

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

EVENT EXPLORES POETRY'S IMPORTANCE IN ARABIC CULTURE AND IN PTSD TREATMENT

(Victoria, BC) Okay, Arabic poetry and PTSD might seem an unlikely pairing, right? Yet, on April 26, a Syrian-Canadian translator/poet/journalist and a former Canadian Forces Middle Eastern peacekeeper will share the stage in Victoria to demonstrate the power of poetry as a vehicle for both deeper understanding of Arabic culture and as a treatment for posttraumatic stress disorder for veterans.

"Unveiling the Middle East" is a compelling presentation of Arabic poetry, music and stories by Ghada Alatrash that will reveal cultural contrasts between East and West and challenge our entrenched beliefs. Syrian-born Ghada [pronounced Rrrrhada] is a columnist for Gulf News (UAE) and was recently featured in reports by the USA's National Public Radio and Al Jazeera. Her book of translations from Arabic to English, "So That The Poem Remains," was nominated for the 2013 Griffin Poetry Prize. Accompanying Ghada will be pianist Ivana Ferraro.

"An evening spent listening to Ghada share her poetry, her culture and her life will leave you culturally and perhaps even spiritually enriched," says Nick Rubidge, President and CEO, College of the Rockies, Cranbrook, BC.

As the evening's opening act, new poet Ed Brown will launch his book "A Soldier's Fortune and Other Poems." Ed is a Canadian Forces veteran of Tsimpshian First Nations and Scottish-Canadian heritage, who served 19 years including tours in the former Yugoslavia, Israel, Syria and Turkey (in support of Afganistan), witnessing ethnic cleansing, horrific violence and especially the impact of strife on children. Ed began writing poetry as therapy for PTSD (posttraumatic stress disorder). At the worst of his PTSD, Ed would go into a rage if he saw or heard someone who appeared to be from the Middle East.

Psychologist Dr. Agnes Sawchyn says that Ed writes, "with unflinching frankness and emotional honesty... Ed extends a message of hope to others by describing what, in the end, made his journey back to health possible and worth navigating: his love for his children, the apprehension and joy of experiencing new love, the simple beauties of nature, and an irrepressible sense of humour and playfulness."

Victoria's acclaimed poet and writer Linda Rogers will host this one-time-only event on April 26, at 7:30 pm, at Oak Bay United Church Sanctuary.

Tickets are available at Munro's Books and Ivy's Bookshop for fifteen dollars in advance, and for twenty dollars at the door. *A portion of the proceeds will go to Syrian relief efforts.*

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Ghada Alatrash, Ed Brown and Linda Rogers are available for interviews to publicize the event.

More info: www.agiopublishing.com/unveiling.html