

FVA 2009: Eight Mainstage Shows at the Sala Rossa

The Festival Voix d'Amérique (FVA) is still taking risks, with strong voices and daring performances that head firmly off the beaten track! We've programmed eight mainstage shows, and the FVA faithful will be delighted to hear the classics are back—**Body and Soul**, the **Combat contre la langue de bois**, and the always naughty **DADA Cabaret**.

Friday, February 6, 8:30 pm at the Sala Rossa / \$25

Liberated: Marie-Jo Thério + guests

How do you describe **Marie-Jo Thério**? Mysterious, wild, wandering, impossible to pin down, one-of-a-kind, liberated, vulnerable. She's so vibrant onstage (as in life), we get the feeling she's walking on a tightrope. But here at the FVA, we think of her as an artist who above all knows how to take risks. She turns her back on convention, laughs at what's expected, and throws heart and soul into every performance. We know what we're talking about, we've been following her career for years. She is an astonishingly good improviser and she loves appearing live. We think she's an inspiration... an "electric girl"!

To pay tribute to that kind of creative freedom, you have to leave the artist free. So we've given her carte blanche for a very personal show in the warmth of the Sala Rossa. She'll be doing what she wants, with guests she invited herself. We may see the ghost of a musical great-aunt, Lydia Lee Leblanc, who emigrated to the United States at the start of the 20th century. (Now, that would be a treat!) The lucky few who manage to get in will be sure to emerge into the cold February night aglow with some kind of brilliance.

Saturday, February 7, 8:30 pm at the Sala Rossa / \$15

Poètes publics

A high-tension evening fraught with words, vocals and music—the kind D. Kimm has been organizing since 1995 (more than 200 at last count). This year she wanted to up the ante, giving her loyal musical sidekicks a challenge worthy of their skills. These are stupendous artists who understand that improv is not about embellishing words, it's about connecting to the energy, beat and breath of the poet. And so she asked them to put together a genuine, permanent "variable geometry" band.

And what about the poets? What kind of challenge could she extend to them? How about breaking down the traditional hierarchy of text-vocals-music? They'd have to stick their necks out, improvising on texts and reworking content. They'd have to use their poet-voice like a musical instrument and develop the listening sense so essential to improv. The brave ones who accepted her invitation already have loads of stage experience and they dove in, bright and innocent as babes.

Stay on your toes, the evening could lift your spirits as well as your eyebrows. Sans introduction, qualifier or dedication. Just totally generous experimental collaboration... and huge, huge risk!

With musicians **Bernard Falaise, Diane Labrosse, Martin Tétreault, Michel F Côté, Guido Del Fabbro**; improv rapper **Khyro**; and poet-performers **Catherine Lalonde, Renée Gagnon, Danny Plourde, Geneviève Blais, D. Kimm**.

Sunday, February 8, 8:30 pm at the Sala Rossa / \$15
Monstres / Bob Bourdon

Tonight is a bit of a family affair. Michel Faubert, Bernard Falaise and Bob Bourdon kept yakking about this **Myriam Pellicane** and how perfect she'd be for our Festival. They convinced us, and we are delighted to welcome this strange performer and her strange show, presented here for the first time in Canada—*Monsters (Others)*, tales of improbable beasts and destinies.

Born in Tunis, the daughter of an immigrant Sicilian father and a mother from deep in the French countryside, Myriam grew up in Algeria and then lived in France where she flirted with punk, theatre and witchcraft. But it was storytelling that brought her up against the power of creation myths and legend. Her partner, percussionist **Éric Delbouys**, has done free jazz to flamenco with dance and theatre companies (and rock, of course). He's an outstanding improv musician too (our friend Bernard Falaise says so)! For people who thought they knew everything about storytelling...

Staying with our family theme, the show opener is the fascinating Métis/Mi'kmag storyteller **Bob Bourdon** (Robert Seven Crows) singing in French, English and Mi'kmag with music by **Bernard Falaise** and **Érik West**. We remember Bob as the one who swept us off our feet at the 2004 FVA.

Monday, February 9, 8:30 pm and 9:30 pm at the Sala Rossa / \$12
Le Miracle de Brahmine
(80 seats, two shows)

The Brahmin Collective is hard to put a label on. They like the hand-made. They like to play. They're serious but don't take themselves too seriously. They're influenced by Robert-Houdin, Méliès and the theatre of "grand illusions" as well as curiosity cabinets and the occult. *Le Miracle de Brahmine* (a title adapted from a Méliès film) is their very first show. Expect seances, channeling, formaldehyde, apparitions, disappearances, magic, automats, vintage novelty films and much much worse. Audiences will be asked to close their eyes and concentrate on a miracle.

It's all very delicate, of course, and we mustn't agitate the spirits. We will therefore be admitting only 80 spectators for two shows, each 50 minutes long (any more and we couldn't answer for the fluids).

The Brahmin Collective is puppeteer **Marcelle Hudon**, the multidisciplinary duo Mobile Home (**Lucas Jolly & Steeve Dumais**), that other equally multidisciplinary duo 2boys.tv (**Aaron Pollard & Stephen Lawson**), the indefinably inventive **Mélanie Charest & Pierre Potvin** (ZAL Company), photographer and videographer **Brigitte Henry**, and **D.Kimm** (it would take too long to list everything she's into). We also have the pleasure of welcoming guest musician **Martine H. Crispo**.

Tuesday, February 10, 8:30 pm at the Sala Rossa / \$12
MEL versus YUL or Melbourne meets Montreal (in English)

Australia is sending four spoken word luminaries to this year's FVA, and they're looking forward to lighting a few campfires with colleagues from Montreal.

Athletic multi-slam champion **Emilie Zoey Baker** is an insolent cowgirl who handles honey and poison equally well. Poet, multi-instrumentalist, performer, dj, sound designer and barman **Justin Ashworth** uses his work to explore our most surreal dreams. **Sean M Whelan** recently launched a poetry collection titled *Tattooing the Surface of the Moon*. And **Alicia Sometimes** is a peripatetic sort who played bass in a hula-hoop grunge band! They'll be coming in from Melbourne and we'll need to rustle up some coats, tuques and warm mitts along with a warm welcome.

To help their descent onto the Montreal scene, we've invited our naughtiest stars, including the irresistible **Puggy Hammer** (incorrigible **Jason Camlot** & **David McGimpsey** who will also be acting as host). Then it's a visit from **Corey Frost**, our most über-educated performer, living in exile in New York while he finishes that famous doctorate of his. Last, we are delighted to welcome the very first version of our collaborator **Victoria Stanton's** band, **The Capital of Plastic Daffodils** (the title alone could fill a program), featuring **Nicolas Guin, Simon Heller, Nicolas Lê Quang, Christian Richer** and Victoria.

Wednesday, February 11, 8:30 pm at the Sala Rossa / \$15
Body and Soul 6: The Dancers Speak

We're not telling you anything you don't know when we say Les Filles Électriques likes a girl who goes too far. The ones who are over the top and in your face. For several years now, our Artistic Director has been wondering why putting a woman on stage is so complicated. Why are girls always judged on their appearance—especially if they dare to put on a show? Too fat, too skinny, doesn't move right, doesn't move enough, too sexy, not sexy enough... Body and Soul, now in its 6th year, presents females who take charge and do not apologize for what they are: *hot!* This year, the focus is on dancers, and they will be taking the enormous risk of... talking.

Actor and mime **Francine Alepin** is a movement specialist who has been working in theatre for more than twenty-five years, fascinated by the anthropology of the body. **Marie-Hélène Bellavance** looks at bodies eternally off-balance and the malleability of physical and psychological limits. **Catherine Tardif** rummages through collective memory, observing and reassembling the disarray. **Clara Furey**, film and stage actor, singer-songwriter, accomplished musician and dancer, does nothing by halves. Lastly, **The Schmutt Sisters**, French twins Séverine and Élodie Lombardo, share a love for the emotional impact of the absurd.

Thursday, February 12, 8:30 pm at the Sala Rossa / \$20
Combat contre la langue de bois, Round Five

Six minutes. No right of reply. Expect to hear a piece of their mind. We have to push back the walls each year to accommodate the throng at this cult rant evening. It's a bare-knuckle event designed for anyone who's plain fed up with the empty rhetoric in our public space.

Our line-up will leave the mealy-mouthed in the dust! (no apologies will be forthcoming for two weeks): **Anaïs Barbeau-Lavalette** (long-time social activist), **Mathieu Beauséjour** (arts organizer and utopian anarchist), **Enrica Boucher** (implacable and intractable in *Un peu de tendresse bordel de merde*), **Manuel Foglia** (straight talk runs in the family), **Louise Harel** (our first politician, surprise!), **Chantal Lamarre** (impertinent, always pertinent), **Émilie Monnet** (the Anishnabeg actor has a few things to say to us), **Yann Perreau** (in a class all his own), and **Émile Proulx-Cloutier** (actor, director and co-creator with Anaïs of the social issues website unissonsosvoix.ca).

To protect the audience from being KO'd, musical referees **Fred Fortin** and **Olivier Langevin** (still loyal five years on) will prod speakers who go on too long past the bell.

Friday, February 13, 8:30 pm at the Sala Rossa / \$15
Surrealist DADA Cabaret (in French and invented languages)
Closing Night Show

The Dadaists were active from 1916 to 1925, challenging the conventions of their day and the limits on artistic freedom and political ideology—just like we do. They rejected propriety and logic—like we do. They loved the lavish and exuberantly creative—like we do. Most of all, they were looking for a liberated language, which they preferred poetic and eclectic. Like we do!!

After the dazzling success of our first DADA Cabaret, we're returning to the scene of the crime with another Cabaret, this one Surrealist as well as Dada. It's the Festival's closing night show and once again, we've invited Montreal's wickedest and told them anything is possible (except a big appearance fee). Text, costume, performance... it's all up to them. Imagine the rudest, most outrageous, kookiest... you're getting warm! Down with logic, up with extravagance! And in a typically dada-esque moment, we decided to keep the ticket price to \$15. One night only, lunacy and levity, hosted by the delicious Nathalie Claude.

Featuring the hysteria of **Azina & Chiwawa** (Langevin/Lecourtois), the fooling around of **Geneviève & Matthieu**, the one-of-a-kind **Groupe de poésie moderne**, a woman who always moves us—**Marie Brassard**, Genuine Professional Idiot **François Gourd**, soul make-over artists **Toxique Trottoir**, the enchanting **Kobol** puppets, **Nathalie Derome & Frank Martel** (another lovable one-off!), and the goofball collective of one-man bands that is **Orchestre d'Hommes-Orchestre**.

At the stroke of 11pm, it's **DJ Khiasm**. It's a party and it's free! Clearly, Les Filles électriques have lost their minds!