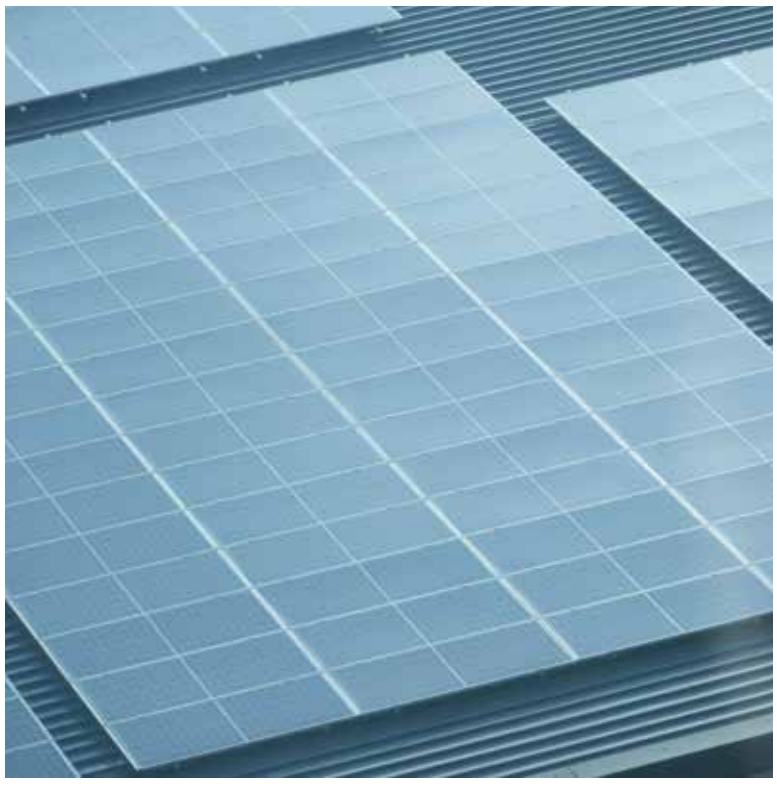
"We're not just focused on what Albertans want to recycle today, but also what they are going to want to recycle 20 years from now," says Rebecca Schulz, minister of environment and protected areas.

Environmental fees also apply to new electronics and range from $0.30 to $2.75. Albertans can drop off electronics at any of the 365 recycling centres across the province.

ARMA and the Government of Alberta plan to create a province-wide renewable energy recycling program.

In June 2023, Quebec launched North America's first electric vehicle battery recovery program. The program later expanded to the rest of Canada with the help of Call2Recycle Canada Inc.

There are currently no designated programs for wind turbines, which are made of primarily recyclable materials and include electrical components that can be recycled.



Over 95 per cent of solar panels in Alberta are set to expire by 2045. Photo courtesy of Towfiqu barbhuiya / Pexels



Alberta has a plethora of recycling programs to help reduce the amount of waste in landfills. Photo courtesy of Emmet / Pexels, edited by Lacey Holowaty

ECCO fire

ECCO Recycling and Energy Corporation continues to wrestle with the fires in their Calgary facility. There is currently no timeline for putting out the fire. Crews are facing major setbacks due to deep voids in the piles of garbage.

Soil and clay are being used to smother the fire. Crews are also using heavy equipment to compact material, reduce void spaces and limit air and smoke.

Alberta Environment and Protected Areas is conducting additional air quality monitoring due to smoke and fumes from the fire.

Carbon monoxide, fine particulate matter, hydrogen sulphide and total reduced sulphur, nitrogen dioxide, ozone and sulfur dioxide are taken into account in Alberta's air quality index.

City of Calgary water services are monitoring water quality and managing runoff. Crews are pumping runoff from the ECCO landfill into wastewater systems, allowing it to be filtered before it returns to the river.

The cause of the fire remains under investigation.

samru students' association of mount royal university

YOUR STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION







Visit our website at samru.ca

@samrubuzz | /samrubuzz | /samrubuzz

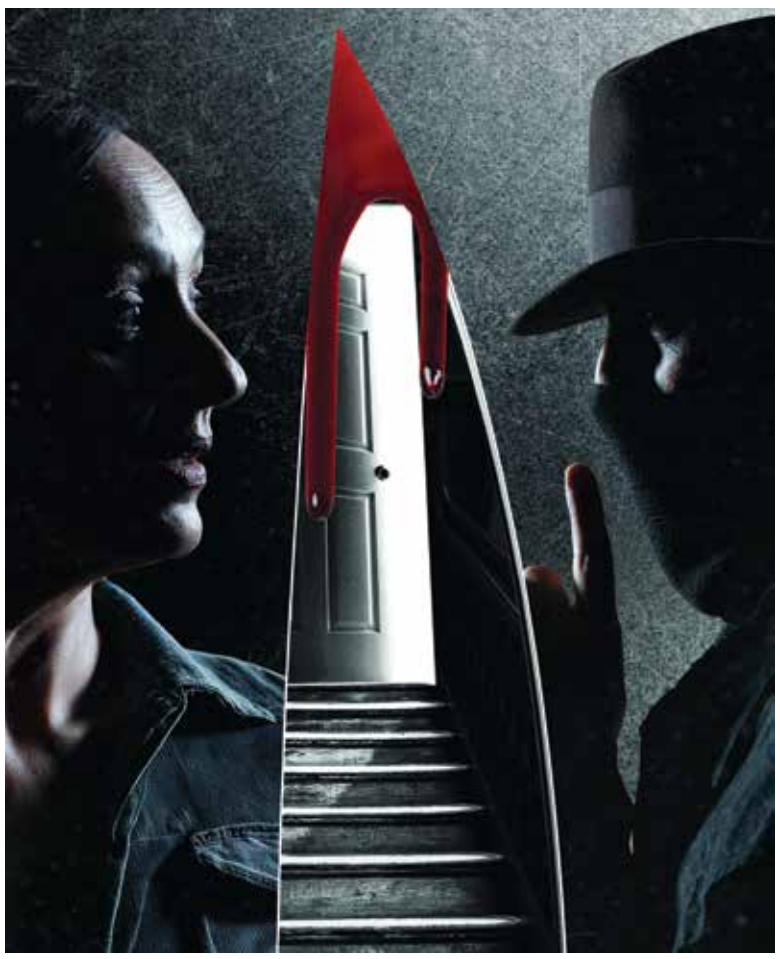
arts

Arts Editor
Rylie Perry
artseditor@thereflector.ca

The Lodger is on Calgary's doorstep

Vertigo Theatre celebrates 50th anniversary season with a classic thriller

Katrina Ebuenga, Staff Writer



Alfred Hitchcock's 1927 film, *The Lodger: A Story of the London Fog*, is a British silent thriller film. Photo courtesy of Fifth Wall Media

Be careful of who you welcome into your home, because not everyone is truthful about who they truly are.

Opening Vertigo Theatre's 50th anniversary season, *The Lodger* will have audiences wary of those sitting in close company.

Set to open on stage from Sept. 26 to Oct. 25 at Vertigo Theatre, with tickets available for purchase, this bone-chilling production will have audiences in anticipation for what's to come next.

Synopsis

After struggling to make ends meet, Ellen and Bill Bunting are eager to start fresh with a too good to be true opportunity, which arrives in the form of a mysterious lodger. Just when things seem to be aligning for the couple, a string of murders are dropped on their doorstep, with all traces leading back to Bill.

With a serial killer now on the prowl, Ellen tasks herself with uncovering the truth before another young woman falls victim.

Based on the classic novel by Marie Belloc Lowndes and inspired by Alfred Hitchcock's renowned 1927 silent film, this modern performance promises suspenseful tension and deceptively smart characters.

Onto the stage

Joining forces to craft an unforgettable night, Canadian novelist Susie Moloney and Canadian playwright Vern Thiessen blend together their creative talents to bring a whole new take on the novel and film.

"We're most excited about people seeing a brand new play, and we're excited about how they're going to react to that," says Thiessen.

In their gripping reanimation of the classic, Moloney and Thiessen amplify the suspenseful atmosphere by situating the play during a time of on-set social upheaval.

"It's set in the 70s, which in my opinion, is an undermined decade of drama simply because there was so much social change going on," Moloney says. "There's this coexistence of a backlash against feminism and acceptance of feminism."

Theissen adds that not only was social change on the horizon during this period, but it was also the golden age of the serial killer, when police departments were distant and communication was scarce.

However, despite the production rolling back the clock, the characters have been curated to appeal as relevant to modern audiences. Moloney has designed a leading female character that, hopefully, younger generations find relatable.

"We talk a lot about men's bad behaviour, but we don't talk a ton about how women make choices that are self-serving," Moloney explains. "So a lot of the era of the 70s, in spite of the women's movement and the gains that we made, there were still a great deal of things that we couldn't do."

The creative pair have thus developed an engrossing story that is both entertaining and vocal in its depiction of modern-day issues that persist.

"Women had to navigate these two worlds: one where we were becoming more autonomous, and the other where we were still very dependent on men," says Moloney.

Despite the play's core being a layered web of mystery and suspense, the serial-killer narrative encompasses themes that extend beyond the stage. Moloney and Thiessen draw on elements from across the horror and thriller genres to create a story that tackles topical issues.

"I'm talking about how women's rights are being attacked, and how women's rights are being removed all over the world," emphasises Moloney. "We're not victims, but we are prey."

The production's commentary still goes hand in hand with the characters' transplantation into this era of great change and uprising, allowing audiences to see themselves in a character like Ellen and feel a direct connection with her.

"There's a lot of moments I think where the characters, even though they're acting according to their characters, are still surprising," says Moloney.

Alongside classic themes being shown through a modern lens, the set has been designed to elevate the play into an immersive experience. *The Lodger*, created in collaboration with an extensive creative design team, is filled with shocking twists.

The set features a unique double view of characters that plays into the mysterious and captivating lure of the stage design, which is configured for the audience to observe and experience.

"There are a number of murders that take place in the play, and how those are done, and how they are staged, are something that I think will surprise the audience," says Thiessen. "I think the audience will be on the edge of their seats."

With the aim of prompting viewers to question what they would do in this situation and what choices they would make, Moloney and Thiessen are excited to see how the audience reacts to the production.

"We're really just hoping that people walk out and are really excited by what they've seen," says Thiessen.

OUT'N ABOUT

Fall Ghost Tours

This fall, Heritage Park is walking Calgarians through the park's haunted history. Take a tour from Oct. 1 to 15 from 7 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. on select evenings to walk through 90 minutes of paranormal activity from Sam Livingston House to the Fort. For more information, visit heritagepark.ca.

Evil Dead the Musical

Presented by Alberta Theatre Projects, *Evil Dead the Musical* is the opening production of the 2026 to 2027 season. This Canadian adaptation of the cult-horror classic film from 1981 hits the Martha Cothen Theatre from Oct. 13 to Nov. 14, with tickets available at albertatheatreprojects.com.

Pumpkins After Dark

Back for another year, Calgary's favourite Halloween tradition, Pumpkins After Dark, is haunting Winsport until Oct. 31. Enjoy jack-o'-lantern displays, live entertainment, pumpkin carvings, and more, Thursday through Sunday every week. For more information or to buy tickets, visit pumpkinsafterdark.com.

Millarville Farmers' Market

The iconic Millarville Farmers' Market is wrapping up for the season this October. Enjoy the final two days of fresh produce, local artisans, and handmade goods on Oct. 3 and 10 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Entry to the market is free, with more information available at millarvilleracetrack.com.

Sex sells

Unpacking the Sydney Sweeney brand

Anais Loeppky, Web Editor

Sydney Sweeney made her *Euphoria* debut in 2019 and quickly went from rising starlet to full-blown Hollywood it-Girl. She had this girl-next-door quality that made her feel surprisingly relatable for someone living a very unrelatable life.

In early interviews, Sweeney often talked about growing up in a working-class family and having to work hard for everything she achieved. She also let audiences in on her life outside of Hollywood, most notably her passion for rebuilding cars.

She was selling the idea that, underneath it all, she was still just a normal, down-to-earth girl who happened to become very, very famous.

However, as Sweeney's fame grew, so did the brand deals.

It did not take long for companies to realise that this relatable up-and-comer was incredibly marketable. Sweeney was no longer just an actress selling movies. She was selling jeans, soap, sex appeal and, apparently, sports.

'Sydney Sweeney has great genes'

At least, that was the message American Eagle seemed to be sending with its 2025 denim campaign, which drew widespread backlash from every possible angle.

The campaign, which repeatedly played on the homophones "jeans" and "genes," featured Sweeney declaring that her "jeans" were great before the ad shifted to a discussion of genetics.

In one version, she explains that "genes are passed down from parents to offspring and can determine traits such as hair colour and eye colour."

Critics and fans were quick to respond to the campaign, arguing that pairing Sweeney with the idea of having "great genes" promoted a narrow-minded and outdated standard of beauty. Some went further, arguing that the campaign echoed ideas associated with eugenics and white supremacy.

However, the responses from both Sweeney and American Eagle did little to quiet the conversation.

American Eagle maintained that the campaign was about denim, later emphasising that "great jeans look good on everyone." But when genetics are part of the punchline, it is difficult to convince people the joke was only about pants.

While Sweeney waited nearly six months before addressing the backlash publicly, her response was not the apology fans were hoping for.

"I was honestly surprised by the reaction," Sweeney explained in an interview with People Magazine.

"I did it because I love the jeans and love the brand."

For many, this response seemed rather dismissive of the larger issues at play, including its similarity to Brooke Shields' infamous Calvin Klein jeans campaign from 1980, which featured a 15-year-old Shields in a highly sexualised jean commercial.

Nonetheless, Vanity Fair reported only days after the advertisement's release that American Eagle experienced a 10 per cent increase in stock, adding nearly $200 million to the company's value.

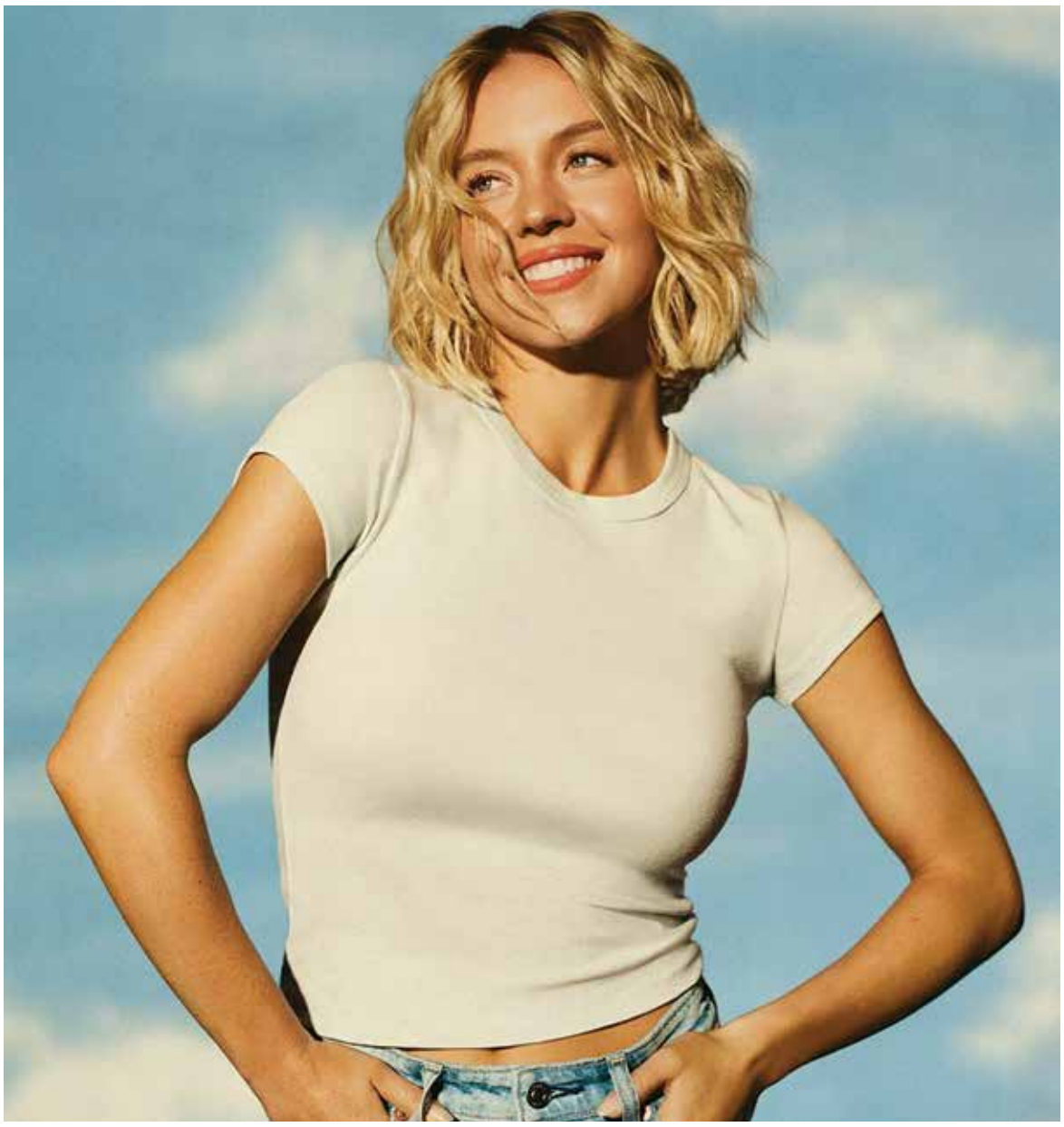
So, although the conversation shifted quickly from "Sydney Sweeney looks great in jeans" to beauty standards and race, neither the brand nor its star seemed particularly eager to address why audiences were uncomfortable in the first place.

Sex sells

Another controversial collaboration was Sweeney's partnership with Dr. Squatch, in which the company produced soap containing her actual bathwater.

Only 5,000 bars were made and sold for $8 each, with some later appearing online for hundreds of dollars.

In an interview with GQ Magazine, just months before the release of her American Eagle ad, Sweeney said fans joked about wanting her bathwater in the past, so she decided to give them exactly what they asked for.



Sydney Sweeney in her recent campaign with American Eagle. Photo courtesy of Facebook / @americaneagle

The campaign sparked a broader conversation about feminism, and the increasingly blurry line between a woman owning her sexuality and a corporation monetising it.

Because yes, Sweeney can be sexy. She can pose naked. She can sell bathwater. She can do whatever she wants with her own body.

But feminism gets a little more complicated when a corporation is standing behind the camera with a marketing budget.

Women in sports?

In September 2026, Sweeney appeared in yet another ad, this time for a sports betting advertisement for Novig. The campaign features a nude Sweeney posing with different sports equipment and mock-playing sports.

The ad was viewed millions of times and quickly drew criticism from female athletes, including Olympic champions Ariarne Titmus and Sophie Capewell, who argued that it sexualised women in a sporting context and distracted from the skill and dedication of female athletes.

Women have spent decades fighting for the right to compete, with legislation such as Title IX helping to dramatically expand athletic opportunities for girls and women in the United States.

But getting women onto the field has never meant putting an end to the countless tired stereotypes.

The criticism of Sweeney's Novig campaign is not necessarily that she is a woman who chose to be sexual. The issue is what happens when a sports advertisement prioritises a celebrity's marketability over athletes who have spent their lives championing the sports they represent.

Certainly a female Olympic athlete could have been at the centre of this campaign, right?

At what cost?

Sweeney is not the first woman Hollywood has packaged for the male gaze.

She is a striking example of how quickly 'relatable' can become 'sellable,' effectively alienating an audience base that no longer aligns with the message she represents.

And while she certainly has attained her Hollywood status, at what cost?

Queering country

Robert Adam is the dream angel cowboy of Canada

Lacey Holowaty, Contributor

Robert Adam comes from a background that is all too familiar to many rural-born queer people.

A prairie landscape on a worn canvas, decorated with conservative religious imagery and painted to the tune of a country song.

Growing up in Bonnyville, Alta., Adam felt like they couldn't escape country music. They grew indifferent to it, as if it were a reminder of days spent singing in a church chorus that was anything but unifying.

Unlike their peers, who were quite comfortable in the oil- and gas-motivated environment, Adam considered themselves more creative and introspective. Even the expectations for men were very different from who they felt they naturally were.

They felt like they were from a completely different world.

"I had so many questions that really didn't have answers," Adam says.

Adam began writing music at the early age of 12, and through their songwriting, they began to make sense of the conformist world around them. To this day, Adam uses songwriting as an outlet to process their emotions. They also find inspiration in writing about unexpectedly profound people.

"We can take a profound thing from the elderly lady who lives next door, or the nurse at the local hospital," they explain.

Adam didn't start writing country music until their 20s, shortly after Kacey Musgraves' "Follow Your Arrow" became a major country hit in 2013. In the song, Musgraves sings about the importance of following your heart, even if that means going against the status quo.

"I think I was running away from my origins as a person...I felt very much that Alberta did not love me, and neither did the home that I came from."

But as they got older, they realised that their rural origins would always be part of who they were, for better or worse. They began writing country music while living in Ontario to remedy their homesickness.

Adam released their first EP, *Prairie Gold*, in 2017. In the opening track, "Rocky Mountain Lot," they sing about their dreams of living a simple life in the countryside.

Many singles later, Adam eventually released their debut LP, *Governed By The Seasons*, October 2025.

According to Adam, the title refers to how daily life in rural communities is heavily influenced by the time of year, and how the concept of change itself can be very difficult for some to deal with.

"I feel like, the faster we learn how to adapt and respect change as a natural part of life, the easier life becomes," they explain. "Yet it's so hard to accept."

Adam wrote the song "Oh

Continues on Pg. 12



Adam takes a lot of inspiration from various fashion influences, ranging from Mugler to current K-Pop trends. Photo by Brandynn L.P.



The ambient techno artist, Locust, first released music in the early 90s and has been growing and changing as an artist ever since.

Locust's older release, *Morning Light*, was the record that first sparked my interest. However, despite my admiration of the creative vision, I do not recommend *Spectral+* as a whole.

The elements I used to evaluate this record are: originality, cohesion, dynamics, and collaboration.

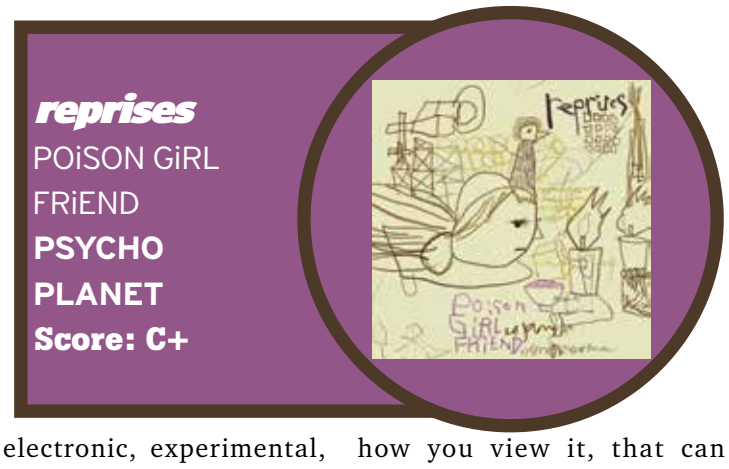
This project differs from Locust's usual discography through collaborations with other artists in nearly every song. That said, I think these collaborations diminish Locust's contribution to each track, and instead bank on the creativity of others to set the record apart. This multitude of collaborations also takes away some of the unifying elements, making certain songs feel out of place in the collective vision.

Although this adds to the dynamics within the album, I believe it is far more valuable to prioritise dynamics within each song. This demonstrates to listeners how the artist is able to warp and develop an idea using a more narrow creative scope.

Overall, the choppy nature of the album makes it a difficult listen if you are expecting to be encapsulated by the overall mood. Personally, I failed to stay fully engaged.

However, if you are interested in some steady beats or encapsulating vocals, I do highly recommend the following songs for a listen-through: "White Light," "All of Them," "Long Distance Lover," and my favourite, "Midori/Falls Away From Me."

—Deya Mirkov



If electronic, experimental, and eerie tunes are your thing, welcome to *reprises*! POiSON GiRL FRiEND, as always, captures a lot of different energy in just eight short songs.

I recommend listening to the songs independently of each other and in an environment that lets you fully hear the effects and musical elements POiSON GiRL FRiEND explores. This helps the album become more bite-sized, whereas a back-to-back approach starts to sound overbearing.

One interesting aspect is that 38 per cent of the album consists of remixes of "Un espoir pour…," the second track on the record. It is interesting to hear how much she is able to expand on the original song, with features from Gaul Plus, AFFERENCE, and Rei Haimachi.

I do think that these remixes stray from the original song concept, and depending on how you view it, that can either heighten or worsen your experience of the album. Luckily, all of the collaborators align with POiSON GiRL FRiEND's experimental ability, creating a stream of shared thought between her record and the audience.

However, it is hard to admire this on a day-to-day basis. For me, the depth of the sounds and digital instruments she incorporates is far too attention-grabbing for, say, walking in the halls.

I recommend this album for anyone eager to find new music to dissect, but if you have less time, I recommend starting with songs like "Falling" and "Un espoir pour…".

—Deya Mirkov

Continued from Pg.11

Jesus" as they were beginning to leave the Christian faith because of moral contradictions. They didn't agree with the church's insistence on only helping certain types of people. To Adam, Jesus' core message was to help anyone in need, especially those who are cast out for any reason.

"I don't think they do that or really pay attention to what Jesus said at all, to be honest," Adam says.

They said the purpose of the song isn't to condemn people, but to shed light on what they had been seeing in Christian churches across North America.

The song earned them a nomination for Songwriter of the Year at this year's YYC Music Awards, and Adam explains that the nomination meant a lot to them, especially given the tension that comes with being a queer country artist.

Adam adds that they were disappointed by the Canadian Country Music Awards' nominee list this year, particularly due to how "straight-white-male-dominated" it was.

"They're really not bothering with, you know, nominating queer people at all," they say.

Adam says it's important to have queer representation in the country genre. They explain how many queer people are just like them in rural areas, and that queer people have always been a part of rural culture and history—but unfortunately, many rural queer folk might not have had the chance to come out because of harmful, community-wide beliefs.

Adam is the self-proclaimed "Dream Angel Cowboy of Canada"—a title derived from Adam's love of 'magical girl anime,' a popular Japanese animation subgenre, when they were younger. They felt inspired by the "magical girl attitude" of fostering warmth and kindness in their community.

"I really feel like it's my role as a musician to inspire people and guide them through emotions that they might not normally feel, or connect with people in a way that maybe they haven't felt in a long time," they say.

Adam also says it's important to nurture their community because of how isolated they feel their generation is.

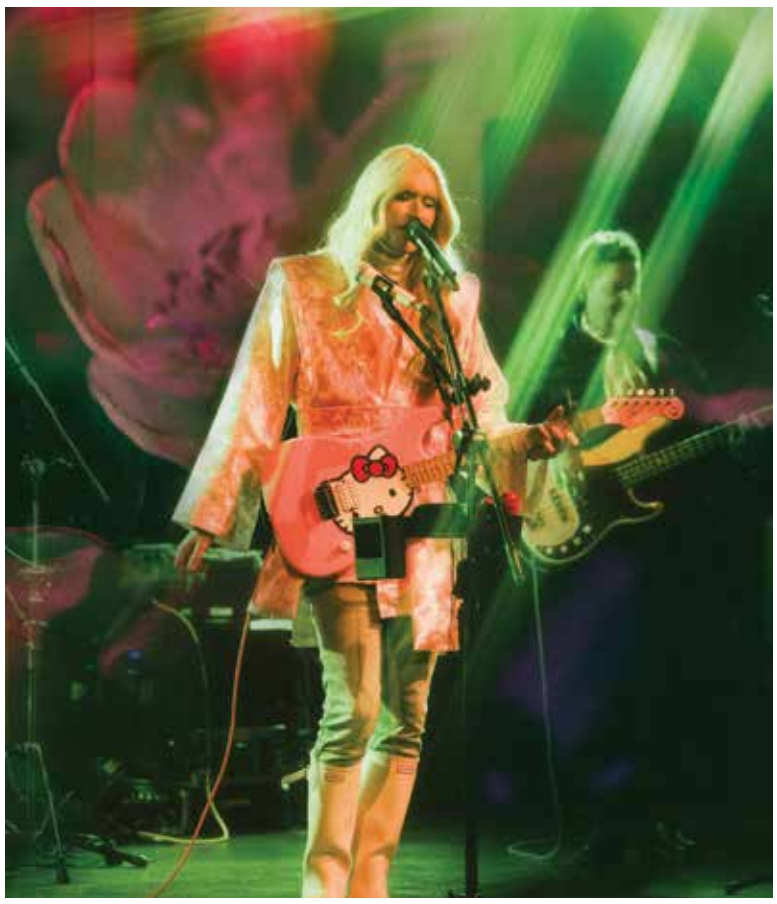
And don't expect Adam to walk out in a traditional country artist's uniform of a button-down and Wranglers. While on stage, Adam presents an ethereal image often accompanied by grandiose angel wings and plenty of glitter, and they still incorporate their country roots in a way that is cohesive and complementary.

In 2025, Adam had the opportunity to go on tour in Japan–a seemingly unlikely place for a country artist to develop a fanbase. But Adam says their favourite moments of their life has come from their time there.

"In Japan, they don't care why I'm playing country music," Adam says. "They're just there to hear music and connect with it."

John Denver's hit country anthem, "Take Me Home, Country Roads," played a main thematic role in the famous Japanese animated film, *Whisper of the Heart*. The film featured a Japanese cover of the song, which Adam performed at each of their tour shows. It gave them a profound opportunity to connect with people from such a seemingly different culture.

"Our native languages are not the same, but here we are singing a version of a country song I grew up with," Adam says. "It transcended so many boundaries. It was so amazing, honestly."



Robert Adam released their debut album, *Governed by the Seasons*, in October 2025. Photo by Brandynn L.P.

Much like John Denver's international hit, their dream of a rocky mountain lot is not restricted to the Albertan countryside. Adam enjoyed their time in Japan so much that they decided to apply to live there next year after they finish their master's in psychology.



sports

Sports Editor
Julia Finot
sportseditor@thereflector.ca

The magic of mascots in sports

Sporting mascots are far more than characters in costumes

Serena Kanji-Ramji, Photo Editor

Team mascots are a beloved tradition in the sports community. They bring the hype and get crowds on their feet.

Mascots become the faces and ambassadors of their team, with their likeness being plastered on t-shirts, jerseys and even the occasional tattoo. These seemingly silly physical representations of a sports organisation carry much more weight than they are given credit for. They have become the centre of fan spirit and pride, and this fun tradition has its roots at home in Calgary.

Cowtown's favourite canine

The Calgary Flames were the first team in National Hockey League (NHL) history to have a mascot, with the introduction of 'Harvey the Hound' in 1983. For the past 43 years, the hound has been a cornerstone in Flames fandom.

Harvey is beloved in the halls of the Saddledome, but it can't be said that he's adored far and wide. In a survey done in 2021, 2,000 fans from both Canada and the United States were asked to rank all of the NHL's mascots on a scale of one to five

When the results rolled in, Harvey placed 29 out of 30 total mascots. While it was an unfortunate result, the survey did not take away from his icon status at home.

Harvey has had some memorable moments over the years, the most talked about being his tiff with former Edmonton Oilers head coach Craig MacTavish.

In 2002, during a game in the Battles of Alberta, the Oilers were fighting for a playoff spot, while the Flames had been eliminated from playoff contention earlier in the season—the score was a miraculous 4-0 in favour of the Flames.

To add a little extra stress to the game, good boy Harvey leaned over the glass to taunt MacTavish, who seemingly wasn't in the mood for any chirping, especially from a mascot. This whole encounter led to MacTavish ripping out Harvey's tongue mid-game.

Harvey isn't the only mascot running the mean Canadian streets. Ace, the Toronto Blue Jays mascot, has also become a local fixture for baseball fans across the country.

However, Ace does outpace Harvey in the mascot popularity contest, with him coming in 7th overall out of all the MLB mascots.

Everyone's favourite cougar

At Mount Royal University (MRU), it's Calvin the Cougar keeping fans in good spirits during all the events on campus. From supporting the volleyball and basketball teams at Kenyon Court, to roaming the halls during the MRU Campus Carnival, Calvin is nothing short of a local legend. But he hasn't always been the face of the Cougars.

When MRU was still a college, there was no set name for the athletic teams, so different teams went by different names.



Calvin the Cougar was first brought to life by former Mount Royal College student Grant Kelba in 1983. Photo courtesy of Instagram / @mrucougars



Calvin's cousin, Clyde, was the mascot for the student association. He was infamous for aggressive hugs and 90s attire. Photo courtesy of SAMRU

The women's basketball team dubbed themselves the Dolphins, while men's basketball went by the Monarchs and eventually the Blues. However, it was the men's football team in 1960 that chose to go by the Cougars, not knowing at the time they'd be cementing the school's legacy.

The credit for MRU's mascot goes to alumnus Grant Kelba.

Kelba originally introduced the concept of Calvin the Cougar in 1983, adapting the character from the Western Canada Summer Games mascot Westy the Wildcat.

At the time, Kelba was working as both Westy and Ralph the Dog, the Calgary Stampeders mascot. Being a well-respected name in the mascot community, he saw a gap in MRU's sports culture.

As a solution, Kelba suggested turning Westy the Wildcat into Calvin the Cougar. By fall 1983, Calvin was introduced as the official mascot of the school's athletic program.

For a while, Calvin wasn't the only Cougar in MRU territory. From 1990 to the mid-2000s, Calvin's cousin Clyde was the Students' Association of Mount Royal University's official mascot.

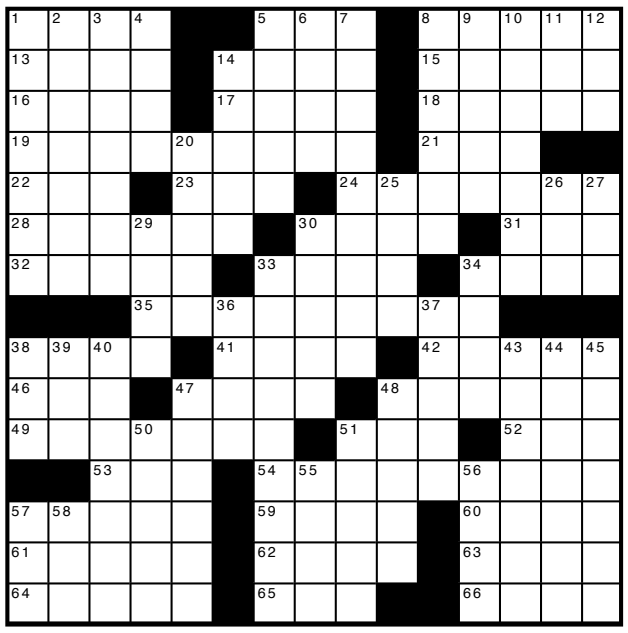
Clyde was often seen interacting with students, showing up to events such as the club expo, campus parties and sports events. This cougar was known for giving students such tight hugs that their faces would disappear into his mouth.

Unfortunately, shortly after Mount Royal transitioned from a college to a university, Clyde slowly stopped appearing in public until one day he was just gone.

It is thought that he retired from his public life to rejoin fellow cougars in the wild, while his domesticated cousin Calvin stayed behind to continue the magic for Mount Royal students.

While mascots can be dismissed as a meaningless tradition, there is no denying that they bring joy and excitement into whatever space they're in.

REFLECTOR DIVERSIONS



ACROSS

1 Scrapes (out)
5 Collector's goal
8 Ebbets Field hero
13 Actress Heche
14 Soccer legend
15 Steve of country music
16 Network of nerves
17 Lascivious look
18 Take ___ for the worse
19 Gazette
21 Flop
22 Samuel's teacher, in the Bible
23 Naval rank, briefly
24 Tool to break solid water
28 Nissan model
30 Headliner
31 Skater Babilonia
32 Tire feature
33 Latin love
34 Funny Foxx
35 Work clothes
38 Oscar winner Paquin
41 Airport near Paris
42 Gillette razors
46 Feathery wrap
47 Examine by touch
48 Most loyal
49 Gallery event
51 Wager
52 Fine hair
53 Pro ___ (for now)
54 Muse of tragedy
57 Look after
59 ...___ saw Elba
60 Mother of the Valkyries
61 Chilean pianist Claudio
62 Require
63 Hunt for
64 Poles for sails
65 Recipe amt.
66 Ethereal

DOWN

1 Serious in intention
2 One bent in reverance
3 Fold
4 Witnesses
5 Oozes
6 Robt. ___
7 Region
8 Person with a paper, perhaps
9 Devour
10 Learned
11 Camera type, briefly
12 Poet's dusk
14 Primary strategy
20 Lost in Paris?
25 Have concern
26 Structural engineer's software
27 Rib
29 And here it is!
30 Little
33 Mutual arrangement
34 Queue after Q
36 Christmas
37 Keep an ___ the ground
38 Attorneys' org.
39 ___'easter
40 Chats
43 Arbitrator
44 Into separate parts
45 A poorly-wiped window?
47 Renowned
48 Lukewarm
50 Went after
51 Censor
55 "___ Tu" ('70s hit)
56 City near Phoenix
57 Friend of Frodo
58 Pitching stat
64 Kind of pie

Crossword puzzles provided by BestCrosswords.com (https://www.bestcrosswords.com). Used with permission.

SUDOKU

EASY

			8			3		
9		1	4	3				
7		3				2	1	4
		8	1				3	
1	3	4	5		6	7	8	2
	7				8	5		
4	2	7				8		3
				5	3	9		7
		5			4			

MEDIUM

		7	3					
		4			6		3	9
	9			7				4
5		9		2				
						4		2
2				6			1	
1	3		5			2		
					4	5		

HARD

		1	5	3		2		
	8		9					
9							1	
6				7				
7		2				8		3
				4				6
	3							4
					4		2	
		9		8	2	5		

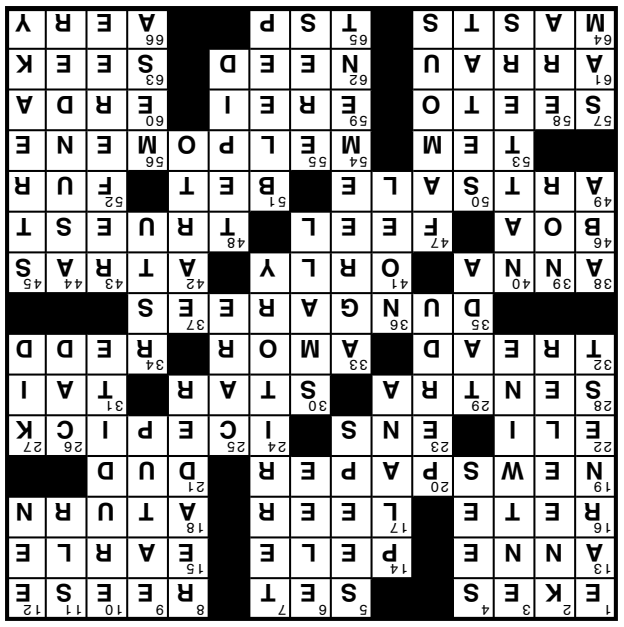
WORD SEARCH

THANKSGIVING

X	F	G	Q	U	P	O	T	A	T	O	E	S	E	E	G	R	A	V	Y
Z	S	H	O	P	P	I	N	G	R	E	E	N	B	E	A	N	S	W	W
C	A	R	R	O	T	S	M	A	S	H	E	D	T	O	D	Q	U	O	Y
R	T	N	O	S	A	N	T	A	M	A	R	I	A	K	J	D	V	M	I
L	E	H	D	J	T	O	F	U	R	K	Y	I	B	L	E	A	V	E	S
V	T	P	E	A	S	C	R	E	A	T	I	N	G	X	D	S	H	A	Y
X	O	J	O	A	K	T	R	E	E	S	L	B	D	R	D	H	C	T	X
P	E	A	C	E	F	U	L	F	A	M	I	L	Y	H	B	U	K	U	Y
Y	S	T	U	F	F	I	N	G	O	R	B	T	U	R	K	E	Y	Q	Z
Q	E	H	Q	S	F	C	O	R	N	U	C	O	P	I	A	M	K	H	J
M	O	O	C	E	A	N	S	F	C	R	A	N	B	E	R	R	Y	A	M
H	A	M	B	L	D	R	E	S	S	I	N	G	M	E	M	Y	X	Y	L
A	P	P	L	E	S	W	E	E	T	R	O	C	T	O	B	E	R	X	U
F	U	P	U	M	P	K	I	N	L	P	W	C	F	G	A	B	X	O	L
H	Y	B	V	R	C	F	I	R	S	T	S	N	O	W	M	M	X	D	M
X	Y	K	V	T	D	E	E	P	F	R	I	E	D	Y	W	F	J	J	C
Q	V	W	K	C	O	R	N	H	W	X	W	B	O	A	T	S	S	O	K
A	H	A	R	V	E	S	T	P	I	L	G	R	I	M	S	Y	U	W	I
C	Y	P	I	N	T	A	F	A	L	L	I	U	W	X	N	N	Q	B	D
A	H	F	V	B	T	H	A	N	K	S	G	I	V	I	N	G	U	D	A

APPLES
BOATS
CARROTS
CORN
CORNUCOPIA
CRANBERRY
DEEPFRIED
DRESSING
EATING
FALL
FAMILY
FIRSTSNOW
GRAVY
GREENBEANS
HAM
HARVEST
LEAVES
MASHED
POTATOES
OAKTREES
OCEANS
OCTOBER
PEAS
PEACEFUL
PILGRIMS
PINTA
PUMPKIN
SANTAMARIA
SHOPPING
STUFFING
SWEET
THANKSGIVING
TOFURKY
TURKEY

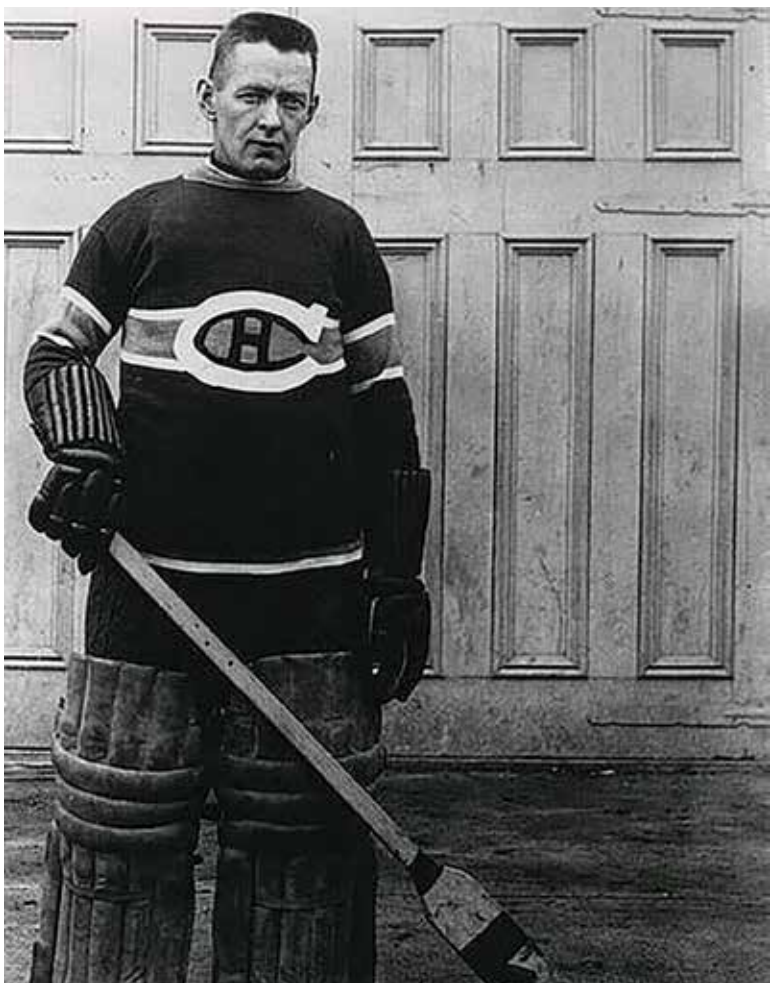
CROSSWORD PUZZLE SOLUTION



A beginner's guide to the NHL's new CBA

A breakdown of some of the newest rules and regulations in the National Hockey League

Naomi Campbell, Staff Writer



According to a 1990 to 2006 study, more than 20,000 hockey players per year ended up in the emergency room. Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

As the 2026-2027 National Hockey League (NHL) season begins, the league has updated the official Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA).

The CBA serves as the master contract between the NHL and the National Hockey League Players Association (NHLPA), dictating the league's rules, working conditions and financial structures.

It is an important guideline in the NHL as it keeps players, league offices and organisations under the same set of rules and standards. The first edition of the CBA was created in 1975, and over the years, it has been updated to address teams' wants and needs and improve safety across the league.

The first set of changes to the CBA occurred during the 1994-1995 season, when the NHL went into a lockout after only 48 regular-season games. This happened because neither the team owners nor the players could reach an agreement on a salary cap.

Then during the league's 2012-2013 lockout, the CBA updated its policy on contract length, only allowing players to sign with a team for seven or eight years.

In the most recent CBA update, there are notable changes for hockey fans to watch as the season begins.

84-game regular season

For the first time in 33 years, the NHL is transitioning from 82 to 84 games per season, reducing the pre-season from eight to four games. This gives every team the chance to play each opponent in the opposite conference twice at home and twice on the road for a total of 42 home and 42 away games.

NHL commissioner Gary Bettman spoke about the impact of this back in March 2026, addressing speculation about whether this rule would be implemented before the next season.

"Going to 84 games, what really that does is balance off divisional play."

"Every team will play every other team twice at home and twice away, which I think is good so we're not doing any rotation within the division. If anything, I think it makes it more impactful," Bettman said in a post-Olympic press conference.

Mandatory neck guards

As an addition to player equipment and player safety, the NHL is now mandating the use of a neckguard for new players. Though there hasn't been a serious neck injury in the league since 2008, former NHL player Adam Johnson passed away in 2023 after suffering a neck laceration during an Elite Ice Hockey League game in England.

The use of neck guards is mandatory for rookies suiting up in an NHL game. As for established players, they have the choice to wear a neck guard or not. While it can help limit injuries, most players will choose to be exempt from the rule due to comfort and preference.

This rule is similar to the CBA's regulation on helmet visors. It gave veteran players the choice to wear one or not, with Jamie Benn, Zach Bogosian and Ryan O'Reilly the only players left who did not.

Emergency backup goalies

Leading up to the night of an NHL game, there will be two goalies representing either team—one in net, and the other on the bench. Despite that, injuries are bound to happen, and an emergency backup goaltender (EBUG) will be called in to play when a team's goalies are unable to continue.

The new rule for EBUGs states that the goalie must be a current member of the team's staff. They cannot have any former NHL experience, have played professionally in the last three seasons and cannot have 80 or more games of pro hockey experience.

The new rule helps eliminate a mid-game scramble to find an emergency goalie, allowing the appointed EBUG to participate in practices and pre-game skates, which will help ensure standardised availability and prevent potential exploitation in emergency roster management. Each team has a selected EBUG, and they are required to declare their goalie accessible to the team 24 hours prior to puck drop.

With the new EBUG rule, the Calgary Flames announced Dusty Nickel as their full-time backup. Nickel has been the arena backup since 2023. Apart from the Flames organisation, he also attended Mount Royal University, where he played only one game for the Cougars.

Olympics

In 2026, NHL players were granted access to play for their respective countries at the Winter Olympics in Milan, Italy. This was exciting for hockey fans as their favourite players had not been allowed to play in the Games since 2014.

The reasons for removing these athletes from competition were fear of injuries before the NHL season had finished and a disagreement between the International Olympic Committee and the NHL, specifically Gary Bettman and the team owners, over insurance, travel costs and scheduling.

As the NHL season begins, more details of the agreement, including contract lengths, playoff cap salaries and affiliate availability, can be found on the NHLPA website.



Plastic and fibreglass were popular materials for padding following World War II. Photo courtesy of Hockey Hall of Fame

Thirteen Canadian MMA fighters set to take on the Octagon

Homegrown talent set to be showcased in UFC Edmonton fight

Abby Weidman, Contributor

On Oct. 17, the Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC) will bring the Octagon to Rogers Place in Edmonton. This evening will be the second time UFC Fight Night has been held on a Canadian stage in 2026 and the second time UFC has held an event in Edmonton since the pandemic, sparking a comeback for mixed martial arts across the country.

Fans will get to witness some of the sport's biggest names go head-to-head—such as main event Canadian fighter Mike Malott vs. Joaquin Buckley and co-main event Canadian Jasmine Jasudavicius vs. Erin Blanchfield.

While some fighters are returning to the Octagon, others, like Calgary-based Javad Mahjoub, are getting ready for their long-awaited UFC debut.



UFC Edmonton headliner Michael Malott headlined his first main card fight in UFC Winnipeg 2026, becoming the third Canadian to headline a UFC main card in Canada. Photo courtesy of Instagram / @michael.malott

A Canadian comeback

After the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a lack of exposure for Canadian fighters, which made it hard for contenders to build their records, gain visibility and compete in front of home crowds. Strict health rules and high costs forced local gyms and in-arena competitions to shut down, which made it difficult for young fighters to compete at home.

In 2023, the UFC announced long-term broadcast deals with Sportsnet and TVA Sports set to start in 2024. This meant the UFC broadcasts would once again be shown regularly to Canadians, increasing local exposure for up-and-coming Canadian fighters.

Sportsnet became home for the English-language broadcasts, including Fight Night and the preliminary rounds of Pay-Per-View cards, while TVA Sports took on the French-language broadcasts.

Hosting its sixth competitive night in Canada since the pandemic, the UFC has officially made a consistent comeback onto local screens, giving the sport more exposure to the Canadian audience. This return has also featured more homegrown talent on their fight cards—including the professional signing and debut of Mahjoub in Fight Night Edmonton.

Canada's newest UFC fighter

Mahjoub will make his UFC professional debut in the Rogers Place Octagon against England's Louie Sutherland. Mahjoub, the 35-year-old heavyweight, took a long path to the UFC, transitioning to mixed martial arts after a long career in international judo.

Throughout his fighting career, Mahjoub has earned 14 medals from the International Judo Federation, and he also represented Iran at the 2016 Rio Summer Olympics. In 2017, he and his family fled his home country of Iran due to political pressures, seeking refuge in Canada. He later returned to the global stage at the 2020 Summer Olympics in Tokyo, competing for the International Olympic Committee's Refugee Olympic Team.

Along with his move to Canada, Mahjoub transitioned from judo to mixed martial arts (MMA), seeing an opportunity to reach a much larger audience through the sport.

"We have to be realistic, the world of MMA is much bigger than that of judo; there are many more fans and far fewer for judo," Mahjoub said in an interview with Le Journal de Montréal.

Mahjoub began his professional MMA fighting career at 31 years old, initially training at Montreal's renowned Tristar Gym, where Canadian UFC legend George St-Pierre trained. He has since put forth an undefeated 5-0 record across regional competitions in Canada, Brazil and South Korea—one of which was a first-round submission victory at Unified MMA 67 in February 2026.

Now training out of Alavanca in Calgary, Mahjoub has signed with Dominance MMA Management to help him compete in larger events like UFC Fight Night.

His opponent, Sutherland, has a 11-6 professional record and holds an experience advantage over Mahjoub. However, Mahjoub will have the backing of an Alberta crowd eager to welcome the sport back to the Canadian market.

On Oct. 17, the Edmonton fight card will feature six main-card and seven preliminary-round fights. UFC Fight Night Edmonton is set to break a record with the most Canadians on a single fight card, with 13 Canadian fighters featured. While some are returning fan favourites, others, like Mahjoub, are just starting their UFC journey.



Javad Mahjoub, 35-years-old, is set to be one the oldest fighters to make his Octagon debut in the UFC. Photo courtesy of Instagram / @javadmahjoub.offical

#S

30 career goals for the University of the Fraser Valley forward Mateo Brazinha, becoming the eighth player to do so in Canada West men's soccer history

62-yard field goal by Calgary Stampeders kicker René Paredes to secure the walk-off victory at McMahon Stadium on Sept. 19 against the Ottawa Redblacks

19 months since his ACL injury, the Dallas Mavericks veteran guard Kyrie Irving says he is ready to take the court at the beginning of the 2026-2027 NBA season

55 penalty minutes were handed out in three minutes during a preseason hockey game between the Calgary Flames and Seattle Kraken at Climate Pledge Arena