

Showcase highlights vast repertoire of VAMS musicians *Gig runs from avant-garde to 'jazzy, bluesy, funky, world music'*

A pre-Christmas concert highlighted the variety of styles covered by Vancouver Adapted Music Society (VAMS).

The showcase featured three unique musicians: contemporary classical composer André Cormier, singer-songwriter Jeff Standfield and the genre-blending Woody Sparks.

The evening began with two of Vancouver composer André Cormier's "experimental avant-garde" works, performed by a trio of professional classical musicians.

"Most of the time my music is performed to people that have come to see experimental contemporary music," he said. "And even then people often leave with a sense of shock, awe and utter confusion."

He said his aim is to create the most original sounds possible – not to shock, but as the best place for his self-expression – with his performers given so much leeway that on a different night his pieces would sound radically different.

After a brief intermission, Standfield performed three numbers – backed up by Sparks on electric guitar – that he stated would someday be released on CD.

"It went smoothly and I felt the sound was good," he said, after the show. "My influences are more folk and blues than rock and pop. But the idea of putting a band together and playing rock always sounded like a lot of work to me, whereas pulling out your guitar for people seemed more natural."

Headliner Woody Sparks (real name Rolf Kempf, of New Westminster) rounded things off with a selection of festive favourites on keyboard. Sparks has been a professional musician since 1959 – he wrote Hello, Hurray for Judy Collins, subsequently a 1973 top-10 hit for Alice Cooper – and knows how to work an audience.

"I guess I take a kind of a jazzy, bluesy,



Photo: Mits Naga

SLOWBURNER: Woody Sparks lighting up the Vancouver Roundhouse stage.

funky, world music approach," he said, describing his set. "But I don't put labels on things."

VAMS was co-founded in 1988 by current Vancouver Mayor Sam Sullivan and disability advocate Dave Symington to enable people with significant disabilities to write and produce music.

"The concert was to showcase the musical talents of our members – and to enjoy ourselves," said VAMS executive director Duane Geddes. "We simply wanted to celebrate our musicians and the work that VAMS does throughout the year."

The VAMS Festive Year End Concert was held at Presentation Theatre, Roundhouse Community Centre, Vancouver on Thursday, Dec. 14.

Jay Drew receives national praise for Tetra work

A Tetra volunteer has received national recognition for his work.

Jay Drew received a Governor General's Caring Canadian Award at a ceremony in Victoria, B.C. He began with Vancouver Tetra in 1991 and has more than 200 inventions to his name.

"Helping other people gives you a sense of fulfillment, and that's what makes you happy," said Drew. "People striving to find happiness only for themselves are doing everything wrong."

B.C. Lieutenant Governor Iona Campanolo presented the award, on behalf of Governor General Michaëlle Jean, on Wednesday, Jan. 10.

In 1999, Drew received the R.A. McLachlan Memorial Award, given by the Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of B.C. He received the CBC Golden Heart Award in 2004.

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Research centre to open in '08

From Page 2

However, their work is hampered because they are spread across Vancouver, and one central location would enable researchers to share information more easily, explained administrative coordinator Cheryl Niamath.

"Sometimes researchers get talking to each other and find that, although it seems their research is different, they are working towards each other," she said. "They are looking at the same things through different eyes."

"A new building would also give people from different places the opportunity to come in for projects. It would be a centre for people doing a certain type of research."

The provincial government has made a \$12.9-million commitment to ICORD's research centre, and other donors have stepped up to the plate to make this project a reality. The Blusson Pavilion, as the building will be called, is named in recognition of a private contribution to the project through the Rick Hansen Foundation by Dr. Stewart and Marilyn Blusson.

**Sam Sullivan Disability Foundation
B.C. Mobility Opportunities Society
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