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**THURS AUG 8** Jana Prikryl launches  
*No Matter: Poems*

**MON AUG 12** J'achète un livre québécois

**THURS AUG 15** Mona Awad launches *Bunny*,  
 Chris Boucher launches *Big Giant Floating Head*

**BOOK CLUBS**

**THURS AUG 1** STRANGE FUTURES  
*Babel-17* by Samuel R. Delany

**SUN AUG 11** QUEEREADS (6PM)  
*Holy Wild* by Gwen Benaway

**WED AUG 14** GRAPHIC NOVEL  
*Clyde Fans* by Seth

**SUN AUG 18** QUEEREADS (6PM)  
*Disoriental* by Nègar Djavadi

**MON AUG 19** TRUE READS  
*Rough Magic* by Lara Prior-Palmer

**WED AUG 28** NEW READS  
*Exit West* by Mohsin Hamid

**FRI AUG 30** YOUNG READERS  
 (AGES 10-12, 6PM)  
*Summer Reads*

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We spoke to Miami rapper  
 Denzel Curry about moving  
 up in the world.

Photo by Julian Cousins

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+ TiKA  
+ JAMES BAILEY  
+ DESIIRE

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Co-presented by: **FUTURISTIC NOSTALGIA**



**KEDR LIVANSKIY**

+ LAFAWNDAH  
+ GUESTS

26 sept. Piccolo Rialto

Co-presented by: **FADER**



**JERRY PAPER**

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25 sept. Bar Le Ritz P.D.B.

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## to-do list

For the daily To-Do List, visit [cultmtl.com](http://cultmtl.com)

### To Sept. 28

The Goethe Institut in conjunction with Berlin's Schwules Museum and Never Apart present *Queer as German Folk*, an exhibition marking the 50th anniversary of the Stonewall Riots in NYC.

→ 7049 St-Urbain, 12–5 p.m., free

### Aug. 2–4

The Montreal summer music festival of Montreal summer music festivals Osheaga is here, with three days of sunny, starchy fun featuring headliners the Lumineers, the Chemical Brothers and Childish Gambino, along with Janelle Monáe, Tame Impala, Gucci Mane, Sofi Tukker, U.S. Girls and many more. See our article about the history of outdoor music festivals in Montreal on pp. 12D13, our interview with cover star Denzel Curry (who's playing Osheaga this year) on p. 11 and more preview and review coverage at [cultmtl.com](http://cultmtl.com).

→ Parc Jean-Drapeau, 12–11 p.m. daily, three-day passes \$325/\$585 Gold Pass (Platinum Passes sold out), day tickets \$125/\$235 Gold Pass/\$500 Platinum Pass

### Aug. 2–30

Painter Charles Leblanc's exhibition *Machinoid*, exploring a longtime fascination with cars and their inner mechanics as well as the relationship between man and machine, is on at Mile End's Art Gallery.

→ 5432 St-Laurent

### Aug. 3–11

The Rogers Cup tennis tournament brings the male stars of the sport to town this year, including the #2 ranked player

Rafael Nadal, Canadians Milos Raonic and Denis Shapovalov and hometown hero Felix Auger-Aliassime.

→ IGA Stadium (fka Uniprix Stadium, 285 Gary-Carter), individual tickets \$13–\$412 (viewing practices is free)

### Aug. 7–11

Montreal's annual graffiti festival Under Pressure transforms the streets around Fofounes Electriques into a canvas for artists from all over, with live music (Maestro [Fresh-Wes] is this year's headliner — he'll be appearing as part of a massive tribute to mark the 30th anniversary of his album *Symphony in Effect*), DJs and dancers rounding out the block party atmosphere for a full-on celebration of hip hop culture.

### Aug. 8–18

Fierté Montréal Pride will feature a variety of free and ticketed cultural events, community events, performances, parties and much more to support and celebrate local and international LGBTQIA+ communities. Special guests this year include comic/actor Margaret Cho, Andrew Morrissey starring in a production of *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*, local music act Dear Denizen and French/Cameroonian singer-songwriter Bo Johnson. The parade is, as usual, taking place at noon on the festival's final day.

### Aug. 9–10

îleSoniq reigns for two days at Parc Jean-Drapeau with EDM, hip hop and related body-shocking sounds care of Marshmello, Above & Beyond, Kaskadee, Adventure Club, Snails and more.

→ Parc Jean-Drapeau, 1–11 p.m. daily, two-day pass \$210/\$285 Gold Pass, day tickets \$115/\$165 Gold Pass

### Aug. 10–27

YES Montreal presents What the Pop!, three art events presented over three weekends in three different venues in the Plateau, Verdun and Old Montreal, with live music, performance art, visual art, fashion, crafts and more.

### Aug. 16–18

Annual anime convention Otakuthon attracts fans of Japanese animation and manga to Palais des Congrès for parties, panels, competitions, cosplay, gaming and more.

→ 201 Viger W., hours vary, \$60 advance/\$65 at the door or \$40/\$50 for single days, children 7–11 \$15

### Aug. 19–25

The 10th anniversary edition of NDG Arts Week brings art exhibitions, dance, comedy, film, workshops, theatre, opera, music and more to streets, galleries, parks and community centres all over the West End hood.

### Aug. 20–25

The MUTEK festival turns 20 this year, continuing its mandate of mounting events showcasing a range of electronic music, often with a strong visual component, at venues in the Quartier des Spectacles and in conjunction with Piknic Électronik at Parc Jean-Drapeau. Among the acts performing this year are Sinjin Hawke & Zora Jones, Matmos, the Mole, Lotus Eater, Errhead and Dandy Jack and the Sniffing Orchestra.

### Aug. 30–Sept. 2

The 21st edition of the MEG (MTL Electronique Groove) music festival features acts including French rappers Årsenik, fellow Frenchman and DNewFonkD artist Dabeull, NYC house/disco DJ Eli Escobar and local techno DJ Omar Hamdi playing shows at SAT and Piknic Électronik.

The third edition of the Mile Ex End music and comedy fest features acts such as Feist, Chromeo, A Tribe Called Red, Alaclair Ensemble, Zach Zoya, la Force and Daniel Lanois on Aug. 30 through Sept. 1, and francophone comics performing on Sept. 2.

→ Under the Van Horne/Rosemont overpass (Marmier & Henri-Julien), \$79.75 festival pass, \$43.75 daily for music/\$29.75 comedy day

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# :rant line™

**THIS WEEK:** Stinking port-o-potties and bad vegan food!

**PLUS:** Man rallies support for cyclist who broke face on pothole!!

“edited” by AL SOUTH

M Hello Rant Line™. Okay here is something good, this is something we can all get behind. I just saw online that this girl, a singer, I can't remember her name [Ed's note: *Léonie Gray*], is suing the city for \$20,000 because she was riding her bike and hit a massive fucking pothole and BROKE HER FACE. Seriously! She broke her nose and three teeth — there is a picture of her and she looks like she just stepped out of a CAGE MATCH. And she's a singer so she can't exactly go on stage looking like that! And she had to pay to get the teeth fixed. So she is suing and I hope she wins because it could be like a case that opens the doors — a test case. It could open the FLOODGATES. Because every single one of us in Montreal whether on bicycle or car or even on FOOT has hit one of these fucking potholes that the city takes forever to fix. If she wins we can all start taking the city to court. Fix the potholes, politicians, and if you don't, we will sue you! It's our money that you are spending, so spend it on things that are important! Don't waste it on, I don't know, bullshit — BANJO FESTIVALS, finger painting festivals, whatever — until you fix the fucking roads. Anyway, I hope that girl is going to be okay, I am sure she will be, and I hope she gets her cash. [BLEEP!]

M Hi Rant Line™. Today I'd like to talk to you about drivers and TURNING SIGNALS. Why don't they fucking use them? Just trying to figure that out. I'm a cyclist. I'm not a holier-than-thou SPANDEX-WEARING piece of shit cyclist, but I do ride my bike pretty much every day in the summer, and no one uses their fucking turning signals! It's literally a flick of the wrist, people, a flick of the wrist! I need to be aware of everything that's going on, it's insane out there. I almost DIE every single time I ride my bike, every day, because you're too lazy to fucking flick your goddam wrist. Do it people! [BLEEP!]

M Well you know it's bad when even the SO-CALLED COMEDIANS at the comedy festival are making fun of our CONSTRUCTION, but Jesus fucking Christ, it really is no JOKE. [BLEEP!]

M So they decided to tear up my street this week. They gave us ONE DAY notice, one fucking day. They put a flyer in my mail slot the night before. And the next day at 7 a.m. they were towing away cars. So now the whole street is torn up, and not only that, but the workers put their blue PORT-O-POTTY right in front of my apartment — I live on the ground floor. So as you can imagine the toilet is already starting to STINK and I can see the FLIES all around it and goddamn, what a mess. One day's notice! Not even, it was more like half a day! Shouldn't there be a law against that? This is on Berri, by the way. [BLEEP!]

F So I saw Jagmeet Singh at a public rally the other day wearing SLACKS and a DRESS SHIRT with his usual TURBAN which I have no problem with but the dude had a KNIFE slung over his shoulder! A knife! I am the first one to object to the racist Bill 21 legislation but please lose the knife! [BLEEP!]

F Hey Rant Line™. I'm calling today to bitch about [names restaurant], that restaurant in the Mile End that started small, really CUTE, on St-Viateur some 10 years ago. It was sort of a family-owned business and it was really good, it was VEGAN. Well now I just feel that they have gone full-blown MCDONALD'S STYLE vegan. Everything has doubled in price, the portions are smaller, the food does not taste as fresh, the kids working there look overworked and exhausted and they have CHEESY UNIFORMS. It's just exorbitant and it's bad and it should not be. It ain't good anymore, man. [BLEEP!]

M How many millennials does it take to change a lightbulb? None. None of them can come to terms with the fact that they can't get their heads out of their assholes. [chortles]. Thank you very much. [BLEEP!]

M Okay so I went to buy, yes BUY, an album I've heard about on iTunes like I've been doing for many years and the only option I can seem to find is to subscribe to their fucking Apple Music channel. No more one-time purchases without a subscription. What? Really? Is this possible? Why can't I find it? Where the fuck is the option? I don't want to stream, I don't want it for free, I just want to buy it! This is annoying, this is confusing. Fuck Apple Music, I think it's time I tried ILLEGAL PIRATING. [BLEEP!]

M Hello, this is in response to the guy complaining about HOMELESS PEOPLE, calling them worthless, telling them to get a job like he did. Listen, not everyone is as lucky as you, not everyone has the same state of mental health as MAYBE you do. Or maybe you don't, and you'll be back on the streets sooner or later looking for some help or just a small bit of EMPATHY. Which yes, is signified by giving someone less fortunate than yourself a small bit of CHANGE. One thing I've noticed is that you never know who is going to give a homeless person change. I mean, usually I give some money, but you know, not always. Sometimes I don't have any change, or sometimes I'm in my own world and can't be bothered to stop, or the homeless person is INVISIBLE to me. But usually I do, and I also notice who else is giving change, and you know what? You never know. Sometimes it can be an old rich guy, sometimes a housewife or a secretary, sometimes a student, sometimes a truck driver, there is no type. Just the type who has empathy. Which is obviously not you dude, which I find very strange since you were on the streets yourself. [BLEEP!]

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## :persona mtl



Mona Awad

Brigitte Lacombe

By Sruti Islam

Mona Awad grew up in Montreal. Though she left in her teens, her genuine love for the city is evident in her voice on the phone as she emphasizes how truly happy she is to return for the launch of her latest novel *Bunny* (176 Bernard, Aug. 15, 7 p.m.).

*Bunny* tells the story of Samantha, a young woman burdened by family trauma and self-doubt, who finds herself isolated as she participates in an elite MFA writing workshop, vying with her own inner-darkness, her audacious best friend Ava, an older professor and a clique turned cult.

Sruti Islam: The popular rich-girl clique in the novel, “the Bunnies,” are adamant about approaching their feminism via their sexuality. They’re feminists obsessed with boys. Can you expand on that choice?

Mona Awad: There's a lot of satire not just around gender politics but around notions of creativity and control. The boys are meant to perform the Bunnies' will, they embody the Bunnies' desires and particularly their desire for control. I love that there's such a sharp contrast between the ways that The Bunnies talk about their creations vs the actual creation, the actual boys, who are essentially these monstrous pets, handsome “yes men” who lack complexity, among other essential traits. The boys reveal a lot about the Bunnies as creators.

SI: Why bunny?

MA: Bunnies are really interesting to me because they're adorable but sort of creepy. This book is all about being seduced by the power of the adorable, and how the adorable can be sinister. So they felt like the perfect animal. An animal had to be at the centre of the novel because of its connection to fairy tale, transformation and particularly *Beauty and the Beast*.

SI: I read that AMC recently acquired the novel's rights. Samantha's race is never addressed in the book, though the whiteness of her rich Bunny cohorts is. Given the TV adaptation, is Samantha's race something the screen will be able to give a more overt consideration to?

MA: The fact that the bunnies are frequently described as white is very intentional. There's kind of an othering of whiteness that's happening in the book. And Samantha's race is not given so it's open to interpretation but I definitely wanted the whiteness of the bunnies to be explicit, something that she fixates on. As for the AMC adaption, I can't say for certain, but I suspect they might draw out some of these tensions. And that would be very interesting.

## :inspectah dep

By the Depset

The Depset doesn't usually get out of bed to inspect chain dépanneurs, but the combination Subway/Couche-Tard in the basement of the Luna Apartments tower at the corner of Docteur Penfield and Peel is so trippy that I made an exception. Unless you did a stint in the McGill Ghetto, there's a good chance you've never seen what is known by locals as “the submarine dep.”

Many of the 1960s and 1970s highrises of this neighbourhood, which are mostly dedicated to student housing and Airbnb rentals, feature a common element of apartment complex design of that era: the ground floor dep that can be accessed without stepping outside, just an elevator trip away. But the submarine dep takes the concept to a whole other level. It's a subterranean dep that looks like a submarine with a Subway restaurant (puns are the lowest form of humour, right?), complete with yellow porthole windows, red emergency lights, exposed pipes and pressure valves, a fake old-school captain's telephone, a periscope and pressure meter and stenciled writing on the walls directing you to the auxiliary electric motor. Don't miss the metal hatch above the entrance outside!



Painted in bright primary colours, the whole place looks like the decor for a children's TV show, or one of those interactive science centre exhibits that were when you were seven. But it's open 24 hours and sells beer, cigarettes and Subway sandwiches. Couche-Tard has tried to make itself interesting using wonky decor elsewhere. There's one on Laurier and de Lorimier that has a fake second floor apartment balcony built in above the beer fridges, and another in the ground floor of le Colisée apartments on Sherbrooke that has a village main street theme, with storefront facades leading you to the “Librairie” and “Bureau de poste.” The attempts at standing out generally fail to give these chain depts any

semblance of coolness, the same way that suburban malls with fake European streetscapes do. But the submarine dep pulls it off so well that you ask yourself, “Whose genius idea was this?”

Beyond the décor, there's nothing special about this place. They have all the regular corporate Couche-Tard stuff, like the giant digital Van Houtte coffee machine and the endless Budweiser and Coors cardboard displays with \$9.99 specials. But next time you've got 20 minutes to kill downtown, get off at Peel metro and walk up two blocks to the submarine dep. You won't regret it.

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# food & drink

## Gamer bait



Bibiko

BY CLAYTON SANDHU

“Le Mile-End est mort.”

Not so long ago I would have called this neighbourhood the unofficial cultural hub of the city. It was a perfect balance between historic Montreal and contemporary Montreal. I've heard tales of Mile End before Ubisoft and the VFX studios, a time when the neighbourhood was the artistic Plateau's Jewish and industrial neighbour to the north, or more recently as the ultra-cool pre Schueler-Levy trendsetting neighbourhood. Mile End is different now and what used to be the cultural hub is now becoming more like an outdoor food-court for the throngs of tech-workers on de Gaspé and Casgrain.

Of course, that's not to say that there's nowhere good to eat. In fact in the last few years we've seen the neighbourhood adopt a plethora of small, independent, inexpensive and often quite good restaurants vying for that coveted lunchtime capital, but the original charm of the neighbourhood is being lost in the process. Recently, I visited Bibiko — a bibimbap bar, and one of the newcomers to the lunch scene on St-Viateur East — to check out their take on Korean fast-food.

The spot, just opposite the Ubisoft building, occupies prime lunch real-estate, where over 3,000 employees take their lunch breaks Monday through Friday. Certainly, they're well-positioned to capitalize, but as I said, they're one of many new places on the block offering quick and delicious lunches within a short walking distance. The options include Lyodies, a Barbadian lunch counter, Falafel Yoni, which is doing some of the city's finest Israeli falafel, QDC Burger, two sushi counters, a sandwich shop, a ramen joint and Il Miglio, a pasta bar from le Club Chasse et Pêche. It's a literal feeding frenzy come noon, and the competition is fierce.

What Bibiko has going for it, besides its location, is its eye-catching design that combines a timeless minimalist decor reminiscent of Tokyo sushi counters. Design firm Rainville-Sangaré also added splashes of royal blue that alleviate the austerity of minimalist aesthetic in a way that says, “This is serious design but we're easy-going and casual.” Additionally, they're serving Korean food. Bibimbap is a perfect compact lunch: you have carbs, protein, vegetables and the wonderful digestion-friendly bacterial cultures (gross, I know, but so good for you) of fermented kimchi. While there may be JinJin sushi down the street (they also serve bibimbap), they do so as part of a business predominantly geared toward selling sushi, leaving the throne for king of lunchtime Korean up for grabs.

Bibiko's menu is uncomplicated, with a handful of bibimbap including both meat and vegetarian options, a composed meal-sized salad, dumplings and steamed buns. It's fairly mixed-Asian in terms of regionality but they're capitalizing on popular Asian food trends, and it's hard to blame them for being aware of what people seem to want. I ordered a roast pork bibimbap at the suggestion of my server and equally a pork Bao. To drink, they're well stocked with Club kombucha, Montellier sparkling water as well as a few specialty drinks made in house. I opt for a Vietnamese iced coffee, which comes topped with a swirl of whipped cream and black sesame seeds.

My food arrives hot and within five or so minutes of my order, a big plus for the lunchtime diners looking to get in and out quickly. The Bibiko take on Vietnamese iced coffee looks to have gone through the Starbucks treatment, but it tastes like the real deal. It's a sight to behold, and frankly a bit outside my comfort level, but it tastes great and the black sesame is actually a welcome addition adding a savoury complexity to the coffee. The bao is less of the puff of a bun I'm used to seeing and more in line with a sandwich, which is probably deliberate. Having worked in this neighbourhood

at lunchtime, you learn one important lesson: people love sandwiches. That being said, I felt like the whole thing was just scaled up and it became a bit cumbersome to eat. As for the taste, the pickled daikon and carrot added nice acidity, the pork was well-seasoned and well-cooked. Overall, pretty good, but nothing to write home about.

The main event, the bibimbap, was sort of a disappointment. It wasn't that it was bad — I would say it was fine — but its mediocrity was a let-down. The kimchi (which may have just been the same daikon and carrot pickles in ssäm sauce) lacked spice and intensity. The bibimbap I was served was just too basic, too devoid of anything decidedly Korean. For a place specializing in bibimbap, I expected more: I expected great homemade kimchi, I expected an option for dolsot bibimbap (a type of bibimbap served in a hot stone bowl), I expected the kind of attention to detail paid to Caribbean food at Llyodies and Israeli falafel at Yoni to be paid to bibimbap at Bibiko. It feels like Bibiko is in many ways a perfect representation of the neighbourhood it's serving, it looks great, it has a great concept, but it's a bit of a hollow shell, it's missing its real Koreanness just like the Mile-End is missing most of its remaining authenticity.

Like I said, it's not that Bibiko is bad — it's really not, it's just not a great Korean place. It's also not one of Montreal's better bibimbaps, it's just a good-looking lunch counter to get a quick bowl of rice and toppings before heading back to the office. I might be wrong in my point of view on this place — maybe something more Korean, more authentic, would be too intense for the neighbourhood's clientele, I don't really know, but I do know that it would make for a better restaurant. I'm sure, however, that this place will nonetheless be popular because it's quick, it's different and it's just outside Ubisoft's front door (but so is Green Panther, and I don't go there either).

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## Miami spirit



Denzel Curry

BY MR. WAVVY

Denzel Curry may just be the only respectable “Florida Man” making news headlines. At the time of our interview, the Carol City-born rapper was on his first arena tour, an opening slot warming up the crowds for teen pop sensation Billie Eilish.

Eilish's fans, although young, are known for their intense loyalty. A swarm of them just outside Denzel's tour bus didn't seem to phase him. “They're just cool little girls. We can't be scared of 13-year-old kids!”

Curry, however, was intimidated initially by the prospect of such large-scale shows. “I had to realize they're coming to see Billie but some of her fans are coming to see me as well.”

Though the pairing may seem odd on paper, Curry explains that Eilish hand-picked him for the job. “She was coming to my early shows back in 2016, when [my second album] *Imperial* was out. She said *Imperial* is what made her a fan. The influence carried over into her career. I'm literally one of her favourite rappers.”

Denzel Curry first made his mark on the culture in 2013 with a single called “Ultimate” that went viral due, in part, to being featured in a number of meme videos.

“That's a song that everybody knows,” he states. “But I know myself — I'm not going to make another ‘Ultimate.’ I'm going to make something that's different. *Ski Mask the Slump*

“They were inventing the whole Miami Spirit. The slang, the lingo, and then they each just brought something different to the table,” he says. “We grew up on Trick Daddy and what he did. ‘Shut Up’ and stuff like that, he brought the gritty, nasty Miami to the mainstream, that was him. [Uncle] Luke is legendary, too, Spring Break vibes all day.”

This is the start of a new era for Denzel Curry. Since speaking with him in June, the Miami Gardens rapper has completed his first arena tour and chopped off his signature dreads. If the latter moment is a metaphor for letting go of one's past, Curry's recent relocation makes it plain: he left home and moved to Los Angeles.

“Miami has too many distractions, and not enough shit going on for me there. I'm not going to wait a year for an artist to slide down there when they feel like it. I'm just going to go where all of the artists are.”

Curry's demanding tour schedule won't allow him time to see either place he calls home until early September, though he is far from a wanderer. With each show, the spirit of Miami is kept alive, impacting a new city every night.

→ Denzel Curry plays Osheaga's Bell Alt TV River Stage on Friday, Aug. 2, 3:50 p.m.

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# Expo to Osheaga

BY DARCY MACDONALD

There's no way to overstate Montreal's global predominance as a festival city, especially when summer's rays give us a well-earned reprieve from the long-lasting frost of winter.

Here, we celebrate culture through art, cinema, food and comedy year-round, on- and off-island. And our reputation for being an outdoor playground of song makes the city a destination for music fans from around the world each year.

Jazz Fest is an obvious forebear to the growth of the city's festival scene over the past four decades-plus, but there are plenty of other predecessors and sideshows that have come and gone, before and since.

Did you know the Grateful Dead played at Expo 67? Or that la Ronde once hosted the likes of Blondie and the Cars? Or that back in '83, the Police, Peter Tosh, Stevie Ray Vaughan and Talking Heads took on Percival Molson Stadium for a summer day that your parents may just never have thought you were cool enough to tell you about?

"It wasn't called the 'Police Picnic' in Montreal," long-serving Montreal booker and promoter Rubin Fogel insists. "That was only Toronto."



Cindy Lopez

Fogel has booked more shows than any human could possibly attend, let alone remember. He credits Fête Nationale shows on Île Ste-Hélène and a one-off concert at the old Autodrome in the mid-'80s as the genesis of the outdoor, multi-band, single-day music fest in Montreal, long before he single-handedly brought the only installment of '90s alt-rock circus Lollapalooza to Parc Jean-Drapeau's Plaines des Jeux in 1994, where headliners Beastie Boys

and Smashing Pumpkins shared the main stage with George Clinton, A Tribe Called Quest, Nick Cave, L7 and others.

Standing on the hill that day on what would more than a decade later become home to Osheaga (and later, Heavy Montreal, Île Soniq and 77 Montréal), it seemed like all you needed were some good bands, a few beer tents and the sunshine to throw a good party.

The year prior, and again in '95, with a similar MO, the Tragically Hip's touring fair, Another Roadside Attraction, landed in the once-empty meadow beside Verdun Auditorium courtesy of DKD Productions.

In subsequent summers, Lilith Fair and the Smokin' Grooves Tour, each of them touring packages catering to more niche audiences in their respective genre representation, saw limited success and no second chance.

For a long time, in fact, the Greenland-produced Vans Warped Tours, from the later '90s to earlier this decade, was the only annual sure shot, growing from its initial inception on the concrete of the Blue Bonnets parking lot to the muddy shores of its longtime home at PJD.

"I remember (for the first Warped Tours) we sold a lot of tickets in advance," recalls Greenland Productions director and elder Montreal scenester Nancy Ross. "But we sold just as many walk-ups, which just doesn't happen. We sold over 4,000 tickets at the door for the first (editions).

"It's also so weather dependent," she continues. "Back when there were less festivals, people were probably more like, 'Screw it, we'll decide when we see the forecast.' Now they know it's gonna happen, rain or shine, so if you wanna see these bands, you're going."

Evenko VP of concerts and events and Osheaga founder Nick Farkas recalls several early misfires before perfecting the formula for a homegrown, multi-day festival booked by Montreal, for Montreal.

"We did one (in the late '90s) called Sunnymead with DKD/Greenland, which was like a camping festival in the Eastern Townships," Farkas recounts. "It all started with that one, that we ever tried in a self-produced way. At Greenland we'd done SnoJams and other punk-rock-related things. But the first big-ish attempt at programming our own was Sunnymead."

Ross was the head bartender at Sunnymead, which grew from hosting Canadian headliners Grim Skunk and I Mother Earth in

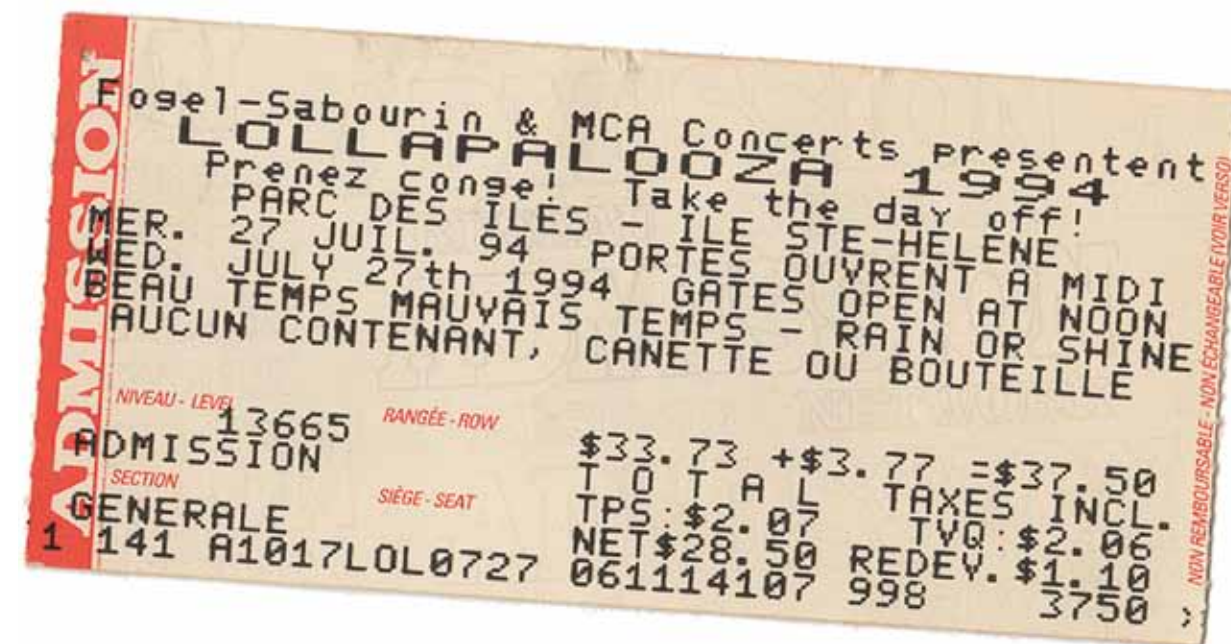


Photo courtesy of Warren Wilansky, warrenwilansky.com

'97 to Roger Hodgson and Blink 182 the following year.

"Dan Webster and Paget Williams (of Greenland) were sort of the ones spearheading it," Ross says. "These guys in the Eastern Townships just let us take over their farm. We had camping and bands to appeal both to the punks and the old locals. I think it was a success? One year was bad weather and the other year was good."

Farkas remembers things quite differently. "To me, (Sunnymead) was just a traumatic experience with rain and losing money. We can look back now on a lot of things and

laugh," he chuckles morbidly. "It took us a long time before we could look back on Sunnymead and laugh."

The dedication that goes into making the mega-fests that define Montreal's 21st century image as a mecca for live outdoor music deserves credit.

If they'd only been in it for the money, Evenko would have dropped the concept before booking Eminem in 2011, giving Osheaga a grand scale facelift while operating in the red in the hopes of pleasing both the town it was born to serve and international audiences.

So why did Farkas and his considerable team (including Osheaga co-founder Webster) persevere?

"It was probably stupidity," Farkas laughs. "The thing was, we knew, like — we were doing one of the Edgefests in Halifax and I think it was Foo Fighters and Our Lady Peace. We'd done the same thing in Montreal and it didn't work in Montreal, but we sold 25,000 tickets there."

Earlier one-off outdoor shows featuring the likes of the Offspring, No Doubt and Black Eyed Peas at Plaine des Jeux had also flopped. Re-evaluating the landscape and re-writing the playbook proved to be a winning manoeuvre.

"We were like, 'How is it possible that Montreal can't be an outdoor show market?' We were convinced that if we built it, people would come," Farkas states with now-validated conviction.

"And still, Osheaga would not be Osheaga if we didn't draw 65 per cent of our people from outside of the province. All of our festivals — Heavy, Île Soniq — draw a solid percentage of tourists. The idea for Osheaga from the beginning was it would become a destination, and that we'd build something that reflected what people wanted to see locally so that they would buy a ticket locally. We built it with Montreal-friendly programming, and by building a microcosm of Montreal that was cool — from art, to food, to music — we'd get people to come from out of the province. It never occurred to us in a million years that it would be as successful as it has been."

As Osheaga returns to its original site this month, Montreal can be proud to host the festival it needed and deserves.

"It worked," Farkas concludes. "And it took a lot of time, but it's been working consistently for 10 years or so."

"We're thankful every day that we get another chance to do it. It's that much fun."



## :hammer of the mods

BY JOHNSON CUMMINS

This section is usually reserved for the cream of the crop of shows for the month but I'm throwing a wrench in the works as there are some blistering Can-con hardcore classics getting the vinyl reissue treatment that you need to own. They originally got plunked down in '83/'84, and two of them were only previously released on the shiddy cassette format.

Being completely obsessed by hardcore as a Toronto punk kid in '83/'84, these releases actually have me getting a wee bit weepy, but for the rest of you short-pants kids wondering just how fucking amazing Reagan-era (or, uh, Mulrone-er-a?) hardcore can get, this is a great start. Not to mention that the debut album by Toronto's Direct Action is one of the most unsung hardcore releases of all time.

Genetic Control, *First Impressions* (Return to Analog)

A lot of people cite S.C.U.M. as the ultimate Reagan-era MTLHC band, but they are simply wrong — it's these guys by a country mile. In an act of desperation I sold my original copy for big money to some punky pud-puller so I am stoked this is getting the 12" vinyl

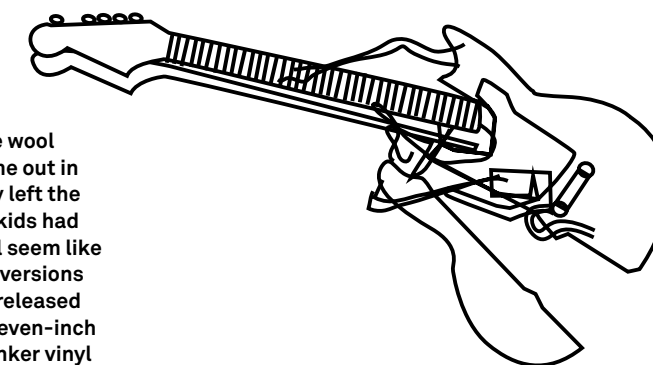
treatment (with added tracks). Being a dyed in the wool Toronto hardcore kid when this original single came out in '84, I saw them at a hardcore matinee that literally left the full room of Larry's Hideaway slack-jawed. These kids had chops that made every other local band on the bill seem like chumps. You don't really need the seven different versions (three versions of "Love Rat"?) or even the two unreleased songs but the original four that appeared on the seven-inch as well as the one comp track should be in any punker vinyl nerd collection.

Chronic Submission, *Sick of Reality* (Schizophrenic)

These East End T.O. teen skins were on at least half the Toronto concert bills by the summer of '83, to the point that most of us just took them for granted, but damn these kids were on a blitz back in the day, and prolific AF. This debut cassette from '83 has the band fully immersed in the thrash of the day before flirtations with metal riffs would mar the angst and urgency of the band a mere year later. Like any raging hardcore worth its salt, these 19 songs all tap in at a minute and a half each and never let up off the gas pedal. How much more punk can you get than the halftime intro of "I Hate Preppies"?

Direct Action, *Tomorrow Is Too Late* (Schizophrenic)

This is the big daddy of the three, and without a doubt I would include this original cassette among my Top 10 hardcore releases of all time. Toronto was a major hub for all touring hardcore bands in the early '80s (thank you Jill Heath!) with Direct Action often taking up a support slot and mopping the floor with any U.S. touring band that dared to go on after them. For myriad reasons the band never took



their rightful place in the hardcore canon, but damn, if the teeth-gnashing guitar intro to "19A.D.4" doesn't get your blood surging, you just ain't punk, Fucko. Things would fuck up quickly with the disappointing full length *Trapped in a World*, but with original guitarist Xig leading the charge and the recording remaining raw as fuck, hardcore never got more raging. Direct Action should've been fucking massive, but thanks to the big-hearted folks at Schizophrenic, maybe they'll get another chance at bat.

Also, you will definitely want to jump on the limited edition versions of both the Chronic Submission and Direct Action records as they come with a heap of collectible crap that vinyl nerds like me love. God love labels like Return to Analog and Schizophrenic for giving these records the love they deserve.

Current Obsession: Antidote, *Thou Shalt Not Kill*  
jonathan.cummings@gmail.com



# film

## Mortal cinema

BY ALEX ROSE

Xavier Dolan is used to a certain level of scrutiny.

Thrust into the spotlight at age 20 with his first film *J'ai tué ma mère*, Dolan has been the golden child of Quebec cinema for the last decade. His films, polarizing as they may be, are always eagerly anticipated. It's not so much a question of \*if\* they'll open at Cannes anymore but rather what prize they might win. To say that his English-language debut *The Death and Life of John F. Donovan* was equally anticipated would be downplaying it.

With an all-star cast and a budget at least three times higher than his highest budgeted feature thus far, it was his biggest gamble yet. Rumours started brewing before anyone had even seen the film: the shoot went on much longer than planned, cast members were announced months after production had reportedly begun, Jessica Chastain was cast and shot scenes that were ultimately excised from the final product... Cannes came and went without a premiere. As fall



*The Death and Life of John F. Donovan*

festival season rolled around, many wondered aloud if we would even see the film.

When the film finally had its world premiere at TIFF in September of 2018, its reception was not exactly at the level of expectations. When the festival ended, the film had yet to secure distribution in most territories and even the film's Quebec distributor had not announced a release date. When I spoke to Dolan during the festival, the mood was not quite as celebratory as in other junkets.

"The weird thing about this is that I can't help but sense the energy of people who are walking in and asking me questions after having seen the film," says Dolan. "I'm interested in people's energy. I write films — that's what I love. I love to read between the lines. It's not been the most reassuring 24 hours of my life. And that's not necessarily something very helpful. But I enjoy talking about the film and being reunited with the cast. I'm happy to be here with them. I very adamantly believe — and I might change my mind — that these films are exercises and challenges that you give you to yourself. There are precise things that you want to do and achieve. At the end of the day, when I look at *John F. Donovan*, I've checked the boxes that I created for myself: to go somewhere else, to try and pay tribute to a time in film and to pay tribute to family dramas from the '90s. These are the films I wanted to pay homage to: *Stepmom*, *Mrs. Doubtfire*, *Jumanji*, *Home Alone*, *Titanic*, *The Little Princess*, *Batman Returns*... These films that I was obsessed with as a child — they're all referenced in this film."

The film crisscrosses timelines between a young boy named Rupert (Jacob Tremblay), who lives alone with his mother (Natalie Portman) and is singularly obsessed with actor John F. Donovan (Kit Harrington), a temperamental star of a teen-oriented TV show who represses his own homosexuality for career advancement purpose and Rupert as a young man (played by Ben Schnetzer), an aspiring actor being interviewed by journalist Audrey Newhouse (Thandie Newton). The film moves back and forth between the two eras of Rupert's life as well as John's own struggles breaking

out of his constrictive image — although the title gives you a pretty good idea of where it's all headed.

It was certainly a different process for Dolan, who works so fast that his next film *Matthias et Maxime* is set for release less than two months after the delayed release of *Donovan*.

"For me, it's definitely new to spend two years reflecting on something — I usually rush things," says Dolan. "I generally rush things. I even have a problem carrying them to term. I get scattered and start writing new scripts — but it happens quickly. After eight months, it's just in the can and gone and we're already moving on. For me, taking all this time for this film has value in that it's taught me different things — s3.and to do things differently.

Though the film is of a much bigger scope and budget than his previous films, it's no less personal as it explores notions of child acting and of media scrutiny that no doubt have their roots in Dolan's own life. In fact, the screenplay was co-written with Jacob Tierney — another Montreal-based child actor who has transitioned into filmmaking.

"It certainly fed our search for a structure and for detail," says Dolan. "As much as it informed the writing process, I had the idea for John F. Donovan when I was directing *J'ai tué ma mère* and I never wrote anything down. I'd been thinking about it for four, five years until I was ready to write it. Let's just say that, back then, I spoke a different English and felt that I needed help. I wanted to write it with someone and really collaborate. I'm assuming that a great part of himself must find itself in this film — there are similarities that he cannot ignore and that probably informed our process. But it's not the idea that we were both child actors that gave us our idea. I had a pretty good idea of where I wanted to go with this film, of the things I wanted to explore, and once we met we threw everything in there."

Ultimately, however, Dolan wasn't terribly phased (in September 2018, mind you) by the reaction to the film.

"I made the film that I wanted to make. I worked with artists who I admired and who I'm still very fond of in their life and in their work. So... that's enough for me. After that? It's not my problem."

→ *The Death and Life of John F. Donovan* opens in theatres on Aug. 23.



Xavier Dolan

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# On Screen



Where'd You Go, Bernadette



Scary Stories to Tell in the Dark



Angel Has Fallen



Luce

BY ALEX ROSE

There are no superheroes to speak of, per se, in *Hot Chick* (Aug. 2), the latest installment in the *Fast & Furious* series, but you could be forgiven for thinking that based on the trailers that have been released thus far. Dwayne Johnson and Jason Statham star in this spin-off of the series as their two characters (usually canonically on opposite sides of the law — or something) team up to fight a cybernetically enhanced MI6 officer gone rogue (Idris Elba). It certainly sounds stupid, but that also seems to be the goal.

Also in the peripheral superhero sphere is *The Kitchen* (Aug. 9), an adaptation of a comic book series starring Melissa McCarthy, Tiffany Haddish and Elisabeth Moss as three women whose mobster husbands are sent to jail and leave them to foot the bill. It's the directorial debut of screenwriter Andrea Berloff and, while the material seems a little familiar (*Widows* only came out last year, after all), the trailer is surprisingly convincing. The adaptation of Alvin Schwartz's nightmare-fuel children's book series *Scary Stories to Tell in the Dark* has been in various stages of production since what feels like forever, with Guillermo del Toro first attached to direct. He retains a "story by" credit on the film ultimately directed by André Øvredal (*Trollhunter*, *The Autopsy of Jane Doe*), which opens Aug. 9.

Almost as pervasive as superhero movies these days

are interchangeable dog movies from studios trying to, somehow, cash in on the cuteness of dogs that already surround and saturate the Internet. This month's entry is *The Art of Racing in the Rain* (Aug. 9), which stars Milo Ventimiglia as a Formula One driver and centres on the driver's relationship with his dog (voiced by Kevin Costner). These movies seem entirely identical to me — not to mention callously designed to wring tears out of dog owners — but they also don't seem to be that popular, so perhaps there's an end in sight. Slightly more promising on the heartwarming scale is *Blinded by the Light* (Aug. 14), a film about a British-Pakistani teen (Viveik Kalra) who becomes singularly obsessed with the music of Bruce Springsteen. It could certainly be cheesy, but it's also a mistake to underestimate the rousing power of the Boss.

Audiences' love of shark movies continues unabated with *47 Meters Down: Uncaged*, the sequel to the surprise 2017 hit. Spoiler alert: it involves sharks again. Strangely enough, Montrealer Sophie Nélisse has one of the lead roles.

The great Movies About the White House in Danger War of 2013 ended disappointingly, with the inferior film (*Olympus Has Fallen*) becoming a huge success and spawning, for some reason, two sequels about the President (Aaron Eckhart) and the head of his security detail (Gerard Butler) killing bad dudes. This time, they're pitted against each other as Butler's character is framed for an assassination attempt on the president in *Angel Has Fallen* (Aug. 23). The second movie in this series is garbage even in context, so hopes aren't running high, but at least director Ric Roman Waugh (*Shot Caller*, *Felon*) has made some okay B-grade action movies.

Only one remake this month, but it's a bizarre one: Michelle Williams and Julianne Moore star in *After the Wedding* (Aug.

23), a remake of Susanne Bier's 2006 film of the same name. Though the original was successful (it was even nominated for the Best Foreign Language Film Oscar), it's not like anyone was clamoring for a remake — especially not from Moore's husband Bart Freundlich, whose body of work has not exactly set the film world on fire. Julius Onah's last film was *The Cloverfield Experiment*, a chintzy attempt to further the franchise that didn't turn many heads when Netflix gave it a "surprise release" immediately following the Super Bowl; he does a complete 180 with *Luce* (Aug. 16), a thorny drama with thriller shading starring Kelvin Harrison Jr. as a former child soldier turned valedictorian who begins to arouse suspicion when he writes an essay praising the violent revolutionary ideals of Frantz Fanon.

From producer Seth Rogen comes *Good Boys* (Aug. 16), a foul-mouthed R-rated comedy about the trials and tribulations of a trio of sixth-graders who try to impress girls by shattering their goodie-two-shoes image. I'm sure the image of elfin Jacob Tremblay describing a rusty trombone (or whatever the fuck) is a potent one, but I can't say I'm sold on this even though it got pretty good reviews out of its SXSW premiere. Richard Linklater directs *Where'd You Go, Bernadette* (Aug. 16) based on the novel of the same name by Maria Semple. Cate Blanchett stars as the titular Bernadette, an agoraphobe who goes missing just before a family trip. Linklater's usually pretty solid, but the film has been delayed and moved around enough to suggest that maybe there's trouble afoot.

Locally, the only release this month besides the tentatively awaited Xavier Dolan film (see p. 14) is Anne Émond's *Jeune Juliette* (Aug. 9), a sardonic teen comedy that seems like a departure for Émond, whose previous works were dramas like *Les êtres chers* and *Nelly*.

"THE TWISTS COME SO STEADILY THAT I ACTUALLY FOUND MYSELF HOLDING MY BREATH FOR LONG STRETCHES. AN EMOTIONAL SHOWCASE FOR MICHELLE WILLIAMS AND JULIANNE MOORE."  
-Peter Debruge, VARIETY

EVERY FAMILY HAS A SECRET

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# AFTER THE WEDDING

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# arts

## Seeing upside-down

By Nora Rosenthal

Laurie Anderson's career as a multimedia artist has often easefully navigated the line between avant-garde and mainstream. She may be best known for her musical contributions, but her career has more recently revealed an immense curiosity when it comes to technological art.

It's fitting that the woman whose celestial spotlight haunted the video for her surprise hit "O Superman" would also be NASA's first (and last) artist in residence, and would also create a VR trip to the moon with the artist Hsin-Chien Huang. Never polemical, yet not one to shy away from political dilemmas, she also collaborated with former Guantanamo detainee Mohammed el Gharani to live-project a monumentally larger-than-life version of himself onto U.S. soil, in "Habeus Corpus." These days she's focused on a variety of VR projects, an upcoming immersive exhibition at the Hirshhorn Museum in Washington, D.C., an orchestral work about Amelia Earhart and even "big paintings". Laughing and excited, she describes her sheer array of summer projects as "a pretty checkered affair," but her scouring and weird focus has been there from the outset — poetically keen and sweetly cockeyed.

We spoke about some of the unusual ways in which she sees her work and the culture around her, and her plans for an upcoming performance at POP Montreal.

Nora Rosenthal: What's your process like when you begin a project?

Laurie Anderson: I would say I really start from trying to see what would be an interesting upside-down way to do things and trying to forget everything I know about how to do things.

NR: Are there performances or songs of yours whose significance you feel has transformed over time?

LA: I don't look back on things really. I don't look at things like that. I'm only looking to try to figure out the next thing I'm doing.

NR: You never look back on your work?

LA: I don't, no. I suppose when someone asks me a question like this I struggle to find something to say, but not really. I don't think I've finished anything either. I just sort of stop working on it when I can't think of how to fix it. I don't ever sit and go, "Oh, wonderful, perfect!" or even "Done." When I stop working, it disappears for me.

NR: You came of age in a very exciting cultural moment, but I was thinking about how male the scene appears to have been, or at least seems now looking back. I'm curious how it felt to be a woman in that milieu. Did gender affect the way you were working at that time?

LA: We didn't think about it. I think it's much more difficult to be a woman now than it was then — as an artist. In many ways things haven't changed very much. For women working in technology it's a little bit easier, weirdly, but women are



Laurie Anderson

still struggling in every area of the world. Whether you're trying to be a lawyer or a diplomat or a doctor, it's still not very fair.

NR: What is it about women working with technology that you think makes it a little easier there?

LA: Women are great, great programmers. I mean I know it's silly to say something that's such a cliché, but women are wonderful at thinking with a kind of big picture and [thinking about how] things connect to other things, and networks. I've met a lot of really good young programmers but I do think that if you look around at any world — music or dance or books — it's still very, very hard for women to be accepted in the same way. I wish I could say something different because I've worked all my life to try to make it a better situation for women. But in the U.S. anyways there's a huge amount of misogyny, as we saw in the last election. It's quite shocking. And that's all across the cultural world, it really is.

NR: I listened to a conversation between yourself and Barbara Goldman back in 1990 and you spoke about how so many of your friends had been helped in one way or another by a Bob Dylan song. It made me wonder, what was the last work of art that really helped you in a time of need?

LA: Oh gosh I don't think of art that way. I think of it as something that thrills me I guess, rather than helps me.

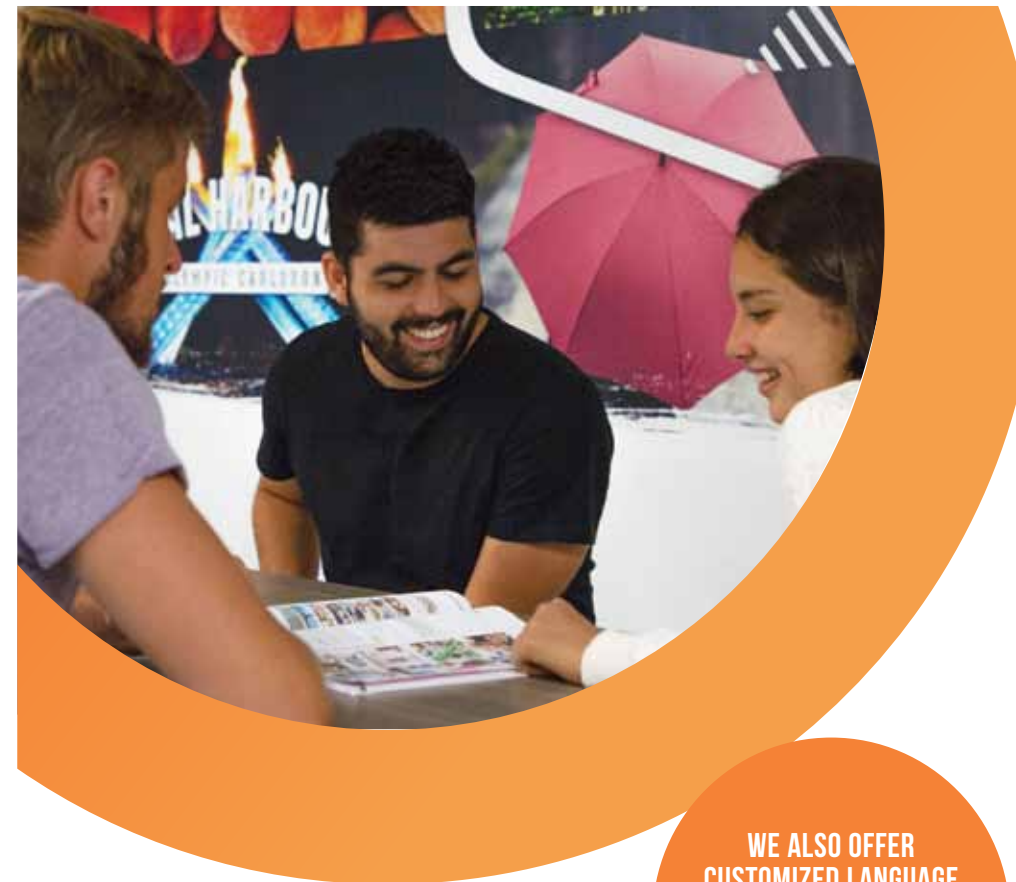
NR: What was the last thing that thrilled you then?

LA: The last thing that thrilled me was...I saw a beautiful dance work in Manchester called *Tao of Glass* a couple weeks ago. The thing I love about festivals is they really present a lot of work in a very democratic way. You have a whole array of things that are presented to you and you don't have to have the right clothes and the right bank account to see stuff. Music in the States is really marketed that way, it's very socio-economic, so that people with money see the opera and people who are 30 go to clubs and people who are 20 go to raves, you know? So festivals are really great. They just open it up so you don't have to see the music that's marketed to you. I love that about it. It just cracks the whole scene open.

NR: Speaking of festivals, what do you have planned for POP Montreal?

LA: I am so excited to be playing. I don't know what to expect and that's the coolest thing. I haven't played with Colin [Stetson] in a long time. I'm more and more interested in improv so this is going to be pretty much pure improv. For me it's a big solution for a lot of things that have bothered me about doing music, and it's also beyond thrilling. I also love being in Montreal. I have a lot of friends there so I'm totally looking forward to it.

→ Laurie Anderson plays POP Montreal at the Théâtre Rialto (5723 Parc), Sept. 25 8 p.m., \$45



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Joseph Collin

## Sexy, safe, joyful

BY NORA ROSENTHAL

The White Room Studio's banks of overhead fluorescents were off one Saturday in July, with just the distinctive dark proto-storm grey diffusing through the big glass windows that line one of its walls.

The heat was staggering and everyone lazily stretched and waited for class to begin. This was Body Time, a new guided improv class taught by Scott McCabe and Motrya Kozbur on alternating weeks, a class where professional dancers, amateurs and everyone in between can share a space to move.

Montreal, it seems, is particularly receptive to this kind of class. It might seem from the outside that only amateurs would attend this sort of thing; would choose to goopily wade through space and laugh. Only that's not the case. A whole range of movers showed up to the first Body Time. It was predominantly young, but people showed up from all levels of confidence, of self-awareness, of technique. Some of the non-dancers were sheepish relatives of dancers, dance-adjacent people just game enough to experience part of what their children and siblings have been up to all these years behind studio doors.

The main challenge in teaching this sort of class would appear to be how to create an environment that is both unthreatening enough to encourage novices while maintaining the genuine and non-patronizing interests of career dancers. The way McCabe and Kozbur have approached this is by constructing an improv class where introspection steers everyone's individual experience of class. No one shares weight; there's no memorizing, no choreography, just a constant stream of verbal cues. You may not have the loose and limber hamstrings of the person next to you, but you can take comfort knowing that you're both trying to visualize your posterior thighs to the same high-octane pop and rap.

In this way, someone familiar with techniques of body visualization can push themselves farther, explore new avenues for moving and thinking, right beside someone for whom a phrase like "feel your feet connecting to the floor" or "think about your shins like the bone is separating from the muscle and flesh" is very much new and maybe weird and frightening. During the class, it struck me that the amateurs allowed a certain pleasant hint of giggling to suffuse the room — because improv really can be very goofy. Meanwhile, the bona fide full-time dancers kept the tone focused enough that people took their own body-mind explorations seriously. The experience felt very sexy, in that profusely sweaty loft space circa *Flashdance* sort of way, but also safe and very joyful. As Kozbur had encouraged the group at the beginning of class, "This is your fantasy."

→ Body Time will take place at the White Room Studio (4532 Laval) every Saturday until the end of August, 5 p.m., \$5

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## The haunted mansion

BY RYAN DIDUCK

Emptyset, "Petal," *Blossoms* (Thrill Jockey Records)

If you are one of the unfortunate Montrealeers living near a construction zone — and let's face it, who isn't? — you have my enduring sympathy. It seems that the strategy of any crew, whether they're building a condo or knocking down the Turcot, is to do the noisiest work as early in the morning as possible. Somehow, things always quieten down by around 10. It reminds me of the old joke: "What does a Calvinist say when he falls down the stairs? I'm glad that's over with."

Jerry Seinfeld, *Comedians in Cars Getting Coffee* (Netflix)

I don't like to complain. But there are many contemptible things about the latest season of Jerry Seinfeld's new show. For one, there's the star and guest's luxurious ambling around New York City in outrageously expensive automobiles, flaunting their lives of fortune and fame while deriding the servant classes. Another is Seinfeld's limited roster of interviewees — he's not making any appearance of discovering new talent, or even extending an invitation to a comedian not already in his inner circle. But there is one script-related thing that particularly irks me as a writer.

As he introduces each episode, rattling off details about his guests and the car he has chosen for them, he always ends this little preamble with: "... and that's why I'm Jerry Seinfeld, and this is *Comedians in Cars Getting Coffee*." In each instance, these hacky tags are utter non-sequiturs. A beat-up police cruiser and a Seth Rogen interview is *not* why he's Jerry Seinfeld. There are in fact few phrases that could precede that statement and actually make sense, and none of them would be interesting: think something like: "My parents named me Jerry Seinfeld, and that's why I'm Jerry Seinfeld..." Seinfeld even stresses that comedians have a deep love of language. And yet here he is, this mammoth comedic mogul, misusing it in every single episode. It's so aggravating.

Ultimately, though, the show breaks the number one cardinal rule of comedy: it's not funny.

Laura Cannell & Polly Wright, "Help Me to Salt Help Me to Sorrow," *Sing As the Crow Flies* (Brawl Records)

The shortest distance between two points is to pretend that point A is also point B, and just never leave.

S. Chioini, "+4 Degrees," Humidex 001 (Humidex)

Nearly a decade ago now, the scientific community convened in Oxford, UK, for the *4 Degrees and Beyond International Climate Conference*. The event's title was inspired by the general consensus that average regional temperature increases of 4 degrees Celsius or more would ensure catastrophic global consequences. France, Germany, Belgium, and the Netherlands all set record high temperatures this



The LaBianca house

summer, during wave after wave of extreme heat. And yet I still want to be optimistic.

Once Upon a Time ... in Hollywood, Dir. Quentin Tarantino (Columbia Pictures)

The Los Feliz area residence at 3301 Waverly Drive, where on Aug. 9, 1969 six friends of Charles Manson infamously murdered Rosemary and Leno LaBianca, was sold last week for \$1.98-million to Zak Bagans, host of the American TV series *Ghost Adventures*. No doubt, the grisly crimes' approaching 50th anniversary, as well as the publicity surrounding Quentin Tarantino's latest film, in which the Manson clan collectively play a supporting role, spurred the purchase. While the LaBiancas don't figure into Tarantino's movie, the house in which their lives tragically ended has a nightmarish kind of resonance.

The grim fascination with Manson-family-related architecture has a history that spans back to the 1969 murders. The house at 10050 Cielo Drive, where the more famous Sharon Tate was killed the previous evening along with five other socialites, was a routine destination on the Los Angeles occult tour circuit throughout the 1970s and '80s, an upside down sort of star map attracting pilgrims of a more morbid persuasion. Trent Reznor rented it out in the early 1990s to record the Nine Inch Nails album *The Downward Spiral*, before the home was finally demolished in 1994. The Spahn movie ranch, where the Manson family lived at the time of the killings, was suspiciously destroyed in a 1970 wildfire, but the LaBianca residence remains in its

near-original state.

The house was built in a modernist update of Spanish colonial style typical of Los Angeles in the 1920s, and is mostly unremarkable aside from its violent history. But there is one striking feature that sticks out in retrospect, and cannot be unseen once you see it: in the entranceway at the centre of the edifice, two oval windows perched above the elongated porch columns distinctly create a screaming face with eyes and mouth agape, an expressionistic image worthy of Edvard Munch. It is as if the building's draftsman foresaw the future brutality occurring there, and built it right into the construction.

In their 2013 book *Horror in Architecture*, Joshua Comaroff and Ong Ker-Shing call these kinds of exaggerated design features "anamorphic" distortions: "The anamorphic projection, while it causes an object or volume to appear misshapen from most everywhere, is resolved to normal appearance from a privileged viewpoint." Similarly, Quentin Tarantino, the cinematic master architect, exploits anamorphic distortions — not only does he favour the widescreen format that anamorphic lenses afford, but he also stretches and distorts history to his own liking, until, from the audience's vantage point, the cartoonish departure from real events appears almost normal again.

The true horror of Tarantino's films is that the histories they revise — indeed the realities they erase — are far more horrifying than pulp fiction.





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