

THE STUDY OF MUSIC

U of R down with hip hop

By HEATHER POLISCHUK
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One may expect university time and resources to be dedicated to the likes of Beethoven, Brahms and Bach. But Biggie Smalls?

The University of Regina's latest Canada Research Chair and fine arts faculty member, Charity Marsh, is entrenching hip hop in her workplace with the opening of two new lab spaces that will be dedicated to the study of hip hop culture in Canada and Saskatchewan.

On Wednesday, the new Interactive Media and Performance labs were officially opened at the university, with the spaces housing a multi-media DJ interactive workshop and performance space, a beat-making and electronic music production studio, an ethnomusicology lab and research offices.

"I'm hoping it's a site for people to come together, to play together, to create together, to collaborate and to make it happen," Marsh said, explaining the labs are available to both students and artists she works with in the community. "It becomes a site where people can access equipment that they might not necessarily be able to afford or that they don't have. And also networking, where we can collaborate and work together as artists and researchers."

Sheila Petty, dean of fine arts, called the labs "ground-breaking," adding that they will make a great addition to the university and the community at large.

"It's going to enhance the work that we're already doing in the areas of culture and heritage ... and certainly build even stronger bridges with the community," she said.

"There is no other lab like this across Canada and so this is hot for the university," Marsh added.

It's just as exciting to hip hop artists in Saskatchewan, some of whom were on hand for the Wednesday opening. The artists, who took part in a roundtable discussion, said hip hop culture is growing in the province, and the addition of the labs not only helps out blossoming artists, but also shows there's a broader interest.

"It's something that we wouldn't have even dreamed of 10 years ago because we were just working with whatever we



BRYAN SCHLOSSER/Leader-Post

Dr. Charity Marsh explains the new Interactive Media and Performance Lab during its launch in the Riddell Centre at the U of R Wednesday afternoon. The newly established labs will be devoted to the study of DJ technologies, DJ music cultures and the social worlds in which they thrive.