

# Association for Bahá'í Studies–North America

## 40<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference

11 – 14 August 2016  
Le Centre Sheraton, Montreal, Canada

Conference Statement .....	3
Thursday .....	5
Friday .....	7
Saturday .....	10
Sunday .....	13
Abstracts and biographical notes .....	14
Artists performing .....	44

### *Important Information*

**Conference Badge** Your conference badge is your “ticket of admission” to all sessions. You must wear it to attend conference sessions. The security personnel will not allow admittance to anyone without a badge.

**Security** The security and usher volunteers at the conference are there to assist you. Please follow their instructions at all times. They can be identified by red ribbons on their badges.

**Promptness** The schedule of sessions is very full. To give equal time to the speakers, the sessions must begin on time. We request your cooperation in arriving promptly.

**Cell Phones** The ringing of mobile telephones in the audience is very disruptive to a presentation. Please turn off your cell phone or put it on “silent” mode while you are in the conference sessions.

**The Children's and Junior Youth Program** (Children must be preregistered to attend)

The **Children's conference** for ages 5 to 10 is being held in **Salons 4 & 5 on Level 2**. The **Junior Youth program** for ages 11-14 is being held in **Salon 2 on Level 2**. Parents may drop off children at their program 15 minutes before the adult session starting time. Parents are asked to pick up their children promptly at the close of each session and for the lunch breaks. (Snacks are included in the children's program.) The times for Children/Junior Youth sessions are

Thursday, 11 August 10:00 a.m. — 5:00 p.m.  
Friday, 12 August 9:00 a.m. — 5:30 p.m.  
Saturday, 13 August 9:00 a.m. — 5:30 p.m.  
Sunday, 14 August 9:00 a.m. — 12:30 p.m.

Parents are required to sign a Medical Information and Emergency Health Care Release form and return it to the Children's Program coordinators.

*The Conference Bookstore* is operated by the Montreal Bahá'í Bookstore. The bookstore is located in **Salon 8** on Level 4 and offers a wide selection of books and materials, including books and CDs by authors and artists presenting at the conference, and Bahá'í jewellery. Hours of operation are:

Thursday, 11 August 2:00 p.m. — 7:00 p.m.

Friday, 12 August 9:00 a.m. — 7:00 p.m.

Saturday, 13 August 9:00 a.m. — 7:00 p.m.

Sunday, 14 August 9:00 a.m. — 1:00 p.m.

*Conference Evaluation* The ABS Executive Committee values your feedback in continuing efforts to improve the conference, and invites you to submit your evaluation online at <http://bahai-studies.ca/conferenceevaluation>.

*Audio and Video Recordings* Plenary session recordings will be available to download and for viewing on the ABS website after the conference.

*Lost and Found* Lost and found articles should be reported to the Conference Registration Table. After the close of the conference, any items not picked up will be turned over to the hotel.

*Room for Parents with Young Children* **Salon Drummond East on Level 3** is assigned to parents with children under the age of five. In the morning and evening the plenary sessions will be broadcast to a screen in this room.

*Visiting Hours to the Shrine of 'Abdu'l-Bahá in Montréal*

Take advantage of your stay in Montréal to visit the only Bahá'í Shrine in the West, the Maxwell home. The Shrine will be open during these hours:

Wednesday, 10 August 6:00 p.m. — 9:00 p.m.

Thursday, 11 August 1:00 p.m. — 3:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. — 9:00 p.m.

Friday, 12 August 6:00 p.m. — 9:00 pm

Saturday, 13 August 1:00 p.m. — 5:00 p.m.

Sunday, 14 August 1:00 p.m. — 5:00 p.m.

*Association Endowment Funds* These funds are established by individuals to support and encourage Bahá'í scholarship initiatives. If you wish to explore opportunities to contribute to these funds and support the goals of the Association, please feel free to consult with the treasurer of the Executive Committee.

## Conference Statement

Since its establishment in 1975, the Association for Bahá'í Studies has served to foster the intellectual life of its members and of the Bahá'í community. The “power of intellectual investigation” is praised by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá as “an eternal gift producing fruits of unending delight.” He says, “It is the very foundation of all individual and national development.”[i] The Bahá'í teachings convey a vision of the future that calls for “profound change not only at the level of the individual but also in the structure of society.”[ii] This concerted effort to transform society is intimately related to advances in thought: “Only as effort is made to draw on insights from His Revelation, to tap into the accumulating knowledge of the human race, to apply His teachings intelligently to the life of humanity, and to consult on the questions that arise will the necessary learning occur and capacity be developed.”[iii]

This year we celebrate the 40th annual conference of the Association for Bahá'í Studies. The annual conference has developed as one way in which the Association brings together a growing number of participants to explore the implications of the Bahá'í teachings for a variety of disciplines, professions and fields of inquiry. Our common purpose is to develop our capacity to examine the ideas, concepts, and theories operating within the scholarly and professional disciplines, and to contribute to the development of a growing body of knowledge associated with Bahá'í thought.

With this purpose in mind, the conference will serve as a venue in which fresh approaches can be taken to generate and apply knowledge related to various disciplines and fields of study. Participants are invited to consider how they can play a role in working with others “to earnestly strive to reflect on the implications that the truths found in the Revelation may hold for their work.”[iv]

Plenary sessions will help to raise our vision and frame our thinking, and breakout sessions create spaces where specialized presentations and discussion can proceed. Across these different settings participants will discover new ideas and begin to explore collaborative enterprises that will extend new lines of inquiry. We hope that the format and spirit of the conference will be conducive to participation so that all can see themselves as actively engaged in a vibrant, inclusive and uplifting process of learning.

[i] *The Promulgation of Universal Peace: Talks Delivered by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá during His Visit to the United States and Canada in 1912* (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1982), p. 50.

[ii] The Universal House of Justice, *Ridván Message 2010*.

[iii] The Universal House of Justice, *Ridván Message 2010*.

[iv] The Universal House of Justice, *Letter to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Canada, 24 July 2013*.

## Thème de la conférence

Depuis sa création en 1975, l'Association d'études bahá'íes a permis de développer la vie intellectuelle de ses membres ainsi que celle de la communauté bahá'íe. 'Abdu'l-Bahá a fait l'éloge du « pouvoir de la recherche intellectuelle » comme étant « un don éternel produisant des fruits aux délices infinis ». « C'est la base même de tout développement individuel et national<sup>1</sup>, » dit-il. Les enseignements bahá'ís présentent une vision du futur qui appelle à « un changement profond, non seulement au niveau de l'individu, mais aussi dans la structure de la société<sup>2</sup> ». Cet effort concerté en vue de la transformation de la société est étroitement lié aux progrès réalisés dans le domaine de la pensée : « Ce n'est qu'à mesure que des efforts sont faits pour tirer parti des perspectives offertes par la révélation de Bahá'u'lláh, pour accéder à la connaissance que la race humaine accumule, pour appliquer ses enseignements de façon intelligente à la vie de l'humanité, et pour se concerter sur les questions qui sont soulevées, que l'apprentissage nécessaire sera réalisé et la capacité sera développée<sup>3</sup> ».

Cette année, nous célébrons la 40<sup>e</sup> conférence annuelle de l'Association d'études bahá'íes. La conférence annuelle est devenue un moyen par lequel l'Association rassemble un nombre de plus en plus grand de participants pour examiner l'impact des enseignements bahá'ís sur différentes disciplines, professions et domaines de recherche. Notre but commun est de développer notre capacité à examiner les idées, les concepts et les théories qui interviennent dans les disciplines intellectuelles et professionnelles, et de contribuer au développement d'un ensemble de connaissances associées à la pensée bahá'íe.

Dans cette perspective, la conférence servira de cadre à de nouvelles approches pour générer et mettre en application des connaissances liées à différentes disciplines et domaines d'étude. Les participants sont invités à considérer le rôle qu'ils peuvent jouer dans leur collaboration avec les autres, à « concentrer leurs efforts sur l'analyse de l'impact que les vérités trouvées dans la Révélation ont sur leur travail<sup>4</sup> ».

Les séances plénières permettront d'élever notre vision et de structurer notre réflexion, et les séances en petits groupes constitueront des espaces destinés à des présentations et à une discussion spécialisées. Durant ces différentes séances, les participants découvriront de nouvelles idées et commenceront à explorer des projets de collaboration qui aboutiront à de nouveaux axes d'analyse. Nous espérons que le format et l'esprit de la conférence seront propices à une participation où chacun se trouvera engagé dans un vibrant et enrichissant processus d'acquisition du savoir, ouvert à tous.

1. *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*: Causeries prononcées par 'Abdu'l-Bahá pendant son voyage aux États-Unis et au Canada en 1912 (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust 1982), 50.

2. La Maison universelle de justice, message du Ridván 2010.

3. La Maison universelle de justice, message du Ridván 2010.

4. La Maison universelle de justice, lettre à l'Assemblée spirituelle nationale des bahá'ís du Canada, 24 juillet 2013.

**Thursday, 11 August 2016**

**10:00 a.m. — 5:00 p.m. Special Simultaneous Workshop Sessions**

*Drummond (East/West/Centre)*

10:00 – 12:00

**Participating in Academic and Professional Discourses**

Participants will study and consult about recent guidance from the Universal House of Justice regarding participation in academic and professional discourses. This constitutes a primary focus of the Association for Bahá'í Studies.

Organizer: ABS EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

*Jarry & Joyce*

10:00 – 12:00

**Tablets of the Divine Plan: A Centennial Perspective**

SHASTRI PURUSHOTMA, SEAN GALLAGHER, SHARAF FUNK

12:00 – 2:00

*Lunch Break*

*Drummond (East/Centre)*

2:00 – 3:15

**Renewal of Judeo-Christianity and Islam: A Primary Goal of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation** LAMEH FANANAPAZIR

3:30 – 5:00

**Tablets of the Divine Plan: A Centennial Perspective**

(Repeat of morning session)

SHASTRI PURUSHOTMA, SEAN GALLAGHER, SHARAF FUNK

*Jarry & Joyce*

2:00 – 3:15

**The Cutting Edge of Consultation: Reconciling Mercy and Justice**

TRIP BARTHEL

3:30 – 5:00

**Work as Worship: Advancing Spiritual Life/Work Coherence**

CYNTHIA BARNES-SLATER

*Drummond West*

3:30 – 5:00

**Applying Bahá'í Principles to One's Professional Endeavours—Innovation in Health Care Delivery: From the Arctic to Mars** MEHRAN ANVARI

2:00 – 5:00

### **Learning about Working Groups**

The purpose of the Working Groups is to explore thought in a field or profession in light of the Bahá'í Teachings, to foster diverse individual and collective efforts with the aim of engaging effectively in academic and professional discourse. All are welcome. The following groups will reflect on their ongoing work and make plans for future gatherings.

*Salon 1:* Health and Medicine

*Salon 3:* Education

*Salon 6:* Law

*Salon 7:* Media

*Musset:* Economies (begins Thursday morning)

*Lamartine:* Religion and Society

*Hémon:* Technology and Society

*Kafka:* Indigenous Studies

5:00 – 7:00

*Dinner Break*

## ***Thursday Evening – 11 August 2016***

*Ballroom*

7:00 p.m.

### **Plenary Session**

Chair: MARTHA SCHWEITZ

Devotions

Official Conference Welcome

Representatives of the National Spiritual Assemblies of the United States and Canada

### **Reflections on Engagement in Discourses at the International Level**

BANI DUGAL

## *Friday, 12 August 2016*

### *Ballroom*

9:00 a.m.

#### **Plenary Session**

Chair: KAREN MCKYE

Devotions

#### **Panel: Social Justice and Education**

SHABNAM KOIRALA-AZAD (CHAIR), CHITRA GOLESTANI, ELENA TOUKAN

#### **Panel: From Truth to Reconciliation: Indigenous Peoples and the Future of Canada**

PAYAM AKHAVAN (CHAIR), MARIE WILSON, ELOGE BUTERA, BOB WATTS

12:00 – 2:00

*Lunch Break*

## **2:00 – 5:30 p.m. Simultaneous Breakout Sessions**

### *Salons 6 & 7*

#### **Business and Management**

Chair: SAMIRA KHAJEHI

2:00 – 3:00

Creating Sustainable Wealth: Understanding the Five Circles of Wealth Critical to Personal and Economic Development in the 21st Century LARRY MILLER

3:15 – 4:15

Agile Methodologies in the Workplace and the Bahá'í Faith EMAD TOUKAN

4:30 – 5:30

Influences that Shape Leaders' Constructions of Power VALERIE DAVIS

### *Kafka & Lamartine*

#### **Education**

Chair: NAZANIN ZARGARPOUR

2:00 – 3:00

Creating Coherence among Spirituality, Morality and Academics in Secondary Education: The Nancy Campbell Academy Experience  
GORDON NAYLOR

3:15 – 4:15

World Citizenship as Capacity: A Study of the Interrelations of the Three Protagonists and their Impact on Youths' Connection to the World  
LIVIA DITTMER

### *Kafka & Lamartine*

#### **Gender Studies**

Chair: NAZANIN ZARGARPOUR

4:30 – 5:30

Six Revolutionary Teachings on Gender Equality VASU MOHAN

<i>Ballroom East</i>	<b>Health</b> Chair: TINA SHAHIDYAZDANI 2:00 – 3:00 A Conceptual Framework to Optimize Sleep Health DARIUS LOGHMANEE 3:15 – 4:15 Integrating Spirituality in Medicine: The New Frontier in Medical Education Renewal, Perspectives of a Bahá'í Physician Educator SHARON HATCHER 4:30 - 5:30 Euthanasia and the Soul ABDU'L-MISSAGH GHADIRIAN
<i>Drummond Centre</i>	<b>History and Bahá'í Writings</b> Chair: TBD 2:00 – 3:00 The Sifter of Wheat and the “Tablet of God” VAHID FARZANEH 3:15 – 4:15 The Architecture of Edward and William Sutherland Maxwell KAYHAN NADJI 4:30 – 5:30 The Seven Valleys of Bahá'u'lláh: The Blueprint of Bahá'í Theology SOHRAB KOUROSH
<i>Salon 3</i>	<b>Humanities</b> Chair: KIM NAQVI 2:00 – 3:00 Reasoned Faith, Deep Fiction, Essays to Love: Reading Marilynne Robinson JAY HOWDEN 3:15 – 4:15 Where History Meets Art: Creating Work Based on Historical Sources ANNE GORDON PERRY 4:30 – 5:30 More than Just Words: Language as Identity AARON MARKS
<i>Drummond West</i>	<b>Media Studies</b> Chair: MICHAEL KARLBERG 2:00 – 3:00 Media Studies: Toward a Coherent Normative Framework MICHAEL KARLBERG 3:15 – 4:15 Storytelling around the 21st Century Fireside: Using Filmic Storytelling and World-Building Concepts to Connect with Media Savvy Audiences MAILE DAUGHERTY
<i>Jarry &amp; Joyce</i>	<b>Peace and Reconciliation</b> Chair: NAVA KAVELIN 2:00 – 3:00 Peace and Security: Building Resilient Communities DANIEL PERELL and SAPHIRA RAMESHFAR 3:15 – 4:15 Emerging Trends in Global Governance and World Order in Relation to the Bahá'í Concept of the Lesser Peace HODA MAHMOUDI 4:30 – 5:30 Bahá'í Consultation: One Way to Spiritual Maturity/ La consultation Bahá'ie: une voie de maturité spirituelle MARGOT LOISELLE-LÉONARD
<i>Drummond West</i>	<b>Philosophy and Ethics I</b> Chair: JUDY FILSON 4:30 – 5:30 Plato, Modern Physics, and Bahá'u'lláh VAHID RANJBAR

<i>Drummond East</i>	<b>Philosophy and Ethics II</b> Chair: TBD
2:00 – 3:00	In Search of a Common Morality JOHN WALKER
3:15 – 4:15	Nature, Science, Religion, Love, and Predestination: What Do They Have in Common? KAMRAN SEDIG
4:30 – 5:30	The History of the Concept of Religion and Its Effect on Discourses Pertaining to the Bahá'í Faith DANIEL GROLIN
<i>Ballroom West</i>	<b>Psychological Sciences</b> Chair: MICHAEL PENN
2:00 – 3:00	Contemporary Psychological Sciences and the Centrality of Spirituality ANDREW HATALA, SHAWHEEN JAMES and MONA FATHIEH
3:15 – 4:15	Depression, Stigma, and the Soul PATRICIA ANN MCILVRIDE
4:30 – 5:30	The Mystery of Consciousness: Learnings from Neuroscience and Insights from the Bahá'í Faith on the Puzzle of Higher Consciousness JENA KHADEM-KHODADAD
<i>Salon 1</i>	<b>Social Justice</b> Chair: TBD
2:00 – 3:00	A New Prosperity: Financial Markets, Wealth Inequality and the Role of Huqúqu'lláh in Establishing Economic Justice SHAMIM MAANI
3:15 – 4:15	Transforming Humanity: Reflections on a Bahá'í Approach to Social Theory KEVIN NAIMI
4:30 – 5:30	Contemporary Racism and Notions of Justice: A Bahá'í Framework MARIAM ASHTIANI
<i>Hémon</i>	<b>Technology and Society</b> Chair: MATTHEW WEINBERG
2:00 – 3:00	Cybersecurity and Privacy from a Bahá'í Perspective BERKELEY CHURCHILL and ADIB BEHJAT
3:15 – 4:15	The Moral Implications of Technology Interpreted through Heidegger & Levinas JORDAN VAN DEN HOONAARD
4:30 – 5:30	Freedom of Speech, Social Media, and Spirituality NIMA NAIMI
	<b>Poster Presentation</b> ( <i>Foyer on Level 3 — Outside Drummond rooms</i> )
2:00 – 4:15	The Gender Analogies of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Two Hands/Two Wings: Implications for Authoring a New Masculinity CHUCK EGERTON
5:30 – 7:30	<i>Dinner Break</i>

## *Friday Evening – 12 August 2016*

*Ballroom*

7:30 p.m.

### **Plenary Session**

Chair: KENNETH BOWERS

Devotions

Piano Piece — Franz Liszt: Etude No. 3 in G sharp minor “La Campanella”  
from *Grandes Etudes d'après Paganini* BENN MCGREGOR

*The 34th Hasan M. Balyuzi Memorial Lecture*  
**The Intellectual Life of the Bahá'í Community**  
FARZAM ARBAB

## *Saturday, 13 August 2016*

*Ballroom*

9:00 a.m.

### **Plenary Session**

Chair: ELIZABETH WRIGHT

Devotions

**“The Word that Shineth and Flasheth Amidst the Books of Men”: Text,  
Translation, and the Nature of Reality** STEVEN PHELPS

### **Panel: Citizenship and Participation**

AFSOON HOUSHIDARI (CHAIR), ARASH ABIZADEH, GERALD FILSON,  
CARL MURRELL

### **Panel: Technologies and Values**

MARK TOWFIQ (CHAIR AND PRESENTER), MITRA NAEIMI SOLOMON,  
MATTHEW WEINBERG

12:30 – 2:30

*Lunch break*

*Drummond West*

1:00 – 2:15

**Graduate Student Forum— Special Session**  
(see page 25 for description)

## 2:30 – 5:30 p.m. Simultaneous Breakout Sessions

### *Hémon*

#### **Arts and Music**

Chair: NANCY ACKERMAN

2:30 – 3:45 A Sacred Charge: Developing Musical Capacity within You and Your Community SHADI TOLOUI-WALLACE

4:00 – 5:30 The Artist in Us—Workshop  
JAY MCGREGOR, JIAN MOSTAGHIM, and BAYAN MOSTAGHIM

### *Salons 6 & 7*

#### **Business and Management**

Chair: SAMIRA KHAJEHI

2:30 – 3:45 The Social Enterprise Model as a Means of Social Action  
SAMUEL BENOIT (CHAIR), ABBAS KHATAMIAN, IREN KOLTERMANN,  
and GORDON NAYLOR

4:00 – 5:30 Consultative Session on Ethics and Practice in Business  
FRANCOIS COUILLARD and SAMIRA KHAJEHI

### *Salon 3*

#### **Economics**

Chair: RAMA AYMAN

2:30 – 3:45 Ethical Finance: Myth or Reality? SHIVA DUSTDAR

4:00 – 5:30 Economies: What They Are and How They Work – Open Consultative Session

### *Salon 1*

#### **Education**

Chair: AARON YATES

2:30 – 3:45 Practices That Build Capacity in Youth: How the Activities of the Five Year  
Plan Facilitate the Development of Essential Competencies  
NAZANIN ZARGARPOUR

4:00 – 5:30 Learning to Draw on the Revelation in Contributing to a Discourse on Science  
Education BORNA NOUREDDIN (CHAIR), EMILY LAMPLE, and ELENA TOUKAN

### *Ballroom East*

#### **Health**

Chair: SANA REZAI

2:30 – 3:45 From Contention to Collaboration: Rethinking the Approach to Hospital  
Administration

TINA SHAHIDYAZDANI, ERFAN FARHANGPOUR, and DARIUS LOGHMANEE

4:00 – 5:30 Exploring the Discourse on Health Equity  
DARIUS LOGHMANEE (CHAIR), LITA CAMERON, TINA SHAHIDYAZDANI, SHIRIN  
MADJZOUB, and SANA REZAI

### *Drummond West*

#### **History and Bahá'í Writings**

Chair: OMID GHAEMMAGHAMI

2:30 – 3:45 Shoghi Effendi's "Hands" – The Ministry of the Custodians: Six Years that  
Changed History and Shaped a Faith's Destiny SHAHEEN TEDJARATI

4:00 – 5:30 Reflections on the Writings of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh  
OMID GHAEMMAGHAMI, TODD LAWSON, FOAD SEDDIGH and SAMANDARY  
HINDAWI

<i>Drummond East</i>	<p><b>Media Studies</b>  Chair: MICHAEL KARLBERG  2:30 – 5:30 Video/Film Production: Seeking Coherence MICHAEL KARLBERG (CHAIR), MARY DARLING, CLARK DONNELLY, ESTHER MALONEY, and HASHEM SELPH</p>
<i>Joyce</i>	<p><b>Peace and Reconciliation</b>  Chair: TARA NAULT  2:30 – 3:45 Realizing Justice—Murdered and Missing Women and Girls in Canada DANIELLE EWENIN  4:00 – 5:30 Weaving a Road to Reconciliation TARA NAULT and MICHELE NAULT MCISAAC</p>
<i>Ballroom West</i>	<p><b>Psychological Sciences</b>  Chair: ABDU’L-MISSAGH GHADIRIAN  2:30 – 3:45 Foundations of Trust: Reflections from Bahá’í Writings and Psychological Science on the Pivotal Role of Trust in Our Lives VICTORIA TALWAR  4:00 – 5:00 An Opportunity for Social Action in Iran: Addiction and Mental Health—An Epidemic and Threat SHADI SALEHIAN, ARASH ALAEI, and KAMIAR ALAEI</p>
<i>Kafka &amp; Lamartine</i>	<p><b>Religion and Society</b>  Chair: SAPHIRA RAMESHFAR  2:30 – 3:45 Religion and Public Discourse in an Age of Global Transition: Reflections on Bahá’í Practice and Thought GEOFFREY CAMERON (CHAIR), JULIA BERGER, and BENJAMIN SCHEWEL  4:00 – 5:30 Engaging the Discourse on the Role of Religion in Society: Experience, Analysis, and Exploration GERALD FILSON, JULIA BERGER and DANIEL PERELL</p>
<i>Drummond Centre</i>	<p><b>Social Justice</b>  Chair: LISA DUFRAIMONT  2:30 – 3:45 Educating for Social Action MONA KIANI  4:00 – 5:30 Contributing to Social Discourse in China JOE CARTER and HE HONGYU</p>
<i>Jarry</i>	<p><b>Technology and Society</b>  Chair: BRIAN KEMPF  2:30 – 3:45 Justice in Action: Using Technology as a Tool for Access to Justice SHERNA DEAMER  4:00 – 5:30 An Inquiry into the Role of Technology in Society BRIAN KEMPF (CHAIR), BAHAREH ADAMI ARDESTANI, ASHIYAN RAHMANI-SHIRAZI, and OAK RITCHIE</p>
5:30 - 7:30	<i>Dinner Break</i>

## *Saturday Evening, 13 August 2016*

*Ballroom*  
7:30 p.m.

**Plenary Session**  
Chair: MEHRAN KIAI

*Presentation of Awards by the ABS Executive Committee*  
TODD LAWSON, 2016 Award for Distinguished Scholarship — Book Category  
BENJAMIN SCHEWEL, 2016 Award for Distinguished Scholarship — Graduate Thesis Category  
FARZAN MA'SUM and FARHAM SABET, 2016 Bahieh Moayyad-Khademi Scholarship Award

### *Arts Evening: Celebrating 40 Years*

MC: MAËLLE TURBIDE

Devotional Pieces ANAÏS PERRON-MARANDA, BEN HOWDEN, JAY MCGREGOR and JIAN MOSTAGHIM

Roots Story by AFSOON HOUSHIDARI

Dunes Music by GENEVIÈVE LABBÉ

Media and the Relevant Voice MARY DARLING and CLARK DONNELLY

The Fire Will Suffice Music by PENN BADGLEY and MTALI BANDA

Engaging Communities Through Music SHADI TOLOUI-WALLACE

## *Sunday, 14 August 2016*

*Ballroom*  
9:00 a.m.

**Plenary Session**  
Chair: JULIA BERGER

Devotions

**Panel: Art, Beauty, and the Human Spirit**  
LEILI TOWFIGH (CHAIR and PRESENTER), SKY GLABUSH, SIAMAK HARIRI

**Advancing in Bahá'í-Inspired Education**  
SONA ARBAB

12:30 p.m. Closing Remarks — ABS EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE: GEOFFREY CAMERON

## *Abstracts and Autobiographical Notes*

**Arash Abizadeh • Citizenship and Participation – Plenary Panel Presentation (see Houshidari for abstract)**

ARASH ABIZADEH teaches political philosophy at McGill University. He received his MPhil from Oxford University as a Rhodes scholar, and his PhD from Harvard University.

**Bahareh Adami Ardestani • An Inquiry into the Role of Technology in Society (see Kempf for abstract)**

BAHAREH studied at the Institute for Advanced Bahá'í Studies in Iran, served as a member of the Philosophy Committee in Isfahan, and taught philosophy and theology to Bahá'í students. She graduated in Electrical Engineering and Computer Science at UC Berkeley. Her research focuses on the impact of technology on intimacy and empathy.

**Payam Akhavan, Chair; Marie Wilson, Eloge Butera, Bob Watts • From Truth to Reconciliation: Indigenous Peoples and the Future of Canada—Plenary Panel Presentation (see individual names for biographies)**

The recent Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission on Canada's residential schools for indigenous children has exposed a disturbing history of abuse that has scarred generations of indigenous communities. The Commission called on Canadians to address these past injustices in furtherance of reconciliation and healing. What is the path ahead from oppression to empowerment? What role does spirituality play in this transformation? What are some of the contributions that indigenous people can make to the future of Canada?

PAYAM AKHAVAN, LL.M. S.J.D. (Harvard), is Professor of International Law at McGill University, with prior appointments at Oxford, Paris, Florence, and Yale. He is a former UN prosecutor and a recently appointed Member of the Permanent Court of Arbitration at The Hague. In 2017, he will deliver the CBC Massey Lectures.

**Mehran Anvari • Applying Bahá'í Principles to One's Professional Endeavours—Innovation in Health Care Delivery: From the Arctic to Mars.**

This presentation explores ways that Bahá'í professionals can apply Bahá'í principles in their work, research and education, and discusses seamless ways that one's professional goals can be enriched by Bahá'í standards. We will examine an example of a Bahá'í inspired project that planned to improve the delivery of health care to patients in the arctic and which ultimately led to the development of telerobotic remote surgery. This project has the potential to improve access and quality of health care to millions of people living in remote areas, and is presently being evaluated by NASA for provision of medical/surgical care to astronauts for the Mars mission.

DR. ANVARI is a tenured Professor and Chair of Surgical Innovation at McMaster University. He holds several clinical and academic appointments including Scientific Director of the Centre for Surgical Invention and Innovation. His body of work in the area of MIS/robotic and telerobotic surgery is recognized internationally, most recently by NASA, with the Innovation Award.

### **Farzam Arbab • The Intellectual Life of the Bahá'í Community**

DR. FARZAM ARBAB holds a doctorate in Theoretical Elementary Particle Physics from UC Berkeley and an honorary doctorate in science from Amherst College. In 1974, he with colleagues founded the Fundación para la Aplicación y Enseñanza de las Ciencias (FUNDAEC). Dr. Arbab served on the National Spiritual Assembly of Colombia and on the Continental Board of Counsellors in the Americas before being appointed to the International Teaching Centre and then elected to the Universal House of Justice. After serving on that body for twenty years, he requested permission to relinquish his membership in 2013.

### **Sona Arbab • Advancing in Bahá'í-Inspired Education**

The concept of “Bahá'í-inspired education” has allowed Bahá'ís to participate in numerous educational projects within a common evolving framework, knowing that the emergence of “Bahá'í education” is but a distant goal. To advance in Bahá'í-inspired education, however, one must go beyond the incorporation of a few principles in programs that basically follow educational trends. Rigorous search—in light of the Teachings and in accordance with accumulating scientific knowledge—is needed for elements of an educational process that will help generation after generation to progressively acquire the attributes of “a new race of men.” I will discuss a few features of this search.

DR. SONA FARID ARBAB has a master's in history of Chinese education from Beijing Normal University and a PhD in Philosophy of Education from the University of London. She has worked extensively in China and is currently an adviser to the Moral Education Research Center at the Beijing Academy of Educational Sciences. From 2003 to 2013, she served as a Director of OSED at the Bahá'í World Centre.

### **Mariam Ashtiani • Contemporary Racism and Notions of Justice: A Bahá'í Framework**

The Bahá'í Writings tell us that racism, “one of the most baneful and persistent evils,” is one of “the most challenging issues” facing the United States and “a major barrier to peace.” Five decades after the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the legacy of slavery and racism still prevail, most notably through the criminal justice system. In this presentation, I discuss the history and current state of race and justice, debunk prevailing myths, and discuss solutions grounded in a Bahá'í framework of justice and the oneness of humanity.

MARIAM ASHTIANI is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Sociology at California State University, Fullerton. Her teaching and scholarship focus on racial and class inequality in the areas of education, employment, and the criminal justice system.

### **Cynthia Barnes Slater • Work as Worship: Advancing Spiritual Work/Life Coherence**

This breakout session will include “lessons learned” from Cynthia’s extensive senior HR management experience as a Bahá’í, at such different work sites as GE Capital, UC Berkeley, and the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham. Through reflecting on the Word of God and its “spiritual susceptibilities,” she will engage ABS participants in an interactive session to consider the 21st century implications of Bahá’u’lláh’s exhortation: “True reliance is for the servant to pursue his profession and calling in this world...”

CYNTHIA BARNES SLATER, SPHR (Senior Professional in Human Resources) serves as at the US Bahá’í National Center as a recruiter. A graduate of Cornell University and Southbank University in London, she has developed the thesis, “Work as Worship: Advancing Spiritual Work/Life Coherence” to explore building individual capacity to spiritually navigate the 21st Century workplace.

### **Trip Barthel • The Cutting Edge of Consultation: Reconciling Mercy and Justice**

What can we learn from the evolving field of alternative forms of dispute resolution in relation to the principles of consultation? All aspects of society are reaching out for new and better solutions to difficult problems: community forums, transformative mediation, circle sentencing, family group conferences, and victim offender reconciliation all use the principles of consultation to bring healing where there has been harm. This interactive session will consider how consultation is blended into the modern practices of dialogue and reform to reconcile mercy and justice.

TRIP BARTHEL, M.A., author of *Dynamic Consultation*, created and directed a community mediation program for 10 years. He worked with courts, district attorneys, law enforcement, public agencies, schools, homeowners associations and community groups to resolve pressing issues.

### **Samuel Benoit, Abbas Khatamian, Iren Koltermann, and Gordon Naylor • The Social Enterprise Model as a Means of Social Action (see individual names for biographies)**

Social entrepreneurship is an emerging area of practice that is attempting to take the methods, mindsets and cash from the world of business and apply them to the wicked social and environmental problems normally left to the non-profit and public sectors. The panel will open with a brief introduction to concept and landscape of social enterprise and lead to panel of practitioners who will share case studies and reflections from the field. This will open up to a larger discussion with the group on possibilities in the fields of social action and business.

SAMUEL BENOIT currently serves as Operational Manager for Right Bike, a social business in Ottawa, Canada. He earned a Master’s Degree in Social Entrepreneurship from Hult International Business School in San Francisco. Samuel has worked with social businesses and nonprofits in Canada, Ethiopia, India, the United States, Ghana, Thailand, and China.

### **Julia Berger • Religion and Public Discourse in an Age of Global Transition: Reflections on Bahá’í Practice and Thought (see Geoffrey Cameron for abstract)**

**Julia Berger • Engaging the Discourse on the Role of Religion in Society: Experience, Analysis, and Exploration (see Filson for abstract)**

Julia Berger is a Ph.D. student in Theology and Religious Studies at the University of Kent in Canterbury, UK. From 2004 to 2015, she served as Senior Researcher at the Bahá'í International Community's United Nations Office in New York.

**Eloge Butera • From Truth to Reconciliation: Indigenous Peoples and the Future of Canada – Plenary Panel Presentation (see Akhavan for abstract)**

MR. BUTERA is a survivor of the 1994 Rwandan Genocide and was chosen by the Quebec Government as “young volunteer of the year” in recognition of his activities organizing and raising awareness about genocide and human rights, as well as advocating for Rwandan charity organizations.

**Geoffrey Cameron (Chair), Benjamin Schewel, Julia Berger • Religion and Public Discourse in an Age of Global Transition: Reflections on Bahá'í Practice and Thought (see individual names for biographies)**

This panel will present some of the research for a forthcoming edited volume on the Bahá'í Faith and the public sphere. The purpose of the volume is to make a fresh contribution to the growing, interdisciplinary body of academic literature on religion and the public sphere by examining Bahá'í perspectives and experiences of the Bahá'í community. On this panel, editors and contributors will introduce the project, describe some of its characteristics as a collaborative project, and present some of the research from the volume.

GEOFFREY CAMERON received an M.Phil from the University of Oxford and is currently a Ph.D. Candidate and Trudeau Scholar in political science at the University of Toronto. He is also principal researcher with the Bahá'í Community of Canada Office of External Affairs.

**Lita Cameron, Darius Loghmanee, Shirin Madjzoub, Sana Rezai, Tina Shahidyazdani • Exploring the Discourse on Health Equity (see individual names for biographies)**

Health equity is an area of study within public health that examines the intersection of individual health, social conditions, and public policies. The study of health equity leads to an examination of social justice, individual rights and freedoms, the influence of the community environment on personal health, and the role of education and empowerment in improving health outcomes. On this panel, the presenters will provide an overview of some aspects of the health equity literature, including its historical development, and introduce an initial exploration of the implications of the Bahá'í teachings for our study of public health.

LITA CAMERON is a resident in family medicine with an interest in global health. She is currently working with fellow residents to formally incorporate the social determinants of health into postgraduate training.

## **Joe Carter and He Hongyu • Contributing to Social Discourse in China**

A brief introduction to China's history and spiritual heritage, and the search for path forward through the current spiritual vacuum and confusion, followed by proposed Bahá'í contributions, including views on: justice at individual and social levels, the relationship between nationalism and internationalism, consultation and discourse. Discourse attitudes include sharing; speaking to China from its "own standpoint" and "terminologies"; anticipating a synergistic embrace of East and West, leading to a New World Order; and keeping in mind that China "...ranks foremost among all nations in material, cultural, and spiritual resources and potentialities, and [its] future is assuredly bright."

JOE CARTER, Canadian architect, taught design at Tianjin University from 1985, then moved to Beijing in 1989. He created St. John's Harbour Symphony, designed a new campus for the Central Academy of Drama in Beijing, and wrote a short book, *Some Thoughts on China and the New World Order* (2009).

HE HONGYU, Qinghua-Berkeley joint Ph.D., Architecture: architect, artist, Chief Designer-Founder of Five Colours Earth Fashion. Beginning with her thesis on the regeneration of historic Beijing, the character of her work is a search for social, economic and spiritual solutions to China's problems.

## **Berkeley Churchill and Adib Behjat • Cybersecurity and Privacy from a Bahá'í Perspective**

When you use technology, does security matter to you? Cybersecurity is interconnected with our lives, and provokes a complex dialogue on safety and privacy. In this panel, we explore how the Bahá'í teachings offer a new framework for understanding the central challenges of cybersecurity. Topics include: Nature of trust in technology; Enabling justice through collective security; Cyber awareness and overcoming bias; Mindfulness and the "Internet of Things"; Privacy versus Transparency; Importance of cybersecurity education.

BERKELEY is a Ph.D. candidate in computer science at Stanford University. His research focuses on programming language technology, including formal verification for software correctness and program optimization. He is very passionate about building secure computer systems.

ADIB is a passionate data scientist and serves as a Data Analyst at Apple. Prior to Apple, he served at numerous Internet organizations such as Internet Systems Consortium and WeLink. He holds a B.S. from California Polytechnic and is an M.S. candidate at Carnegie Mellon University.

## **Francois Couillard and Samira Khajehi • Consultative Session on Ethics and Practice in Business**

Conducting business while staying faithful to Bahá'í beliefs can sometimes be a challenge. This workshop provides a space to learn about the ebbf way ([www.ebbf.org](http://www.ebbf.org)) and from each other's successes and failures in overcoming this challenge. Workshop participants are encouraged to share their experiences—when they felt their work conflicted with Bahá'í principles, how they reacted to these situations—and share how they proactively avoided these situations from arising. Participants will be invited to consider further collaboration opportunities between ebbf and ABS in activities such as conferences, publications, local events.

FRANCOIS is the CEO of a 12,000 member healthcare association, the CAMRT. He volunteers as President of OCISO, an immigrant and refugee settlement agency. He has held senior roles in businesses and not-for-profits such as Johnson & Johnson and The Canadian Red Cross. He holds a Chemical Engineering degree and an MBA.

SAMIRA KHAJEHI is an MBA student at McGill where she is pursuing a dual concentration in strategy and finance. After completing her Bachelor's at the University of Western Ontario in Biology and Political Science, she worked as a fundraising consultant. Samira has international experience managing cross-functional teams of 60+ people.

**Mary Darling • Video/Film Production: Seeking Coherence (see Karlberg for abstract)**

MARY DARLING and her husband/collaborative-partner Clark Donnelly have written, directed, or produced many documentaries, lifestyle programs, and a television comedy titled "Little Mosque on the Prairie" that has aired in over 100 countries. Recent projects include a CBC children's program and a onehour documentary called "The Bahá'ís."

**Sherna Deamer • Justice in Action: Using Technology as a Tool for Access to Justice**

Access to justice is of compelling concern to Bahá'ís around the world and is of increasing concern to others. The United Nations' "sustainable development" goals for the next 15 years – 2016 to 2030 – has a goal called "Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions". This workshop will address obstacles faced by people seeking justice and will review a few of the efforts being made by the legal community around the world to overcome those obstacles. Most specifically, it will explore an innovative website created in California, USA, to help people use local courts without lawyers as one path toward justice.

SHERNA DEAMER worked for the Superior Court of California as manager of the Virtual Self-Help Law Center, one of the State's five Model Self-Help Programs. Before joining the court, Ms. Deamer worked for 19 years as a writer, editor and project manager at the Bahá'í World Center in Haifa, Israel.

**Maile Daugherty • Storytelling around the 21st Century Fireside: Using Filmic Storytelling and World-Building Concepts to Connect with Media-Savvy Audiences**

Modern brains have become increasingly wired to respond to story constructs from screen media—both in form (attention span, story structure) and thematic content (specificity within universality). Understanding these ideas helps us to understand and connect with those around us as we engage in Ruhi and Junior Youth Empowerment programs—particularly in more westernized, media saturated cultures. This session will examine and discuss filmic and world-building principles and their impact on how we tell stories, both at a one on one fireside level, and collectively using the mass media.

MAILE DAUGHERTY (MA Hons - Screenwriting) is an established producer with 20 years of experience in the New Zealand screen industry. In addition to producing and writing, Maile lectures and leads the Screen program at Unitec's School of Performing and Screen Arts, a leading Australasian film school.

### **Valerie Davis • Influences that Shape Leaders' Constructions of Power**

There is an expanding discourse in the literature about the need for leadership that more accurately reflects our contemporary world and responds to the heightening complexity that characterizes society. This presentation discusses the findings of an empirical study designed to explore how leaders who are identified as collaborative construct power. The presentation explores their broader constructions than is typical of the literature and discusses some of the influences that informed their constructions of power. Comparisons are made to guidance recommended to Bahá'ís for teaching the faith.

VALERIE DAVIS is a PhD Candidate at Fielding Graduate University and a leadership development professional. This presentation is from her dissertation study. Following participation in the pilot program “Constructing a Framework for Social Action” she was inspired to pursue her PhD studies

### **Livia Dittmer • World Citizenship as Capacity: A Study of the Interrelations of the Three Protagonists and their Impact on Youths' Connection to the World**

This presentation will share preliminary findings from a qualitative study conducted at Nancy Campbell Worldcit Academy, a Bahá'í-inspired school in Ontario. Through this research, I examine how the interactions of the three protagonists—the institution, the community, and the individual—create conditions that impact young people's capacity for world citizenship. In particular, I examine how students' spiritual engagement in learning is influenced by the interrelations of these protagonists and the implications of spiritual engagement for their development as world citizens.

LIVIA DITTMER is a PhD candidate in the Community Psychology program at Wilfrid Laurier University. Her research focuses on critical education, with an emphasis on building young people's capacity for social action. She lives with her husband and their two children in Fergus, Ontario.

### **Clark Donnelly • Video/Film Production: Seeking Coherence (see Karlberg for abstract)**

CLARK DONNELLY and his wife / collaborative-partner Mary Darling have written, directed, or produced many documentaries, lifestyle programs, and a television comedy titled “Little Mosque on the Prairie” that has aired in over 100 countries. Recent projects include a CBC children's program and a one-hour documentary called “The Bahá'ís.”

### **Bani Dugal • Reflections on Engagement in Discourses at the International Level**

In her talk, Bani Dugal will explore the Bahá'í community's participation in the discourses of society, the area of activity most closely connected with the establishment of the Lesser Peace. She will offer reflections from her unique vantage point of engagement at the international level, within the United Nations system, and will explore the connection between our formal engagement in discourses at all levels of society and the conversations unfolding within our communities, among our neighbors, colleagues, and friends, and in our own homes.

BANI DUGAL is a lawyer. She has practiced before the Supreme Court of India and has an LLM in Environmental Law. Ms. Dugal has served at the Bahá'í International Community's UN Office since 1994, including as Director of its Office for the Advancement of Women and, currently, as its Principal Representative to the UN.

### **Shiva Dustdar • Ethical Finance: Myth or Reality?**

Shiva will present her insights from the study of the Bahá'í Writings and her professional experience as investment banker for over 23 years to deepen our understanding of the root causes of the recent financial crises and discuss if ethics and finance can go hand in hand. She will outline recent trends in Socially Responsible Investments that show that the markets have an “invisible heart” which should guide the invisible hand. She will challenge the current paradigm that drives wealth accumulation and philanthropy and suggest how each one of us can make ethical finance a reality.

SHIVA has worked in international finance for 23 years at JP Morgan, Fitch Ratings and now European Investment Bank (EU Bank), heading the Innovation Finance Advisory division. She presents regularly at innovation policy and finance conferences. Shiva has an Economics degree from Columbia University and an Executive MBA from LBS.

### **Economies: What They Are and How They Work – Open Consultative Session**

As a consequence of efforts made by the ABS Executive in 2014 and 2015 to develop engagement with discourse in various fields, a group formed that began to explore economic issues. In this session some people who have been involved in that group will explain the efforts they have made collectively to understand the nature of economies, and show how that evolving understanding is manifested in research projects they are currently undertaking. Through guided small-group discussions, an attempt will be made to enable people who share an interest in exploring specific questions regarding economies to find each other and make plans to work together.

### **Chuck Egerton • The Gender Analogies of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Two Hands/Two Wings: Implications for Authoring A New Masculinity – Poster Presentation**

A recent Bahá'í International Community statement declared that it is men who must “find the moral courage to convey and model new understandings of masculinity and who must challenge and question the narrow roles that society and the media have assigned to them.” Men conditioned into destructive and hegemonic masculinities need spiritual, emotive, and rational motivations to change. The old meta-narrative of distorted unequal gender roles is fracturing. What are the implications of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's analogies of men and women as two hands and two wings on this new understanding of masculinity?

CHUCK EGERTON is a Ph.D. student in Peace and Conflict Studies at the University of Manitoba. His thesis topic is: Visioning Peace: Exploring the Non-verbal Agency of Photography to Transform Conflicts and Build Communities of Peace and Justice. His focus is gender and racial equality.

### **Danielle Ewenin • Realizing Justice—Murdered and Missing Women and Girls in Canada**

Between the years of 2000 and 2014 Indigenous women were six times more likely to be murdered than non-Indigenous women. One measure of a country's human rights is determined by its rate of violence against women. A prerequisite for peace is justice; a prerequisite for justice is equality. This presentation will provide an overview of current data, research on MMIWG and provide an analysis of potential impact for change of Canada social fabric.

DANIELLE EWENIN, member of Kawacatoose First Nation and family member of MMIW, is a graduate of the University of Regina and has worked in the field of community development for 30 years in First Nation communities both in Canada and the United States.

### **Vahid Farzaneh • The Sifter of Wheat and the “Tablet of God”**

Mulla Muḥammad Ja'far Gandum-Pak-Kun, known as the Sifter of Wheat, was the first person in the city of Isfahán to accept the message of the Báb. His acceptance of the faith was recognized by the Báb in the Persian Bayán and by Bahá'u'lláh in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas. Despite the praise and recognition he has received, there is very little known about him. This presentation will examine the writings of the Báb, Bahá'u'lláh, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and Shoghi Effendi as well as historical books and research papers about the Bábí and Bahá'í Faiths to learn what we can about him and his spiritual status.

VAHID FARZANEH is a sixth generation descendant of the Sifter of Wheat. Vahid has a BS and MS in structural engineering from Case Western Reserve University. He currently works for the Boeing Company. Vahid enjoys hiking, gardening, playing the flute, and teaching Bahá'í children's classes.

### **Gerald Filson, Daniel Perell and Julia Berger • Engaging the Discourse on the Role of Religion in Society: Experience, Analysis, and Exploration (see individual names for biographies)**

The aim of this session is to engage all those with initial interest and/or mature experience in participating in discourses in the fields of religion and/or philosophy. Current members of the group will narrate how they have worked together; how they have sketched out one aspect of the field; what the group has read, and what insights have been gleaned from these readings. A research note that details some central concepts on the role of religion in society will be shared, and new avenues and approaches for the group's functioning will be explored.

### **Gerald Filson • Citizenship and Participation – Plenary Panel Presentation (see Houshidari for abstract)**

GERALD FILSON, Ph.D., is Director of Public Affairs, Bahá'í Community of Canada. Dr. Filson has served as Chair of the Canadian Network on International Human Rights, Co-Chair of the Mosaic Management Group of VisionTV, and Board Member of the Couchiching Institute on Public Affairs.

**Lameh Fananapazir • Renewal of Judeo-Christianity and Islám: A Primary Goal of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation**

In these days when a great deal of harm is perpetrated in the name of religion, the fundamental realities of Judaism, Christianity and Islám must be “renewed, reformed and revoiced to mankind.” As indicated by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in the Tablets of the Divine Plan, this effort promotes unity of faith and oneness of humanity on which depends the peace and tranquility of the world. Consequently, we are to study diligently the Bible and the Qur’án. This allows us to reinforce the essential ethical values, while simultaneously emphasizing the solution provided by Bahá’u’lláh for the issues that they face

LAMEH FANANAPAZIR is a cardiologist who was a research scientist at the National Institutes of Health in the United States for 15 years prior to serving as Director of Health Services at the Bahá’í World Center. He is the author of *Islam at the Crossroads* which was published in 2015.

**Erfan Farhangpour • From Contention to Collaboration: Rethinking the Approach to Hospital Administration (See Shahidyazdani for abstract)**

ERFAN FARHANGPOUR practices hospital-based medicine in a community hospital in Vancouver, British Columbia. In his role as local department head, his administrative work has been able to give him opportunities to look at certain problems in light of the teachings, particularly trying to bridge the divide between the boardroom and the floors through opening consultative spaces.

**Mona Fathieh • Contemporary Psychological Sciences and the Centrality of Spirituality (see Hatala for abstract)**

MONA FATHIEH completed her B.Sc. in Life Sciences and M.A in Psychology with additional training in Cognitive Behavior Therapy. Currently working for a non-profit organization her focus is on immigrant and refugee health. Mona is interested in the relationship between suffering, resilience and the purpose of tests and difficulties.

**Sharaf Funk • Tablets of the Divine Plan: A Centennial Perspective (see Purushotma for abstract)**

SHARAF FUNK currently resides in British Colombia Canada and owns a photo/media-based company in California. He has served on the National Spiritual Assembly of Bulgaria and represented that body as its external affairs officer. He has pioneered in Russia and served at the Bahá’í World Centre.

**Sean Gallagher • Tablets of the Divine Plan: A Centennial Perspective (see Purushotma for abstract)**

SEAN GALLAGHER currently resides in Washington DC and serves on the Local Spiritual Assembly of Washington DC. He works in technology and attended UC Davis in California and The George Washington University in Washington DC. He also served at the Bahá’í World Centre.

### **'Abdu'l-Missagh Ghadirian • Euthanasia and the Soul**

Recent years have witnessed increasing interest in and demand for euthanasia or physician assisted suicide (PAS), a contentious practice involving the right of patients to ask for medical assistance to “die with dignity.” Advocates of euthanasia believe that suffering from an incurable, unbearable disease confers the right to request ending one’s life. Those opposed maintain that life is sacred, not to be terminated at will. Most religious teachings forbid shortening of life through PAS. For Bahá’ís, the Universal House of Justice has yet to decide, however suicide is strongly condemned.

ABDU’L MISSAGH GHADIRIAN, an author and researcher, is a professor emeritus of McGill University, Faculty of Medicine. He teaches a course on spirituality and ethics in medicine and has published extensively including the books: *Creative Dimensions of Suffering*, *Steadfastness in the Covenant* and, more recently, *Alzheimer’s Disease: An Eclipse before Sunset*.

### **Omid Ghaemmaghami, Todd Lawson, Foad Seddigh and Samandary Hindawi • Reflections on the Writings of the Báb and Bahá’u’lláh (see individual names for biographies)**

This panel will feature three presentations on the Writings of the Báb and Bahá’u’lláh. The first presentation reflects on some of the approaches suggested in the Bahá’í Writings for the study of the Creative Word. The second paper undertakes a comparison between the Báb’s Qayyúmu’l-Asmá’, “the first, the greatest and mightiest of all books,” and Bahá’u’lláh’s Súriy-i-Şabr, a seminal Tablet revealed on the first day of Riḍván. The final paper compares aspects of the form and content of the Qayyúmu’l-Asmá’ with those of what may be considered the major founding work of European literary modernism, James Joyce’s *Ulysses*.

OMID GHAEMMAGHAMI is Assistant Professor of Arabic in the Department of Classical and Near Eastern Studies at the State University of New York (SUNY) in Binghamton.

### **Sky Glabush • Art, Beauty, and the Human Spirit – Plenary Panel Presentation (see Leili Towfigh for abstract)**

SKY GLABUSH lives and works in London, Ontario, where he teaches studio art at Western University. Recent exhibitions include “What is a Self?” at Oakville Galleries, “Display” at MKG127, and “The Painting Project” at Galerie de l’UQUAM. He is represented by MKG127 in Toronto and Galerie Division in Montreal.

### **Chitra Golestani • Social Justice and Education – Plenary Panel Presentation (see Koirala-Azad for abstract)**

CHITRA GOLESTANI is an adjunct faculty member at Valparaiso University and the Institute for Humane Education in a hybrid Master’s program in education. She is also a co-founder of the Paulo Freire Institute at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) where she is a research associate.

## **Graduate Student Forum • Special Session (Saturday lunch: 1:00 - 2:15pm)**

This gathering creates a space for graduate students and faculty to share reflections on various facets of their academic experience. Among the themes we hope to address are: perspectives on theory, method, and practice; drawing upon insights from science and religion; correlating Bahá'í teachings with contemporary worldviews; working within an evolving conceptual framework; choosing a topic of study in light of service to the Cause; mentorship; and ways in which the Association for Bahá'í Studies can support your efforts.

### **Daniel Grolin • The History of the Concept of Religion and Its Effect on Discourses Pertaining to the Bahá'í Faith**

The current concept of religion imposes itself so as to impede the way in which the Bahá'ís can present the Bahá'í Faith in the discourses of the West and places where its discourses dominate. This paper presents the idea of effective history, and then uses the methodology to explore the history of the concept of “religion.” It follows researchers who suggest that the current concept originated in the Renaissance. The paper concludes the exploration of religion, by looking at the way in which Bahá'í discourses are impacted by the concept of “religion.”

DANIEL GROLIN authored the book *Jesus and Early Christianity in the Gospels*, and was appointed to the executive board of the ABS –English-Speaking Europe. He has continued as book review editor for the *Bahá'í Studies Review*. He has regularly taught Wilmette Institute courses about Christianity or the Bible.

### **Siamak Hariri • Art, Beauty, and the Human Spirit – Plenary Panel Presentation (see Leili Towfigh for abstract)**

SIAMAK HARIRI, founding Partner of Hariri Pontarini Architects, specializes in creating works of enduring value for clients seeking to lever change through design. Educated at the University of Waterloo and at Yale University, his portfolio of nationally and internationally recognized buildings has won over 60 awards, including the Governor General's Medal in Architecture.

### **Andrew Hatala, Shawheen James and Mona Fathieh • Contemporary Psychological Sciences and the Centrality of Spirituality (see individual names for biographies)**

Taking as our starting point the Universal House of Justice's statement that the Bahá'í Faith “should not be associated with any particular school of medical theory or practice,” this paper explores the relationships among Western psychological sciences, biomedical models of healing, Indigenous spiritual knowledge and alternative healing systems, and 'Abdu'l-Bahá's perspectives on psychological healing. After analyzing several key Writings from 'Abdu'l-Bahá, we are compelled to caution against a conflation of Western biomedical perspectives of psychological healing with “science” writ large, and thereby explore alternative ways of “scientific” healing more closely aligned to the spiritually grounded perspectives elucidated by 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

ANDREW R. HATALA, PhD, is a medical and psychological anthropologist with interest in cultural psychiatry and health psychology and Assistant Professor in the Department of Community Health Sciences at the University of Manitoba. His previous research explores the therapeutic practices for and conceptions of mental illnesses in both Canadian and Belizean Indigenous contexts.

**Sharon Hatcher • Integrating Spirituality in Medicine: The New Frontier in Medical Education Renewal, Perspectives of a Bahá'í Physician Educator**

Medical practice and education in the western world are undergoing a process of change and renewal. In the context of a more holistic approach to health and healing, there is increasing interest in the role of spirituality in patient care. The aim of this presentation is to review the findings in the literature and from a qualitative study exploring the perspectives of medical students and teachers. The study author will share some relevant experiences and reflections as a Bahá'í physician educator as well as relate the findings to the Bahá'í Writings.

DR. HATCHER is a family physician practicing in Saguenay, Quebec, Canada. She is Associate Dean of the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences of the Université de Sherbrooke, Saguenay Medical Education Program Director, and Education Director for the Saguenay regional university teaching hospital.

**Samandary Hindawi • Reflections on Approaching the Writings of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh (see Ghaemmaghami for abstract)**

Born into an Egyptian Bahá'í family with grandfathers who were both Muslim clerics, SAM HINDAWI was taught about Islám and the Bahá'í Faith from an early age. He lives with his son in Toronto, Canada.

**Afsoon Houshidari (Chair), Arash Abizadeh, Gerald Filson, Carl Murrell • Citizenship and Participation—Plenary Panel Presentation (see individual names for biographies)**

Citizenship is widely upheld as an important value in many societies, and it is a central concept in many fields of study. What are some of the prevalent ways citizenship is defined and analyzed in the social sciences and humanities? How does citizenship relate to thinking about the empowerment of populations to participate in processes of social transformation? What aspects of a Bahá'í conceptual framework come to the fore when examining the discourse on citizenship?

MS. HOUSHIDARI serves as legal counsel for Canada's Department of Justice. Her areas of expertise are immigration law, refugee law and domestic/international human rights law. Aside from legal expertise, she uses storytelling as a medium by which to increase awareness of human rights violations, especially those of Baha'is in Iran.

**Jay Howden • Reasoned Faith, Deep Fiction, Essays to Love: Reading Marilynne Robinson**

The writings of Marilynne Robinson run counter to popular culture, yet recall a sane and intelligent Christianity and echo the Bahá'í prescription for right living. Robinson has won a Pulitzer and many other prizes, including the National Humanities Medal given in 2012 by noted fan Barack Obama.

“Robinson’s genius is for making indistinguishable the highest ends of faith and fiction...” writes one critic. This presentation— on the "Gilead" fiction trilogy, and essays on history, culture, science and religion—introduces a brilliant, essential and sympathetic contemporary voice.

JAY HOWDEN is an educator, coach and mid-life writer. His last five chalk-stained years were spent in China; he now lives in Ottawa with his wife and the youngest of four sons. He has been searching for the Bahá’í way since his teens. His writing can be sampled at [JamesHowden.com](http://JamesHowden.com).

**Shawheen James • Contemporary Psychological Sciences and the Centrality of Spirituality (see Hatala for abstract)**

Shawheen James is a mental health counselor in a crisis resource center. Beyond individualized and small group therapy, his focus also includes helping a client’s system of support create environments in the community that encourage and sustain positive behavior change. Shawheen is starting medical school in the fall and hopes to eventually practice psychiatry.

**Michael Karlberg (Chair), Mary Darling, Clark Donnelly, Esther Maloney, and Hashem Selph • Video/Film Production: Seeking Coherence (see individual names for biographies)**

The work of the Bahá’í community is advancing within an evolving conceptual framework that will guide our contributions to the discourses of society over time. Panelists will discuss how this framework has shaped their own thinking and/or practice in relation to their work with video/film; prevailing assumptions, conceptions, and practices related to video/film production that might be problematic in relation to this framework; prevailing insights and conceptions related to video/film production that appear to be coherent with this framework; and spaces Bahá’ís might want to be in.

**Michael Karlberg • Media Studies: Toward a Coherent Normative Framework**

Media studies is in need of a more coherent normative framework. This presentation begins by examining the fragmented state of contemporary media studies. It then discusses a few of the normative issues that are central to media studies in order to demonstrate the inherently normative nature of the field. Next it articulates core elements of a normative framework derived from the teachings and experience of the Bahá’í community. The presentation then discusses some implications of this framework for public discourse and the public sphere.

MICHAEL KARLBERG is a professor of media studies at Western Washington University. He is the author of *Beyond the Culture of Contest* and a range of articles on related themes.

**Brian Kempf (Chair), Oak Ritchie, Bahareh Adami Ardestani, and Ashiyan Rahmani-Shirazi • An Inquiry into the Role of Technology in Society (see individual names for biographies)**

How do technologies shape human values, perceptions, and behaviors? How does humanity start to make more conscious choices, informed by the application of spiritual principles, about the path of technological innovation and adoption? This panel will examine a few contemporary insights into

these questions in order to begin a process of correlating these with the teachings and experience of the Bahá'í community. Audience members who are interested in contributing to this learning process over time are invited to a follow-up session to consult about next steps.

BRIAN KEMPF has seven years of experience in the IT industry and currently serves as a Product Manager for an e-commerce company based in North Carolina. He is interested in the sociological, psychoanalytical and spiritual principles involved in consumer engagement with social networking platforms and mobile phones.

### **Jena Khadem-Khodadad • The Mystery of Consciousness: Learnings from Neuroscience and Insights from the Bahá'í Faith on the Puzzle of Higher Consciousness**

Researchers from a variety of disciplines have offered data and theories for solving the enigma of consciousness. This presentation shares current knowledge on the neuro-anatomical basis of human consciousness. Images of the human brain and diagrams are used to explain neural connections and basic concepts. Reflection on higher consciousness in humans leads to seminal questions: How does the brain relate to the mind and consciousness? Furthermore, this presentation offers concepts and insights from the Bahá'í Faith on the soul, the rational soul, the spirit and the immortality of the soul which may be probed to enrich understanding of consciousness in humans.

JENA KHADEM KHODADAD, Ph.D. Biological Sciences, Northwestern University. Academic career: research in Cell Biology; teaching of Cell and Molecular Biology and Neuroanatomy to Medical and Graduate students. Current rank: Professor Emeritus, Department of Cell Biology and Anatomy, Rush Medical College, Chicago.

### **Abbas Khatamian • The Social Enterprise Model as a Means of Social Action (see Benoit for abstract)**

At 35, with a film degree and MBA, Marketing Director ABBAS KHATAMIAN left corporate life to make the world a better place—his way. A Kickstarter success and 4 years later, he's now co-founder of the startup behind The Virtuals: High tech heroes that inspire the best in kids (TheVirtuals.com).

### **Mona Kiani • Educating for Social Action**

Junior Youth Groups can be an everyday occurrence for a secondary teacher, if they creatively design their curriculum for social action. This session examines how a high school math classroom can be transformed from a place of theoretical learning, to a launching pad where students can understand the world around them, including all the injustices, through mathematics, and furthermore, enact action. Through a social action approach, these youth can use their daily schooling experience as a way to curiously "carry forward an ever advancing civilization" as prescribed by Bahá'u'lláh.

MONA KIANI is an 8th year high school math teacher with an emphasis in social justice education. She focuses on inspiring agents of change in her classroom. She is a Doctoral Candidate in Educational Leadership and her research regards how Emotional Intelligence can assist at-risk students.

**Shabnam Koirala-Azad (Chair), Chitra Golestani, Elena Toukan • Social Justice and Education — Plenary Panel Presentation (see individual names for biographies)**

Much of scholarship in the field of education focuses on the relationship between schools and society, and on the disparities in access, opportunity, and educational experience. In light of changing community demographics, how do we create educational environments that promote equity and holistic development? How can Bahá'í educators and researchers contribute to knowledge in this field? What insights gained by Bahá'í communities could be shared in fields such as social justice education and human rights education? How can we address educational equity in a more constructive way?

SHABNAM KOIRALA-AZAD is Associate Dean of Academic Affairs and Associate Professor of International and Multicultural Education in the School of Education at the University of San Francisco. Her research explores collaborative methods of educational research, human rights education and social change. She is co-founder of the first graduate program in human rights education in the United States.

**Iren Koltermann • The Social Enterprise Model as a Means of Social Action (see Benoit for abstract)**

IREN is the managing director of eCaliber Group, a firm providing professional services in related areas of talent management, diversity, and inclusion. Iren holds an MA in Intercultural and International Communication, a Bachelor of Education and a graduate-level certificate in Sustainable Community Development.

**Sohrab Kourosh • The Seven Valleys of Bahá'u'lláh: The Blueprint of Bahá'í Theology**

The Seven Valleys, characterized by Shoghi Effendi as Bahá'u'lláh's greatest mystical composition, is generally considered a complex mystical treatise guiding the wayfarers in treading the path of spirituality. However, in The Seven Valleys Bahá'u'lláh employed mystical language to describe many theological concepts and fundamental principles of Bahá'í theology, some of which were unprecedented in the history of the religious discourse. In this presentation several principles outlined in mystical language in The Seven Valleys and subsequently developed in The Kitáb-i-Íqán and other writings of Bahá'u'lláh are discussed and a methodology for facilitating the study of The Seven Valleys is provided.

DR. SOHRAB KOUROSH is VP & Senior Environmental Scientist at Technico Environmental, Inc. in Texas. His diverse educational background includes B.S. and M.S. in Mechanical Engineering, M.A. in Psychology, M.S. in Aerospace Engineering, Ph.D. in Biomedical Engineering, and J.D. in Environmental Law. He has authored and published books and articles on Bahá'í subjects.

**Emily Lample • Learning to Draw on the Revelation in Contributing to a Discourse on Science Education (see Nouredin for abstract)**

EMILY LAMPLE has a PhD in Community Research and Action from Vanderbilt University. She currently serves at the Bahá'í National Center in the United States.

**Todd Lawson • Reflections on the Writings of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh — The Artistry of the Báb: Literary Dimensions of the Báb's Revelation (see Ghaemmaghami for abstract)**

TODD LAWSON is emeritus professor of Islamic Thought at the University of Toronto where he taught for 25 years. He has published widely on Bahá'í Faith, Quran commentary, the Quran as literature, Sufism, and Shí'ih Islám.

**Darius Loghmanee • A Conceptual Framework to Optimize Sleep Health**

Despite its metaphysical character, sleep is governed by just a few relatively well understood forces. Consistent and predictable as these forces are, however, many find it challenging to channel them effectively, and subsequently have difficulty achieving healthy sleep for themselves and those in their care. Detrimental habits of thought, unhealthy patterns of community life, and a misconception of human nature create barriers to optimal sleep in our society. This presentation will provide a conceptual framework to systematize our thinking about sleep and will consider approaches to education and policy that can contribute to optimal sleep in a population.

**Darius Loghmanee • Exploring the Discourse on Health Equity (See Lita Cameron for abstract)**

**Darius Loghmanee • From Contention to Collaboration: Rethinking the Approach to Hospital Administration (See Shahidyazdani for abstract)**

DARIUS LOGHMANEE is a sleep physician from Chicago, Illinois. As the Director of the Advocate Children's Sleep Network he is currently focused on helping build capacity in a growing number of patients, families, physicians, community members, and institutions to find their part to play in optimizing pediatric sleep health.

**Margot Loiseau-Léonard • Bahá'í Consultation: One Way to Spiritual Maturity/ La consultation Bahá'íe: une voie de maturité spirituelle**

The Bahá'í Faith offers its adherents multiple ways for spiritual development; one of them is the art of consultation which, according to 'Abdu'l-Bahá, must be a spiritual dialogue or conference. As humanity presently stands at the threshold of its age of collective maturity, it requires from the individuals and Bahá'í institutions the learning and practice of ever greater capacities, qualities and virtues for the spiritualisation of the world. What are those capacities, qualities and virtues? How are they developed through consultation? By what criteria may we evaluate the degree of individual, institutional and community maturity?

DR. MARGOT LOISELLE-LÉONARD is a retired professor of Social Work specialized in intercultural intervention. She has been a Bahá'í for 45 years during which time she served on many different committees and institutions in Canada and in Rwanda, one of which being the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Canada.

**Shamim Maani • A New Prosperity: Financial Markets, Wealth Inequality and the Role of Huqúqu'lláh in Establishing Economic Justice**

Since the Financial Crisis, governments have used unprecedented measures to make capital available to corporations and institutions. While the aim has been to stabilize financial markets and promote broad prosperity, wealth inequality has only intensified. The reason for this collateral damage is that the financial system as currently constructed is flawed in generating sustainable prosperity. Fortunately, Bahá'u'lláh has provided a solution, through the Law of Huqúqu'lláh. This Institution, which we have only begun to fathom, offers a pathway to economic justice. We will explore the connection between our financial system, wealth inequality, and the role of Huqúqu'lláh in creating prosperity.

SHAMIM has 16 years of experience in financial markets. He spent several years at a major Wall Street investment bank, as well as three years in Haifa, helping to manage the Bahá'í World Centre investment funds. Shamim is currently 2nd Vice President at The Northern Trust Corporation in Chicago.

**Shirin Madjzoub • Exploring the Discourse on Health Equity (See Lita Cameron for abstract)**

SHIRIN MADJZOUB is a family physician currently working at the Cambridge Health Alliance, a safety net integrated delivery system in Boston, MA. She is interested in learning about systems and processes that will allow patients and communities to take responsibility for their own health.

**Hoda Mahmoudi • Emerging Trends in Global Governance and World Order in Relation to the Bahá'í Concept of the Lesser Peace**

World peace will unfold gradually and in stages, as outlined in the Bahá'í Writings. Based on Bahá'u'lláh's Tablets, humanity is currently engaged in an evolving process whereby the leaders of governments will eventually establish the Lesser Peace. This presentation examines features of the Lesser Peace and current transformations in global governance and world order. Drawing from recent scholarly works in the fields of international relations and social sciences and linking them with themes in the Bahá'í texts, the presentation explores emerging trends in global governance and world order.

HODA MAHMOUDI, holder of The Bahá'í Chair for World Peace at the University of Maryland. Previously, Dr. Mahmoudi served as the Coordinator of the Research Department at the Bahá'í World Centre in Haifa, Israel (2001-2012). She has served as dean of the College of Arts & Sciences at Northeastern Illinois University.

**Esther Maloney • Video/Film Production: Seeking Coherence (see Karlberg for abstract)**

ESTHER MALONEY serves as coordinator of Illumine Media Project, a grassroots media initiative guided by the Office of Social and Economic Development, for which she has written and directed four short films and the series "How We Grow." She is currently pursuing her MEd at the University of Toronto.

## **Aaron Marks • More Than Just Words: Language as Identity**

Languages are often seen purely as systems of communication, with no inherent value past their communicative function. In this utilitarian view, the diversity of languages in the world is often seen as an inconvenience, or even a barrier to global integration. Here, I will present an alternative view: that the Bahá'í teachings allow for and reaffirm a holistic conception of our languages as not just means of communication, but as vehicles for the Sacred, as manifestations of our internal psychological and spiritual realities, and as one of the primary markers of our various human identities.

AARON MARKS I'm a linguist working in the field of language revitalization for American Indigenous languages, and conduct research on language endangerment, language change, language contact, and language typology. I am currently a language program consultant for the Mishewal Wappo Tribe of northern California.

## **Jay McGregor, Jian Mostaghim, and Bayan Mostaghim • The Artist in Us—Workshop**

Are we naturally attracted to beauty? Can we recognize beauty even when it is least expected or seems ordinary? How can we see and create beauty? How do these abilities relate to the arts? Is there an artist in all of us? These questions will be explored in the workshop through multimedia-presentations involving discussion and video-interviews with people from diverse backgrounds—including youth who study the arts, professionals who work in visual arts (e.g. Rogers), music (e.g. Lenz), theatre (e.g. Batdorf), storytelling (e.g. Profeit-LeBlanc) and architecture (e.g. Hariri).

JAY MCGREGOR is a 14-year-old arts enthusiast. Besides working towards his Associate of The Royal Conservatory diploma in piano, he also has a strong interest in drama and film arts. He started The-Artist-In-Us project to generate conversations about the arts in [www.blog.musicwithoutborder.com](http://www.blog.musicwithoutborder.com).

JIAN MOSTAGHIM is a 13-year-old cellist who is performing in Carnegie Hall this year. He enjoys performing in a spirit of service to his community, and volunteers for a youth-run service-project [www.musicwithoutborder.com](http://www.musicwithoutborder.com) that draws on the power of the arts as a form of youth engagement.

BAYAN MOSTAGHIM is a 15-year-old pianist who has competed numerously in the D.C. area. Besides contributing to the Music-Without-Borders-Blog, Bayan performs in service to his community and explores the visual arts. He hopes to study genetics and feels that the arts give him a unique perspective.

## **Patricia Ann McIlvride • Depression, Stigma, and the Soul**

Depression is a world health crisis predicted to be the leading cause of the global burden of disease by 2030. The stigma associated with depression is a major obstacle to treatment. Study of the Bahá'í Writings on the true nature of man shows that infirmities on this earthly plane do not affect the soul and its relationship to God. "Know that the soul of man is exalted above, and is independent of all infirmities of body or mind" (Bahá'u'lláh). Bahá'ís can combat this pandemic by understanding depression and by providing the spiritual education and social support critical for recovery.

DR. PATRICIA ANN MCILVRIDE, Ph.D., formerly Dr. Patricia Romano McGraw, is a clinical forensic psychologist and author. She lives in California where she provides expert witness testimony in court and psychotherapy via teletherapy to clients worldwide.

**Larry Miller • Creating Sustainable Wealth: Understanding the Five Circles of Wealth Critical to Personal and Economic Development in the 21st Century**

A spiritual redefinition of wealth and capitalism is essential to understanding how a spiritual economy will develop in an organic and historically inevitable way. If we analyze the causes and components of true wealth, we may find a pattern. In my observation, that pattern is holistic. It is an on-going process, a turning of the wheel, of five forms of capital. This workshop will present a re-definition of capitalism. It will describe the sequence of wealth generation that follows a path from Spiritual Capital to Social Capital, to Human Capital and Innovation Capital and finally results in Financial Capital.

LAWRENCE M. MILLER is the author of eleven books on management and leadership, including *Spiritual Enterprise*, published by George Ronald. He has been consulting with major corporations for the past forty years. His website is [www.ManagementMeditations.com](http://www.ManagementMeditations.com). He lives in Potomac, MD.

**Vasu Mohan • Six Revolutionary Teachings on Gender Equality**

This talk explores six unique teachings in the Bahá'í Faith on the equality of women and men that are extraordinarily powerful and critical to addressing global challenges. The principle of the Oneness of Mankind is the pivot round which all the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh revolve. Equality of women and men is a core component of this principle as it applies to the oneness between the two halves of humanity – male and female. It is impossible to grasp the meaning of the oneness of mankind and the bold claims of the Bahá'í Writings without understanding and operationalizing gender equality.

VASU MOHAN is a democracy, governance and human rights specialist with a focus on political, social and legal empowerment of the disenfranchised – women, ethnic minorities and persons with disabilities. He leads Asia programs at the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES).

**Carl Murrell • Citizenship and Participation – Plenary Panel Presentation (see Houshidari for abstract)**

MR. MURRELL served as Principal UN Representative for the Bahá'í International Community, working with civil society on a number of issues including the elevation of the status of people of African descent in the United States through the lens of the United Nations Decade for people of African Descent.

**Kayhan Nadji • The Architecture of Edward and William Sutherland Maxwell**

Edward and William Sutherland Maxwell, Montreal-based architects, were among the most important architects in Canada at the turn of the century. However, today they are little known as the

creators of the architectural work, even though these works still hold a place of prominence in the country's major cities.

KAYHAN NADJI holds a Master's Degree in architecture and urban planning and has over 39 years of experience in architectural design. His sensitivity to northern architecture has contributed to a high standard of design for many northern communities.

### **Kevin Naimi • Transforming Humanity: Reflections on a Bahá'í Approach to Social Theory**

This presentation will explore a distinctively Bahá'í approach to social theory which places the human capacity to transform reality at the heart of our analysis of self and society. The Bahá'í Writings liken the individual to a mirror that, when polished, can reflect into the world the perfections of God. This presentation will explore the importance that this view of the individual has for our understanding society and social theory. I will argue that emphasizing the transformative capacities of individuals helps avoid the despair that prevalent sociological perspectives tend to promote.

KEVIN NAIMI is a Doctoral candidate in the Sociology of Education at the University of Toronto. His work focuses creativity and the empowerment of young people

### **Nima Naimi • Freedom of Speech, Social Media, and Spirituality**

Freedom of speech is the fundamental human right to voice one's opinion without fear of censorship or punishment. With the rise of the social media phenomena, more people are able to communicate publicly. Unfortunately, the nature of social media has created a shift in the freedom of speech paradigm. This presentation will focus on how to develop framework for using social media in such a way that adheres to the Bahá'í standard and the teachings of the Faith rather than to the crumbling norms of the old world order.

NIMA NAIMI is a Social Media and Legal Specialist who received LL.B. from Université du Québec à Montréal in 2011 and a B. Comm from McGill University in 2007. Nima has spoken out about the legal implications of social media in schools, universities and conferences and has numerous media appearances.

### **Tara Nault and Michele Nault McIsaac • Weaving a Road to Reconciliation**

This session will centre on an understanding of the Aboriginal (to be inclusive of First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples as defined by the Constitution of Canada) community of Canada and the spiritual principles that are required to come to a deeper awareness and understanding. The presenters will explore how Bahá'ís can increase their understanding of Indigenous Cultural Competency and Cultural Humility. This presentation will provide an overview of the history of Aboriginal peoples in Canada using the TRC's Reconciliation Framework.

TARA NAULT is the Director, Aboriginal Health with BC Ministry of Health. Tara has worked with First Nations and Aboriginal communities for over 30 years and is a graduate in Indigenous

Governance from the University of Victoria. Tara is Métis with cultural roots in Saskatchewan and Manitoba.

MICHELE NAULT MCISAAC is a Métis woman originally from Saskatchewan and has lived and worked on Vancouver Island for over 30 years. Michele holds a degree from the University of Regina in Adult Education and Training. Michele has been a presenter and facilitator on Aboriginal wellness.

**Gordon Naylor • Creating Coherence among Spirituality, Morality and Academics in Secondary Education: The Nancy Campbell Academy Experience**

As a Bahá'í-inspired socio-economic development project, it distinguished itself when designated as a number one rated academic school in Canada. More importantly despite the many struggles and sacrifices required from all those associated with the project, this process has inspired and transformed hundreds of youth for over twenty years. This article traces Nancy Campbell Academy's efforts to systematically correlate knowledge from revelation, science, art, and reason in programs that practically and successfully build capacity in students dedicated to creating a new and divine civilization.

**Gordon Naylor • The Social Enterprise Model as a Means of Social Action (see Benoit for abstract)**

The development of human potential has been the focus of MR. NAYLOR'S work for more than forty years in North and South America. He completed graduate studies in Clinical Psychology and Educational Administration, M. Ed, University of Toronto.

**Borna Nouredin (Chair), Emily Lample, and Elena Toukan • Learning to Draw on the Revelation in Contributing to a Discourse on Science Education (see individual names for biographies)**

In this panel we explore theoretical and practical considerations for reading a discourse on science education. As scholars and educators we have considered aspects of the conversation where we detect receptivity to elements of a conceptual framework informed by the Revelation. The panel will share experiences of beginning to engage the literature from two different vantage points: one related to the current Ontario science curriculum and another addressing the question of science education for community development. A chair will help frame the discussion and place it in broader contexts.

BORNA NOUREDDIN is a faculty member in the School of Computing and Academic Studies at the British Columbia Institute of Technology, teaching programming courses in the Bachelor of Technology program. He has a Ph.D. and M.A.Sc. in electrical engineering from the University of British Columbia.

**Daniel Perell • Engaging the Discourse on the Role of Religion in Society: Experience, Analysis, and Exploration (see Filson for abstract)**

**Daniel Perell and Saphira Rameshfar • Peace and Security: Building Resilient Communities**

Shoghi Effendi reminds us: "World unity is the goal towards which a harassed humanity is striving. Nation-building has come to an end. The anarchy inherent in state sovereignty is moving towards a climax. A world, growing to maturity, must abandon this fetish, recognize the oneness and wholeness of human relationships, and establish once for all the machinery that can best incarnate this fundamental principle of its life." This workshop will explore the intersection of peace, security and building resilient communities, with a particular focus on how youth are affected by these processes.

DANIEL PERELL serves as a Representative at the Bahá'í International Community (New York office). His areas of work include human rights, gender equality, the role of religion in society, and defense of the Bahá'í Community

SAPHIRA RAMESHFAR is originally from Australia, but is now living and working in New York City. She has worked with the United Nations and previously the Australian Government on international trade negotiations and market strategy. She holds a Bachelor of Applied Science, Bachelor of Economics and a Masters in International Law.

**Anne Gordon Perry • Where History Meets Art: Creating Work Based on Historical Sources**

(Presentation preceded by a brief reading from "Noble Rider," a book-length poem about Bahá'u'lláh by **Bret Breneman**)

How can we use the history of the Bahá'í Faith to create imaginative works that bring us closer to the events and sensibilities that have shaped the Cause and will lead us into greater spiritual discourse and social evolution? Emphasis will be on approaching 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Tablets of the Divine Plan at its centenary, with reference to works by Roger White, to the Perry Production film regarding 'Abdu'l-Bahá's visit to the West (*Luminous Journey*), to Holy Days, and to the heroic work of contemporary playwrights striving to make the culture of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh more accessible to the West.

ANNE GORDON PERRY, PhD Aesthetic Studies, teaches humanities and film appreciation at the Art Institute of Dallas. With her husband, Tim Perry, she created the documentary film *Luminous Journey: 'Abdu'l-Bahá in America, 1912*, and she served as the primary author of *Green Acre on the Piscataqua*.

Raised in Hawaii and schooled at Punahou, Stanford and the University of Sussex, BRET BRENEMAN has taught English in several countries and states for over forty years. His most famous former student is Barack Obama. He has published a children's book and an epic poem based on *The Dawn-Breakers*.

**Steven Phelps • "The Word that Shineth and Flasheth Amidst the Books of Men": Text, Translation, and the Nature of Reality**

What is the relationship between language and reality? What distinguishes the words uttered by the Prophets? How are old words used in new ways in the Bahá'í Writings, and what implications does all this have for the translation of the Sacred Writings? We will explore these questions in the context of the translation program at the Bahá'í World Centre, guided by the Writings of the Central Figures of the Bahá'í Faith.

STEVEN PHELPS received bachelor degrees in physics and philosophy from Stanford University and a Ph.D. in physics from Princeton University. He worked for 13 years at the Bahá'í World Centre in its Research Department, coordinating the cataloging, indexing, and translation of the Bahá'í Writings.

**Ashiyani Rahmani-Shirazi • An Inquiry into the Role of Technology in Society—Pacific Women's Communication Perspectives on Development, Social Capital, and Consultation (see Kempf for abstract)**

The increasingly notable field of communication for international development particularly identifies the role of mobile telephony, social media, radio and similar technological tools for the elimination of global poverty, to which almost 2.8 billion people worldwide are subject (UN, 2010). Certain Bahá'í principles, including the elimination of extremes of wealth and poverty, consultation, and gender equality will be considered particularly in the context of indigenous Pacific women's empowerment to enhance social capital and community building processes

ASHIYAN is a PhD student, in Communication & Information Sciences, and teaches, at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. His research looks at the way in which women in rural communities in the Pacific use mobile devices to interact with community radio. He serves as a member of the NSA of Hawaii.

**Shastri Purushotma, Sean Gallagher, Sharaf Funk • Tablets of the Divine Plan: A Centennial Perspective (see individual names for biographies)**

This presentation will examine the impact that the Tablets of the Divine Plan have had on the Bahá'í community and the world in the century since 'Abdu'l-Bahá first wrote them. In addition, it will draw insights from the Writings to see what effects these Tablets may have in the next hundred years and beyond, as well as look at how they provide guidance for the journey of the soul as it travels through all the divine worlds.

SHASTRI PURUSHOTMA currently resides in Northern California and is working at a high-tech startup company in social media. He has served as human rights officer for the US National Spiritual Assembly's office of external affairs in Washington D.C. and before that served at the Bahá'í World Centre.

**Vahid Ranjbar • Plato, Modern Physics, and Bahá'u'lláh**

We will review the history of Plato's theory of forms, and show how it is surprisingly consistent with modern physics. In the Tablet of Wisdom, we find Bahá'u'lláh's rendering of these ideas, which he attributes to Socrates, even more descriptive of the Quantum field than what was understood in Plato's theory of forms. We also consider thermodynamics and show how recent developments appear to add more weight to the primacy and the potential organizing power of information. This we link back to Bahá'u'lláh's assertion of the creative power of the word of God as the source of platonic universals.

VAHID RANJBAR received his Ph.D. in Physics from Indiana University, and did his post-doc at Fermilab's Tevatron. Later he worked at Tech-X Corp, developing codes to simulate various types of beam, plasma and spin dynamics effects. He currently is at Brookhaven National Labs working on the RHIC collider.

**Sana Rezaei • Exploring the Discourse on Health Equity (see Lita Cameron for abstract)**

SANA REZAI is a primary care physician striving to learn about empowering patients at a community level to become protagonists of their health care; as the processes of the Plan develop more and more human resources in his area, and the conditions are such that a neighborhood clinic can be formed, he hopes to contribute.

**Oak Ritchie • An Inquiry into the Role of Technology in Society—Platform Algorithms and Their Effect on Civil and Political Arenas (see Kempf for abstract)**

OAK RITCHIE earned his M.S. in Information Science from the School of Information and Library Science at UNC. His research area focuses around web technologies and their influence on social behaviors. He currently works at UNC for the Center for Bioethics and the Center for Health Equity Research.

**Shadi Salehian, Arash Alaei and Kamiar Alaei • An Opportunity for Social Action in Iran: Addiction and Mental Health—An Epidemic and Threat**

Substance abuse and mental illness represent the greatest epidemics of our time and leading causes of morbidity and death among youth and others globally. Iran has some of the highest rates in the world with grave economic, social, political and spiritual consequences that plague a fragile community with regional and international implications threatening its future and emergence into the world community. Practical and spiritual-based solutions are needed to curb this epidemic and represent a unique opportunity for social action and engagement of a community. We present evidence-based data and experience to devise innovative interventions and lasting solutions.

SHADI SALEHIAN served at the Research and other departments at the Bahá'í World Centre for 26 years. She is completing a Master of Public Health at Johns Hopkins University with focus on substance abuse and mental illness. She collaborates with Global Institute for Health and Human Rights with Drs. Arash and Kamiar Alaei.

ARASH ALAEI and KAMIAR ALAEI serve as the University at Albany's Associate Vice Provost for International Education and associate Dean for Global and Interdisciplinary Research, respectively. Clinical Associate professors in the Department of Health Policy, co-founding Directors of the University at Albany's Global Institute for Health and Human Rights (GIHHR) and the Advance Certificate in International Health and Human Rights.

**Benjamin Schewel • Religion and Public Discourse in an Age of Global Transition: Reflections on Bahá'í Practice and Thought (see Geoffrey Cameron for abstract)**

BENJAMIN SCHEWEL (Ph.D. Leuven) is currently an Associate Fellow at the Institute for Advanced Studies in Culture at the University of Virginia. His first book is currently forthcoming with Yale University Press and he has another edited volume forthcoming with Wiley-Blackwell

**Foad Seddigh • Reflections on the Writings of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh - Traces of the Qayyúmu'l-Asmá' in the Tablet of Madínatu's-Şabr (see Ghaemmaghami for abstract)**

FOAD SEDDIGH was born in Iran. He received his first degree in Mechanical Engineering from Tehran University, followed by Master's and PhD degrees in Aeronautics from Oregon State University. He is the author of numerous books and articles on the Bahá'í Faith in Persian and English.

**Kamran Sedig • Nature, Science, Religion, Love, and Predestination: What Do They Have in Common?**

We are encouraged to “investigate and analyse the principles of the Faith and to correlate them with the modern aspects of philosophy and science.” General systems theory (GST) is a science of sciences that examines the underlying similarities in phenomena at a meta level. We will examine a few Bahá'í concepts (e.g., nature, science, religion, and predestination) through the lens of GST. The goal is to highlight the inherent oneness and interconnectedness of these concepts. Indeed, ‘Abdu'l-Bahá's characterization of the above concepts is strikingly similar to GST.

DR. KAMRAN SEDIG is an associate professor at Western University in Computer Science and Information and Media Studies. He received his M.Sc. from McGill in artificial intelligence and his Ph.D. from UBC in applied cognitive sciences. He has published more than 100 scientific articles in international journals, conferences, and books.

**Hashem Selph • Video/Film Production: Seeking Coherence (see Karlberg for abstract)**

HASHEM SELPH is a film, television, and video producer based in Los Angeles. Focusing primarily on the documentary form, he has contributed to projects on a wide-range of issues and have been distributed on television, theatrical, and online platforms. He is currently senior producer for a youth-focused digital media & entertainment company.

**Tina Shahidyazdani, Erfan Farhangpour, and Darius Loghmanee • From Contention to Collaboration: Rethinking the Approach to Hospital Administration (see individual names for biographies)**

Perhaps the most significant barrier to a hospital's ability to effectively deliver care is the dichotomous relationship between administrators and caregivers. A structural representation of the conceptual dichotomy of “the business of medicine” and “the practice of medicine,” dysfunction at this level makes collaboration on development, evaluation, and implementation of hospital policies

unnecessarily contentious. In this session participants will hear examples of how approaches based on the concepts of oneness, justice and consultation are being applied in inpatient, outpatient, and system wide spaces, and will be invited to join the presenters in considering next steps.

**Tina Shahidyazdani • Exploring the Discourse on Health Equity (see Lita Cameron for abstract)**

DR. TINA SHAHIDYAZDANI, MD, MPH, is a practicing pediatrician and clinic director at San Ysidro Health Center, a non-profit organization providing healthcare to underserved populations in the border area of San Diego, California. Her primary interests are adolescent medicine and obesity.

**Mitra Naeimi Solomon • Technologies and Values - Plenary Panel Presentation (see Mark Towfiq for abstract)**

MS. SOLOMON is currently senior director of internet marketing at Shutterfly but has founded and led a number of technology companies in the San Francisco Bay Area. She has also served for a number of years on the Bahá'í Internet Agency (BIA) under the auspices of the International Teaching Centre.

**Victoria Talwar • Foundations of Trust: Reflections from Bahá'í Writings and Psychological Science on the Pivotal Role of Trust in our Lives**

Trustworthiness and truthfulness are a crucial aspect of human functioning and society. Bahá'u'lláh said that trustworthiness is the "supreme instrument for the prosperity of the world." It is central to the development of character and the life of the community as a whole. The current talk will review some of the scientific evidence on the importance of trustworthiness to interpersonal functioning and as the basis for a healthy society. It will examine this evidence within the framework of how trustworthiness and truthfulness are conceptualized in the Bahá'í Faith.

DR. TALWAR is a Canada Research Chair (II) in the Dept. of Educational and Counselling Psychology at McGill University. Her research is in the area of developmental psychology with an emphasis on social-emotional development.

**Shaheen Tedjarati • Shoghi Effendi's "Hands" – The Ministry of the Custodians: Six Years that Changed History and Shaped a Faith's Destiny**

The rise and fall of great empires, movements and faiths pivot at core around principled leadership and succession. Wars, dissension, schism have defined such crucial periods and shape our current events. Shoghi Effendi charted the course of an unfolding new World Order. His sudden death tested a community's resolve and faith. His appointed "Hands" shouldered the greatest undertaking and proved beyond doubt the power of Bahá'u'lláh's Covenant. They navigated a community through tumultuous waters towards the united shores of unprecedented victories, further strengthening the pillars of a new World Order. They redefined selfless leadership and succession. This is their story.

DR TEDJARATI is chief/associate professor of surgery/oncology in New York. He has studied leadership and management extensively with great emphasis on Shoghi Effendi. He holds an MBA in

Leadership in Healthcare and an MPH from Yale and Johns Hopkins University. His research interests include evidence-based principled leadership and management

**Shadi Toloui-Wallace • A Sacred Charge: Developing Musical Capacity within You and Your Community**

In a recent Message, the House of Justice states that “...new elements of culture will evolve over time as people hailing from every human group, inspired by the Revelation of Bahá’u’lláh, give expression to patterns of thought and action engendered by His teachings, in part through artistic and literary works.” This workshop will examine the implications of this statement in the field of service, and reflect on guidance within the framework of the plan. We will also explore ways to develop our musical capacity whilst contributing to the development of culture within our communities.

SHADI TOLOUI-WALLACE is widely recognized for her musical contributions to the Bahá’í community and involvement in arts based initiatives and discourse, specifically the integration of music within the Community Building Process. Shadi now resides in Vancouver, BC, where she continues to work, serve, travel, perform and record her music.

**Emad Toukan • Agile Methodologies in the Workplace and the Bahá’í Faith**

Agile methodologies have brought a new wave of management practices to software development organizations. Many promoters of the agile practices recognize that at the core of the agile mindset, there is a strong belief that this transformation is part spiritual in nature rather than a new management fad. Agile methodologies have many practices that are aligned with the teachings of the Bahá’í Faith, such as consultation, action, reflection and universal participation. Its success has been greatly witnessed as it has created workplaces that are more dynamic where employees can grow and thrive.

EMAD TOUKAN is a Software Engineer and Agile Transformation Consultant. Emad develops mobile software products for clients across various industries. He also works with large organizations to enable them to adopt agile practices across their organization.

**Elena Toukan • Social Justice and Education – Plenary Panel Presentation (see Koirala-Azad for abstract)**

**Elena Toukan • Learning to Draw on the Revelation in Contributing to a Discourse on Science Education (see Nouredin for abstract)**

ELENA TOUKAN is a PhD student in Curriculum, Teaching and Learning at OISE/University of Toronto. Research interests include the interplay between global education policy and local agency, and the generation and application of knowledge for community development.

**Mark Towfiq (Chair, and Presenter), Mitra Naeimi Solomon, Matthew Weinberg • Technologies and Values – Plenary Panel Presentation (see individual names for biographies)**

New and old technologies alike play increasingly important roles in our lives, both individually and collectively. In what ways are the designers of these technologies influenced by particular values? How do technologies, in turn, influence the values of their users? How can we be more reflective about our technological choices? And, in turn, how should we think about technology design in ways that are coherent with the Bahá'í teachings?

MARK TOWFIQ is a software engineer by training, and currently works at User Testing, which helps companies receive feedback from real people about their products and services. He lives in the San Francisco Bay area with his wife, Shahani, and their three children, Ella, Milan, and Elise.

**Leili Towfigh (Chair and Presenter), Sky Glabush, Siamak Hariri • Art, Beauty, and the Human Spirit — Plenary Panel Presentation (see individual names for biographies)**

How do Bahá'í insights into the relationship between beauty and the human spirit inform our approach to art? What makes good art? This question has attracted the interest of philosophers throughout the ages. How important are novelty, usefulness, and intrinsic beauty to making good art? What is the role of art in the development of community life? How can and should art influence society?

LEILI TOWFIGH is a studio artist and educational technologist. Educated at Bryn Mawr (A.B., Bahá'í studies), Harvard (Ed.M., media, art and technology in education) and MIT (research fellow in urban studies), she also served for five years with the Institute for Studies in Global Prosperity.

**Jordan van den Hoonaard • The Moral Implications of Technology Interpreted through Heidegger & Levinas**

The Bahá'í Writings can shed light on some of the most interesting philosophical questions. Given that technology seems to be evolving so quickly that control of it is slipping through our fingers, it's worth asking the question of whether the overall impact it has on us is good or bad. There are various philosophers who take up this very question, and two particularly fascinating ones are Martin Heidegger and Emmanuel Levinas. Their arguments are substantiated in important and interesting ways when reinterpreted through the Writings.

JORDAN VAN DEN HOONAARD acquired his BA in philosophy at St. Thomas University, and most recently completed his MA in philosophy at Ryerson University in Toronto, specializing in German phenomenology, contemporary continental philosophy, and the philosophy of logic.

**John Walker • In Search of a Common Morality**

Globalisation is forcing humanity to consider the ethical basis of society. The presentation will describe the common morality that exists to prevent and mitigate harms, relies for motivation on public censure and applies only to the "in group." Without a common vision for the advancement of society common morality fails to address the moral actions and motivation necessary to promote the supreme good. The presentation will show that Bahá'u'lláh strengthens the common morality,

provides a vision of the supreme good and identifies love, supported by reward and punishment, as the highest motivation for moral action.

JOHN WALKER served for many years as an Auxiliary Board member and as treasurer and secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Australia. He holds a BBus (With Distinction) and an MA (Phil). He is a company auditor who is interested in ethics and the philosophy of religion.

**Bob Watts • From Truth to Reconciliation: Indigenous Peoples and the Future of Canada — Plenary Panel Presentation (see Akhavan for abstract)**

BOB WATTS was the Executive Director of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and also served as the Chief of Staff to the AFN National Chief, Phil Fontaine. He is an Adjunct Professor at Queen's University. Bob is a graduate of Harvard University. He resides at the Six Nations Indian Reserve

**Matthew Weinberg • Technologies and Values — Plenary Panel Presentation (see Mark Towfiq for abstract)**

MATTHEW WEINBERG served as research director of the Bahá'í International Community's Office of Public Information. He also was a senior analyst with the U.S. Congressional Office of Technology Assessment, where he directed studies in the areas of environmental and technology policy. He currently serves as director of the Bahá'í Internet Agency.

**Marie Wilson • From Truth to Reconciliation: Indigenous Peoples and the Future of Canada — Plenary Panel Presentation (see Akhavan for abstract)**

After 35 years as an award-winning journalist, trainer, and executive manager, MARIE WILSON was a Commissioner of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission on Indian residential schools. With honorary degrees from several universities, she also recently received Orders of Canada and of the Northwest Territories for contributions to journalism, public service, and social justice.

**Nazanin Zargarpour • Practices that Build Capacity in Youth: How the Activities of the Five Year Plan Facilitate the Development of Essential Competencies**

Researchers and practitioners concerned with college and career readiness among traditionally at-risk youth are discovering the importance of psychosocial and socio-emotional learning. Competencies such as intrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci), self-regulation (Zimmerman), and resilience (Duckworth) play a critical role in students' ability to access and succeed in college and career pathways. We will discuss practices found to be effective in developing such competencies in youth and will correlate these practices with the activities in the framework for action of the Five Year Plan.

NAZANIN ZARGARPOUR, Ph.D., is director of the Master's Program in Educational Evaluation and professor at Claremont Graduate University. As Senior Research Fellow at the Claremont Evaluation Center, she facilitates evidence-based and collaborative learning among educational organizations.

## *Artists Performing*

PENN BADGLEY is a musician/actor working out of Brooklyn, New York. He is best known for his role as Dan Humphrey in the TV series GOSSIP GIRL, as well as his portrayal of the late Jeff Buckley in GREETINGS FROM TIM BUCKLEY. He is also co-writer and lead vocalist in the R&B-indie rock project titled MOTHXR, whose debut album *Centerfold* was released in Feb 2016.

MTALI BANDA is a saxophonist based out of Massachusetts. He is the band leader for the Mtali Banda Oneness Project, a jazz collective largely based around his life growing up as a Bahá'í. He is also touring nationally with the Mixed Race Mixtape, which he is the co-composer/saxophonist for, and the Jeremy Turgeon Quintet.

MARY DARLING and her husband/collaborative-partner Clark Donnelly have written, directed, or produced many documentaries, lifestyle programs, and a television comedy titled *Little Mosque on the Prairie* that has aired in over 100 countries. Recent projects include a CBC children's program and a one-hour documentary called *The Bahá'ís*.

CLARK DONNELLY and his wife/collaborative-partner Mary Darling have written, directed, or produced many documentaries, lifestyle programs, and a television comedy titled *Little Mosque on the Prairie* that has aired in over 100 countries. Recent projects include a CBC children's program and a one-hour documentary called *The Bahá'ís*.

AFSOON DONNA HOUSHIDARI is an attorney by day, and storyteller by night. When she is not practicing immigration, refugee and human rights law for the Canadian Department of Justice, she is telling inspirational tales, including those drawn from her own refugee, integration and travel adventures.

GENEVIÈVE LABBÉ'S songs are inspired by her years of travels and performance in Vietnam, India and Australia. Her new album *DUNES* is infused with jazz and world beat music. She has also produced two albums for children: *Sous un même soleil* and *Sunshine in You*. She has also co-produced with Caity Quinn a musical *The River Within*.

BENN MCGREGOR has been studying piano for ten years and will be completing his Associate of the Royal Conservatory Diploma this summer. For two years now, Benn has worked on a service project – [www.musicwithoutborder.com](http://www.musicwithoutborder.com) – with his friends, that taps into the power of the arts as a way for youth to serve others.

JAY MCGREGOR loves a variety of musical genres, including classical, jazz and pop, and has performed as a soloist and chamber musician in different musical settings. He is currently working towards his Associate of The Royal Conservatory diploma in piano.

JIAN MOSTAGHIM has enjoyed performing and competing at various venues both as a soloist and as a member of *Trio Etoile*. In March 2015, he had the honour of performing with his brother Bayan for *Music without Borders*, created in 2014 by Benn and Jay McGregor for youth engagement in humanitarian service through the arts.

ANAÏS PERRON-MARANDA, born in Quebec City, Anaïs moved to Montreal 8 years ago to get her bachelor's degree in Jazz Vocals at University of Montreal. Last summer she released her debut EP *Le souffle court*. She teaches private singing lessons and works as a project coordinator for the Montreal Jazz Festival.

SHADI TOLOUI-WALLACE is widely recognized for her musical contributions to the Bahá'í community and involvement in arts based initiatives and discourse, specifically the integration of music within the Community Building Process. Shadi now resides in Vancouver, BC, where she continues to work, serve, travel, perform and record her music.

## Conference Organization

ABS Executive Committee	Julia Berger, Geoffrey Cameron, Mehran Kiai, Shabnam Koirala-Azad, Martha Schweitz
Conference Task Force	Julia Berger, Amelia Haskell, Parvin Rowhani, Farshid Salehi
Arts Programme	Amelia Haskell
Children's Conference	Elaheh Mottahedeh-Bos
Conference Coordinator	Parvin Rowhani
Devotions	Adriana Cabera Cleaves
Junior Youth Program	Kevin Collie
Logistics	Eric Michell
Photography	Clara Haskell and Dylan Sheper
Plenary Chair	Shabnam Koirala-Azad
Publicity	Maroussia Beaulieu and Justine Rastello
Registration	Nilufar Gordon and Mitra Changizi
Security/Ushers	Payam Safaee and Farshid Salehi
Stage Manager	Anaïs Perron-Maranda
Technical Director	Geoff Cohen
Translation	Guillaume Giraud and Louis Brunet
Volunteers	Farshid Salehi

The ABS Executive Committee extends its deep appreciation to all those who have assisted in the preparation and running of this conference. Our heartfelt thanks are also due to the many volunteers who contributed their services and have worked so hard to make this conference a success.

**With special thanks to the Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Montréal.  
Nous remercions particulièrement l'Assemblée spirituelle des bahá'ís de Montréal.**