

Story Café Program Celebrating Black History Month

The Black Experience – Journeys of a People

Wednesday, February 24, 2021, 7:00 pm MST

Watch on [Storytelling Alberta YouTube channel](#)

Welcome

Maria Crooks

Land Recognition and Traditional Welcome Song

Chantal Chagnon

But What Am I

Norma Lewis' story is a journey through her childhood to adulthood, exploring growing up in Calgary as a first generation Canadian in an immigrant Caribbean family discovering identity, nationality and a sense of belonging.

Song: Bring Me Li'l Water Sylvie

Doreen Vanderstoop

Music & Lyrics by Huddie Ledbetter (aka Lead Belly)

Brief Lessons in Black History

Maria Crooks recounts some lesser-known facts and stories about Canadian history.

Song: Freight Train

Doreen Vanderstoop

Music & Lyrics by Elizabeth Cotten

The Response of Weeds

Poetry by Bertrand Bickersteth

Video: Hymn to Freedom

<https://www.hymntofreedom.ca/>

Music by Oscar Peterson Lyrics by Harriette Hamilton

Performer bios:

Bertrand Bickersteth is an educator who also writes plays and poems. The Response of Weeds, his debut collection of poetry was released by NeWest Press in April. He lives in Calgary, teaches at Olds College and writes about Black history in Western Canada. In 2018, he was longlisted for the CBC Poetry Prize. <https://twitter.com/bickersb1>

Chantal Chagnon is a Cree Ojibwe Métis Singer, Drummer, Artist, Storyteller, Actor, Educator, Workshop Facilitator, Social Justice Advocate and Activist with roots in Muskeg Lake Cree Nation, Saskatchewan. A single mother of two boys, she understands societal struggles first-hand. She regularly organizes events and shares singing, drumming, speaking, presenting and teaching within the community, with a focus on building allies and alliances. She recognizes sharing culture and building community is an integral part of building bridges of understanding and acceptance. www.cree8.ca

Doreen Vanderstoop sings, plays guitar, and performs oral stories of all kinds for audiences of all ages. She is also a fiction writer. Doreen's debut novel, Watershed, was published by Freehand Books in May 2020. Watershed has received critical acclaim, appearing frequently on best seller lists in Alberta. <http://www.facebook.com/doreen.vanderstoop>

Maria Crooks is a Calgary storyteller, playwright, actor and singer. She is interested in myths, legends and folk tales from Africa and the Caribbean. She has participated in storytelling events for audiences of all ages, in English and French. Several of her plays have been produced locally. Maria believes in the power of stories to transcend differences, instruct and entertain. <https://www.facebook.com/maria.crooks.96/>

Norma Lewis has been a performing artist for over twenty years and a member of ACTRA and the Canadian Actors' Equity Association. A co-founder of 8Rojo she has performed internationally in Taipei, Stockholm, Prague, and Mexico City. 8Rojo has been a thriving theatrical company for over fifteen years. She has performed across North America with Dandi Productions in The Twins and the Monster since 2004 for family audiences. Norma's pursuits have allowed her to do extensive work in storytelling through voice, mask work, and dance. Website: <https://www.8rojo.com/>

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