

## THE ARTS

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# THE ARTS

It's easy to think that Vancouver's Lycra-clad locals are a bunch of philistines when it comes to culture – how can opera and ballet fans also enjoy off-road mountain biking? – but in reality the city is a major regional center for artsy pursuits. On the highbrow side, there's an enormous array of classical music (below) on stage here, while dance (p172) is one of the city's Canada-leading specialties. There are also dozens of theater troupes (p178) across Vancouver, covering Shakespeare to challenging contemporary works and everything in between. And even though the Lower Mainland region is a popular location for Hollywood movie shoots, there's also a relatively healthy domestic movie scene (p173) and a great love among the locals for art-house productions. Finally, if you're in the mood for something a little more eclectic, the city is home to some regular spoken-word events (p177), including poetry and story slams.

To tap into the local scene, grab a copy of the *Georgia Straight*, and also check the *Westender* and the West Coast Life section of the *Vancouver Sun*. All three appear on Thursday every week. Make sure you also check the city's festival calendar (p12) before you arrive: Vancouver is home to some excellent annual arts events that can satisfy the most hungry of traveling culture vultures.

## CLASSICAL MUSIC

Vancouver has a rich and resonant classical music scene, with particular strengths in baroque and chamber music. Along with recitals at downtown churches, the spectacular Orpheum Theatre and the swanky, state-of-the-art Chan Centre at the University of British Columbia (UBC), the city hosts festivals for fans of many genres. These include the frequently fascinating New Music Festival (p16) and the giant MusicFest Vancouver (p15). The following societies and orchestras stage shows across the city.

### EARLY MUSIC VANCOUVER

[www.earlymusic.bc.ca](http://www.earlymusic.bc.ca); times & locations vary  
Devoted to the performance and study of baroque music from the Middle Ages to the late Romantic era – often played on instruments authentic to the period – this lively recital society stages a popular summer festival (p15) as well as a rolling roster of concerts throughout the year, usually from September to May. Talks, workshops and events are also offered, so bring your lute in case there's a jam night.

### FRIENDS OF CHAMBER MUSIC

[www.friendsofchambermusic.ca](http://www.friendsofchambermusic.ca); Vancouver Playhouse, downtown; ☎ Oct-Apr; 🏟 Stadium-Chinatown  
Taking over downtown's [Vancouver Playhouse](#) (see the boxed text [opposite](#)) for intermittent

Tuesday evening (plus some Sunday afternoon) performances, the Friends stages a tasty menu of shows from international visiting musicians. It's the kind of roster where you'll see chamber musicians from the Lincoln Center one week and the Berlin Philharmonic wind quintet the next.

### NATIONAL BROADCAST ORCHESTRA

[www.nbo.ca](http://www.nbo.ca); Chan Centre for the Performing Arts, UBC; ☎ times vary; 📻 99B-Line  
Formed from the disbanded CBC Radio Orchestra – killed by funding cuts at the national broadcaster in 2008 – the new NBO tours the country but calls the [Chan Centre for the Performing Arts](#) (see the boxed text [opposite](#)) its home. Expect a full slate of intriguing shows, including plenty that champion Canadian composers.

### PACIFIC BAROQUE ORCHESTRA

[www.pacificbaroque.com](http://www.pacificbaroque.com); times & locations vary  
Dedicated to baroque music from the 17th and 18th centuries, this thrilling Vancouver orchestra is highly regarded across North America. Its mandate is to perform the music the way it was originally written, which means using antique or authentic replica instruments and researching the prevalent techniques and styles of the period. Expect to hear plenty of violins and violas, accompanied by visiting harps and harpsichords, as you listen to fresh versions of works by composers such as Bach, Handel and Mozart.