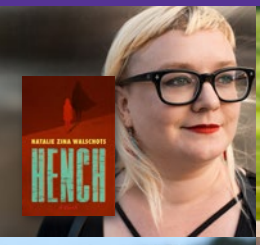
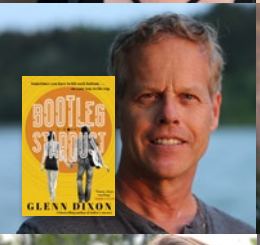
STARFest
St. Albert Readers Festival

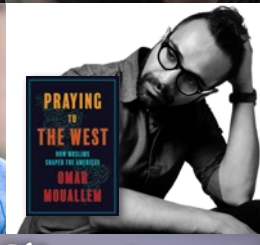
Fall 2021

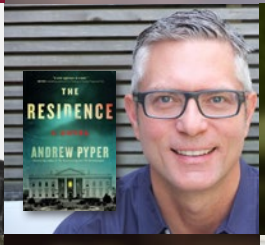
Inspiration. Conversation.

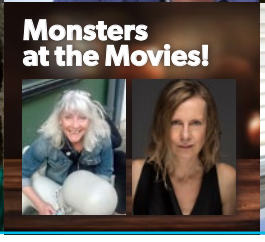
15 events over three weeks in October

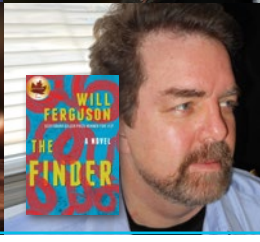












St.Albert Public Library

St. Albert Place | 5 St. Anne Street
780-459-1530

STARFest.ca

Welcome to St. Albert Public Library and to STARFest

Janice Marschner
Library Board Chair

I'm delighted to welcome you to the 11th annual STARFest Readers Festival, a celebration of exciting literary voices and books the entire country is talking about. The 2021 lineup features an inviting balance of in-person and online events that reflect St. Albert Public Library's commitment to creating meaningful programs and events that inspire and delight readers. Find the STARFest titles in Library displays now, so you're ready for the October festival!

Welcome to St. Albert and to STARFest

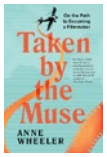
Mayor
Cathy Heron

Once again, it's a thrill to welcome this star-studded array of authors to STARFest. Over the last year and a half many of us have taken comfort in the pages of a book to take our minds off the pandemic. As we move to recovery, hopefully we will fondly remember nights spent at home curled up with a good book. STARFest is a great opportunity to share this love and celebrate the authors that continue to entertain us. St. Albertans and visitors from all across the region continue to be delighted each year with the range of entertaining, provocative and thoughtful events that the St. Albert Readers Festival bring to gather avid readers, local celebrities, and our guest authors in a shared love of Canadian writing. St. Albert is so proud of the work our public library does. Welcome to the Festival and enjoy!

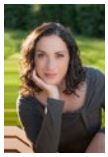
STARFest 2021 at a glance

Helen Humphreys
Rabbit Foot Bill
Hosted by Jacqueline Baker
Tuesday, Oct. 12 | 6:30 PM
Virtual $5

Anne Wheeler
Bye Bye Blues: the Music & the Film
Wednesday, Oct. 13 | 7 PM
Arden Theatre $25

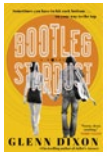


Anne Wheeler
Taken by the Muse
Thursday, Oct. 14 | 7 PM
Forsyth Hall $7



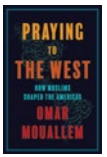
Chevy Stevens
Dark Roads
Hosted by Jana Pruden
Friday, Oct. 15 | 7 PM
Virtual $5

Morgan Murray
Dirty Birds
Hosted by Vish Khanna
Saturday, Oct. 16 | 2 PM
Forsyth Hall $7



Glenn Dixon
Bootleg Stardust
Hosted by Barry Bailey
Sunday, Oct. 17 | 2 PM
Virtual $5

Romance Panel with Courtney Milan, Farah Heron, and Uzma Jalaluddin
Moderated by Natasha Deen
Tuesday, Oct. 19 | 7 PM
Virtual $5



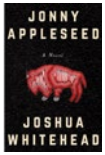
Omar Mouallem
Praying to the West
Hosted by Zain Velji
Friday, Oct. 22 | 7 PM
Forsyth Hall $7

Genevieve Graham
Letters Across the Sea
Hosted by Elinor Florence
Saturday, Oct. 23 | 2 PM
Virtual $5

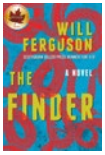
Amanda Leduc
The Centaur's Wife
Hosted by Nisha Patel
Sunday, Oct. 24 | 2 PM
Forsyth Hall $7

Natalie Zina Walschots
Hench
Hosted by Celine Caruso Dixon
Wednesday, Oct. 27 | 7 PM
Virtual $5

STARFest 2021 at a glance

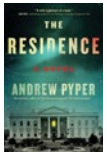


Joshua Whitehead
Jonny Appleseed
Hosted by Emily Riddle
Monday, Oct. 25 | 7 PM
Virtual $5



Will Ferguson
The Finder
Friday, Oct. 29 | 7 PM
Arden Theatre $15

Monsters at the Movies!: Susie Moloney & Eva Colmers
Hosted by Michelle Steinhusen
Saturday, Oct. 30 | 7 PM
Forsyth Hall $7



Andrew Pyper
The Residence
Hosted by Marty Chan
Tuesday, Nov. 2 | 7 PM
Virtual $5

Never miss another SAPL author event!

SAPL's monthly newsletter showcases programs and events for all ages, including author and Writer in Residence events.

Sign up at **sapl.ca**

The seasonal STARFest newsletter keeps you up to speed on all the latest STARFest news.

Sign up at **STARFest.ca**

St.Albert Public Library

STARFest St. Albert Readers Festival

STARFest tickets

STARFest 2021
October 12 – November 2

Virtual events	**$5**
Events at Forsyth Hall St. Albert Public Library, Downtown location	**$7**
Events at Arden Theatre	**$15**
Bye Bye Blues with live jazz musicians at Arden Theatre	**$25**

Tickets for all events are available online at

shop.sapl.ca

Find out more at

STARFest.ca
@ReadersFest
STARFest > St Albert Readers Festival

Books will be available for purchase and signing at receptions after in-person events.

These independent bookstores support STARFest events and authors:

- Audreys Books
- Glass Bookshop

Director's welcome

Michelle Steinhusen

Interim Festival Director

I was one of those kids who repeatedly got caught reading under the covers with a flashlight at midnight. Once I realized that you could discover whole new worlds, meet amazing people, and experience mind-blowing heights and crushing lows within the pages of a book, I was hooked.

As an adult, I still stay up too late reading, and I'll read anything (ask me about my shark book obsession). As a librarian, I love helping people discover new titles, new authors and new themes to explore. I get excited that there are so many pathways into a book, so many ways to love the words and the stories. Any book can be a good book for the right person.

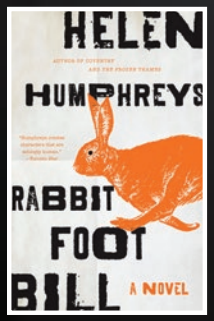
This is the 11th year of STARFest. The Library hosted six authors at the first STARFest in 2011. Since then, we've hosted over 100 authors and reached an audience of thousands. We've adapted to the times, and have safe, vibrant in-person events and accessible virtual events.

As the Interim STARFest Director, I'm thrilled to present the 2021 St. Albert Readers Festival, connecting our reading community to familiar favourites and new voices. There is something for every reader at STARFest 2021!

Helen Humphreys

Rabbit Foot Bill

Tuesday, Oct. 12 | 6:30 PM
Virtual $5



A lonely boy in a prairie town befriends a local outsider in 1947. For young Leonard, it's an escape from school, bullies and his father. When he witnesses Bill commit a murder, his shock is absolute. Fifteen years later, they are reunited at the Weyburn Mental Institution – Leonard as staff, Bill as inmate – and Leonard becomes fixated on discovering the truth of what happened on that long-ago day.

STARFest facts

Helen Humphreys is an acclaimed and award-winning author of fiction, non-fiction and poetry. Her fiction includes *Machine Without Horses*, *The Evening Chorus*, *Coventry* and *Afterimage* and her non-fiction includes *The Ghost Orchard* and *The Frozen Thames*, as well as the memoir *Nocturne*. She has won the Rogers Writers' Trust Fiction Prize and the Toronto Book Award, and she has been a finalist for the Governor General's Award for Fiction, the Trillium Book Prize, the Lambda Literary Award and CBC Radio's Canada Reads. The recipient of the Harbourfront Festival Prize for literary excellence, Helen Humphreys lives in Kingston, Ontario.

Rabbit Foot Bill is her 19th book. Based on a true story, this page-turning novel from a master stylist examines the frailty and resilience of the human mind.

Jacqueline Baker's short story collection, *A Hard Witching*, was shortlisted for the Writers' Trust Fiction Prize, and won the Danuta Gleed Literary Award and the Alberta Book Award for short fiction. Her novels are *The Horseman's Graves*, and *The Broken Hours*, a ghost story about the final days of H.P. Lovecraft's life. She teaches creative writing at MacEwan University in Edmonton.

Bye Bye Blues: the Music & the Film

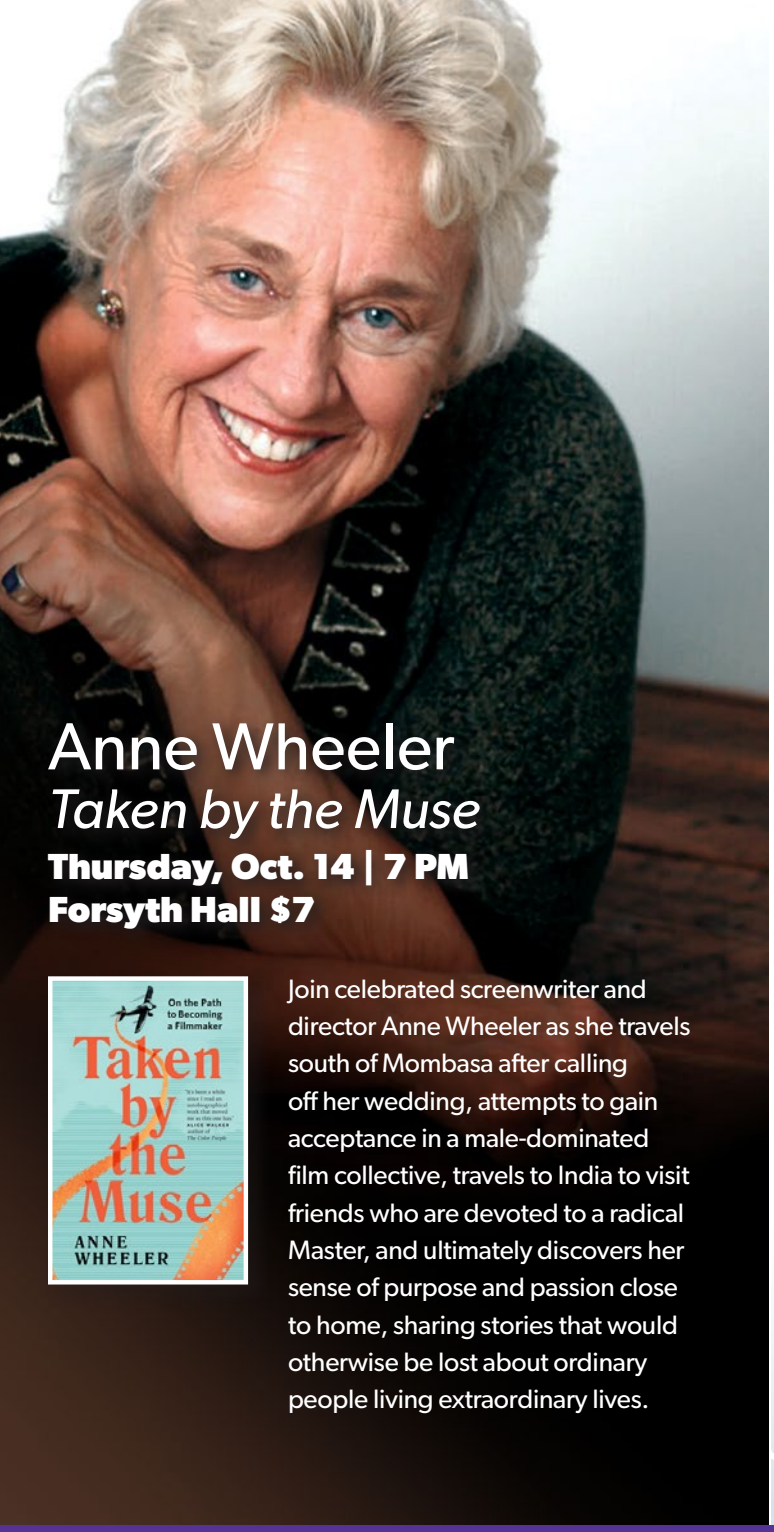
Wednesday, Oct. 13 | 7 PM
Arden Theatre $25

STARFest and The Arden Theatre are thrilled to partner for a special event. Join director Anne Wheeler for a screening of her award-winning film *Bye Bye Blues*, and enjoy a stellar lineup of local jazz musicians to pay tribute to the music from the movie. This bittersweet and poignant film showcases fine performances by Rebecca Jenkins and Robyn Stevan. *Bye Bye Blues* made Jenkins a star, and was nominated for 13 Genie Awards, including film, director and screenplay. It won for actress (Jenkins), supporting actress (Stevan), and song.

STARFest facts

Anne Wheeler's place as one of Canada's foremost filmmakers was established with three multi-award-winning features – the documentary *A War Story*, relating the devastating story of her father's time in a POW camp during World War II; *Loyalties*, a dramatic feature examining issues of sexual abuse and racism; and *Bye Bye Blues*, a musical drama inspired by her mother's experience as a musician in a dance band during World War II. Anne has also worked extensively as a TV director; she has received seven honorary doctorates and the Order of Canada.

Bye Bye Blues is a World War II romance set to the music of a Prairie swing band. Daisy (Rebecca Jenkins) and her husband Teddy (Michael Ontkean) are living in colonial luxury in pre-war India when he is transferred to Singapore, and Daisy is sent home to Alberta with their two children and an old piano. Stranded with her God-fearing parents, fun-loving sister-in-law (Robyn Stevan) and no news of her husband, Daisy is in desperate need of work. She begins playing piano and singing with a dance band, and finds herself drawn to her handsome bandmate Max (Luke Reilly). When Teddy returns, weakened from years as a prisoner of war, Daisy has to choose between career and family, and between an old and a new love.



Anne Wheeler
Taken by the Muse
Thursday, Oct. 14 | 7 PM
Forsyth Hall $7

Join celebrated screenwriter and director Anne Wheeler as she travels south of Mombasa after calling off her wedding, attempts to gain acceptance in a male-dominated film collective, travels to India to visit friends who are devoted to a radical Master, and ultimately discovers her sense of purpose and passion close to home, sharing stories that would otherwise be lost about ordinary people living extraordinary lives.

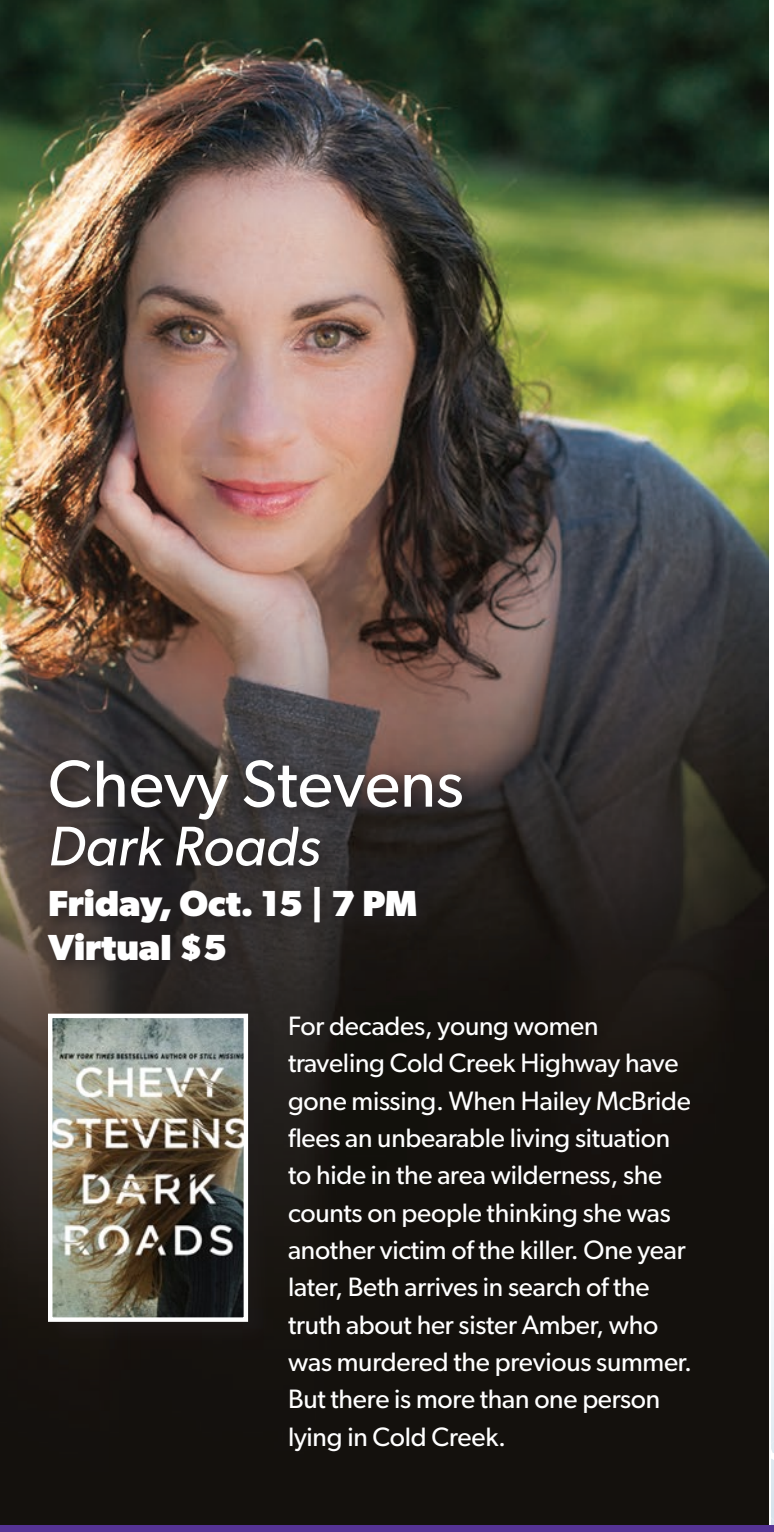
STARFest facts

On October 13, Anne Wheeler guides us through a screening of her most famous film, *Bye Bye Blues*. Tonight, the celebrated filmmaker takes us through the serendipitous journey she took in the seventies, when she broke with tradition and found her own way to becoming a filmmaker and raconteur. Laced with humour and revelation, Anne Wheeler's creative nonfiction stories capture her experiences as a woman in a male-dominated field at the beginnings of filmmaking in Alberta in the 1970s.

"Such a career was not on the list of what a woman could be in the sixties. There was no film school or #metoo movement to suggest that my talent was worthy of attention; that it could provide a viable living; that I could be a visual artist, a writer, or a performer of any kind and not be a burden and a disappointment to my widowed mother. To follow my fancy would have been seen as a selfish thing to do."

Taken by the Muse: On the Path to Becoming a Filmmaker is a must-read for anyone open to exploring the possibilities of who they are and what they might do with their lives – and for those who love a good story told with integrity and warmth. It was a finalist for the 2021 Robert Kroetsch City of Edmonton Book Prize and a finalist for a High Plains Book Award.

See page 13 for Anne Wheeler's bio.



Chevy Stevens

Dark Roads

Friday, Oct. 15 | 7 PM
Virtual $5

For decades, young women traveling Cold Creek Highway have gone missing. When Hailey McBride flees an unbearable living situation to hide in the area wilderness, she counts on people thinking she was another victim of the killer. One year later, Beth arrives in search of the truth about her sister Amber, who was murdered the previous summer. But there is more than one person lying in Cold Creek.

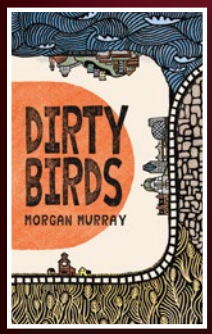
STARFest facts

Chevy Stevens lives on Vancouver Island with her husband and daughter. For most of her adult life she worked in sales, first as a rep for a giftware company and then as a realtor. While holding an open house one afternoon, she had a terrifying idea that became the inspiration for *Still Missing*. Chevy eventually sold her house and left real estate so she could finish the book. *Still Missing* became a New York Times bestseller and won the International Thriller Writers Award for Best First Novel.

When Chevy isn't working on her next book, she's hiking with her two dogs on her favourite mountain trails and spending time with her family. Chevy's current obsessions are vintage airstreams, all things mid-century modern, Hollywood memoirs, and stand-up comedians – not necessarily in that order. Her books, including *Those Girls*, which Stephen King called "incredibly scary," have been published in more than thirty countries and optioned for film. *Dark Roads* is her seventh novel.

Jana G. Pruden is an award-winning writer at The Globe and Mail. She lives in Edmonton.

Morgan Murray
Dirty Birds
Saturday, Oct. 16 | 2 PM
Forsyth Hall $7



In late 2007, as the world's economy crumbles and Barack Obama ascends to the White House, the remarkably unremarkable Milton Ontario – not to be confused with Milton, Ontario – leaves his parents' basement in Middle-of-Nowhere, Saskatchewan, and sets forth to find fame, fortune, and love in the Euro-lite electric sexuality of Montreal, to escape the infinite flatness of Saskatchewan, and to find his messiah: Leonard Cohen.

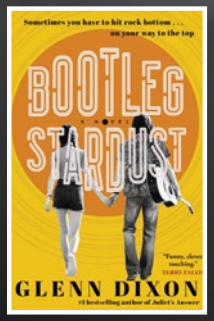
STARFest facts

Morgan Murray grew up in Caroline, AB and now lives in Cape Breton with his wife, cartoonist Kate Beaton, and growing family. In between, he has been a rancher, a roustabout, a reporter, a tour guide, a schemer, a variety show host, and a student in Caroline, Calgary, Paris, Prague, Montreal, Chicoutimi, and St. John's. *Dirty Birds* is his first novel. It has been compared to the writings of Kurt Vonnegut, and was a finalist for the Leacock Medal for Humour, longlisted for CBC Canada Reads 2021, a finalist for three Atlantic Book Awards (winning the Best Atlantic Published Book) and the ReLit Awards, and won silver in the 2020 International Forewords Indies Award for Humour. It has also made his parents proud even though it's full of cursing and carrying on.

Hilariously ironic and irreverent, *Dirty Birds* is a quest novel for the twenty-first century – a coming-of-age, rom-com, crime-farce thriller – where a hero's greatest foe is his own crippling mediocrity as he seeks purpose in art, money, power, crime, and sleeping in all day.

Vish Khanna works for CKUA Radio, and has toured North America playing in several bands. He hosts the interview podcast *Kreative Kontrol*, is an Assistant Editor at *Exclaim! Magazine*, and is a co-organizer of the Long Winter arts series in Toronto, where he hosts a monthly talk show called *Long Night with Vish Khanna*. He was a host and producer at CBC Radio 3 and is an on-air columnist for *The Next Chapter with Shelagh Rogers*.

Glenn Dixon
Bootleg Stardust
Sunday, Oct. 17 | 2 PM
Virtual $5



It's 1974 and Levi Jaxon is about to become very famous. He's living in his best friend's basement, sending out demo tapes to record companies when, miracle of miracles, he's asked to audition at Abbey Road Studios for the already famous band, Downtown Exit. The problem is, it's all lies.

Photo credit: Desiree Bilon

STARFest facts

Glenn Dixon's fourth book, *Bootleg Stardust*, is about a band in 1974. The author has played in bands all his life, and for this book he created a full soundtrack of songs. Recorded on the legendary Rolling Stones Mobile Studio and then mastered at Abbey Road Studios, the project was the dream of a lifetime.

His #1 bestselling memoir, *Juliet's Answer*, was published in twelve countries and translated into five languages including Chinese, Spanish and German. His second book, *Tripping the World Fantastic*, was a travelogue about music around the world. Glenn has traveled through more than seventy-five countries, and written for *National Geographic*, the *New York Post*, *The Globe and Mail*, *The Walrus*, and *Psychology Today*. Before becoming a full-time writer, he taught high school English for twenty years. He lives in Calgary.

Barry Bailey is a long-time resident of St. Albert. Currently he is a bookbinder and proprietor of St. Albert's only used bookstore, Bailey Books. Past adventures have included careers in radio and television, musician, concert producer, writer and corporate communications. He has also volunteered with the Arts & Heritage Foundation and the St. Albert Chamber of Commerce.

Romance Panel

with Courtney Milan, Farah Heron & Uzma Jalaluddin

Tuesday, Oct. 19 | 7 PM
Virtual $5

Romance fiction outsells all other genres of writing combined, and the vast diversity in the books means Romance has something for everyone. Join us as panelists Courtney Milan, Farah Heron and Uzma Jalaluddin dish on what's fun, what's steamy and what's new in the world of Romance novels. Edmonton author Natasha Deen moderates.

STARFest facts

Courtney Milan's bestselling books about carriages, corsets, and smartwatches have received starred reviews in *Publishers Weekly*, *Library Journal*, and *Booklist*. Before she started writing romance, Courtney got a graduate degree in theoretical physical chemistry from UC Berkeley, then a law degree from the University of Michigan. She was a law professor for a while. She now writes full-time.

Farah Heron's debut, *The Chai Factor*, was named one of the summer's best books by *The Globe and Mail*, and was praised in *Book Riot, Smart Bitches Trashy Books, Bustle* and more. Her next release, *Accidentally Engaged*, was praised in *Entertainment Weekly*, *USA Today*, *NPR*, *The Toronto Star*, *Glamour* and *Oprah* magazine. Her next book, *Kamila Knows Best*, comes out in March 2022.

Uzma Jalaluddin is the author of *Ayesha at Last* and *Hana Khan Carries On*. A high school English teacher, she is also a *Toronto Star* columnist and a contributor to the *Atlantic*. Her first novel was published in the US, the UK, Australia and India and was optioned for film by Amy Pascal and Sony Pictures.

Guyanese-Canadian author Natasha Deen writes for kids, teens, and adults. Her novel, *In the Key of Nira Ghani*, was a Most Anticipated Novel for both Barnes & Noble and Chapters-Indigo, a Red Maple Honour Book, and won the 2020 Amy Mathers Teen Book Award.

Omar Mouallem

Praying to the West

Friday, Oct. 22 | 7 PM
Forsyth Hall $7

A new father, searching for a place for himself and his family in the Muslim community he has resisted all his life, visits thirteen unique mosques across the West on a journey of self-discovery, each one revealing surprising history and a deepening sense of identity and belonging. Original, insightful, and beautifully written, *Praying to the West* reveals a secret history of home and belonging taking place in towns and cities across the Americas.

Photo credit: Aaron Pedersen

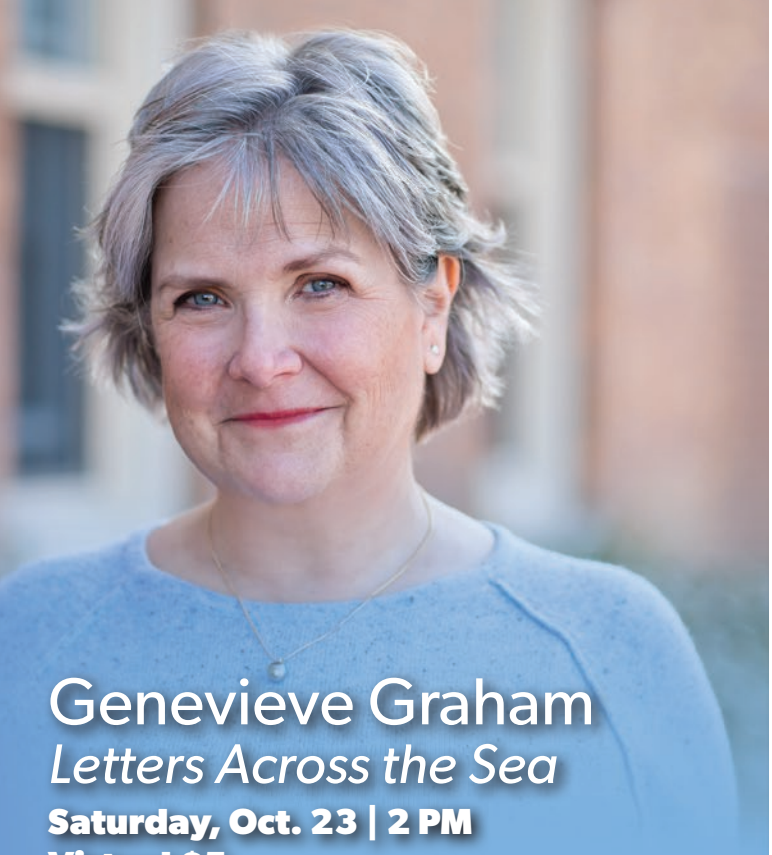
STARFest facts

Omar Mouallem is an award-winning writer and filmmaker. He's reported on Muslim and Middle Eastern issues for *The Guardian*, *The Ringer*, and *WIRED*, coauthored the national bestseller *Inside the Inferno: A Firefighter's Story of the Brotherhood that Saved Fort McMurray*, and directed *The Last Baron*, a documentary about the unlikely connection between the Lebanese civil war and a rogue burger chain. In 2020, he founded Pandemic University School of Writing. He lives in Edmonton with his family.

Mouallem grew up in a Muslim household, but always questioned the role of Islam in his life. As an adult, he used his journalism to criticize what he saw as the harms of organized religion. But none of that changed the way others saw him. Now, as a father, he fears the challenges his children will no doubt face as Western nations become increasingly nativist and hostile toward their heritage.

In *Praying to the West*, he explores the unknown history of Islam from California to Quebec, and from Brazil to Canada's icy north.

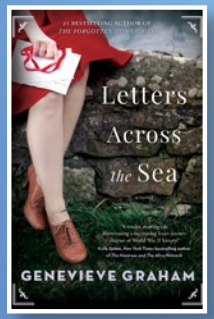
Zain Velji is a political commentator who appears weekly on CBC radio and television and co-hosted the 2019 federal election for CTV. He hosts the award-winning podcast *The Strategists*, and the Zain Velji show on *Newstalk 1010*. Zain's writing has been published by the *Toronto Star*, *The Globe and Mail*, and *National Post*.



Genevieve Graham

Letters Across the Sea

Saturday, Oct. 23 | 2 PM
Virtual $5



Inspired by a little-known chapter of World War II history, a young Protestant girl and her Jewish neighbour are caught up in the terrible wave of hate sweeping the globe on the eve of war in this powerful love story that's perfect for fans of *The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society*.

"If you're reading this letter, that means I'm dead. I had obviously hoped to see you again, to explain in person, but fate had other plans."

STARFest facts

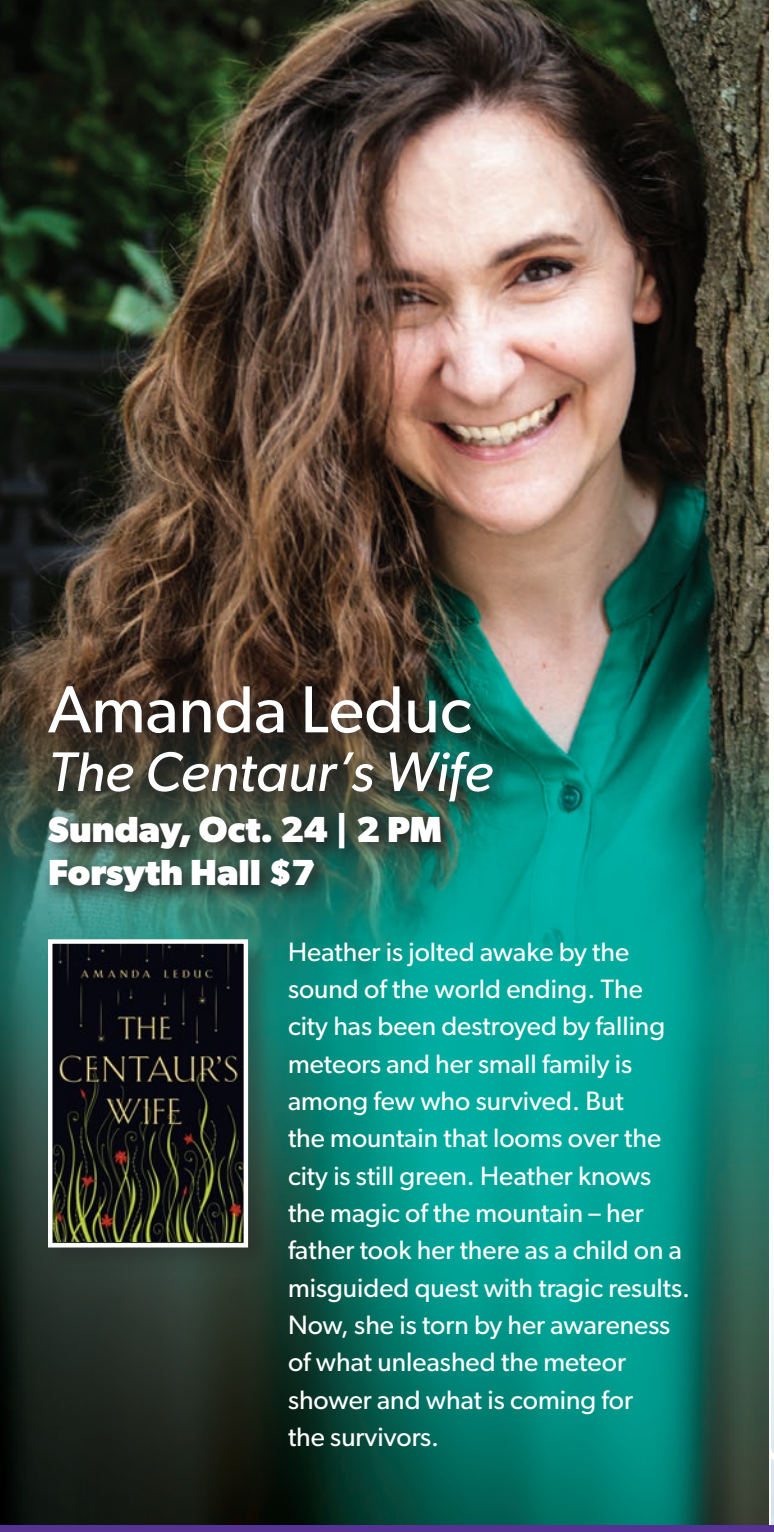
Genevieve Graham is the *USA TODAY* and #1 bestselling author of *The Forgotten Home Child*, *Letters Across the Sea*, *Tides of Honour*, *Promises to Keep*, *Come from Away*, and *At the Mountain's Edge*. She is passionate about breathing life back into Canadian history through tales of love and adventure. She lives in Halifax, Nova Scotia.

Letters Across the Sea is a poignant novel about the enduring power of love to cross dangerous divides.

As 18 year old Molly Ryan works to help her family through the Depression, Hitler's hateful ideas are crossing the sea to Toronto, a city already simmering with unrest. When tensions between the Irish and Jewish communities erupt, Molly and her best friend are caught in the middle, with devastating consequences.

Six years later, Molly is a reporter and a new war is on the horizon. As letters trickle in from overseas, Molly is forced to confront what happened all those years ago.

After a long journalism career, Elinor Florence published her first novel, *Bird's Eye View*, in 2014; it became a Canadian bestseller. She released *Wildwood* in 2018 and it was named by Kobo "one of the best Canadian novels of all times." Elinor has written a series of stories about Canada's wartime history, many of which appeared in the collection *My Favourite Veterans: True Stories From World War Two's Hometown Heroes*.



Amanda Leduc
The Centaur's Wife
Sunday, Oct. 24 | 2 PM
Forsyth Hall $7

Heather is jolted awake by the sound of the world ending. The city has been destroyed by falling meteors and her small family is among few who survived. But the mountain that looms over the city is still green. Heather knows the magic of the mountain – her father took her there as a child on a misguided quest with tragic results. Now, she is torn by her awareness of what unleashed the meteor shower and what is coming for the survivors.

STARFest facts

Amanda Leduc is the author of the novel *The Centaur's Wife* and the nonfiction book *Disfigured: On Fairy Tales, Disability, and Making Space*, which was shortlisted for the 2020 Governor General's Award in Nonfiction and the 2020 Barbellion Prize. She is also the author of an earlier novel, *The Miracles of Ordinary Men*. She has cerebral palsy and lives in Hamilton, Ontario, where she serves as the Communications Coordinator for the Festival of Literary Diversity (FOLD), Canada's first festival for diverse authors and stories.

The Centaur's Wife is woven with fairy tales of Leduc's own devising and replete with both catastrophe and magic – a vision of what happens when we ignore the natural world and the darker parts of our own natures. At times devastating, but ultimately redemptive, Amanda Leduc's fable for our uncertain times reminds us that the most important things in life aren't things at all, but rather the people we want by our side at the end of the world.

Nisha Patel is an award-winning Indo-Canadian poet and artist in Edmonton. She is the current Poet Laureate for the City of Edmonton and the Regional Writer in Residence at St. Albert Public Library and Strathcona County Library. She is the 2019 Canadian Individual Slam Champion. Her debut poetry collection, *Coconut*, was published in 2021 by NeWest Press.

Natalie Zina Walschots
Hench
Wednesday, Oct. 27 | 7 PM
Virtual $5

A sharp, witty, modern debut, *Hench* explores the individual cost of justice through a fascinating mix of Millennial office politics, heroism measured through data science, body horror, and a profound misunderstanding of quantum mechanics. Kirkus Reviews calls *Hench* "A fiendishly clever novel that fizzes with moxie and malice."

Photo credit: Au Photo

STARFest facts

Natalie Zina Walschots is a Toronto writer and game designer. She is the author of two poetry books: *Thumbscrews*, which won the Robert Kroetsch Award for Innovative Poetry, and *DOOM: Love Poems for Supervillains*. Natalie sits on the board of Dames Making Games, a space for queer and gender-marginalized people to create games freely, where she hosts interactive narrative workshops. Her novel, *Hench*, was a Canada Reads finalist.

In *Hench*, Anna is working for a monster that lurks beneath the surface of the world when she is badly injured in an encounter with a so-called "hero." Then she gets laid off, and discovers that her suffering at a hero's hands is not unique. By tallying up the human cost these caped heroes wreak upon the world, she discovers that the line between good and evil is mostly marketing.

Soon she's employed by one of the worst villains on earth. As she becomes an increasingly valuable lieutenant, she might just save the world.

Celine Caruso Dixon is a Political Science student at the University of Alberta. Her passion for social justice led to her becoming President for the UofA Black Students' Association and creating an open mic space, ZION, that works with minority communities and those in juvenile detention centres. Her work with La Connexional has enabled her to be more involved in her own community (the AfroLatin community) and to help provide meaningful experiences to those of African, Caribbean, and Latin descent.

Joshua Whitehead

Jonny Appleseed

Monday, Oct. 25 | 7 PM
Virtual $5

Jonny Appleseed is a tour-de-force about a Two-Spirit Indigiqueer young man and proud NDN glitter princess who must reckon with his past when he returns home to his reserve. Jonny's life is a series of breakages, appendages, and linkages, and the seven days leading to his return are like a fevered dream: stories of love, trauma, sex, kinship, ambition, and the heartbreaking recollection of his beloved kokum.

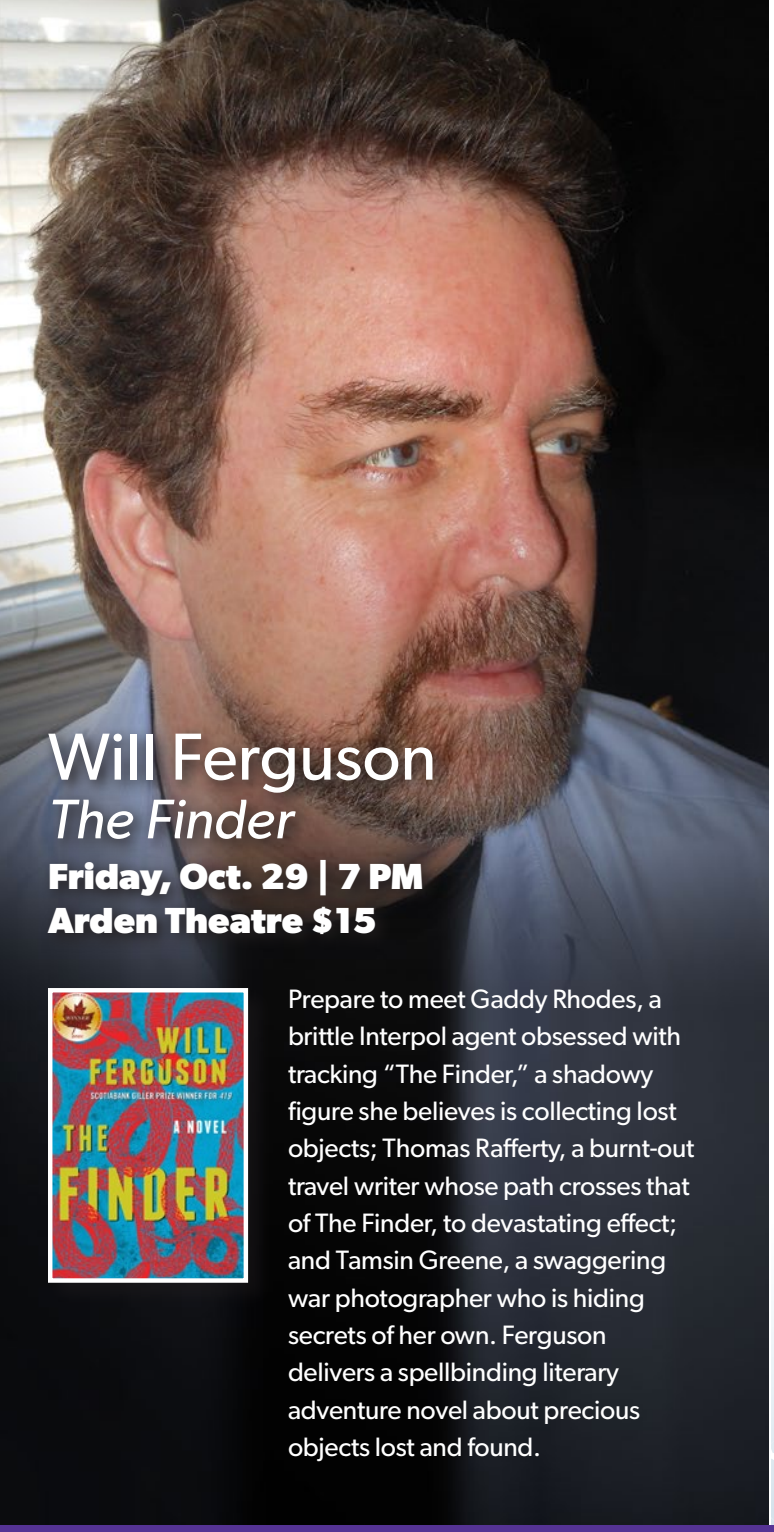
Photo credit: Tenille Campbell

STARFest facts

Joshua Whitehead is a Two-Spirit, Oji-nêhiyaw member of Peguis First Nation. His poetry book, *full-metal indigiqueer*, was shortlisted for the inaugural Indigenous Voices Award and the Stephan G. Stephansson Award for Poetry. His novel, *Jonny Appleseed*, was longlisted for the Giller Prize, shortlisted for numerous prizes including the Indigenous Voices Award and the Governor General's Literary Award, and won the Lambda Literary Award for Gay Fiction and the Georges Bugnet Award for Fiction. Whitehead is a Ph.D. candidate, lecturer, and Killam scholar at the University of Calgary where he studies Indigenous literatures and cultures with a focus on gender and sexuality.

Jonny Appleseed is a unique, shattering vision of First Nations life. Off the reserve and trying to find ways to live and love in the big city, Jonny becomes a cybersex worker. Self-ordained as an NDN glitter princess, Jonny has one week before he must return to the "rez" to attend his stepfather's funeral. As he goes through the motions of preparing to return home, he learns how to put together the pieces of his life.

Emily Riddle is nehiyaw and a member of the Alexander First Nation in Treaty 6. She lives in amiskwaciwâskahikan. Emily was shortlisted for the 2020 CBC Poetry Prize and selected for the 2021 Writers' Trust of Canada mentorship program. Her work has been published in the *Globe and Mail*, *Teen Vogue*, *Canadian Art*, *The Malahat Review*, among others. She is currently the Senior Advisor, Indigenous Relations for Edmonton Public Library.



Will Ferguson
The Finder
Friday, Oct. 29 | 7 PM
Arden Theatre $15

Prepare to meet Gaddy Rhodes, a brittle Interpol agent obsessed with tracking "The Finder," a shadowy figure she believes is collecting lost objects; Thomas Rafferty, a burnt-out travel writer whose path crosses that of The Finder, to devastating effect; and Tamsin Greene, a swaggering war photographer who is hiding secrets of her own. Ferguson delivers a spellbinding literary adventure novel about precious objects lost and found.

STARFest facts

Will Ferguson is an award-winning travel writer and novelist. His debut novel, *Happiness*, sold into 23 languages around the world. His last novel, *419*, won the Scotiabank Giller Prize. His new novel, *The Finder*, won the 2021 Arthur Ellis Award for Crime Fiction. Ferguson has won the Stephen Leacock Medal for Humour three times and has been nominated for both the IMPAC Dublin Literary Award and a Commonwealth Writers' Prize. He was born and raised in Fort Vermilion and now lives in Calgary, with his wife and sons.

In *The Finder,* Will Ferguson takes readers on a heroic, imaginative journey across continents, from the seas of southern Japan, to the arid Australian Outback, to the city of Christchurch, New Zealand, after the earthquake.

T*he Finder* is a beguiling and wildly original tale about the people, places, and things that are lost and found in our world. Both an epic literary adventure and an escape into a darkly thrilling world of deceit and its rewards, this novel asks: How far would you be willing to go to recover the things you've left behind?

Interviewer to be announced soon.

Monsters at the Movies!: Susie Moloney & Eva Colmers

Saturday, Oct. 30 | 7 PM
Forsyth Hall $7

Made you scream! Spend a chilling evening with horror screenwriter Susie Moloney and veteran film director Eva Colmers as they discuss their process, from idea to page to screen, for the award-winning, horrifying short film *The Suburbanight*. With a screening and discussion, you'll go home sure to keep the lights on. Muwhahahahaha!

STARFest facts

Join us for a screening of *The Suburbanight* and a post-screening discussion with screenwriter Susie Moloney and director Eva Colmers in a conversation hosted by Michelle Steinhusen.

Susie Moloney is an award-winning novelist, screenwriter, and columnist; her first feature film, the horror-thriller *Bright Hill Road*, was released in 2020. Her second novel, *A Dry Spell*, has been published in 18 countries and translated into 12 languages. Tom Cruise optioned the film rights. Her other novels, *Bastion Falls*, *The Dwelling*, and *The Thirteen*, have also sold in multiple countries, and languages. She is the author of a collection of short fiction, *Things Withered*.

Eva Colmers is an award-winning director and producer of 18 films in the dramatic, comedy and documentary genre – mostly shorts and some long formats including *The Suburbanight*, *Happy Birthday*, *Mango!*, *Not a One-Way Street*, *2.57k*, and *Granny Baby*. She has also written and directed the NFB documentaries *We Regret to Inform You…*, *The Elder Project* and *The Enemy Within*. Her TV work includes directing for APTN's series *Caution May Contain Nuts* and more.

Michelle Steinhusen is the Interim STARFest director and the Adult Programming Librarian at St. Albert Public Library. She started reading horror fiction when she was nine (don't tell her mother). Her regular stack of scary books by her bedside and her love of spooky movies make her a shoo-in to host Susie and Eva for this Halloween-Eve event!

Andrew Pyper

The Residence

Tuesday, Nov. 2 | 7 PM
Virtual $5

In this terrifying ghost story based on true events, the President's late son haunts the White House, threatening all who live in it, and the divided America beyond its walls. Only by overcoming their grief and confronting their darkest secrets can the President and his wife hope to rid themselves – and America – of the entity that seeks to make the White House its permanent home.

STARFest facts

Andrew Pyper is a prize-winning, internationally best-selling novelist whose work has been translated into many languages. His most recent novels include *The Homecoming*, *The Only Child*, and *The Damned*. His 2013 novel, *The Demonologist*, won the International Thriller Writers Award for Best Hardcover Novel, and was a #1 bestseller in Canada and Brazil. A number of Pyper's works have been acquired for TV or feature film. *The Homecoming* is being developed by eOne with Andrew acting as co-creator and executive producer.

The Residence, a supernatural thriller, opens in 1853 as President-elect Franklin Pierce is traveling with his wife Jane and their son to Washington, DC. The train violently derails, killing their son and casting Franklin's presidency under a pall of sorrow. In the White House, the Pierces are soon plagued by ghostly voices and visions of spirits. When Jane orchestrates a séance, the barrier between this world and the next is torn asunder. Something horrific comes through and takes up residence alongside Franklin and Jane in the very walls of the mansion itself.

Marty Chan writes plays for adults, books for kids, and tweets for fun. Theatre fans might remember his hit thriller, *The Bone House*, a play about the hunt for a serial killer that brings the monster right into the theatre among the audience members. Marty works and lives in Edmonton with his wife Michelle and their cat Buddy.

STARFest supporters

We thank the City of St. Albert, the Library's main funder, for its ongoing support.

We thank the Friends of St. Albert Public Library, the Alberta Foundation for the Arts and the Canada Council for the Arts for their financial support.

Thank you to our media sponsors