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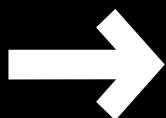
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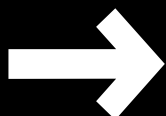
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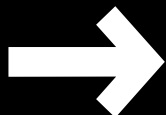
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Bowen Yang spoke with us about getting an award from Just for Laughs, embracing his role on SNL and the sketch that seemed to delight, outrage and confuse Montrealers in equal measures.

Photo by Mary Ellen Matthews (NBC)

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# :MTL courtside



BY MR. WAVVY

The NBA Playoffs are more unpredictable than ever. This will be the first time since 1998 that the Heat, Lakers, Spurs and Warriors will not be present in the finals. Early-round eliminations of once-frontrunners such as the Nets and Jazz has also shocked many.

At the time of print, the Bucks, Clippers, Hawks and Suns are the four teams remaining. While both Clippers and Suns have yet to win a single championship, the Bucks and Hawks have gone cold since 1971 and 1958, respectively.

This year's NBA Playoffs are sponsored by the letter "I" — for "injuries." Anthony Davis, Kawhi Leonard and Kyrie Irving are just a few of the once-perennial stars who have fallen during this year's postseason. These circumstances have allowed for unlikely talents to emerge victorious and create a timeline that nobody could have seen coming.

## TRAE YOUNG, WILD & FREE

I hate Trae Young as much as the next guy. His playing style is often cheap. His foul-drawing shenanigans style has been negatively compared to James Harden and Steve Nash before him.

Whatever your opinion is on Young, it is becoming increasingly harder not to give him his flowers when due. At only 22 years old, "Ice Trae" has led his Atlanta Hawks to the Eastern Conference Finals. This was accomplished without any All-Stars by his side. Luka Dončić comparisons begin to fall flat when these facts are taken into consideration.

Much like the Montreal Canadiens are in the hockey world, Atlanta are the NBA's eastern underdogs. They are a team whose season was not always the most consistent but an abundance in chemistry and an unconventional COVID year has brought them closer than ever to going back for a championship.

## THE PISSED AWAY PISTONS

During his tenure with the Oklahoma City Thunder, Troy Weaver was an excellent assistant general manager. He drafted the likes of James Harden and Russell Westbrook,

made three Conference Finals appearances and earned one Western Conference Championship.

It is clear that lightning doesn't strike twice for Weaver. Last summer, he was hired as the General Manager for the Detroit Pistons. Since this time, he essentially gave away two terrific players in Blake Griffin (waived) and Derrick Rose (traded), both of whom made the Playoffs. Apart from these travesties, the team also drafted a forgettable Frenchman by the name of Killian Hayes, who averaged a dismal 6.8 points per game despite being the seventh draft pick.

With 20 wins and 52 losses in the past season, the Pistons earned their worst franchise record since 1966.

Hopefully, there is a light at the end of the tunnel. The Pistons earned a big break with the number one overall pick in the forthcoming 2021 draft. There is not a ton of chatter for this year's draft class but in a best case scenario, the Motor City can foster a talent that they could bank on for the foreseeable future.

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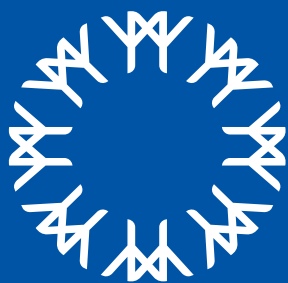
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# : best buds



BY DAVE MACINTYRE

And now, back to our regularly scheduled programming! After a month off from writing this column due to our annual Best of MTL results issue, I'm back with another trio of government-approved Devil's Lettuce to inhale and wax poetic about. Since I was gifted another four weeks to take each of these strains for a test drive (not literally, obvi), I found myself smoking them in various situations — from the intriguing to the utterly mundane. Here's how that went.

**SATIVA: NAMASTE LEMON**

At just below 20% THC, this strain provides you with a euphoric high that hits your body harder than your mind. Nonetheless, it's a good one to take when in need of an energy boost, and/or the motivation to fill your day not simply with Miss Vickies-fuelled binge watching. True to its name, Namaste Lemon also gives you a fruity taste while inhaling. Best of all? It's a good strain if you want to stay invested in the music you're listening to (in my case, Dinosaur Jr.'s bizarre effects-laden cover of the Cure's "Just Like Heaven") or the show you're watching. For me, the latter involved the season 5 premiere of *Rick and Morty*. This strain certainly helps give you a more visceral watch of the episode. When a strain hits you hard enough that you find yourself being too entranced by the show to even think about its toxic fanbase, it's done its job. *8.5/10*


**INDICA: TWD. INDICA**

When the provincially imposed curfew finally lifted less than a month ago, this was the first strain I smoked in celebration. This Canopy Growth-powered strain is one that burns smoothly, and leaves you with warm feelings of relaxation and contentment. Unfortunately, it's also one that tends to

leave you rather couch-locked. How couch-locked, you ask? Enough that I found myself essentially chained to my office chair one day after smoking it, right before I'd planned to go out for a long walk (which I eventually managed to do). It's a potent high at 20%, and a pleasant one, at that. But if you decide to go for a long stroll outside, your legs miiiiight feel a bit heavy. Mine sure did. *7.5/10*

**HYBRID: LA BATCH TROIS ET DEMI**

This one definitely has the best artwork and logo of the three, and the high itself is a pretty decent one, to boot. It's straightforward just like its branding, and definitely just a touch too dry. That said, it packs a bigger punch than the other two, and leaves me feeling RIPPED while out walking aimlessly through Parc Laurier. While not boasting a particularly distinctive sensation or taste, it seems like a good one to take in situations where you need a nice head high to keep yourself calm and even-keeled. During a highly stressful Game 7 against the Leafs, this is exactly what I used it for. On the flip side, it's also great for watching the Habs' sheer domination against the Jets. Perhaps I'll need to reload for the Tampa series? In any case, Go Habs Go! *8/10*






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# :the 1st half



BY PAUL DESBAILLETS

Summer is in full swing, and there has actually never been more football on the airwaves than there is right now.

Here is the breakdown... The MLS returned, welcoming our illustrious CFM team back to the pitch. Since returning, they drew 0–0 and 1–1 in the first two games after the month-long break. Luis Binks has left for Italy to join his new team Bologna FC 1909 in the Serie A. CF Montréal and Bologna have a solid working relationship because of Joey Saputo's executive roles at both clubs.

Binks originally joined CF Montréal ahead of the 2020 MLS season, on loan from Premier League side Tottenham Hotspur. The 19-year-old Englishman played in 21 games for Montreal.

The Canada men's national team has made it into the next qualifying round for the World Cup 2022. This round is called the Hexagon. The Hex is often used to refer to the final round of the FIFA World Cup qualifications, among the six remaining teams

in Concacaf. The 16 round-robin format has been used by Concacaf since 1998. The top three teams go to the World Cup.

Canada has to face some of the most fierce footballing nations to make it out. They will play teams such as the United States, Honduras, Jamaica, Panama and Mexico to get to the World Cup 2022 in Qatar.

On the international football scene, we are wrapped up in two major tournaments: the Euro 2020 and Copa América. The best of the European football world is playing-it-out and the best of the Latin American world is doing the same, at the same time.

During the Euros in June, the whole world literally watched a footballer drop dead during a match and be resuscitated on live TV, which was extremely shocking, painful and very emotional to witness. Denmark's Christian Eriksen's heart stopped. Eriksen collapsed during Denmark's opening Euro 2020 group game against Finland and was given lengthy medical treatment before regaining consciousness.

Denmark's team doctor said that Christian Eriksen's heart stopped and that, "He was gone!," at the European Championship before being brought back to life. He survived, which was the positive outcome of such a dramatic shared experience. A take-away: We are reminded of the importance

of having a defibrillator kit on hand at every field, as well as the fact that we should all have basic CPR training. These medical emergencies are not rare and they can happen to anyone, at any age.

By the time you read this, more European teams from the round of 16 will have been eliminated. (Hopefully England will not be one of those teams!) Italy, Denmark, the Czech Republic and Belgium have all moved forward into the next round.

Yes that does mean there will be no Ronaldo in the Euros.

In non-football news that must be noted, our very own hockey team, the Montréal Canadiens, aka the Habs (tourists take note that this is short for *les Habitants*, who were the early farmers of Quebec), have gone all the way! They made the Stanley Cup Finals and will be in the thick of it vs. the Tampa Bay Lightning by the time this is published.

And as a good buddy once said, "How can any real hockey fan, no matter where they are from or how they support during regular season, not root for a hockey team that has snow in the winter!" Plain and simple. So Canada, rally around our Habs!

As said around town: Ça sent la coupe!

"Talent without working hard is nothing."  
—Cristiano Ronaldo

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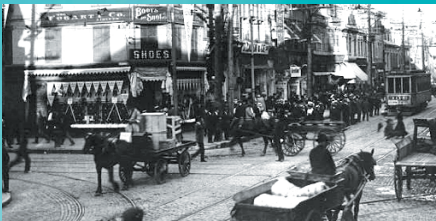


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# food

## Ideal wine and dine

BY CLAY SANDHU

Dining is back! Damn, doesn't it feel good to say that?

I've been out to eat at a few of my favourite spots and, maybe the old adage is true, maybe absence does make the heart grow fonder — or maybe, just maybe, restaurants are better? It's hard not to view these experiences through rose-coloured glasses but hospitality, in my experience, is at an all-time high lately and perhaps nowhere more so than at *Mélisse*, a new restaurant — or at least new to me, in Old Montreal.

Through the winter I started keeping a journal of some of my favourite meals: a late-summer tomato sandwich on white bread from Orford's *Chez Dora* bakery, thickly cut tonkatsu from *Butagumi* in Tokyo, the first snow crab of the year with nothing more than a squeeze of fresh lemon. My list was long and varied — equal parts travel journal and tasty bits compendium and yet, for the most part, everything had one major characteristic in common: they were wholly uncomplicated. And when I say uncomplicated, I don't mean devoid of technique — we tend to call this “simple” food but that in itself is overly reductive. Uncomplicated food is thoughtful, deliberate and unburdened by all the unnecessary elements that serve no more purpose than to add a splash of pomp and pretension.

It's exactly the kind of food that I've come to expect from chef Tom Allain, who took over the kitchen at *Mélisse* roughly two years ago. For some reason I had been putting off going to *Mélisse*. I've tasted Allain's food countless times, and I had no reason to expect anything other than a delicious meal — something about the location or the vaguely Mediterranean identity that is adopted by so many mediocre restaurants had me pushing back my reservation time after time.

Last week, however, I bit the bullet and made the journey down to the corner of William and Queen (at 719 William, to be specific). It's strange to say, but the sprawling, roughly 50-seat outdoor terrasse felt intimate and oddly private tucked away beneath the towers of condo buildings surrounding Square William. Though it lacks the objective charm of European town squares, the resulting effect was not altogether dissimilar. We were guided to our table, a spacious two-top on the terrasse. We were greeted by the endlessly charming *Salomé Médam*, daughter of owner *Caroline Desgagne* and resident sommelier, who presented us with the menu and the wine list. The menu is short and sweet — nine dishes that range in portion size along with oysters by the half-dozen or dozen, and daily crudo and pasta specials.

We began with a half dozen oysters served with mignonette and lemon — a standard affair with two choices of some PEI favourites (*Casumpec* and *Salt Grass Point*) along with the crudo of the day: halibut with labneh, garlic scape salsa verde, fresno chiles and potato chips. Following the advice of *Médam*, we opted for a glass of sparkling *Chenin Blanc* from *Testalonga*, a favourite South-African producer. The oysters were briny, plump and appropriately celebratory for a return to restaurant dining but it was the crudo, unexpected and so



Clay Sandhu

clever, that would end up being the dish of the night. Halibut, a delicately flavoured fish, is really all about texture when served raw. In his preparation, Allain serves the fish in meaty slices placed atop a thick smear of creamy and acidic labneh — the lot is dressed with the aforementioned garnishes which make for a very pretty plate of food. For me, a good crudo celebrates the fish and accentuates it with a balance of fat and acidity. Generally speaking we're talking about olive oil and lemon juice or vinegar. Allain's crudo cleverly adds the fat and acidity in his crudo by way of yogurt — a lovely combination. The richness of the yogurt is bolstered by the garlicky depth of the salsa verde and gets a pointed vibrancy from the gentle heat of the fresno chile — and who doesn't love a crispy potato chip?

As we finished the raw course, we perused *Médam*'s beautifully composed wine list. A strictly natural selection, for me, it read like a greatest hits list: *Alexandre Filaine*, *Château de Béru*, *Denavolo*, *Courault*, *Souhaut*, the list goes on. We landed on a bottle of 2018 *Poulsard* from *Domaine des Marnes Blanches* and settled in for the next course. Four impossibly crisp balls of falafel arrived with their herbed mayo. Topped with some basil leaves and coriander (which I found a bit superfluous), the falafel themselves were as good as any I've had. They mayo offered little in terms of accompaniment — I thought it could have been herbier, but it was more than made up for by the vibrancy of the bright-green falafel themselves. Though I never ordered take-out

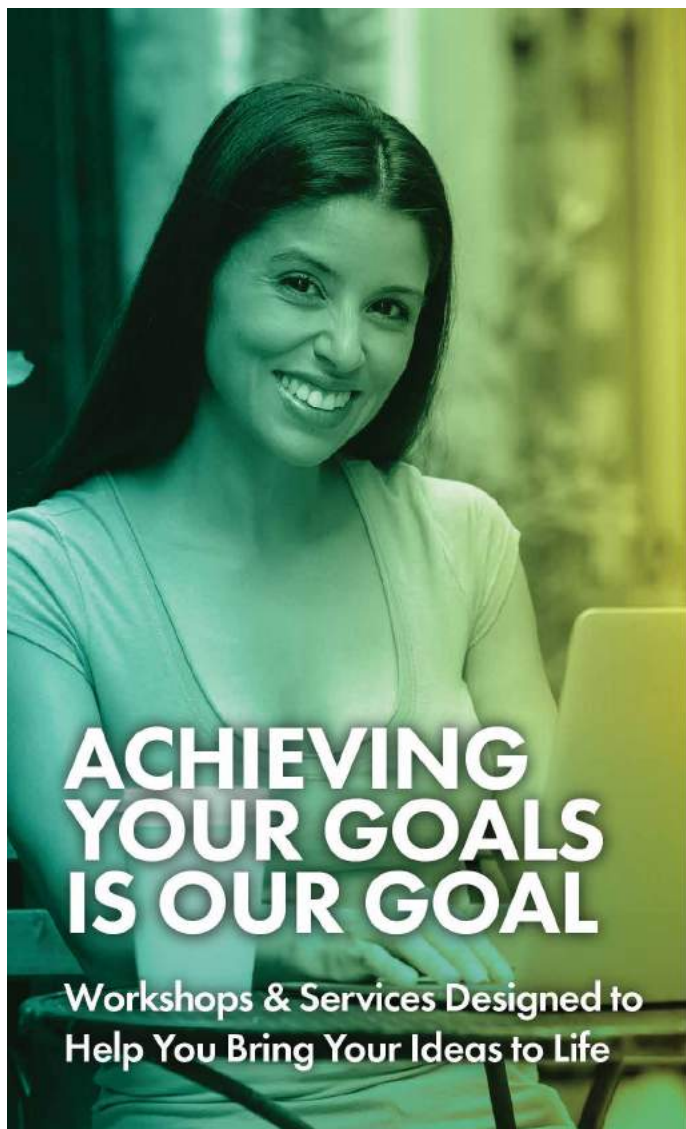
from *Mélisse* over the course of the pandemic, I can assume that a falafel sandwich could have easily carried them through those tough times.

Our main course was a very generous portion of the pasta of the day: *Tagliatelle Carbonara*. Far from a traditional carbonara, Allain's version featured crispy bacon, sweetbreads, green peas and beautiful Quebec morels. The pasta itself was perfectly cooked and served as an excellent vehicle for the other elements. It goes without saying, however, that the star of the dish were the beautiful plump morels. In my opinion, the pasta served with peas and morels alone would have been more than sufficient, although the dish as composed by Allain was certainly delicious as well.

For dessert, we enjoyed a slice of coffee cake topped with a beautifully glazed rhubarb lattice and crumbly streusel. Alongside the quite tasty cake were one scoop each of rhubarb and pistachio ice cream, which were fine but nothing to write home about.

My job is to be critical of restaurants and their food but I admit that, seated on the tastefully decorated terrasse at *Mélisse*, it was hard to feel anything other than delight. For me, the evening was everything you could want when you go out to dinner. A beautiful space, warm and attentive service and delicious food — the ideal restaurant experience.





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# music

## The quest continues



Jesuslesfilles

Camille Gladu-Drouin

BY YARA EL-SOUEIDI

Jesuslesfilles never stops creating music.

*L'heure idéale*, their fourth album, comes at a time of excitement, coinciding with reopenings that give hope for new shows — aside from a very sold out album launch at l'Esco a couple of weeks ago.

When talking with singer Martin Blackburn and drummer Benoit Poirier, the anticipation of the release is palpable, even through a screen. Both of them talk about the hard work they've put into the new album, but also about the general inspiration behind it. It's an album strongly inspired by the exodus to the West.

"At first, it started from the city of L.A. We were finding it a little bit crazy that everyone wanted to go to Los Angeles and change their life. We realized that a lot of people had those ambitions of leaving and getting successful somewhere else," says Blackburn.

The band views this album as an opportunity to explore new

sounds while staying true to themselves and their origins. For them, Jesuslesfilles is not always psych-rock — it goes beyond genres. The band isn't about one type of music. It's about where they find the inspiration behind the music, as Blackburn explains.

"We are alternative. We don't want to fit any label. When I make music, I ask myself what the mood is rather than what type of music I'm making. Am I rock? Am I pop? I think I get my inspiration from all the styles. It depends on how I'm feeling. I will drink a beer, smoke a joint, listen to Elton John, go outside, come back in and start playing whatever my creativity brings. We have all kinds of inspiration. We have a mood, 'Jesuslesfilles,' and this is what we want to share."

Having been around since 2008, Jesuslesfilles is well-known in Montreal's psych-rock circles. They are very humble about their background. They still see themselves as the poor kids on the block. Their song "Troisième Semaine" conveys exactly what they identify as: young kids trying to make their way in the scene.

"We were the poor kids of Quebec's rock. 'Troisième Semaine' is exactly Jesuslesfilles. This is our energy. We are always

in between. Not pop, not rock. Jesuslesfilles, we are used to misery," adds Blackburn while laughing.

And yet, the successful band that has won Rock Album of the Year at the GAMIQ (with *Daniel*, in 2018) is very far from being unrecognized. Their albums keep on getting praised by critics. For *L'heure idéale*, they worked with Emmanuel Éthier — the producer behind Corridor and P'tit Belliveau. Éthier was able to visualize what to bring to the album.

"We got into a studio and we spent weeks on it. With Manu, he's very laid-back, there's no pressure. He knows where he is going. He's a machine. He looks like he's extremely chill, but in his head everything is going on," Blackburn explains.

Jesuslesfilles seems like a band that is here to stay. When asked whether, in keeping with their album's theme, they've found their El Dorado, Poirier and Blackburn laugh and take a pause before answering.

"Right now, we have found our El Dorado. We have a label that takes care of us, we have a good album. We are very cherished," Blackburn says.

"The quest continues," adds Poirier.



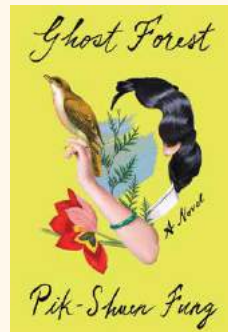
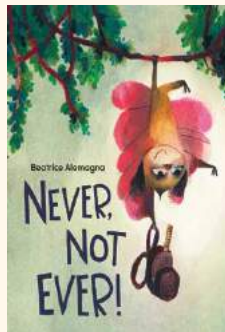
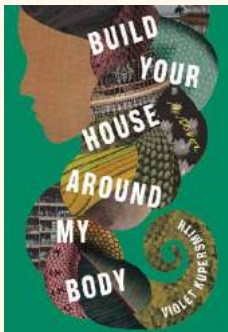
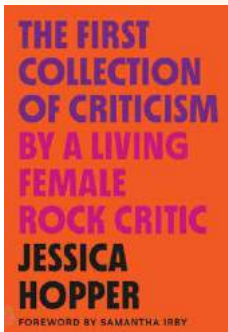
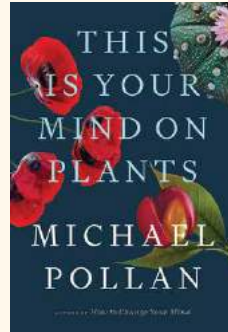
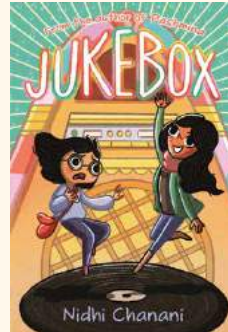
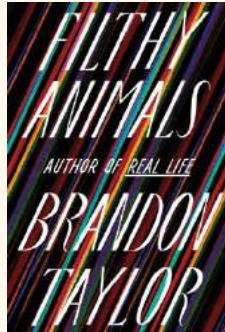
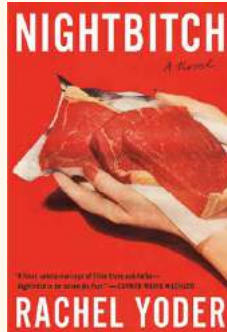
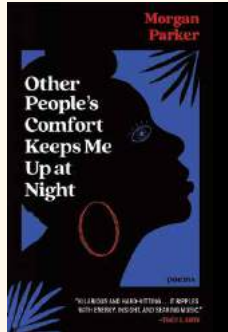
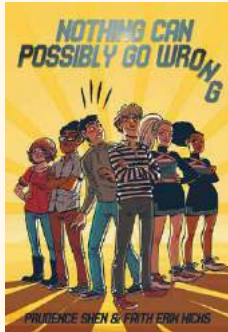
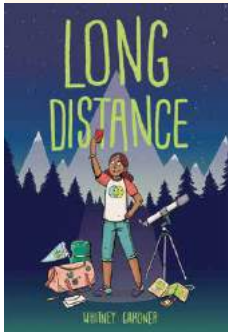
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# Album reviews

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St. Vincent, *Daddy's Home* (Loma Vista)

St. Vincent is back on the scene — this time, as a psychedelic space queen in a bleached bob-cut and bell bottoms. Her sixth studio album, *Daddy's Home*, features experimental grooves and melodies that drag you down a rabbit hole back to the early '70s. Tracks like "Pay Your Way

In Pain" and "The Melting of the Sun" offer listeners a diverse blend of funk, psychedelic rock and gospel that culminates in something completely original yet nostalgic. Other songs like the luscious "Candy Darling" and Pink Floyd-esque "Live in the Dream" solidify the artist's realization of a specific time and place. Throw in some majestic guitar solos and you've got yourself a damn good concept album. 9/10 Trial Track: "The Melting of the Sun" (Al Sciola)



Backwash, *I Lie Here Buried With My Rings and My Dresses* (Ugly Hag)

Danger, chaos and threat are all elements of what keeps hip hop interesting and alive, keeping the door open for new generations that will still inevitably turn their back on the mainstream and seek out emotions to relate to in music. There is

much identification to be found in Backwash's third outing

for the angry, confused and disillusioned among us who nonetheless refuse to let go of hope. *I Lie Here Buried* has the added benefit of being accessible for more seasoned music fans who sometimes get the feeling we've heard it all before but nonetheless wait in anticipation for artists like Backwash to come along and put a new stamp of authenticity on familiar packaging. This is not exactly "raw" how ODB liked it, or how Big Daddy Kane described it. But when the drugs have run out, you've fucked yourself silly, your tear ducts are like sandpaper and blood and plaster have caked into your knuckles from punching holes in the wall, Backwash brings you to a safe space to finally lie buried. 8.5/10 Trial Track: "Terror Packets" ft. Censored Dialogue (Darcy MacDonald)

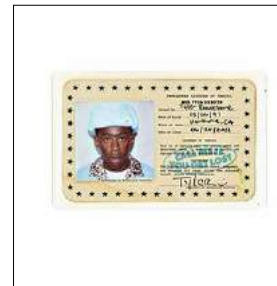


Your Old Droog, *Time* (Mongoloid Banks/Nature Sounds)

"I'm not in a Rush/Fuck Geddy Lee," raps the Brooklyn-based Droog on the intro to his latest arrival, a 15-track collection that lands nicely on these muggy, post-solstice summer days and nights, when hours and minutes come and go at

their own leisure. Some will last forever, others are gone in an instant, and as hip hop approaches its sixth decade, hazy memories are a suitable substitute for dates, names and times, though YOG has plenty of those in the bank, too, and doesn't hold back from calling them out here when necessary. Once upon a career mistaken for Nas, and often lauded as the heir apparent to frequent collaborator MF DOOM (who

comes with a savage posthumous guest appearance on album standout "Dropout Boogie"), Droog's considerable body of work still dwells in whatever's left of the New York underground. This latest will likely find its audience with quintessential hip hop fans who still take precious moments to enjoy beats and lyrics carefully and deliberately. 8.5/10 Trial Track: "Quiet Time" (Darcy MacDonald)



Tyler, the Creator, *Call Me If You Get Lost* (Columbia/Sony)

What is there left to prove for Tyler, the Creator after releasing a project as masterful as *IGOR*? On its follow-up, the Odd Future founder takes a victory lap. This one is for day-one fans. The project is considerably more low-stakes than other Tyler releases, with most

of the songs feeling akin to freestyles. Hosted by the legendary DJ Drama, *Call Me If You Get Lost* is the rapper's very own homage to the 2000s-era Gangsta Grillz mixtapes that helped shape him. 7.5/10 Trial Track: «Juggernaut» (feat. Lil Uzi Vert & Pharrell Williams) (Mr. Wavvy)

DJ Kay Slay, *Accolades* (EMPIRE)

DJ Kay Slay's latest eight-track offering is a gruelling listen, to say the least. The New York disc jockey has gone from making quality hip hop to becoming heavily reliant on gimmicks. This time around, the most concerning example is "Rolling 110 Deep," which features a whopping 110 different emcees. This ambitious concept is near-immediately disappointing, with the likes of Jadakiss, Ice-T and, for some reason, Shaquille O'Neal rapping about absolutely nothing. *Accolades* is rapping for rapping's sake, with lots of half-baked punchlines without any substance behind them. 3.5/10 Trial Track: "Wild Child" (feat. the LOX, McGruff, Black Rob & Razah) (Mr. Wavvy)



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# :hammer of the mods

BY JOHNSON CUMMINS

Okay, I know many of you avid readers of this dark corner of *Cult MTL* will get your taint chafed but this month I am going to look at the recent *Sabotage* box set from Beelzebub's favourite lounge act, Black fucking Sabbath.

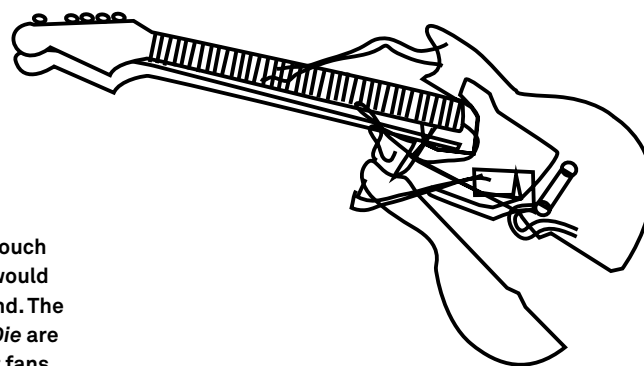
"But Johnson, you already reviewed a Sabbath box set back in April!" Das right, Poindexter, of course I hippped you squares to the Sab's monolithic super deluxe box set edition of *Vol. 4* a couple of months ago, but c'mon fuckos... it's Sabbath, by gummy!

Warner/Rhino started releasing the Black Sabbath super deluxe box sets last year with their sophomore stomper *Paranoid*, followed by the aforementioned souped up set of their second greatest record, *Vol. 4* (first is *Master of Reality*, natch). The label clearly knew they had a good thing going when these weighty boxes sold like hotcakes as they pretty rapidly released Sab's sixth slab of ballast, 1975's *Sabotage*.

This sixth Black Sabbath release is by no means a slouch in the Ozzy era. While I consider it a great record, it would be the last good one that Ozzy would do with the band. The following albums *Technical Ecstasy* and *Never Say Die* are widely regarded as garbage even by the most ardent fans, and most will probably give 'em the slip if they actually do get the box set treatment.

After making the tragic mistake of getting the CD edition of the *Vol. 4* box, I grabbed the LP edition this time around — with *Sabotage*, size really does matter. What you're treated with when you lift the lid is an extensively researched 40-page hardcover book, a rare copy of the program from the band's 1975 show at Madison Square Garden, a huge 1975 promotional tour poster, a Japanese replica 7" single, the remastered version of the record and the real reason you will want this set: the first official release of their widely distributed bootleg *Live in Asbury Park 1975*.

The triple LP live set shows the band at their most pulverizing and crushing. Recorded a week after *Sabotage*'s release, the band is absolutely bloodthirsty after being trapped in a studio for over a year. The fidelity is punchy and immediate as the band comes out swinging with a killer set list that includes a lethal version of "Symptom of the Universe," "Hole in the Sky," their doom-laden eponymously track "Black Sabbath," "War Pigs" and more. It's on this live



recording that you realize that Iommi was indeed the architect of the band but the rhythm section of Geezer Butler and Bill Ward were more than capable of running the engine room while the clown prince Ozzy kept the heart beating. Although we've been lucky enough to have rare live concerts padding out the previous super deluxe box sets, it's this one that shows the band at their very peak and firing on all cylinders while giving no quarter.

Most of you who are getting hot under the collar about this release already have a copy of *Sabotage* on the shelf, and truthfully the remastering and completely silent pressing is a vast improvement (despite online hubbub about digital sources) but the triple LP live record and box set goodies make this yet another mandatory Sabbath purchase.

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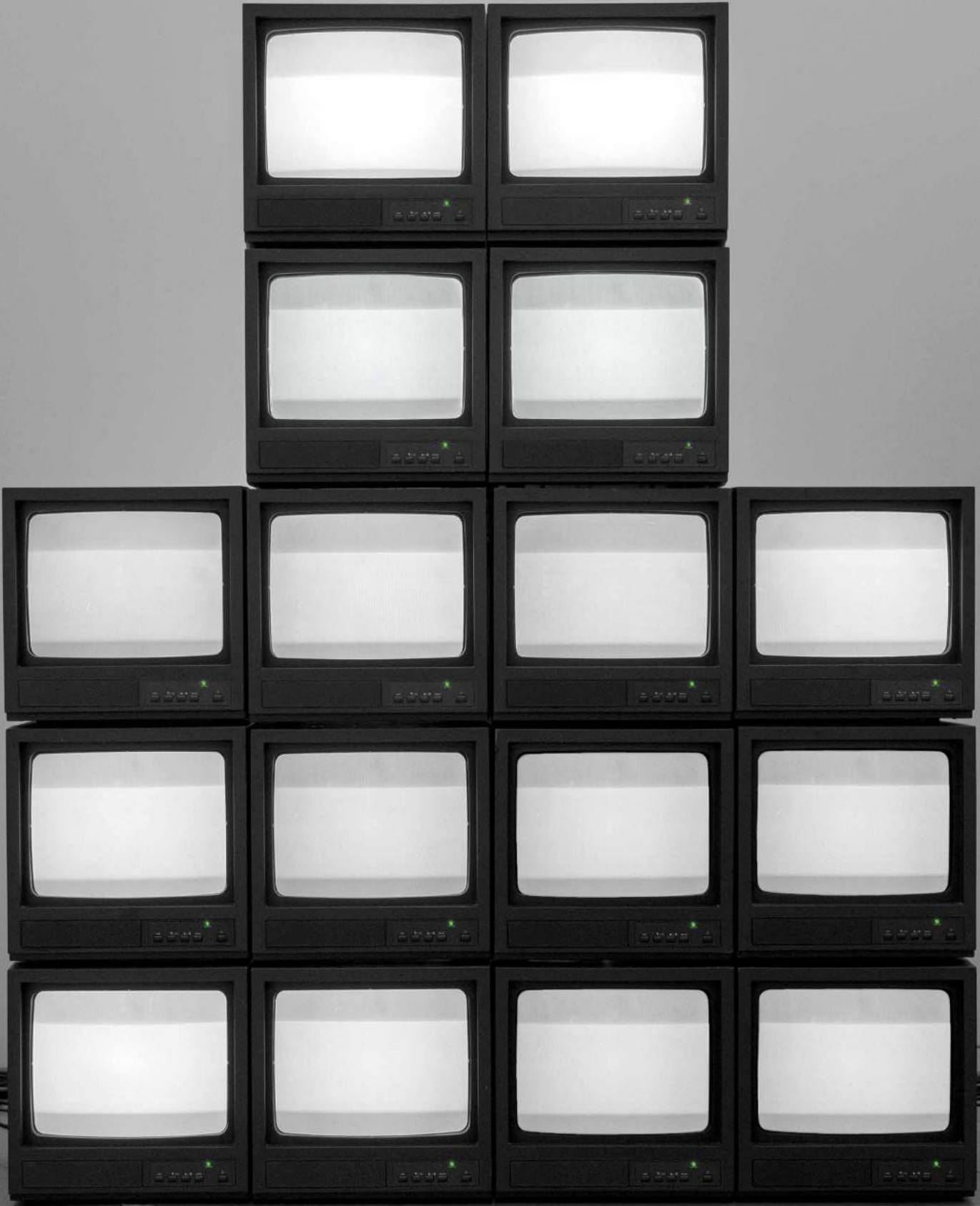
CINÉMA DU PARC



# RISE AGAINST

## NOWHERE GENERATION

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## Building bridges



Sebastien Raymond

BY ALEX ROSE

Tracey Deer's *Beans* is named after its protagonist, a 12-year-old Mohawk girl from Kahnawake.

*Beans* (played by Kiawentiio) lives with her parents (Rainbow Dickerson and Joel Montgrand) and little sister Ruby (Violah Beauvais). Beans is a good student, with her mind set on attending an exclusive private school populated, predictably, mainly by white people. Beans is at that crossroads in her life where she's not quite a teenager (she still plays with her little sister constantly) but not quite a kid anymore. What precipitates things is the Oka Crisis on the other side of the island of Montreal, in which the community of Oka had approved the expansion of their golf course over sacred Mohawk land. Mohawks on the South Shore (including Beans's father) set up a blockade on the bridge in solidarity and to prevent further raids from the SQ, prompting outrage and racist outbursts from the white community in Châteauguay.

Deer's film is told from the perspective of a 12-year-old who doesn't quite grasp the enormity of the events surrounding her. In that sense, *Beans* is less a historical document than a snapshot from a very specific perspective — but one that feels very personal for Deer, who grew up in Kahnawake and was 12 years old in 1990.

"I didn't want to make a movie about the Oka Crisis," says Deer. "I wanted to make a story about a little Indigenous girl coming of age as an Indigenous person in this country and how difficult and really brutal that coming of age can be. Certainly, that's what my experience was. My coming

of age was through the backdrop of the Oka Crisis, and the Oka Crisis gives us a situation where everything is very heightened. That environment, that animosity, that lack of safety, that is still incredibly current across the board. It was never going to be a story about Oka — it was always going to be about a little girl with Oka in the backdrop. They feed into each other."

*Beans* relies immensely on the performances of the young people at its core. The film is not just telling Beans's story, there's essentially nothing in here that isn't her direct experience. But casting such a specific role came with challenges.

"It was definitely a process," says Deer. "We did have an open casting call for children across the country, because the typical casting process in which a casting director puts out a casting call to all the agents and the agents get their clients to submit wasn't going to work. There aren't a ton of Indigenous kids in that traditional system that have already been discovered. We got a ton of submissions from all of these incredibly talented kids. We narrowed it down to five kids per role and we flew them down to Toronto for an acting workshop at the Canadian Film Centre. That was like an acting 101 workshop; it wasn't two days of *Beans*. It was for learning about acting, having fun with each other.

"I was there watching them as they went through these two days to see how open they were, to see how willing they would be to be vulnerable. It was incredible to watch these 20 kids blossom as actors over these two days. At the end of the two days, we did another round of auditions in which I was able to mix and match the actors. It was after that weekend that we were able to find three of our roles, but then Violah Beauvais was found much later. It's her first role,

so she's a complete discovery. All of the other young actors had some experience, but Violah, this was her first time. She's from Kahnawake herself, and I do think it was meant to be that way. I'm so pleased that there's a young person from my community as well."

All of *Beans* is affecting, but one particularly brutal scene happens as Beans, her mother and sister drive down a road bordered on each side by white people who are pelting them with rocks. This scene is immersive and raw and frankly quite hard to sit through, which I imagine is tenfold when you've lived it yourself.

"It was definitely the hardest thing I've ever done," says Deer. "But cathartic, healing — it was definitely those things. As a young girl, I felt very powerless during that summer, and for most of my coming of age, in fact. Powerless, voiceless, invisible... I felt like I didn't matter. When cops allow adults to throw rocks at you, as a child, the only way I was able to interpret it was that I didn't matter. So now, 30 years later, being at the helm of sharing this story with the world, it's the very opposite of powerless. I have a voice that I was able to put out there and make sure that what I experienced and what countless other people experienced is not forgotten. I wanted people to bear witness to it and understand what it is to be Indigenous in this country. It's so complicated. It's difficult in this country. In all of my work, I hope to build bridges and inspire compassion. I want allies and to build allyship; I want people to leave the film thinking, 'Wow, I can't believe this happened in this country. What can I do to make things better for our indigenous brothers and sisters in this country?'"

→ *Beans* opens in Montreal theatres on Friday, July 2



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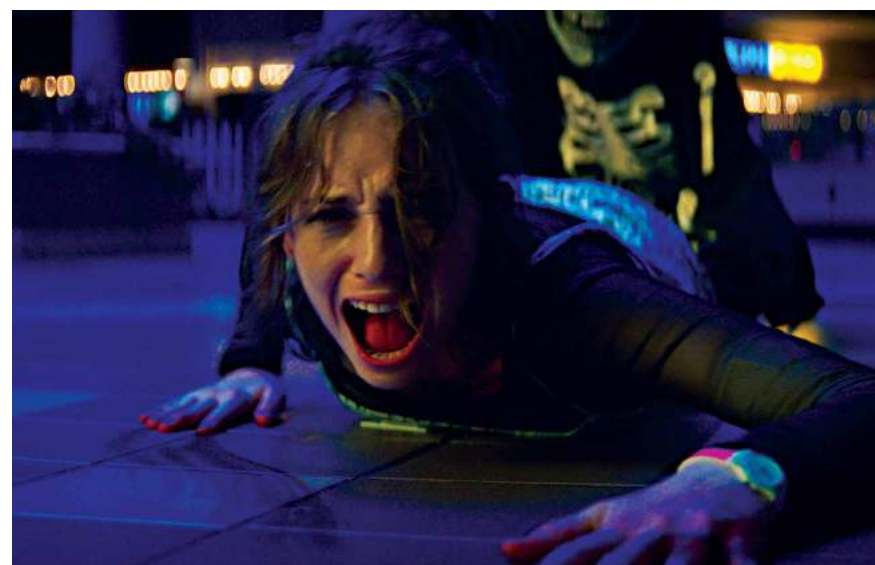
Stillwater



The Tomorrow War



Space Jam: A New Legacy



Fear Street Part 1: 1994

BY ALEX ROSE

With theatres reopening everywhere and some releases making just about as much money as they would've in a pre-COVID world, it certainly is beginning to feel like the summer movie season is back.

Perhaps the clearest sign of that is the arrival of a new Marvel movie in theatres. Scarlett Johansson stars in *Black Widow* (July 8), a spinoff/prequel of the character she plays in the Avengers films. Florence Pugh and Rachel Weisz co-star in the film, directed by Cate Shortland (2012's *Lore*).

LeBron James steps into the Michael Jordan role with *Space Jam: A New Legacy* (July 16), the belated sequel to the inexplicably popular 1996 animation / live-action hybrid which seems to extend way beyond Looney Tunes to incorporate the entirety of Warner Bros' catalogue of characters (including, mystifyingly, the droogs from *A Clockwork Orange*).

True to most summer movie seasons, July 2021 is composed mainly of reboots, prequels and adaptations. The weirdest adaptation source this month has to be

Disney's *Jungle Cruise* (July 30), a huge action movie starring the Rock and Emily Blunt that's based on the Disneyland ride of the same name — it worked for *Pirates of the Caribbean*, after all! Henry Golding stars in the titular role of *Snake Eyes*, a reboot of the G.I. Joe film series from a decade ago. Robert Schwentke (*Red*, *Flightplan*) directs. This month also sees the release of *The Boss Baby: Family Business* (July 2) which sees Alec Baldwin reprise his role as a baby who is also a boss. Another franchise getting a sequel this month is the long-running *Purge* franchise, which sees its latest installment *The Forever Purge* drop on July 2.

Thomasin McKenzie (*Leave No Trace*, *Jojo Rabbit*), Gael García Bernal and Vicky Krieps (*The Phantom Thread*) star in *Old* (July 23), the latest thriller from M. Night Shyamalan. The three play a family on vacation who discover that they're rapidly ageing for reasons they can't quite grasp. While Shyamalan has a pretty inconsistent output in general, one can't fault the promise of this concept. Dev Patel and Alicia Vikander star in David Lowery's *The Green Knight*, a reimagining of Arthurian legend from the director of *A Ghost Story* and *The Old Man and the Gun*. Matt Damon stars in *Stillwater*, a crime thriller directed by Tom McCarthy (*Spotlight*) about the travails of a man whose daughter is imprisoned in France for a murder she didn't commit.

Karen Gillan and Lena Heady star in *Gunpowder Milkshake*, a hypercaffeinated action film about professional assassins who band together to exact revenge on a crime lord played by Paul Giamatti; it hits theatres July 15. Going straight to HBO Max / Crave on July 1 is the latest crime drama from Steven Soderbergh, *No Sudden Move*. The 1950s-set noir has a crackerjack cast (Don Cheadle, Benicio del Toro, Jon Hamm, Ray Liotta, Amy Seimetz and Brendan Fraser, to name a few) and has gotten good notices in its festival premiere earlier this month.

Netflix is trying a bold strategy this month by releasing a trilogy of films based on RL Stine's *Fear Street* series with only one week between installments. *Fear Street Part 1: 1994* is out on July 2, with further installments coming on July 9 and 16. Chris Pratt stars in Amazon Prime Video's *The Tomorrow War*, a sci-fi action film from director Chris McKay (*The Lego Batman Movie*) that was originally meant for a theatrical release but was instead purchased by the streaming giant in the wake of COVID-19. Louis Morissette, Catherine Chabot and Émilie Bierre star in *Le guide de la famille parfaite* (July 14), a dramatic comedy from Ricardo Trogi (1991) that is being distributed by Netflix everywhere but in Quebec, where it will have a theatrical release before being available exclusively on Netflix. Jean-Claude Van Damme stars in the Netflix action comedy *The Last Mercenary* (July 30).



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# arts

## Hello again

BY LORRAINE CARPENTER

Bowen Yang has had a dramatic couple of years for a breakout comedy star.

Joining the cast of *Saturday Night Live* in 2019 after having been a writer (and made a cameo as Kim Jong Un) the previous season, Yang has written and starred in some of the most memorable sketches on the legendary NYC sketch show as it weathered the pandemic, the U.S. presidential election and a quasi-coup d'état. Yang played Elton John, Fran Leibowitz and the bitchy iceberg that sank the Titanic, conceived a sketch that cast Harry Styles as an oversexed gay social media manager at Sara Lee (and himself as the “straight man,” though not really) and of course the temperamental host of the (fictional) Montreal news program *Bonjour Hi!*, a reflection of the fact that Yang spent his early childhood in this city.

As the first East Asian American cast member on *SNL*, Yang represented with a moving appeal for human kindness following the disturbing rise of anti-Asian hate crimes in the U.S. (and around the world) earlier this year. As only the third openly gay male cast member on the show, Yang represents by peeling back layers of self-censorship and sharing jokes that might have once been considered too niche for the relatively mainstream *SNL* audience — a recent sketch about being worn out and depressed by the pressure of over-partying during Pride, for example, rings more relatable to a wider audience than he would have once thought.

Outside of *SNL*, Yang co-hosts his own podcast *Las Culturistas* (with Matt Rogers), appears in the Comedy Central/HBO Max TV series *Awkwafina Is Nora From Queens* and appears in the recently launched, Alan Cumming-directed podcast *Hot White Heist*, which has an all-star, all-LGBTQ2 cast that also features Abbi Jacobson, Jane Lynch, Margaret Cho and Cynthia Nixon, among others.

This summer, Yang will receive the Breakout Star of the Year award at the annual Just for Laughs Awards show, airing online on July 28. I spoke to Yang about this recognition, embracing his role on *SNL* and the famous sketch that seemed to delight, outrage and confuse Montrealers in equal measures.

**Lorraine Carpenter:** How did the *Bonjour Hi!* sketch come about? I know you lived in Brossard for about seven years when you were a kid, and performed at JFL in 2018, but was there a particular exchange you had with Montrealers that inspired that characterization and that concept?

**Bowen Yang:** It wasn't a particular exchange, necessarily. One of my best friends who just finished a six-year tenure at *SNL* as a supervising writer is Sudi Green — I came up with her in New York comedy, and she had been a new face at Just for Laughs in 2015 and she had family in Montreal as well — we were in L.A. during the lockdown last year and we were batting ideas around. She had thought of what was initially going to be a talk show, and the host, played by me, would be someone who kind of embodies the way that French Canadians can pivot so quickly from being so jovial and friendly and welcoming to deep, deep visceral anger at the slightest perturbation. That is so comedically rich to me, and to Sudi.

That was a seed of the idea, which eventually became a news show, but it was obviously informed by growing up there and having teachers in public schools be so kind and nice and nurturing and then if someone spoke out of turn in third grade, you have the teacher immediately (yells in indecipherable angry French). It's so burned into my memory in such a wonderful way that it's, like, only in Montreal, only in Brossard, only in Quebec do you get that kind of person.



Bowen Yang

Mary Ellen Matthews

**LC:** So many Montrealers were shocked that that sketch existed because it seems so inside-joke, with the phrase “bonjour-hi” being borderline triggering to some people here. I'm surprised it wasn't considered too niche.

**BY:** I feel like the title of the sketch sort of clues in a knowing audience that knows what the controversy itself is or who knows what Québécois identity is, who knows that it's just going to be a completely farcical take on what the culture is in a way that is hopefully not offensive.

One neat thing about *SNL* is that it's a very bottom-up approach to writing and to getting things on the show. It's not a top-down thing where producers are mandating a certain kind of tone. I've never been explicitly told, “This is too niche,” or “People won't understand this.” If anything I need to deprogram myself because I'm the one who self-censors and edits. Sketches like the iceberg on Weekend Update, during the entire creative process around that, I told myself, “People aren't going to get this! How do I make this understood?” And then by the end I'm surprised that people appreciate it for what it is. You really can't underestimate your audience.

**LC:** When you were growing up and coming up in comedy, did you consciously feel under-represented in terms of LGBT comedy icons and peers, or were there enough comics and actors out there to fill that space that's so much more rich now?

**BY:** I never considered that there was a dearth of people who didn't reflect me back to myself. In hindsight, I'm always like, “Oh wow, I appreciate the fact that there was someone like Margaret Cho.” I honestly think I've been the beneficiary of timing and cultural changes and circumstances that led me here. I spoke to Lorne (Michaels, *SNL* producer) after the finale of the season and I forget how we got to talking about this but he said that the worst thing you can do as a performer is to be convinced that we are God's gift to comedy or film or television or whatever lane we're in, and that ultimately what we do on the show, how we end up on the show, has to do with luck — the right place at the right time. It's been a very grounding humbling thing to consider. I always try to get back to that truth about how the industry works, and I don't think someone like me would have been

on the show however many years ago, so it feels fortuitous that I was able to carve out some space for myself. Hopefully now that will start to be more common, where it becomes an inevitability to have a queer Asian person succeed on *SNL*, or on any television show.

**LC:** To get back to *Bonjour Hi!* for a minute, do you think there's a chance we may see a sequel to that sketch?

**BY:** I can tell you that we tried to remount it with Dan Levy. It was like, “Oh, this is perfect!” We had this Canadian comedian coming to the show and he can do a great Québécois accent. It was so fun to write, but on the topic of niche-ness, because we swung big with the first iteration, in the second iteration we talked about my character getting engaged to Bonhomme Carnaval, and we showed pictures of Bonhomme and nobody really got it. This was at the table read on Wednesday — it's the first testing environment for what sketches will work — and it didn't quite work. But I am determined to bring it back, because that hybrid of European and American sensibilities that I saw growing up watching Just for Laughs street performances, that is something that doesn't really live in any other container at *SNL* but on a show like *Bonjour Hi!* I hope it doesn't stir up as much heated, spirited conversation next time, but I want to bring it back — I really do, Lorraine.

**LC:** How do you feel about getting the Breakout Star of the Year award from Just for Laughs?

**BY:** It feels almost undue. It's like, oh gosh, do I deserve to be in the same league as people who received it before? It's a huge honour and I feel very favoured and blessed and all those words. To be recognized by this festival, there is an emotion to it for me that's extremely personal. The beautiful thing about the festival is that it is for everybody. It's for everyone in the industry, but I always saw it as a festival that was for the people of Montreal. Seeing the Just for Laughs street performers as a child was probably one of those formative things for me growing up, to start to solidify an appreciation for comedy. On a cultural level, to see everyone come together and gather and appreciate comedy in this way, I feel that probably changed the course of my life. Not to be too dramatic, but I do believe that to be true.



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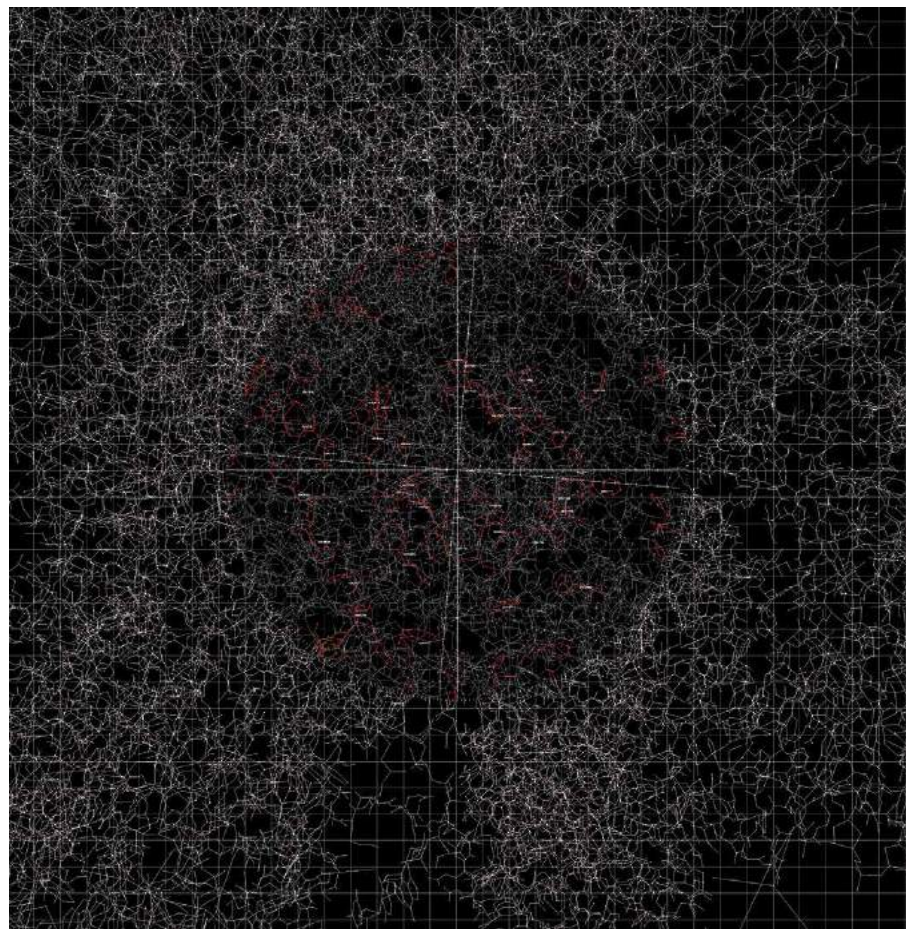
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# Up in the stars



William Arcand



BY SAVANNAH STEWART

Only a very small handful of people around the world will ever have the chance to board the International Space Station. But in a groundbreaking virtual reality exhibition coming soon to Montreal, the first exhibition ever to feature VR content filmed in space, viewers will get to witness breathtaking footage from aboard the space station as if they were there themselves.

*The Infinite* is a 60-minute VR experience that will be making its world debut at l'Arsenal Contemporary Art in Montreal from July 21 to Nov. 7. A joint venture created by Felix & Paul Studios and PHI Studio, two Montreal-based companies at the forefront of immersive entertainment and storytelling, the exhibit integrates a free-roaming VR experience aboard the ISS into a highly sensory journey into space and back.

"It's the most ambitious VR project that has been realized so far," says Julie Tremblay of PHI Studio, producer of *The Infinite*. "We talk about it as an exhibit but really, it's an experience. It's really a narrative that you're going to follow through."

This narrative will begin right at the onboarding, with a sound and light installation simulating blastoff into space. Then, with VR headsets on, the free roaming exploration of the ISS begins. In a room constructed to scale with the real structure in space, viewers will be able to watch exclusive content of astronauts going about their daily lives, not to mention taking in some stunning sights of planet Earth as seen from the ISS.

"The content filmed by Felix & Paul Studios, some of it is very scientific, but some of it is also very poetic," explains Annabelle Fiset, the creative director of the project. "At one point, for example, two astronauts are playing with a

football, and us as spectators, we're in the middle and we see the ball floating by us. That moment is really fun."

The content was filmed in collaboration with NASA, TIME Studios and the ISS National Lab with a special camera that is currently still aboard the ISS. Félix Lajeunesse of Felix & Paul Studios controls the camera and directs the astronauts from Earth, continuing to produce content with the goal of creating more exhibitions like this in the future.

After the free-roaming experience, viewers progress into a room featuring immersive artwork by Japanese visual artist Ryoji Ikeda, commissioned specifically for the exhibition. In a black room, Ikeda's piece, titled "The Universe Within the Universe," will be displayed on a massive screen on the ceiling, reflected in the mirrored floor, evoking a feeling of weightlessness.

"The feeling when you're there, there's a sensation of vertigo because of the mirror and you feel like you're in space. So you really feel like, 'Okay, am I going down there?'" Tremblay laughs. "It's amazing."

"He is really the perfect artist to be a part of this project," Fiset says. "He works a lot with data, so his process is very scientific, but creating art that is very impactful and contemporary."

Fiset explains that this portion of the experience featuring Ikeda's work is meant to symbolize travel through a black hole.

The experience culminates with a return to Earth through a "wormhole," and a reawakening of the senses in a room representing the natural features of our home planet.

"It's like a return to Earth but with a vision changed forever about it. What will be [our view of] this world after all that traveling in space? It's about nature, a return to Earth but specifically to the natural world," says Fiset.

Overall, the exhibition promises to be a never-before-seen glimpse into the highly scientific, highly technical structure that is the ISS, but contrasted with deeply metaphorical and poetic immersive experiences that provide a meditation on

space travel, humanity's fascination with the universe, and what the experience of voyaging among the stars can teach us about how we treat our home, Earth.

"For us, it was really important to distinguish ourselves from museum experiences that are more scientific," says Tremblay. "We wanted to avoid that because there are places that do that really well. At PHI, we have always been more aligned with the arts, so we really wanted to be at the meeting place between arts and science."

Like all VR experiences, the exhibition includes a disclaimer that it can cause discomfort for people who experience seizures or light sensitivity, who have heart problems or who experience claustrophobia. That said, Tremblay says they worked hard to keep the experience accessible, including for people in wheelchairs or who are hard of hearing.

"We worked hard and really made sure to work on the user experience to make it comfortable for everybody," says Fiset.

Tremblay estimates that in these last few weeks leading up to the opening, some 200 people including their suppliers are involved in getting everything ready. The internal team that has been working on this project, which began in 2019, included around 70 people from all different fields.

"We have people coming from architecture, we have people coming from theatre, from video games, exhibition, some people that are specialized in entertainment, we have technology specialists, video designers," Tremblay says, noting that the bulk of the work to put this exhibition together happened virtually, during the pandemic. "It's something we're pretty proud of, to come up with a project like this that's been created during this time."

After the showing in Montreal, *The Infinite* will be put up in Houston, Texas, before travelling around North America and Europe over the next five years.

→ *The Infinite* is on at l'Arsenal Contemporary Art (2020 William) from July 21 to Nov. 7. For more details and to buy tickets, please visit the PHI Centre website, [phi.ca](http://phi.ca)

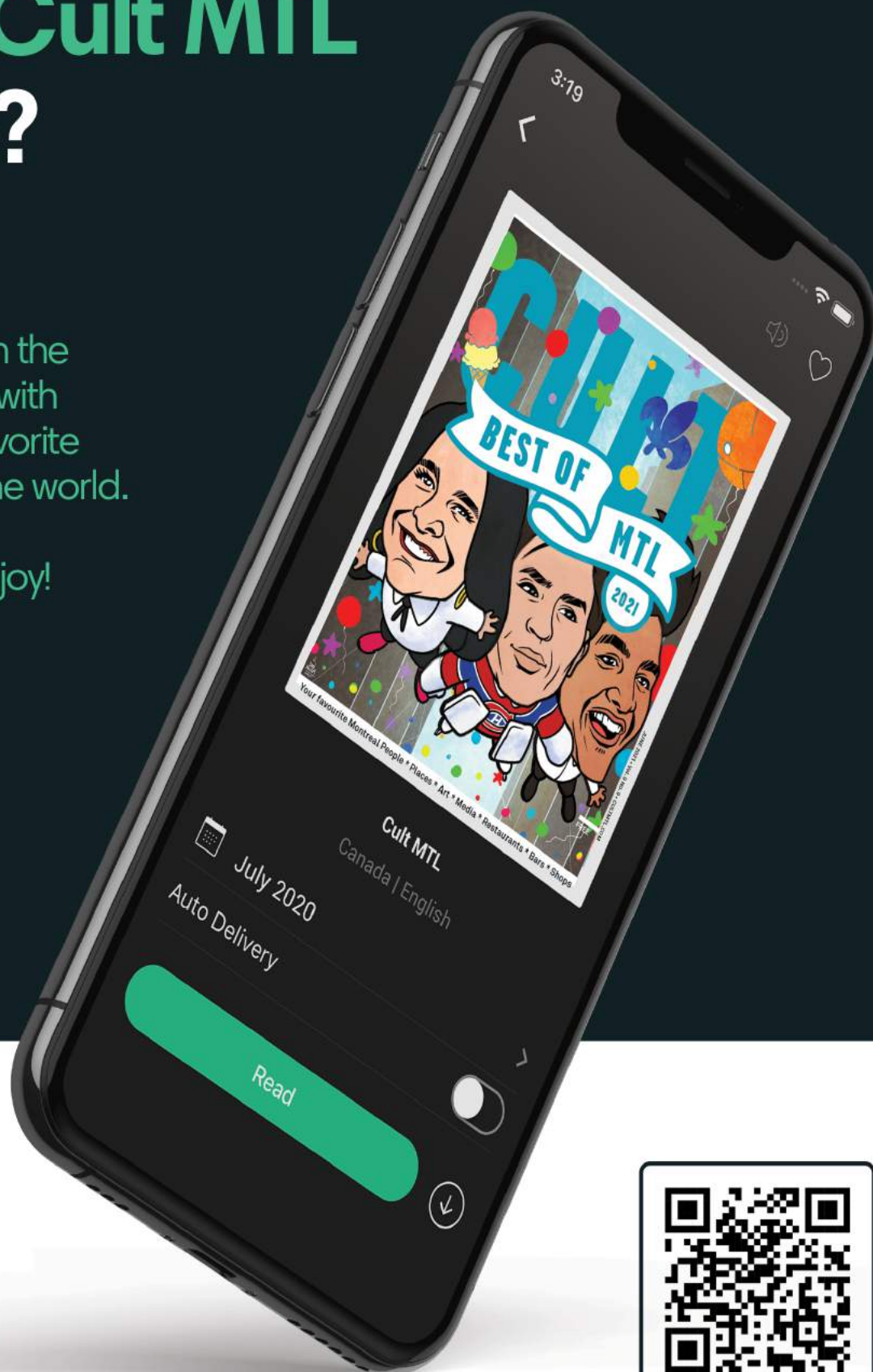




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## Mind out of time



BY RYAN DIDUCK

Island People, "Loneliness Has a Purpose," // (Raster)

When I think about how all of this began, it's like that scene in some classic disaster movie, just before whatever happens, happens: a sunny spring day, kids playing in the park, laughter on the soundtrack, in the distance a dog barks, all of them oblivious to impending calamity. Cut to 15 months later. Disaster struck. And yet, everywhere you look, people are already dipping their toes back into what we once called "normalcy" — getting a fresh haircut; eating in a restaurant; sharing a joint with a double-vaxxed friend; getting arrested after a hockey game.

Two thoughts strike me: 1) Isn't this all happening just a little too fast? Ahead of schedule in some instances? One must always be wary whenever a crisis is averted ahead of schedule. And 2) Are haircuts and hockey riots really the be-all-end-all of normalcy? Wasn't there something more to all of this? Is it simply the act of doing that's important, of going through the motions, or is there some greater fulfillment at stake? What we have forever lost is the ability to be oblivious, to *not* anticipate the next calamity, to be content under Kodachrome skies.

Nene H, "We Wait," *Ali* (Incienso)

Navigating reality is constantly complicated by temporal pressures. We are prompted to act and react quickly in contemporary life, both by technology and biology, and often against our better interests. Time itself propels us exponentially faster into an increasingly uncertain future. But anyone who knows the fable of the tortoise and the hare knows that slow-and-steady wins the race.

I'm a proponent of deliberation to the point of procrastination. And there is evidence to support the social value of delay. In his 2012 book *Wait: The Art and Science of Delay*, author Frank Partnoy writes: "The best professionals understand how long they have available to make a decision, and then, given that time frame, they wait as long as they possibly can." Like with filing this column, for example, a lot of the best music and ideas tend to come in just under the wire.

Shackleton, "Something Tells Me / Pour Out Like Water," *Departing Like Rivers* (Woe to the Septic Heart!)

An update on my post-pandemic hair: the last time I submitted a report, we were sitting at Neil Diamond on the *Hot August Night* album cover. Since then, it's only gotten wilder, morphing from Christian Slater-in-*Heathers* to Dennis Miller's late-era *Saturday Night Live* Weekend Update do. For a moment in mid-February, I looked like the consummate caricature of a yuppie in 1991. But the mane kept growing. By April I was sporting the difficult to replicate Christopher Walken-on-hiatus look. It especially worked if I slept on it and didn't shower for a few days. And at this moment, I am dangerously close to the obscure coif known only to aficionados as the Kevin Corrigan-in-*Illtown*. I look like a B-movie actor from a film no one has seen. Although Kevin Corrigan in my opinion



Alex Van Pelt

Louise Deenos

is highly underrated as an artist. His appearance in *Trees Lounge* with Michael Imperioli made me think he should have been a character on *The Sopranos*.

Ann Margaret Hogan & Karl O'Connor, "Temporary Thing," *Let the Night Return* (Downwards)

I feel sorry for Conan O'Brien. After an already enviable career as a comedy writer, he inherited David Letterman's NBC show, *Late Night*, when Letterman moved to CBS. And having made it even crazier and more successful than ever, O'Brien was first in line to take over from Jay Leno after Leno quit *The Tonight Show*. But things didn't go as planned. Leno didn't quit, and O'Brien was Plutoed down to Jane Fonda's ex-husband's little nickel-and-dime network. I seem to recall he was doing some internet thing for a while. During his tenure, Conan was the funniest, quirkiest nighttime chat show host, and was rewarded for his efforts with diminishing returns.

Now that O'Brien has graduated to HBO Max, it feels like late night television as we once knew it is done. I am old enough to recollect not liking Johnny Carson. I remember when Letterman and Leno were jockeying for Carson's gig. (Too bad it didn't go to Garry Shandling, although Larry

Sanders was a far better outlet for Shandling's brand.) I can't stand the Jimmys. Colbert was better as Colbert. And Corden is a clown. In all the vying for the afterhours viewer, these hosts have forgotten the most important aspect of helming a talk show: the art of conversation.

Alex Van Pelt, "Broken Heart," *Global Crush* (Kidderminster Records)

There are some wounds that time doesn't heal. In fact, time creates many more problems than it solves. If something is broken — a heart, for example — time only extends its brokenness. Broken things take significant time to fix, and even if and when you do fix them, there is no guarantee that time won't come along before much time and fuck up your shit again. Time ain't no doctor, and it's very difficult to doctor time.

Time doesn't take sides, but whatever side you're on, it's not on time. Time and tide wait for no man. Not women either. Whatever your pronouns, time doesn't identify with you. There are so many time-sensitive clichés that it would take a lifetime to retell them all. There would scarcely be time enough to talk about all the times that time obeyed the clock but not the heart. What time does instead is it marches on. All in due time.



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