

U of R prof to study Canada's music

By **KERRY BENJOE**
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A University of Regina professor has received more than \$600,000 in research grants to study how music affects the way Canada is understood socially, politically, geographically and virtually.

"DJ cultures have always been something I've been drawn to and electronic music making and hip-hop," explained Charity Marsh, who's looking forward to starting her research next month.

Her research will focus on DJ culture, indigenous hip-hop culture and the role landscape plays in music.

"It's not just necessarily, 'Here is information on this,' but really engaging with the ideas of, 'How is this shaping how we understand Canada as a nation? How does it shape our cultural landscape and what does it mean?'"

said Marsh.

She said the explosion of the aboriginal hip-hop music scene has fuelled her interest in conducting more in-depth music research, particularly in Western and Northern Canada.

"It's not just this copying of hip-hop, but we see a new hip-hop — something that's happening where it's being adopted and adapted and changed," Marsh said, adding as part of her research she will examine the role of interactive media and social networking in music culture.

"I will be looking at things like MySpace, Facebook and YouTube and what all of these things mean in relation to how Canada is understood."

Marsh, a fine arts faculty member, is now the ninth Canada Research Chair (CRC) at the university. She is a Tier 2 CRC in interactive media and performance, which means she will receive \$500,000 in grants to conduct her re-

search as well as an infrastructure grant of \$115,996 from the Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI).

Marsh is also eligible to have her CFI funding as well as two years of her CRC research funding matched by the province's Innovation and Science Fund.

With the infrastructure grant Marsh plans to set up an interactive media and performance lab to assist in her research. The lab is to house: A multi-media DJ interactive studio; work and performance space; an ethnomusicology and beat-making lab; and archival materials.

She said the lab, which is set to open this fall, is going to be a grounding for all the research that's going to happen.

"A number of the musicians I will be working with are folks from across genres," explained Marsh, who's working with artists such as Saskatchewan's Eekwol, Juno winner Leela Gilday,

B.C. rap artist Kinnie Star, folk singer Gary Fjellgaard and others. "These are all artists whose relationship to their surroundings, relationship to the landscape to where they are, has had an incredible effect on their music making and performances."

The CRC program was established in 2000 with \$900 million in funds with the goal of making Canada one of the top five countries for research and development.

The eight other U of R professors to receive funding through the program include: Christine Chan in electronic and software systems engineering; Shadia Drury in interdisciplinary studies; Gordon Huang in environmental systems engineering; Peter Levitt for evolution and ecology; Randy Lewis in physics; Greg Marchildon for social sciences and humanities; Joseph Piwowar in geography; and Carol Schtick for education research.