

Dialogue between genres

(Article Excerpt)

By Michael Harris

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Unlike the Vancouver Fringe Festival -- a beloved crapshoot -- the PuSh Festival offers daring performance art of a consistently high standard. "I don't believe in risk," says PuSh's executive director, Norman Armour. "I believe in being brave, in being relevant. I think the notion of risky art is stupid."

PuSh's curated approach to "fringe" material allows independent artists to draw spectators they could not attract on their own. Audiences loyal to film, or new music, are thrown together with theatre crowds and fans of dance -- a vitalizing (and money-making!) cross-pollination.

Meanwhile, the genre-busting festival encourages collaboration. "It's easy to feel isolated in Vancouver," Armour says. "But there are artists here in dialogue with New York, with London. To be inspired, after all, is to be in dialogue."



Among PuSh's 18 main shows and seven satellite productions, here are a few not to be missed.

Show: Sonata for Violin and Turntables

Buzz: Daniel Bernard Roumain's musical collaboration with DJ Scientific solders funk, rock, hip-hop and classical styles into hybrid compositions that have New York audiences shouting (Roumain has a tendency to shout too -- onstage). Never mind genre-bending; this event promises to bend your ideas about the nature of music and performance.

Scene: The same folk who swarmed the Chan last year to watch the Kronos Quartet jam with Nunavut throat-singer Tanya Tagaq: *Gramophone* subscribers, aging hipsters and culture-jam junkies.

Jan. 11, 8 p.m. \$20 to \$36. Chan Centre for the Performing Arts, 6265 Crescent Rd., 604-280-3311.

Photo by Leslie Lyons