

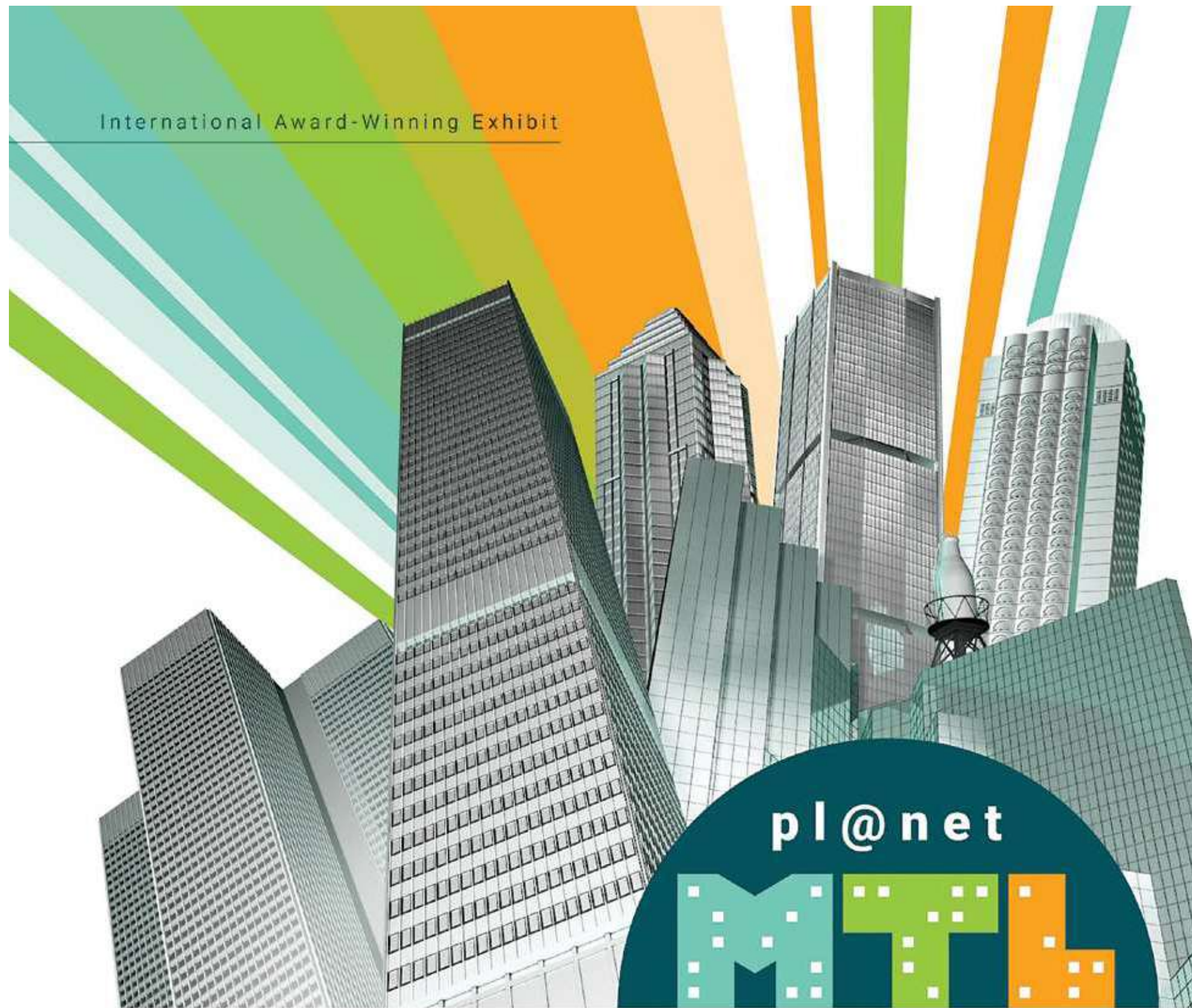


JUNE 2019 • Vol. 7 No. 9 • CULTMTL.COM


FREE


* Fringe Festival * Goal * Arthurs * Mike Leigh * Cannes * Mural * Rachel Bloom


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urban ecosystem

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READINGS AND BOOK LAUNCHES

THURS JUNE 13 An evening with **Kaveh Akbar**,
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WED JUNE 19 **Emma Jacobs** launches
Little(r) Museums of Paris

THURS JUNE 20 QC Fiction: Double Translation Launch!

MON JUNE 24 **Nora Samaran** launches
*Turn This World Inside Out: The Emergence of
Nurturance Culture* (AK Press)

THURS JULY 4 **Adrian McKerracher** launches
What It Means to Write: Creativity and Metaphor

BOOK CLUBS

SUN JUNE 9 **D+Q COOKS! COOKBOOK CLUB**
Ottolenghi Simple by Yotam Ottolenghi

MON JUNE 10 **TRUE READS**
Becoming by Michelle Obama

WED JUNE 12 **GRAPHIC NOVEL**
Is This How You See Me? by Jaime Hernandez

FRI JUNE 14 **YOUNG READERS** (Ages 10-12, 6PM)
To Kill A Mockingbird: A Graphic Novel
by Harper Lee

SUN JUNE 16 **QUEEREADS** (6PM)
Time Was by Ian McDonald

WED JUNE 26 **NEW READS**
Washington Black by Esi Edugyan

SUN JUNE 30 **QUEEREADS** (6PM)
*Nepantla: An Anthology Dedicated to
Queer Poets of Color* ed. Christopher Soto

TUES JULY 2 **INDIGENOUS LITERATURES**
Nítisânak by Lindsay Nixon

MON JULY 8 **TRUE READS**
How to Write an Autobiographical Novel
by Alexander Chee

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Infamous comedy hour host
Kate Hammer on her Fringe
Festival show, a Shakespeare
mash-up comedy called
The Peers.

Photo by Mathieu Samson

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Just for laughs

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JULY 26 | Place des Arts Québec: **THE Wanda SYKES GALA**

JULY 28 | Place des Arts Québec: **THE Jonathan VAN NESS GALA**

JULY 26 | Place des Arts Québec: **THE HASAN MINHAJ GALA**

JULY 24 | Place des Arts Québec: **THE HOWIE MANDEL ALL-STAR COMEDY GALA**

CLUB SHOWS

JUNE 20 | Place des Arts Québec: **AZIZ ANSARI ROAD TO NOWHERE**

JULY 25 | L'Olympia: **NKIRCOLL**

JULY 27 | L'Olympia: **HOW DID THIS GET MADE?**

JULY 25 | L'Olympia: **comedy. BY blake**

JULY 27 | L'Olympia: **FRED ARMISEN Comedy for Musicians**

JULY 22-25 | centaur: **ELON GOLD & MODI TWO FOR ONE**

JULY 17-27 | L'Olympia: **THE NASTY Show**

JULY 24 | L'Olympia: **steve o THE BUCKET LIST**

Tangerine CLUB SHOWS

JULY 23-25 | Place des Arts Québec: **RONNY CHIENG Tone Issues Tour**

JULY 22-27 | Place des Arts Québec: **RACHEL BLOOM**

JULY 25-27 | Place des Arts Québec: **MARGARET TRUDEAU CERTAIN WOMAN OF AN AGE**

JULY 26 | Place des Arts Québec: **PETE HOLMES AND FRIENDS**

JULY 10-26 | Place des Arts Québec: **THE ETHNIC SH&W**

JULY 24-27 | Place des Arts Québec: **JEFF ROSS AND JUST FOR LAUGHS PRESENT THE RETURN OF THE ROASTMASTER'S INVITATIONAL**

JULY 26-27 | Place des Arts Québec: **Brit(ist)**

JULY 26 | Place des Arts Québec: **Bryan CALLEN**

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to-do list

For the daily To-Do List, visit cultmtl.com

To June 16

Montreal's annual Fringe Festival of independently produced theatre, musicals, spoken word and other performance arts packs in over 800 shows by 500 local and international artists across 16 venues, at very affordable prices. See our coverage on p. 24–26, and pick up a program at Fringe Park (St-Laurent & Rachel, site of the box office) or check their website for more.

To June 23

The Suoni per il Popolo music fest occupies over a dozen venues across the city (primarily their home bases Casa del Popolo, la Sala Rossa and la Vitrola) with avant garde music by the likes of Vancouver Indigenous hip hop duo Snotty Nose Rez Kids, Colombian-Canadian “pop satanic” artist Lido Pimienta, Detroit experimental band Wolf Eyes and local faves including Nick Schofield, Frankie Teardrop, Police des Moeurs and Xarah Dion. Keep an eye on the Hammer of the Mods column at cultmtl.com (and on p. 14 in this issue) for weekly festival highlights.

To Oct. 13

Dinner Is Served! The Story of French Cuisine is the latest exhibition at Pointe-à-Callière, a collection of artifacts, paintings, illustrations and video that reveal “the captivating history of French gastronomy, imbued with luxury, good taste and refinement,” course by course.

→ 350 Place Royale

June 6–16

Now in its seventh year, Mural Fest welcomes an impressive slate of international and local artists including Gleo, Joshua

Vides, Miss Van, Pichiavo and Insane 51 to decorate the city's walls while St-Laurent Blvd. becomes a pedestrian-only zone filled with art, live music, BBQs and sidewalk sales. See more about Mural 2019 on p. 28.

June 7

Montreal singer-songwriter and guitarist of note Patrick Krief launches his new record *Dovetale*.

→ 0 Patro Vys (356 Mont-Royal W), 7:30 p.m., \$16

June 7–Sept. 8

The first installment of the CCA's Out of the Box exhibition series, *Material Thinking*, is dedicated to the works of trained architect and conceptual artist Gordon Matta-Clark.

→ 1920 Baile

June 10–16

As part of Mural fest, several galleries, artist collectives and artists from NYC are taking part in the Global Artist Initiative exhibition at the Plateau's Espace 8.

→ 4040 St-Laurent, 11 a.m.–11 p.m.

June 11–16

Transdisciplinary digital art festival Elektra unites dozens of artists and engineers combining cutting-edge technologies with creative media (music, film, performance, design, gaming) at various galleries, cultural centres and performance spaces across the city.

June 13–16

The Montreal Folk Fest features an eclectic line-up of roots and contemporary bands and solo artists including the Damn Truth, Ashley MacIsaac, Good Lovelies and Hawksley Workman, with a youth program and a number of special events. All of this is happening at the outdoor stages by the Lachine Canal (at St-Patrick) as well as Bar de Courcelle (site of the opening party) and the Annexe St-Ambroise (where afterparty jams are scheduled on Friday and Saturday). Note that entry is PWYC (but you should pay something!).

June 14–22

The 31st annual Francos Montréal music festival (fka les

FrancoFolies) brings a wide range of talent from around the province and across the Francophonie to play indoor/ticketed and outdoor/free shows in the Quartier des Spectacles, from Ariane Moffat to Dumas, Pierre Lapointe to Bleu Nuit, Hubert Lenoir to Fwonte.

June 15–16

Monthly pop-up event the Market showcases work by local artists and designers at the Decade Building in Mile Ex.

→ 6551 Durocher, 11 a.m.–6 p.m.

June 22

Ska/reggae/rock band Osmosis Unlimited launch their album *Music for Cool Cats* at Petit Campus alongside Foolish and the Anti-Conformists.

→ 57 Prince-Arthur E., 8 p.m., \$10/\$12

June 26–30

Head to the Gay Village for the 20th edition of MTL en arts, a five-day, kilometre-long open-air art gallery and market featuring live art, performances, installations, demonstrations and more.

June 27–July 6

The Jazz Festival dominates the Quartier des Spectacles with hundreds of shows happening in concert halls and in the streets. The fest's 40th edition will attract tourists and locals with a typically eclectic program, including Bryan Adams, Suuns, U.S. Girls, Norah Jones, Pink Martini, Richard Reed Parry, Blue Rodeo, Mercury Rev, la Force and Lee Fields. See our round-up of highlights and more coverage later this month at cultmtl.com.

June 29–July 27

Fireworks light up the sky over Montreal every Saturday night as part of the International des Feux Loto-Québec competition. Buying tickets for la Ronde will get you up close (for those who don't mind the ash, explosive noise and \$56+ price tag), but there are loads of great (free) vantage points across the south-central part of the city.

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Pitching in

BY LORRAINE CARPENTER

More than hockey, more than basketball, more than baseball or football, soccer is the international game that brings the world together. The popularity of the sport — which has seen a steady rise in the traditionally unfriendly territory of (north) North America, where the 2026 World Cup will be held — and its ability

to unify even as it divides team followers was part of the impetus for GOAL, a local festival of “footy culture” that has made a mark on the city every July for the past nine years.

This year, GOAL is expanding in two ways. First, the main event on July 7 will be preceded by a wellness-oriented day on July 6, featuring non-alcoholic drinks, healthier food options and even more family-friendly activities. Second, the charitable aspect of the event has been legitimized with the government certification of the Goal Initiatives Foundation, which promotes sports and physical activity by providing equipment to youth sports organizations in need, among other things. Proceeds from the vendor village will benefit Dans la rue on July 6 and Share the Warmth and Montreal



Goal MTL 2018

Community Cares on July 7, maintaining the relationship between Goal and other Montreal charities.

Entry is free for both events, which take place at McGill Stadium and promise dozens of kiosks with food, drinks, games, talks, haircuts, tattoos, massage and more. The main draw, of course, is the soccer, both on the jumbotron (this year it's the semi-final and final of the Women's World Cup) and on the field. As usual, the July 7 teams will be made up of staff from local bars and restaurants, but Goal is opening up team membership on July 6 to people from other industries who want to donate as a group, get pampered on site and hit the field.

While healthy living will dominate the scene on July 6, the Goal event on July 7 also has a theme: women in sports, well-timed with the Women's World Cup final. As Goal co-founder Paul Desbaillets explains, inclusivity has always been embedded in Goal tournaments.

“The field has always been mixed — there's never a moment where there's not a mix of boys and girls, it's actually written in the rules,” he says. “It's ridiculous that we actually have to do that, and that in 2019 we're still talking about this, but unfortunately it's taking forever to become the norm and people seem to fucking need constant reminders that it should be the norm. So since it's not, Goal has made sure that there are always two girls on the pitch; it's only five a side, and if you don't [have two girls] you lose the game.”

As with the game itself, the appeal of Goal lies in its inclusivity and accessibility and in its social nature, not to mention the added good vibe of its charitable aim. Having fun, feeling good AND giving to a good cause while you're at it is a trifecta for a great summer day in Montreal.

“Major sporting events like the World Cup or Euro or Copa really bring everybody together under the big umbrella of football, and that's the key of sport: to come together and partake in festivities,” says Desbaillets. “The goal for Goal was always to bring the community together, boys and girls, using football as an opportunity to hang out and enjoy the day on common ground.”

→ Goal WellNess is happening on Saturday, July 6, Goal MTL on Sunday, July 7. Both events are at Percival Molson Memorial Stadium (475 des Pins W), 11 a.m.–6 p.m., free entry. Go to goalinitiatives.org for more details and to register to play.

:persona mtl



Toulia Drimonis

By Lorraine Carpenter

If you've picked up a newspaper, listened to talk radio, watched local news or read editorials on local websites, chances are you've seen, heard or read the work of Toulia Drimonis.

Born in Montreal and raised partly in Greece (from the age of 10 to 20), Drimonis was a writer and editor at a string of community newspapers in this city, and has been a fixture on local TV and talk radio shows, discussing local politics, women's issues and culture in all three of her languages. She currently spends most of her time writing editorials as a freelancer for publications such as *The National Observer*, *Ricochet* and, most recently, *Cult MTL* — her weekly contributions thus far have focused on police brutality, Bill 21 and her love for summer in Montreal.

In the interest of further introducing Drimonis to our readers, I asked her about being a professional editorial writer in a time when social media has given everyone a platform.

“I'm not one of those people who tends to rag on social media or people who are on social media as the unwashed masses,” she says. “I think it's a real equalizer, in many respects. Social media has allowed a platform for a lot of voices — including women's voices — that otherwise would never be heard, and I commend that and I applaud that. Even as a professional working in this field, I come across voices on a daily basis who have amazing insight, and an ability to very eloquently put together arguments in favour of or against something. It's getting better, but to this day in mainstream media the so-called expert or the person who's in an authority position is often still an older male.

“Social media is a tool like anything else, and I always advocate taking in all the information, as much as you can, all the different perspectives. But media literacy is important and there's a certain amount of responsibility that has to go to the reader, to the consumer of news. I feel that there's a lack of accountability for people who are sharing stuff that isn't founded in reality; people are too quick to share stuff that is clearly, and I hate to use the term, but fake news. We need to be teaching media literacy and critical thinking in high school.”

:rant line™

**THIS WEEK: Fake panhandlers, bad SQDC pot, bus windows that won't open!
PLUS: Entire city reeks of weed, man claims!**

“edited” by AL SOUTH

M So all anybody basically does in Montreal is SMOKE WEED. It's everywhere. Since it became legal, life begins and ends with weed — it STINKS everywhere of weed. I don't mind. I'm not saying... How can I put this? I used to smoke weed, I sometimes smoked weed in my life in the '90s. But when I smoked weed, weed smelled like weed. Now it smells like ARMPITS and WEIRD UNDERWEAR and BALLS. It's fucking everywhere! Everywhere I go there are people smoking weed — on bikes, on balconies. The landlords had to make a law that you can't smoke weed because people smoke so much fucking weed that everywhere just stinks of weed! It's fucking, like, get a life, do something else besides smoke weed! Thank you, that's all. [BLEEP!]

M What's up Rant Line™? This is just a quick POT SMOKING rant. I've been looking through the newspapers again and today they've been talking about how they made a BIG CRACKDOWN on illegal pot. And in the same article they were talking about how the SQDC pot is legal but the BLACK MARKET pot is not. Do you want me to let you in on a little secret, Rant Line™? Do you know what makes pot legal or illegal? [pause] Time's up: the government has a fucking magic wand that deems this pot is legal but everything else is not legal and you can be fined and jailed because you don't want to give your money to the pockets of the government, which distributes shitty quality marijuana! I've bought both the SQDC's and my local dealer's pot and compared the two. I have a great deal with my dealer and his pot is better quality — there's more, it's less dry and I'm pretty sure the dosage is accurate compared to what is labeled on the government box. I'm almost willing to bet that a couple of years down the line there will be a huge scandal about the SQDC with the quantities not matching what was on the wrapping. So yeah, this is how they do it. If you don't give us your money we'll jail you, even though it's just weed either way. All of that just to say, fuck the government. Buy local, buy often. Thank you. [BLEEP!]

F Ferrandez is gone. The KING is dead, long live the king. All hail to the King! Well, he improved my life in the Plateau, anyway. [BLEEP!]

M I know that you don't like to publish things that have to do with controversies involving personal legal affairs, and I don't blame you — you don't want to be sucked into the VORTEX of another's DRAMA. But I would like to let you know, as a citizen of this country, that on one New Year's Eve, I was invited to a small party in St-Something-or-Other in Quebec — my girlfriend invited me and I went there — and during the course of the evening, there was an invitation to go downstairs to this BASEMENT. And there on the pool table was displayed a large amount of COCAINE. And I was offered to partake, by a woman, and I said, well, it doesn't suit me, I'm not a COKEHEAD. But I said wow, that's a lot of money there, what do you do for a living? She says to me, “I'm a CROWN PROSECUTOR.” And I said, “Oh, okay.” That left a deep mark on my mind. What do I do with this information? Try to communicate it to those who are young and editorial-positioned? It's an

education of the streets, I would say, about the corruption within the system. “Yes, I am a Crown Prosecutor.” Good coke. Bye. [BLEEP!]

M Hi Rant Line™, first time caller, longtime reader. Here's what I want to tell you about the new STM fleet of buses. Okay great, so I am able to charge my phone on the bus now, that's fantastic — I can ignore even more people than I did before. But the windows, they do not fucking OPEN. None of them, none of them. This morning, it's 12 degrees outside, it's pretty cold — it's 30 degrees on the bus as of 8 a.m. The 161 Van Horne bus, filled with people. It's fucking hot, SWEATY and disgusting. Like they say they have air conditioning, but they're not going to turn the air conditioning on when it's only 12 degrees out. It's hot! You gotta be able to open those windows! I need that circulation! [BLEEP!]

M Yeah, panhandlers are fucking shit, I know what you're talking about. There's some dumb BROAD I've seen a couple of times, she's probably 16 or 18, 20 years old max. She goes on the orange line and just holds a sign that says she needs money for whatever. The thing is, she doesn't even look homeless, she just looks like a student, like some stupid broad who wants to have handout money because DADDY won't give her. I mean, why would you carry your fucking purse around when you're panhandling? It's just little details like that that make me go, “Hm.” Also, most of the panhandlers I see, they're just LURKING downtown, all throughout the summer. They spend their whole fucking day at the corner, just panhandling money so they can get 1.14 litres of strong alcohol, 10.1 per cent or some shit. I would go to work, near Square Victoria, I would go past one hobo — panhandling already, while I'm walking to work — as I'm leaving, he was still there panhandling, with a bottle of beer right next to him. Being a homeless guy myself — well, ex-homeless guy — I managed to pull myself up by my bootstraps, actually get back to work, do regular shit, be an average contributing citizen. So these fuckheads don't deserve any of my pity, respect or time. Fuck 'em. [BLEEP!]

M Do you know how many times I hear SORRY every day? Sorry. I know it means, “Excuse me,” but, “Sorry, I can't hear you.” Oh I'm so sorry, I can't help you, sorry about that. I'm sorry about the world's condition. I'm sorry about the human condition, I'm so sorry. Oh I'm sorry, did I bother you? I'm sorry, I'm so sorry, I'm so fucking sorry. Goddamn I'm so sorry for saying sorry so many fucking times. But anyways, sorry about that. Sorry I didn't hear you. Oh, your silence screams louder than any power tool or train. So I guess you're just going to have to use little sorrys. Okay, sorry. Sorry sorry sorry. Bye. [BLEEP!]

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Arthurs



Clayton Sandhu

BY CLAYTON SANDHU

Arthurs is like a beautifully appointed diner conjured up in a good dream. It's the kind of diner-meets-deli that serves the food you want to eat with the level of care and attention that other diners just don't manage.

The restaurant from partners Alex Cohen and Raegan Steinberg is named in honour of Steinberg's late father and pays homage to his legacy with a nod to the Jewish comfort foods of Eastern Europe that defined Steinberg's childhood. Sitting at the marble-topped bar with the soft morning light peeking through elegantly draped minty-green curtains, I feel like I'm in some sort of lucid dream and I'm in no hurry to wake up.

Chef Alex Cohen claims to take inspiration from Russ and Daughters, the world-renowned fish-forward deli in New York City. Certainly, in the decor, the inspiration comes across. The two restaurants share a salmon-hued typeface in the exterior signage and the use of the green from the Russ & Daughters sign permeates the entire restaurant. As for the food, Cohen's shares three things in common with Russ & Daughters: Jewish fare, a penchant for smoked fish and good cooking. The luminous space glows with natural light and even at 9:30 on a Monday morning, the room is alive with energy.

Like a true diner, Arthurs serves only filter coffee, which is fine by me. Before I know it there's a steaming cup of black coffee in front of me served in a classic diner mug striped in the same green as the stripes on the awning outside. The menu is laminated and, again, in classic diner style, serves as both menu and placemat, which I very much like. It's these little clin d'oeils that set Arthurs apart — the space is beautiful and elegant and elevates the restaurant above

diner status, but it also incorporates the classic diner tropes in a way that reminds you not to take it too seriously.

Arthurs is a daytime spot, serving breakfast and lunch from 8 a.m. until 3 p.m. weekdays, and from 9 a.m. until 4 p.m. on the weekends. There is a mix of eggy breakfast dishes and lunchier items like a Matzah ball soup and chicken schnitzel, a selection of scoops (i.e. tuna salad, egg salad etc.) with toast in a sort of build-your-own-sandwich style, and a number of composed sandwiches. I arrive with breakfast in mind and hungry for something authentically Jewish. I order what's called the Latke Smorgasbord, a plate with scrambled eggs, a latke, a cucumber and dill salad, some salmon gravlax and challah roll for good measure.

Sipping my coffee, I observe the room. It's teeming with regulars and I seem to be the only first-timer in the whole place. Expectant mothers relax in a banquet and chat over avocado toast, friends meet for coffee and cookies, a fashionable man wearing a necklace brandishing a diamond-studded star of David orders Matzah ball soup to go. The neighbourhood converges on this diner in a genuine and heartwarming way. Suddenly my breakfast arrives.

In a plate matching my mug are five small and attractive piles of food, the components of my smorgasbord: a custardy dollop of scrambled eggs, a golden brown latke topped with a duo of puréed apple sauce and sour cream garnished with chives, ribbons of thinly sliced salmon gravlax piled voluminously and dressed with mullet caviar, a salad of small-diced cucumber and pickled onion and a warm sesame-dotted challah bun. It's a beautifully compartmentalized breakfast that allows one to taste each component on its own and to mix in whatever combination they so choose. A bite of eggs on challah, some salmon followed by a refreshing bite of cucumber, a sweet and savoury morsel of latke and applesauce, something tasty to eat in every corner of the plate. The dish is perfect.

The scramble is especially good, velvety smooth aside from the very small curds of egg that add that pleasing texture to great scrambled eggs. The latke was crispy and golden

brown, but more importantly it tasted of potato and onion and not of cooking oil. Really good. The salmon gravlax was expertly sliced and the seasoning from the cure was perhaps slightly delicate, but overall very good. I personally would have liked a bit more salt and a bit more acidity in the cucumber salad, but again, overall the salad was vibrant and added a beautiful freshness to counterbalance the fatty fish.

As my plate was being cleared and my coffee topped up, I was persuaded by my server to order the Syrniki: cottage cheese pancakes offered in a full stack (four pancakes) or half (two). I opted for the smaller portion. The pancakes are beautifully fried, nearly cartoonish in their appearance: half-inch thick fluffy cakes sitting in a glorious moat of maple syrup fried to a perfect golden-brown. I cut into the top cake, which tore away to reveal an incredibly moist interior with a beautifully bubbled crumb. I don't particularly care about pancakes, and I ordered them mostly for a bit of diversity for the review, but these are truly exquisite. The exterior is crisp and withstands the syrup until the moment you cut into it and allow the moist and porous interior to drink up some the syrup; then you bite into it and the saltiness of the butter that the pancake was fried in meets with the syrup, and you get the sweet and salty experience. As I said, I don't care about pancakes and here I am gushing about them. They're very good.

It should come as no surprise that I liked Arthurs. Everyone likes Arthurs. But now I understand why. It's food you think you understand, it's food you've likely eaten countless times, but it's better. You know when you see food in a photo and it looks delicious but the real thing is so disappointing? Arthurs is as good as the food in the photo looks.

I can't say much about the lunch side of things, but the wine list is cheap and put together by Ryan Gray, and Rachel Ray loves the schnitzel. If lunch is anything like what I ate for breakfast, it's also very good. Do yourself a favour and check out Arthurs for a nosh.

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Album reviews



Loud, *Tout Ça Pour Ça*
 (Joy Ride)
 Loud stays true to his name on this second solo LP, and there's no way this is gonna go quiet any time soon. If the fact it's a French-language release keeps you from plugging in with his undeniably skilled combo of hip hop currency and timelessness, take a

course in manners, not grammar. Having just become the first Quebec rapper to fill the Bell Centre — for two nights at that — the introspection driving *Tout Ça Pour Ça* doesn't simply roll out like a list of self-commentaries so much as a confident acceptance speech from a voice unafraid to claim what's his and tell you exactly what else he's coming for. He's not the province's "answer" to anything in the broader spectrum of modern rap music — no one was even asking for a guy like this. He just fucking tells you why we need him, while *Tout Ça Pour Ça* — lushed-out with gritty yet decadent production mostly handled by Ajust and Ruffsound — all but demands that the next ones put up or shut up. Interesting times, these. 8.5/10 Trial Track: "Pas Sortable" (Darcy MacDonald)

Tyler, the Creator, *IGOR*
 (A Boy Is a Gun/Columbia)
 When Tyler's breakthrough album *Goblin* dropped in 2011, this critic was none too impressed with what he considered Odd Future's overly lauded rehashing of lesser-appreciated, broke-and-broken-beat indie rap from the late '90s and



early 2000s. Time has mellowed me on the California rap talent's importance to the past near-decade of music, as his influence becomes less subtle and his attitude proves increasingly vital as he approaches 30. This fifth, entirely self-produced and elegantly crafted LP takes a

turn for the groovier, surprising listeners with a synth-soul driven collection of less rappy, not-quite-happy jams that still seethe dangerously just under its jive-ass, exaggerated, lay-me-some-skin collar. If *IGOR* packs a feel-good hit for the summer, it's laced with bathtub fentanyl and will leave you sweating, shaking and not quite right in the head. 8/10 Trial Track: "What's Good" (Darcy MacDonald)



Laurence Nerbonne, *Feu*
 (Coyote)
 A combative DIY pop and rap affair fit for the times, and it's not always apparent where the haymakers are being directed. That unpredictability is definitely what gives Nerbonne's self-helmed sophomore release added

panache, as does its sheer confidence. You can feel the fucks not being given throughout this excruciatingly 2019 album, with Nerbonne willing a lot of these hooks to the next level through sheer determination. Not an unheard of formula elsewhere, but in Quebec a lone wolf pop proclamation feels like its raging against the old machine in more ways than one. 7.5/10 Trial Track: "Rebound" (Erik Leijon)

Tim Heidecker, *What the Brokenhearted Do...* (Jagjaguwar)
 On his third album, legendary comedian Tim Heidecker



plays the role of a sad-sack singer/songwriter undergoing a messy divorce. A potentially hilarious premise, but Heidecker's despondent screams on songs like "Finally Getting Over," guided by Jonathan Rado's melancholy guitar, make for a bleak, genuinely affecting

11 tracks. Heidecker's influences are clear (Dylan circa *Blood on the Tracks*, the discography of Harry Nilsson) and are sometimes overwhelming — at times coming close to parody. But hey, they're spot-on: almost as good as his impression of Alex Jones. 7/10 Trial Track: "I'm Not Good Enough" (Brandon Kaufman)



Steve Lacy, *Apollo XXI*
 (3qtr)
 Steve Lacy, member of the Internet, producer and prolific songwriter — who's shared credits with Solange, Kendrick Lamar and Vampire Weekend — has released his debut album. The results are mixed. There's little edge to Lacy's SoCal chill-funk vibe; the songs are all pleasant, sure, but pleasantries only go so far before you realize the person who's speaking just doesn't have much interesting to say. Lacy's talents as a producer, nevertheless, are clear on tracks like "Only If" and "Playground." *Apollo XXI* might not be his best showing, but Lacy is talented enough to sustain intrigue about future work. 5/10 Trial Track: "Only If" (Brandon Kaufman)



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:hammer of the mods

BY JOHNSON CUMMINS

I got some big picks for the mighty month of June, but if you think I'm gonna be giving the Hammer bump to some sort of Broken Social Scene grant-grab claptrap, you haven't feasted your eyes on the pearls I lay down on the reg in this here rag. No Q radio static for this ol' punker. Imma gonna wise you L7s up to two shows that stand back to back on the June calendar. Not only that but I will be shouting from the tallest mountain about the return of Montreal's greatest progressive bands as well as the kings of noise who will open for them.

This last big pick is happening at Suoni per il Popolo, running through most of June at Casa, Sala, la Vitrola and la Sotterenea, which hardly needs to be mentioned as a festival highlight as each night is stacked. For those about to skronk, we salute you.

Nails, Misery Index, Outer Heaven, Ulthar

Surprisingly enough, I am not really into the testosterone-fuelled, hairy-knuckled, angry-dude rock but every now and again there comes a band that possesses the rage of an early Steve Austin from Today Is the Day and I have to give it up. That band is Nails, and with a combination of black metal, noise, crust and death, this band is angrier than a beaver with a chipped tooth and hits like a mit-full of nickels. Expect to see every bearded, tattooed, septum-pierced duder to be wearing Nails shirts for the next couple of years after this gigger.

Club Soda (1225 St-Laurent), June 11, 7 p.m., \$20/\$25

Full of Hell, Primitive Man, Genocide Pact, Flesh/Void

Another band that easily remains head and shoulders above the stubbed-toe, angst-ridden set. Full of Hell's crushing display of blackened aggression is sure to recall the heady days of Cursed and Converge when they were at their most pulverizing on Jane Doe. If you want to know where heavy music is at in 2019, you will definitely want to make this and the Nails gig. Definitely show up early for this one, too, as Primitive Man will give the almighty Full of Hell a good run for their money.

Bar le Ritz PDB (179 Jean-Talon W.), June 12, 7 p.m., \$16/\$18

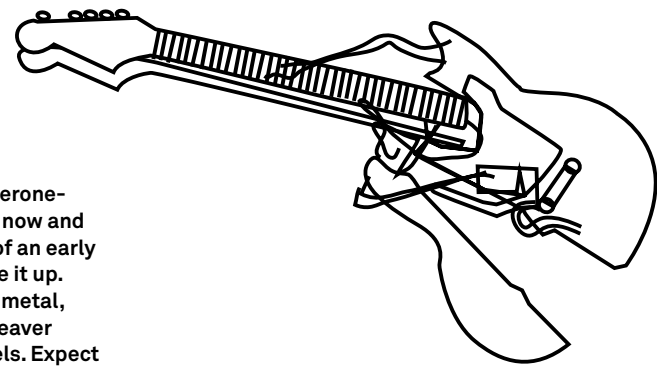
Fly Pan Am, Fennesz, Wolf Eyes, Gashrat, Cucina Povera

After a 14-year hiatus, while greying at the temples and long in the teeth, Montrealers Fly Pan Am are back on stage,

with a new album to come. Surely their sonic fuckery is honed even more razor sharp — or maybe not. Will it suck? Maybe. Will it be the tits of the Suoni fest? Who knows, Poindexter, I can't throw the I ching for ya. Speaking of itchy, I'm also itching to tell you about the Led Zep of noise — Wolf Eyes — who will liquefy your fillings with a maelstrom of sonic nails. Fly Pan Am will be showing the young'uns how it's done over two nights in the middle of the month, but you will definitely want to make it to the first night, as Wolf Eyes are just too good to miss. Oddly enough, Jonathan Parant from Fly Pan Am will also be manning the bar both nights as he was too cheap to give up the tips from his shifts.

La Sala Rossa (4848 St-Laurent), June 14 and 15, 8:30 p.m., \$20-\$40

Current Obsession: Darkthrone, Old Star
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Richard Galliano
duo with Ron Carter
Tribute to Michel Legrand
with Richard Galliano and the Quatuor Molinari
June 26

Double Bill
Ravi Coltrane
Quartet
Antonio Sanchez & Migration
June 30

Bahamas
Opening act: Emilie Kahn
July 5

Leslie Odom, Jr.
Dominique Fils-Aimé
July 6

Théâtre Maisonneuve, PdA • 8 p.m.

LES RYTHMES

The Strumbellas
Opening act: Elliot Maginot
June 27

Steel Pulse
Opening act: Jah Cutta
June 28

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Opening act: Matt Andersen
June 29

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Opening act: Blinky Bill
July 4

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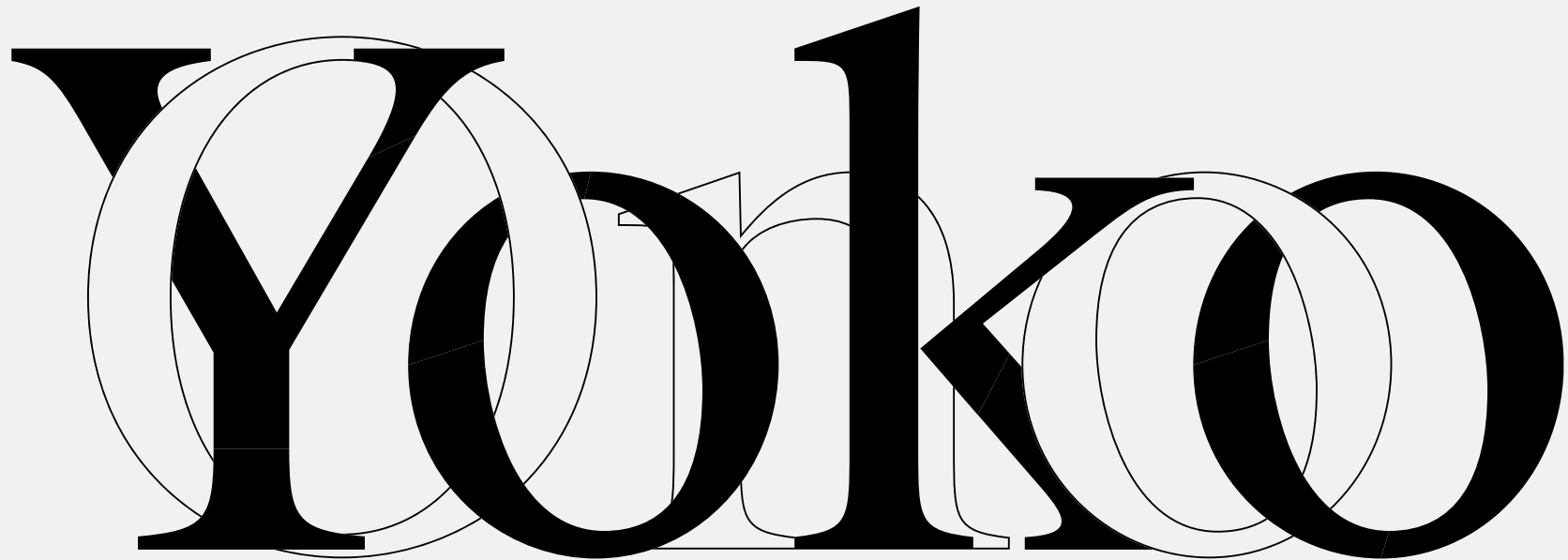
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film

Let's get radical



Peterloo

office — those letters are still in the National Archives. So we were able one day to go to the National Archives with all of the actors who were playing magistrates and those who were playing real ones could read their own letters — the letters their characters had written! On top of it, I worked with a historian, Jacqueline Riding, and she helped guide us through all the research.”

And even if it's not regularly a part of Leigh's process, the filmmaker says he quite enjoys it — primarily for the results it gives.

“Yes, of course!” he says. “I'm not an academic — I wouldn't be doing it for its own sake. I only enjoy doing it for the purpose of finding what story I'm going to tell. I'm not disposed to do research in an academic way, because I'm not that way — although I am a reader of books, obviously. You know, we made *Topsy-Turvy*, which involved massive amounts of research, as well as *Mr. Turner*. And, indeed, when we made *Vera Drake*, that involved substantial research into the nature of what went on when abortion was illegal.”

There's certainly no denying that, thanks to its meticulous historical nature, *Peterloo* is more dense and involved than, say, the aforementioned *Happy-Go-Lucky*. Attention has to be paid with the understanding that, despite it all, some of it might go over your head — an almost automatic criticism in the “Golden Age of TV” era where exposition is not only encouraged but actively expected by audiences.

“I have two things to say about that,” says Leigh. “The first thing is that I'm not at all interested in such nonsense. But also, with all due respect to everybody, the terms of reference of those kinds of observations are based on the premise that movies is Hollywood. But, actually, I'm not part of Hollywood. I'm part of world cinema. I'm a European filmmaker. All around the world, people are making all kinds of films. That's got nothing to do with the presets and the constraints of what happens in Hollywood. I'm not really interested in any of that. It doesn't really make any sense. Any film should do what it has to do, respect the intelligence of its audience, and get on with it, really!”

I bring the conversation back to the idea of scale in his film — *Peterloo* is a film with hundreds of extras, extensive crowd scenes and tons of period detail, which I make the mistake of thinking has not been achieved through CGI.

BY ALEX ROSE

There's one kind of film we tend to associate with Mike Leigh: dialogue-heavy dramatic comedies about England's middle and lower classes that generally unfold as a slice-of-life.

Leigh is associated with those movies because he's absolutely the best at making them, but in the last two decades, he's also made three historical films: *Topsy-Turvy*, *Mr. Turner* and now *Peterloo*, which has been touted, since its festival run, as the most radical departure in his filmography. It's certainly on a larger scale than some of his previous films, but Leigh rejects the notion that this is a departure at all.

“Somebody about half an hour ago said it was stylistically different,” says Leigh. “It *isn't* stylistically different. In fact, all my films are stylistically siblings. The difference, if there is a difference, is that it's the only film that's explicitly about political activities. All my films are in a way political. In a way, you could say that it's more overtly political, but it has nothing to do with form or style or a way of looking at human beings. As far as I'm concerned, it's exactly the same except for the subject matter and the scale, which are obviously different. We're looking at people as people in a truthful, real and organic way.

“Some say that this film is more concerned with language,” Leigh continues, referring to the film's meticulous recreations of letters and trials culled from actual real-life archives. “That's bullshit, really; all my films are concerned with language! (laughs) Language fascinates me. You can't say that *Naked* was less concerned with language than *Peterloo*. Even *Happy-Go-Lucky*, you have this lunatic right-wing nutcase driving instructor. All this stuff pours out of him! This is a film in which there is a great deal of talking and a great deal of language and ideas. In the end, I make films

about people doing what they do. In this film, what they do is make speeches to other people to convince them of ideas!”

Peterloo centres on a period of British history where, soon after the battle of Waterloo, manual workers found themselves short on work and in an economic slump thanks in part to strict laws that make it impossible to import cheaper grain. These sets of rules keep the rich richer and the poor poorer, which in turn sparks an activist movement that is watched closely by local authorities, who are counting their ducats and patiently waiting for any excuse to arrest those they see as dangerous radicals. A large-scale event is planned in St. Peter's Field in Manchester wherein world-famous orator Henry Hunt (Rory Kinnear) is to give a speech, drawing massive crowds from surrounding towns, but the event is (again) closely watched by authorities who want nothing more than an excuse to go in there with guns blazing. The event is widely known as the Peterloo massacre, lest you think that it all ends peachy-keen for the working man.

Leigh is also notorious for his long rehearsal process, in which he essentially shapes the film's script through constant work with the cast. He also applied that process to *Peterloo* — with the caveat that it first had to rest on extensive historical research.

“The material you need to make a film set 200 years ago is all there,” he explains. “It's all around. It's only 200 years ago! There's a massive amount of stuff in the National Archive, in libraries, in archives in Manchester. All of the newspapers from the period are around. Some of the protagonists in the film wrote their autobiographies. Three hundred people testified after the Peterloo massacre as to what happened to them at the massacre. There are court proceedings... you name it, it's there. It's also been written about quite a bit. Were I to make a film set in the sixth, seventh or eighth century, it would be quite hard to not only research things that actually happened, but also to understand how people lived, how people spoke and so on. But 200 years ago — everything is searchable. Everything I just listed, we did.

You see in the film the magistrates writing to the home

“Did I hear you say there's no CGI in it?” says Leigh. “It's got CGI all over it! (laughs) Huge amount of CGI! First of all, we only had 200 extras — there's huge amounts of crowd replication in there. Secondly, where we shot the massacre is a place called Tillbury Fort in Essex, east of London. It's a fort built by Henry the 8th. There's nothing around, in the sky. In the film, you can see all these factories and churches and all this kind of stuff. The CGI guys built a model of Manchester at the time so that you could look in any direction and see this stuff. These guys have learned that craft doing all these big movies that are about CGI and advertised as such. The great thing is they've brought these skills and made it look really real. It's fascinating the number of people — including you — who have said there's no CGI. We couldn't have done it without CGI!”

Regardless, don't see *Peterloo* as a breakthrough in what Mike Leigh might make films about in the future. He certainly doesn't.

“These things are a technicality, in the end,” he says. “Any tools that are there to help me tell the stories that I want to tell are tools to be used. And these kinds of new tools have been perfected by these bright people over a long period of time to be deployed. But in the end, I'm only interested in deploying them to do exactly the same kind of thing that I was doing in what you could call the ‘cruder’ films I was making 20 or 30 years ago. You move on! I made a whole bunch of films on 16mm film for BBC television; the motion picture standards that we were upholding then were very crude, indeed, but the object of the films are still the same, which is to talk about real people in a real way. In *Mr. Turner*, there's a point where Turner and two young painters are in a rowing boat and they see that great ship, the Fighting Temeraire, which is a painting by Turner, being towed to be broken. Well, we filmed the sunset and we filmed the guys in the boat, but we sure as hell didn't film the Fighting Temeraire!”

→ *Peterloo* is in theatres now.

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The best of Cannes 2019

PHOTOS BY YACINE FORT

The 72nd edition of the Cannes film festival went down in scenic southern France from May 14 to 25. For reviews and the complete photo gallery, go to cultmtl.com. Here is the best of the red carpet from our on-site paparazzo.



Tilda Swinton



Winnie Harlow



Quentin Tarantino, Leonardo Di Caprio and Brad Pitt



Jim Jarmusch



The cast of *The Dead Don't Die*



Madison Beer



James Norton



Emma Stone

On Screen



Child's Play



The Dead Don't Die



La femme de mon frère



Dark Phoenix

BY ALEX ROSE

You'd think that the apparent finality of *Avengers: Endgame* would mean that studios would naturally cool it on the superhero movies for a while, but alas, it's not a calendar month without a superhero movie.

This month's culprit is *Dark Phoenix* (June 7), the supposed endpoint for the convoluted X-Men series that has been unfolding, in various permutations of varying quality, since 2000. Hopes aren't too high for the maligned franchise, which has seen disgraced director Bryan Singer kicked off and replaced by screenwriter Simon Kinberg. This chapter focuses primarily on the character of Jean Grey (Sophie Turner) as she turns into Dark Phoenix.

It's a franchise-heavy summer (aren't they all), as just one week later sees the release of *Men in Black International* (June 14), a sequel/spinoff focusing on the British office of the paranormal agency. Chris Hemsworth and Tessa Thompson are good casting choices, but the first trailer was heavy on the spectacle and dangerously light on laughs. Emma Thompson, Kumail Nanjiani and Liam Neeson co-star. The first three *Toy Story* films are stone-cold classics, but Pixar has been stretching itself a little thin with the sequels these days. This new iteration, *Toy Story 4* (June 21), introduces a wack-ass spork character voiced by Tony Hale (?) and has a slightly moldy, straight-to-video-'90s-Disney-movie vibe. That said, Pixar has surprised us before.

The most unlikely franchise unfolding this month is almost certainly the most recent chapter in the Shaft franchise

(June 14). The third film in the series to be titled just *Shaft* (!), it follows three generations of John Shaft (Richard Roundtree, Samuel L. Jackson and Jessie T. Usher) coming to terms with the reality of being a black private dick who's a sex machine to all the chicks in 2019. Frankly, the fact that this movie even exists and that it posits that all *Shaft* movies are direct sequels to each other is so insane that the actual quality of the finished product seems inconsequential.

The *Annabelle* series continues to putter on with *Annabelle Comes Home* (June 26), the seventh installment in the *Conjuring* series. The synopsis hasn't changed much: a couple of demonologists played by Patrick Wilson and Vera Farmiga must contend with a possessed doll wreaking havoc around them. It seems like it's pretty much exactly what we've come to expect. The same can't be said about *Child's Play* (June 21), the remake of the longest-running possessed doll franchise. The first *Child's Play* film to be made without the involvement of creator Don Mancini, it stars Aubrey Plaza, Brian Tyree Henry and Mark Hamill as the voice of Chucky.

Lest we panic, there are a few original propositions hitting screens this month. Original is perhaps too strong a word to describe *The Dead Don't Die* (June 14), a star-studded zombie comedy from Jim Jarmusch; there's so little left to say about zombies that even a filmmaker of Jarmusch's status is likely to go over familiar ground. *The Dead Don't Die* was the Cannes opening film this year, where it was met with mixed reactions, but a zombie movie starring Bill Murray, Adam Driver, Tilda Swinton and Tom Waits would have to be truly unwatchable not to get my attention.

Emma Thompson and Mindy Kaling star in *Late Night* (June 14), a Kaling-penned comedy about a late-night talk show

host (Thompson) who tries to boost her ailing ratings with the help of a new writer (Kaling). The Nisha Ganatra-directed film was well-received out of Sundance, where Amazon Studios paid a foraminous \$13-million sum for the distribution rights.

Danny Boyle dropped out of the latest James Bond movie to make *Yesterday* (June 28), a high-concept jukebox musical that imagines a world where the Beatles have never existed — but one guy (Himesh Patel) knows all the songs. Truthfully, this seems like a pretty dumb concept to hinge a movie upon, but people sure do love the Beatles.

Monia Chokri — probably best known for her acting work in Xavier Dolan movies — makes her directorial debut with *La femme de mon frère*, a dramatic comedy about an underemployed 30-something (Anne-Élisabeth Bossé) whose already precarious life is thrown upside down when her brother (Patrick Hivon) falls in love. *La femme de mon frère* (June 7) won the "Coup de coeur" prize at Cannes, where it premiered in the Un certain regard section.

Kenneth Branagh takes a short break between enormous blockbusters to direct and star in *All Is True* (June 7), a Shakespeare biopic co-starring Judi Dench (as Shakespeare's wife Anne Hathaway) and Ian McKellen. Once a Fantasia regular with his early, genre-based works, 18-year-old filmmaker Nathan Ambrosioni makes his "official" debut with the romantic drama *Les Drapeaux de papier* (June 28). Guillaume Canet follows up his 2010 hit *Les petits mouchoirs* with its sequel *Nous finirons ensemble* (June 28); much of the cast (including François Cluzet and Marion Cotillard) returns.



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Open mic

BY NORA ROSENTHAL

Kate Hammer is a shockingly busy woman.

For the past year and a half, she's been hosting the weekly comedy hour *Infamous*, a show giving space to femme and nonbinary comedians and monologists both with and without experience. She also performs regularly in sketch and improv groups across Montreal. At this month's Fringe Festival she's written and directed a Shakespeare mash-up comedy, *The Peers*, in which she also performs, as well as starring in the queer coming-of-age story *Exits*, written by Ella Kohlmann and directed by Madie Jolliffe. And because Hammer seemingly doesn't sleep, this summer she'll be doing two shows as part of OFF-Just for Laughs: *Lesbian Speed Date From Hell!* (also being presented at Montreal Pride) and *Tinder Tales*.

This is one comedian who's fully committed to thoughtfulness in comedy — to a consideration of what we're laughing at and who we're laughing with — but also to playfulness. It's easy to see that a longstanding love of performance and laughter keep Hammer excited about what she does.

Nora Rosenthal: For most people, improv is probably the



The Peers by Infamous

Mathieu Samson

most terrifying type of comedy. At least in stand-up you have your *bit*. What is it that draws you to this kind of comedy?

Kate Hammer: For years I'd known about improv and been so drawn to it and looked up UCB (Upright Citizens Brigade) in New York, the improv school that was founded by Amy Poehler and Matt Besser and that crew. Very nerdy improv. A couple of weeks ago I went to New York to take level one of the UCB format. It was such a cool experience. For years I'd wanted to go.

I guess what really got me into it in Montreal was wanting a community, and wanting to make friends, being new in the city. But I think the real drive was to meet those like-minded people and make those bonds by playing pretend on stage as adults.

NR: Speaking of community, I'm interested in the role of the comedian as organizer and host — could you talk about that?

KH: I am a big believer that as a performer you have a responsibility. You have the responsibility to make space for voices, to represent the world that you want to be a part of. You know, at so many shows it's the same performers and it's a bunch of white men and people are like, "This is because they're just the best people," and well, are you giving space for anyone else to have a chance? So whenever I produce a show, I always try and mix in newer performers, people who have never done stand-up. I want them on my show because I want that space for new comedians who don't punch down, who support each other and have unique points of view, voices that need to be heard.

NR: What was the genesis of *The Peers*, and this idea of a Shakespeare mash-up?

KH: First and foremost I promised myself that I would have fun. I'm really interested in questioning what's in our canon of literature and theatre. Why do we hold Shakespeare and other names up instead of building a new narrative out of something current and alive? I don't think any of it is terrible, but we're like *this* is the level you have to reach to be considered poetry, to be considered good. It's also a fun thing to play with because everyone knows Shakespeare to some extent. Even if you've never read Shakespeare, you've for sure seen something else in the zeitgeist that has parodied Shakespeare.

I realized that I missed a lot seeing shows. You know I feel like I get *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and I've seen it how many times? But when you go over it again, you're like, oh I forgot that the fairy queen was trying to keep a small child as a slave.

NR: Anything else about the show, any favourite moments?

KH: There's a Björk reference that I particularly love, more because I get to wear a swan than anything else.

I cast [*The Peers*] before I wrote it because I really wanted the characters to be inspired by the actors. All the characters are called by our own names cause they're playing very heightened versions of ourselves.

I've tried to rein myself in over the years, not to make others uncomfortable, not to be too much, and writing this show is the first time in a long time that I feel like I've been allowed to be *big* and to be myself.

→ *The Peers* plays at Théâtre Impro Montréal (3697 St-Laurent) June 7, 9, 10, 13, 15 & 16, various times, \$10-\$12

See cultmtl.com for an extended version of this article.

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Crème de la Fringe



Blindside

BY SARAH DESHAIES

With over 800 performances by more than 500 artists in 16 venues over the course of 19 days (through June 16), the sheer choice of theatre productions at the 29th annual Montreal Fringe Festival is a bit daunting.

The Fringe operates by a lottery system, which means winning artists have full creative control over their shows. There are a lot of daring, wacky and wondrous performances. Some will move you to tears and make you laugh joyously, others will put you to sleep or prompt you to rip up your ticket as you walk out.

Remember that if you truly detest a show, you've likely only lost 30 to 60 minutes of your day — and now you have something to bitch about at the beer tent. And if you love a show, tell everyone you know.

Here's a round-up of Fringe shows that I'd like to see, and that I suspect you'd like to, as well.

Dear Jax

Stephen Maclean Rogers' mother was struck with aphasia, a disorder that blurs your ability to speak. After her quick decline and death, the family uncovered letters that she had written to a spirit named Jax, asking for advice on a range of subjects. Rogers, who grew up in Guelph and is now based in Montreal, explores grief, his family's interest in the spiritual and his mother's legacy.

Le Ministère (4521 St-Laurent), June 6, 8, 11, 13, 15, \$5/\$10

Fairy Falls

Meander is a whimsical being, clad in pink suspenders and blush make-up, who's on a mission to find his wings. It's a fairy tale, yes, but one decidedly for adults. You might recognize this clown from their alter ego Dot Dot Dot, the red-headed sweet-faced drag queen of House of Laureen. (Laureen is also presenting its own show: *Mx Queerdo MTL*, at Café Cléopâtre.)

Théâtre Impro Montreal (3697 St-Laurent, #202), June 6, 7, 8, 13, 14, 16, \$10

Burning Bridget Cleary

Remembered as "the last witch burned in Ireland," the ailing Bridget Cleary's gruesome fate was sealed when her husband suspected that she had been replaced with a changeling. This is feminist retelling was co-written and

directed by Darragh Mondoux, a theatre artist who comes by her history honestly as both a Concordia Irish studies student and member of the court at this year's Saint Patrick's Day Parade.

MainLine Theatre (3997 St-Laurent), June 8–11, 13, 15, \$8–\$10

The Trophy Hunt

Bring your walking shoes for this site-specific hunting party. The masked Fringe-for-All preview gave off a swirl of tams, *The Lion King* and *Mean Girls*. Directed by Fringe vet and Shaw Fest-trained Paul Van Dyck, written by Trina Davies and starring a solid four-person cast and a strong chorus, the play is getting a "rolling world premiere" across Canada this summer, with artists presenting different interpretations of the show at various Fringe festivals. Neat!

Info Booth at Fringe Park (Rachel & St-Laurent), June 6–8, 11–15, \$12

Piaf and Brel: The Impossible Concert

Singer Melanie Gall brings to life two iconic performers who felt and lived all the feels both onstage and off. The Alberta-based Gall, who's also the world's leading expert in historic songs about knitting and spinning, has run the show at the Edinburgh Fringe three times. Tickets cost \$10 for students, seniors and beret wearers.

Le Ministère, June 9–11, 13–15, \$10/\$12

inVivo (testé sur moi)

A 90-minute, bilingual look at one woman's mission to get knocked up. *inVivo* is the follow-up to Véronick Raymond's autobiographical 2017 Fringe piece *inVitro*. After seven failed attempts at using her own eggs, the Montreal author and theatre artist explores her other options while taking a critical look at the ethical, feminist and environmental quandaries of assisted procreation.

Studio Jean-Valcour du Conservatoire (4750 Henri-Julien), June 6, 8, 9, 13, 14, 16, \$10–\$12

Blindside / Eye Candy / INK

On that family note: Stephanie Morin-Robert and Alastair Knowles are Canadian Fringe circuit darlings, and now also partners and parents to one-year-old Olive. They're hitting the festival with baby in tow, presenting three shows in Montreal: choreographer Morin-Robert's storytelling dance show, *Blindside*; *Eye Candy*, her new tale about sex, pregnancy and birth, which features Olive; and *INK*, which hands the elastic and gifted Knowles a pen and 10,000 square feet of paper in a quest to get more out of life.

La Chapelle Theatre (3700 St-Dominique), various dates, times and prices

Magnificence

To show off his Fringe bonafides, playwright Keir Cutler wore a 1999 festival t-shirt to the Fringe-for-All preview, but his many shows speak to his skill and experience. For his 15th crack at the festival, and 10th original monologue, Cutler will tell his mother's fascinating story, adapted from her memoir and anecdotes. The founder of children's publisher Tundra Books, May Ebbitt Cutler also served as mayor of Westmount.

Freestanding Room (4324 St-Laurent), June 6–9, 13–15, \$12

Aquaphonie

A 30-minute clown escapade about a trio of "aquanauts" who are forced into action when their reservoir springs a leak, because sometimes you need a wet 'n' wild palate cleanser, and perhaps a non-verbal, all-ages show to schlep the kids to.

Parking du Musée des Hospitalières (201 des Pins W.), June 5–7, \$7

→ See the complete Fringe program at montrealfringe.ca

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Beyond the wall

BY NORA ROSENTHAL

In its seventh year, the Mural Festival will be taking over a large swath of St-Laurent Boulevard with its ever-increasing international roster of artists working on the urban scale.

This year the festival is emphasizing artists who use more unusual media or who otherwise stray from the notion that mural art is exclusively painted on walls. The Dutch artist



Spidertag

Leon Keer will be painting an immense trompe l'oeil on pavement, and Spanish artist Spidertag will be creating an interactive LED installation at the corner of St-Laurent and Mont-Royal.

Spidertag in particular is creating light-based site-specific works that defy what we think of as a mural. Neon is a critical part of the visual narrative of cities, but Spidertag uses flexible portable battery-powered cables of LEDs that have allowed him to make light art in the peripheries of cities, adding to that visual landscape with abstractions that don't deal in the language of roadside advertising and late-night motel signs, only in their colours and luminosity.

Spidertag refers to these abstract pieces as neonmetry. Speaking over email, he described neonmetry as "a language experiment", "a new word [to] express what [he's] doing." Street art is intrinsically impermanent, but Spidertag pointed out that even his longer-term installations can only really be seen by night. His work will be interesting to see alongside more traditional painted murals, the bright colours and tremendous size of which always look their imposing best on a smoggy summer day.

Spidertag's work can exist on smaller scales — brief site interventions without permission in line with the transitory nature of a great deal of street art. A festival context, however, gives the legitimacy and time for more ambitious projects, not only for Spidertag but for all the participating artists.

This year's Canadian line-up includes Toronto graffiti artist Waxhead, Montreal's Germ Dee, whose work is heavily steeped in nostalgic iconography (albeit with an undeniably warped stoner vibe), as well as Laurence Vallières, who creates large sculptures of animals with recycled cardboard. These sculptures have an even more fleeting life than most street art, but Vallières aims to create a year-long sculpture at the festival, made not of instantly-soggy-if-rained-upon cardboard, but of sturdy coroplast.

Most of the murals at the festival will endure for the year afterwards, sometimes longer, but during the festival itself spectators get to witness the creation of these works. If you haven't been before, the sheer scale of mural art becomes vastly more apparent when the artist in question is teetering above you on a ladder and wearing a face respirator, spray paint can in hand. Just seeing the process can give insight into the difficulty of painting or otherwise making work on such a large scale, and can alter how you see, and subsequently live with, the art that graces our city's walls.

→ The Mural Festival takes place from June 6–16. Many events are free, with guided tours from \$20.

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Triple threat

BY LORRAINE CARPENTER

It's quite an accomplishment to see childhood dreams come true.

Rachel Bloom aspired to be a Broadway star when she was a kid — “or a surgeon, or Disney imagineer, or a kitty,” she says — and with the evolution of *Crazy Ex-Girlfriend* from hit sitcom to touring show to Broadway musical (the next step), she has reached that showbiz apex.

Having co-created and co-starred in *Crazy Ex-Girlfriend* alongside Aline Brosh McKenna — Bloom also executive-produced the show, which began airing on the CW from 2015 and just had its series finale in April — Bloom developed a perfect vehicle for her triple-threat skill-set. Not only was the story of New York lawyer Rebecca Bunch a satirical romantic comedy, it also incorporated song and dance. This allowed Bloom to draw from her musical theatre training, a path she embarked on while delving into comedy simultaneously.

“They were two separate things to the point where some comedy friends used to say to me, ‘When are you gonna quit musical theatre and just focus on comedy full time?’” says Bloom. “And my theatre teachers often had no idea that I was involved with sketch comedy and improv, and when they found out, they were impressed but warned me I might have to make a choice at some point.”

With her upcoming Just for Laughs gigs, Bloom is continuing to mix music and comedy, performing songs from the show and doing stand-up in her solo performances. I was curious about whether, Broadway aside, she looks forward to a time when she can focus on one thing — just comedy. Does making jokes and singing during the course of one show, night after night, become exhausting?

“I love using all of these skills at once! The exhausting part of my job is really working on everything else that’s being done in conjunction. On *Crazy Ex*, it was cowriting the songs, looking over scripts, being in production meetings, going to editing for the music videos and doing hours of costume fittings. In live shows, it’s keeping track of rehearsal changes, writing scripts, making props and costume lists, among other things. The performing itself is the fun part.”

In an era when it’s easier to offend people than to make them laugh, the title *Crazy Ex-Girlfriend* may invite scrutiny from mental health advocates and feminists alike, especially if they’ve never seen the show. Issues such as anxiety, depression, alcoholism and negative body image were part of the fabric of *Crazy Ex-Girlfriend*, and the title, Bloom explains, “leans in to the fact that it is, indeed, a negative stereotype.”

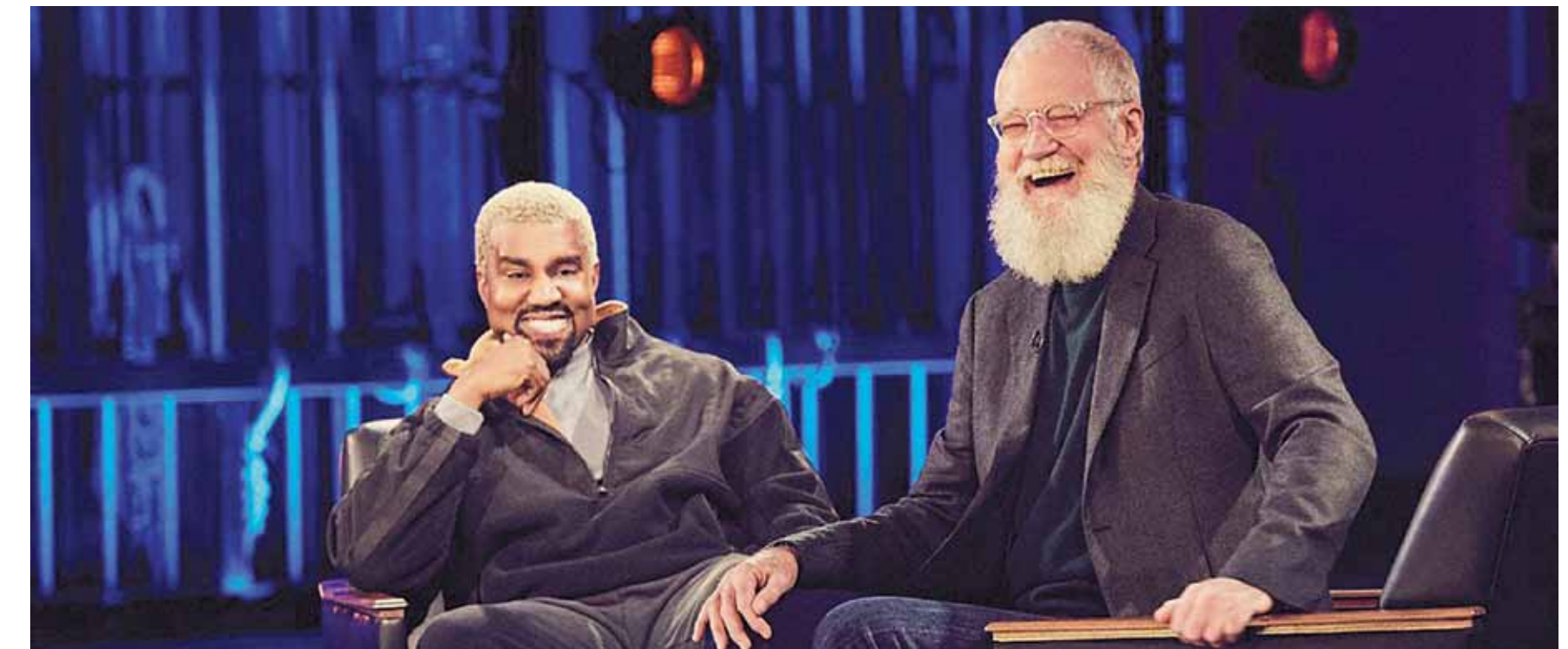
“It’s a negative stereotype that, at some point, most people of all genders fall into because romantic love is chemically designed to make you go ‘insane.’ As we got deeper into the show, though, Rebecca’s actions went beyond what some would call the ‘normal’ feelings and actions of obsession and that is when we dove even deeper into what was going on in her psyche. We were always looking at her story from the inside out, never labeling her as an ‘other.’ If we had done that, the show would have been called *MY Crazy Ex-Girlfriend*.”

→ Rachel Bloom performs as part of Just for Laughs at the Gesù from July 22–24 and 26–27, 7 p.m. nightly, \$42–\$45

:play recent



Acid again



Kanye West and David Letterman

BY RYAN DIDUCK

Michael Pollan, “How to Change Your Mind: What the New Science of Psychedelics Teaches Us About Consciousness, Dying, Addiction, Depression and Transcendence (Penguin Group)

The first time I ever had a mystical psychedelic experience was as a teenager in my basement bedroom. I had been told not to take it alone. But as an only child, if I wanted to take acid on a Tuesday night, there was no one else to do it with. So down the hatch it went.

The first thing I remember is being in bed, feeling very comfortable. But before I knew it, I became aware that my body had disintegrated. I couldn’t feel anything. It wasn’t an analgesic sensation either; I had physically ceased to be. Somehow, this wasn’t scary either. It was more simply curious. I just thought, “That’s weird, I don’t have a body anymore.” Suddenly, I had left my room entirely, and found myself in some sort of blank, dark space. It was as if I was floating through the cosmos, flying above a series of what looked to be shiny silver orbs, which I supposed at the time (if I could have consciously supposed anything) were celestial bodies, like planets or stars. One by one, I glided over these gorgeous glistening pearls.

Then, I seemed to come to what felt like an end — the end of the solar system, the end of the universe. I wondered what would happen next, but just as I was wondering, I floated down and back and started travelling underneath these gargantuan and wondrous worlds. Wow! Space and time folded in on themselves, I thought. There is no end, I thought. The universe is donut-shaped, I thought. I’d never read

anything about physics, or relativity, or the chaos theory. I’d been a solidly average science student. But somehow, I’d been shown (by whom?) a little sliver of all there is to see.

The next day at school, I related my experience from the night before to a friend called Marc. Marc was much older — a college student who looked like the quintessential headbanger. He wore his black hair long, down past the middle of his back, and a black leather biker jacket with white tassels on the sleeves. There was a little bit of Otto from *The Simpsons* in his vibe. I told Marc about the acid, and the out-of-body experience, and the universal revelations that I felt I’d had, and he smiled at me and said, “Oh yeah, one of those trips, man!”

Exposé Noir, May 24, 2019, Studio Notre-Dame Warehouse

A lot of technical devices have to work right to make a rave seem seamless. There are the smoke machines and strobe lights, of course, but the music — which is almost all electronically produced — is funnelled and forced through a series of black boxes, circuits and wires, and pushed at high sound pressure levels out from sympathetic speaker systems that look like they could blow at any moment.

On this particular Friday, I had this thought as I watched Danji Buck-Moore (aka Anabasin) set up for his midnight DJ set. The turntables weren’t plugged in, so he was scrambling to arrange all the equipment on deck before the previous act’s track ended. As if Murphy himself were there, enforcing his own law, the patch cables weren’t long enough to reach the mixer. So, just in the nick of time, they were turned sideways. And then, without missing a beat, a bunch of old-school jungle happened.

Film projectionists know this feeling. It’s like performing a reel change. We call it 20 minutes of boredom, followed by eight seconds of panic. But if you do your job properly, nobody notices a thing. It’s a miracle, really, that anything happens.

Underworld, “Soniamode (Aditya Game Version)”, Drift Songs (Smith Hyde Productions)

Of all the 1990s techno acts still at it today, none is classier than Underworld. They have discovered that eternal creative spring, and bless us often with a cup of its life-affirming elixir. Relax and watch them work.

David Letterman, “My Next Guest Needs no Introduction” with Kanye West, May 31, 2019 (Netflix)

If anyone knows how to handle a difficult, megalomaniacal guest, it’s David Letterman. On the Oct. 1, 1986 episode of Letterman’s old NBC *Late Night* program, there is a remote segment in which Dave shows a tourist couple from Louisville around New York’s mean streets. They visit the Empire State Building, pick out postcards and take a goofy group snapshot in an instant photo booth. They then venture up to Trump Tower, making a surprise visit into the offices of the Donald, who at that time was a regular Letterman guest.

Dave delighted in torturing Trump: he would call Donald “the world’s most famous slumlord”; he would badger Trump about how much cash he could produce at the drop of a hat. Trump’s hair, Trump’s ties — anything and everything odd about him became a Letterman punchline. On this particular occasion, as Dave and the Louisville couple headed out the door, Letterman needed the notoriously OCD Donald, pointing to the floor, saying: “There’s a spot over here, Don, on the carpet.”

LSD, “Process 7”, *Second Process* (LSD)

Let the children lose it,
Let the children use it,
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