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Sunny ways to gloomy days

With leadership in limbo, Canadians wonder about Canada's future

Khaoula Choual

Contributor



Tensions rise as the severe threat of annexation continues to be pushed on the Canadian government by President Trump. Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

After a nine-year-long run in office, Justin Trudeau announced his resignation as Canada's prime minister on Jan. 6. His popularity had recently declined, leading to a significant loss of public support.

The question many Canadians have asked throughout Trudeau's time as prime minister is, "When will he step down?" Now, with his resignation, even more questions arise about Canada's future.

"This country deserves a real choice in the next election and it has become clear to me that if I'm having to fight internal battles, I cannot be the best option in that election," said Trudeau in his resignation speech.

Duane Bratt, a political science professor at Mount Royal University (MRU) said, "The Liberal Party had suffered bad polls for well over a year and a half. They lost three key byelections at places that had been liberal strongholds. The confidence and supply agreement he had with the NDP was ripped up. There was caucus uprisings. Cabinet ministers left."

Bratt believes the biggest blow towards the Trudeau government was on Dec. 16 when Chrystia Freeland, the finance minister, resigned in a rather critical letter directed toward Trudeau.

Since Trudeau decided to

step down, it has prompted a Liberal leadership race to replace him.

There are five credible candidates running for Liberal leadership. The names in question are Former Liberal MP Ruby Dhalla, Government House Leader Karina Gould, former Liberal MP Frank Baylis, Former Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland and Ex-Bank Governor of Canada and England Mark Carney. According to Aljazeera News, Freeland and Carney are the front runners of the Liberal leadership race.

"The Liberal Party of Canada is an important institution in the history of our great country and democracy. A new prime minister and leader of the Liberal party will carry its values and ideals into the next election," Trudeau said.

Since Trudeau stepped down, the Liberal Party of Canada has announced that 400,000 members have registered to vote in the next Liberal leadership election.

What does this mean for Canada?

According to BBC, while federal elections are typically held every four years when a prime minister is elected, an early election is likely to be announced.

According to NPR, an election could be called in late

March 2025. Once Trudeau announced his resignation, he said Parliament would be postponed, or suspended, until March 24.

According to BBC, the opposing parties say they will immediately call for a non-confidence vote and force a new general election.

According to Our Commons, a non-confidence vote is an arrangement if a government loses a vote of confidence, they must resign or request parliament's dissolution, leading to a general election.

What do opposing political parties say about this?

For months, the Conservative party has tried to initiate an election by introducing a non-confidence vote in the House of Commons.

According to CBC, Pierre Poilievre has stated that "nothing has changed" and that "every Liberal MP and leadership contender supported everything Trudeau did."

Jagmeet Singh, the leader of NDP, said that "the Liberals do not deserve another chance, no matter who is the leader."

In terms of Liberal support, Bratt believes that the polls shifted slightly. He does not believe the race is close, and that the Conservatives still have a significant lead at this time.

The carbon tax

Carney and Freeland have both taken a shot at Poilievre's plan to "axe the tax."

Both Canadians have demonstrated scrapping the carbon tax. According to CBC, Poilievre said, "Carney will pause the Liberal tax for a few months to get through the election."

He further said that Carney would then bring in an even bigger carbon tax.

According to The Narwhal, Poilievre argues that the

carbon tax unjustly raises prices for food, shelter and utilities, and has recently begun referring to it as a self-imposed tariff.

"Pierre Poilievre had anticipated that this election would be about the carbon tax. Both Carney and Freeland appear to be moving away from the carbon tax, and they want to reframe the election as who is best able to deal with Trump," said Bratt.

The long-standing question of tariffs

During President Donald Trump's campaign, he said that he would impose tariffs of 25 per cent on Canada and Mexico and 10 per cent on China. Effective on Feb. 4, 2025, Trump aims to hold Mexico, Canada, and China accountable for their promises of preventing illegal immigration and preventing fentanyl and other drugs from entering the United States.

According to the Government of Canada, Canada accounts for less than one per cent of all fentanyl and illegal border crossings into the United States.

Trump has initiated a trade war with Canada, leading the federal government, provinces, and territories to begin their own countermeasures to retaliate against the American economy.

With the tariffs, that means there will be a fee for Canadian products entering the United States, which will most likely be passed on to American customers.

According to CBC, the Canadian government has threatened to impose retaliatory 25 per cent tariffs on \$155 billion in American goods entering Canada. The first \$30 billion will be applied on Feb. 4, 2025, followed by the remaining \$125 billion over the next 21 days.

Following Trudeau's vow to strengthen border security on Monday, Trump cancelled his proposal to put tariffs on

Canada for at least 30 days.

Trudeau stated that 10,000 front-line personnel will be working at the border as part of a safety initiative. The recently resigned prime minister also made several fresh promises to Trump, including appointing a new fentanyl "czar." He also promised to designate Mexican cartels, the leading suppliers of fentanyl and other drugs in Canada and the United States, as terrorists under Canadian law.

"This is the biggest economic crisis to hit Canada since the Great Depression if these tariffs go into effect," Bratt says.

Bratt says if the tariffs go into effect within a week, hundreds of thousands of job losses are expected on both sides of the border. He also believes this is the worst position between Canada and the United States since before World War I.

O say, can you see

Since before being sworn in, Trump has constantly repeated his interest in Canada becoming the 51st state. Trump has also been linking tariffs with annexation.

According to CBC, Trump stated that he would like Canada to join the 50 states, stating that America will provide enhanced protection and military security to Canadians.

Bratt said since the tariff and "annexation of Canada," there has been an increase in patriotism. Several provinces have been removing American alcohol from their liquor stores.

"You're seeing grocery chains identifying Canadian products. You're seeing the booing at the American national anthem. There has been a rise in patriotism," said Bratt.

Canada, at the moment, is in a state of uncertainty, and growing US tariffs and concerns over potential annexation plague the population.

AI: Friend or foe to climate action?

Sarah Palmer
Staff Writer

When hearing the phrase ‘artificial intelligence,’ mental screenshots of ChatGPT’s landing page probably come to mind. From waking up to an alarm powered by Amazon’s Alexa to trusting Grammarly to carve the perfect email, it’s becoming harder to imagine a world without it.

Just as the internet and the advent of user-friendly computers helped expand the World Wide Web beyond scientists in the early 2000s, recent developments have made AI technology more accessible—sparking a rise in energy consumption and indirectly raising greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

In 1999, Jordan Kidney, a computer science professor at MRU started his undergraduate degree. At that time, the internet was something most people accessed at their local library, and AI was an unrealistic concept known only after watching sci-fi movies.

Hitting fast-forward on the VCR, Kidney worked as a research assistant for a professor who did AI work during the second year of his undergrad at the University of Calgary. Inspired by the opportunity, he completed his master’s degree in AI, machine learning and multi-agent systems in 2006.

Teaching everything from advanced computer programming to introductory-level science courses under the general education category, Kidney has been an instructor at MRU for the past 15 years. He says that as technology evolves, so does the way he approaches teaching.

“Technology is something that helps us to manipulate the world around us,” said Kidney. “We’re used to physical information, but we’re in the world of digital that’s expanding more and more.”

But while digital media advances provide socioeconomic benefits, research shows that the rise in AI software development comes at the expense of a hefty carbon footprint—despite offering some clean energy solutions, according to



Sam Altman, pictured, is CEO of OpenAI, an AI platform that uses about 500 milliliters of water for every five to 50 prompts by users. Photo courtesy of Flickr

the World Economic Forum.

Tech booms causing carbon doom

The prominence of wireless technology and feather-light personal devices has made it easy to forget where computing power comes from. Namely, Kidney finds that the ‘cloud’ has added to the impression that digital information is stored far, far away in the depths of the atmosphere.

“Anything that’s in the cloud is not in a physical cloud,” said Kidney. “It’s in a machine somewhere that’s storing information and those machines take power for transmitting.”

What he’s referring to are data centres which, in simplistic terms, are physical warehouses filled with an assortment of specialty computers. Powering everything from social media to search engines, data centres require high-speed internet and are where the ‘cloud’ calls home.

Although data centres are only directly responsible for one per cent of energy-specific GHG emissions, they’re powered by electricity grids that are supported by fossil fuels—amounting to a total contribution of 40 per cent of emissions, according to the International Energy Agency (IEA).

The Government of

Canada reported a 24 per cent increase in global GHG emissions between 2005 and 2021. Since 2010, the global sum of internet users has doubled. It’s understandable that a number of nations pledged emission-reduction strategies in both the Kyoto Protocol and Paris Agreement around that time.

After signing the treaties, the expectation was that each nation would enforce some form of regulation aimed at limiting CO2 emissions. Hence, Canada launched the Canadian Net-Zero Emissions Accountability Act in 2022 which has since taken shape as financing efforts for promoting renewable and efficient energy.

That same year, the World Economic Forum released research saying AI promotes green energy by making automotive procedures more productive through helping “boost the accuracy of emission measurement”—an action proven to have reduced emissions by 40 per cent in some corporations.

In fact, the AI software market is projected to reach the grand sum of \$126 billion by the end of this year. Contributing to this growth is the increase of companies implementing AI software into their business operations—a pattern that’s swollen by 270 per cent since 2021, according to a market snapshot published last year in the Journal of Hybrid

Advances.

Aside from the economic advantages of replacing human labour with AI, it seems that a number of companies have begun to use it to assist in complying with the carbon neutral regulations placed on their industry.

The future’s looking brighter, right? Well, not entirely. Despite there being superficial success in the event of a corporation following carbon-conscious guidelines by introducing AI technology, the software demands significant power be generated from data centres that use and emit carbon.

Cutting costs with AI: How the environment pays the price

Hitting a milestone of 200 million weekly users in August 2024, ChatGPT’s mainstream popularity has sounded environmental alarms.

Asking AI questions takes around 33 times more energy than a traditional search engine according to a publication by Cornell University.

This is because ChatGPT falls under the large language learning model (LLM) category of AI and needs to be trained on information in order to be able to supply responses—demanding significant computing energy from the data centres powering them.

To put it in perspective, the amount of electricity produced by data centres globally in 2022 was equivalent to roughly 71 per cent of all of the electricity generated in Canada that same year. The IEA reported AI as being a major factor and predict that the global consumption of data centre energy will double by the end of 2026.

As of December 2024, the Government of Alberta announced their intention of using the province’s natural resources, cold climate and “low tax regime” as leverage for enticing the installation of AI data centres—adding to the already 239 data centres in Canada if successful.

THE REFLECTOR

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Breaking up with carbon tax

With the 2025 federal election, are Canadians leaving carbon tax behind?

Bella Coco

News Editor

The carbon tax. We know it, we pay it and most Canadians oppose it. Like most toxic relationships, the Canadian federal carbon tax seems to take, take, take and never give. However, with the 2025 federal election looming over Canadians like a violent storm cloud—don't lie to me, I know you're at least a little nervous—we may say goodbye to the controversial consumer carbon tax.

The question remains: are Canadians better off without a carbon tax?

What the heck is the carbon tax anyway?

You may have heard about the carbon tax on the news, or maybe you punched your fist into the sky and cursed Justin Trudeau while paying \$100 just to fill up your tank with regular gas. I drive a small hatchback and still spend upwards of \$75 a tank—trust me, even as a self-proclaimed nature-lover, sometimes it's frustrating.

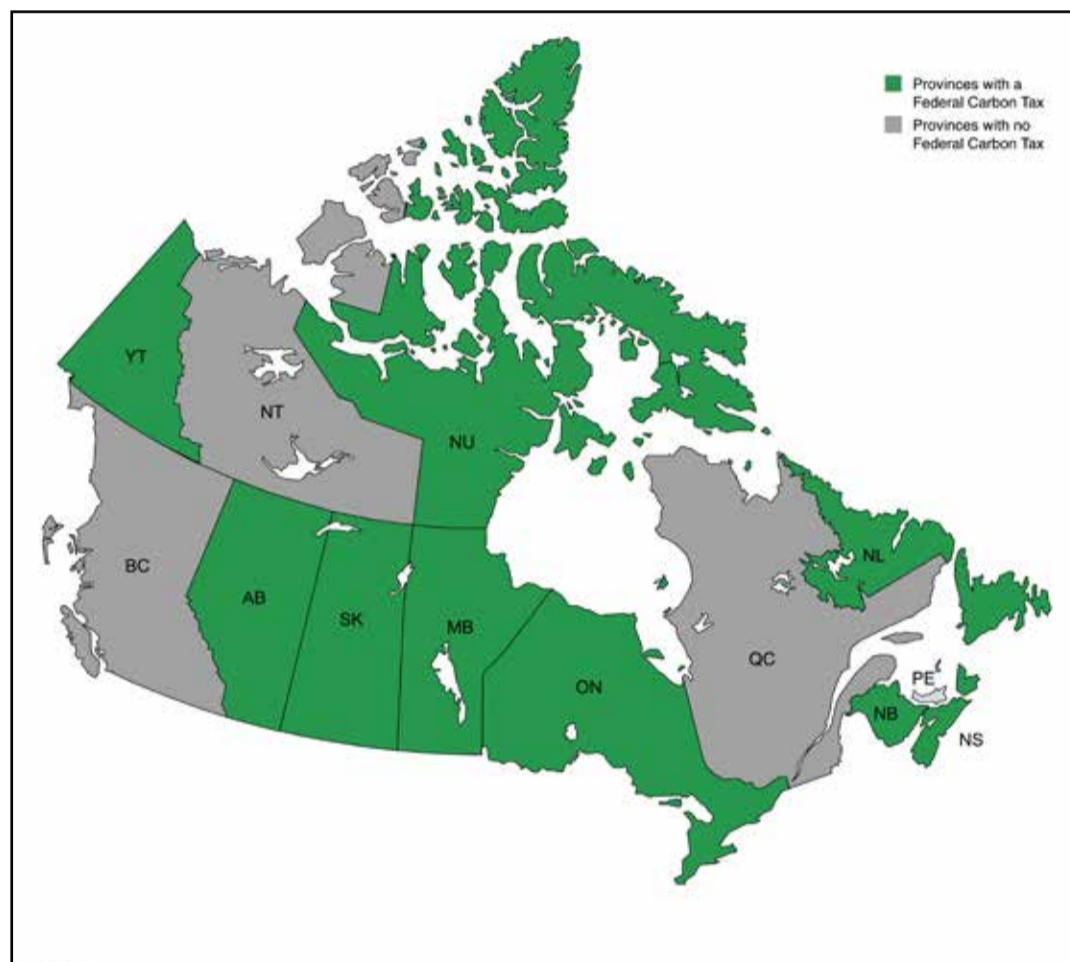
If we're going to get super technical, let me just push up my glasses and clarify that “carbon tax” is the incorrect phrasing. What you call a carbon tax is actually a carbon price. Bet you didn't know that, did you? If you did, congratulations! You get an eco-friendly, recyclable green star. If you didn't, you might just be a part of the 70 per cent of Canadians who don't understand what the carbon tax is or what it costs them.

However, for the sake of the story, I'm calling it a carbon tax. Everyone else does!

The Narwhal simplifies the definition of a big oil's anti-Christ beautifully: “in short, the consumer carbon tax is meant to impose a cost on people to incentivize change.”

With the climate crisis worsening by the second, the carbon tax aims to push Canadians to use more green and sustainable energy resources to limit greenhouse gas emissions.

The carbon tax applies



A comprehensive map of Canada outlining which provinces operate with federal carbon tax and which ones do not. Graphic by Bella Coco using mapchart.net

to the lucky or saddened, residents of Newfoundland and Labrador, New Brunswick, Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, Yukon, Nunavut, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island.

But wait! There's more. With a revenue-neutral route, the majority of the money Canadians pay via a carbon tax is returned to them courtesy of the Canada carbon rebate. What your F*ck-Trudeau-conservative uncle tends to forget is that the refund isn't tied to your actual cost. Ergo, the less gasoline you use, the more refund you can receive.

With its humble beginning in 2019, courtesy of the liberal government, the carbon tax has increased with each passing year. If the carbon tax sticks around, Canadians can expect an increase of \$15 a year by 2030. For those who don't feel like doing the math, that's \$170 per tonne.

It's intimidating to see all of these dollar signs, big numbers and dates, but these facts aren't meant to scare you. In fact, they're just trying to tell the truth. Can you say the same about the big bad politicians these days?

So...does the carbon tax even work?

It's pretty easy to see gas prices rise, watch environmentalists continue to push for sustainability in the savage wake of global warming, and say that the carbon tax does nothing but take hard-earned Canadian money.

However, shockingly so, it takes a lot more than pinching pennies to fix the generations of climate and land devastation caused by human greed.

According to IOPScience, “the majority of studies suggest that the aggregate

reductions from carbon pricing on emissions are limited—generally between zero per cent and two per cent per year.”

Now, before you say, “but News Editor, you're an eco-freak! Are you really going to spotlight the minimal environmental benefits of the carbon tax?” Slow down! You didn't forget that we were talking about the consumer carbon tax, did you?

An independent analysis conducted by the Canadian Climate Institute suggests that industrial carbon pricing (we're looking at you, Big Oil) is the single biggest driver of emissions reductions by 2030.

The Canadian Climate Institute suggests that industrial carbon pricing is projected to contribute “between 23 and 39 per cent (or 53 to 90 megatonnes) of avoided emissions from all policies implemented to date.”

The report also states that the consumer carbon price accounts for between 8 and 9 per cent (or 19 to 22 megatonnes) of projected emissions reductions.

In short, while the consumer carbon tax is posed as an incentive for Canadians to make “greener choices,” the industrial carbon pricing aimed at large corporations has a larger impact on reducing global emissions.

Drumroll please... are Canadians better off without a carbon tax?

In my humble opinion, I believe that along with your ex who can't quite rip themselves from your inbox, Canada should be leaving the toxic relationship of the consumer carbon tax behind.

The industrial carbon price, however, has proven itself to be a promising start to reducing carbon emissions in Canada. Companies like Shell and Chevron are to blame for the rising global carbon emissions and therefore deserve to be aggressively incentivized through carbon pricing to evaluate their unsustainable practices.

Mark Carney, a current Liberal leadership candidate, has stated that his plan would be to replace the consumer carbon tax with a reward program to push Canadians down a greener path. Essentially, Canadians who buy energy-conscious products would be eligible for a fixed dollar rebate.

However, large industrial corporations will continue to feel the harsh consequences of consistently taking from our planet and will be forced to pay (potentially increasing) carbon rebates.

Now, I don't know about you, but I like the sound of that tune.

With the Liberal leader vote on March 9, and the federal election upcoming in the fall, only time will tell to see if Canadians will hold onto the carbon tax.

Reflector Ramblers

A new starting lineup in the sports scene: WAGs

Mia Smith

Staff Writer

The sports scene has some new players: the wives and girlfriends of athletes, otherwise known as WAGs. Social media has been taken by storm by these women. Women like Alix Earle, Hailee Steinfeld, Taylor Swift and many more have created their own demographic within sports.

As a girl myself, I know I am not the only person to find athletes quite the dish. So it is no wonder why these A-list females are flocking by the dozen.

But it goes to wonder, are stereotypes of the athlete boyfriend always being the main attraction diminishing with a new storm of female empowerment? Are the boyfriends and husbands now sitting on the bench while their wives and girlfriends brave the starting line of fame?

The attention of watchers has been drawn away from the television and down to their phones to watch their favourite girls sip cocktails and try to style their boyfriends' backup jerseys while the boys are gearing up for the intense game ahead.

"Get ready with me" videos (GRWM) are a hidden subgenre on social media.

Many ladies have developed a common interest in watching Earle, who is dating Miami Dolphins wide receiver Braxton Berrios, 'get ready with me for game day' videos.

Do Earle fans watch the games? Possibly. But most likely just to catch a glimpse of Earle in her cute outfit in the crowd.

While sitting down at a restaurant for dinner I decided to give our server, Bree Engbrecht, who is 19-years-old, a little quiz to see if my hypothesis was correct.

"Someone in the NFL I think," Engbrecht said when asked about who international pop star Steinfeld's boyfriend is.

Swifties to the field

Arguably one of the most influential names in the world, Swift has single-handedly brought the world of WAGs to a stadium level.

In an article written by ESPN, once news broke of Swift and Kelce's relationship, his jersey prices spiked by nearly 400 per cent.

The influence that Swift has on the sports scene is simply incomparable and unheard

of, something professionals are calling the 'Swift effect.'

This being swiftly proven by the team's ticket sales increasing almost threefold just 24 hours after Swift made her first appearance at a Chiefs game, according to an article by Glamour. Women now account for almost half of the NFL's new social media followers overall in the past year.

You're welcome, NFL

All in all, the influence that WAGs have had on the public through social media platforms has heavily impacted the previously male-dominated world of sport. Bringing in a new demographic of sports fans, even if that sport is attentively watching the television in anticipation of spotting their favourite WAG in the crowd.

Some athletes have boosted the careers of their girlfriends and wives by giving them platforms to create and endorse things such as clothing brands, podcasts and healthcare lines. But in a recent switch of tides, the partners of athletes have given the athletes themselves boosts in publicity and fans.



Alix Earle and Braxton Berrios, her NFL boyfriend, at his hometown highschool in Leesville, Louisiana. Photo courtesy of Instagram/@alix_earle

A guide to the YYC Hot Chocolate Fest

Acacia Carol

Staff Writer



The hot chocolate in contention at Edelweiss Village, topped with whipped cream and berries for a photo perfect finish. Photo by Acacia Carol

As tariff tensions between the United States and Canada grow, many politicians are calling for Canadians to support locally owned businesses. Meals on Wheels Hot Chocolate Festival is just one of the ways you can do so.

Serving Calgarians for 60 years, every February, Meals on Wheels looks to fill the gap for Calgarians facing food insecurity by delivering nutritious and affordable meals to those in need. Last year, they sent out 1.4 million meals from their facilities.

The YYC Hot Chocolate Fest is a key fundraiser for Meals on Wheels, and as events coordinator Kristin Stringer says, the amount raised has been "going up" yearly—raising \$150,000 in 2024.

Stringer says the festival began in 2011, with only 22 cafes participating. This year's hot chocolate fest has over 220 cafes participating, with many "last minute" applications coming through before the festival began on Feb. 1st.

Even with the cheapest drink being only three dollars, Stringer explains that money goes directly back into the community.

"Five hot chocolates is actually feeding a Calgarian, and because we're feeding local people, it's probably the warmest and easiest and

most delicious way to support charity," she says.

With that, I set out to find some cafes to recommend. You can read my complete ranking on our website!

My top choice

The place: Approach Cafe
The drink: Lavender Honey Hot Chocolate

The info: \$7.00 | 9.5/10
This drink was climbing high. A traditional hot chocolate base with honey and lavender syrup, topped with whipped cream, puffed rice, lavender, and a honey cookie. The lavender and honey worked well together—lavender can be overpowering, but the honey balanced it. The whipped topping wasn't too sweet, and you could skip it and still enjoy the drink. The puffed rice was a lovely aromatic touch, showing real thought in the recipe and presentation.

The only downside is sweetness—while I didn't find it excessive, those sensitive to sugar might.

Located inside SoCal Bouldering, I recommend this drink to climbers, the friends they dragged along, and anyone looking for a fresh take on a classic.

YYC Hot Chocolate Fest runs through all of February. Votes can be cast on their website or through their app.

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Event Date: March 13 at 8 pm in West Gate Social



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From the President of the Write Club

It is so exciting to have our second issue collaboration with The Reflector. Building the Write Club for the past three years has been immensely gratifying, since the beginning I've held two truths close: all writing is sacred, and all community is sacred. Now more than ever, you need to have your voice heard. You need to find your people, hold them tightly and share with them. We create art because we're capable of imagining a better future.

I don't know exactly what the Write Club will become after I graduate. What I do know is that I want to leave this community stronger. You've let me be a benevolent tyrant these past years. It's time now to ensure the Write Club's spirit lives on through new voices and visions. We have so many exciting events coming up. I would like to thank everyone that submitted, and showed up to the Write Club! Please join if you're interested!

And please don't forget to check out our upcoming anthology of poetry and short stories coming out this April!

— founder & prez, ken.

Marshland

By Jake Beka

Deep beneath Her West Coast willow, I wilt and wallow
 And whine as I willingly drown and deluge myself
 In Her marshy wine. Her spiced spirits harsh to swallow,
 Yet, Her luring Pacific eyes still ensnare myself.
 Gagged and bound; Her feverish skin tough like blackened bark.
 Her jagged limbs entangle no lucid beholders.
 Once more, I am soothed by Her lurid song... a skylark
 Pinioning me as my frail forest smolders.
 But I lick my wounds clean. Once hysterical and nude,
 Now, I tilt my head up at your volatile mind
 And weave pitiless poems that you once misconstrued.
 I zealously gaze at my bloated body unbind
 And float down your brazen bog as I blithely plot out
 The hellish narrative to your forthcoming fallout.



Photo courtesy of Sofia Wang on Unsplash



Photo courtesy of PickPic

Sea-salt

By Izzy Hurcum

Alien terrain for one of stardust, who worships the ocean like an old world god. Sea-salt wind stings on my exposed skin, water choppy for the pacific swim. Letting the waves carry me back to the shore as I roll onto grey sandbeds. Seeking the solace in the Star of the Sea, continued love leaves me nonplussed.

Mother of Pearl and Father of Coral, I too discussed as odd, carrying on lineage. Oyster shells clicking together jammed into pockets, when the weather fair it's so clear blue, pale like your eyes. Yet so quick to flip, turbulent grey like mine.

But now I'm landlocked, with fossilized creatures hidden in the dirt, seabed dried out millions of years ago. Learning to cope, living without the cry of the gulls. Shooting gin, chased down by sorrow, no longer protected by the nacre, little pearl all on her own. So I go dumb and numb.

One day I'll be called back to the bay. The seaweed will wind up and down my limbs, anchoring this weary vessel in place, and as the waves crash, sun streaming down I'll be home.

Car Ride

By Christina Jarmics

Car Ride
By Christina Jarmics

Let's take a car ride,
drive destinationless through
endless recurring roads and
fancy suburban neighbourhoods.

I will tell you my worries and woes
and you'll listen to mine.

This a silent stillness, to
the perpetually passing lights,
dusted dark alleyways, and
glistening glowing signs.

Illuminated the workers,
nighttime crawlers and us.

Slow turns,
winding roads and the
GPS turned off, as we
burn the midnight fuel
with heated breaths, and
drooping eyes.

bright lights dimmed as
dusk overtook the night,
stars hidden in glimpses between
the pollution pools,
giving us an idea of
how truly tiny we are.

Insignificant existence,
but with you, I don't feel so small.

I tell you my day with a
tightened chest that
methodically over time seems
to unwind.

You listen,
to you little girl speak,
bags pull at your eyes, beckoning
you for sleep.
Pain burns imaginary holes in your back,
and yet you listen.

Intently maneuvering,
shifting and turning,
watching my anxious expressions melt.

Sleep finds me easily those nights,
when we speak to each other,
basking in the beauty of the night.

Some nights,
the moons not there,
we sit as silent still statues,
when tears prick your babies' eyes,
it was a rough day, but
you always make it better.

I wish one day,
to ask you the same question.
Key in hand,
morning buzz depleted and
evening snooze on the horizon.

That's when I'll ask,
as sun kisses moon goodnight,
with the same red puffy cheeks, and
sprung on you, out of the blue;

"would you like to go for a ride tonight?"

Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons



Nonstop

By Franz Valeria

This is for those kids
Those at rest on the mountain
The ones that still read

Still the students run
Words spoken silently heard
A breeze over earth

Voiceless yet perceived
Words frenetic, eyes worn down
Again and again

Still they write and write
For eden lies beyond this
A false paradise

Then and Now

By Benjamin Urquhart

I'm unborn, floating in an infinite ocean I cannot perceive. A fleshy thing in my mother's stomach, back when she was whole and healthy, a decade away from tumours and radiation and bone cement. I don't know how to think, I don't know light, I don't know. The doctors cut her stomach open and I'm torn through the breach into sound and color, swaddled in cloth and bestowed a name. My first memory is waddling around on the deck as my brother chases me.

My mom's Chinese and my dad's Canadian. I'm born in Hong Kong and remember nothing, memories swallowed into the event horizon of childhood. Youth is Dim Sum at the Silver Dragon and red envelopes of money from grandma and grandpa. I can't speak Mandarin nor Cantonese---my tongue is harsh and unwieldy, a chainsaw that cuts through tones and soft consonants. I feel like a fraud.

I make Thor's hammer out of styrofoam and a flashlight, monkeying around the playground until my best friend mocks me—I learn the concept of betrayal. He pinches me on St. Patrick's Day so I punch him in the nose: I'm weak enough that violence is always an option. I leave Nellie McClung after Grade 3 and he fades out of my life until high school because he's my roommate's girlfriend's ex. He exists on the periphery of my consciousness, only invoked when my friends from EP Scarlett talk about the smartest burnout they knew: I think of summers spent biking through Palliser and the abrasion of youth.

My OCD manifests and my world becomes the length of my washroom. Prison looks like gray walls, tiled floors and water-scale on glass. My instruments of torture are the sink and shower tap. I scrub my hands until they're red and fracturing---scalding water cascades over me until cold bleeds through. I'm still not clean. My dad sits on the other side of the door until 4AM—I escape my cell because I'm too tired to be anxious. I fall asleep wishing I wasn't broken. My OCD gets better and better until I barely remember the pain; years of progress built on Prozac and panic attacks.

There's a girl I really like—I don't tell her how I feel. She goes away for a summer and comes back, but someone talked when I held my tongue. I numb the sting of cowardice with drink and lose myself in the inky sea of the night sky. My roommate jokes about the friend-zone and I consider breaking my corona bottle over his head, but I choose to do nothing, just like with her.

Physicality becomes a religion to me, just like it is for my father. I spend my 22nd summer landscaping, weightlifting, and learning martial arts. Everyday is bile in my throat and aching shoulders from holding dumbbells, tools, Thai pads. Exhaustion settles over me like a warm blanket, clouding my summer in a gentle haze. I last a month until martial arts is placed on the backburner. September rolls around and I begin to wake up.

It's the 10th anniversary of my mothers death and my father's house is crowded with people. Adults shoot me awkward glances because I was just a baby the last time we met, and they can't reconcile then and now. My cousins and I form a huddle amidst strangers—we're children again, playing in a backyard fort. My grandparents watch the crowd in somber happiness: cursed to outlive their child but alive to see the legacy she built. My nana tells me my mom would be proud of me. I hope so.

Darlene

By Sylvia Belcher

Tell me again about the birds
How the starlings signal first spring.
Hold out cracked blue eggs
And tell me who belonged to them.
Show me the way you crow out into the sky
So a black feathered phantom will sweep down
Trusting enough to feed.

You are home here among the trees and the creatures
I see you, elven and wise.
Upon turning into your drive
I watch you, sat upon a stump.
Tangles of plants twine around your calves
Accepting you as their own.
You belong so much to the wild world,
I can't imagine you caged and kept.

When you take me for a wander
Through your precious sanctuary of land
For me, you unearth every hidden thing.
Mushrooms bursting up from the ground
That bring forth plumes beneath your foot.
Tiny purple lamps of fairies
Grown in their own micro meadows.
Soft aspen skin that gifts chalky white powder
Spread upon faces to ward off scorching sun.

You seem solid as a wooden trunk,
Rooted.
Your skin wrinkles like bark,
Years of grooves written in.
You commune with God in the trees
Reached in ways church could not.

When we speak, we spar.
We throw wit like paper stars
Unfolding each one
To see their lines of creation.
I watch you twinkle
As I let forth my wildness.
Unabashed and honest.
I laugh without shame
And look challengers dead in the eye
Unflinching.

In the fields we watch hawks circle overhead.
You too have feathered wings
Marked by bands used to tie them.
You were too young
To stave off the hands that did.
I want to massage out the wounds,
Make your plumage lay smooth once more.
Despite its grooves, it shines.

In your eyes is a girl with a snake round her neck
Reigning terror over city folk
Defiantly steadfast
Refusing her skirts
Flashing animal teeth and shrieking for freedom.

But they twisted your small limbs
And crammed you in a box
Which might have been your coffin
If you'd lain.

But you scratched
Till at once
You clawed your way out
Shredding your cardboard prison.
Like a feline far from home
You at last made your escape
Back to the prairie
Guided by an inner compass begging your getaway.

When I hunt down my ambitions,
It is for you.
You and our long lineage of those told to sit down.

My wings beat relentlessly,
Sun break to set
Fuelled by thoughts of aprons and regrets
And generations of heavy fists.
I refuse to be silenced
No heavy-racked buck will ever make me small.

When I dream, it will be of you on your land
Digging in your feet and declaring
Making clear
You will not be dragged from your sanctuary,
Your home, your being.

When I hear the call of a morning bird
It's your voice hitting my ears.
When I press my hand into moss,
It is your embrace I receive.
When I breathe crisp air
You fill my lungs.

I was born of the forest nymphs,
You, the matriarch of the line.
Our souls composed of wind
Our hair of the ebbing grasses
Our blood the babble of winding creeks.
When you speak of the wilderness
You speak of ourselves.
So tell me again about the birds.



Photo by Aiden Johner

PINK

By Rachel Fitzgibbon

I never hated the colour pink

I hate the pretty pink polkadot pinafores put on passive and petite girls

In the playhouse playing pregnancy like a prizewinning t of pristine pedigree
The pervasive propaganda of procreation as our primary purpose
Parenthood is the pinnacle
And you must provide or you're pointless

Perturbed women pleading for patience as they pathologically perform
perfection
Using poison to purify their paranoia
Punished when the prescription fails to push past the psychosis

The predatory patriarchy making prepubescent girls into pornography
Polished pussies pasted on porn hub, parents are preoccupied with their
popularity
Picturesque plastic molded provocatively, these parasites profiting off our
insecurities
Preserve your perishable beauty so you remain pleasant to perceive

Paradise is a pollution filled pavilion when you are no better than a polished
prisoner
paraded as a princess but profoundly powerless

Enduring painful protests in the pursuit of the privilege to be plain and still have
peace
A portrait of a pariah pressed into pre-prepared patterns

Their paltry promises are poor when the practice proves their priorities

A plethora of pretty pink puppets with perforated psyches pushed to a palpable
point of pain

Pricked and pulled and plucked until they are palatable, pale and, pliant pawns
in the pink plague

It was never about the colour pink

Biringan - A Myth Reimagined

By Marcus Madelo

I invite you to stare,
with yr scleras ever - so still,
a stuttering hesitation to yr step
& yr chest utterly satiated with still air.

Witness an omniscient presence
of skyscraper shadowing stature,
a chimerical multi - level metropolis
manifesting out the polluting palms
of human flesh. An emerald green
tinted still - life titan
who demands yr offerings & tithes
with worship & art galleries.

I encourage you to cast yr gaze
onto the garuda's flowering ribcage;
the fabled Biringan
sprouting out the hollow exoskeleton
of a featherless demi - god.

High - rise homes holstered onto its shoulders,
empty houseless shelters tethered to its thighs,
shinto gates & tilted towers attached to its wings.

Imagine yourself sprinting down Apolaki's scalp,
pursuing the spears of sunshine
scattering off his coruscating crown.

I implore you to dedicate yr life to this celestial being,
who provides free public transport in his spinal fluid,
and colosseum-sized conversation lounges within his lungs.

Who's twin tails stem from a suspension bridge
symmetrically shattered into two, cascading clear waterfalls,
rapids bellowing out sawed - open sewage pipes
& scraps of spaniard sailboats resting in watery graves
beneath his typhoon summoning talons.

Perceive this prophecy, this virtuous vision
of jasmine petals & banana leaves
burgeoning off the bi-sected halves
of the Manananggal, the virgin maiden, the enchantress Mayari
who hosts stilt homes, hospitals & hovering shipyards
upon her hip, exporting to all people of the three realms.

Maria Sinukuan, reclaim yr gleaming throne
that stays on the tip of my tongue. Remind me of yr daily splendor:
why sunrises & sunsets gleam & glisten in watermelon & crimson.
Remind me of yr eternal mercy & how there is always a reserved place
in yr astral pantheon for the Igorot, the Lumad, the Palawano,
the Mangyan, the Aeta & all the people of the Philippines
who forever bare sun-blessed skin.

Apung Sinukuan, please continue to protect our people
& I will produce in my nervous system stockpiles of poetry,
limericks & choruses coursing in my veins, to provide a signal,
to empower our people to proclaim how our past provides
& our future is prepared for our present-day experiences.

I will repeat this poem in my sleep,
revolve my mornings, mid - days & midnights
reciting this mantra, remind myself
of our ever-evolving vernacular
& how to foster the tools of our oppression
into the crux of enduring discussions
for more than just peace.
Our people, forever and ever.



Photo by Marcus Madelo

Local soundwaves

The best bands you've never heard of (yet)

Rylie Perry

Staff Writer

With a new year comes a new demand for more music, more live shows, and more places to spend a night out. Luckily, Calgary-based bands have got you covered.

From metal to punk to alternative, Calgary has no shortage of local talent that continues to fly under the radar.

Holding court at local bars like Whiskey Rose, Ship and Anchor, Modern Love, the Attic, and Brickwell Taphouse, these bands mark hot spots to catch some new music and have a good time.

Whether you tune in on streaming services or head out to one of these venues, these musicians are some of the best local bands you've never heard of—yet.

Betaboys

Defined by the influence of Duran Duran and The Cars, Betaboys pay homage to the 80s' with their New Wave sound.

Sincere and fun, the Betaboys lean into the period's iconic synth-pop, using a midi keyboard and saxophone to hone their signature sound.

Following the release of their first EP, "So Shy," in 2021, the band has played a number of Canadian festivals, including Calgary's own BIG Winter Classic and Sled Island Music and Arts Festival.

They released their second EP, "Just Yesterday," in 2023 and are set to record their third album with Russell Broom, a JUNO Award-nominated producer.

Since then, they have taken up residence in some of Calgary's best local spots,

including Dickens, King Eddy, and Ship and Anchor.

However, after opening the month at the Cold Bones Festival in Drumheller, they have yet to announce any local show dates.

Nonetheless, it is easy to stay up to date on their schedule through their Linktree and stream them on Spotify, Bandcamp, Apple Music, and Amazon Music.

Sunglaciars

Making music meant to mesmerize, Sunglaciars strike a balance between post-punk and neo-psychedelic influences.

They manage to be bright yet existential, experimenting with the limits of their sound through synths and drum machines in place of guitars and drums.

Their sophomore album, *Subterranea*, was co-produced by Calgary's own Chad VanGalen, a local indie legend. VanGalen also worked on their latest release, *Regular Nature*, to cultivate something completely different from its post-punk predecessors.

The four piece spent the majority of 2024 on their North American tour as well as attended a full roster of Canadian music festivals, including Sled Island alongside Betaboys.

While Sunglaciars are regulars at the Palomino Smokehouse, you can also catch them at the Palace Theatre on Friday, Feb. 14 for Block Heater 2025, which is presented by the Calgary Folk Music Festival. Tickets are available for purchase



Betaboys band performing a vibrant set live at Festival Hall. Photo by UnfoldingCreativePhoto, courtesy of Instagram/@betaboysband

through their Linktree.

They will also be attending The Starlite Room in Edmonton on Friday, April 25, with tickets also available through their Linktree.

Sunglaciars are available for streaming on most platforms, including Spotify, Amazon Music, and Apple Music.

Iron Tusk

Marrying post-punk and heavy metal, Iron Tusk is known for their gritty riffs and anti-authoritarian outrage.

From Siksika Nation, Iron Tusk is tied together by a shared sense of community, traditional metal influence, and a love of over-the-top music that enables calamity.

Their newest album, *Disowned*, which came out in 2024 via Moments Fest Records, put them on the punk-metal map at a slew of Canadian Music Festivals, including Edmonton's Winterruption and Calgary's Sled Island.

The band also attended the

Indigenous Tattoo and Music Festival in Albuquerque, New Mexico in 2024, following the release of their album.

When they are not burning down festival stages, Iron Tusk frequents the Palomino Smokehouse and Dickens. Although they don't currently have any upcoming shows announced, it is easy to stay up to date through their social media and Linktree.

Iron Tusk is available for streaming on most platforms, which includes Spotify, Apple Music, Amazon Music, and Bandcamp.

Crooked Spies

A melting pot of pop-punk, heavy metal, and stoner rock, Crooked Spies is unlike any other.

They manage to evade all laws of genre, bending heavy garage-rock influences to create a gnarly and unique sound.

Fronted by siblings Steven and Dylan Evanik, Crooked Spies has an infectious,

unfiltered energy that cannot be replicated. By producing an honest experience that makes them a live must-see, they manage to cut through formalities.

They released their latest album, *A Lesson in Heuristics*, in May of 2024, following their appearance at BIG Winter Classic in Calgary.

Since then, they have been booked and busy at local bars such as Ship and Anchor, Dickens, Modern Love, and many more.

You can find them next month at Dickens on March 28 and keep up to date with their schedule through their social media and Linktree.

Crooked Spies can be streamed on Bandcamp, Spotify, and Apple Music.

Underground artists such as Betaboys, Sunglaciars, Iron Tusk, and Crooked Spies work to define the local music scene and provide Calgarians with something new this year that should not be missed.

OUT'N ABOUT

Block Heater 10th Anniversary

Calgary Folk Festival is bringing back Block Heater for its 10th anniversary. A celebration of local artists across various locations in downtown Calgary, this event takes place from Feb. 14 to 16. A better look at the full schedule, ticket prices, and lineup is available on calgaryfolkfest.com.

Mother Mother

Beloved Canadian band Mother Mother is stopping at the Scotiabank Saddledome on Feb. 21 for their North American tour. Known for their hit song "Hayloft," they take the stage alongside Cavetown in this dual-headline performance. Tickets start at \$60 and are available on Ticketmaster.

ImaginAsian Night Market

The Asian Heritage Foundation is hosting a vibrant night market at The Pioneer from Feb. 14 to 16. As a unique and free activity for Valentine's weekend, guests can expect the sights, sounds, and tastes of Calgary's diverse Asian communities. More information on dates and times is available online.

Calgary Home and Garden Show

As we approach the season of spring cleaning, the Calgary Home and Garden Show is here to help transform your spaces. Located at the BMO Centre from Feb. 27 to March 2, guests can expect Q&As with the pros, crafty markets, and decoration ideas. More information and tickets are available at calgaryhgs.com.

Love Languages

The gateway to a flourishing life

Brennen French

Staff Writer

Calendar pages flip to February, New Year's resolutions dissolve, and many people begin to feel the heaviness that holds the air. That heaviness, composed of much more than the brisk winter blanket draping Alberta, comes alongside the synthetic holiday of love—Valentine's Day.

Distant relatives question where your partner is, and grocery stores force-feed gifts of empty endearment down your throat. No matter your situation, this time of year can be very hard. However, the dreaded Feb. 14 is not only about romantic relationships, it is about platonic ones too.

Family and friends are pivotal to how people feel loved during this holiday,

but it is no surprise that every person expresses their love differently. This is why a gentleman named Gary Chapman created and coined the term 'love languages'—to help people identify their own expressive principles behind their ability to communicate their own love.

Chapman is the author of *The 5 Love Languages: How to Express Heartfelt Commitment to Your Mate*, which was published and released in October 1992. It slowly became one of New York Times bestselling books. He created the book based on his work as a couple's counsellor at a Baptist church after receiving his PhD in anthropology.

The Five Love Languages

Acts of service:

Acts of service are demonstrated by showing love and gratitude to loved ones by doing small and large acts of kindness, such as cleaning the house or offering to hold someone's bag.

Receiving gifts:

Receiving gifts doesn't have to be a grand gesture, more so the thought and process of going out of one's way to get something to express affection to others. This can also go the other way, as some people like to give gifts just as much as they receive them.

Quality time:

Quality time is often just

enjoying the company of others to the fullest. No distractions, no phones, and no computers, just thoughtful interaction and dedicated special time—quality over quantity.

Words of affirmation:

Words of affirmation are ways an individual indicates their love by spreading praise, appreciation, and general expressive communication.

Physical touch:

Physical touch is expressed in many different forms besides intimate experiences. Things such as dancing, hand-holding, hugs, and much more are events that contribute to this beautiful love language.

Why is this

important?

Chapman has a website where more information is provided and quizzes are available to determine what is most likely to be an individual's love language.

Even though these forms of love communication were originally built off of partner relations, it is not strictly reserved for relationships of that nature. Rather, knowing and understanding the love languages of those around you can be a beneficial way to ensure your network feels supported and loved.

Many people incorporate

Continues on Pg. 13

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Continued from Pg.12

these love languages into their daily lives without even realizing it. Acts of service is for those helping hands, and someone who shows their love this way might inadvertently do things like cleaning the table after a family dinner or brushing the snow off of your car.

The language of receiving gifts does not always mean massive teddy bears and chocolates, but can look like a friend bringing you coffee without asking or handing off their favourite book to you because they know you might like it.

Quality time is arguably the easiest and most effective way to make family and friends feel loved. Unplugging, being present, planning thoughtful days together, going on a hike, or even hitting the town with friends are easy ways to be in the moment together.

Words of affirmation are often times one of the more difficult languages. Many people overlook the power in simply saying “I love you” to family and friends when they mean it. It could also look like telling people what they remind you of, asking about their day and engaging in their life, or simply letting them know what they mean to you. Small but mighty, it’s

called a love language for a reason—don’t forget the power of words.

Lastly, it is widely believed that physical touch is reserved for romance only. However, a hug goes a long way. Things like a hand on their back during a time of need or a head on the shoulder when you watch a sad movie can’t be overlooked. Remember, though, not everyone is a fan of physical touch. When making new friends or seeing distant family, it’s always a good idea to ask where they stand with their personal bubble. Even if they laugh at you, it’s better than invading their space unknowingly.

Love is all around

Valentine’s Day doesn’t have to be lonely. It should be a day of solidarity with people we love and care about whether that be with a partner or not—platonic relationships require attention too.

The idea that an individual only uses one or two of these languages is a common misconception. Our lives and activities are made up of all of these love languages, and they should be used as a way to open up communication, provide comfort and care, and show solidarity with our loved

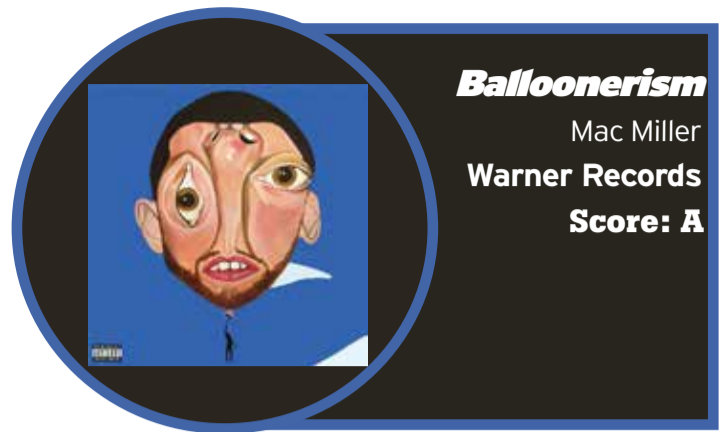
ones that we so graciously get the opportunity to spend our time with.

Chapman and relationship experts alike all share a similar motive in their field of work—wanting to see growth in their clients. Without a willingness to open one’s heart, growth is much harder to achieve. Considering how many people struggle with the idea of being alone, there is something that I personally would like to note.

Seeing growth and opening your heart is scary, but without trying, change will never happen. These love languages are gateways to learning how to love ourselves. There is no right or wrong way to approach what a person needs, which is why it is important to take care of ourselves and stay surrounded by people who really care and want to experience growth healthily on the same journey.

And after all of that, if you’re feeling bummed about Valentine’s Day, remember this quote from the late, but very popular peace activist Buddhist monk, Thich Nhat Hanh, from Hue, Vietnam.

“Sometimes your joy is the source of your smile, but sometimes your smile can be the source of your joy.”



Balloonerism
Mac Miller
Warner Records
Score: **A**

Balloonerism by Mac Miller was released on Jan. 17, 2025, which is his seventh studio album and his second posthumous album since his death in September 2018.

He recorded this album between 2013-2014 through Warner Records. This album consists of 14 songs, 58 minutes in total length.

I will always admire how Miller’s albums speak true to what he was going through at the time he was making them. It gives a different perspective of what was going on in his head and his unique way to put it in song form. It’s something a long-time fan would appreciate, and it is so comforting to hear this project from him.

This album is a heavy one as he was struggling during this time period of his life,

and it’s an introspective look into a troubled and self-aware mind. He displays honesty through intimate storytelling, rhetorical questions, eerily retrospectives and blunt metaphors. *Balloonerism* conveys a wide variety of emotions and feelings. It has its ups and downs in deep melodies and intimate lyrics, kind of like a balloon rising high, with the final track a slow easy drop off, like the balloon is deflating. Hearing this album feels surreal, there’s an inescapable yet comforting haunting undertone as you listen to each song. He clearly reaches listeners who are lost in their dreams as he was in his, and it’s all the more hopeful and celebratory thanks to his passion.

—Jillian Zack



The love language of gift giving is often expressed through small offerings of food or candy. Photo by Brennen French



DeBí TirAR Más FOTOS
Bad Bunny
Rimas
Entertainment
Score: **A+**

DeBí TirAR Más FOTOS (DTmF) by Puerto Rican artist Bad Bunny was released on Jan. 5, 2025, which is his sixth solo studio album through Rimas Entertainment. This album consists of 17 songs with a total length of 62 minutes.

An honourable mention would be “LO QUE LE PASO A HAWAII” which highlights Puerto Rico’s neo-colonization, gentrification, and displacement of locals. The lyric, “Que no quiero que hagan contigo lo que le pasó a Hawái” (“I don’t want them to do to you what they did to Hawaii”) highlights the way the Hawaiian statehood has threatened local culture.

He sings “Quieren quitarme el río y también la playa. Quieren el barrio mío y que abuelita se vaya” (“They want to take away my river, they want to take away my beach, they want my neighbourhood and they want my grandmother to leave”). This song is filled with generational angst that

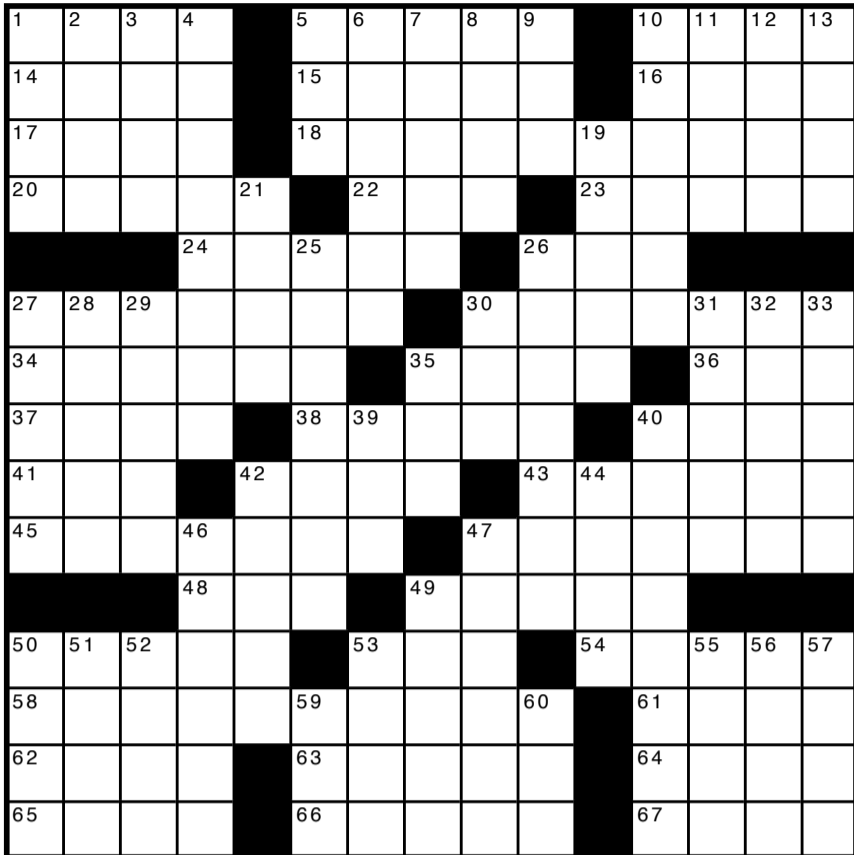
isn’t typically seen in reggaeton, moving from hometown pride to radical music, urging listeners to keep their roots alive and to celebrate their heritage rather than letting it fade.

Another great song on this album is “DTmF,” as it perfectly captures the feeling of loving the people who showed you everything about where they come from. This song is a reminder to cherish where you came from, your heritage, and your family. He conveys an intimate and vulnerable feeling with a cultural sense of pride as you listen to each song. With this new album, it’s not just music, it’s art.

As a non-Spanish speaker, the music transcends the language barrier evoking an emotional reaction. This album is a great example of music being a universal language.

—Jillian Zack

THE REFLECTOR CROSSWORD



- 34. Pestors
 - 35. World's longest river
 - 36. Prefix with skeleton
 - 37. Actor Connery
 - 38. Deep black
 - 40. Hardware fastener
 - 41. Bark up the wrong tree
 - 42. ___ about (roughly)
 - 43. Conditional release
 - 45. Porpoise
 - 47. Abilities
 - 48. ___ Paulo
 - 49. Loses color
 - 50. Contemptuous look
 - 53. Kenan's comedy partner
 - 54. Hawke of "Reality Bites"
 - 58. Familiar
 - 61. Pool division
 - 62. Extol
 - 63. Drench
 - 64. Legendary singer James
 - 65. Small combo
 - 66. "Hedda Gabler" playwright
 - 67. Escape slowly
- 10. Swamp
 - 11. Waterfall
 - 12. ___ the Red
 - 13. Fresh-water fish
 - 19. Red cosmetic
 - 21. Swing to and fro
 - 25. Hall of fame
 - 26. Frog's perch
 - 27. Stationed
 - 28. Diciembre follower
 - 29. Knot
 - 30. Transgression
 - 31. Dovetail part
 - 32. Rejoice
 - 33. Spoils, with "on"
 - 35. ___'easter
 - 39. ___ appétit!
 - 40. Table supports
 - 42. Scarlett of fiction
 - 44. Toward the sheltered side
 - 46. Pretended
 - 47. "Unto the Sons" author
 - 49. Unborn child
 - 50. Shaker contents
 - 51. Tenn. neighbor
 - 52. Prefix with distant
 - 53. Door handle
 - 55. Detest
 - 56. Get in on a deal
 - 57. Half-moon tide
 - 59. Despot Amin
 - 60. Family room

DOWN

- 1. Price indicators
- 2. Dies ___
- 3. Italian bread?
- 4. Seasoning plant
- 5. Imitate
- 6. Payment for regular work
- 7. Lieu
- 8. Engrave with acid
- 9. Obedience school command

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

ACROSS

- 1. Slant
- 5. Beasts of burden
- 10. Hill toy
- 14. Oratorio solo
- 15. Singer Page
- 16. Old Italian money
- 17. Teri of "Tootsie"
- 18. The "E" of "E-mail"
- 20. Fortune tellers
- 22. That's the spot!
- 23. Prevention dose
- 24. Give merit
- 26. Schlep
- 27. Panhandlers, collectively
- 30. Not blind

See answer grid at bottom of page

WATCH THE COUGARS

WOMENS VOLLEYBALL

Next home game: MRU Cougars vs UofA Pandas - Friday, Feb. 14 at 8 p.m.

MENS VOLLEYBALL

Next home game: MRU Cougars vs UofA Golden Bears - Friday, Feb. 14 at 6 p.m.

WOMENS BASKETBALL

Next away game: MRU Cougars vs Manitoba Bisons - Friday, Feb. 14 at 5 p.m.

MENS BASKETBALL

Next away game: MRU Cougars vs Manitoba Bisons - Friday, Feb. 14 at 7 p.m.

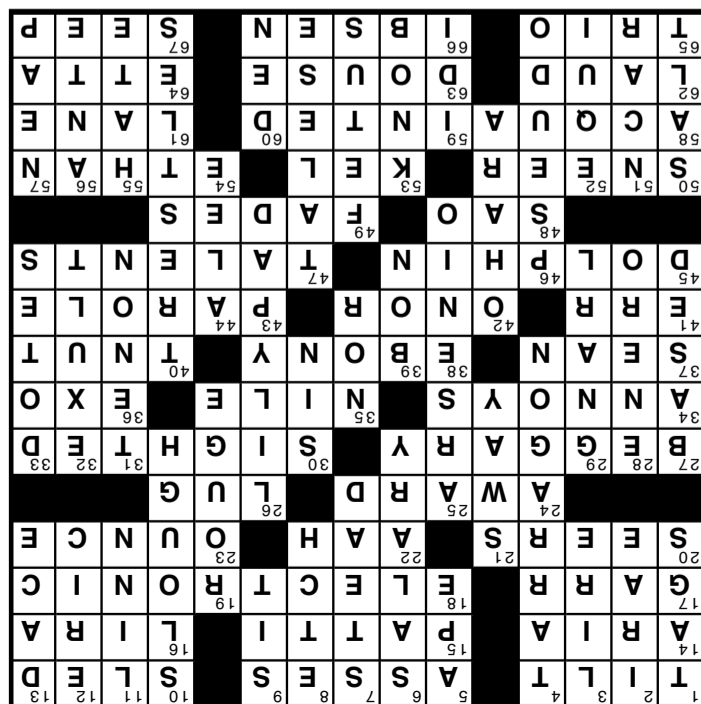
WOMENS HOCKEY

Next home game: MRU Cougars vs TWU Spartans - Friday, Feb. 14 at 7 p.m.

MENS HOCKEY

Next away game: MRU Cougars vs TWU Spartans - Friday, Feb. 14 at 8 p.m.

Watch all games live on CanadaWest TV.



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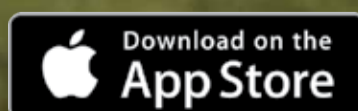


Photo graphic by Rafael Fernandez. Own work, CC BY-SA 4.0. <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/index.php?curid=51218006>

Cougars crushed in chaotic Crowchild Classic

Naomi Campbell

Staff Writer

The 11th annual Crowchild Classic hockey game between the Mount Royal University (MRU) Cougars and the University of Calgary (UofC) Dinos on Friday, Jan. 31 drew a record 13,118 fans at the Scotiabank Saddledome. Beating the attendance record of 12,859 that was previously set in 2016, the Cougars put up a fight in both games but conceded two losses as the Dinos won the women's game 2-1 and the men's game 4-0. Still, the Cougars out-rank the Dinos in the playoff hunt in both men's and women's hockey and were able to secure revenge wins on Saturday, with MRU taking a 5-2 win in the women's game at Flames Community Arena and the men's team winning 5-0 in Dino territory at Father David Bauer Arena.

Women's game

The puck dropped at 4:30 p.m., to start the head-to-head battle for the women. Within the first period, Mount Royal held a heavy offensive advantage against the University of Calgary. Players like Abbey Borbandy, Julia Duke and Sydney Benko came up with some insane scoring opportunities, but could not sneak the puck past Dinos goalie Amelia Awad. MRU netminder Kaitlyn Ross took a firm stance between the posts to deny every puck sent her way. No penalties were given out, and the shots were 9-6 in favour of the Cougars by the end of the period.

The excitement picked up in the second period right away when Jerzey Watteyne had an incredible open net opportunity, but could not capitalize on the goal as Awad deflected the puck at the last second. Only a minute later, Summer Fomradas buried the first goal of the game for Mount Royal, with assists from Duke and Alex Spence. Aliya Jomha made a number of attempts to capitalize on

a second goal for MRU, but Awad stood her ground in front of the Dinos net. Both teams picked up penalty minutes in the second period, but MRU's penalty kill, which is among the best in all of U SPORTS, held strong, thanks in huge part to Ross. After 40 minutes of action, the Cougars were holding onto a narrow 1-0 lead.

The third period began in a defensive standoff, with neither team finding a steady offensive flow. With seven minutes left of regulation, though, the Dinos tied the game as Brooklyn Anderson finally put a puck past Ross with an assist from Sydney Mercier. Both teams played with high energy and motivation, but could not score another goal before the end of a mesmerizing 60 minutes of play. The horn sounded at the end of the third, leaving them to head into five minutes of 4-on-4 overtime.

The UofC spent plenty of time in their offensive zone, but Mount Royal's conference-topping defence stayed solid, not allowing a goal. Jomha was called for a penalty early in the extra period, but Ross kept a number of quality Dino scoring opportunities out of the net. Watteyne had yet another scoring opportunity on the breakaway, but neither team scored a golden goal. After five minutes of play, no goals were granted, leading them into a shootout. Awad stopped all three of the Cougars attempts, including an incredible move from Jomha. The Dinos took a 2-1 victory in the 11th Crowchild Classic at the Scotiabank Saddledome.

Borbandy put up three shots on goal in the game and played with endless reserves of energy for the entire 60-plus-minute match.

"I would say that my burst of energy from the offensive side came from the realization that there's only so much

time left in this game, and it's a huge crowd, and we waited all year for this moment," Borbandy said. "Why not take the opportunity to do things that I normally don't do, and play with some type of energy that the team needs and just be a different player? This is a moment that I will remember forever and if I didn't take that chance, I probably would regret it just knowing that this is an opportunity that most people don't get."

Men's game

The women's game was a close battle, fought until the umpteenth minute. The men's game was a brutal beating, and unfortunately for MRU fans, the Dinos were the ones doling it out as the Cougars took a 4-0 loss. The Cougars had scored in every other game this year, including the preseason, but could not beat Dinos goaltender Carl Tetachuk despite loading 34 shots on goal to the UofC's 19.

MRU started off the first period with a thirst for shots on goal, leading 9-1 in that category through the first 10 minutes. The Dinos picked up a penalty about eight minutes into the match, and it looked like the Cougars were about to score their first goal of the game.

However, with just four seconds left in the powerplay, the Cougars turned the puck over in their defensive zone. The Dinos tried to centre the puck from behind the net, but it bounced off of Teague Patton's skate right in front of the Cougars' net—just outside of Shane Farkas's reach. Jake Gricius snapped a shot past Farkas and despite holding a massive shooting advantage, the Cougars went down 1-0 early.

The Cougars upped their aggression in the second period, as did the Dinos, and penalties were handed out generously. Eight minutes into the period, MRU picked up a pair of penalties to the

Dinos' one, giving the UofC a four-on-three advantage. It didn't take long for the Dinos to capitalize on their powerplay as Dinos forward Colson Gengenbach rocketed a wrist shot from the high slot into the top left corner of the net to give the UofC a 2-0 lead.

MRU remained aggressive on offence, loading shot after shot at Dino's goaltender Tetachuk, who remained flawless between the posts. Nearing the end of the second period, MRU held a 26-8 advantage in shots on goal, but turned the puck over in the offensive zone, setting the Dinos loose on a two-on-one breakout. Mack Stewart led the break up the left wing before saucing a bouncing puck over to Tyson Galloway, who backhanded the puck in mid-air past Farkas. With just their ninth shot on goal, the Dinos went up 3-0 and held onto that lead until the end of the second period.

Things were looking grim for MRU, but Cougars fans had faith in their high-octane offence to make a miraculous comeback in the final period.

However, the Dinos were the only team to score in the third period; nine minutes in, the UofC got a fortuitous bounce off the side boards on an errant pass, springing Dallon Melin on a short breakaway. Melin caught the puck backhanded, played it to his forehand in one swift move and unloaded a beaming shot past Farkas for their fourth and final goal of the game. The two teams exchanged shots until the final buzzer, and after 60 agonizing minutes for Cougars fans, the Dinos took a 4-0 win in the 11th Crowchild Classic at the Scotiabank Saddledome.

Jayden Wiens has been on a tear throughout this rookie campaign this season and was impressed by the energy of the record-setting crowd at the 'Dome in his first-ever Crowchild Classic matchup.

"I didn't really know what to expect coming in, but that was probably the craziest experience I've ever had," Wiens remarked. "The crowd was electric, obviously [we] wanted a better result, but, overall, the experience was amazing."



With a record 13,118 fans in attendance, the MRU Cougars men's hockey team, pictured, suffered a tough 4-0 loss at the hands of the Dinos, but struck back the following night with a dominant 5-0 victory at Father David Bauer Arena. Photo taken by Adrian Shellard



Even though MRU lost both of their Crowchild Classic games, there were plenty of memorable moments for everyone in attendance, on and off the ice. Photos taken by Daniel Zappe and Adrian Shellard

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116 million dollars lost in potential contract money after Luka Doncic was traded to the LA Lakers

13K+ fans attended the 2025 Crowchild Classic, a new all-time record

52 points scored by Cougars guard Keivonte Watts in his last two home games for MRU

40 assists from Lexi Herrod in MRU's 3-2 victory against the TRU Wolfpack last Saturday