

Les Filles électriques

I invite you to be impertinent when you listen to poetry. Take it down off its pedestal and make it come alive. Bring poetry into the everyday and make the everyday fantastic. Live life as though it were a film or a novel.

D. Kimm

The mission of Les Filles Électriques (LFÉ) is to create, distribute and archive interdisciplinary works of art and events related to text in performance. The organization was founded in 2001 by artist D. Kimm, who wanted a space that would reflect the spirit of experimentation and risk-taking that characterized her own art and her work as an artistic director. Of course, the organization is not only about girls; it works to create a public space for "different" voices.

The organization's annual flagship event is the Festival Voix d'Amérique (FVA), devoted to poetry in performance and vocal experimentation. It is now the largest spoken word festival in Canada, celebrating its eighth year in February 2009. The Montreal Arts Council recognized the high quality and vitality of the FVA in 2004, short-listing it for the Council's 20th Grand Prix. Over the years, the FVA's Guests of Honour have included poet Patrice Desbiens, singer-songwriter Urbain Desbois, singer Chloé Sainte-Marie, Aboriginal playwright Tomson Highway, singer-songwriter Richard Desjardins, and New York poet John Giorno. In 2009, the FVA will feature Acadian singer-songwriter Marie-Jo Thério.

Les Filles Électriques offers a platform for original and emerging voices. It presents poetry in a way that is alive and accessible, whether in the form of stage shows, performance, publication, DVD, or compact disc. The organization mentors artists 18 to 30 years of age, and its website features biographical notes for some 500 artists. LFÉ is also an umbrella organization for a number of multidisciplinary groups including the duo Mankind, the band Poètes Publics, and the research collective Brahmine, as well as several video-poetry projects. It does all this within a context of linguistic plurality.

In addition to producing artists' shows, LFÉ puts its expertise and connections to work supporting "different" voices, including those of traditionally marginalized people such as street women. LFÉ has published two books in partnership with shelters for women-at-risk: *Écrire et sans pitié* (Éditions du Passage/l'Arrêt-Source, 2006) and *ABCd'art de La rue des Femmes* (Remue-ménage, 2007).

Les Filles Électriques is a charitable organization and can issue receipts for income tax purposes.

Since its creation, the organization has

- produced more than 130 shows and welcomed hundreds of artists at its Festival Voix d'Amérique
- produced a CD and shows for the Band de Poètes
- published the CD and booklet *Conte-moi un poème* (Planète rebelle, 2004)
- produced the DVD *Écrits et chuchotements / Page vs Stage* featuring the work of fourteen Montreal spoken word artists
- produced *Le Silence des hommes* as a CD and live performance
- presented two shows that toured Montreal's Maisons de la Culture

- presented *La Salle des pas perdus* at the Berlin Poetry Festival and at Ex-Centris in Montreal
- presented *Mankind* at Quebec festivals including the Festival International de Musique Actuelle de Victoriaville, Edgy Women, and Suoni Per Il Popolo; and internationally at the Berlin Poetry Festival (Germany), the Donau Festival (Austria), Musique Action (France), and Howl (United States)
- presented the art videos *En attendant Corto Maltese*; *Si tu veux me garder, tu dois t'éloigner*; and *Qui est là?* at the Festival du Nouveau Cinéma (Montreal) and the Rendez-vous du cinéma québécois
- created, in partnership with Wired on Words, the La Voix Électrique / The Voice Electric Award, to honour the body of work of a spoken word or poetry in performance artist
- sponsored a Jeunes Volontaires (Young Volunteers) project by the group Léopard et moi.

D. Kimm
Artistic Director

Interdisciplinary artist D. Kimm is Director of Les Filles Électriques, whose mandate is to create interdisciplinary arts events and whose flagship production is the Festival Voix d'Amérique devoted to performance and spoken word. She has published four collections of poetry including *La Suite mongole* (book and CD, Planète rebelle, 2001). She produced the CD *Le Silence des hommes* in collaboration with guitarist Bernard Falaise. She is half of the "spoken-noise" duo Mankind (with performer Alexis O'Hara), which has appeared at festivals in Canada (Festival International de Musique Actuelle in Victoriaville, Edgy Women, Suoni Per Il Popolo) and abroad (Poesie Berlin Festival in Germany, Donau in Austria, Musique Action and Montevideo in France). She also produced, in collaboration with the late Patrice Duhamel, two short films: *En attendant Corto Maltese* (2007) and *Si tu veux me garder, tu dois t'éloigner* (2008), both screened at the Festival du Nouveau Cinéma. She is currently working with videographer Brigitte Henry on a multidisciplinary project combining performance and video titled *La Mariée perpétuelle*.

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