



Granville Island

Granville Island Culture - Beyond the Fringe

Granville Island is a creative force to be reckoned with, attracting many of Vancouver's finest theatrical and artistic talents to its stage. From February's Winterruption – a multi-day dose of arts and culture to beat the winter blahs, to the Wooden Boat Festival in August – there's entertainment to be had at any given time.

The Vancouver Fringe Festival delivers an eclectic mix of 400 theatrical performances by more than 65 different groups over 11 days. They use many of the venues on Granville Island, including Performance Works, a flexible black box theatre space converted from a machine shop dating back to the 1920s.

Since its transformation from the old Tye Machinery Building, the air-conditioned Waterfront Theatre has hosted a myriad of productions. Playwrights Theatre Centre (PTC) studio is an intimate space for new play development and holds in-house readings. In June, PTC mounts the New Play Festival which presents a variety of workshop productions, cabarets, and seminars.

Children are also celebrated on the Island. Young audiences are entertained at the Carousel Theatre while ages 2-19 learn the art of clay, painting, dance, photography, Asian Art and Funktional Art at the Arts Umbrella, a non-profit visual and performing arts institute. To help out parents during spring break week, the Spring Break Theatre Festival offers daytime performances for wee ones.

Canada's celebrity comics Colin Mocharie and Ryan Stiles got their start doing improv comedy at Vancouver TheatreSports League in the Arts Club Revue Theatre. Next door, the Arts Club Theatre, housed in a former chain factory, hosts productions that range from musicals, classics, and dramas, to contemporary comedies.

If you miss the Yuletide Traditions of twinkling lights, roving performers, and ornament-making workshops in December, catch the Chinese New Year Festival which starts off the year with a traditional lion dance procession – said to ward off evil spirits and bring good luck – as it winds through the Public Market. Eat braised e-fu noodles for long life and prosperity, and collect your lucky red envelope.

Also in June, Granville Island hosts the Vancouver International Jazz Festival where music lovers listen to some of the best jazz talent in the world. October is for booklovers with dozens of readings and author appearances take place during the Vancouver International Writers (& Readers) Festival.

In the spirit of the live reality shows, the Annual Plywood Cup tests the skills of Canada's handyman and women by supplying 16 teams with a few materials and 90 minutes in which to build a vessel that will carry them across False Creek. More often than not the duct tape just doesn't hold.

On any given day, the best shows in town are the buskers. Found on street corners and oceanfront decks, the buskers juggle, dance, perform magic, play the sounds of music from around the world, and appreciate donations. They have been ranked with the buskers of London's Covent Garden, the most famous buskers in the world.