



Image from the poster for the Haida language film *Sgaawaay K'uuna* (Edge of the Knife) (submitted photo)

Haida-language film *Edge of the Knife* showing in Prince Rupert

Sgaawaay K'uuna has been featured at festivals across Canada

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An acclaimed Haida language film, *Sgaawaay K'uuna* (*Edge of the Knife*), is coming to Prince Rupert.

The film has played at international film festivals, such as VIFF (Vancouver International Film Festival) and TIFF (Toronto International Film Festival) and has won awards across Canada, including best Canadian Film and best director of a Canadian film by the Vancouver Films Critics Circle.

The film is the first of its kind. A feature film about Haida people in the Haida language, a language that only a select few people are fluent in.

The event, which will take place on Tuesday, Feb. 5, at the Lester Centre of the Arts, was spearheaded by Gidin Jaad, Erica Jean-Ryan.

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She was born and raised on the North Coast, spending time in Prince Rupert, Lax Kw'alaams and Haida Gwaii where she works as an employee at Northern Savings Credit Union and as an aspiring teacher of the Haida dialect. Jean-Ryan, who was also selected to play a small role in the film said this whirlwind experience was the opportunity of a lifetime.

“The experience was like a dream, my opportunity to do exactly what I’ve been busting my butt for. It was an opportunity for me to refuel, recharge and get inspired and remember why I went to school for this,” Jean-Ryan said.

On the Prince Rupert side, Northern Savings Credit Union employee Leigh-Anne Magnussen put the wheels in motion to show support for her colleague, and to get the film screened on the North Coast.

“We noticed that the *Edge of the Knife* was playing all over Canada, but not here in the north. So we thought that was kind of weird that it wasn’t playing up here,” Magnussen said.

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Jean-Ryan and a group of elders taught the rest of the cast the three Haida dialects during a boot camp that took place before filming. The experience was surreal for Jean-Ryan.

“It was just beautiful to see all these people in the same room connecting and teaching these actors these languages,” Jean-Ryan said.

The doors of the Lester Centre will be open at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday for the show. Entry is by donation with all donations going toward the preservation of Haida dialects.

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