

Poetry slam finalists taking message to London city hall

Mike



Donachie/Metro Poet Inali Barger is among those who will compete this month in the London Poetry Slam finals and at city hall on Tuesday.

London's politicians are about to hear a message about their place in the universe.

Poet Inali Barger is taking her powerful words to city hall and, on Tuesday, will speak to the full council.

"How can I here allow myself to feel unworthy?"

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It's a partial quote from Barger's creation, The Universe Poem, which she will deliver to council as it holds its regular meeting. Only humans can create poetry, she says, among all of the universe's atoms, so we should feel special.

Barger will be at city hall to make sure everyone knows about the finals of London Poetry Slam. Fellow poet Tom Cull, from Poetry London, will also take part in council chambers.

Barger, 23, is one of 10 poets competing in the finals. She spends much of the rest of her time acting as poet laureate for the mental health nonprofit Mind Your Mind.

"It's all about taking down mental health stigma, and youth engagement," she said. "All the programs we create are in partnership with youth. It keeps Mind Your Mind relevant."

Her speciality is to take the language of two projects or organizations — which can sometimes involve the same terms with different meanings — and turn it into poetry to help them communicate.

It's about “a poem as a bridge,” she added.

How to hear them

— The finals of London Poetry Slam take place at the Palace Theatre (710 Dundas St.) on April 13.

— Doors open at 6 p.m. and the event starts at 7 p.m.

— Performing are Ted O., Inali Barger, Alisha Tax, Ceilidhe Miller, Emma Blue, Holly Painter, Jenny Jay, Rachel Rensby, Summer Hicks and Jake Martell.

— The winners will form a team to travel to the Canadian Festival of the Spoken Word in Vancouver later this year.

