

# TANYA TAGAQ

**IN CONCERT  
WITH *NANOOK  
OF THE NORTH***

**THU, NOV 17,  
8PM**

***RETRIBUTION***

**FRI, NOV 18,  
10PM**

**YBCA.ORG  
#TANYATAGAQ**

**YERBA BUENA  
CENTER FOR  
THE ARTS**



Photo by Nadya Kwandibens

# WELCOME TO YERBA BUENA CENTER FOR THE ARTS

Our organization was founded in 1993 as a citizen institution that would be home to the diverse local arts community while serving to connect the Bay Area to the world. YBCA's mission is to generate culture that moves people. We believe that culture—a collection of art, traditions, values, human experiences, and stories—is what enables us to act with imagination and creativity, to act socially, politically, and with conviction. Culture instigates change in the world.

We believe that more and different kinds of people need to be defining culture today and that more people need to have access to cultural experiences that are relevant to their lives and their communities. We need new definitions and new experiences that bring people together regardless of their differences in order to make the inclusive and equitable culture we need today. We believe that the arts should be on the front line of change and that cultural institutions exist to spur and support big societal movements. Through powerful art experiences, thoughtful and provocative content, and deep opportunities for participation, we are committed to kindling inclusive culture that cultivates empathy, awakens personal and societal transformation, and reaches for a world fueled by inspiration. The need has never been stronger than now, and there is no better place than YBCA to answer the call. We are so glad that you are here. We are grateful for your cultural participation, and we hope you will come back and enjoy all that YBCA has to offer.

Warmly,

**DEBORAH CULLINAN**  
CEO of YERBA BUENA  
CENTER FOR THE ARTS



Photo by Vanessa Heins

## TANYA TAGAQ

### IN CONCERT WITH NANOOK OF THE NORTH

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 2016, 8PM

**Tanya Tagaq, vocals**  
**Jean Martin, drums**  
**Jesse Zubot, violin**

*Tanya Tagaq in Concert with Nanook of the North* was commissioned by TIFF Bell Lightbox as part of the film retrospective *First Peoples Cinema: 1500 Nations, One Tradition*. *Nanook of the North* is used courtesy of The Flaherty.

## RETRIBUTION

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 2016, 10PM

**Tanya Tagaq, vocals**  
**Christine Duncan, vocals**  
**Jean Martin, drums**  
**Jesse Zubot, violin**

Exclusive management for Tanya Tagaq,  
**Helen Britton, Six Shooter Records**  
sixshooterrecords.com  
Exclusive US representation:  
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bernsarts.com

## TUNGIJUQ

Release date: **September 2009 (Canada)**  
Directors: **Felix Lajeunesse,**  
**Paul Raphaël**  
Production company: **Igloodik Isuma**  
**Productions**  
Cast: **Tanya Tagaq, Zacharias Kunuk**  
Screenplay: **Tanya**  
**Tagaq, Felix Lajeunesse, Paul**  
**Raphaël, Stéphane Rituït**  
Music composed by: **Tanya Tagaq, Jesse**  
**Zubot**

funded by **BRAVO!FACT -**  
**Canada Council for the Arts**

## A NOTE FROM THE CURATOR

MARC BAMUTHI JOSEPH  
CHIEF OF PROGRAM AND PEDAGOGY



Our Mother grows angry  
/ retribution will be swift  
/ we squander her soil  
and suck out her sweet  
black blood and burn it  
/ we turn money into  
God and salivate over  
opportunities to crumble  
and crinkle our souls for  
that paper / that gold

—TANYA TAGAQ, *Retribution*

Imagine the sound of the Earth Mother being torn apart. Think of it as a rock anthem for the dance floor. Completely non-ironic, as she swallows her parasites whole, the planet forces them into a fit of sex-addled hypnosis, impelled by sonic boom and hip-hop thrust. As a parting gift, a final twist of the knife of retribution, the Earth launches this sound inside of the body of an Inuk oracle, a voice excavated out of millennia-deep

ice to melt us inside the sauna of a new and immediate global warmth.

The Polaris Prize-winning artist Tanya Tagaq arrives at YBCA in full investigation of the border of indigenous resource and urban future-scape. Her music and activism call into question a sense of “natural order.” Who survives and why? *Whose world is this?*

In her residency with us, she awakens a tradition of mild anarchy, evokes a people who revel in the edge of chaos, bathing in it like sleeping giants in the afternoon sun. Tagaq produces music that makes demands, driven by a social pulse that begs for peace against the backbeat of arch-conservative droning. With her live scoring of the controversial 1922 documentary *Nanook of the North*, she calls out the visual culture of the early twentieth century as an instrument to reconcile and propagate racist norms. It is a fascinating use of the long canvas of historical memory, imprinted with the indelible stain of historical prejudice and pathology.

As she premieres a performance of her new album *Retribution*, I am reminded of music that moves at a running stream’s pace into the teeth of the opposition. *Retribution* utilizes the force of animistic spirit, projected at the volume of a hunger after the hunt. It is a measure of accountability to people we’ve never seen and will never meet.

It is this inhabited accountability— inhabited politically, ecologically, and aesthetically— that makes Tanya Tagaq a unique star in her particular nebula of change-driven celestial bodies. She continues to employ long-range thinking in the context of evolutionary time. Change is a fractured mirror of relative emotions and episodes. Measure the twenty-seven years of Nelson Mandela’s imprisonment against the instantaneous shock of the second tower falling. Tagaq asks, How long will it take to sweep our consciousness into a new collective place? How much longer can a people on the edge be reasonably asked to wait?

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

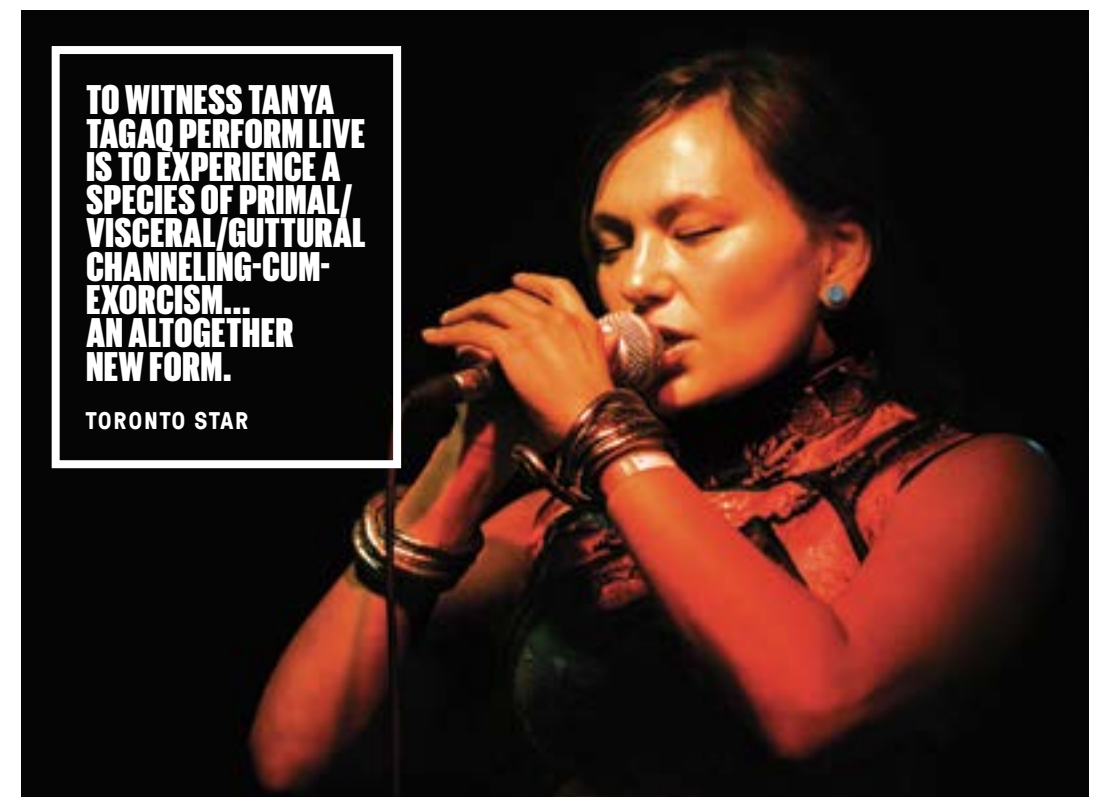
### TANYA TAGAQ IN CONCERT WITH NANOOK OF THE NORTH

On the first of her two evenings at YBCA, Tanya Tagaq’s intense, evocative vocalizations, based on Inuit throat singing traditions, help reclaim the controversial 1922 film *Nanook of the North*. Tagaq, together with percussionist Jean Martin and violinist Jesse Zubot, performs a live accompaniment to the film’s silent images of life in an early twentieth-century Inuit community in northern Quebec.

Commissioned by the Toronto Film Festival for its First Nations Film Festival, Tagaq’s work with *Nanook of the North* began with a sonic exploration of the film’s visuals, which spoke deeply to the vocalist. Tagaq’s perception of sound in the Arctic spaces shown in the film transforms the imagery, adding great feeling and depth to its complex mix of beautiful representations and racially charged clichés.

### RETRIBUTION

On the second evening, Tanya Tagaq is joined on stage by Christine Duncan, a musical chameleon with a near five-octave range for a concert celebrating the release of Tagaq’s new album, *Retribution*. The two are very different artists, yet Tagaq and Duncan find common ground in their improvisational approach to vocal expression, both using their voices as instruments that explore tone, timbre, and texture.



TO WITNESS TANYA TAGAQ PERFORM LIVE IS TO EXPERIENCE A SPECIES OF PRIMAL/VISCERAL/GUTTURAL CHANNELING-CUM-EXORCISM... AN ALTOGETHER NEW FORM.

TORONTO STAR

Photo by Nadya Kwandibens

## ARTIST PROFILES

### TANYA TAGAQ

The Arctic-born Tanya Tagaq is an improvisational performer, avant-garde composer, and experimental recording artist. Tagaq contorts elements of punk, metal, and electronica into a complex and contemporary sound that begins in breath, and becomes a communal and fundamental phenomenon.

Winning the 2014 Polaris Music Prize for her album *Animism*, a work that disrupted the music world in Canada and beyond, brought wider attention to Tagaq's art and messages, but she has been touring and collaborating with an elite international circle of artists for more than a decade. Her improvisational approach lends itself to collaboration across genres, and recent projects have pulled her in many different directions, from contributing guest vocals to a recent song by F\*\*ked Up (a hard-core punk band from Toronto) to premiering a new composition made for Kronos Quartet's Fifty for the Future collection.

Tagaq's music and performances challenge static ideas of genre and culture, and contend with environmentalism, human rights, and postcolonial issues. In interviews, Tagaq stresses the importance of considering her work in the context of contemporary—not traditional—art. This statement is not just about sound, although her music is decidedly modern and technically intricate, but also relates to deep-rooted assumptions about indigenous culture.

### JESSE ZUBOT

The practice of Jesse Zubot (violin, viola, electronics) spans multiple genres and transcends categorization. Zubot has worked with artists as diverse as Destroyer, Mira Calix, Dan Mangan, Stars, Mats Gustafsson, Kelly Joe Phelps, and Hawksley Workman. A multiple Juno Award-winning artist, he contributes regularly to Vancouver's improvised music scene and tours extensively with Tanya Tagaq. Zubot produced Tagaq's Polaris Prize-winning album *Animism* as well as her new album, *Retribution*.



Photo by Ivan Otis

### JEAN MARTIN

Jean Martin is a drummer, multi-instrumentalist, producer, and a key member of the field of creative music in Canada. He is based in Toronto, but his network of collaborators extends throughout the country and internationally. He was nominated in 2004 for Best Drummer at the National Jazz Awards, and he received the 2004 Freddy Stone Award for excellence in contemporary music in Canada.

As a producer, Martin is best known as the artistic director of Barnyard Records, a vital label for contemporary music in North America. Barnyard features a diverse catalogue of more than forty titles. In addition to his work with Barnyard, Martin has produced and/or engineered more than one hundred other recording projects in countless musical styles.

### CHRISTINE DUNCAN

Christine Duncan has been singing professionally since the age of fifteen. She began performing on stage when she was five years old, with her family, as the Duncans, and toured North America extensively until the age of nineteen. A musical chameleon with a range of nearly five octaves, Duncan uses her voice as an instrument, exploring its full tonal, timbral, and textural range. She is involved in everything from jazz, R&B, gospel, improvised music, and sound poetry to new music and musique actuelle. She has recorded and/or collaborated with Bob Murphy, Hugh Fraser, Miles Black, Veda Hille, Paul Plimley, Danielle Palardy Roger, Jean Martin, and DB Boyko, among others, and has performed with Anthony Braxton, Chucho Valdés, Kenny Wheeler, Rufus Reid, P. J. Perry, Ray Charles, Linton Garner, Paul Horn, Jeff Healey, André Crouch, Sabir Mateen, John Oswald, Paul Dutton, Michael Snow, and Nobuo Kubota. She has six recordings to her credit and is featured on countless other recording projects. She has been a member of the VEJI (Vancouver Ensemble of Jazz Improvisation) big band for ten years. She has been a featured performer in two new music operas and has been teaching voice since 1995. For the last few years she has also been very involved in recording and touring with Barnyard Drama, her group with the drummer and electronic artist Jean Martin.

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Special thanks to the City of San Francisco for its ongoing support.

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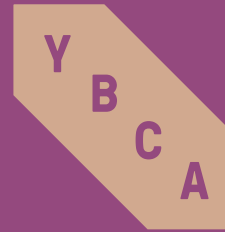
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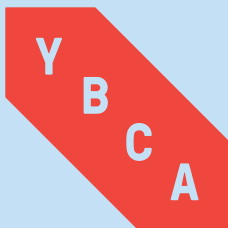
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