



Press release  
For immediate release

## **FIMAV @ 37— A miracle!**

Tuesday May 25, 2021 — Two days after the final day of the 37<sup>th</sup> edition of the Festival International de Musique Actuelle de Victoriaville (FIMAV), which took place from Monday 17 to Sunday 23 May 2021 in a heatwave, the team and the members of the Board of Directors of Productions Plateforme described with enthusiasm, but above all relief, the 37<sup>th</sup> FIMAV 2021 as a “miracle.”

### **The first one and the only one**

The miracle that was the 37<sup>th</sup> FIMAV 2021 was unique in two other ways. First of all, it launched the festival season by opening on Monday, May 17 with the circuit of sound art installations in public spaces, which was open to the public free of charge from 10 am to 8 pm every day until the following Sunday. We were the first festival to present 12 concerts entirely in front of a live audience over three days, the first festival to offer movie buffs two programs of experimental short films without webcasting, the first festival to exhibit large-scale visual artworks. So we were the first festival to provide four artistic programmes in person, filled with original and diverse experiences, to eager audiences without any virtual alternative.

Secondly, the 37<sup>th</sup> FIMAV 2021 is the only festival to have presented in their entirety four artistic programmes that followed the strict rules of public health officials, the most important of which being physical distancing and procedural mask wearing, both indoors and outdoors, and above all a 9:30 pm curfew. And all this mere days before the start of a plan, announced by the province on May 19, to gradually relax these rules, by which time the circuit of sound art installations in public spaces had been in full swing for three days

and the team was preparing for the first concerts and short film screenings two days later. The first one and the only one: a miracle!

### **A record year for our sound art installations in public spaces**

The 12<sup>th</sup> edition of the circuit of sound art installations in public spaces presented as part of the 37<sup>th</sup> FIMAV 2021 was already looking very promising when its programming was revealed in February 2021. Eight out of nine works were going to be presented as world premieres and two new spaces were going to be invested (Gérald Musique's window and Rue de la Gare). However, the team is reporting results that surpassed all expectations.

Despite a significant decrease in guided tours (25 school groups instead of the usual 40 in recent years), attendance reached a new record: nearly 14,000 visits (against 12,000 in 2019 for this component). The team attributes this enthusiasm to several factors, the main one being the attraction of a quality cultural activity after several months without access to in-person arts. We recorded a significant participation from people who travelled from outside the area only to walk the circuit. A phenomenon was also observed for the first time this year: sincere interest from teenagers. Place Ste-Victoire, where most of the sound art installations are located, is an ideal park for young people to meet for lunch or after school. The last year and a half has been particularly upsetting for young people who have been cut off from all extracurricular activities. Their interest in sound art installations can therefore be explained in part by a lack of entertainment in recent months. The other explanation is directly linked to the guided tours offered to school groups since the first edition of the circuit in 2010. A decade later, these young people who were introduced to contemporary arts visit the circuit on their own. A direct result that demonstrates the importance of cultural mediation with young people!

### **Sold out concerts**

The two-metre physical distancing rule and attendance cap for indoor performances strongly limited audience sizes at the 37<sup>th</sup> FIMAV's concerts and short film screenings at St-Christophe d'Arthabaska church, Colisée Desjardins and Carré 150 (three huge venues that can accommodate hundreds of people). Two of the twelve concerts were sold out,

both on Saturday, May 22: the TAMAYUGÉ / THISQUIETARMY X AWAY double bill at 5:30 pm and GROWLERS' CHOIR at 7:30 pm.

### **The miraculous edition**

The past year and a half has been the most difficult period to overcome in the history of Productions Plateforme and FIMAV. Cancellations, uncertainties... closed borders, mandatory quarantines... lockdown, emergency measures... red zone, orange zone... A rollercoaster in terms of emotions and a puzzle in terms of production. The result: festivalgoers who felt safe during the event, artists moved to meet an audience in person, and a team surprised to have made it through.

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