

## News

# Raving in Regina



The DJ is a rising element of rave culture.

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BY JEANETTE STEWART

the Carillon

Three ambitious University of Regina professors from different faculties are working together on a unique project exploring the rise of DJ culture in Regina and beyond.

The “transdisciplinary seminar series” is a showcase of new technologies and research involving the rapidly evolving and expanding world of the DJ. The three monthly lecture/workshops aim to provide different academic perspectives on both the tools and technologies involved in a DJ’s work, and the exploration of DJ culture.

Funded partially by the Vice-

President’s Transdisciplinary Fund, the project highlights the research done by professors from three different departments: Charlie Fox from Media Studies and Production, Charity Marsh from Music, and David Gerhard from the department of Computer Science.

Marsh proposed the project to the other two professors, and both responded eagerly to the opportunity to showcase their own favourite field of study. “The primary idea here is that there are these three people in different disciplines that have common interests,” said Gerhard.

Marsh was excited to work with both Fox and Gerhard, because she knew of the common interests shared

among the group, and was looking for an opportunity to “engage in different disciplines throughout the university,” she said. “Basically my research revolves around electronic music, DJ culture, dance culture, rave culture, so this is my area of expertise. I was thinking about a way to do a project like this.”

“[The project is] really neat because it gives us an opportunity to explore research projects with people that we wouldn’t necessarily work with.”

“We have the opportunity now to get together and do work that wouldn’t be possible on an individual basis.

“We thought it was a great idea to talk about the culture and technology of DJs. These disciplines tend to be anchored in the past as opposed to in the present, and to bring something into the present is informative not just for the public and the people doing it, but also for the departments we work in,” he said.

The first presentation was called “The Rise of the DJ.” It included a presentation by Marsh on “the importance of the DJ in music culture and how incredibly significant

the DJ is as a figure and how it has altered popular music dramatically,” she said. The second component of the presentation was a demonstration by local Regina DJ, DJ Kinder, who “showed us the technology, and showed people how to mix beats, match beats and how to work the records.”

The first seminar had about 75 participants. The organizers were pleased at the numbers and, said Marsh, “it is quite indicative of the fact that people are really interested in electronic music and popular music in general.”

“I think it’s incredibly important [to showcase popular music],” said Marsh. “I think that’s one of the reasons I was hired and brought here. I think it’s showing that the department of music here is attempting to open things up.”

“It’s a really important move for the University of Regina to be engaging in taking up the music that the majority of students are listening to every day,” said Marsh. The seminars are an effort to engage the public in new means of making music that they had not previously considered, as well as “making connections

with the community. It shows there really is lots going on in Regina.”

The next two seminars will be held on Mar. 24 and Apr. 7. The first is a presentation by Fox and Gerhard on “new technologies and new soundscapes,” said Gerhard.

“We’re going to talk about things like DJ technologies—the samplers, the mixers, the turntables, as well as digital technologies, new kinds of things where all the scratching and mixing stuff happens inside the computer.”

The featured guest will be artist/composer Andra McCartney from Concordia University, who will “be talking about some of her work and looking at electro-acoustics, the recording studio and various different modes of production,” said Marsh.

The third and final seminar features Marsh’s extensive research on rave culture in both Toronto and Regina. “We’ll be talking about the aesthetics of rave culture and the music, and also talking about my own experience,” she said. “We’re going to look at the fashions and also the sound. We’re going to talk about what it means to rave in Regina.”