

BOOKS & THE ARTS

LATEST NEWS AT CALGARYHERALD.COM/ENTERTAINMENT

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THE BUZZ

Bridges makes cover of guitar magazine

CELEB • Jeff Bridges took a detour from his triumphant stroll to the Academy Awards today to take part in a cover story for *Guitar Aficionado*.

The issue doesn't come out for two weeks, but in the story Bridges springboards off his heralded performance as Bad Blake in director Scott Cooper's *Crazy Heart* to talk about his own musical obsessions and notable guitar collection.

"Bad Blake is one of those 'Dude' parts," Bridges says in the piece. "It's the kind of part you know you're born to play. Bad's the last of a breed, one of those guys they just don't make anymore — like Kris (Kristoferson) or Waylon (Jennings) or Merle (Haggard)."

Musician cited for plagiarizing da Vinci find

ART • An Italian musicologist is accusing a Manitoba jazz musician of plagiarizing his discovery of music embedded in a famous Leonardo da Vinci painting.

The Milan-based literary agent for Giovanni Maria Pala says his client is consulting his lawyers to see what court should hear the case.

Jazz guitarist Jeari Czapl, who is based in St. Andrews just north of Winnipeg, has garnered attention for his YouTube video in which he reveals a 40-second composition hidden in da Vinci's late 15th-century painting *The Last Supper*. But Pala, who is also a drummer and author, says the composition is virtually identical to the one he "discovered" and wrote about in 2007.

Czapl, who has been trying to sell his own jazz song inspired by Leonardo's alleged music, admits that he discovered Pala's theories online in 2007 while he was researching the idea himself.

He insists that his discovery was independent of Pala's and grew out of ideas he had while a music student in the late 1980s.

Blair's memoirs to be published in September

BOOKS • Tony Blair's memoirs will be published in September, the head of Random House Group said today.

Tony Blair: The Journey will be released simultaneously in Britain, the U.S. and Canada, Random House chairman and chief executive Gail Rebuck said in an e-mailed statement.

The memoirs of the former U.K. prime minister "will break new ground in prime ministerial memoirs just as Blair himself broke the mould of British politics," Rebuck said. "His book is frank, open, revealing, and written in an intimate and accessible style."

'HE WAS SUCH A PILLAR FOR HIS MEN'



Photos, Colleen De Neve, Calgary Herald; Michael Palmer

Calgary author Michael Palmer chronicles his grandfather George's experience as a prisoner of war in his new book *Dark Side of the Sun*.

FAMILY BONDS

Calgary man sets out to tell grandfather's war story, and unearths forgotten history of brutal Japanese POW camp

ERIC VOLMERS
CALGARY HERALD

While a prisoner of the Japanese army during the Second World War, Cpl. George Palmer wrote three concise and seemingly cheerful letters home to his young wife and child in Prince Edward Island.

In the first letter, written not long after he was captured under the bloody Battle of Hong Kong, Palmer wrote that he was in good health and being treated

well by his Japanese captors. During the 45 months that followed, Jeanette Palmer would only hear from her husband two more times, both of them in the form of short letters sent from the Omine prisoner of war camp in Japan.

By the time of the second and third letters, George Palmer, once a muscular 165-pound lumberjack, had been reduced to a 99-pound shell of a man after years of back-breaking labour in a coal mine, a diet that often consisted of rice, maggots



Courtesy, Michael Palmer

Cpl. George Palmer kept his hardships as a prisoner of war in Hong Kong out of the letters to his wife Jeannette.

and rats, and frequent beatings from his guards. Yet they read like they are from someone away on business or a short vaca-

tion, offering banal niceties and inquiries about his young son. "I am still in good health. Give my love to Louis and

SPOTLIGHT

Dark Side of the Sun: George Palmer and the Canadian POWs in Hong Kong and the Omine Camp is now in stores

all our families and friends. Love and kisses," Palmer wrote in his innocuous missive sometime after 1943.

"It's almost comical," says grandson Michael Palmer, whose new book, *Dark Side of the Sun*, chronicles his grandfather's experiences as a prisoner of war.

"They were brutalized right from Day 1. They were probably told exactly what to say. You weren't allowed to send much, and what you did send was heavily censored."

SEE FAMILY, PAGE C10

Artist creates visceral connection with viewers

NANCY TOUSLEY
CALGARY HERALD

Their impact is unexpectedly visceral, probably because Jan Peacock's video works at Truck Gallery induce a kind of synesthesia — the subjective sensation of a sense other than the one being stimulated — that melds sight with touch.

A disembodied hand

is the protagonist of *One same, same thing* (2003), a large wall projection that apparently was shot out of doors at night. Illuminated in the darkness, the hand flutters rapidly just above the pebble-covered ground that speeds by underneath it.

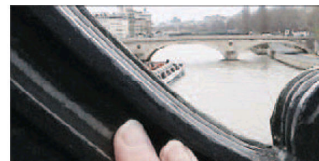
Say the artist dropped something outside in the dark. It's as if her pale hand, trying to feel its

REVIEW

Inarticulations: Stephanie Anne Clark and Jan Peacock, two solo shows, on view at Truck Gallery until Thursday

way along the ground, is searching for something, and has been forced by the speeding ground to accelerate its touch.

SEE ART, PAGE C4



Courtesy, Jan Peacock

There, there (2009), a video projection by Jan Peacock.

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FROM C3

FAMILY: Grandfather kept experience to himself

But Michael Palmer would get used to having to pry information from his grandfather, who preferred to stay in good humour during his post-captive days. He returned home to Prince Edward Island after the war, where he would live until the age 82 despite suffering from curvature of the spine and various lung ailments from his days in the Japanese mines.

He wouldn't dodge questions, exactly. But he wasn't overly generous with his information either, which must have been a source of minor frustration for Michael as he hit his early teens and became increasingly fascinated by Second World War history.

"After the war they created this Hong Kong veteran association for this battle and the men involved," he says. "They would have a convention every two years or five years and the men would get together and reminisce. He didn't want to get involved. When he got home he just wanted to leave it behind him and get on with living. He got into farming and fishing and had seven more kids. He wanted to leave that world. He never was one who yearned to revisit those places."

By the time he was in his early teens, Michael was nevertheless fascinated with the idea that his own family history overlapped with some of the bloody war stories he was reading about. His grandfather didn't much like talking about the war, although he would humour his grandson by revealing general information about battles or the ships he was on. Like many veterans, he didn't say much about the horrors he faced. Nor did he write anything down.

Years would pass before Michael Palmer began thinking about his grandfather's experiences again. He moved out west to work in finance for a downtown Calgary oil and gas company in the mid 1990s. In 2003, nearly a decade after George Palmer's death, Michael began chipping away at the mystery of those years his grandfather spent in Omine, a camp that would probably be notorious if more people knew about its grim history.

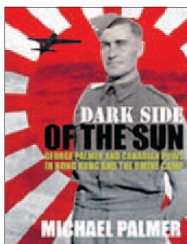
"I started wondering what he went through," Palmer says. "Did he kill people? Did he shoot people? Did he help people? I wanted to figure this out. During the research phase, some nights when I was reading or writing this stuff it was very brutal. People were being beaten and shot and executed. I found some lost interviews from (my grandfather) and he admitted he was beaten up on a few occasions. At first it kind of got to me. I often wondered, can I finish this?"

At first, Palmer didn't even know what "this" would be. Initially, he just wanted to put together an informal history of his grandfather's experiences that he could give his family. Nevertheless, he took the research seriously. He read books, spoke to historians and, perhaps most poignantly, contacted a dozen of his grandfather's fellow prisoners from across Canada. Some knew of George Palmer, some didn't. Some had sharp memories of the horrors they faced, others simply refused to talk about it.

But in the end, he had much more information than he had anticipated. A friend with some minor experience in publishing suggested he send the manuscript out to publishers. It was eventually picked up by the Ottawa-based Borealis Press, which specializes in Canadian storytelling.

"It's just kind of evolved," says Palmer. "From the get go, I never really had any intentions of this unfolding like it did. But it's been wonderful."

Dark Side of the Sun may be the only history book that gives details about the conditions of Omine. George Palmer was among the 1,974 Canadian soldiers shipped out as reinforcements for the British garrison at Hong Kong in 1941. He was captured by the Japanese on Dec. 23 after a battle that saw the Japanese kill nearly 300 Canadians. Another 265 would die in captivity. Hong Kong surrendered on Christmas Day. George Palmer spent more



than a year in the camp in Hong Kong, before the Japanese realized they needed workers for the coal mines. He was among the nearly 1,200 men sent by sea — in vessels charmingly known as "hell ships" — to labour camps.

Thirty-one at the time of his capture, Palmer was older than many of the other men, which automatically made him a leader and mentor of sorts for the young soldiers enduring the harsh conditions.

"Whenever they would go to the mine, my grandfather would often be joking and carrying on as they went off to work," says Palmer. "That always stuck with me. To be starving and brutalized and yet to wake up and be carrying on with your buddies and joking around a bit from day to day. It was quite an amazing spirit. That was his nature anyway, he always had a quick wit. But it wouldn't surprise me that he would probably turn to his attitude or carefree nature to help out the men too."

He instructed the young soldiers to eat all the maggots they found in their small portions of rice, convincing them that they were a good source of protein. When a friend was ailing due to a lack of nutrition, Palmer stole an orange from a tree while marching from the camp to the mines. He hid it in his armpit and, at great risk to himself, gave it to his friend at the end of the work day.

"That orange probably saved (his) life," Palmer says. "He was starving, but I think this was more about nutrient deficiency. That was always the way he was. Another fellow mentioned the same thing, he said (my grandfather) was always the kind of man who helped out the guys who needed it. That was his nature, when he was in the camp he ramped it up a bit because he knew the men needed a pillar."

George Palmer officially became a free man on Sept. 2, 1945 after the Americans dropped A-bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki and Japan surrendered. He returned home to the civilian life he had left behind and tried to put the war behind him.

But his first-born son — the Louis from the aforementioned letters — became a Second World War but an interest that he passed on to his own son. Now retired and living in Antigonish, Louis keeps copies of Michael's

debut book in his trunk to give out to the townspeople.

For Michael Palmer, the research gave him even more of an appreciation of his grandfather. It showed him that the loving, good-natured man who was so determined to leave the horrors of war far behind him was actually a hero with a story worth telling.

"He was always a great grandfather, but he gave so much of himself and he was such a pillar for his men," Palmer says. "It's amazing that someone could live in a concentration camp and be upbeat. He had so much hope despite the odds against him."

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Birthdays

Engagements

RICHARD EARL ROSE celebrates his 90th birthday today!

He is a distinguished WWII veteran. In 1940 he enlisted in the Army with the Royal Canadian Corps of Signals and in 1943 transferred to the RCAF. He was a Flying Officer Navigator with the 437 Squadron, Transport Command, in Europe.

He was employed by Canadian National Railways for 39 years and held the position of System Manager, Passenger Sales and Promotion in Montreal when he retired in 1978. He is a past Vice President of the

Advertising and Sales Executive Club of Montreal and a member of the Canadian Railway Club. For several years he was active in community hockey and baseball programs of the Lakeside Heights Recreation Association in Pointe Claire, Quebec.

His beloved wife of 65 years, Hilda, passed away in 2007.

Happy 90th!

Valerie, Marnie, Randy and families.



Ramsey and Savie Mackinnon together with Scott and Kathleen Stonehouse are excited to announce the upcoming marriage of

Stephen and Maureen
Wedding to take place July 24, 2010 in Calgary

Birth

Rory & Lisa Greaves are pleased to announce the birth of

Zoe Violet
7 lbs. 8 oz.

Grandparents are Gord & Kathy Doherty, Earl & Diane Greaves (Cranbrook). Great-grandparents are Ken & Edith Shields and Bette Doherty.

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PENGROWTH SADDLEDOME

EVENTS

BILLY TALENT March 16th
Don't miss four Award winning recording artists Billy Talent with special guests Alexsiangre, Against Me! and Cancer Bats at the Pengrowth Saddledome on March 16th at 6:45 p.m. Tickets are \$49.00, \$39.00 and \$29.00, plus convenience charge and order processing fee.

OLDTIMERS HOCKEY CHALLENGE March 24th
Hockey Hall of Famers will take on the Calgary Police and Fire Fighters for the Oldtimer Hockey Challenge on Wednesday, March 24th at 7:00 p.m. As an added feature, all fans with an Oldtimer Hockey Challenge ticket are invited to bring their skates and participate in the Legends Pre Game Public Skate with some of the Legends between 4:00 and 5:00 p.m.

TIM MCGRAW March 27th
Tim McGraw will stop in Calgary on March 27th at 7:30 p.m. with his "Southern Voice" tour with opening act Lady Antebellum and The Lost Trailers. Tickets are \$90.00, \$70.00 and \$50.00, plus convenience charge and order processing fee.

MUSE March 30th
British rock trio Muse hit Calgary on Tuesday, March 30th at 7:00 p.m. Opening for Muse is Silverman Pickups. Tickets are \$59.50 and \$45.00, plus convenience charge and order processing fee.

JOHN MAYER April 3rd
Don't miss seeing John Mayer live, with special guests Michael Franti & Spearhead on Saturday, April 3rd at 8:00 p.m. Tickets are \$86.00, \$66.00 and \$40.50, plus convenience charge and order processing fee.

BROOKS & DUNN May 4th
This is your last chance to see superstar duo Brooks & Dunn in concert on Tuesday, May 4th at 7:30 p.m. Opening is Gary Allen. Tickets are \$84.50, \$64.50 and \$32.50, plus convenience charge and order processing fee.

STARS ON ICE May 9th
See Canada's newest Gold Medalists Tessie Virtue & Scott Moir and Bronze Medalist Joannie Rochette as they join the best skaters our country has to offer — Kurt Browning, Jeffrey Buttle, Marie-France Dubreuil & Patrice Lauzon, Jamie Sale and David Pelletier, and 2010 Olympic Team members Patrick Chan and Cynthia Phuong on May 9th at 4:00 p.m. Tickets are \$120.00, \$75.00, \$45.00, and \$25.00, plus convenience charge and order processing fee.

NICKELBACK May 31st

TOM PETTY June 15th

BON JOVI July 14th

JASON ALDEAN AND MIRANDA LAMBERT July 17th

CALGARY FLAMES HOCKEY
For tickets call 403-777-4646

MARCH	11 th Flames vs. Ottawa Senators	7:30 PM
	*** Jersey Off Our Back Night	
	16 th Flames vs. Detroit Red Wings	7:30 PM
	19 th Flames vs. San Jose Sharks	7:00 PM
	23 rd Flames vs. Anaheim Ducks	7:00 PM

CALGARY HITMEN HOCKEY
For tickets call 403-777-4646

MARCH	7 th Hitmen vs. Saskatoon Blades	2:00 PM
	*** Hitmen Head Shave for Cancer	
	12 th Hitmen vs. Edmonton Oil Kings	7:00 PM
	14 th Hitmen vs. Red Deer Rebels	2:00 PM
	*** Fan Appreciation Night	

CALGARY ROUGHNECKS
For tickets call 403-294-9244

MARCH	13 th Roughnecks vs. Washington Stealth	7:30 PM
	26 th Roughnecks vs. Minnesota Swarm	7:30 PM

APRIL