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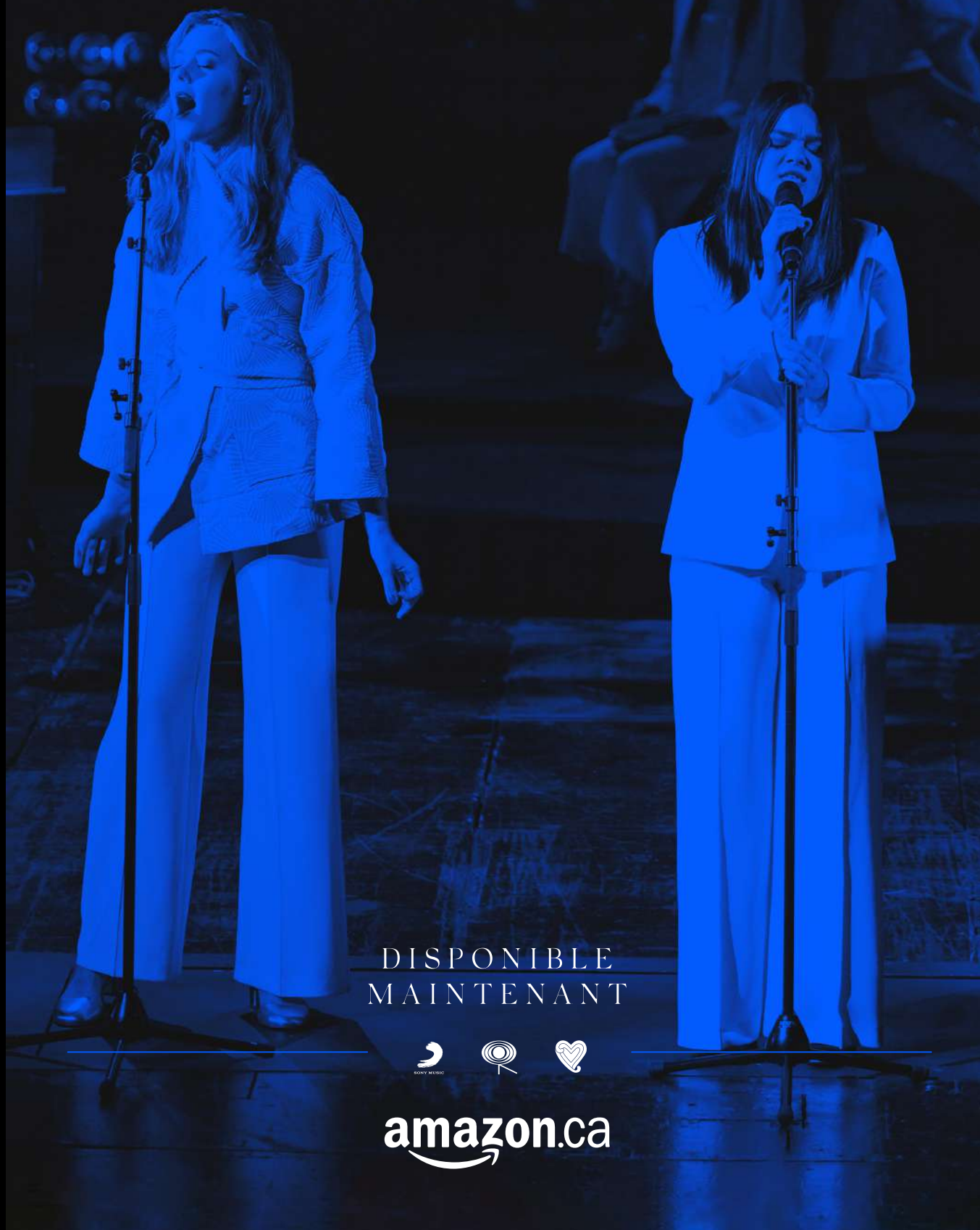
Uber Eats

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Au printemps 2017, le duo First Aid Kit et leurs acolytes ont monté un spectacle au Royal Dramatic Theater à Stockholm en l'honneur de la vie et de l'œuvre de Leonard Cohen.

FIRST AID KIT: LIVE TRIBUTE TO LEONARD COHEN

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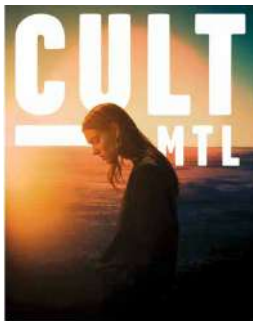
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Cult Mtl is...



We spoke to Montreal singer-songwriter Charlotte Cardin as she prepares to release her long-awaited debut album.

Photo by Norman Wong

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:MTL courtside



BY MR. WAVVY

It's no secret that the city of Montreal loves basketball. Just ask the thousands of people who attended the sold out NBA exhibition games from 2012 to 2018. Or the crowds who flooded the streets of downtown to celebrate when the Toronto Raptors took home a Championship trophy in June 2019.

Next summer, Montreal will be getting a team of its own by way of the Canadian Elite Basketball League. 2022 will mark the league's fourth season, and with the expansion to the city, they'll be eight teams strong.

"What we tried to do is be in the top 15 municipalities, and you can see us changing as we move forward," explains Mike Morreale, the CEO and commissioner of the CEBL. "We started with six teams across the country and added Ottawa last year. For us, adding

Montreal is a major market." Prior to gaining these honorific titles, Morraele played as a receiver in the CFL, earning the Grey Cup Championships in both 1996 and 1999. He also served as the league's Players' Association President from 2012 to 2014.

Current CEBL teams are located in large to mid-sized markets such as Guelph, Hamilton and Niagara Falls. "These markets are certainly tremendous for us because they are, in most cases, the only big game in town. We're a professional league filled with professional players that play at the highest level in the country."

Indeed, there is a strong emphasis on homegrown talent throughout the league. 70% of each team's roster must hail from Canada. There are also some notable national talents behind the scenes. Montreal-born two-time NBA Champion Joel Anthony serves as a consultant for the Hamilton Honey Badgers.

"We have dozens of NBA G-League players, we have NCAA stars, U Sports stars — it's a well rounded group," Morreale says. "We've missed seeing them, because so many leave Canada to go play overseas. So this is our chance to bring them home, and for them to build their brand locally as well."

Morreale sees Montreal as the beginning of the CEBL expanding into Eastern Canada.

"Montreal has its challenges, at least with the language. We want to make sure that we are properly prepared and have a local flavour to it. The actual basketball community in Montreal at all levels is really tremendous. The only thing missing is that pro angle, and we believe it's a void that will be filled in a pretty profound way. I think fans will be excited to see what we do."

"There are two to three [venues] that would be suitable for this level. We're still in the final stages of lease negotiation and paperwork. Where we're going is going to be a great place, it's going to be a fun place and a great home for the new Montreal franchise."

It's been speculated that the Verdun Auditorium will be the spot, but Morraele can't confirm this. "I kind of spilled the beans (about the team) a little bit early, on purpose! Now, it's just about finalizing lease arrangements, just technical stuff. There's no major hiccups. Everything seems to be going real well."

Down the line, Morreale can envision the CEBL doubling in size. "I see us being at 16 teams across the country, in every major province and into a divisional model, playing a 28- or 32-game schedule."

Following Montreal's landing in the league, he teases that a Quebec City team could soon follow. "Quebec City is certainly on the radar. We hope it will become an instant rival to Montreal!"

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Lee Bae, Issu du feu, 2018, Charcoal, rubber band, 130 x 90 x 90 cm.
Courtesy of the artist and Perrotin.

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BY DAVE MACINTYRE

Okay, so I'll start this month's column off with a disclaimer: the product I'm reviewing does not appear to be available at the SQDC, at least not for now. So... maybe this is a preview of a future SQDC product? In any case, since I'm currently cooped up at my parents' house in the Eastern Townships, and the nearest location is quite a trek away, I decided I'd instead try out some legal cannabis products that I already had lying around.

I discovered that, while the Ottawa-based company Hexo does sell capsules in CBD form via the SQDC's website, the THC capsules appear to not yet be available (mine were bought online, directly from Hexo). I gave these capsules a go to see whether or

not the THC equivalents are a product the SQDC should think about acquiring any time soon.

HEXO SOFTGELS THC GEL CAPSULES

I took these bad boys on three separate occasions. Although there are only just under 5 mg of THC in each one, they pack a decent amount of power in an extremely tiny, orange, spherical package that looks halfway between antidepressants and Wonka candies. Mixing both MCT (medium-chain triglyceride) and cannabis oil, these THC softgels definitely lean more toward the "body high" side than the head side. Despite containing no CBD, it nonetheless did a good job of relaxing me. The first night I used it was whilst browsing the Internet after a long, hard day. It doesn't give off a particularly overwhelming sensation, but it does make music more fun to listen to. Whether that's the driving post-punk of Shame or the hugely danceable funk of Montreal's double Grammy-winning pride and joy Kaytranada, the subtleties and basslines definitely hit harder with these tiny spheres full of uplifting chemicals in your system. Or maybe my headphones are just really top-notch... or maybe both? Who the fuck knows.

The second night, I gave it a go as I tried falling asleep. After smoking some other weed I had lying around earlier, I decided to add a softgel to the mix to see if that would elevate my high further. As much as that could've been a dumb idea (and honestly, it kinda was), I had a pretty nice, peaceful sleep. Pretty weird dreams, though. I had one dream where I was back in high school and trying to work on a project, but kept getting sidetracked. Then, I had another where it was a COVID-free reality and I was in the airport trying to catch a flight over and over again, but I missed it each time. What does any of that mean? I don't know, but any of you who are well-versed in dream interpretation are welcome to teach me. Regardless, I slept pretty well.

Lastly, I took two softgels at once, and went for a walk around the town. Despite the day itself being incredibly cold, gloomy and a smidge rainy, the tiny raindrops crashing against my face didn't faze me as much as they probably would have sober. I was definitely higher while doing two pills at once, but it still wasn't an overwhelming feeling. Either way, being high in this small town makes me sad that I only have one pizza restaurant to satisfy my munchies with, if I wanted to. Shit. Now I'm craving pizza as I type this. Predictable.

Long story short: yes, the SQDC should be selling these soft gels. In fact, going for walks around Montreal this summer after swallowing these bad boys would be quite the relaxing experience — and for the SQDC, an untapped opportunity to make bank as a result. 8.5/10



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BY PAUL DESBAILLETS

Well, football never sleeps and this last month proves just that!

The start of March saw some crazy stuff go down in Spain. Police executed a search and seize operation a week before FC Barcelona was about to have an election for its new president. This has the makings of a movie-of-the-week. Those arrested in this event were: former president Josep Maria Bartomeu, current chief executive Oscar Grau, director of legal services Gomez Ponti and advisor to the president Jaume Masferrer.

The operation is in connection with last year's "Barcagate," in which club officials were accused of launching a smear campaign against current and former players who were critical of the club and Bartomeu. Barca elected Joan Laporta that week as its 42nd president.

Speaking of new starts, CFM has chosen a new coach to lead them into and through this bound-to-be-weird, wacky and wonderful COVID-19-restricted season. Forty-three-year-old Toulon, France native Wilfried Nancy is the club's eighth coach since they entered the MLS in 2012. He has been with the club as

a coach for the academy since 2011. He joined the first team as assistant coach in 2016, making him qualified to lead the charge. CFM announced its March schedule before leaving for pre-season in FLA. All the info can be found on the team's website. Kick-off is April 17 against, you guessed it, TFC.

More to do in the MLS: In March, Seattle Sounders FC unveiled its new secondary kit for this season. It's an original design full of purple, orange and yellow mixed together in a psychedelic pattern that pays tribute to Seattle native, music legend and world renowned cultural icon Mr. Jimi Hendrix. Trippy, man, trippy! Seattle says, "The project is to recognize and celebrate the meaningful principles of peace, love and giving for which Hendrix stood." The design is part of the MLS and Adidas "Community Kit" line. MLS explains that, "This project was created this year to introduce to clubs the opportunity to create secondary kits rooted in individual meaning for each team."

In March we all witnessed Mr. Abs himself, Cristiano Ronaldo, score his 700th career goal. CR7 has become (just) the sixth footballer to have scored that many times in history, joining the exclusive club of legends Josef Bican, Romario, Pelé, Ferenc Puskás and Gerd Müller. CR7 has scored more career goals than any other active player in professional football and has moved past his football nemesis Lionel Messi. Of more importance, he has also passed the (arguably) All-time Great Pelé's record!


Speaking of the Brazilian King, I just finished one of the better docs on the man who won three World Cup titles. Streaming on Netflix at the moment is the documentary *Pelé*, which was made this year. The film focuses on a 12-year period of which you see and follow his transition from Superstar to National Hero. The political stream this footballer had to navigate was more captivating than his play on any pitch. What I learned truly altered my perception of the icon.

European football is in full bloom with ManCity still on top of the pile. The English Premier League season looks to be done and dusted in theory, but not yet mathematically.

April brings the next round of football giants battling to the death in the quarter-finals of the Champions League. Manchester City, Dortmund, Real Madrid, Liverpool, Porto, Chelsea, Bayern (Canadian connection) and PSG will all duel to be named Champions of Europe.

Rangers FC won their first Scottish Premiership title in 10 years in March with Steven George Gerrard at the helm. Everyone still believes that he is a manager-in-training to one day make his move into the EPL and take the reins of his life-long club Liverpool once Klopp leaves.


"I learned all about life with a ball at my feet."
—Ronaldinho



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food

A taste of the real thing

BY CLAY SANDHU

It's tough, sometimes, to appreciate the silver linings — or to see them at all.

Even when you can recognize them, they seem insignificant, at least when compared to the gravity of recent events. It's hard to write about food with any sense of joy (although I try my best) at the moment, but if you make yourself open to seeing the upside of things, like looking at one of those magic eye pictures, a silver-lining is suddenly revealed.

Francis Blais and Camilo Lapointe Nascimento's project, Menu Extra, is one of the most joyful embraces of the possibilities of food that I have experienced, including before the big C. The chef-duo are both winners of TV cooking shows: Blais having won *Top Chef Canada* and Lapointe Nascimento *Les Chefs!* Personally, I don't put much stock in those types of accolades. Yes, I suppose one can infer that they're good cooks by virtue of these wins, but there are plenty of excellent cooks out there that don't bother with the TV schtick. But the notoriety the chefs gained from their TV appearance is undeniable.

Using their newfound public platform, Menu Extra was launched at the end of May last year. Originally, the project was a series of pop-ups. Menu Extra would take over a restaurant for the day and serve comfort classics retooled in the chefs' personal style with an added touch of refinement. Lamb kebabs were served out of la Prunelle, pogos at Boxerman's, lasagna at Nora Gray and the proceeds from these events were donated to various charities. By the end of last summer, Menu Extra hosted nine pop-ups and raised over \$32,000.

It was during this time that Menu Extra caught my attention. I was impressed, not by the quality of the cooking or the excellent branding of Menu Extra, but that these chefs seemed to be cooking entirely without ego. There were no flexes; their events offered a COVID-safe place where that captured the fun and excitement of a backyard BBQ while raising money for charities like Desta BYN, Pour 3 Points and the Native Women's Shelter, among many others.

During the summer, as restrictions eased, Menu Extra began hosting private dinners outside of the city. In vineyards and on farms, where health measures could more easily be maintained, a return to a formal restaurant experience started to take hold. Moreover, Blais and Lapointe Nascimento used these multi-course dinners as an opportunity to show what they could really do. That all came to a grinding halt at the end of September.

After that, Menu Extra fell off my radar for a bit, that is until I started noticing the "lost cat" style posters going up around Little Italy. A piece of printer-paper with a picture of a *pithivier* (an ornate closed-pie which originated in the Loire Valley, France) read, "Have you seen this pithivier?" complete with tear-off phone numbers with which to place an order. I thought it was brilliant. For me that sums up Menu Extra's identity perfectly — it's playful, self-aware and so damn smart. While the rest of the industry was figuring out how to simplify their menus for take-out, Menu Extra was like, fuck it — we're going to figure out how to make this very technical, very finicky dish available for delivery.

They've since moved on from the pithivier to the emblematic dish of an iconic film: *Babette's Feast*. For those familiar with the film, Babette's dish of poultry-in-pastry will be warmly imprinted on their memories. If you haven't seen the film, the principal character, Babette, after living as a refugee of



Menu Extra

the Franco-Prussian War in a small Danish village, wins a large sum of money and with her winnings, cooks a lavish French meal in which *Caille en Sarcophage* is the star, for the villagers. It is one of the best food-centric films that exist.

A day in advance of my meal, I order the Caille en Sarcophage for two. It arrived late afternoon and the cheerful delivery driver carefully handed me a large bag and instructed me to put the dessert in the freezer immediately. I brought the bag into the kitchen and unpacked my meal. The meal, for two, includes a salad, potato purée, the quail and a McCain-style caramel cake for dessert. Each dish was well-packaged and very neatly labelled. Aside from the very good branding, the unboxing was standard procedure, barring the addition of a printed instruction card that read "Menu Extra et le Caille en Sarcophage" which was reminiscent of a menu card at a good restaurant and a sprig of fresh gypsophila. A true touch of class.

I popped the dessert in the freezer and sat down to read the card. It begins with the story of the dinner's inspiration, *Babette's Feast*. They speak romantically of the simple pleasure of a good meal shared between loved ones and move into a detailed explanation of the dish itself. Caille en Sarcophage is a whole quail, deboned via the back and stuffed with applewood smoked duck. The bird is then set in a nest of puff-pastry which rises as the bird cooks, locking in all the dish's delicious flavour. It's served with a quail and red wine jus.

Next, the sides get their explanation. A simple salad of greens is served with roasted hazelnuts from Ontario and lightly dressed with a shallot and honey vinaigrette. The creamy potato purée is dusted with a burned onion ash and for dessert, a take on the McCain deep 'n' delicious — a childhood favourite. Menu Extra's version transforms local bolete mushrooms and sunchokes to replace the chocolate in the base cake. It's a true restaurant-calibre menu and far from anything you could call traditional take-out.

And that's because it's not take-out. Menu Extra's format requires that you cook, or really reheate, the dishes before serving. But the directions provided could not be more clear. I followed along dutifully and took note that this is as close to idiot-proof as you could ask for. They even go so far as to remind you to put the salad in a bowl to mix. The quail,

however, does require a smidgen of know-how. It's true that they've provided very clear directions on how to cook the dish; the only hiccup is that not all ovens are created equal. 375F on your oven might be 325F in another. You just don't know what your true oven temp is unless you measure it. The delicate balance of golden brown pastry, crispy-skinned quail and rosé duck farce is one that requires some precision.

In my preparation, after the 30-minute cook time suggested in the recipe, I had pale-blonde pastry and undercooked farce. Another 10 minutes in the oven solved the issue nicely. So while this dish wasn't difficult to cook, you can't exactly set it and forget it. But, to me, there's a beauty in that it's not automatic — even as you're barely even cooking, you are immersed in the preparation of the meal. The romance of the story compels you to open a bottle of wine and take the good dishes out of the cabinets. In my case, the dining room table was used for the first time since Christmas as a dining table and not a desk. After an hour of playing chef in my kitchen, I had before me a perfectly roasted Caille en Sarcophage with two sides and a decadent sauce.

The meal was rich — bordering on but not quite crossing into overly rich. My wife and I ate our meal commenting on how nice it was to have set the table and how it felt celebratory. In that moment, I realized the truly exceptional aspect of this meal. Yes, the food was very good and I was impressed at how simple Menu Extra managed to make such a complicated dish. But what was really remarkable was that the experience they've provided was as close as I've felt to eating at a restaurant in a very, very long time. It was once thought that you could put any dish in a take-out container and it would be fine, but you could never take the romance of the restaurant experience to-go. Well, they've come pretty damn close.

Dinner for two from Menu Extra will cost you \$95 bucks (plus tax and tip) but for me, to feel, for an hour, like I was sitting in a very good restaurant eating a very good meal, it was worth every last penny. Thinking back on silver linings, I count this experience among them. How fortunate we are, faced with such adversity, to have minds creative enough to have figured out how to pop the restaurant experience in a bag and drive it to our homes.

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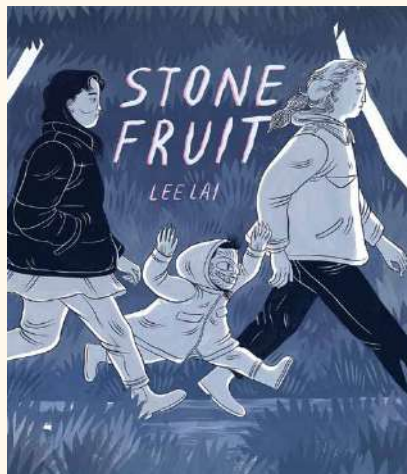
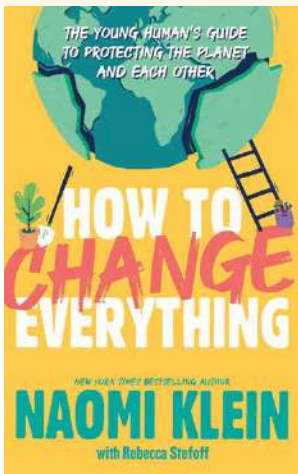
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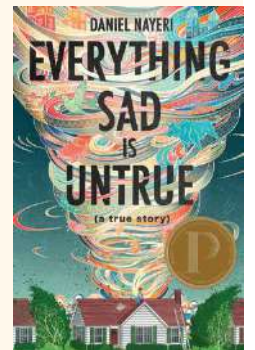
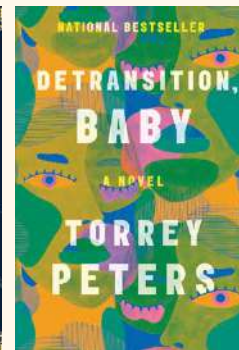
APR 20, TUESDAY | 6:30 PM

Naomi Klein launches *How To Change Everything*, in conversation with Rebecca Hamilton and Naia Lee

MAY 6, THURSDAY | 7 PM

Lee Lai launches *Stone Fruit*, in conversation with Eli Tareq El Bechelany-Lynch

VIRTUAL BOOK CLUBS



APR 6, TUESDAY | 8 PM **NEW READS**
The Lying Life of Adults by Elena Ferrante

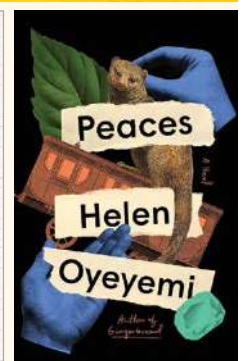
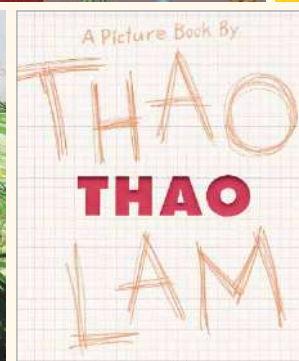
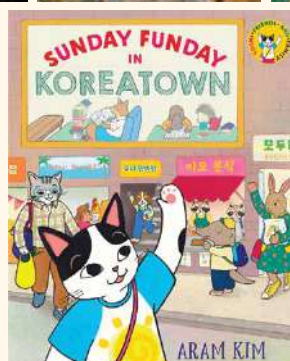
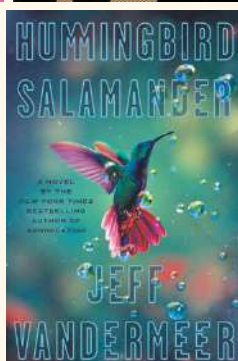
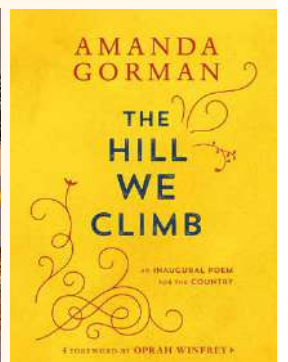
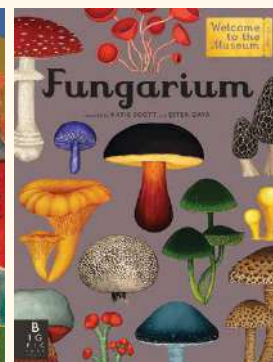
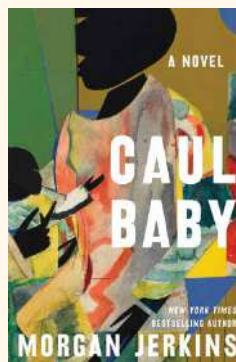
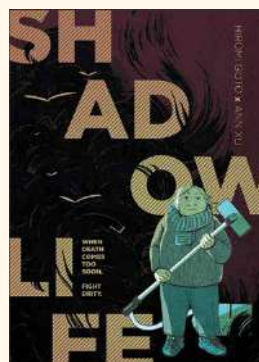
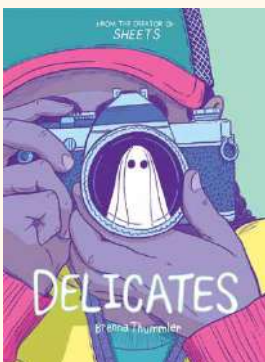
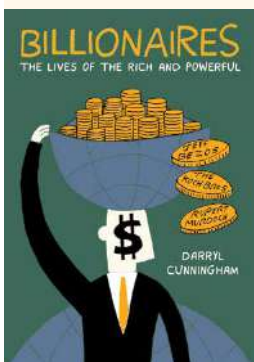
APR 13, TUESDAY | 8 PM **GRAPHIC NOVEL**
The Magic Fish by Trung Le Nguyen

APR 16, FRIDAY | 6 PM **YOUNG READERS**
Everything Sad Is Untrue by Daniel Nayeri

APR 21, WEDNESDAY | 8 PM **GAY READS**
Detransition, Baby by Torrey Peters

APR 30, FRIDAY | 6 PM **TEEN BOOK**
Shadow and Bone by Leigh Bardugo

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Widening wingspan

BY MR. WAVVY

For the past half-decade, Charlotte Cardin has held it down as Quebec's golden child. From her humble beginnings as a finalist on *La Voix*, to accumulating a strong fanbase province-wide with the releases of her *Big Boy* and *Main Girl* EPs, Cardin is royalty in la belle province without even releasing a full-length album.

On April 23, Cardin's ceiling will grow taller with the release of *Phoenix*, her debut album. "The album was actually made before the pandemic. When the first wave hit us, the album was getting mastered, it was already 99% done," the singer reveals. "We basically pushed back the release date by almost a year."

Cardin felt like releasing the album at such a time would be like "throwing away years of work. Nobody really had the headspace or even the media space to talk about music."

Through the process of creating *Phoenix*, Cardin feels as if she gained a greater sense of self. "One thing that I realized is that I had always kind of lived my life thinking about how others would receive my actions, or what people expected of me."

"When I started writing this album, it took me a full six months of doing the same thing that I had been doing before; writing on my own, trying to figure things out. At one point, I just realized that the album wasn't going anywhere because I was trying to write it thinking about what other people were expecting. I thought to myself, 'This is the wrong approach. This album really needs to be transparent and this album is going to be much more liberating if I just write it for myself.'"

Interestingly enough, Cardin was able to get more in tune with herself through co-writing, a first for the artist.

"I had only ever written stuff by myself before. I decided to just surround myself with my small team and to really collaborate on this album, to co-write everything. This album was kind of a conversational process, to really be able to talk to my team about things I wanted to express. This album feels even more personal to me than things that I have released so far. I guess I was a little scared of co-writing at first because I want this album to be super personal and 100% me. In reality, co-writing has been able to get me to speak about even more personal things."

Phoenix works swimmingly as both a grand introduction to those who are new to Cardin's music and a fresh new chapter for already established fans. On the project, the singer prioritized a "less is more" creative process.

"The whole direction for the album was to keep it as



Charlotte Cardin

Norman Wong

minimalistic as possible. We really focused on vocal melodies and putting forward my voice, rather than tons of crazy different productions."

Despite completing the album long before the pandemic, there are many lyrics that are sure to resonate with her core fans of a young age, who feel as if a formative era of their lives is being stripped away by the state of the world.

"In the song 'Meaningless,' I say, 'I've been wasting my twenties.' The connection with the pandemic was crazy because a lot of people have been feeling that way for many different reasons. This album was such a long process that I feel like a large portion of my twenties was included in the process. The line was a coincidence."

As we all wait for the world to open up, Charlotte is eager to

return to the stage. She hopes that *Phoenix* will be a tipping point to accumulating a larger U.S. audience, especially once touring is allowed once again.

"My career has been very fun and stimulating for me because I have always been super supported in Montreal and Quebec. I've been able to play amazing venues with big crowds, big festivals and stuff like that. At the same time, I still feel like an 'emerging artist' everywhere other than Quebec. I have been dealing with all of these really fun challenges, playing big shows in Montreal and then literally playing to three people sleeping at a bar in Denver. It's just kind of adapting to all of these things at the same time which is really exciting. I hope that this album will at least have me be a little bit more well-known elsewhere. I just want my career to expand as much as it can and I want people to hear my music all over. I'm looking forward to that."

Racism with a smile



Charlotte Cardin

BY LORRAINE CARPENTER

The months leading up to lockdown were a whirlwind for Cadence Weapon.

In January and February, the rapper-poet played the narrator in a run of performances of the musical *Please Thrill Me* (starring fellow Edmonton native Sean Nicholas Savage) at la Chapelle theatre in Montreal. Then he went to the Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity to mentor participants in a songwriting residency, which usually ends with a big show — but not this time. When he returned to Toronto, the pre-apocalyptic portion of 2020 had truly set in. And like many people, willingly or unwillingly, he opted to chill out for a while.

“I just kind of took some time to absorb what was happening in the world and just be in it,” says Cadence Weapon (aka Rollie Pemberton), “but then, in the absence of creating, I started getting some inspiration from what I was reading in the news, and seeing inequality exposed on such a large scale. That really ignited a lot of ideas in me. Obviously after the George Floyd murder and protests, I was super hyped up.”

On April 30, Cadence Weapon will release his fifth album, *Parallel World*, his most explicitly political record to date, with minimal yet intense production to match. We connected last month, right after he’d shot the video for the “Eye to Eye” (a song about racial profiling and police brutality) right here

in Montreal, where Pemberton lived from 2009 to 2015.

Lorraine Carpenter: It’s easy to spin the story of this record to say “he’s gone political,” but it’s not like there were no traces of that before. For you, is this a major shift or more of an evolution?

Cadence Weapon: It’s more of an evolution. Throughout my career I’ve really tried to focus on certain socio-political subjects in my music but I don’t think I’ve been as successful at clearly illustrating that as I am on this album. I’m being a lot more explicit about it and returning to these themes multiple times, whereas in the past I would have a song like ‘High Rise’ where I talk about gentrification but it doesn’t really come up again on the album. On this record, it’s threaded throughout.

I felt such a drive to really emphasize all the inequality, all the things that I’ve seen, and make the connections between them. I feel like I have a certain capability to make those connections that I don’t think everybody has and that I have a certain responsibility to do it.

It’s become kind of out of style for artists to take on the political powers that be, or take on institutions or corporations. A lot of artists nowadays, especially in rap, are afraid to affect their brand, politically, whereas I want to be Linton Kwesi Johnson or Public Enemy or the Clash. I want to bring back that kind of energy.

LC: Well you definitely didn’t see a lot of explicitly political music a few years ago that was just anti-Trump or whatever, but with the return of the Black Lives Matter movement, it has been embraced in the mainstream on some level, to the point where you see it at the Grammys.

CW: It’s funny you point out that Grammy performance. I like that song by Lil Baby a lot but I find the whole idea of commodifying struggle — I don’t think that’s very productive. I don’t find that very helpful. At the beginning of 2016, 2017, we weren’t getting that big rush of political music that everyone expected, like, ‘Oh, it’s going to be a great time for punk,’ people were saying. What we have now is people realize you need to make identity-based music to really make a difference in people’s lives, so you see everyone trying to be the wokest artist.

LC: What’s your take on racism in Canada, as far as it being a different brand of racism than what you sometimes see in the States?

CW: That’s for real. It’s racist but it’s polite. They do it with a smile, they do it behind your back when you’re not in the room — that’s Canadian racism. Just to get back to the whole political idea, I feel like my existence is inherently political. Being a Black man in Canada, being a Black man in independent underground music scenes in Canada — I’ve been through a lot of weird situations when it comes to racial dynamics and I’ve never really talked about it in my music. With this record I finally said how I feel about some of these things, and it was very cathartic.

Even bringing up the Justin Trudeau blackface situation. You know, I can’t believe we just moved on past that as a society. I don’t really understand. I’m not going to be able to forget that; it’s very painful. It feels like somebody I know did that to me. But again, that’s existence in Canada if you’re a Black person. Wendy Mesley can say the N-word around a bunch of coworkers at CBC and not get any retribution for it?

I feel like I am knowledgeable about this, I feel like I’m able to talk about it and I’m able to synthesize it in my music, so I must. I should.

LC: I understand you’ve also been working on a book.

CW: Yeah, it was something that started in late 2019. I do music journalism right alongside making music and I’ve done some stuff for Hazlitt. My editor there, Haley Cunningham, asked me if I had any ideas for books and I was like, ‘Actually, yes I do.’ I came to her with an idea of writing up a book of music essays that are primarily autobiographical and based on different aspects of my career, and the concept expanded to the point where I ended up getting a book deal with McClelland & Stewart and writing a book called *Bedroom Rapper*.

It’s a cross between a memoir and cultural criticism. I have a chapter about how I became a rapper, I have a chapter about DJing and my philosophy around it and my experiences doing it, and also how I feel about music in public spaces and the racial dynamics with that. When you, for instance, go to a gentrified taco restaurant in Toronto and they’re playing all old-school ’90s rap but if you listen to the lyrics it’s like all the pain and struggle of these Black people and all the people who work at the restaurant are white...

I also have chapters about my experiences of different music scenes, and there’s a lot about the time I spent in Montreal. I feel like the time I was there was just a really golden era for Montreal music, for sure.

I’m really excited about that. I’m almost done.

:hammer of the mods

BY JOHNSON CUMMINS

Iggy. Fucking. Pop.

They tell me he's the grandpappy of that toe-tapping genre the kids are calling punk rawk, and who am I to argue? Don't get me wrong: I don't go for any of that baritone cash grabbin' car commercial Iggy that your brother in law probably likes. I'm talking about the motherfucking Stooges, when his trusted delinquent Ron Asheton stood by his side as Iggy teetered on the precipice of nihilism before deciding to toss the whole thing in and plunging directly into the yawning chasm of chaos.

Mere weeks before Iggy finally put a stake in the heart of the-long suffering Stooges and checked himself in to a psychiatric hospital, he had one final gig — on Feb. 9, 1974, in his home state of Michigan — that would perfectly document the moment when the wheels finally came off. The recording of that concert, *Metallic K.O.*, is musically mediocre at best, but as a historical document of the roots of punk rock, it's as good as you can get.

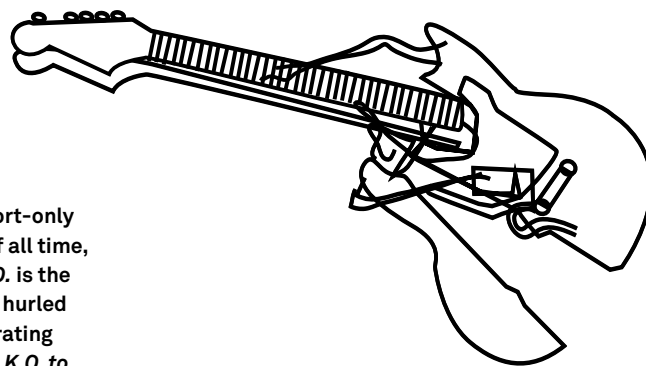
Long before punkers at the Roxy or CBGB's in NYC were taunting the crowd in an attempt to shock, or engaging an audience to gob at 'em, Iggy was dodging a storm of flotsam sent stageward that included everything from batteries to whisky

bottles. When *Metallic K.O.* was released as an import-only oddity in 1976, the ultimate culture commentator of all time, Lester Bangs, heralded its arrival with: "*Metallic K.O.* is the only record that I know where you can actually hear hurled beer bottles breaking against guitar strings." Celebrating this record that helped birth punk rock comes *From K.O. to Chaos* (Skydog/Jungle/MVD), a box set featuring seven CDs and one DVD.

This record is nothing without its backstory, because (again), musically this is hardly the Stooges at full flight — that would be *Funhouse*, duh. The six tracks that originally appeared on *Metallic K.O.* showcased a band that was strung out — all of the stuffing was clearly beaten out of them as they sweated it out to the oldies while dodging beer bottles and jeers just so they could make enough money for a fix. By the beginning of '74, you could definitely see the band circling the drain.

As the story goes, Iggy got completely knocked out by a biker at a gig in Michigan the week prior to this show, so the lggster went on the radio and called out the whole bike gang, who dutifully showed up to the final Stooges gig looking for blood as the band crumbled before everybody's eyes.

For true gluttons for punishment (like me), this super duper edition of *Metallic K.O.* is great stuff. Enclosed in a handsome clamshell case, *From K.O. to Chaos* collects all of the Stooges material released on the Sky Dog Label including a full director's cut of *Metallic K.O.* with a bunch of



new material — thankfully speed-corrected as the original version ran too slow. *Metallic K.O.* takes up three discs here, two discs of killer outtakes and rarities, two acoustic CDs/DVDs, which are best left in their sleeves, and a fairly recent recording of the reunited Stooges, which is meh.

If the Stooges were gonna fly off the rails, they were going to do it spectacularly. Like the band from the Titanic, they held out for as long as they possibly could. God bless the Stooges and all who sail with them.

Current Obsession: From K.O. to Chaos
jonathan.cummins@gmail.com

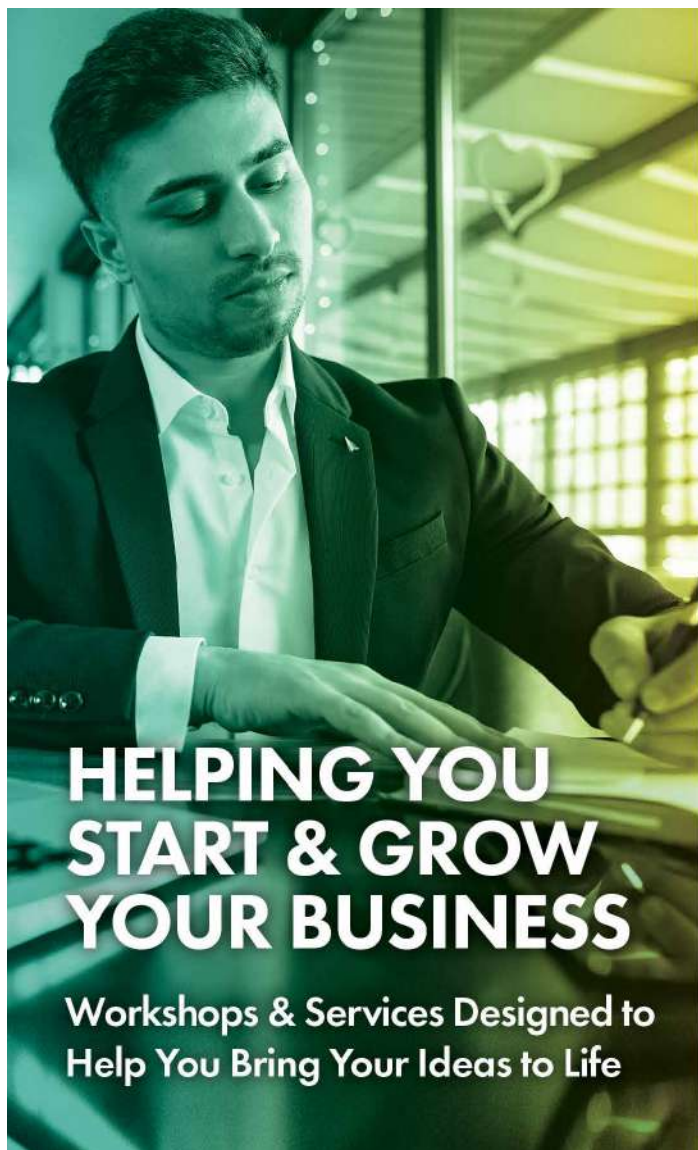
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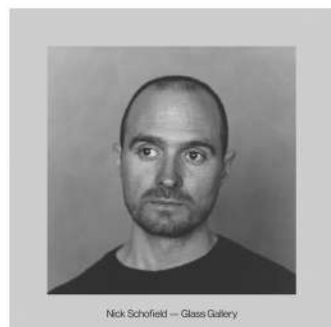
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Alternative point of view



No Ordinary Man



BY ALEX ROSE

If you've even heard of jazz musician Billy Tipton, it's probably for one of two reasons: you watched a lot of daytime TV shows in the late '80s and early '90s, or you're an aficionado of mid-'50s easy listening jazz standards.

Tipton's lasting cultural legacy — or, at the very least, his cultural legacy prior to the release of Aisling Chin-Yee and Chase Joynt's *No Ordinary Man* — was one very much mired in tabloid culture. When Billy Tipton died of complications from a peptic ulcer in 1989, it was discovered that he had been assigned female at birth and had hidden this fact from his wives and children his entire life. The story was picked up by the tabloid press, eventually causing Tipton's family to go on TV and discuss his identity at length.

Although Tipton's story was certainly not the first depiction of transmasculinity in mainstream media, it was one that stuck.

"In some ways, the talk and tabloid circuit was one of the only places where people were finding representation of trans and non-gender-conforming people," says Joynt. "One of the things that's so compelling to us as a creative team is that on one hand, it offers this kind of brutal insight on the way that, historically, trans people were treated on television. On the other hand, we can also recognize it as a moment where many of our trans-identified interlocutors, artists and activists saw representations that felt familiar. 'Oh my God, there might be someone in the world who is kind of like me.' It might be an imperfect representation, but it's someone who's living and thriving.

"We always want to treat the talk-show footage with that kind of complexity. I think one of the things that's striking about our project is that we're not actually talking about trans people on the talk-show circuit — we're looking at non-trans people. We're looking at Tipton's family, and they do quite an extraordinary job of protecting their father's legacy in the face of that kind of violent curiosity."

Although Tipton was a musician, he wasn't one with a particularly deep discography. As a working jazz musician, he rarely recorded and mainly focused on performance of others' compositions. That means that, while *No Ordinary Man* is unmistakably a film about a musician, it isn't exactly a music documentary.

"We wanted to do his biography honestly," says Chin-Yee. "And there's nothing to be ashamed of, being a working musician. He didn't need to change the genre, on top of everything else we're exploring in the film. He was very much following a path of playing standards and so on. Again — super talented and had his craft down and knew how to present a great show, but his output was very limited. We worked with Rich Aucoin, a musician based in Nova Scotia, and one of the things that came out of the pandemic was that he couldn't tour anymore. He's a classical pianist, but he also works a lot with synths in a very contemporary way. But he's also a gigging musician, and he was very excited to work with us to make something that's essentially about all the musicians that don't get biopics made about them and still contribute to the way we understand culture, music, genre and breaking musical barriers."

Chin-Yee and Joynt have chosen to frame the film around a series of auditions of transmasculine actors reading

for the part of Tipton in an imagined biopic. The actors discuss their own experiences of transmasculinity and media representation, around which the film builds the more straightforward biographical story of Tipton. The actors featured in the film don't necessarily fit the casting description of Tipton — if Chin-Yee and Joynt really were making this biopic, that is.

"There's no footage of Billy Tipton," says Chin-Yee. "There's nothing to pull from to show him in the past or show the milestones in his life. There's a biography that we reference in the film and photos, but no footage. We could've gone re-creation, but that would've been the wrong thing to do, since it brings our own bias into the picture, and it's a bit of a hokey, *Unsolved Mysteries* style that we didn't want to be painting ourselves into a corner with. It also opened up the conversation about who Billy was and who Billy is to a much larger, more diverse group of artists. That felt exciting for us to do."

"We put a call out and clustered the talent in New York and Los Angeles," says Joynt. "One of the great things about putting a call out for participation in a documentary is that people walk in the door ready to be themselves. Very naturally, a conversation sparked in the waiting room between transmasculine actors about what it means to be an actor and a trans person in this particular moment in time. By virtue of who we are as a creative team, we found some conversational grooves with the talent in the casting room space that was an opportunity to talk out loud about Tipton's life and history and the various ways in which they might approach the material."

→ *No Ordinary Man* opens in theatres on Friday, April 2.

On Screen



Stowaway

BY ALEX ROSE

Though theatres have begun to reopen across the country and releases have begun to trickle out, the moviegoing experience has hardly resumed at pre-pandemic levels.

Case in point: there are still few major studio releases being trotted out in April, with the release schedule consisting mainly of indie fare, documentaries and streaming premieres. In fact, the only theatrical release that even verges on the blockbuster format is Simon McQuoid's *Mortal Kombat* (April 16), a new adaptation of the popular '90s video game that takes the material into hard-R territory.

That's about the totality of the action movies you'll be able to catch in theatres this month, alongside the Liam Neeson vehicle *The Marksman* (April 2), in which Neeson plays a former Marine who helps a kid escape the cartels. Outside of theatres, Amazon is hoping to start a brand new Tom Clancy franchise to complement the Jack Ryan series starring John Krasinski. Michael B. Jordan stars as Navy SEAL John Clark in *Without Remorse* (April 30), in which he discovers an international conspiracy after his pregnant wife is killed by Russian soldiers. Jamie Bell, Jodie Turner-Smith and Guy Pearce co-star.

Many pundits now consider *Nomadland* the frontrunner for the Oscars this year. The Frances McDormand-starring road movie directed by Chloe Zhao has six nominations and is in Montreal theatres April 9, a couple of weeks before the ceremony. Michelle Pfeiffer and Lucas Hedges star in *French Exit* (April 2), an off-beat, Montreal-shot comedy about a rich heiress who has decided to move to Paris after dilapidating her fortune. Netflix's big feature releases this month are *Concrete Cowboy* (April 2), a drama set in the world of Detroit's urban cowboys

starring Idris Elba and *Stranger Things*' Caleb McLaughlin, and *Thunder Force* (April 9), a superhero comedy from the married team of Melissa McCarthy and Ben Falcone.

Sophie Dupuis's long-awaited follow-up to *Chien de garde* was just about to hit theatres the last time they were closed. The drama, set in a mine in Abitibi, is finally set for release on April 30 alongside Swedish master Roy Andersson's *About Endlessness*, his latest collection of strange existential tableaux starring gaunt Swedes. Amongst other Quebec releases, there's Benoît Pilon's *Le club Vinland* (April 2), a *Dead Poets Society*-esque drama set in a boys' college in 1940s Quebec, and *Big Giant Wave* (April 2), a feature-length documentary from Marie-Julie Dallaire that looks at music in various permutations.

Anna Kendrick and Toni Collette star in the Amazon Prime original film *Stowaway*, about astronauts who face an unprecedented conflict when a stowaway (Shamier Anderson) is discovered on board — it is streaming as of April 22. Albert Dupontel's *Adieu les cons* won seven César awards earlier this month. The dark comedy stars Dupontel and Virginie Efira as two people, for lack of a more succinct term, who are ready to die. It comes out in theatres April 23.



Thunder Force

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Thriftling for gold



Shanique Morris (La Vegan Baddie)

BY JULIETTE PALIN

When the pandemonium hit, the popular pastime of thrifting was rudely interrupted, forcing many young shoppers to find new ways of getting a fix.

When thrifting kings and queens fell into despair, platforms like Depop and Instagram's new shopping feature were there. According to ThredUp's resale report, 74% of 18-29-year-olds would rather shop more sustainably, which brings us to vintage reselling.

This vacuum allowed many vintage resellers to thrive despite the pandemic. Not only was it becoming trendy to shop more local and second-hand, but it was now the only way of getting your hands on vintage gems. When I say local, we are speaking in broad terms — the main way of shopping is still to buy from major companies such as Nike, H&M, Zara, ASOS and other popular online retailers.

Currently, there is a concentration of young people looking towards resellers, mainly those from their own country. According to the latest Statista report, the second-hand market in 2020 was valued at \$22-billion U.S., while the resale market sat at \$10-billion U.S., a 29.4% increase in size since 2017.

Reselling isn't necessarily a new form of shopping. Depop and Poshmark launched their platforms in 2011, and ThredUp has been around since 2009. But what has shifted is the sense of accomplishment from the customer — when you find the perfect piece without contributing to the planet's inevitable doom.

These new shops also sometimes gear themselves towards a specific aesthetic. Shanique Morris, creator of la Vegan Baddie — an online store that concentrates on styles from

the early 2000s — focuses on celebrating and bringing back brands that Black fashion icons like Beyoncé, Lil Kim and Alicia Keys have made popular. Some of the brands you can find on the shelves at Morris's booth at MarktFloh include Bebe Phat, Juicy Couture and Apple Bottom Jeans.

La Vegan Baddie carries “everything that was basically made in the late '90s or early 2000s and was created by Black entrepreneurs” This includes fashion entrepreneurs such as Kimora Lee Simmons, who created Bebe Phat, Telfar Clemens, who started his businesses in 2005, and Jay-Z and Damon Dash, who co-founded Rocawear in 1999.

For Morris, it is important to have an emphasis on the origin of the style. “I was actually born in that era. For me, it's a little bit easier to connect and talk about (this style) or know about it more. You know, the Black culture popularized a lot of trends.”

“Anything that's Bratz-inspired, kind of anything that's from my childhood. That's what I try to manifest a lot, because that's what I try to base my shop off of,” says Morris.

After finding success in recent months, she quit her two jobs to focus on la Vegan Baddie full time. At the same time, her colleague was quitting her job to concentrate on her own brand, Poison Thrift.

Ivy Dewar, better known on Instagram as PoisonThrift, draws inspiration from old-school tattoos and has a more '90s-casual-streetwear vibe to her shelves. She is always on the lookout for authentic vintage pieces from brands like Doc Martens, Levis, Nike and Point Zero.

The shop is a reflection of her closet: anything and everything that she would want to wear. But she doesn't only thrift, she also upcycles items found on thrift runs. Upcycling is when you take a piece of clothing that may be boring or plain and turn it into something fun by getting crafty, doing things like cropping, painting something or screen-printing.

The first lockdown gave her time to perfect her craft. “That's when I put a lot more time into upcycling. I travelled, too, and I was quarantined for 14 days. And I did so much upcycling then because I couldn't really do anything else. I've been collecting all these blank items that are vintage that I wanted to upcycle, but I haven't had the time. And I just took that time to really work on those and find a community.”

Most people who shop in these circles know there is a lot of hate towards resellers, particularly from people who have a problem with the pricing model. Because retailers source their items from places like Village des Valeurs or Fripe-prix Renaissance, many customers get upset about the resale price mark-up and the supposed “lack of good stuff” left for them when visiting the thrift store.

“Kids are not getting it. They just feel like, you know, we're just taking away from them!” says Morris.

In reality, there is no shortage of clothes to source from thrift stores. The average Canadian throws out 81 pounds of clothing each year, material that ends up in landfills. This is despite the fact that most of these items are reusable or recyclable; some could even be donated and bought off the racks of Village des Valeurs. However, of the clothes we do donate, only 10% get sold. While some of the remains are recycled into rags or household insulation, most of it ends up overseas in landfills dedicated to the overflow of donated clothes from North America.

Frequent shoppers will have noticed that prices at the average thrift store have risen, but not for the reasons you may think. Although the rise in popularity of thrifting may have incentivized retailers to increase their prices, there is no reasonable financial explanation for this uptick. As previously mentioned, it is not a question of supply and demand. Clearly, there is no shortage of donated clothes, so the argument of increasing prices because of limited stock

cannot be made; supply still greatly outweighs demand in most markets.

Not unlike other private ventures, when faced with a rise in popularity and growth of their clientele, companies such as Village des Valeurs will price their items higher just because they can — they are capitalizing on a revenue opportunity as willing-to-pay has increased. They are taking advantage of the rise in ethical consumption.

But it would be wrong to blame normal people who are either making a living curating thrifted clothes for resale purposes or trying to ethically consume in an age of fast fashion and 20-second fads.

Most of the hate these businesswomen receive comes in the form of comments asking why their prices are so high. Dewar recently experienced someone calling her out on Instagram. “They called me out because I had forgotten to take one of the Renaissance tags off of a pair of shoes. And the tag was \$18.75, and my price for the shoes was \$85,” says Dewar.

This is the model that sellers have been using ever since resale platforms became popularized. “I'm not hiding the fact that I'm buying my stuff at a thrift store and flipping it,” she says. In fact, part of the appeal of shopping from specialized resellers is to avoid the lengthy digging for good finds in thrift stores, and guaranteeing you will find your desired look — not to mention the convenience of a one-stop-shop curated vintage store.

“All the time that goes into getting all the items, curating them, washing them, researching them; you have a whole list of things you have to do before you can actually even put it on the floor to sell.”

Even with the negative backlash, both women are sure they wouldn't want to do anything else. Ever since she was young, Morris collected clothes from the thrift store, not really knowing what their future purpose would be. “The only way I could express myself was through, you know, going to the thrift and finding pieces that I may not see other people with.”

A couple of years ago, Morris didn't even know about the reselling industry, but she was always collecting interesting pieces to add to her own collection. “I didn't know that people were (reselling thrifted clothes). I was just (thrifting) because, you know, being a student and working a minimum wage, you know, it's kind of hard to have nice clothing.”

When the opportunity to open a virtual store presented itself in the fall of 2019, Morris jumped at the chance, selling on social media platforms and at pop-up events. When the decision came to quit her day job, she knew it was time. “The owner of MarktFloh contacted me saying that she had an opportunity for me if I would be interested in selling in the shop, and I was like, 'Yeah, for sure.' Like, that's awesome. That's what I really wanted — I manifested it.”

Dewar, on her end, always dreamed of investing herself in Poison Thrift full-time. “I said, 'Maybe one day' for six years and now my business is two years old. It could have been eight years old. I could have been way further in.”

Before going solo, Dewar had two business partners, and did reselling and upcycling part time. “As triple threat thrift, we were essentially us three, we've been friends for over 10 years. [...] We all wanted to do this.”

The three shared a booth at MarktFloh before going their separate ways. “We used to meet and we'd have creative days together, we would all upcycle together, obviously before COVID.”

When walking into the MarktFloh store on St-Denis now, you'll find a cozy atmosphere, with creatives everywhere. The Poison Thrift and la Vegan Baddie booths are located at the top of a large industrial staircase. You might just find the perfect pair of Doc Martens or Apple Bottom Jeans.

Global drag



Pythia

BY NADIA TRUDEL

Drag has entered the mainstream and become more popular and accessible than ever, largely thanks to the internet and a little Emmy-winning reality show called *RuPaul's Drag Race*.

Montreal has long had a vibrant drag scene that has also benefited from this “golden age of drag.” Perhaps the best example is *Drag Superstars*, an annual show organized by Fierté Montréal. Its fourth edition was presented by MAC Cosmetics on an enormous stage in Parc des Faubourgs with a cast of both local performers and *Drag Race* alumni, all for free (unless you wanted to attend the meet and greet).

Local drag performers were getting international bookings and online followings, and some were even cast on the first-ever season of *Canada's Drag Race*, which was filmed in the fall of 2019.

And then...well you know what happened. Mid-March 2020, performers saw all their bookings, even ones three months away, get cancelled. Those whose income relied on drag were left to wonder how they'd pay rent.

As the producer of Quebec's only recurring drag king show, *Man Spread*, Montreal drag king Charli Deville was faced with a difficult choice.

“There was a *Man Spread* that was happening the week that everything shut down. I remember trying to figure out, ‘Should I cancel?’ What's going on? Because we were really in the dark. I remember asking the artists, ‘Do you want to drop out?’ and everybody said no, and then they made the decision for us and shut down the venue. There was a lot of uncertainty for a good couple of weeks before and then everything really shut down.”

Virtual drag shows were quickly organized. Many were fundraisers and had a “pay what you can” model.

“It was interesting because it took away the physical boundaries of performers so I was able to do shows in Chicago and Los Angeles and even though I wasn't physically there, I figured it would be a way to get my name out even more,” Deville says.



Charli Deville

Montreal drag performer Pythia welcomed the opportunity to use her degree in set and costume design and get creative with a new medium for performing.

“I've always had an interest in creating more visual storytelling with my drag. I like having very much a concept for the theatrical, something cutesy, something that captures their attention as a way for me to tell a story, whatever I'm doing. Through online drag, having the power to control everything that is seen through a camera was very nice for me because I got to create the whole world. I used green screen a lot, and a lot of editing. I could edit myself playing multiple characters.”

Despite this, both artists explained that putting together a digital drag performance is a lot more work and ultimately less fulfilling than live performances.

“You have to do all the video editing and get somebody to film you and the process ends up taking probably about 12 hours to produce one digital number that's good enough to be seen. Like for me, I don't want to put something really crappy out there. It had to be nicely edited and nicely shot and you have to think about lighting and there's a lot of technical issues that come up. I've never really done much video editing or production before. So we had to learn that really quickly,” Deville explains. “A lot of us are really missing experiencing something in a room together. Specifically drag for me, I used to go to three, four of them a week and not being able to go for a year... it's been really hard. If ever I was having a crappy day at work, you could always go to a drag show and you know you'll feel better and you'll be entertained.”

Though there was quite a bit of interest and support for these shows in the first few months of the pandemic, Pythia says the phenomenon sort of died down, especially when summer came and a few live drag shows were organized. A lot of these shows followed a drive-in model with audience members sitting in (or on) their cars watching performers on stage.

Despite measures like limited capacity, social distancing and mandatory masks for both the audience and performers, Pythia chose not to participate in live shows.

“There was a lot of talk within the community, people were getting COVID, bars were shutting down and then people were coming into contact...It was just too scary for me to be part of that because I don't want to get sick or put

my boyfriend and my roommate in danger. I don't think anyone from the audience got sick or any of the queens contracted (the virus) from anyone in the audience. But they have their own lives, they have part-time jobs, daytime jobs. So, it's just kind of transferred backstage and then quickly another lockdown came and all that was shut down.”

Deville did get to do a drive-in drag burlesque show, and two socially distanced performances last summer.

“I was very thankful to be able to do that but it's just crazy to have gone from three a week to three in a year. It's a big adjustment. A lot of performers, we're just very happy to be able to do a few things live, here and there.”

Though Pythia chose to turn her energy away from digital drag performance, it's easy to see by looking at her Instagram that, creatively, Pythia has managed to thrive in lockdown.

“It really gave me a lot of time to work on my makeup and my skills. I had so much fabric laying on the side and a whole bunch of wigs that I wanted to style that I never got to and when everything just stopped and I had no job because of the pandemic, I really got into playing around more with makeup and producing looks. I started doing little projects. In October, every day I looked like a different Halloween costume, but my interpretation. It didn't really halt my creativity. I'm very happy that I got the chance to do all these shows because it really got my following to grow and it got me to also improve a lot.”

In terms of the future of drag in Montreal, Deville is cautiously optimistic.

“I moved here from a small town because of the nightlife and the exciting things that this city brings to you. There are so many performances and festivals and all of these free or very accessible things you can do — just these exciting, fun, shared experiences, everywhere, all over the city, all the time. So I know for sure that *here*, people are really thirsty for that again, for these kinds of experiences. We're hoping that once we can be together, people will go out and we'll be able to hopefully make up the money that we've all lost throughout this time and that it doesn't end live performance. It's just a kind of long break, and once we're able to go back again, we'll all be very excited to resume what we were doing before.”

:play recent



Falling up



Buffalo 66

BY RYAN DIDUCK

Mark Templeton, “Somewhere Along the Sunburnt Dirt,” *Western Sunset* (SUPERPANG)

If you have ever gone to a Ukrainian Orthodox funeral, you will know that they take death seriously. There's the funeral service first, which lasts two or more hours, featuring plenty of sorrowful chanting and incense smoke that could choke an ox. Then, there's the actual burial, usually some ways out of the city in a small rural community cemetery, because families tend to want to be buried together. Then there's the meal after the burial, which, in COVID times can only be attended by a small number of people, but is usually the main event, attracting several hundred people, depending on the popularity of the deceased (and who made the perogies). Then there's the 40-day service, back in church again, followed by another massive meal. The graves get blessed in the springtime. And there are annual memorials thereafter. Orthodoxy doesn't allow cremation, because they believe in literal resurrection. A burnt seed can't produce fruit.

Vincent Gallo, “A Somewhere Place,” *Buffalo 66* (Will Records)

Every few years or so, I get curious about what Renaissance man Vincent Gallo is up to. Ever since *Buffalo 66*, his 1998 directorial debut, which was equal parts style and substance — no small feat for an independent filmmaker — the walking Joaquin Phoenix / Willem Dafoe mashup has never failed to entertain.

I recently re-watched *Buffalo 66* and was amazed with its simplicity. At a moment when streaming media giants are producing more and more stressful content in bids to attract increasingly anxious audiences, Gallo's simple film is tonic.

Simple has a bad rap. Simplicity is often associated with stupidity. But simple can be smarter than the most rococo flourish. Neither is simple basic;

simplicity is nearer to the sublime, a window into the profundity of infinity.

In the same way that Jean-Michel Basquiat used simple (some would have said “crude”) drawing techniques to convey complex ideas, Vincent Gallo uses simple (some would say “crude”) directing techniques to convey complex emotions. (However, this is not to say that Vincent Gallo is the Jean-Michel Basquiat of filmmaking.)

Valgeir Sigurðsson, “Brute Force,” *Kvika* (Bedroom Community)

With a little bit of effort, lots of new music and some novel kit, Play Recent is about to become a radio programme at Repeater Radio, as well as your trusted monthly column on all things cool for *Cult MTL*. I bought a new microphone specifically for the gig — a Sennheiser condenser that hangs like a teardrop over my studio table. The microphone stand I chose was the most basic option — just a telescoping stick screwed into a sturdy base — and didn't even come with a holder to slip the mic into. So, I searched some on Amazon, and found one made by Shure that I thought would do the job.

When the clip arrived a few days later, the first thing I noticed was a rather large and alarming sticker on the packaging advising that the product therein was made with materials that are known to cause cancer and reproductive difficulties. Why would something manufactured to be used right next to the human mouth intentionally be made of carcinogenic materials? I decided to return the clip and see if I could find one made of something that wouldn't potentially make my unborn children grow gills.

The return process was easy enough. I filled out a form on Amazon, choosing the closest reason from a dropdown menu. To my surprise, I was informed that I needn't return the clip, and that I would receive a refund nonetheless. The clip only cost \$10, so I suppose it wasn't worth it to Amazon to go through the physical returns process. But that meant that I was now stuck with disposing of a radioactive hunk of plastic. Should I throw it out with the regular trash, I wondered? Should I recycle it? Should I take it to the loneliest forest somewhere and bury it where it would hopefully do the least harm? Amazon freebie-as-curse.

MICROCORPS, “XEM” w/ Gazelle Twin, *XMIT* (Alter)

They don't build things like they used to. But writing is different. The next great novel was written millions of times and abandoned on some memory stick, still stuck in a corrupted data port, on a hard drive nobody knows the password to, produced less than 50 years ago, trapped in a now-obsolete format. Locked-in syndrome for media.

Godspeed You! Black Emperor, *G_d's Pee AT STATE'S END!*, 16mmFilmBrodcastDisquePremière, March 27, 2021, Centre Cinéma Impérial (Suoni per il Popolo and Constellation Records)

When I was a child, I was taught that capitalism was good because it encouraged competition. This meant that we would always have the best of everything because there would never be mediocre monopolies or shoddy state-run industries controlling things. Private companies would compete against each other to produce ever-better products and services and win evermore customers. This process would self-evolve, too, as private, profit-motivated entities innovated and improved on every aspect of modern human life.

But capitalism is not that, it's not that at all. Capitalism exploits vulnerability. Capitalism produces weakness, upon which it can then recapitalize. Sick and desperate subjects are ideal subjects under capitalism since they will efficiently produce and consume in relatively stable cycles for as long as they remain sick and desperate. In efforts to maximize profits, private companies spend as little as possible, and charge as much as possible. In efforts to maximize value, subjects work and spend as little as possible.

With everyone trying to rip everyone else off, this system produces a state of de-innovation, the worst of everything winning favour, rising to the top rather than falling off the charts. When we transcend and abandon capitalism, the real ça va bien aller campaign begins.

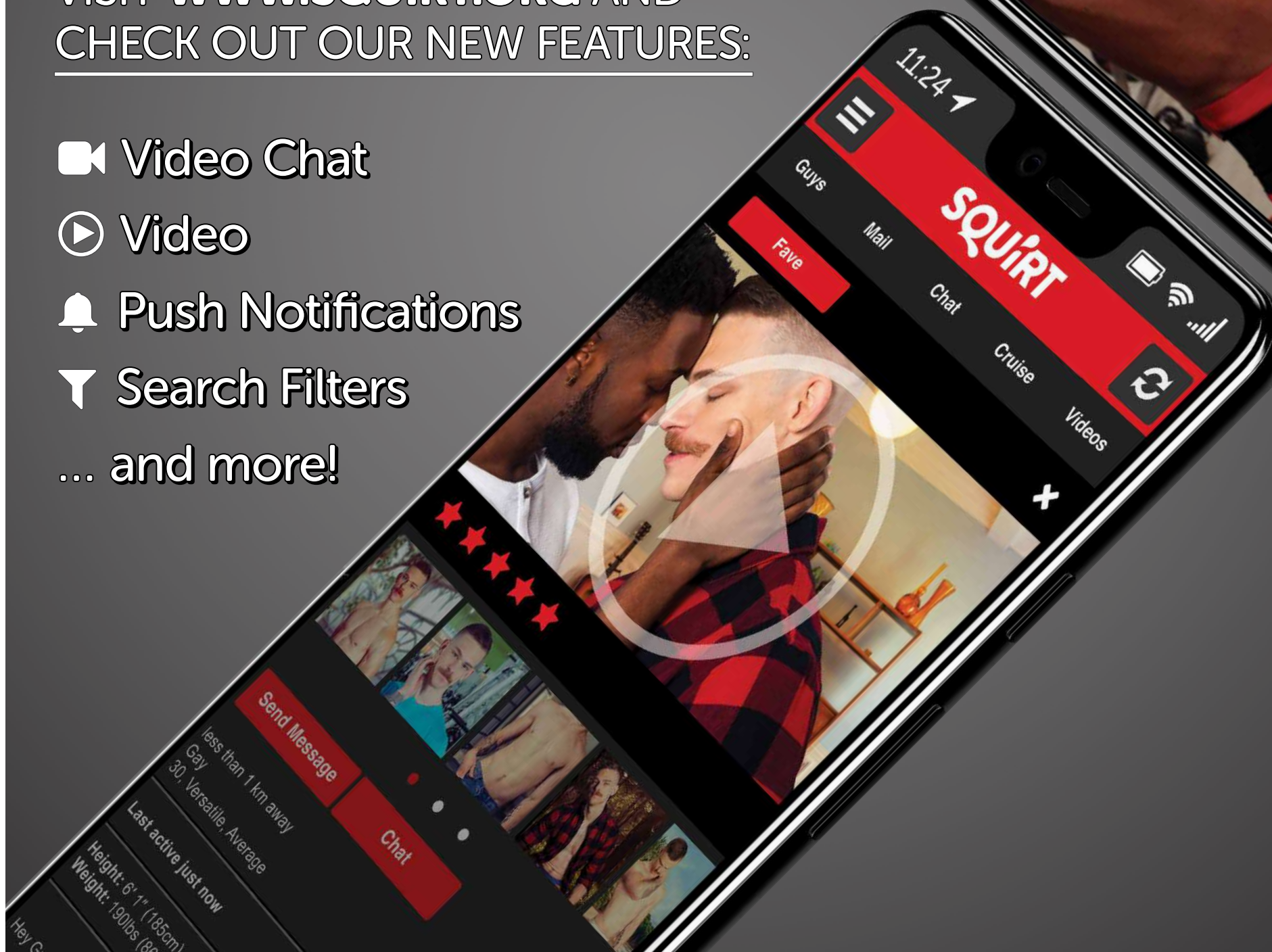
The logo for SQUIRT.org, featuring the word "SQUIRT" in a large, white, stylized font with a small dot over the 'i', and ".org" in a smaller, white, sans-serif font below it. The logo is set against a red rectangular background.

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