

# THE SENIOR TIMES

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## Victoriaville Festival: from avant jazz to indie rock



Vijay Iyer. Photo: Lena Adasheva

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For its 35th season, the Festival International de musique actuelle de Victoriaville (FIMAV) has lined up a varied program – 21 concerts over four days that touch base with the recent past and also break new ground with emerging innovators. That mix is what draws devoted fans from Quebec and North America to this quiet town, 164 kilometres northeast of Montreal.

It runs from May 16-19.

There are few distractions here, so it is a delight to check out the music in the recently-built downtown cultural centre, the nearby Coliseum, or a 19th century church.

Yes, there are experimental films and sound installations to check out, but the main draw is the daring and innovative music that makes this a world-class event in the improvised and experimental scene – from avant jazz and free improv to indie rock.

For artistic director Michel Levasseur, a primary focus was to hire musicians who have made a significant impact in the past 10-15 years such as pianist/leader Vijay Iyer, who first performed in Canada at Victo in 2006 in a trio. Now a major star, he performs Saturday, May 18 at 10pm in a sextet.

Thursday's opener at 8pm features Vancouverbased cellist Peggy Lee, who first played here in 1997, leading a tentet playing her Echo Painting Suite with such accomplished players as trumpeter Brad Turner, organist Wayne Horvitz, and drummer Dylan Van Der Schyff.

The closing concert Sunday at 10pm is a double bill, first pairing the Indonesian duo Senyawa – singer Rully Shabara and Wukir Suryadi on the home-made, guitar-like bambuwukir – and Japanese vocalist-guitarist Keiji Heino.

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Then, Holland's The Ex lets loose with its threeguitar Indie Rock sound, propelled by drummer Katerina Bornefeld.



Vijay Iyer sextet. Photo: Lynne Harty



Peggy Lee, cello. Photo courtesy of the Victoriaville Festival



Philadelphia poet Camae Ayewa, performs as Moor Mother. Photo: Janette Beckman



German saxophonist Peter Brötzmann with Heather Leigh on pedal guitar and guitarist Keiji Haino. Photo: Cristina Marx

Other highlights feature musicians Levasseur describes as “the masters” – American bassist Barre Phillips, 84, plays solo upright bass at 10pm May 17. It’s a double bill, to be followed by German saxophonist Peter Brötzmann, 78, in a trio with Heather Leigh on pedal guitar and guitarist Keiji Haino; Saxophonist Roscoe Mitchell, 78 and a founder of the influential Art Ensemble of Chicago, is joined by Philadelphia poet Camae Ayewa, who performs as Moor Mother, at 8pm, May 18.

Two big ensemble projects are on tap, featuring mainly Quebec musicians: May 17, 8 pm, guitarist-composer Rainer Wiens presents his 12-member Birds of a Feather, based on what the musicians developed from recordings of birdsongs. May 19, 8 pm, Joker a 20-member choir, founded by vocalist Joane Héту, with improv veterans Danielle Palardy Roger and Jean Derome, performs Héту’s Les Lucioles.

“There is a lot to discover, a lot of risk – that’s why people come to Victoriaville,” Levasseur said.

For full lineup and tickets: [fimav.qc.ca](http://fimav.qc.ca)

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