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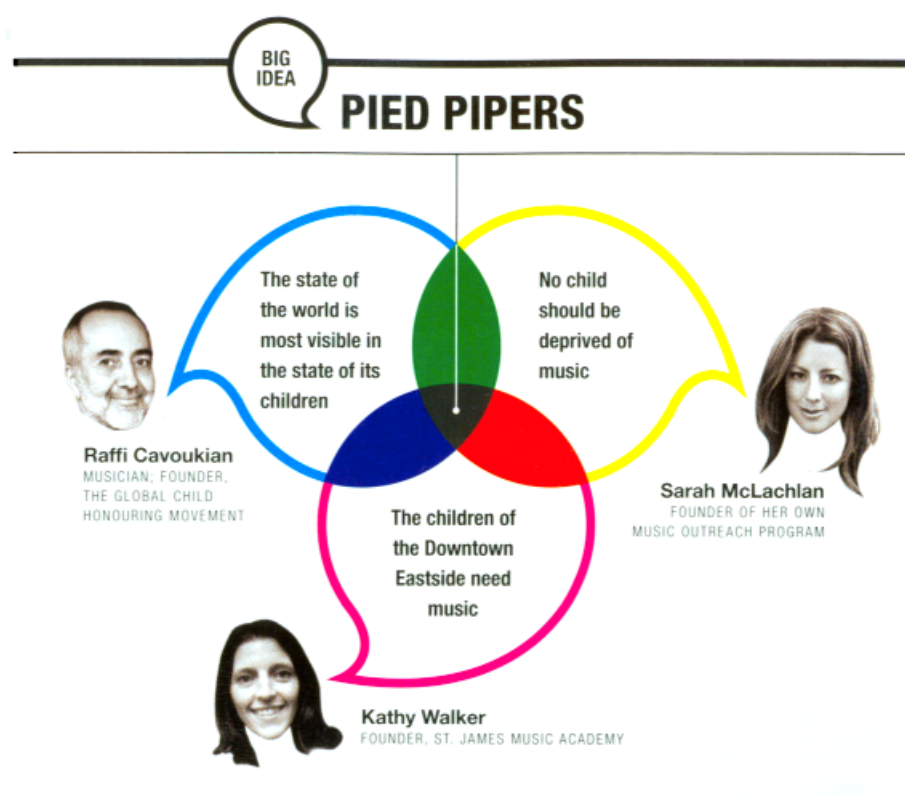
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Kevin Falcon
B.C. MINISTER OF TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

[N] Ah, election years. We're in the months that keep on giving, as Transportation Minister Kevin Falcon has made clear with such let-them-eat-cakers as the scrapping of the Coquihalla Highway tollbooths (including one that was just repaired at a cost of \$100,000) and an increase in bike routes across the province, to the tune of \$31 million. As 2010 nears, eyes turn to the safety of highways; Falcon bought improvement rights to the Sea to Sky through an \$18-million deal with the Squamish First Nation, but no amount can safeguard visitors should thousands of cubic metres of rock fall onto the asphalt, as happened in July. Beside such worries, service cutbacks for B.C. Ferries (as the board took a 60-percent pay increase), dissatisfaction with a neutered TransLink and the Gateway Project (the entire city of Burnaby is opposed to the \$3-billion transportation explosion), and off-the-cuff comments about suicidal senior citizens seem minor.

2008 LOW POINT? The NDP voting against a \$14-billion transit plan, which includes a new rapid-transit line to UBC. **WHO DO YOU MOST ADMIRE?** Margaret Thatcher, for her courage and determination. **WORST MISTAKE?** Running for public office.

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Thomas Fung
CHAIRMAN & FOUNDER, FAIRCHILD GROUP

[▲] As census results finally wake the city to the reality that less than half of the population of Greater Vancouver has English as a mother tongue, eyes turn to the influential Chinese-media empire of Thomas Fung, the self-effacing director of the diverse Fairchild Group, whose \$400 million in assets includes Fairchild



TV and Radio, the online portal Eseenet.com, and, as of this year, Toronto's Chinese-language A1 Radio. Recently, Henderson Development, owner of the beleaguered International Village, requested his know-how (won over two decades of building and rebuilding the Bing Thom-designed Aberdeen Centre) as it relaunches the retail albatross—even as Aberdeen itself enters a third triumphant phase of expansion (including a conjoined Aberdeen Residences and 150-room hotel) to coincide with the opening of its own Canada Line stop.

LAST BOOK READ? *20 Years of Censored News*—must-read nonfiction. **WHO DO YOU MOST ADMIRE?** Al Gore. **ATTRIBUTE YOU'D CHANGE?** I wouldn't mind being my own wife for a change. **WORST MISTAKE?** Not accepting US\$100 million from two venture capital firms to acquire 50 percent of my radio-station shares in 2000.

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Wally Oppal
B.C. ATTORNEY GENERAL & MINISTER RESPONSIBLE FOR MULTICULTURALISM

[▲] While some on this list wield their power like a chain saw, AG Oppal

favours the soft-blanket approach—everyone feels comfortable in his presence. The former Court of Appeal justice is known for taking his time making decisions, but ultimately coming to the right conclusion—even when it's not politically expedient. To wit, Oppal is thought to be ready to green-light criminal charges in the polygamy quagmire that is Bountiful—a potential constitutional mess that none of his predecessors dared wade into. And while some of his younger cabinet colleagues jockey to see who will replace Premier Campbell, Oppal is content to play elder statesman to a wide variety of groups, from new immigrants to new judges. Wally Oppal may never top the power list, but he's unlikely to fall off it anytime soon.