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READINGS AND BOOK LAUNCHES

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

FRI JULY 5 Amber Scoriah launches *Leaving the Witness Exiting a Religion and Finding a Life*

TUES JULY 9 Montreal Review of Books Summer Launch

WED JULY 10 Feminist Intersectionality Poetry Night ft. Wendy Chin-Tanner

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

BOOK CLUBS

TUES JULY 2 INDIGENOUS LITERATURES *Nitisaanak* by Lindsay Nixon

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

SUN JULY 14 QUEEREADS (6PM) *La Bastarda* by Trifonia Melibea Obono

WED JULY 17 GRAPHIC NOVEL *Leaving Richard's Valley* by Michael DeForge

WED JULY 24 NEW READS *Normal People* by Sally Rooney

SUN JULY 28 RAINBOW STORY HOUR (11AM) Children's reading with local LGBTQ+ Drag Queens, Comedians, Advocates, Performers, and Celebrities!

SUN JULY 28 QUEEREADS (6PM) *QDA: A Queer Disability Anthology* ed. Raymond Luczak

MON AUGUST 1 STRANGE FUTURES *Babel-17* by Samuel R Delany

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table of contents

	American political comic Hasan Minhaj hosts a gala at Just for Laughs this year. We spoke to him about being a brown Muslim ascending the showbiz ladder. Cover photo by Eric Hobbs.
to-do list	6
city	7
:rant line™	7
:persona mtl	7
:inspectah dep	8
food & drink	9
Café Souvenir	9
music	10
Muzion	10
Album reviews	12
:hammer of the mods	12
film	14
Fantasia	14
On Screen	16
arts	18
Hasan Minhaj	18
Nicole Byer	20
Lucas Brothers	21
L'Autre Cirque	22
:play recent	23

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to-do list

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

To Oct. 13

The Canadian Centre for Architecture's exhibition *Our Happy Life: Architecture and Well-Being in the Age of Emotional Capitalism* is "a dissection of the political project behind methods of city data collection and application, an investigation of the emotional component of the real estate market and a demystification of the idea of social space." → 1920 Baile

To July 27

Painter Charles Leblanc's new 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

To Sept. 15

The McCord Museum is mounting *The Polaroid Project: At the Intersection of Art and Technology*, a collection of original works by 100 international artists, many of them among the most celebrated artists of the 20th century, along with the cameras they used. → 690 Sherbrooke W.

July 5–7

Fanboys and fangirls please report to Palais des Congrès for Montreal Comiccon, a cavalcade of geek culture celebrating comics, sci-fi, fantasy, horror and more. This year's guests include Elijah Wood, William Shatner, Michael Madsen, Tom Felton and Lou Ferrigno. → 1001 Place Jean-Paul-Riopelle, exhibition hall 1–8 p.m.



Ghost

Friday, 10 a.m.–7 p.m. Saturday, 10 a.m.–5 p.m. Sunday, \$69 three-day pass, \$25/\$40/\$31 single day tickets

July 6–7

The GOAL football-culture festival — a free event at McGill's Percival Molson Memorial Stadium — promises soccer tournaments, screenings of the semi-final and final of

the Women's World Cup on jumbotrons, family activities, kiosks with food, drinks, games, talks, haircuts, tattoos, massage and more. With its ninth edition, the fest has expanded to two days, with wellness-focused programming on Saturday, and this year the teams are raising money for the GOAL Initiative 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 and Share the Warmth and Montreal Community Cares. → 475 des Pins W., 11 a.m.–6 p.m. both days, free entry

July 10–28

The Just for Laughs comedy fest brings in heavy-hitters from all corners of the entertainment industry (from Netflix, podcasts, TV, movies and the stand-up circuit) including this issue's cover star Hasan Minhaj, Jim Jefferies, Wanda Sykes, Kevin Hart, Jonathan Van Ness, Margaret Trudeau (!), Trevor Noah, Marc Maron, Nick Kroll and Rachel Bloom. See our interviews with incoming comics Minhaj (p. 18), Nicole Byer (p. 20) and the Lucas Brothers (p. 21), and check out more interviews at cultmtl.com.

July 11–Aug. 1

Genre film festival Fantasia attracts throngs of rowdy cinephiles to Concordia's downtown-campus movie theatres with killer horror, sci-fi, fantasy, animation and much more, premiering movies from all over the world, sometimes with guest directors and actors in attendance. See our rundown of festival highlights on p. 14 and keep an eye on cultmtl.com for almost-daily previews and reviews during the fest.

July 18–21, 25–28

The sixth annual Slut Island Festival showcases "artists living on the margins, working consistently towards anti-oppressive and safer spaces." See live music and more across two weekends at Bar le Ritz PDB, Casa del Popolo, Article and Phi Centre. Passes cost \$40 per week.

July 26

Evenko's third annual punk fest '77 Montreal promises headliners Bad Religion, Pennywise, Streetlight Manifesto and the Exploited along with new- and old-school punks from the '70s, '80s and '90s. See Johnson Cummins' highlights on p. 12 and look for more preview coverage at cultmtl.com later this month. → Parc Jean-Drapeau (Île Ste-Hélène), schedule TBA, \$77/\$117, all ages

July 27–28

The Heavy Montreal music fest brings the noise and the weight to Parc Jean-Drapeau, with metal and punk stars including Slayer, Ghost, Godsmack, Evanescence, Slash and Anthrax, among many others. → Parc Jean-Drapeau (Île Ste-Hélène), weekend pass \$175/\$320 Gold Pass, single-day ticket \$95/\$185 Gold Pass

:persona mtl



Paul Desbaillets

By Lorraine Carpenter

Paul Desbaillets is part of the crew behind the Burgundy Lion pub, which opened its doors in 2008 on the strip of Notre-Dame where Joe Beef was just beginning to make some noise.

The Concordia BFA grad, who previously co-opened the Three Monkeys boutique in Cours Mont-Royal in 2004, drew heavily from football culture when it came to naming and branding the pub: three lions is an image borrowed from the badge of England's national soccer team.

Desbaillets's latest baby (he's got a pair of actual kids) is even more deeply rooted in soccer: the GOAL Initiatives Foundation is a charity that raises funds to support school sports, primarily through the annual GOAL football culture festival, which is right around the corner (July 6 and 7).

Lorraine Carpenter: How did you get into soccer in the first place?
Paul Desbaillets: I played soccer in a soccer camp growing up, and things were coming in from family in England here and there, but then one year (in the early aughts) I watched the World Cup and I fell in love hard. It got worse and worse and worse and worse. When I wanted to watch England games at one point, I had to call [a local sports bar that shall remain nameless just in case], ask them to record it illegally and pick up the DVD after work to watch the match that night.

LC: What teams do you support?
PD: In terms of country, you can be a dual citizen, so in World Cups I cheer for Canada and England. When it comes to club, I'm Chelsea all the way.

LC: What about the MLS?
PD: I'm into the MLS, but it's growing, it's getting to where it's supposed to be. It needs to win, it needs to do well, but it's going to take time. Of course I'm a fan of Montreal.

LC: What was the main attraction to football for you?
PD: What turns me on about football is the fact that you can be anywhere on the planet and say the names Messi or Ronaldo or Beckham or Zidane or Marta and anybody knows what you're talking about — even if they don't watch sports. That's big. It's a sport that can create wars. It's no joke.

The 90 minutes are out of your control. I'm not a professional player, never was, not even close, but I love the game and I'm a competitive person when it comes to sports so it was really easy to get into this. It's also an easy game to play, boys and girls can play together or separately, it's cheap to do. There are so many reasons why I think it's fantastic. I love it so much.

:rant line™

THIS WEEK: Hail Nervosa, ban bussy!

PLUS: Landlords are cold-blooded, lying, cheating, ruthless, invasive and horrible, man claims!

"edited" by AL SOUTH

M Oh hey, former Montrealer here. It's Pride season in Toronto, so, you know, the fascists are out in full force. One rule of Pride that I'd like to see is BAN ALL FASCISTS, absolutely. But I think the second rule of Pride has to be that the word BUSSY must never ever be used. B-U-S-S-Y. And that is not having the quality of a tiny little bus. That is BOY PUSSY. And I remember Montreal being a city entirely made up of BOT TOMS, so god knows there is enough bussy for everyone. But I just don't know what the francophone term for that is, and if it should be banned in the same way that bussy should be banned. All right. See you later. [BLEEP!]

M Hi ranters. This is Rocking Rob wishing you all a great weekend! Okay, my rant today is NERVOSA. Yes, Nervosa. I mean the band Nervosa. If anybody hasn't heard of them, I urge you to check them out. Nervosa. Amazing Brazilian metal girl band. I mean, that's pure metal. And I saw them in an interview — they are totally wild out of control and crazy and NASTY onstage beyond belief, but they have something to say, they are beyond metal — but I saw them in an interview and I tell you, they are the SWEETEST nicest ladies you could ever hope to meet. They are so funny and smart, very mellow and gentle — the kind of girls you'd like to have a coffee with. They have a real message, they're from Brazil, they sing about how tough and rough it is there. And they can scream with the best of the male metal bands, and even better. I mean I have to say this — they make SLAYER sound like BARRY MANILOW, okay. I'm being honest. I'm not putting Barry down, because even though I'm a metal rocker, I'm a Barry fan. Don't tell my metal friends that, okay? Rocking Rob here signing out. [BLEEP!]

M There is nothing worse in this world than a LANDLORD. I cannot believe what they get away with. If you are lucky, you have one who is a human being, but 99 per cent of the cases are cold-blooded lying cheating ruthless invasive horrible people. Watch out for your landlord. But even so, make sure to keep your lease, because when the rent increase comes up you know it's not going to be exorbitant, it has to be in line with the law. [BLEEP!]

M The Mural Festival. The Party Zone, or whatever the fuck it is called. I'm walking down the street at 4 p.m., on my way back from work, do I really need to have my BAGS SEARCHED because you guys are selling a few drinks inside a territory on St-Laurent street? A downtown street? Which is free and open to all? And yeah, it's not that big a deal. But it's a big enough fucking deal that it's goddam annoying to get stopped and searched. I don't even let the cops look in my shit unless they have probable cause. But because some booze company wants to make sure that they don't lose any fucking SHEKELS, precious dimes and nickels that might be spent on alcohol. God forbid somebody brings a beer in. Boy, wait till the marijuana companies get a little more public — right now everyone's

smoking everywhere, but soon they'll be frisking your weed at the door so you buy more weed inside. It's unreal. I suppose I could take a side street, take another street, but I don't fucking want to! Why? Because it's my God-given right to walk down any street in this city without somebody searching me! That includes the organizers of Mural Festival, it includes the police of Montreal, it includes any human being to whom I have done no harm nor committed any TRANSGRESSION. I am not culpable to anything under the eyes of the law! But because there is beer for sale you are going to frisk my fucking person? It's not the end of the world, but it's the end of some sort of right when my right to walk down the street without being searched is compromised by a corporation and an organization who are afraid of losing a little bit of money. [BLEEP!]

M What's up Rant Line™? Just to let you in on a little secret, just between you and I: You know how Canada has legalized weed and everything? Well if you look at all the RULES that still apply — for example no smoking in public — or that they want to fine you and jail you because you are buying weed from your dealer instead of one of the SQDC stores. Let that sink in for a moment. They are willing to put you into jail if you don't give them your money. And still we don't call them all one-armed bandits? [BLEEP!]

M What is with the HATERS ON CYCLISTS. Today I was riding my bike and a small piece of it, just the front wheel, was on the crosswalk, the yellow pedestrian crosswalk, and some guy started screaming at me. Just screaming! He was going, "You fucking SELF-ENTITLED piece of shit cyclist, get the fuck off the crosswalk." I don't know, was he a lunatic? He must have been. Who else would behave like that? Honestly, between him and the people in cars honking and yelling, it is shocking. Who is being self-entitled? Entitled to what? And by the way, the reason I was even near the crosswalk is because we were being pushed there by the CONSTRUCTION. Speaking of that, who is planning the detours for all this construction? Is there any oversight, any planning, any central body or trained person in charge? Does it seem like there is to you? Because it seems to me that it is just the construction dudes — some guy in a HARDHAT with a Grade 8 education — who is in charge. That is who is doing the planning! This is not normal. I don't want to defend TORONTO, but this is not how it would be done there. [BLEEP!]

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JUL 29: 7PM. VERNISSAGE: MAMI YONEKURA (JAPAN)

AUG 15: 7PM. VERNISSAGE: JESSICA GAVES (MTL)

SEPT 19: 7PM. VERNISSAGE: DEMING HARRIMAN (NYC)

OCT 24: 7PM. VERNISSAGE: MOIRA NESS (TORONTO)

NOV 21: 7PM. VERNISSAGE: RUPERT BOTTENBERG (MTL)



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:inspectah dep

By the Depset

I've got to duck a little to make it through the door and down the steps into Dépanneur Paul, a compact half-basement right off the corner of des Pins and St-Urbain. The scene is familiar. In the fridges, on the shelves and in the display racks are the usual suspects: the requisite wall of ales, pilsners, ciders, malt liquor, triple IPAs, energy drinks, eggs, Doritos, beef jerky, Kraft Dinner, rolling papers, red solo cups and condoms. It's this sameness, though, that ensures a dépanneur is really only made special through the more intangible offerings to the community it serves.

My living around the corner over the last few years, coupled with my very real and pressing need for cheap Milwaukee beer and cigarettes, has seen to it that I've become thick as thieves with Kanak Pal, the proprietor of Dépanneur Paul and as such, it is a dépanneur like no other in my mind. There are other businesses I've visited for years and I've never wavered from the stock small talk with whoever might be working



Gregory Videman

there, but for whatever reason, Kanak and I were fast friends. Over the years I've been there to congratulate him on the birth of his son, seen videos of his extended family prepare their home for week-long festivals back in Bangladesh, witnessed his harrowing struggles with the Canadian immigration system and celebrated with him through his final triumph in bringing his young family to live with him here in Montreal. Kanak has been an unending wellspring of generosity, and never ceases to surprise me with gifts out of the blue, from fresh baked Bangladeshi misti to a recent set of magnificent red and gold bed-sheets that he and his wife (quite rightly) felt would help live up my otherwise spartan, beige-coloured apartment.

The future is far from certain though and Kanak has noticed a significant decline in business at the dépanneur in recent years, as well as his other

dépanneur only a stone's throw away on the corner of des Pins and St-Dominique. The shuttering of the Hotel-Dieu Hospital and the elimination of all vehicle parking on des Pins have had a particular impact on Kanak and his business but the problem is province-wide. According to the Quebec Convenience store Association, the number of dépanneurs in Quebec fell from 10,000 in 1990 to just 7,000 in 2018 due to rising product costs, the success and proliferation of large-scale convenience stores like Couche-tard and a perceived over-regulation in the industry. It's my hope that businesses like Kanak's will be able to continue to survive and thrive in the coming years because losing them is losing more than a convenient place around the corner to get beer and dish detergent at all hours of the day—it would, at least in my case, mean losing an important actor in the fabric of my community.

food & drink

Bistro reborn

BY CLAYTON SANDHU

Never heard of Café Souvenir? Me neither, until recently.

It's another red-awning on the busy restaurant-lined strip of Bernard west of Parc. In truth, that beautiful sun-soaked string of terrasses, enticing as it may be, is relatively devoid of good places to eat — until now. Café Souvenir, with its underwhelming facade, nearly indistinguishable from its flashier, busier neighbours, is in the midst of becoming what could be the single best place to eat in the neighbourhood.

The restaurant has been open since 1992 and over 27 years it has maintained the same relatively uninspired menu. We all know the type of restaurant - there's one failing in every neighbourhood in town — but Café Souvenir won't succumb to the slow and silent death awaiting most of these restaurants. Instead, it's attempting to breathe new life into the business by hiring a consulting chef.

That chef is Tom Allain. His name will be unfamiliar to many, but I can almost guarantee you've eaten his food, whether it was during his most stints as chef de cuisine at l'Original, Marconi or Nora Gray. The young chef's credits even include Attica in Melbourne, which ranks amongst the 50 best restaurants in the world. While one might expect a chef of this calibre to attempt showy world class cuisine, Allain demonstrates his experience by using restraint. He's created a clever and simple bistro menu that reflects the restaurant where it's served. Being a fan of Allain's cooking, we left him in charge of our order.

To begin, we were served an endive salad, simply dressed in a fresh white wine vinaigrette and dill, garnished with toasted walnuts and generously covered with grated parmesan. The seasoning was perfect, balancing acidity and depth of flavour from the parm and walnuts, with the fresh textural crunch from the endives — it's a winning combo. It's a testament to Allain's cooking and experience that not only is he mature enough in his career to see the value in the classics, he executes them in a way that reminds us why they're classic in the first place. That theme continued with our next dish, cured salmon with caviar de mujol, crème fraîche and rounds of fingerling potatoes. Another obvious dish, pairing cream, caviar, potatoes and salmon, it's done nearly to death but rarely as satisfyingly as this. The cure on the salmon is perfect, the crème fraîche is delicate and adds a welcome sweetness to balance the salty caviar, and the starchy potatoes add structure. Two wonderful plates.

Next, a bourgeois classic and personal favourite of mine, coq-au-vin. Who still makes coq-au-vin, and who serves it in mid-June? Allain does, and he does it because it's good — weather be damned. Another thing I appreciate about Allain's food is his presentation, each element of the dish placed deliberately and lovingly, but without becoming fussy or dainty. Each plate is clean and attractive, but doesn't masquerade as art. It's simply a good-looking plate of food. Two bone-in chicken thighs — turned deep burgundy from being braised in wine — sit triumphantly in a crimson broth, garnished simply with cubes of carrot, slices of cremini mushrooms, short batonnets of celery and delicate petals of pickled cocktail onions. It's rustic elegance embodied, and the chicken is so tender I literally eat it with a spoon.

Asian fusion has always been a part of Café Souvenir's identity. Tom keeps the Asian element alive on this menu, but demonstrates how to keep the menu distinctly French.



Café Souvenir

Clayton Sandhu

The dish is a seared duck breast served in an airy celeriac puree and garnished with pickled carrots, pickled daikon and coriander, and sauced in a hoisin-laced demi-glace. There's hardly anything more French than duck, celeriac and demi-glace, but the simple addition of coriander and hoisin changes the flavour profile without fundamentally changing the dish itself. Brilliant.

For the final savoury course, we're served an enormous beef femur, sliced lengthwise and roasted with rosemary to reveal the tender and infinitely savoury marrow within. I stand corrected: l'Os à Moelle is perhaps the most French thing you could serve, and the most bistro of dishes to boot. Garnished with a bit of parsley, some of those delicious pickled onions and serve with sel gris and cornichons, it's an indulgent but effortlessly classic way to finish a superb meal.

Although there is hardly any space left in our bellies, dessert arrives: a modest but decadent slice of dark chocolate terrine, handsomely garnished with a sweet and savoury combination of salted rye crumbled and shards of sponge

toffee, and subtly dotted with bits of fresh thyme that cleverly tie together the sweet and savoury elements in perfect harmony. Unsurprisingly, it's a knock-out.

As it stands, Café Souvenir has the best menu on Bernard, bar none. Aside from the food, though, there's little to say about the restaurant. The service was relatively inattentive, barring the interactions between resetting plates. The wine list was uninspired. The terrace could use some serious polishing, and similarly the interior has quite a lot of charm but is undone by sloppy handwriting on the chalkboard, twinkly christmas lights and unattractive accent furniture. The menu positions this restaurant to be amongst the best bistros in town, but nobody will have the chance to discover that if they aren't charmed by the room. My advice: hire a consulting sommelier and an interior designer to finish off the overhaul. With a little elbow grease, even after nearly three decades, this restaurant's best years might still lie ahead.

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music

Muzion mentality

BY DARCY MACDONALD

In the summer of 1999, the Quebec rap scene got an infusion of new blood in a trio combining the aesthetic and cultural kinship of the Fugees, the sonic discord of Wu Tang and the Roots, and the militant force of Public Enemy in Muzion's debut album, the now-classic *Mentalité moune morne* (*ils n'ont pas compris*).

Comprised of J.Kyll, Dramatik and Imposs and hailing from Montreal's northern hemisphere of St-Michel and its surrounding environments, Muzion (formed in 1996) distinguished themselves from the more traditional *français-de-France* hip hop stylings of contemporaries Dubmatique and Sans Pression by wearing the street on their sleeves with a recognizably urban Montreal swagger that still comes across today.



Muzion

On July 26, their classic and long out of print debut receives the vinyl treatment (a first-ever pressing in the format) to mark its 20th anniversary.

"We were discussing whether we'd mark the occasion or just let it slide under the radar," explains J.Kyll, sitting with her brother Dramatik in Sony's Montreal offices near Outremont.

"As we were talking about it, (the label) contacted us and told us they were thinking about releasing the project on vinyl to mark its 20th anniversary, and asked if we were interested in the idea. It was a cool coincidence."

Collectors and fans new and old will notice how well the strut of its mostly dark, sometimes-jazzy and occasionally entirely uplifting sonic appeal holds up, and from an engineering standpoint not much has had to be upgraded.

"It sounds perfect," J.Kyll states matter-of-factly. She created most of the beats herself by choosing the samples and orchestrating the arrangements with friends who had the tech of the times. "We're rereleasing it as-is."

"There's a huge difference between hearing it on YouTube and listening to it at home on a stereo," offers Dramatik, still a force majeure as a solo artist in the Quebec rap scene.

"A group putting out a project today with so many different styles and vibes would be a bold move," he says, "especially in times when people just press play and skip if they're not feeling it right away. It's like shows on Netflix."

As J.Kyll puts it, Muzion thrived by taking elements from the global spectrum of hip hop and bringing them into the world of Montreal at the time.

"There's still no Quebec sound, because so much of it is influenced by both the American production sound and the French rhyme style," Dramatik suggests.

But what drove their sound at the end of the century, aside from the necessity for creating a live show, was their curiosity as young artists learning on the fly how to go pro.

"Because it was a first album, it didn't have a preconceived outcome or aim, although we did make it with intention," describes J.Kyll.

"And we were fans first, before artists. It wanders through styles because of those elements and because we were talking *with* our audience, not to our audience.

Dramatik depicts a vivid — if today sepia-toned — portrait of his first memories of learning about hip hop as a child, whether at home or visiting family in NYC in the early '80s.

"I was in a foster home, I was seven or eight, and I heard 'Planet Rock' from Afrika Bambaataa," he says. "I didn't even know it was hip hop, it was just new. Star Wars was out. You'd see breakdancing out. Later it was Kool Moe Dee and then LL Cool J. Breakdancing was just going out of style. The high top came into style. People started saying 'yo'. The rap era was beginning."

Later, J.Kyll, whose first experiences in music were, surprisingly enough for a black woman of the era, in the world of heavy metal. "The (hip hop) movement hadn't attracted me yet. We felt outside. When Public Enemy and NWA came out, I was like, 'Ouf! We here!'"

"Festive rap didn't speak to me. There was something urgent and serious about (these groups). When we later started

doing it, I felt we could do it with a global influence but with the creole twist from Haiti, and with the feel of Africa."

On becoming overnight vedettes chez nous, complete with three MusiquePlus Buzz Clip videos like "Rien à perdre" and the certified classic "La vie, ti neg" debuting from Chateauguay to Chibougamau, the duo reflect with humour and humility in equal measure.

"You had to choose from what you had on an album and make it enduring because that was your shot," says Dram. "It was a big deal. It was like making a short film. And it was a privilege."

"It was an event. When a new (rap) video came out, you didn't go to school," J.Kyll says, laughing. "You stayed home and waited. Our friends would come over and pop champagne."

"(Then) people see you on TV," she continues. "It gives you a certain status and you become a role model whether you

want to or not. But it was new for us, too. And people then don't necessarily want to see you riding the bus next to them."

Ultimately, 20 years later, the impact of their presence then is undeniable today as the Keb rap scene continues to grow and give fans more of what, back then, was parsed out only by doses major labels would allow. And so often, it was right back to the next Mitsou video when the novelty wore off.

"The bands today have a lighter approach because they're not in the trap of the business," Dram reasons. "They have the luxury of staying in the oeuvre, and it can appeal to people because it can afford to be light. And hip hop is the new pop."

Muzion were never a fad, though, and maybe with this vinyl reissue, *ils comprendrons, finalement*.

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WED. JULY 10 - JORDAN LAZAR

THURS. JULY 11 - PAT LESYK & GARY DAVIS

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Album reviews



Octavian, *Endorphins* (Black Butter Limited) Following the fall 2018 release of *Spaceman*, Octavian's new mixtape pulls at different stylistic threads, with a half-dozen dazzling features packed with perfectly selected collection of aphoristic beats. The project comes together more like a full-length studio album. It's a diverse collection

of productions straddling grime, trap, R&B and pop. Veering from the typically U.K.-grime BPMs, *Endorphins* instinctively reaches for trap beats, as heard on "Lit," and explores subjects on thug life, oral sex, romance and drugs. While playing with trap hi-hats, Octavian still retains his unapologetically unique, gruff idiosyncratic London attitude. With *Endorphins*, Octavian, along with AJ Tracey and slowthai, might be able to bridge the gap between the classically U.K.-grime and North America's trap scenes. 9/10 Trial Track: "Bet" featuring Skepta and Michael Phantom (Mira Silvers)



Benny the Butcher, *The Plugs 1 Met* (Griselda) By the time many read this, the talk will have shifted to the Griselda Records camp's Westside Gunn and his new LP, out July 5, but if you're still not familiar with the Buffalo, NY family — which also includes Gunn's brother Conway, both cousins to Benny, who will soon see a group effort released on Shady — this EP is a good primer, not to hardly

discount the rest of these cats' previous output. Hip hop heads are obsessed with things like "bringing it back" and "doing it like they used to." The thing with Benny is he doesn't sound for one second like he's trying. And for those who care about that type of thing, any and all thuggin' considered in the bars herein gives you that gut-punch authenticity. No frontin' ass, used-to-be-gangsta musings here. The plugs Benny the Butcher met are dangerous, a vibe so very often lacking in modern hip hop. He's not bringing anything back. He's standing right fuckin' here. If there's any glory to be found from street life, Benny makes it speak. But kids, just please, don't try this at home. You simply don't have the ordnance. 8/10 Trial Track: "Crowns for Kings" ft. Black Thought (Darcy MacDonald)



Madonna, *Madame X* (Interscope) *Madame X* is Madonna being Madonna. In the album's announcement, she says, "Madame X is a dancer, a professor, a head of state, a housekeeper, an equestrian, a prisoner, a student, a mother, a child, a teacher, a nun, a singer, a saint, a whore, and a spy in the house of love."

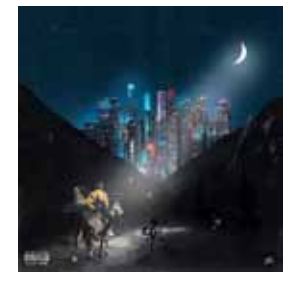
With that in mind, the album keeps true to the multifaceted identities with its eclectic experimental exploration of every genre currently relevant to music pop-culture with huge doses of Latin influences: trip-hop on "Crazy," Diplo-created reggaeton on "Future" with Quavo, house-inflected "I Don't Search I Find," disco revival in "God Control," trap ballad in "Crave" with Swae Lee and Portuguese fado, Baile funk, Batuque with Anitta in "Faz Gostoso." Lyrics, though strongly worded and poetic, don't find their mark on the first or second listening-rounds. 7/10 Trial Track: "Future" ft. Quavo (Mira Silvers)

Freddie Gibbs & Madlib, *Bandana* (Keep Cool) This rap "supergroup" is supposedly called MadGibbs but for some reason also isn't, really. And the same can be



said about this LP offering, hailed since the beginning of the year to be the second coming of hip hop but landing like a perfectly average, no-more-no-less entry into both artists' — whom I consider wildly overrated — respective discographies. There are a few sure shot bangers scattered among its 16 tracks, and guest spots from Anderson

.Paak, Yasiin Bey and Black Thought are welcome and warranted, but other than that, Madlib's mostly paint-by-numbers production here serves as an oft-overdone backdrop to Gibbs growl and frankly lazy pen game on this outing. Both are capable of better and Bandana is more rag than swag. But not everyone agrees. As Keb rap star Lary Kidd voiced, "Bruh, it's just refreshing, sample-based, hard-ass rap in the midst of all these new guys." I'm down with at least two thirds of that. Which is more than I can say for the album. There's not much new under this Bandana. 6/10 Trial Track: "Fake Names" (Darcy MacDonald)



Lil Nas X, *7* (Columbia) Where do we draw the line between music and trolling? As it turns out, Twitter star tern country star Lil Nas X is capable of making songs that aren't just different versions of Song of the Summer "Old Town Road." The Nirvana-interpolating "Panini" and the Cardi B-assisted "Rodeo"

each have the potential to continue the ranger's reign on top. However, everything else on this project fails to entice. Though his strive for cross-genre experimentation is commendable, the results are ultimately too generic and result in filler tracks. This cowboy should take his horse back to the drawing board. 5.5/10 Trial Track: "Old Town Road (Remix)" feat. Billy Ray Cyrus (Mr. Wavvy)

:hammer of the mods

BY JOHNSON CUMMINS

Outdoor festival season is here, and as I do every year, I must admit that I can't stand it. Never liked 'em, never will. But I'm an old-as-fug curmudgeon and misanthrope, so if you still have a healthy zest for life and think a stranger is just a friend you've never met, you're probably excited for the big fests happening back to back at Parc Jean Drapeau: '77 Montreal on July 26 and the real biggy, Heavy Montreal, taking place on July 27 and 28. Despite the fact I will be keeping my Irish tan intact by staying indoors for this three-day extravaganza, I would be a complete asshole not to hip you L7s to some don't-miss bands playing these festivals, for you brave souls who are able to line up for chemical toilets while chugging down pricey plastic mugs of beer. So here goes:

'77 Montreal

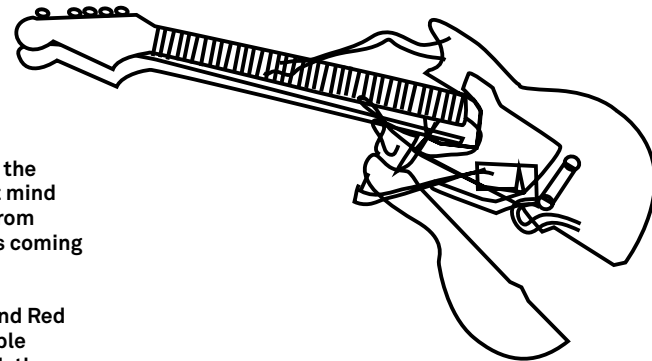
In my books if you can't see the white of the eyes of the singer, then it sure as fug ain't punk, but if you don't mind watching punk bands on a big screen or squinting from behind a barricade, there are some definite classics coming to this sweat-act before Heavy Montreal.

There are the fuggin' great locals like the Lookout and Red Mass, but you can see these rad cats at more sensible locales like Brasserie Beaubien and l'Esco. Although there is plenty of punk to go around at '77 this year, the real deals would be classic San Francisco punkers the Avengers (they opened the Sex Pistols last show at Winterland, donchaknow). This is reason for real hoopla as the female-fronted Avengers' only full length, "the pink album," is one of the era's true shining diamonds.

The other killer punk band to grace the '77 stage is Off!, fronted by punk fucking king Keith Morris (Circle Jerks, Black Flag) and rounded out by Melvins/Redd Kross bassist Steve McDonald, Burning Brides singer Dimitri Coats and Hot Snakes/Rocket From the Crypt member and pro skater Mario Rubalcaba. If you ever wondered what it would sound like if Black Flag's *Nervous Breakdown* had just kept going (while sidestepping Gregg Ginn's missteps), Off! is your new favourite band. There are far bigger bands on the top of the marquee, but I hate them, so nyah nyah nyah.

Heavy Montreal

There are some serious heavy swingers here, like Slayer, who are sporting two original members, so if you've never had a chance to see them, this will more than likely be your last chance as they did their farewell tour over a year ago.



There are killer locals playing Heavy, like the hate-filled doom of Dopethrone and the wallop of the Great Sabatini, but again, wait until they have a small local gig that you can support. The real reason you will want to wage war with the beating sun and dust inhalation is to see one of the big four (along with Slayer): Anthrax, who, despite having a singer who likes Journey, can still bring a mosh like no other.

The real hits are all bands that have been around for decades, like Corrosion of Conformity, Clutch, Cattle Decapitation and Fu Manchu, but the definite surprise of the fest will be the Disneyworld of black metal: Watain. If they are able to perform their full show, Watain may remain the talk of the fest along with the tribute to Slayer ... that are called Slayer.

Current Obsession: Lee "Scratch" Perry and the Upsetters, *Super Ape* jonathan.cummings@gmail.com

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Freaks



The Miracle of the Sargasso Sea

BY ALEX ROSE

There are so many kinds of films that play at the Fantasia Film Festival (which runs from July 11 to Aug. 1) and so many unpredictable factors — world premieres, debut films, the rowdiness of the crowd — that it can be daunting to know where to even begin with the program. The fact is that you can't make a truly terrible decision, but we've tried to isolate some highlights from the program.

Returning favourites

Sadako is the latest installment in the *Ringu* trilogy and the first to be directed by original helmer Hideo Nakata since 1999's *Ringu 2*. Emma Roberts, Milla Jovovich and Awkwafina star in Alice Waddington's feature debut *Paradise Hills*, set in a dystopian reform school for women of aberrant behaviour. Waddington's short film *Disco Inferno* was a standout of the Born of Woman short-film showcase a few years back, and she co-wrote the script with Nacho Vigalondo (*Colossal*, *Timecrimes*). Genre stalwart Pollyanna McIntosh (*The Woman*, *The Walking Dead*) makes her directorial debut with *Darlin'*, a coming-of-age tale that also serves as a direct sequel to Lucky McKee's *The Woman*.

Triple-threat weirdo Onur Tükel's *Summer of Blood* premiered at Fantasia in 2014; he returns here with *Black Magic for White Boys*, a retooled version of a project he first presented as a four-part series. Malik Bader made quite a splash with his brutal debut *Cash Only* in 2015; he returns with *Killerman*, a gritty cop drama starring Liam Hemsworth. Writers Grady Hendrix and Ted Geoghegan (both Fantasia regulars) wrote Chelsea Stardust's *Satanic Panic* together; the film stars Rebecca Romjin as a wealthy Satanist. I may be mistaken but I think every single one of Richard Bates Jr.'s films has played Fantasia; his latest horror-satire, *Tone-Deaf*, is no different. Amanda Crew and Robert Patrick star in this home-invasion thriller that riffs on the current American political situation.

Award winners and avowed masters

If you missed Zhang Yimou's *Shadow* during its lightning-quick release earlier this year, here's your chance to rectify that. The Chinese master returns to the genre of wuxia with a film that took four awards (including Best Director) at Taiwan's Golden Horse awards. Caroline Poggi and Jonathan Vinel's *Jessica Forever* was one of the most divisive festival films of the past year. It's a strange fetishic sci-fi film with influences as disparate as Claire Denis and *Metal Gear Solid*. Low-budget maverick Larry Fessenden takes on the Frankenstein myth with *Depraved*, a riff on the classic Mary Shelley story starring *Blair Witch Project*'s Joshua Leonard.

American stars 'n' bars

Riley Stearns returns to Fantasia five years after his debut *Faults* with *The Art of Self-Defense*, a black comedy starring Jesse Eisenberg as a meek accountant and Alessandro Nivola as the toxic, psychopathic sensei who takes him under his wing. Eisenberg also stars alongside Imogen Poots (who is also in *The Art of Self-Defense!*) in *Vivarium*, a dark sci-fi tale about a couple who quite literally become trapped in nightmarish suburbs. Lupita Nyong'o and Alexander England star as a couple of chaperones on a kid's field trip that soon turns into a zombie outbreak in Abe Forsythe's horror-comedy *Little Monsters*. Dave Bautista and Michelle Yeoh star in *Master Z: Ip Man Legacy*, an umpteenth film about the mythical martial arts master, this time under the direction of legendary choreographer Yuen Woo-ping.

Elijah Wood has now more or less dedicated his career to genre films; he stars in prolific producer and Fantasia regular Ant Timpson's directorial debut *Come to Daddy*, a gonzo black comedy that also stars Stephen McHattie. Irish comic Maeve Higgins stars alongside Will Forte in the supernatural comedy *Extraordinary*, in which Higgins plays a driving instructor with a flair for the supernatural.

Shock docs

Brian De Palma's 1974 musical *Phantom of the Paradise* was more or less ignored by all upon release — everywhere but in Winnipeg, where college students became so enamored with the film they built up a cult to it that lasts to this day. Sean Stanley and Malcolm Ingram's *Phantom of Winnipeg*

traces that unusual path. (The original film will also screen with songwriter and star Paul Williams in attendance!) Homegrown doc *L'inquiétante absence* explores why the Quebec film landscape has so few horror films; director Amir Belkaim and Félix Brassard have assembled a veritable who's-who of local luminaries, many of whom (it stands to reason) will be in attendance. Italian photojournalist Letizia Battaglia is the subject of *Shooting the Mafia*, a documentary that follows her career capturing most facets of the Sicilian Mafia's decades-long reign.

Homegrown horrors

Prolific Canadian director Bruce McDonald returns to the genre world with *Bruce McDonald's Dreamland*, a bizarre gangster fable starring Stephen McHattie (in a dual role!) and Henry Rollins. Montreal-based filmmakers Chris Bavota and Lee Paula Springer make their feature-length debut with *Dead Dicks*, a dark comedy about a woman forced to dispose of multiple corpses that look just like her fuck-up brother Richie. Emile Hirsch and Bruce Dern star in *Freaks*, an oddball Canadian sci-fi thriller that won awards at several festivals. Renaud Gauthier (*Discopathe*) returns with another stylish riff on classic genre films with *Aquaslash*, a gory water park-set '80s slasher.

Unidentifiable filmic objects

Christian Louboutin (!), Asia Agento and Jean-Pierre Léaud star in Arielle Dombasle's frankly impossible-to-describe *Alien Crystal Palace*, a film whose mere description on the Fantasia website makes my brain hurt. Mia Wasikowska stars in Mirrah Foulkes's *Judy and Punch*, a strange, slapstick black comedy that takes the idea of the classic punching-puppets concept to the real world (!). *The Miracle of the Sargasso Sea* is a Greek crime film that's described as being part of the same cinematic wave as Yorgos Lanthimos's films, which should be the only selling point necessary.

Apologies to the majority of the continent of Asia (!), the films from which I was mostly unfamiliar with this year. That having been said, the programming at Fantasia is particularly strong in this regard, and you basically can't fuck up by seeing a Korean cop movie.

LUNCHTIME CONCERTS: Elinor Frey plays cello 28.07.2019 12:30pm
 GARAGE CLUB: Hua Li + Chivengi 04.07.2019 8pm
 Dead Dog + Errhead 18.07.2019 8pm
 TOOLKIT FOR TODAY: "Archival Absenting" 08.07-11.07.2019, 8:30pm
 READING: THE ARCHIVES OUT LOUD: Gordon Matta-Clark We read letters and notes from the Gordon Matta-Clark archive 19.07.2019, 12:30pm
 HOW TO: Disturb The Public A residency on the potential for public programming to disturb the public and also the institution. Opening event: 21.07.2019, 3pm. Closing event: 27.07.2019, 3pm.
 CONVERSATIONS: with Torsten Lange on queer ecologies of care 25.07.2019 8pm

July

EXHIBITIONS

● Our Happy Life: Architecture and Well-Being in the Age of Emotional Capitalism. 08.05-13.10.2019

● Out of the Box: Gordon Matta-Clark selected by Yann Chateigné. 07.06-08.09.2019

● Second Life. 27.03-24.11.2019



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On Screen



Menteur



Once Upon a Time in Hollywood



The Farewell



Stuber

BY ALEX ROSE

It's been a disappointing summer, both critically and commercially. We've watched franchises wither and die, while ill-advised remakes and adaptations landed with an indifferent thud. Even sure-bet deals like the live-action *Aladdin* remake disappointed, leading some to proclaim the death of cinema for probably the 100th time in the last century.

I don't know if Jon Favreau's "live-action" remake of *The Lion King* (July 19) offers much hope for resuscitating the art form, but one thing's for sure: people are going to show up for this thing. It's as if this remake (which is only live-action inasmuch as the lions look more real than in 2D animation) was bred in a lab for maximum four-quadrant appeal, with Donald Glover, Beyoncé and Seth Rogen amongst the voice cast.

Spider-Man: Far From Home (July 2) closes out the current phase of the Marvel Cinematic Universe. Tom Holland returns as the reluctant webslinger who is tasked to put his European senior trip on hold to assist a mysterious spaceman (Jake Gyllenhaal) in saving the world from certain destruction. It's amiable enough in the sense that the lesser Marvel movies are always more charming than their overstuffed brethren, but it's not exactly shaking

things up. For that, you can always rely on the ever-controversial, ever-slippery Quentin Tarantino, whose ninth film *Once Upon a Time in Hollywood* premieres on July 26. This story of a fading Hollywood star (Leonardo DiCaprio) and his stunt double (Brad Pitt) navigating a changing Hollywood landscape brewed up much controversy when it was revealed early on that it was also about the Manson murders. That controversy seems to have died down since the film's Cannes premiere, suggesting that Tarantino's wild revisionist streak remains intact.

Comedies are often pointed to as the greatest victim of the changing film landscape. Simply put, people don't leave their house to watch comedies if comedies of any stripe are available on Netflix. As disappointed as I am to say this considering the pedigree, I doubt that the Kumail Nanjiani/Dave Bautista two-hander *Stuber* (July 12) is going to buck that trend. Directed by Montrealer Michael Dowse (*Goon*, *Fubar*), it stars Nanjiani as an Uber driver (named Stu, of course) who takes a customer who turns out to be a tough-as-nails policeman (Bautista) on the trail of a killer. Despite the talent at hand, the trailer didn't do much to convince me.

Quebec comedies are still one of the most popular genres, however, and stand-up comedian Louis-José Houde tends to topline the most successful ones. *Menteur* (July 10) is a high-concept comedy in which a compulsive liar finds himself in a situation

where every white lie he's ever told becomes real; it's an inverse *Liar Liar*, if you will. Alexandre Aja has had a bit of an uneven career since his breakout film *Haute tension* in 2003 — he's directed mostly horror (*Mirrors*, *Piranha 3D*) with varying levels of success, but his latest has an irresistible logline. Kaya Scodelario stars in *Crawl* (July 12), in which she plays a young woman who saves her father (Barry Pepper) from their flooded house and must return to safety by navigating the gator-infested waters in which the town is now submerged.

Prolific documentarian Nick Broomfield (*Biggie & Tupac*, *Kurt & Courtney*) returns with another documentary pairing two music icons; *Marianne & Leonard: Words of Love* (July 12) focuses on the relationship between Leonard Cohen and his muse Marianne Ihlen, who died a few months apart in 2016. It comes out the same week as another biographical doc, Timothy Greenfield-Sanders' *Toni Morrison: The Pieces I Am*. Awkwafina and Tzi Ma (*24, Arrival*) star in *The Farewell* (July 19), a drama about a Chinese-American woman who visits with her family in China when her grandmother is diagnosed with lung cancer. Reception from Sundance has been overwhelmingly positive.

In Montreal, of course, July means one thing above all else: Fantasia! This year, the festival launches on July 11 and runs through to Aug. 1. For highlights, see p. 14. Watch the *Cult MTL* website for daily coverage of films screening during the fest.

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Political by nature

BY DAVE JAFFER

It's tough to have a conversation about anything media-related these days without also having a conversation about diversity and representation. This isn't a bad thing.

Diversity is good and, as you've likely heard, makes us strong. Representation is important in all industries but on-screen media representation is perhaps the most important. We see comedians, actors and news anchors in a way we don't see CEOs or loan officers or assembly line workers. Media is a major way people understand and contextualize reality. As such, issues of representation are actually issues of validity and existence, a "pics or it didn't happen" situation writ very, very large.

Hasan Minhaj clearly gets this. With apologies to everyone else doing the political comedy news show thing, Minhaj is the only one who has turned his big break — Netflix's *Patriot Act With Hasan Minhaj* — into something we haven't really seen before.

As *Slate's* Inkoo Kang wrote shortly after the series premiered, "*Patriot Act* diverges from its predecessor [*Last Week Tonight With John Oliver*] in one unmistakable way: It lets Minhaj be Minhaj — i.e., an Indian-American comic whose beliefs and reference points are often influenced by his cultural background and experiences as a brown man in America."

As a brown man in Canada, this is noteworthy. I've been writing about art and artists for 15 years and I can count how many of them looked like me on one hand. As such, Minhaj's recent run of success — from *The Daily Show* to the White House Correspondents' Dinner to *Homecoming King* to *Patriot Act* to an inclusion as one of *Time's* 100 most influential people in the world — has been incredible to witness for two very specific reasons:

One: it's incredible to see tangible proof that times have changed.

Two: kids who look like Hasan Minhaj get to see him writing and acting and performing and speaking his truth in front of thousands of people, which makes them think, "Hey, I can do that, too."

"I just feel super grateful that I was given a shot," he says, warmly, over the phone from New York. Some people don't sound like themselves over the phone; Hasan Minhaj sounds so much like himself I want to reach out and touch his famously coiffed hair.

"The fact that I have a shot, and that I'm one of the first people to host a show like this that comes from my background, I know that this is an incredible opportunity. You don't get a whole lot of cracks in this business, so, if I have this opportunity, I want to say something. It's why I opened the [series] with an episode on Saudi Arabia and [an episode on] Affirmative action. I wanted to indict my own community and I wanted to indict my own religious background."



Hasan Minhaj

That Minhaj, a Muslim, started *Patriot Act* by taking a shot at Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, who allegedly masterminded *Washington Post* journalist Jamal Khashoggi's assassination, was a hell of a brush-back pitch. In throwing it, he was making a statement: *I'm not here to fuck around.*

The experience of interviewing Hasan Minhaj is an exercise in getting more than you ask for. I wanted to know whether he felt like he had a responsibility to communicate his lived experience as an Indian-American, he gives me a riff on the Spider-Man "great power, great responsibility" bit. His thoughtfulness is refreshing, but it betrays something else: incredulity.

"I would have never have thought that we'd be living in an era now where all of us — whether it's you with writing or others with comedy and film — would finally have this moment to be able to put that into art," he says. As if flashing back to every dirty look and "this is not for you" comment I received back in the day, I catch myself nodding like a perpetual motion drinking bird.

"We've reached this cultural tipping point," he continues. "A lot of us are children of people who immigrated to the United States and Canada in the '70s and '80s and we've now come of age, and have had time to reckon not only with our parents' experiences but our own experiences navigating identity and the sort of insider-outsider relationship [we have] with our country."

He makes reference to Mindy Kaling, Kumail Nanjiani and Aziz Ansari but also to Dev Patel and Riz Ahmed, all of whom were born between 1978 and 1990. He says "country" but he may as well say "the west."

Having his own show, he says, allows him to "open up conversations [he'd] never seen on the dozens of late night and satire shows that exist in the world," and is largely why he makes references to "Indian uncles" and "the chai." It's why he casts his net further afield than only mainstream (American) things and issues, and why he doesn't shy away from covering "Indian elections or corruption in cricket or Brazil, Bolsonaro and the rainforest or what's happening right now in Sudan."

Hasan Minhaj is going for broke. He's shooting his shot. He's trying to get it all done before his mom wakes him up and tells him it's time to go to school.

"There's been so much white space that has existed and that hasn't been discussed for the longest time," he says. "While I have this opportunity, I'm going to put my foot on the gas," he says.

It merits mention that Hasan Minhaj didn't only talk to me about the brownness of it all, but those were the parts of our talk that felt the most important to tell you about. Minhaj took a shot at one of the world's most powerful people in his first show because it needed to be said. So did all of this.

→ The Hasan Minhaj Just for Laughs gala takes place at Place des Arts's Salle Wilfrid-Pelletier on Friday, July 26, 9:45 p.m., \$42.80-\$121.09



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Ache and bake

BY ERIK LEJON

If you happen to see American comedian Nicole Byer on stage or in public at Just for Laughs this year, resist the urge to yell “Nailed it!” at her. It’s tempting, I know, but rest assured Byer hears it, a lot.

“It’s a blessing and a curse,” Byer says from her home in Los Angeles, referring to her hosting duties on *Nailed It!*, the Netflix dessert-baking game show where bumbling home pastry chefs fail miserably at recreating complex confectionary under a strict time limit.

Instead of yelling the show’s titular catchphrase at her when she hits the stage in Montreal this July, consider sending her a pic of a mangled homemade cake on social media.

“People do that and it’s fine,” she says. “People really connect with the show and they’re at home cooking and that’s cute — I like that. I just don’t need to be screamed at every day.”

It’s no surprise *Nailed It!* has taken off as an alternative to the glut of overly serious cooking shows out there, and Byer is the reason for it. Under her stewardship, the three contestants in every episode laugh off their misfortune and feel comfortable being their klutzy selves in the kitchen, knowing that Byer and fellow judge Jacques Torres are laughing with them, not at them.

“That’s not my style,” Byer says. “I’m not here to make anybody feel like shit. And we all know what the game is: it’s to be the best of the worst. They took the time, energy and



Nicole Byer

effort to make these things. And what fun would it be if we just told them how bad they were?”

As a result of keeping things light, Byer, Torres and a rotating cast of guest judges genuinely look like they’re having fun while filming. Infectious laughter rings through the kitchen and their earnest reactions (usually looks of horror) to the big reveals at the end can’t be faked. Byer says the show is as enjoyable to make as it is to watch.

“Jacques is a great person. I love hanging out with him for the 12-hour days we shoot,” she says. “The contestants are all really fun, everyone is there to poke fun at themselves. It’s a good time.”

And yes, Byer and Torres’s reactions are completely real.

“But I don’t think either of us have gotten sick from eating anything yet,” she adds.

While in town for the festival, the multitasking Byer will be doing stand-up as well as recording two of her four podcasts: *Why Won’t You Date Me?* and *Best Friends* with co-host (and best pal) Sasheer Zamata. Byer is no stranger to the city: she filmed her *Comedians of the World* Netflix special at Club Soda last year.

Why Won’t You Date Me?, which has been running consistently since 2017, finds the comedian asking that very personal question from ex-partners, while also gabbing with other friends about a variety of subjects pertaining to love and sex.

“It strikes a chord with a lot of people who feel like it’s hard to meet people and they don’t understand why they can’t find a partner, so I think I’m saying a lot of things that people are feeling,” Byer says. “Then I’ll have people I hooked up with on the show and I’ll ask them to their faces why they won’t date me. I think that’s the dream that everybody has — they would love to just know why.”

→ Nicole Byer performs at Café Cléopâtre (1230 St-Laurent) from July 24–27, 7:30 p.m., \$25.75. Byer is also recording episodes of *Why Won’t You Date Me?* (July 26, 4 p.m.) and *Best Friends* (July 25, 11:30 a.m.) at DoubleTree by Hilton (1255 Jeanne-Mance), \$27.50 each.

Lords of the underground

BY MR. WAVVY

It’s been five beautiful years since identical twins the Lucas Brothers first captured the world’s attention with their roles in the 2014 summer blockbuster *22 Jump Street*. The same year, the pair appeared in *Variety’s 10 Comics to Watch* showcase at Just for Laughs. This freshman class of sorts sees the coveted publication predicting some of the industry’s best next in line.

“Everything is just a blur,” explains Kenny (who is older than his brother Keith by a matter of minutes) of the duo’s past half-decade. “I’m enjoying the moment, I feel like I’ve grown tremendously as a comedian.”

Since their early JFL outings, the Lucas Brothers have been nothing short of plentiful with their creative endeavours. While the boys have not experienced skyrocketing levels of fame like fellow *10 Comics* alumni like Amy Schumer or Tiffany Haddish, Keith and Kenny asserted themselves as subcultural kings via their beloved animated stoner series *Lucas Bros. Moving Co.*

“[The show] was bizarre because if people love the show, they really loved the show,” says Keith of *Moving Co.’s* cult

status. “There were no fair-weather fans. They would watch it over and over again. It’s a beautiful thing because we were trying to tap into that very specific group of people, and I feel like we reached them.”

Fans who have been longing for Lucas Brothers-fronted content won’t have to wait much longer. Keith and Kenny have two new series in the pipeline: a return to animation with Disney involved and a live-action legal comedy.

“We’re in law school and trying to uncover whether or not our father committed the crime. And then we get involved in high-level corruption — it gets surreal,” says Kenny of the latter series. “That show, we’re in the process of developing with the guys who directed *Game Night* (John Francis Daley and Jonathan Goldstein). It’s been a fun process.”

As if two television projects weren’t enough, the twosome is also teaming up with Judd Apatow for a film that they will write and star in.

“We just closed the deal maybe yesterday. Universal greenlit the script that we’ve been writing,” Kenny proudly reveals. Like many Apatow-backed films, the story takes plenty of inspiration from real-life events.

“We’re drawing a lot from our biography, our childhood. It’s a story that involves our father, some development with him in reality that is part of the script. It’s a very personal story but I believe it’s very funny,” divulges Keith.

Their father, of course, went to jail for 15 years when the two were in their adolescent years. Such a predicament has been a strong source of inspiration for some of Keith and Kenny’s bits, turning a source of pain and confusion into laughter.

This month, the Lucas Brothers return to Just for Laughs for the fourth time, with hopes that their performances will help them iron out the kinks for their forthcoming stand-up special.

“We’ve completed about 80 per cent of it, we still have to work out some of the jokes and figure out the overall story that we want to tell,” says Kenny. “I know where we wanted

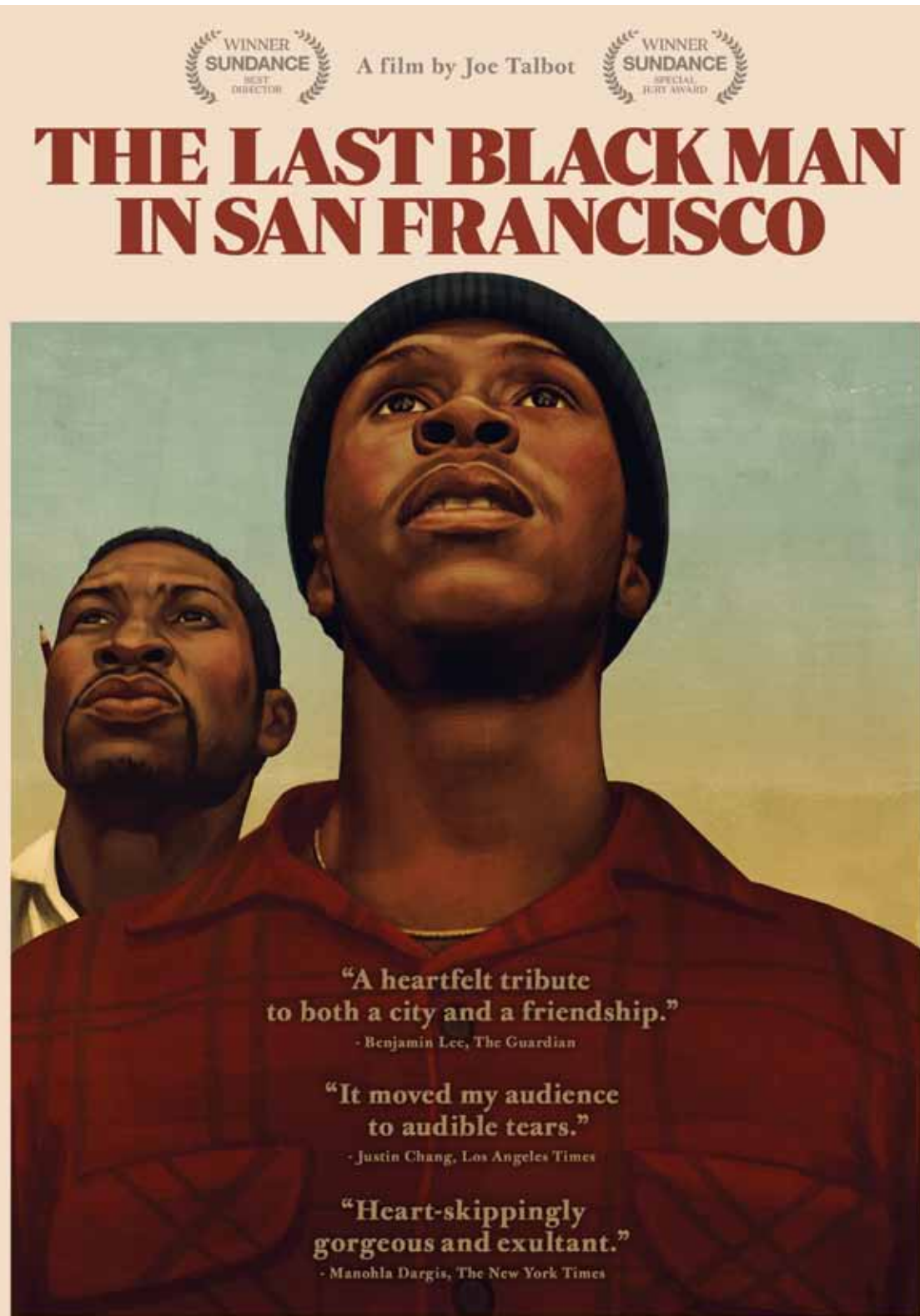


Lucas Brothers

to shoot it. We’ve been touring vigorously to get the material tight. At this point we feel comfortable doing an hour, maybe an hour and 15 minutes.”

The two identify Montreal crowds as “honest” compared to other markets. With so much comedy seen here in such few days, we only laugh when we mean it.

→ The Lucas Bros: Hood Disease will be at Newspeak from July 23–27, 10 p.m. each night, \$23.75



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Subdued superhumans

BY NORA ROSENTHAL

When most of us think about Montreal circus arts, we think about Cirque du Soleil.

A Cirque du Soleil performance is incredibly impressive. And yet, watching the effortless midair flinging of bodies and seeing the throngs of sweatily enthused philistines give standing ovation after ovation, it's hard not to be overcome by a strange numbing effect, almost like that of porn. Sure, those trapezists have magnificently throbbing forearms and

everyone's inner ear seems surgically calibrated, but the whole thing is still just Vegas glitzy. In Cirque du Soleil's defence, there are no fine arts delusions up in the corporate machinery — it calls itself, after all, an "entertainment company."

Enter experimental circus, a growing community of circus artists with a different philosophy. They hold that circus performers can still be technically virtuosic but cozy up a little closer to the fine arts, and find the cerebral in the razzmatazz. Basile Philippe and the duo Clara Prezzavento and Luisina Rosas are young circus artists working on the periphery of the mainstream, part of a line-up at la Chapelle Theatre called l'Autre cirque, an offshoot of this year's ninth edition of Montréal Complètement Cirque.

Philippe, a floor acrobat, is presenting *Within/Beignade*, in which he interacts with an immense donut-shaped mat. Prezzavento and Rosas are performing *La mort d'un cerf-volant*, a piece for themselves and a German Wheel (two large metal hoops connected with spokes). Philippe gets



l'Autre cirque

Prigo Rivabois

enthused just talking about the vibrations the donut makes when it hits the ground, how the audience is close enough to feel the resonations through the floor. He describes the show as "sensorial and private," even referring to himself and the donut as "us." Prezzavento and Rosas also have a very emotional engagement with their piece. Their duo simply concerns the idea of "carrying the load," both literally and figuratively.

All three of these circus artists are recent grads from l'École nationale de cirque, all trying to create their own paths outside of entertainment circus. They continue to prioritize their bodies and their athleticism, but seek out ways of rendering their movements more intimate.

Prezzavento talked about how, with feats of traditional circus, "it's almost like you're seeing a superhero. It's not something a normal human can do." She and Rosas want to build on a more human connection with the public.

Watching excerpts of *La mort d'un cerf-volant*, it is difficult, I will admit, not to demand the very same trashy razzle-dazzle you would otherwise critique. Where are the death defying leaps? Where are the glutes barely encased in sequins? What's more, these artists are still doing work that's dangerous, even if it may seem subdued. Phillippe spent five months just last year recovering from a concussion. But whereas circus acts with big companies are insured and well paid, circus artists working on their own or with small companies and who are trying to push the boundaries of something that is part art and part sport, are left in a precarious situation.

Nevertheless, this branch of circus is growing. In part, it serves as a cultural response to the hollow feeling even glittery superhumans can leave you with. Philippe talks about the lack of a coherent vocabulary to even talk about circus: "You choreograph a dance piece, you direct a piece of theatre, but you don't have any word to speak about how you create a circus piece." Still, despite the absence of a critical dialogue around circus, and the corporate rigidity of big circus companies, there is a growing new circus community in Montreal that is beginning to create circus differently.

→ L'Autre Cirque is happening at la Chapelle Theatre (3700 St-Dominique) from July 8–10, \$23.50

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Radiohead's Thom Yorke

BY RYAN DIDUCK

Fly Pan Am with Lungbutter, La Sala Rossa, June 15

Fly Pan Am and Lungbutter are very different bands. One is a reformed quartet that conjures elaborate post-rock with electronic flourishes; one is an all-lady power trio that kicks out long-form punk stomps. Although their energies are distinctive, together on one bill they give new meaning to the phrase "let's blow the roof off the dump."

Dean Hurley, "Philosophy of Beyond: An Introduction (Documentary)," *Anthology Resource Vol. II: Philosophy of Beyond* (Sacred Bones)

It's really true that my first word as a child was "clock." Long before I ever uttered "mom" or "dad," I pointed at that abstract time-keeping apparatus on the wall and called it by its most common English name. I've been fascinated with the notion of time ever since.

Daphni featuring Paradise, "Sizzling," *Sizzling EP* (Jiaolong)

We have made progress as a dance music culture when Dan Snaith features Paradise, the obscure Bermudian band, as co-author on this masterful remix under his Daphni moniker. Paradise recorded "Sizzlin' Hot" in 1981 for an album of the same name, but it received little attention beyond Bermuda's borders. New York's Frederiksberg Records reissued it in 2017, and the liner notes' introductory quote from DJ John Gómez speaks volumes: "Relentless disco from Bermuda that's finally been recovered from the triangle." The assumption here is that indigenous musics don't exist until they've been "recovered" for a wider audience — usually by some white guy in the western world. Snaith's gesture to credit Paradise rightly acknowledges and challenges these culturally hegemonic assumptions.

In that spirit, let's re-credit some other classic electronic tunes: there's "Music Sounds Better

With You," by Stardust featuring Chaka Khan; Daft Punk featuring Eddie Johns' "One More Time;" and of course "Natural Blues" by Vera Hall featuring Moby.

Karen Gwyer, "Faces on Ankles," *Man on Mountain* (Don't Be Afraid)

"If we are given the general form of the way in which a proposition is constructed, then thereby we are also given the general form of the way in which by an operation out of one proposition another can be created." Wittgenstein: *Tractatus*: 6.002, quoted in *Music by Computers* (1969), Heinz von Foerster and James W. Beauchamp, editors.

Radiohead, "MD122," *MINIDISCS [HACKED]* (self-released)

A funny thing happened a few weeks ago as I was trying to order take-out. I placed the order online from my usual spot, but as I was finalizing the payment, my card was declined. Now, I may be broke, but I know my credit is good, so I called up the restaurant to find out what happened. They tried to run it through again, but again it was declined. Affronted and hungry, I attempted ordering from somewhere else, thinking that maybe it was a problem with their machine, not my card. Never my card! The pop-up screen on the second restaurant's webpage, though, confirmed it: "contact your financial institution," it instructed.

It's safe to say that few of us enjoy contacting our financial institutions. The touchtone menu, which they always insist on informing us has changed, the higher than normal call volume, no matter what time of day or night, the waiting on hold for an indeterminate length of time, the forever wretched on-hold music, the inevitably tired and snippy person you eventually reach, the 17 highly personal security questions they ask to confirm your identity — it's not fun. When I finally cleared my way through the dense and thorny brush of MasterCard's call centre quagmire, I wanted to know precisely why they had cut off my regularly paid-up credit card. After reviewing a list of my recent transactions, the human agent informed me that the purchase, which had triggered their systems, was the album of Radiohead *Minidisc* recordings from Bandcamp. Had I indeed bought this, he asked?

Like many of us, when I read that a hacker had stolen hours worth of *OK Computer*-era demos, and that the band subsequently released them legitimately to benefit Extinction Rebellion, I ponied up and paid the price. It's not like it was an exceptionally big-ticket buy. It wasn't an 82-inch television; it wasn't a first-class ticket to Tahiti. It was a \$30 transaction. And it wasn't particularly out of character for me, as a writer about music, and frequent consumer of music and music-like things. It was a Radiohead download on Bandcamp. To someone like me, it was a reflexive, almost obligatory reaction to click on the Buy Now button.

There are two obvious possibilities for what happened: either an automated algorithm flagged the transaction as suspicious, or a person did. Credit card companies, I would imagine, have developed highly sophisticated protocols for detecting the possibility of fraudulent purchases and identity theft by hacking. My question was, what about my \$30 Radiohead download would have appeared suspicious? And to whom? Was it suspicious to a series of discrete computer processes, or did it pique a person's scepticism in some vast MasterCard warehouse somewhere? Did someone actually scroll through a list of my latest commercial activities and, upon seeing Radiohead, think, "Hey, that doesn't look right"?

The upshot of this is that my routine downloading of a Radiohead record prompted a very Radiohead-esque chain of events to unfurl — the sudden interruption of capital; the violent reminder of how fragile and precarious our economic agency can be; the dehumanising processes of giant credit card companies; how easily Radiohead can effectively ring their bell and take my money; how easily MasterCard can, in turn, freeze it; and the cold, calculated yet uncalculated nature of it all. It reminded me of just how Radiohead-esque things have generally become over the past 20 years, almost as if Radiohead had, through simple imagination, somehow manifested their own deepest digital dystopias.

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