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## Monumental success at the 12<sup>th</sup> annual PuSh International Performing Arts Festival

(Vancouver, BC) — The 12<sup>th</sup> annual PuSh International Performing Arts Festival took place from January 19 to February 7, 2016, in venues across Vancouver. The 2016 PuSh Festival continued to offer Vancouver audiences the best live performing arts from around the world—with works by artists and companies from Australia, Canada, Denmark, England, France, Lebanon, and the United States. 23,000 Vancouverites and visitors attended this year's PuSh Festival, taking in 250 performances and events over 20 days.

At the end of the three weeks of shows and celebrations, PuSh Festival Artistic and Executive Director Norman Amour says, "When I reflect on this year's Festival, I keep coming back to the audiences—our audiences. They were the stars this year. They came in droves, with enthusiasm, openness, curiosity—and a thirst to hear stories that open up the world at large. They embraced Jack Charles with as much generosity as he gave, travelling from Australia to share his tale with us. They made it unequivocally known at *monumental* that The Holy Body Tattoo could always call Vancouver its home. They rolled in the aisles with laughter then leapt to their feet at the nuttiness of *L'immédiate*. They followed us to The Fox Cabaret, the new home of Club PuSh, to party into the wee hours with our international visitors. Individual audience members introduced refugees to our city and our culture, and to art from beyond our borders. They are simply the best damn arts patrons to be found anywhere. Thank you to them all!"

In a year of many successes, there are several particular standouts to celebrate. The knockout performance of *monumental* by Vancouver's Holy Body Tattoo dance company, accompanied on stage by Godspeed You! Black Emperor, left 2,400 audience members at the Queen Elizabeth Theatre reeling; a remarkable sendoff for the hometown heroes on their world tour. The inaugural Meet Your New Neighbour program brought together 100 local PuSh patrons and new Canadians and refugees to experience the transformative power of the live performing arts. And with the support of the Consulat général de France à Vancouver and the Institut français, the PuSh Festival offered a Spotlight on France, a series of four French circus and dance works, that expanded the horizons of human possibility and ingenuity.

### 2016 PuSh Festival Overview

- 250 performances and events at 17 venues across Vancouver over 20 days
- 23,000 patrons attended over three weeks, including over 500 PuSh Passholders who came out to the Festival 2,200 times
- 125 sold-out performances and events
- 167 artists representing 7 countries performed in 18 Main Stage shows, 9 Club PuSh shows and many other ancillary events
- \$28,800 contributed by PuSh Patrons Circle donors over the course of the Festival
- 200 volunteers contributed more than 1,500 hours of their energy, skill and expertise
- 300 young people registered for the Youth Passport to see shows for \$5
- 50 youth, aged 16 to 24, participated in the Youth Program, which included professional work experience, networking and learning opportunities in the performing art industry
- 47 arts industry delegates representing 9 countries traveled to Vancouver to participate in business exchange and networking at the PuSh Assembly
- 300 tickets given away or discounted through Accessible PuSh for community organizations serving Aboriginal communities, and underserved populations

**About the PuSh International Performing Arts Festival**

The PuSh International Performing Arts Festival is Vancouver's signature mid-winter cultural event, taking place over three weeks each January in theatres and venues across the city. The PuSh Festival presents groundbreaking, contemporary works of theatre, dance, music and multimedia by acclaimed local, national and international artists.

The next edition of the PuSh Festival will take place January 16 to February 7, 2017. Full programming will be announced in November 2016.