

[Verses Festival of Words](#)
April 23 – May 3, 2015
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**Feast your ears! Raise a Hullabaloo!
Celebrate Year Five of Verses Festival of Words,
the largest spoken word festival in Canada.**

2015 marks the fifth anniversary of the Verses Festival of Words. Since Shane Koyczan's performance at the 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympic opening ceremonies, spoken word has become the fastest growing art form in Canada. For five years, this alternative literary festival has been presenting writers who defy conventional categorization. From [book launches with burlesque dancers](#) to [haiku deathmatches](#), from the [Canadian Individual Slam Championships] to [musical activist storytellers](#), and everything in between: Verses has become the place to discover the cutting edge of new approaches to the written and spoken word. So how do you celebrate such a phenomenon?

We raise a Hullabaloo! The [Hullabaloo youth festival](#) officially joins Verses as a series of youth events. We'll also be staging our first gala presentation *Jangle & Shout: The Hulla-Verses Remixer* at The York Theatre (April 26), featuring performances from (nearly) every artist in both the youth and adult programming.

This year we'll crown our 5th Canadian Individual Slam Champion, the poet who will represent English Canada at the World Cup of Poetry Slam in Paris. 2014's World Cup winner, [Ikenna 'OpenSecret' Onyegbula](#), is a two-time CIPS champion. Will another world champion emerge from CIPS Finals at the Rio Theatre on Saturday May 2?

[Ivan Coyote](#) returns to Verses with the [Tomboy Survival Guide](#) (April 29). An expanded version of the PuSh 2015 hit finds the storyteller leading an all tomboy musical ensemble, dismantling of the gender stories we tell ourselves and each other.

And our signature community stage series is expanding, creating more spaces to nurture blossoming local poets while increasing the depth, breadth and dynamism of the spoken word community with events, workshops and forums on social justice and community organizing.

From Artistic Director Jillian Christmas:

"Verses Festival is designed to be a community-conscious, adventurous celebration of the spoken word. A stretch of our collective imagination that attempts to expand our canon with a creative blend of styles and mediums. My personal goal is that everyone who attends the festival will leave having seen something that they had never seen before, but must see again."

From Managing Director Chris Gilpin:

In the 21st century, the role of the writer remains unchanged: to bring new ideas to the public, to play with the musicality of language, and to examine complex issues. However, the way that writers do these things is changing rapidly in the digital age. Verses showcases new forms of literary production, including videopoetry, interdisciplinary shows, and spoken word competitions. That's why it's the most exciting alternative literary festival in Canada.

Visit [versesfestival.ca](#) for full line up, artist and ticket information.

For interview requests, artist information and photos please contact:

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