

citylife

Our occasional focus on the Alberta social scene touches down this week at a brilliant new stage at the province's landmark centre for performing arts and creativity



Sandra Green, Ernie Green and Banff Centre's Dave Rochefort toast the new Shaw Amphitheatre.



Nancy and Andrew Wiswell.



Linda MacKenzie and Carol Bentley celebrate a new performance venue.



Chic Scott, author of "Pushing the Limits: The Story of Canadian Mountaineering" and nurse Kathy Madill.

Amid the mountains, a shiny space for art

The new Shaw Amphitheatre opens in Banff



JESSICA DEMELLO

It was a feast for the senses as contortionists, musicians, chefs and storytellers gathered in Banff to celebrate the opening of a new performance space. A three-room cocktail and buffet was offered up to the invite-only crowd, followed by exclusive performances by acclaimed Korean-American pianist **Minsoo Sohn**, National Circus School performer **Camille Tremblay** and Broadway songwriting duo **Benj Pasek and Justin Paul**. The CBC's **Angela Knight** was master of ceremonies. The Shaw Amphitheatre is the latest stage at The Banff Centre, an internationally renowned school and theatre for the creative arts. It's also the most recent success in a string of high-priced, private endowments. Last year, the Kinnear Centre for Creativity & Innovation, an academic building designed by starchitect **Jack Diamond**, opened with similar fanfare. Like the Shaw Amphitheatre, it is one of six new projects to benefit from a \$100-million capital campaign. **J.R. Shaw**, media titan and benefactor, was on hand for the event. So too were society regulars **Pat and Sherrold Moore**, **Andrea Brussa**,

Jim and Karen Prentice, **Dr. Diane Howard**, **Bill Brooks**, **Heather and Don Ingram**, **Rick George**, **D'Arcy Levesque**, **Ted Morton** and **Barbara Walker**. Elected officials also showed their support by showing up, including Member of Parliament for Calgary Centre-North **Michelle Rempel** and Banff Mayor **Karen Sorensen**.

The Shaw Amphitheatre will seat more than 450 audience members with, weather permitting, grassy accommodation available for another thousand people or so. The cool, rainy weather on the eve of its opening had guests cautious, most opting to watch the ceremony from the covered patio of the Kinnear Centre rather than on the amphitheatre's outdoor cement benches. Inside, though, everyone enjoyed the stunning displays of athleticism and musical talent.

This month, The Banff Centre plays co-host to WordFest, Calgary's writer's festival. Two-time Governor General's Literary Award winner **Guy Vanderhaeghe** read from his most recent novel last weekend. Vanderhaeghe is both the type of literary heavyweight Calgary has come to expect from its festival, and the author of a story the city has been grappling with for a decade. *A Good Man* is the tale of a Wild West with a big heart and its protagonist, shaping a country with his vision, ambition and good intentions. And what will the outcome be? It's a question that tenacious, freedom-loving Calgarians love to chew over.

Other authors at The Banff Centre this month include **Madeleine Thien**, **Will Ferguson**, **Wade Davis** and **Dr. Jane Goodall**. More information is online at BanffCentre.ca.

Weekend Post



Photographer Thomas Willock, Susan Sax-Willock and Joni Cooper, director of the Banff Mountain Festival.



Don Ashley and Clem Dumett.



Sherri Neldner of the Banff Midsummer Ball steering committee, Jeff van Steenberg of Kern Energy Partners and Derek Nelder of RBC.



David Riggs and Teresa Leonard.

PHOTOS BY JESSICA DEMELLO FOR NATIONAL POST

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Dale and Cheri Hohm.



Marianne Scott, Barbara Walker and Donna Clare enjoy an evening at The Banff Centre.



Michelle and Marc Mereau.



Jay Mehr and Shannon Donnici.



Sandra Laronde, Jennifer Melanson and Steven Smith.



J.R. Shaw, executive chairman of Shaw Communications, Carol Shaw and Pat Moore.