Tanya Tagaq & Throat Singing

Library Hours

December 1st – December 17th
Monday – Thursday 8:30 am – 7:00 pm
Friday 8:30 am – 5:00 pm
Saturday & Sunday 1:00 pm – 5:00 pm

December 18th – 24th
Thursday, Friday 8:30 am – 4:30 pm
Saturday & Sunday closed
Monday, Tuesday 8:30 am – 4:30 pm
Wednesday 8:30 am – 12:00 pm

Choral / Band / Orchestral Collection

December 1st – December 19th
Monday – Friday 11:30 am – 3:30 pm
Saturday – Sunday Closed

The Music Library will close for the holidays starting December 24th at noon.
We will reopen on January 5, 2015.

Selected Listening

Check out these CDs available at the Music Library!

Sinaa by Tanya Tagaq – MCD23024
Canada: Music Rough Guide – MCD18961
(2HR Reserve)
Everlasting Light by Christos Hatzis – MCD18783
The Music of Tuva by Ay-Kherel Ensemble – Available online through NAXOS
On the Sensations of Tone by Tom Heasley – Available online through NAXOS


Tanya Tagaq recently won the 2014 Polaris Music Prize for her throat-singing album Animism. Born in Ikaluktuutiak Nunavut, she studied at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design in Halifax. Tagaq has recorded with Björk and the Kronos Quartet, and won Best Female Artist at the Canadian Aboriginal Music Awards in 2005.

In the Inuit culture, throat singing originated as games played by women while their husbands were away hunting. Two women face each other and make various sounds, such as exhaled, inhaled, voiced and voiceless sounds, with each woman taking turns emitting high and low sounds. The games each have a motif, which can change throughout. The point of the throat games? While each woman does try to win, the quality of sound and entertaining each other and the audience are just as important.

The throat games evolved into stand-alone songs, often performed during celebrations or festivals. Commonly during hunting rituals, throat songs would celebrate the final kill by telling the story of the hunt. It’s no surprise, then, that many throat sounds resemble the noises animals make. While drum dances are the main form of music in the Inuit culture, throat songs complement them with individual throat sounds relating to specific dance movements. In hunting celebrations, the hunter would traditionally perform the drum dance with a chorus of women accompanying with a throat song.

Western Libraries
December 2014 by Rachel Sandieson

Did you know?
You can request books from other libraries on campus to be picked up here at Music!
Just use the REQUEST ITEM icon in the catalogue, and select Music Library as your pickup location.