

## SOCIAL INTERCOURSE

### The Lives of Others

Directed by Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck  
Starring Martina Gedeck, Ulrich Mûhe and Sebastian Koch  
Garneau Theatre  
Opens Friday, 16 March

*Das Leben Der Anderen* details the story of Captain Gerd Wiesler, a member of East Germany’s secret police during the reign of communism as he’s assigned to the task of spying on a famous playwright and his wife who may be dissenters. It won the Academy Award this year for Best Foreign Film, an impressive achievement considering that it was Donnersmarck’s directorial debut. As such, a little-known scene was caused earlier on during Oscar night when, prior to him winning for *The Departed*, Martin Scorsese lunged at Donnersmarck with a chokehold, screaming that he was a lazy asshole who hadn’t paid his dues.

### The Long Winters

With Team Building and TV Heart Attack  
Friday 16 March at 8pm  
Victory Lounge  
Tickets \$15 at Megatunes, Listen and Blackbyrd

It’s ironic that The Long Winters are playing Edmonton just as our weather is starting to improve. Hailing from Seattle, the Winters bring their straight-forward rock to town, a sound similar to The Dudes or The Weakerthans. They’re on tour supporting their new album *Putting the Days to Bed* and are backed up by Team Building, and TV Heart Attack, a Vancouver band named after their TV was mistakenly tuned to an episode of *Two and a Half Men*. The television’s subsequent pains in its jaw and upper chest region were unfortunately ignored and defibrillation proved fruitless.



**2007 U of A Amnesty International Benefit Concert**  
Featuring Soulah Fyah, All Else Fails, The Grassroot Deviation and Wish  
Friday 16 March at 7:30pm  
Powerplant  
Tickets \$10 advance at HUB, SUB, and CAB Info Booths, \$12 at door

Come out Friday and support human rights at the U of A Amnesty chapter’s annual concert. Featuring local talent as diverse as the reggae of Soulah Fyah and the folk rock of The Grassroot Deviation, the show will also feature a Capoeira display and a “stellar surprise band,” who will hopefully prove sonically talented, saving listeners from any ironic cruel and unusual punishment.

**Impressions from Turkey: Recent Prints by Aysegül Izer & Emre Senan**  
FAB Gallery (Room 1-1 Fine Arts Building)  
Running until 24 March

Expressing both a love for their homeland and their thoughts on the use of cranberry to make a particularly gamy bird palatable, Aysegül Izer and Emre Senan tactfully display their passion for art and poultry in this new FAB Gallery. A professor of Graphical Arts at Mimar Sinan University in Istanbul, Izer presents a mix of lithography, screen and mixed multimedia printmaking, while Senan, a prominent Turkish designer, presents his digital animations and screen prints. The gallery is the Department of Art and Design’s first project with artists from Turkey, as well as their first exchange with the Mimar Sinan University, and has been described as succulent and juicy by critics.

JOHN KMECH  
A&E



# Slam poetry, praise music

Despite Canada’s wide geography, CR Avery hopes that slam poetry will spread across the nation

### CR Avery

With Mihirangi  
Saturday, 17 March at 7pm  
Velvet Underground

KRISTINA DE GUZMAN  
Arts & Entertainment Staff

Slam poetry has yet to make a wave in Canada the way it has in the States—its birthplace—and in other countries, such as Germany, Nepal and the UK. However, CR Avery can attest to the growing slam poetry scene here at home, most notably on the West Coast.

Originally from Ottawa—where, according to Avery, the slam poetry movement was next to non-existent—the beat-boxing, singing, harmonica- and keyboard-playing one-man band arrived in Vancouver at around the same time that the slam poetry movement was gaining momentum. Today, Vancouver, which has been sending poets to the States in the last ten to 15 years, could be called the slam poetry centre of Canada.

“In the early years, Vancouver was the only Canadian representation [in the American National Poetry Slam]. And it still is,” says Avery, who has been participating in slam poetry competitions since 1998. “Winnipeg sent a team one year but poetry’s really big out here on the West Coast.”

But other cities are catching on. Avery points out that Winnipeg, Halifax and Calgary all have growing slam poetry scenes, and while it’s a little new to Toronto, poetry has always been big in the city. Avery also recalls that Montréal sent a team to the National Poetry Slam one year and mentions that one of the city’s poets, Alexis O’Hara, is fairly renowned worldwide.

“I just think the geography of Canada is a little crazy to unite everyone,” Avery says. “In the States, you’ve got New York, Philadelphia, Providence, Boston and everything is closer. Then within New York itself, there’s three different slams going on. So I think as far as geography in Canada, there are these bigger spaces between cities.”

From being referred to by Bob Holman as the “democracization of verse,” and by Harold Bloom as “the death of art,” the slam poetry movement has fuelled some rather heated debates about what poetry is all about. A type of spoken-word performance, slam poetry is usually intended to be performed at poetry competitions. In the 1990s, it was strongly associated with the hip-hop style but in recent years has taken to a variety of performance styles, writing forms and cultures. An attempt is also made to break down barriers between performer and audience, one of the reasons why props and costumes aren’t allowed in some slams. In Avery’s case, he couldn’t play the harmonica.

“But you were allowed to use the other poets that you went with [from your respective city] when you performed,” Avery says as he describes the loophole. “So instead of going up by myself, a lot of the time we would bring up the other poets and we’d be doing different musical things. So I kind of used the other people that I went with as my harmonica.”

Known for having more than a hundred performances a year, Avery is back on another Canadian tour in support of last year’s album *Chainsmoking Blues*, which has been compared to the sounds of Bob Dylan and Bruce Springsteen. Just four months earlier, Avery was touring in the UK. He never fails to be blown away by European fans.

“I listen to a lot of obscure music in the sense that it’s not played on the radio, and they just knew that stuff better than me,” Avery says. “A lot of peopled don’t know who Sonny Terry and Sonny Boy Williamson are, but they had all this knowledge of old blues guys and they just ate it up. It’s not a put-down to Canada. DJs [in Canada] aren’t playing what they want to play on the radio. I guess there are tons of kids that would be turned on by so much great music and it’s hard to get your hands on it. But I think the Internet is changing that a lot. I know there are pockets of amazing people in every city and I guess I go on tour to find them.”

## AVERY BODY’S TALKIN’

- Avery was born August 20, 1976.
- In 2005, won CBC’s Poetry Face-off.
- The Be Good Tanyas lent some background vocals on *Chainsmoking Blues*.
- He’s been performing with Shane Koyczan and “Mighty” Mike McGee in the spoken word trio Tons of Fun University since 2003.
- One of his solo tracks (“Pocketknife”) on TOFU’s unreleased EP *The Them They’re Talking About* (2005) also appears in *Chainsmoking Blues*.
- Writer of six hip-hop operas including “Freight Train Land” (2001) which was performed in New York and Los Angeles, “Shotgun Wedding” (2002), and “Gonna Change My Tune” (2004).
- Was a former member of The Fugitives.
- Avery be heard on two tracks of Po Girl’s *Vagabond Lullabies*.