It's no exaggeration to say that Victoria is well known for its diverse and dynamic theatre community. With 60 local theatre companies and national acclaim regularly lauded upon the likes of the Belfry, Pacific Opera Victoria and Intrepid Theatre, Victoria has earned its reputation as one of Canada's cultural capitals.

Much of that credit belongs to the University of Victoria's Department of Theatre. Peek behind the curtain of almost any production in town and you're bound to find a theatre graduate.

For 50 years, the theatre department and Phoenix Theatre—its public performance wing—have helped shape the development of local and national theatre by producing celebrated alumni and innovative productions.

The department's international exchanges, applied theatre, and theatre education programs are renowned for affecting social change and transforming the way theatre itself is taught.

The department's 50th anniversary continues this spring with two more Phoenix productions: the British emancipation story, Gut Girls (Feb. 9–18), and professor Linda Hardy's West Coast adaptation of the Russian satire, The Inspector (March 9–18). Info: www.phoenixtheatres.ca

At UVic's Ideafest 2017, watch for the Human Library Project (March 11) where you can speak one-on-one with up to 20 "human books" to learn more about Phoenix history, alumni impact and Victoria's theatre community. Info: finearts.uvic.ca/theatre/50th/humanlibrary/

Meet Mary Kerr at bit.ly/uvic-kerr