



APRIL 2022 • Vol. 10 No. 7 • CULTMTL.COM

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CLAUDE MCKENZIE

THE LEGENDARY ARTIST IS BACK





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table of contents



“Montreal indie pop artist Maryze is launching her first album 8 after making a name for herself in the local music scene and beyond.

Photo by Mansoor

city	6
Fran Lebowitz	6
Processed food	7
Bicycle Bob	8
:1st half	10
:mtl courtside	12
:best buds	16
 food & drink	 18
Vin Papillon	18
 music	 22
Maryze	22
Li'l Andy	24
alt-J	26
:hammer of the mods	28
 film	 30
<i>Everything Everywhere All at Once</i>	30
On Screen	32
 arts	 34
Martha Wainwright	34
FTA	34
:play recent	38

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Cult MTL is published by Cult MTL Media Inc. and printed by Imprimerie Mirabel. Entire contents are © Cult MTL Media Inc.

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city

Living for the city

BY LORRAINE CARPENTER

Fran Lebowitz is an author, though she hasn't been published in decades.

She's attributed her writer's block to a paralyzing reverence for the written word, so she's become renowned for the spoken word, too. In 2010, Martin Scorsese made an HBO documentary about Lebowitz, a longtime friend, called *Public Speaking*. This small-screen collaboration was followed up in 2021 with the Netflix series *Pretend It's a City*, a seven-episode opportunity for the New Jersey-born Lebowitz to opine on the city she's chosen to live in for over 40 years. She pulls no punches in her criticism of the people who live in (and especially the tourists who occupy) New York City, even as her love of the place is made clear.

In the last week of March, *Cult MTL* connected with Lebowitz ahead of a planned appearance in Montreal on May 6. (For our conversation about Will Smith, Chris Rock and the Oscars, please visit cultmtl.com.)

Lorraine Carpenter: How long does it take you to form an opinion of a city?

Fran Lebowitz: One second.

LC: Okay.

FL: ...no, I mean it takes me one second, because I make snap judgements, and it doesn't matter if I'm wrong because I'm leaving the next day.

I've been on the road for several months, and I've been in dozens of American cities, but I just came back from 10 or 12 days in Europe and the biggest difference I noticed between American cities and European cities is that Europe, it seems to me, is completely open. In the United States, for some reason that I still don't understand, employers actually asked their employees if they felt like going back to work, so of course, naturally, people said, "No, we don't." In Europe, it appears as though they just told them to go back to work, so they went back to work.

If people do not go to work, what is a city? All these other cities are packed with people, everything is open, there's actual life because they went to work. In this country, including New York and San Francisco, and all the places I've been that are actually cities, they're pretty much murdered. You look outside and there's no one in the street, and there's no one in the street because no one has to be in the street.

I don't think it ever occurred to anyone, no matter how much you may think you've thought about cities, what would happen if no one ever went to work again. I do actually believe that the people who are now not going to work are living on the residual of people who went to work, including themselves, but eventually this will run out.

LC: What's your previous experience with Montreal?

FL: I've been to Montreal maybe four or five times. It's a city I really, really like, but at one point, and this was many years ago, I was supposed to speak at a bookstore in Montreal and I was prohibited from doing so because you had to speak French in that bookstore. Like most of my fellow Americans, I'm unilingual. I know that they were having, for many years, a war about French and English there. I don't know if this war



Fran Lebowitz

Brigitte Lacombe

continues but I know that when I go to Montreal, I'm going to be speaking English because I don't speak anything else. I'd hate to get in the middle of other people's civil wars, because we have our own here.

LC: I've read that you don't own a smartphone or computer.

FL: I have no modern devices. I don't have a phone, I don't have a computer, I don't have a microwave oven. I have a landline, which we're speaking on — which is why you can hear me. This really angers other people. People say to me all the time "I can't reach you!" and I think, "Who am I that I have to be reached 24 hours a day?" Am I an emergency brain surgeon? Frankly, I'm not that essential. There's many things I don't have that other people have. I also don't have a pair of skis, I don't have any children, I don't have any dogs. These are just personal preferences, they're not big political statements.

LC: How about your TV consumption? You mentioned the division in your country, and I was wondering whether you watch the news all the time?

FL: During the five years of Donald Trump — because I include the year of the campaign, which was unbearable enough — I became one of these people who, every time I walked into my apartment, I put on the news. It was a horrible compulsion shared by many people I know — if you were away from any media for an hour, you would think, "Now what has he done?" And I would come home and put on the news thinking, "Anything could've happened!" Even if it had been only four hours, we could have been at war with Sweden.

The second Trump was out, I stopped doing that. Now that we have a sane President — I'm not saying we have the world's greatest President, but we have a President who is a normal human — I'm not in a constant state of rage, which I was during the Trump administration.

But there's always plenty of news to worry about — of course Ukraine is paramount now. When I was in Europe, it was very important to me to watch the news. I was in the United States for the first week of the war and it took four days for me to get my first question about Ukraine, but in Europe they were completely obsessed with it. Part of the problem with Americans is they don't know where anything is — if it's not down the block from them, they don't care.

LC: A lot of people were unfamiliar with Zelensky before, especially the fact that he was a comedian who played a guy who accidentally became president, and now he's at this level of international crisis in real life. What are your feelings about him?

FL: Well, I was aware of him before this, and obviously it seems much better to have a president who used to be a comedian than a president who was a clown while he was president. Everyone, I believe, shares my view that this guy is unbelievably heroic. The reason he's behaving the way he's behaving is because what really matters is character, and this guy has a sterling character. I'm sure he had the same character when he was a comedian, it just didn't have any reason to manifest itself to the entire world. I would bet that the people who were friends with him before would've said, "Oh yeah, that guy is fantastic." He may not have been a fantastic comedian, I have no idea, but he's certainly a very brave guy. There's a very high chance he won't survive this, and I'm sure he knows that.

This would not be me. In general, the behaviour of what seems like a significant majority of the people of Ukraine is something spectacular in itself. I'd be the first person running away from any kind of conflict like this; I don't have the courage.

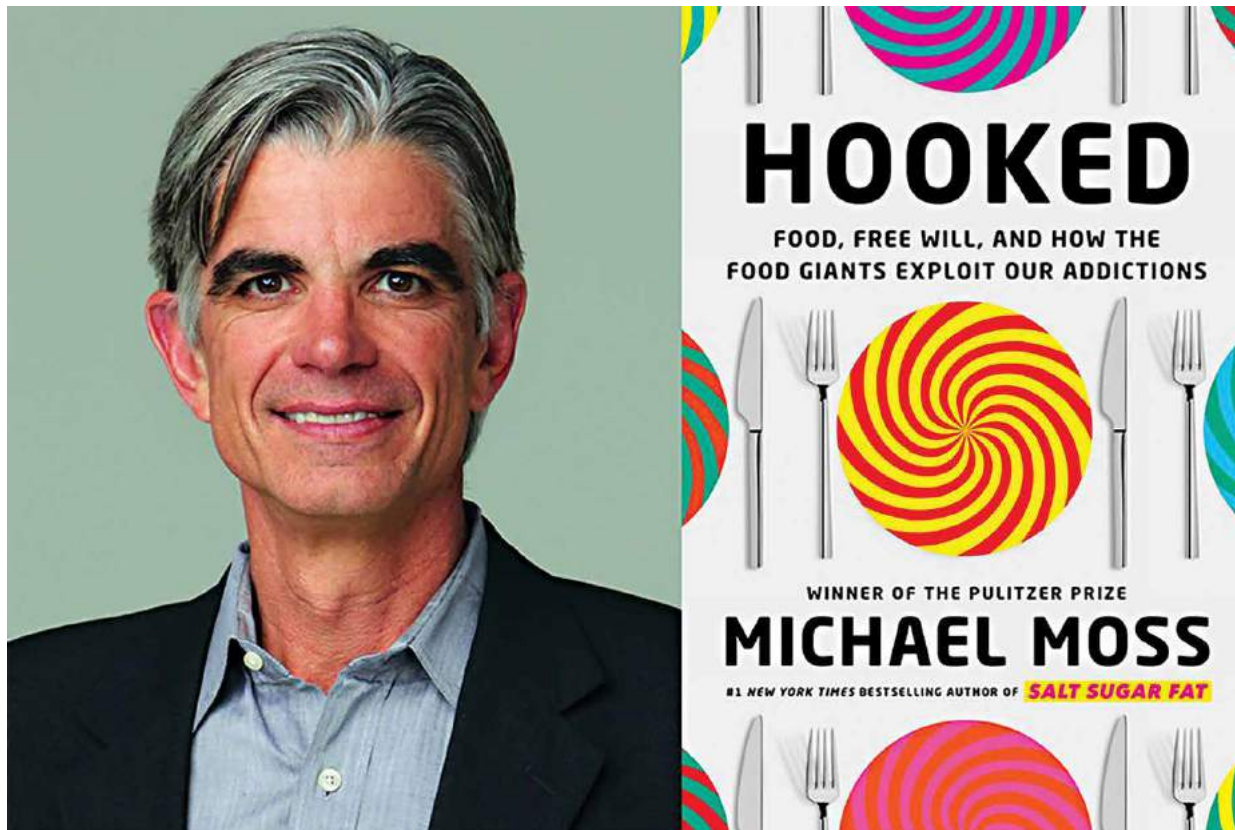
It's also interesting for me to see, in my lifetime — which has been long — the first big refugee situation where the refugees are white. This is the reason for all this compassion. Truthfully, the world is full of refugees and the refugee problem is paramount, as it has been for many years, but I don't remember hearing so many people saying, "Oh, it's so horrible! What's going to happen to the Syrian refugees?" or "Oh, it's so horrible! What's going to happen to the refugees from Africa?" Being a refugee is the same, it doesn't matter where you're from, and no one is extending all this help (to refugees of colour). I believe, of course, that we should extend this help to Ukraine — we should extend help to all refugees. It's outrageous to me that they've made this distinction, but it's very clear. You'd have to be, really, almost dead not to notice this.

→ Fran Lebowitz will speak at Eglise St-Jean Baptiste (4237 Henri-Julien) on Friday, May 6, 8 p.m., \$55–\$71.50

WITH JULY TALK



Process of elimination



BY STEPHANE BANFI

If one of your resolutions for 2022 is to make better food choices, yet every time you try to have “just one” handful of Doritos, you end up plowing through the entire bag in less than a minute, your fingernails caked in orange Dorito-dust and your stomach tied in shameful knots, well, you might be pleased to hear that you’re not alone.

But more importantly, you may not even be entirely responsible for your compulsive behaviour and appetite for junk food.

In his latest book *Hooked: Food, Free Will, and How the Food Giants Exploit Our Addictions*, author and *New York Times* investigative reporter Michael Moss spent the last five years “crawling through the underbelly of the food industry” as he likes to say, reporting on their insider tactics and strategies to design the most attractive products possible.

The result is both fascinating and terrifying, and if Moss harboured any doubts before starting work on the book as to just how addictive chips, snacks, soda drinks or other ultra-processed and convenience foods could be, he no longer has any second thoughts as to their perilous appeal.

“I came full circle,” he admits. “I started off the research for *Hooked* thinking it was ridiculous to compare processed food to drugs, I mean Twinkies like heroin? Come on. Ultimately, we are the ones deciding what to buy and how much to eat, right? But after *Hooked*, I completely turned around, absolutely convinced that in some ways, their products are even more powerful than cigarettes, alcohol and heroin in the way that they use our own biology against us to destroy free will and our ability to make good decisions.”

A glance at worldwide trends not only confirms Moss’s findings, but also reveals a far more disturbing picture. With processed food sales reaching an estimated \$2-trillion on the planet in 2015, the World Health Organization reminds us that worldwide obesity has nearly tripled since 1975, and

that most of the world’s population now live in countries where obesity kills more people than being underweight.

In 2016, ultra-processed food and drinks sales in Canada were estimated at a whopping 275 kg per person, the fourth-highest among 80 countries. In fact, ultra-processed foods and drinks account for nearly half of the total daily calories consumed by Canadian adults, according to a 2019 study by Heart and Stroke and l’Université de Montréal. The study also upheld the classic “garbage in, garbage out” theory by measuring junk food’s direct impact on our health: Canadian adults who ate and drank the highest amounts of ultra-processed foods had 31% higher odds of obesity, 37% higher odds of diabetes and 60% higher odds of high blood pressure.

And Quebec isn’t spared by the epidemic, with nearly 4 million Quebecers currently overweight or obese, an all-time high.

So how did we collectively get so fat, so fast? We sat down with Mr. Moss for some answers.

Stephane Banfi: What was your relationship with the food industry while you were working on this book?

Michael Moss: I think that generally, they wished I hadn’t been born, right? But at the end of the day, they felt the reporting was tough but fair. Because I spent the time needed to really understand how they work and do things. I like to think the book reads like a detective story, I’m not preaching I’m just getting inside the companies and explaining through their own documents and interviews, with their own people, how they do it.

SB: What is it that these companies do so well that makes their food so addictive?

MM: Part of it is the way they engineer ingredients to make their products incredibly seductive and powerful. Some of it is those basic ingredients — salt, sugar, fat especially — and part of it is marketing, because they are really good at finding and hitting those emotional buttons that we have that cause us to eat when we are not even hungry. And thirdly, they found these ways to exploit our basic nature, things that draw us to food, that they are able to exploit, capitalize on and then turn against us in a way that is not good for our health. It’s those three elements that

cause their products to be, I would argue, as addictive as other things we think of as being addictive like cigarettes, alcohol and even some narcotics. Also, they know that our memory of food is so powerful, especially for children. When we eat something for the first time and it tastes good, we’ll associate it with the other emotional aspects of the moment. Coca-Cola and Pepsi worked so hard to get into baseball stadiums knowing that if they can get a soda in the hands of kids when they are with their parents in this beautiful moment of being at the ball game, that soda will forevermore be associated with that emotional feeling.

SB: In many ways, as you also mention in your book, our bodies are just not ready for this type of food.

MM: I thought (psychologist and neuroscientist) Dana Small who was trained in Montreal said it really well when she mentioned that it’s not so much that we are addicted to food — of course food is addictive, or else we wouldn’t eat and we’d starve. It’s that the nature of our food has been changed so dramatically by these companies that our genetic ability to deal with food has had no time to catch up with it. That was probably the best enlightening quote perspective of the entire book, in that regard.

SB: Can we even call it food at this point?

MM: I think it’s perfectly reasonable to stop calling these things food. One of the most powerful aspects of these products is the speed with which they are able to hit the brain because that is the hallmark of addictive substances: the faster they can hit the brain, the more apt we are to be seduced by them and lose control. I’ve started calling these products “fast groceries,” like fast food.

SB: Is it best to just avoid these products?

MM: It depends on where one is on the spectrum of dependency and over-dependency on convenience foods. Some people clearly can’t eat just a couple of Oreo cookies or a frozen pizza once a month. For them, if they are eating these things compulsively, or overeating, probably the solution is to try to avoid any contact at all. And I’ve met people like that, it’s incredible. I met people who cannot touch a grain of sugar without losing control. For them, shopping is like going into a minefield because there is sugar all over the grocery store, in products. It’s really difficult.

SB: There’s a very revealing anecdote in the book about the industry’s attempts to make healthier products. When a new Pepsi executive is brought in to develop a healthier line of products, the outgoing president empties a bag of Doritos on the table and reminds him that “You have to accept that profitability will come from these for a while.”

MM: Even after 10 years of crawling through the underbelly of this industry, I still hesitate to think of them as this evil empire that intentionally set out to make us clinically obese or diabetic, and all sick on their products. These are companies doing what most companies want to do, which is to make as much money as possible by selling as many products as possible by making their products as attractive as possible. But I think it’s also useful to ask the question if they could play a meaningful role going forward. If they could sell really good food and make money, they would! And I think they would be happier. But again it comes down to their deep reliance on selling food that’s really cheap and really convenient, and now being sort of stuck in that mode where they’ve gotten us hooked on convenience and it’s really hard to change significantly in that regard.

SB: But they are also incredibly proactive when it comes to protecting their interests. As you mention in your book, when a judge threw out a 2003 lawsuit against McDonald’s that was accusing the company of causing obesity, the industry immediately lobbied different states to pass the Commonsense Consumption Act that would make any similar litigation illegal in the future.

MM: In that case, their perspective was that it’s our fault that we eat too much of their products, not their products or their fault. And I think some of them perhaps still think that, so they would also think it’s totally unfair for us to sue them for getting us hooked on their products.

SB: Do you see a net correlation, in your opinion, between rampant obesity and the food industry?

MM: Oh totally, I think they are absolutely wrong, it's not our fault, it's totally their fault. In the way that they have maximized the allure of their products that exploited our own biology. These things are designed in a way that shuts down our ability to say no, to have free will in our decision-making. So many people can't eat just a handful of chips, they eat the whole bag or Oreo cookies. So many people structure their lives, thinking they have to eat TV dinners and fast groceries, and don't have time to cook and eat. And that's the doing of these companies, more than it is on our part.

SB: We have seen some countries, like Mexico or Chile, imposing warning labels on the front of certain products to help consumers make better food choices. Do you think this can happen here?

The only danger is that these companies are really good at designing a product that might give them a green light on the front of the label but it's still not real food and it's still maybe not really good for you in any conceivable way. So I think that kind of government intervention is a game that they can play to their advantage.

SB: With the obesity epidemic on the rise though, won't governments be forced to step in at some point?

MM: I don't see that happening yet. Look at the Obama administration. You had Michelle Obama making food a priority and starting this public conversation on how dependent we've become on highly processed food and convenience foods. She was working really hard, and even with that, she wasn't successful in causing real, meaningful change in the food industry. Partly because the companies are so powerful and have so many jobs, and President Obama was facing a dire financial situation when he came into office. So all the companies would have had to do is say "Look, you're going to lose 10,000 jobs or 100,000 jobs by doing this." No, I think it has to come from the bottom up, through education, us demanding real change that's translated into purchase decisions, because the companies

then will change. If they come under pressure in the grocery stores in terms of sales, that will be incredibly alarming to them and they will change then.

SB: ... Like talking about nutrition in schools.

MM: Oh my God, absolutely! Oh sure! If I was king for a day, every school would have a garden. Not just to feed the kids but to get them excited about things like radishes. And then, every neighbourhood would have a store that would sell radishes that were fresh. Every community would have access to local farms and you would have greenhouses in parts of the country where you can't farm, growing fresh vegetables and fruits which every nutritionist says we should be eating more of. And then the economics of food and agriculture would change, so when you walk in the store, a basket of blueberries wouldn't cost as much as a two-pound, four-meat, three-cheese frozen pizza that's going to feed the whole family. There are ten things that have to happen but it starts with the next generation and teaching them about food, and about their body's relationship to good food and to health. It's really critical.

SB: ...And hospitals?

MM: I think you're starting to see doctors in training learn about nutrition. But it's still pretty new. It's so important to health and long-term health. And it's such a missed opportunity, to help people learn about food when they're in the hospital. Just imagine you're in a hospital, you arrive, they save you in an emergency room, then you're in the ward. Just think if during that time, they could have a nutritionist come in and teach you about the incredible value of food and teach you ways to shop and prepare food that maybe is not that expensive. It's a missed teaching opportunity. But the health system is so stressed by immediate life and death matters that long-term preventive care is more difficult for them.

SB: What is the industry's next move?

MM: You're seeing it already. They're responding to our increasing concern about the ingredients they use. They're moving towards clean labels to eliminate sort of scary-

sounding chemicals and ingredients and try to limit the number of ingredients per product to four or five. They're also responding to us wanting to eat organic food by putting the word "natural" on their label - which is absolutely meaningless. They are cutting back on salt, sugar and fat by manipulating their products, re-engineering them in ways so that they don't need as much of those three ingredients. And with so many people realizing that sugar can be so problematic and wanting to reduce their sugar intake, companies are starting to use artificial, non-caloric sweeteners, not just in drinks but in food products all over the grocery stores and sometimes in combination. So you're seeing puddings, and breads and chips and what have you with non-caloric sweeteners, sometimes natural, sometimes artificial. And that could be a troubling trend, the science is sort of still out on what those non-caloric sweeteners are doing to our brain and gut.

SB: What is your relationship with processed food?

MM: I have two boys, one graduated from college and one is in high school. The key for us has been not to ban junk food from the house but rather to make sure we are talking about it, and understand why it is so powerful and the consequences of eating too much of it. The kids understand that these companies are engineering these foods in a way that causes them to really, really like them, they get it. So rather than say no, we have been more about finding ways to control these products rather than letting them control us. I also think that we're lucky that all of us in our family are able to eat a handful of potato chips and put the bag away. And again, many people can't do that. And for them, the solution is just not to let that stuff in the house.

SB: Finally, did anything surprise you in the industry while you were writing this book?

MM: I was really struck by how many of their top executives had switched sides. Not only do they not eat their own products, but they've come to see the light, and they realize they went too far. We became too dependent and the health issues caused by their products are so severe that they've quit the processed food industry and are working for real food companies, trying to help them.



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Pedal and people power

BY TAYLOR C. NOAKES

If you enjoy biking around Montreal — and, statistically speaking, that's likely a substantial number of Cult MTL readers — take a moment to give thanks to Robert “Bicycle Bob” Silverman, who passed away in February. Without Silverman, Montreal quite simply wouldn't be the cycling mecca it has become in recent decades.

I write this cognizant of the fact that many of Cult MTL's readers may not even be remotely aware that there was a time, not so long ago, when this city had essentially no cycling infrastructure whatsoever and the powers that be were doing essentially everything they could to develop and enforce a city that was entirely dominated by the automobile. This is no exaggeration: 50 to 60 years ago, the city of Montreal was busy ripping up the trees that lined so many of our city streets to make room for parking. Small city parks and playgrounds were destroyed and paved over to make parking lots while highway-style interchanges were constructed where housing once stood. Buildings, some well over 100 years old, were torn down on either side of René-Lévesque to make an urban boulevard, while new highways were built in every direction, facilitating a massive population transfer that emptied the city of most of its residents — something we've only just begun to recover from.

It wasn't just that so much of our urban environment was handed over to the exclusive use of the automobile that it quite literally made the city an unpleasant place to live, the city of Montreal was actively trying to prevent people from biking in the few places that were safe and pleasant to bike. Cycling had been technically illegal in city parks since 1874 but the police would occasionally be called upon to enforce the ancient bylaw. A 1973 *Montreal Star* article relates that the Fuzz set a trap up on Mount Royal to catch the cyclists who made good use of the Olmsted Trail, which then, like now, private cars were not permitted to use. The police ordered everyone off the trail, including the children who rightfully pointed out that the park was probably the only safe place in the city to ride a bike.

Astoundingly, back then you could drive your car into the Botanical Gardens — people were encouraged to do so — while cyclists were banned from both the Botanical Gardens and Île-Ste-Hélène. A city parks spokesperson from the time informed the *Star* journalist that bike paths would never be permitted in any of Montreal's parks, as there was nothing more dangerous to pedestrians than a cyclist. Cars, he related, were far easier to control and, by extension, safer for the public at large.

Fifty years ago is a long time for someone in their 20s, but in the grander scale of recent history, or the history of North American cities, it may as well have been yesterday. My experience of Montreal has generally been one in which cycling has been encouraged and cycling infrastructure has gradually increased and improved over time. I recall bike safety lessons at my elementary school and the summer a bike lane was painted along the north side of Pierrefonds Boulevard (replaced a few years later by a completely grade-separated bike path located on the outside of the sidewalk), so I always found the antipathy, if not overt hostility towards cyclists in much of the city's populist media to be something out of left field. Articles like the one I just read in the *Star*, and the life experience of Bicycle Bob Silverman, remind me that cycling in an urban context is still really quite new for an awful lot of people.

It took Silverman a while to find his life's calling. His politics were way too left wing to live a 'normal life' in the superficially liberal but generally conservative world of Montreal's anglophone community. As Marion Scott relates in her recent, and excellent, obituary of the man, Silverman attempted to run a bookstore, but as an avowed Trotskyist discovered, he wasn't adept at capitalism. He tried his hand



living in Cuba in those heady days right after the revolution, and found himself picking sugar cane with Che Guevara, only to then discover the Cubans weren't too keen on him importing anti-Soviet literature. He lived on a Kibbutz but discovered his concern for the wellbeing of the Palestinians made him a suboptimal Zionist. He then spent some time in France, learned the language and fell in love with riding his bike. Coming back to Montreal, he was active in the anti-war movement before rededicating himself to the cause of cycling in the mid-1970s.

It's difficult to imagine but Montreal was very much behind the times in the mid-1970s on the matter of cycling in urban areas. The counter-culture of the 1960s and the growing environmentalism movement of the 1970s led to a rebirth of cycling enthusiasm across Europe and, more importantly, North America at the time, seemingly everywhere except Montreal. Even Vélo Québec at the time was more interested in advocating for cycling as a sport or recreational activity than as a means of active transport in an urban environment. In the mid-1970s, Montreal had no bike lanes or bike paths to speak of, nor any bike stands. In addition to facing the possibility of fines lest they trespass in a city park, cyclists were also banned from using the metro and local commuter trains, and there was no way to bike to the South Shore as bikes weren't permitted on any of the bridges. It wasn't unheard of that a motorist might try to deliberately run a cyclist off the road, and Quebec's cyclist death and injury rates led the country. In the same 1973 *Montreal Star* article mentioned above, journalist Susan Pomerantz related that Ottawa — the city that fun forgot — was head and shoulders above Montreal in terms of developing safe bike paths and promoting cycling as a healthy alternative to the car.

Silverman thus had two jobs to accomplish: first, to make cycling seem like a normal activity in an urban context, and second, to encourage the city to develop the infrastructure necessary to support a progressive growth in the number of cyclists using cycling as their primary means of conveyance. Either of these tasks, individually, were uphill battles. Doing both simultaneously was Silverman's life work.

It helped that there were already a number of cycling enthusiasts and that they were beginning to organize in the mid-1970s, but what really kicked the pro-bike lobby into high-gear was Silverman's chance discovery of likeminded people on the other side of the linguistic divide. Silverman and his friends were mostly middle-aged anglophone leftists from the Lower Main, while francophone cycling enthusiasts tended to be younger and more explicitly

sovereignist in their political orientation. But as with all great things about this city, they found a common cause and put their differences aside to accomplish it.

It wasn't long after that Silverman wound up working with Claire Morissette, a fellow 'Velorutionary' and every bit Silverman's equal. The two were co-founders of le Monde à Bicyclette and shared the desire to have an east-west separated bike lane to cross through the downtown core. It would open in 2008, a year after Morissette succumbed to cancer, and was named in her honour. Silverman and Morissette wound up splitting the city between them, with each speaking to their respective linguistic clan, a two-pronged approach to get Montrealers of all tongues to realize the bike had just as much a right to be a part of our city's transit cocktail as the car. Silverman was the ideas guy who came up with innovative ways to get the word out about all the unnecessary barriers and all the ridiculous and arbitrary rules that impeded the development of cycling in Montreal. To protest the lack of a bike lane to the South Shore, he dressed up as Moses to 'part the seas' of the Saint Lawrence River (a bike lane was added to the Victoria Bridge in 1990). To bring attention to the fact that bikes weren't allowed on the metro, Silverman and other biketivists brought all the outsized items that were permissible on the metro, from telescoping ladders to skis and even life-size cardboard hippopotamuses (bikes are now allowed in the front cars during off peak hours). Perhaps the most effective (and hated) 'cycledrama' Silverman came up with was attaching poles and cardboard to his bike, roughly occupying the same dimensions and volume as a sedan, and biking around the city in it to demonstrate the ridiculous amount of space cars took up, even though most were transporting no more than one person at a time.

Silverman remained active in promoting his cause well into the 1990s and early 2000s, at which point he had little choice but to slow down. Fortunately, his years of dedicated advocacy seems to have paid off in a big way, and certainly encouraged a lot of Montrealers to rethink our commitment to the car. It's unfortunate that he never really got to enjoy the bike-positive city we live in today, where cyclists are steadily winning the war against the car and not only living better lives, but providing a better quality of life for all of us. Silverman helped prove that a lifetime of activism, an open and progressive spirit and a desire to work with others can lead to some impressive accomplishments. Montreal is a better city now because of his life's work, and it's worth remembering he had neither political connections nor much of any money to speak of. It was all pedal and people power, and it transformed the city in ways the elites could never even dream of. He'll be missed, but never forgotten.



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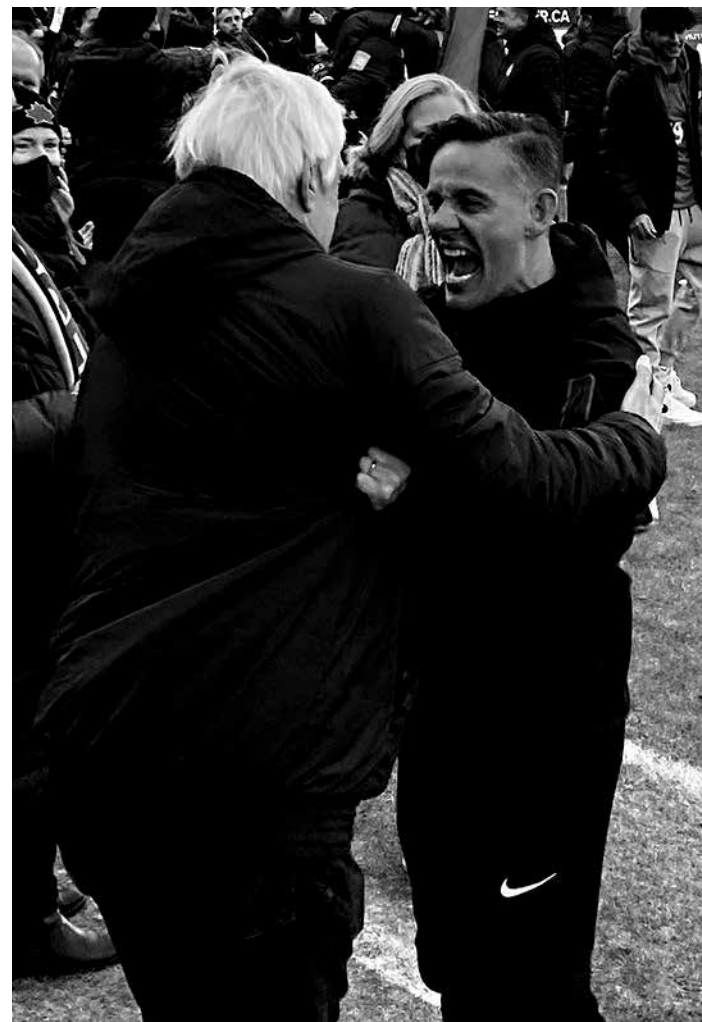
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:the 1st half



BY PAUL DESBAILLETS

Let's just start this article off by saying how lucky we are to be talking about things like football when Eastern Europe is still dealing with such a horrific situation. I'm wishing for dialogue and peace as fast as possible.

It's April, which means Spring and a new season is upon us. March 2022 will forever be known as the month in which Canada qualified for the 2022 World Cup this winter.

One of the most exciting football events that I have experienced was the clinching match that Canadian Men's National Team played in Toronto against Jamaica. It is very hard to explain the vibe: the supporters, the media, the energy and fanfare that was on display that afternoon. Everybody in the stadium felt like they were part of something unique and that we were all on the same journey as this young Canadian team was about to make history.

The last time Canada appeared in the World Cup, it was Mexico 1986, where they finished bottom of the group without scoring a single goal (and I was only nine years old.) Today, Canada finished at the top of their group. They scored beautiful goals, exciting fans

all over the world, while creating new football enthusiasts of all ages in our beautiful country.

April 1 was the World Cup draw for all the teams that have qualified to play in November. Canada will face Belgium, Morocco and Croatia in their group, and to be perfectly honest, I'm confident they'll do well and will make it out of the group. (I'm putting it on paper now so we can reference this when it comes to fruition.)

Mexico and the United States have also qualified for the World Cup, which is good to see considering that, along with Canada, these North American nations will co-host the 2026 World Cup on this side of the globe.

There are still a few teams to be named to World Cup 2022 groups and this is due to the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, so those teams will be determined sometime in June. Stay tuned.

On the European football front, the Premier League season in England kicked off again this past weekend and the race for top four is at an all-time high. One point separates Manchester City and Liverpool in the first and second spots on the table. The two teams will face each other on April 10, which should pretty much determine who will win the league.

But you never know with this crazy game.

The ongoing Chelsea FC saga continues. Russian oligarch Roman Abramovich has had ALL his assets frozen in the U.K., including Chelsea Football Club, which he had just put up for sale before that political move by the U.K. government that

locked him out of everything. The club is on the block for a cool \$3-billion.

Believe it or not, there seems to be many interested parties in purchasing the club. Groups from America, Europe and the Middle East have all come to the table and made their bids and proposals known.

It seems that the vetting process and evaluations of these proposals should be over by mid-April. Only then we'll know who comes out on top. Whoever wins the bid, Abramovich still has to sign off on the deal, even though the government is now involved and controls the assets belonging to him. Abramovich reiterates he simply wants what's best for the club and that money from the sale will go directly to Ukrainians in need.

In North America, mid-March saw Mexican football club Cruz Azul eliminate CF Montreal from its champions league run in the quarterfinals at the Olympic Stadium. Montreal returns to regular season MLS action vs. Cincinnati on April 2 and away again April 9 vs. the New York Redbulls. Montreal's first home game at Saputo Stadium will be April 16 against Vancouver.

The end of March also saw ex-Impact defender Gabriel Gervais named CFM's new club president. During the same press conference where that announcement was made, owner Joey Saputo mentioned that the club's "snowflake branding" from last year will be getting a makeover. The CFM name is here to stay but its logo will be altered again.

That's some month of March if you ask me.

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Kemy Osse

BY MR. WAVVY

The prime of a basketball player is thought to begin in the athlete's late 20s. This puts Parc-Ex-raised, 29-year-old point guard Kemy Osse in the perfect place to lead the Canadian Elite Basketball League's Montreal Alliance into their inaugural season.

The signing, the team's first, was announced in a press conference earlier today at Verdun Auditorium, which will serve as homecourt come May.

"We are extremely excited to announce Kemy as our first official signing in franchise history," said General Manager Joel Anthony. "Kemy's leadership and experience in our league will play a large role for the team, along with his ability to contribute on both sides of the ball."

Osse is no new face in the CEBL. The baller spent his last two seasons with the Saskatchewan Rattlers, averaging 11.8 points, 4.5 rebounds, 2.2 assists.

Kemy serves as a symbol of hope for aspiring hoopers across Montreal. His signing with the Alliance launches a new era of basketball in the city. Now, players need not leave home to have a sustainable career on the court.

We spoke to Kemy Osse at the Alliance's presser event about his role with the team and his ideas about what the future of the sport could look like in Montreal.

Mr. Wavvy: What are your expectations with the first Alliance season?

Kemy Osse: I'm working with General Manager Joel Anthony, I'm working with team President Annie Larouche and Coach Vincent Lavandier. When you work with people like that, your expectations have to be high. The goal is always to win every single game. Every other team feels the same way: We're gonna compete and want to give ourselves a chance to win every single game.

MW: What do you think your role will be in terms of team? You've had a couple years of experience in the league. I'm sure there will be a lot of newcomers that are entering their first year of professional basketball. Do you expect to take a vet leadership role in some sense?

KO: Yes, and doing anything that's required for us to win as a team. It's a team sport. It's not like boxing. So you've got to bring what you do best and what may be missing to the team.

Once we have the whole team together, I think you've just gotta sit back as a leader and see, "Okay, what's missing? Is it more communication? Is it maybe taking on more defensive responsibilities?"

MW: You've had some time in the CEBL, having played two seasons in Saskatoon with the Rattlers. How was it playing in a bubble for the 2020 season?

KO: It was interesting. It was fun because I like new challenges. It was only a month and a half. Everybody lived in the same hotel. It was fun though. It was a different experience. I'd rather play in our arena. It was different but was still competitive. At the end of the day, it was still basketball.

MW: How was it playing in Saskatoon? I find the CEBL so smart, placing themselves in many mid-sized markets because a lot of those cities don't have teams to cheer for. The fan dedication must be so different.

KO: The fan base, that was crazy. Shout out to them. They gave me a lot of love and I appreciate them. But it was a no-brainer to come home and play for the home team [in Montreal].

MW: How do you find the Montreal basketball landscape has

developed since you were growing up? There are a great number of players from the city in both the NBA and NCAA, and now a team of our own.

KO: It's right here. You work hard. You do what you got to do to be seen, nowadays, with social media and connections. Now you have people like Joel. We bring in people that are connected. You have people from (Montreal in basketball) everywhere, whether it's college basketball, prep schools, high schools... we're connected. So I think kids nowadays, they've got a bright future if that's what they really want to do.

MW: How do you think the French language plays into Montreal's basketball landscape? Some NBA players are already wishy-washy about playing in Toronto, I can only imagine what Montreal would be like.

KO: Montreal is very multicultural. The culture here is why the name of the team is Alliance. Yeah. Because it's a bunch of communities here but they accept it. Obviously, it's a French-speaking city, but they're open to English people. I mean, look at how you are speaking to me (in English) and you live here, right? They accept you. I think you can do it here.

MW: It's interesting, you guys have got a coach from France, too.

KO: Crazy! But we're probably gonna have some English speaking people on the staff, too, which won't matter for me, personally.

MW: Do you guys have your eyes set on any rivalries? I know there is also a Toronto/Scarborough team beginning this season.

KO: Nah man, everyone. Every team is a rivalry to me. I think every time you step on that court, you try to win. You try to just kill that team. So I think every game should feel like a rivalry.

→ The 2022 CEBL season begins on May 25.

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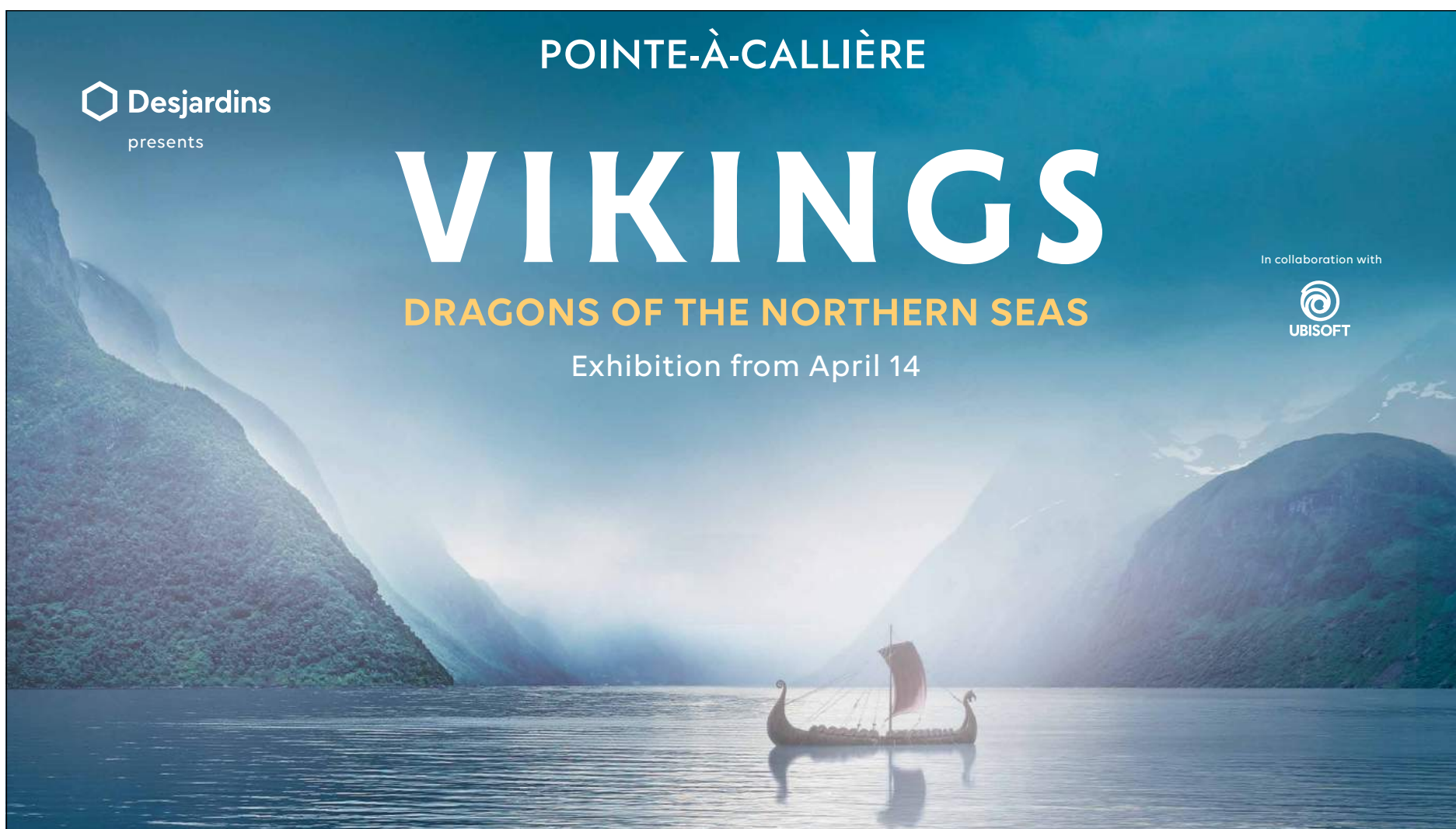
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: best buds



BY DAVE MACINTYRE

You know what Forrest Gump always said: life is like a box of chocolates — you never know what you're going to get. This mantra also applies to... this bag of weed I bought from the SQDC. Because it's literally a mixed bag of different strains in the same bag.

I decided to give this assortment from QcGold a shot. Even though it's technically a mystery box, all of these buds are of the hybrid variety, and — at 24.5% THC, as is indicated on the bag I got — are quite strong no matter which bud you smoke first. Not only is it Quebec-grown, but it's also meant to make you feel more hungry and relaxed, like any good old-fashioned strain should. Pretty reassuring for a random hodgepodge of the devil's lettuce!

So how did my magical mystery tour go? Will it be worth trying again sometime if I get a good high with

each bud? I smoked a different one three times and took notes for each, seeing where each individual experience could take me. Let's dive in.

QCGOLD TECH MIX3

BUD #1

Okay, so this is a definite head high right here. These buds also smell pretty good, somewhere in between earthy and fruity — and it's a similar feeling when you actually inhale and taste it. But once it hits, you're in for a definite ride. In fact, it got me so fucked that I felt like my eyes were shuttering off and on involuntarily, not to mention my arms feeling as if they were moving weirdly. This first go-round was a long-lasting one, too: it felt like a sativa that both energized me and allowed me to stay fairly productive. At its highest, it's a bit overwhelming, but nonetheless enjoyable. It made me want to start writing this, so there's that. 8/10

BUD #2

This one was another head high, but a slightly more visceral kind. It also lasts even longer than the previous one, in case anyone was still worried about potency by now. As if that

wasn't enough, I end up lying on my bed for a good 20 to 30 minutes, so it's likely more of an indica I got here. The feeling of this one overall is definitely one of couch-lock, but I found this high to be more comfortable than the previous one. Of course, it also gets me high enough that I order chocolate on UberEats at 11 p.m., because I guess that happens to me when I'm high sometimes. Or maybe that's the sign of a satisfying strain — you be the judge. 9/10

BUD #3

Whooooaaaaaaa dude. This one was wavy. It wasn't as fast-acting as the other two, but it's a quietly powerful high. On the flip side, it's not as long-lasting as the other two, and the high isn't great if you feel anxious or paranoid when you smoke. But it's a good strain for when you're listening to music, particularly psychedelic indie acts like Crumb, who make an excellent band to blaze to. Even while at my parents' house and taking the family dog out for a walk, I feel incredibly buzzed and basically need to remind myself to stay alert and focused at all times — the pooch loves to tug at me while holding his leash and sniff everything in sight. He basically walked me that night. 8/10



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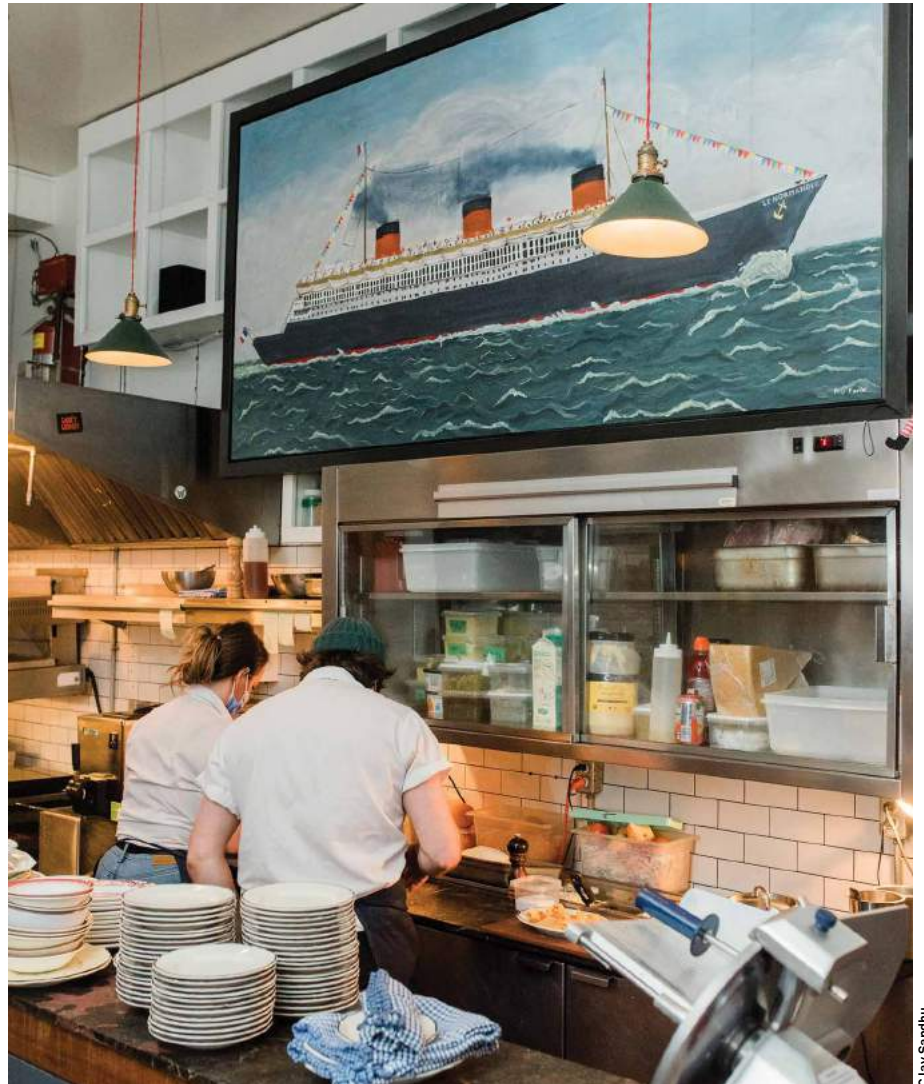
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food

Butterfly effect



Vin Papillon



Clay Sandhu

BY CLAY SANDHU

I have never written about any of the Joe Beef group's restaurants. It's widely accepted that they are good and, moreover, they are as well known and popular as any restaurant could hope to be.

But for the first time in a very long time, Montreal's most celebrated restaurant group is experiencing a paradigm shift. This isn't about Dave McMillan, it's about how the majority of the restaurant's stalwarts have moved on to other things. Fred Morin, often considered the contemplative genius behind the restaurants, is, for the first time, the sole decision-maker for all things Joe Beef. This new era, in so many ways, offers a period of renewal for the restaurant group now 17 years into its tenure, and a rare opportunity to begin again.

In that spirit, I figured it would be fitting to check in on the Joe Beef group to see what, if anything, has changed. The first significant transition that I remember, in regards to Joe Beef, happened at the end of 2013 when the group opened le Vin Papillon. Vin Papillon (or Vin-Pap, as it's known around town) was a major departure from so much of what Joe Beef (and Liverpool House) had become internationally known for. Rich, over-the-top, Bouchon Lyonnais-style cooking was left behind to make room for clever, almost whimsical presentations of peak season vegetables. Who could forget the famous smoked carrot éclair?

Vin Papillon was also incredibly important, not only to Joe Beef's legacy, but to the landscape of Montreal's restaurant scene because of the notable alumni who passed through it. The restaurant was opened as a sort of gesture of appreciation for Marc-Olivier Frappier and Vanya Filipovic. Marc-Olivier would have free rein over the food and Vanya full custody of the wine and service. Along with them came Willow Cardinal (now chef at Gia), Jessica Noël (of Vin Mon Lapin) and Gab Drapeau (now the culinary director of WeCook) and beloved front-of-house manager Alex Landry. Almost instantly, le Vin Papillon gained a reputation, around the world and throughout Montreal, as a veritable institution in the same ways as its beloved next-door neighbours. Then, as things do, a lot began to change.

Dave and Fred underwent a period of self-reflection, they both got sober, Fred discovered he was celiac and they vowed to make their businesses better places to work. Marc-Olivier and Vanya opened Vin Mon Lapin, sold their shares of Joe Beef, got married and turned their Little Italy restaurant into a near-overnight sensation, taking Jessica Noël, Alex Landry (and a host of other talented folks) along with them. Two years of pandemic pivots later, Gab Drapeau and Dave McMillan also moved on from the business, which, for many outside observers, marked the end of an era.

I got an early reservation the day I went to eat at Vin Papillon — 5:45, with the sun still shining. I have to say, the moment I walked in the front door I caught a glimpse of that special gently-blue-hued evening light that comes at the very beginning of spring illuminating the window-nook table and something clicked for me. Say what you will about Joe Beef and its legacy — it's a somewhat controversial business —

but the romance and the subtle yet distinct magic of those restaurants is alive and well. I remembered the feeling I got as a 19-year-old cook poring over the Joe Beef cookbook in utter amazement. There's a magnetism to this place.

The dining room had its familiar bar-à-vin feel, cozy leaning a bit toward snug, but there were some subtle and not so subtle changes. The most obvious addition is the massive (3 x 6-foot, I'd guess) painting of an ocean liner above the tiny open kitchen, painted by Fred himself. Later in the evening, he'd explain the painting to me in the simplest of ways, "You like the boat? I always wanted a painting of a boat." An emblem, perhaps, that Fred is now free to do as he pleases.

The menu is short, unelaborated and full of dishes with deliberately simple names. Wines by the glass are up on a chalkboard and daily specials are revealed at the table. A dinner for two is likely going to be around four to five dishes depending on what you order. For example, the razor clam special, which came served in a princess scallop shell with crème fraîche, grapefruit and chervil, was little more than a small bite each. Delicious, refreshing, palate-awakening even, but far from what you'd call a plate of food.

Other dishes, however, like the intriguingly named *Langue de veau bagnat*, were quite a bit more substantial. Like much of the dishes at these restaurants, the veal tongue *bagnat* traces its roots back to a classic French dish. In this instance, it refers to the sandwich version of Niçoise salad known as *Pan Bagnat*. In Vin Papillon's version, a halved veal tongue, braised and seared, comes topped with olives, fresno chillies, a soft-boiled egg and charred cups of onion filled with a

creamy tonnato sauce. The lot is served in a shallow pool of demi-glace. Delicious. The dish cleverly omits the bread of the pan bagnat but you don't miss it one bit — in fact, you don't even think about it. That's part of another new development at Vin Papillon — plenty of gluten-free options.

The wine program has been taken over by Max Campbell, a Joe Beef alumni in his own right and co-owner of the wine importation agency Deux Caves. The Vin Papillon cellar is full of coveted *quilles* and one is spoiled for choice provided they're prepared to foot the bill for one of the pricier lists in town. Service is charming and informal in the most classic Montreal-restaurant way, but never strays into the territory of overfamiliar or lackadaisical. The bussers were prompt and expeditious, nearly to a fault, flying in after each course and resetting the table in what seemed like a single motion. It's obvious that nothing is by chance; this kind of service is the product of a tried and true system and a uniquely "Joe Beef" style hospitality. The whole team are pros.

Back to the food. The two standout dishes of the night, for me, share in common a unique trait — see if you can spot it: *Maitake aux champignons* and *Escargot aux escargots*. Wylie Dufresne is famously quoted for his praise of eggs benedict, "Eggs Benedict is genius. It's eggs covered in eggs." It's a line that seems easily applied to this particular menu. The Maitake, also called Hen of Woods, is a mushroom famous for its rich flavour and meaty texture. It's a regular stand-in for meat on many-a-vegetarian menu. In Vin Papillon's preparation, the mushrooms are skewered, like a brochette, and grilled over charcoal, which lends the mushroom's ruffled edges a wonderfully charred and crisp texture and a lovely smokey quality. The brochette is then served in a silky and richly-hued mushroom gravy, which is every bit as good as it sounds.

The *Escargot aux escargots* — which I have been told is a Joe Beef classic, although I have not come



across it before — is a thing of beauty. The principal escargot is not a reference to succulent French snails but another French delicacy: The escargot pastry, also known as *pain aux raisins*, is a tight coil of flaky pastry, which, in this instance, is filled with a hearty yet refined duxelles. The pastry is then set atop a half-dozen plump escargots (the snails this time) *en persillade*, the bright green condiment of oil, garlic, shallot and parsley. It is the real deal and it encompasses everything I love about the Joe Beef way of cooking — it's playful, iconoclastic, rooted in old-world French cooking and utterly delicious.

One would be remiss not to mention Vin Papillon's famous ham and cheese plate: a mound of thinly sliced *jambon blanc* topped with ribbons of Avonlea Cheddar and drizzled with brown butter. It is a near-perfect plate of food, if you ask me, and is required eating for anyone going to Vin Papillon for the first time.

We finished the meal with an artfully scored frangipane tart — a personal *galette des rois*, really — served with a dollop of vanilla speckled *crème chantilly*. The pastry was beautifully flaky and the frangipane filling tasted properly of almond without being overly sweet, which allowed the chantilly to carry the bulk of the dessert's sweetness. I suspect it won't last much longer on the menu as the season warms but trust that the dessert menu here remains in top form.

I think that could maybe be said across the board — everything remains in top form. I didn't expect to eat at Vin Papillon and then deliver its eulogy, but there was some doubt that it would come out of all this completely unscathed. With that said, it's still a restaurant helmed by one of the greatest culinary minds in the country and staffed by competent and talented cooks and servers. Maybe it's unsurprising that Vin Papillon is still an exceptional restaurant, but I find comfort in the fact that, after everything, one can still eat very well in the heart of Little Burgundy.

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music

To infinity and beyond

BY DAVE MACINTYRE

You can't rush great art, even if it takes up to eight years.

For Maryze Bernard, better known as Maryze, the result is a fierce, nostalgia heavy pop album influenced by a whole mess of musical genres, while also showcasing her tremendous talents.

The bilingual Montreal-via-North Vancouver songstress is about to drop her debut album, *8*, on Hot Tramp Records. Releasing on May 6, the album is years in the making — though she's spent more than two years properly working on it, some of its songs were written as far back as eight (yes, eight) years ago.

"I think it's going to be an interesting amalgamation of all my music influences and experiences I've had throughout my 20s," Maryze says. "I'm nervous, but mostly just ready for the catharsis of putting it out there."

Having released her debut EP in 2019, Maryze quickly shifted focus toward a full-length, while also collecting years' worth of unfinished tunes she'd made with other projects.

"I wanted to collect the songs that meant a lot to me that I had been writing over almost eight years, but also make sure that at least half of the album was really current," she adds.

"Some of the songs weren't even finished until a few weeks before completion. It's been a mix of older songs and other experiences mixed with things that literally happened six months ago."

The title *8* is a reference to Maryze's lucky number since childhood. She likes how round the number is, her birthday is December 18, it's symbolic for infinity, and how life cycles can repeat themselves, and because music is often structured around eight beats. But her love for the number eight runs even deeper than all of that.

"When I was a kid, my friend and I were walking in a forest. I told her that, behind these ferns, there were our two lucky numbers," she explains. "I brushed the ferns aside, and there was an eight and a three. I don't know how I knew that as a child. I told her that her lucky number was three, and my lucky number was eight. I've kind of just held that through life."

With this debut album, Maryze will also be flexing her muscles as a producer, self-producing some of the tracks. "They're either me a capella, layering harmonies over my own voice, or just me on piano," she says. "But I really wanted to set that challenge for myself where I was writing, performing and producing some of the songs."

Born to an Irish-Canadian mother and a French father from Brittany, Maryze's influences also come from some of the most disparate of musical worlds. On *8*, she takes cues from hyperpop, jazz (she spent years studying the genre, and was in her high school's jazz choir), Celtic folk (her dad's from a Celtic region of France), soul music (Etta James and Ella Fitzgerald are favourites), Édith Piaf and the emo scene bands she loved in high school.

There's even a song titled "Emo" on the album, and the tone of its bass parts are influenced by that of Pete Wentz from Fall Out Boy — a band she's seen four times. She names Panic! at the Disco, My Chemical Romance, Taking Back Sunday, Bring Me the Horizon and late-aughts crunkcore duo 3OH!3 among her other favourites.

"My favourite Warped Tour was 2009—you know, 3OH!3, Abandon All Ships. Not necessarily great music, but it makes you feel something," she says while laughing.



Maryze

Mansoor

Though she grew up in an anglophone majority, the community around Maryze was largely francophone, as she went to school with francophone kids who'd moved to B.C. with their families who wanted them to continue speaking French. She also went to a fully French school, where she only took about two classes in English before Grade 7.

Even at home, her father would have her watch French TV for most days of the week to ensure she'd become fully bilingual. Though she was allowed to watch *Pokémon* in English once a week, she'd sometimes sneak it past her dad while he wasn't looking.

"I remember hearing my dad coming down the stairs and trying to switch back from *Pokémon* to the French channel," she adds. "At the time, it was annoying, because I wanted to watch what I wanted to watch and I have to watch all these foreign films. But I'm so grateful for it now. It does give me a larger sense of identity and culture."

Having visited Montreal multiple times as a child, Maryze decided it was a matter of when, and not if, she would relocate to the city, packing up and moving to la Belle Province during the summer of 2017. "Montreal was this kind of very magical land I always hoped to get to when I was a kid," she adds.

Since she'd been working a "steady and comfortable" desk job in Vancouver (where her colleagues encouraged her to take the leap of faith), her move to Montreal represented an opportunity to pursue her music career in earnest. Having already established herself as a fixture in this city's music scene, Maryze appreciates the openness of Montreal's underground music community to new acts and voices, and felt welcomed by that community after arriving.

"There seems to be this special energy in Montreal, where people are so creatively fuelled," she continues. "They have so much to share, and people actually want to hear it and discover new music. It feels like an incubator for a lot of new creativity."

Alongside previously released singles like "Too Late" and the 2000s-inspired "Experiments" (which even interpolates Justin Timberlake's "Señorita"), there's the menacing, hypnotic Backxwash collab "Squelettes." Though both artists are from wildly different ends of the musical spectrum, Maryze says the musical chemistry between them was seamless — after all, they've known each other and played together for several years now.

"I think a lot of my music is about darker subjects, and her stuff is also extremely cathartic," she says about the hyperpop-tinged number. "I'm really happy that we both enjoyed each other's music so much that we wanted to bring

it together... It was a fun challenge, but it didn't really feel like a challenge! It was natural."

Those who don't recognize Maryze from her musical output may know her from her social media activity. In the winter of 2021, she uploaded the icicle TikTok. The hilarious clip of Maryze putting on a fake European French accent and warning viewers of the dangers of falling icicles (rating each one out of 10 based on deadliness) has racked up more than 4.6 million views on the platform, with TikTok even referencing it in their own Canadian marketing campaigns.

"Who could've predicted that icicles would change my life so drastically?" she says, laughing about her unexpected viral success. As a result of the clip (which got publicity nationally and abroad), her TikTok follower count skyrocketed.

"I thought everyone would unfollow after a few months," she admits. "But they stuck around. I think people came for the icicles, for sure, and then stayed for the music — but at least they liked the music enough to stay!"

The icicle queen has only returned on rare occasions, and every icicle in Quebec has presumably melted by now. But Maryze says there very well may be more icicle ratings in her future.

"I don't want to make any promises, but I did tell people that I would make a follow-up icicle video," she says. "There are no icicles left, but I have videos that I've saved. So I might just try to get that in before winter is fully over, just to thank everyone for the icicle love."

The clip's even had an impact on her music career: she soon started enjoying a boost in listenership, gaining as many new ears as there'd be if she'd just released a new single. "It's really incredible, the power of TikTok," she adds.

For the rest of 2022, Maryze will be playing a handful of Canadian cities in May, where she'll play the album live for the first time. Though she also intends to take time writing more music, she's also hoping to film more music videos for the LP, and possibly play shows stateside.

When asked what she thinks her debut album says about her personally and how far she's come artistically, she believes it's her ability to be herself while embodying her tastes and interests without feeling any restrictions.

"It demonstrates, even to myself, that I'm also able to take on different roles as a producer, songwriter and performer, and really be my full self," she says. "Even if the genres seem kind of disparate, I think they tie in together, and I don't really care anymore if people think that it's cohesive or makes sense — because it makes sense to me."

A band member of LP with curly dark hair, wearing a black leather jacket over a plaid shirt, and multiple metal gauntlets on his arms. He is holding a microphone in his right hand and has a tattoo on his left hand.

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Meet Hezekiah Procter

BY STEPHAN BOISSONNEAULT

The musician known as “Hezekiah Fortescue Procter” was an obscure jazz-folk, old-time evangelical singer from the mid-1920s who rose to prominence by performing in medicine shows in the American Southwest before the Great Depression.

He was also a key figure in the Gastonia, North Carolina worker labour strikes — the only strikes ever in American history that were actually started by the Communist Party — and by 1929, he disappeared without a trace, no doubt on the lam from the North Carolina police department. Procter ushered in a new era of music and mystery surrounding celebrity musicians.

His story is one of intrigue; about a talented, self-righteous and destructive man whose recordings were lost in the annals of history. He was a hustler, a man who did what he had to in order to survive a harsh reality — perhaps even murder.

His story is up there with those of country stars like Hank Williams, Jimmie Rodgers and Ernest Tubb — the only difference being that Hezekiah never really existed.

Yes, Hezekiah Procter is the figment of someone's imagination, specifically the imagination of Montreal's acclaimed country singer-songwriter Andrew McClelland — known in the music world as Li'l Andy. For his upcoming project, a multi-faceted entity 10 years in the making, McClelland pulled out all of his resourceful creativity. He invented the legend of Hezekiah Procter (down to his mannerisms and way of speech), his biography (a 150-page printed experimental fiction novella written by McClelland himself), found the right period style band and most notably, recorded a double LP — a 29-song box set called *The Complete Recordings of Hezekiah Procter (1925–1930)*.

McClelland has been a follower of North American roots music since childhood. He's read a number of old music biographies, liner notes and newspaper clippings, and is the kind of guy who can throw out a random music history fact — like the true story about Jaybird Coleman having members of the Ku Klux Klan as his booking agents in the 1930s to get into venues restricted for Black artists — like it's a common topic of discussion. But it never comes off as pretentious, rather coming from a place of pure fascination and passion.

He recalls that this passion started after buying the Robert Johnson box set on a Boxing Day afternoon when he was 13. The set contained a pile of liner notes about the fascinating, almost mythological stories about the blues singer. McClelland was enthralled and driven to collect these records and box sets of long dead blues and country musicians, now realizing it sowed the seeds for Hezekiah Procter.

“I noticed how I would become obsessed with the singer more than the songs. And so it was like I was creating this kind of uber roots, uber jazz country, old-time musician in my brain, and that's how this character of Hezekiah Procter kind of came about,” McClelland says as he lights a cigarette on a vintage couch in his grand loft music studio.

“I wanted him to have all the elements that we think of as necessary for a proper and authentic country singer. Like a childhood in poverty, perhaps some kind of disfiguring accident, an apprenticeship in a medicine show or early radio and then becoming a star on records before they even knew that a recording star could be something that existed.”

McClelland wanted the story and recordings of Hezekiah to feel like real long-lost musical artifacts. This is why he would not settle for anything but authentic recording gear that sounded like the period. Each song needed to have that nostalgic hiss synonymous with the time. Even tape recording (used in the '50s, but primarily the '60s) felt too modern. He needed to go farther back in time. He went to the Smithsonian Museum and spoke with historians, he travelled to England to speak with people recording old 78 rpm records. Still, nothing felt quite right for the Hezekiah project.



alt-J

As he lamented his woes to his drummer, Ben Caissie, one day, Ben said “Oh, you should use a wire recorder.”

“Ben is just one of those guys who seems to live in a different era and knows things most people don't,” McClelland says with a smile. “He said, ‘It could work well because it's steel wire and not tape. Tape degrades.’”

Unfortunately, Ben did not have a wire recorder but he put out a Kijiji ad for one throughout Quebec and Ontario. About a year later, a man from Quebec City answered the ad and said he had one for sale. Ben drove out that same day and arrived at a church. It turns out the man was a caretaker of a Catholic Cathedral, and during the '30s and '40s, the congregation and priests used a Chicago-Webster wire recorder to record every sermon for their parishioners. Ben bought the recorder immediately, and as a bonus, went home with a bunch of reels of recording wire.

“So that's what we recorded the album over, these sermons from a Quebec City congregation,” McClelland laughs while tuning an old acoustic guitar. “So when Ben would

be queuing up a tape and we'd be trying to get some space between the songs, there would be recordings of church stuff in Latin. It was bizarre.”

But before they recorded what you hear on the album, McClelland spent years experimenting, deciding what sounded best in terms of his voice.

“When I sang in my regular voice, it would sound terrible, but when I sang in a higher, more old-timey, hammy register it sounded great,” he says. “There was just some kind of marriage in between those frequencies, the higher pitched frequencies and the machine.”

It's not an easy task to just unlearn your modern country singing style you've cultivated for the last decade, but McClelland went even farther than that with his guitar playing. He found that he had to play his guitar with a straight strumming style, with next to no flourish or riffery.

“I also had to learn the weird way they would fuck with time signatures and leave beats out of time back then, on top of learning how to sing that way,” McClelland says. “Basically, I had to re-learn how to play music and be an old timey musician.”

But he wasn't alone. Ben acted as the recording engineer for the project and McClelland essentially joined a band called Sheesham, Lotus 'n Son — a group revered in the 2000s Canadian folk scene for their old-time roots music. For the Hezekiah project, they are referred to as the Hash-House Serenaders.

“They are the best. They have done their research and studied old time styles in a way that I could never even hope to,” McClelland says. “The thing is, they all play different instruments. The sousaphone player does a few fiddle solos on this record. They're all multi-instrumentalists.”

Along with his band, McClelland plays the character of Hezekiah Procter right down to his Southern drawl and speech.

“When we would be recording, Sam, the banjo player, would say, ‘Are you Hezekiah now? When you sang that note, is that Hezekiah?’ And I'd be like, ‘No, you're right, I have to always be him.’ So we kind of ended up just joking around in character all the time. It's acting and basically performance art.”

During the performance at Sala Rossa on April 21, McClelland will be playing double duty as Hezekiah Procter and the Hash-House Serenaders open for Li'l Andy. The Hezekiah set will feel like a travelling old-school medicine show.

“So when I address the crowd, I will be Hezekiah and I'm going to do it as Hezekiah playing a show in 2022. So he's going to have a look at how strange the world is now,” McClelland says. “In between songs, I'll be addressing the crowd and really hamming it up with jokes. I'm going to have a lot of fun with it.”

The type of performance McClelland is planning ties into the very essence of a 1920s-30s recording artist. Back then, you were expected to be, yes, a musician, but also a comedian and an overall entertainer.

“And then if you were in a medicine show, you were expected to sell a tonic or an elixir to people who were suspicious of doctors,” he says.

There most likely won't be a show like this in Montreal for some time. So come for the show and stay for the snake oil.

→ The Complete Recordings of Hezekiah Procter launch, with a performance by Li'l Andy and openers Hezekiah Procter and the Hash-House Serenaders, takes place at la Sala Rossa (4848 St-Laurent) on April 21, 8:30 p.m., \$17.85

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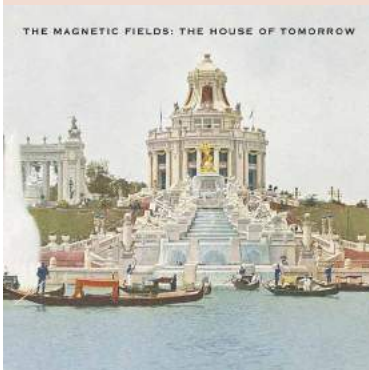
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Living the Dream

BY DAVE MACINTYRE

Bands often have to toe a line between being both original and accessible to get recognized. Few bands in the last decade have walked that tightrope more gracefully than alt-J.

The British band's 2012 debut, *An Awesome Wave*, led to alt-J becoming mainstays on the global festival circuit, seeing breakout single "Breezblocks" go platinum in the United States and eventually scoring that year's Mercury Prize. Since then, they've racked up more than 2.5 billion streams (their Spotify stream count currently sits at nearly 8 million per month), and their albums have moved more than 2 million units to date. Their distinctive sound and songwriting style even earned them a hilariously spot-on parody by two members of Montreal indie rock outfit Fleece eating rice cakes, with alt-J changing their Twitter avatar to a rice cake in response.

The trio's evolution over the past decade has now culminated in a bold, captivating and sonically rich fourth album, *The Dream*, released in February. Across 12 tracks and 49 minutes, the Cambridge-via-Leeds trio (Joe Newman, keyboardist/vocalist Gus Unger-Hamilton and drummer Thom Sonny Green) take their artsy spin on indie and alt-rock in darker, bolder directions on their first full-length since 2017's *Relaxer*, which received mixed reviews from critics and fans alike after its predecessor, 2014's *This Is All Yours*, nabbed a Grammy nomination for Best Alternative Music Album.

Cult MTL got to chat with Unger-Hamilton via Zoom while alt-J were in San Diego during their North American tour. The band will be bringing their joint tour with Portugal. The Man to Laval's Place Bell on April 15, with support from Cherry Glazerr.

Having made the album in the thick of the pandemic, alt-J found themselves taking longer than they otherwise would've to get it done. For Unger-Hamilton, this was more of a blessing than a curse, as they had a bit more time and freedom on their hands than usual.

"It felt like the coronavirus kind of wiped everybody's deadlines. Nothing was really expected of us," he says. "We just took our time and spent 18 months in the studio writing and recording, and came out with what I think is a really great album."

Arriving nearly five years after *Relaxer*, the intervening time between the two albums reminded the trio of the importance of relaxing (har har) and taking breaks, having toured extensively in 2017 and 2018 before taking a year off. "We came back refreshed and rejuvenated, and excited to start making music together again," Unger-Hamilton says.

"We learned the importance of giving each other space and not just being a constant production factory... With touring and spending all that time together, you start to lose your love for what you do. We're so privileged to do this job that the second you start feeling like you're not enjoying it anymore, you probably need to take a break."

Through their relentless touring, alt-J have some fond memories of the times they've played Montreal thus far: the band performed at Osheaga's 2013 and 2015 editions, with Unger-Hamilton declaring the festival's famously delicious catering — complete with an ice bar full of oysters — as "the most amazing of any festival I've ever played."



alt-J

George Muncey

Not only has performing in Canada treated the band well in general, but Unger-Hamilton appreciates opportunities to play in Quebec specifically. Born in Paris to English parents who had been living and working there, he speaks French to a "reasonably good standard" (though he's not perfectly bilingual), and takes advantage of opportunities to practise it while speaking to crowds in francophone markets. In fact, several alt-J songs include some French lyrics, notably on *An Awesome Wave*'s "Matilda" and "Taro."

"We've always felt like, in francophone places, our music is quite cerebral," he adds. "I think there's a certain sensibility among francophone people that respects that slightly more academic side of music, perhaps." Unger-Hamilton later added that he's spent time during the pandemic taking French lessons again, as well as reading French novels.

The Dream isn't just alt-J's most adventurous album, it's also their most outwardly American-influenced one to date. This isn't particularly surprising for a band who have spent a good chunk of the past decade touring the other side of the pond, not to mention the omnipresence of American culture and films during the band's youth.

"Growing up in the U.K., America is like the cultural sun around which all English-speaking planets revolved," he says. "It's hard to avoid. Culturally, its heft is so mighty that it's everywhere... We wrote quite a lot of these songs during soundchecks, and a lot of those soundchecks were in America."

Though Unger-Hamilton was listening to a lot of the Beatles during its creation, the band also took influence from laidback '90s California rock bands like Eels — lead single "U&ME" in particular draws from this type of sound.

Taking the American influence even further, two songs named "Chicago" and "Philadelphia" sit side-by-side in the middle of the tracklist. "The Actor" depicts someone — based on the life and death of John Belushi — moving to Hollywood to live "the dream," before later dying of an overdose at the Chateau Marmont. Opening track "Bane" even begins with a sample of a man opening and drinking from a can of Coca-Cola, with frontman Joe Newman expanding on that theme lyrically.

Essentially, *The Dream* could be seen as alt-J's answer to Supertramp's *Breakfast in America*. One can even hear this on "Bane," whose emotional apex is probably

the harmonized "Yeah you!" refrain that even sounds a bit Supertrampish — something Unger-Hamilton says is unintentional.

"I've never listened to Supertramp, actually. I know my mum likes them a lot," he says, adding that he was instead worried about that particular motif sounding too much like Queen.

Throughout the album, the band take their diverse, vibrant palette of musical influences — Unger-Hamilton used to sing in a choir, while Green played in a metal band and Newman learned guitar from his soul music-playing father — and mesh those disparate parts into a cohesive, entrancing whole like they've done their whole career.

This year also marks the 10th anniversary of *An Awesome Wave*, which will hit that milestone on May 25. When asked what most often comes to his mind when thinking of that album, Unger-Hamilton points to his youth (he was 23 upon the album's release) while comparing it to his present-day reality, where he now has a wife and child.

"We were on the road for two years nonstop with that record," he adds, later naming "Dissolve Me" as the song from that album he holds nearest and dearest to his heart. "I was having the time of my life. I'd never really been outside Europe before. All these exciting things were happening. I suppose 'adventure' would be a word I'd associate with it. Youth and adventure."

As far as *The Dream* goes, the trio have explored another intriguing new territory: "Get Better" is a gut-wrenching acoustic ballad about losing a loved one, hoping their condition improves and getting through daily life after their death; "Losing My Mind" is written from a serial killer's point of view; "Hard Drive Gold" is a rollicking sendup of crypto culture and a young boy's obsession with getting rich from it; and album closer "Powders" breaks from the more grim lyrical themes heard earlier by depicting a meet-cute between two young people.

"Lyrically, this album relies a lot less on making references to writers and films. It stands on its own two feet more," Unger-Hamilton says, though "U&ME" does include a reference to Stellan Skarsgård strutting to and from a bar. "Joe has always been a great lyricist, but I think he's at the peak of his powers right now. We're all trying new things on this album — I play bass on a few songs, for instance. We're broadening our musical spread, which is a fun thing to do."

MAREN MORRIS



HUMBLE QUEST

NEW ALBUM OUT NOW



:hammer of the mods

BY JOHNSON CUMMINS

As of this writing, I am still reeling from the absolutely action-packed first weekend of April.

Right out of the gate, there was either sold out or nearly sold out shows for the sublime Low, the fire and brimstone of Nick Cave and Warren Ellis, the rag-tag nu psych of the Brian Jonestown Massacre, the teeth-gnashing from hardcore giants Circle Jerks and 7 Seconds and finally the dark drone power of Sunn O)))'s Stephen O'Malley. At the shows I was able to squeeze into over the weekend, people were perhaps in the best mood I have ever seen in a room with our natural urge of human communion running free. And the best part is April just keeps on giving, a topic I will hip you L-sevens about in a wee bit.

Here's the rub though: Although COVID restrictions are loosened up for gigs as we enter the sixth wave and learn to live with the pandemic, we are hardly out of the woods yet. Touring bands and local bands started making their presence known and were breathing new life into our hallowed halls at the end of March. Unfortunately COVID dealt another crushing blow to two small venues that were tearing at the seams with music-starved punters. This of course has resulted in some

cancellations while the venue staff get well again so they can keep serving you up suds.

So listen up, Poindexter: Again, we are LIVING with COVID now, so if you feel like you are experiencing some symptoms, even in the slightest, don't be a complete turd burglar and risk infecting others who are already a bit trepidatious about being shoulder to shoulder with people in a venue. There will be plenty of shows coming up, so if you suspect you might have symptoms, do the right thing and give it a pass for now. Also, stay in school and don't do drugs, kids!

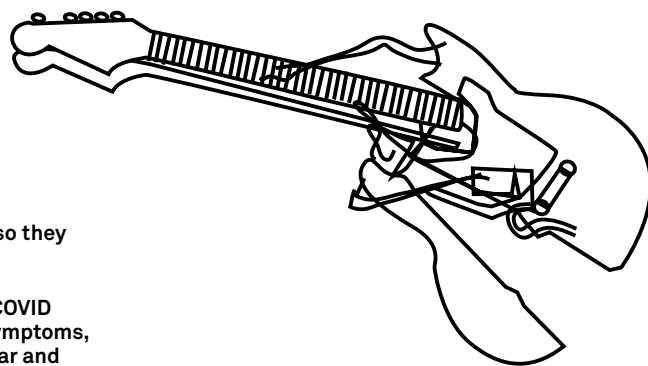
Now that I've waved my finger at you poor puds, here are my big picks for April that you'll definitely want to put your masks on for.

April 9

Pedal nerds and other fans of myopic eyewear and backpacks will definitely want to squeeze the ear plugs in when Mogwai liquify the fillings in your teeth at Théâtre Corona. 2490 Notre-Dame W., 8 p.m., from \$44

April 10

Sure, many of you are clamoring to get to Turbo Haüs to see the mighty duo from No Fun City, the Pack A.D., and certainly there are enough of you who are willing to take a chance on middle band Strange Breed, but the real Guac in this rock 'n' roll burrito is openers and local stud muffins the Sick Things. Get there early for these local riff slingers. 2040 St-Denis, 8 p.m., \$12/\$17



April 14

For whatever reason, I spend a lot of time explaining to pedestrian music listeners (probs waiting for Osheaga) that this is not a metal column, so I won't push the fact and tell you about Judas Priest and the almighty local answer to Priest and Nwobhm, Metalian, who are both playing this month. But I will tell all of you heshers who were grippin' tix for Baroness back in February that you can now redeem 'em at the makeup show at le Ritz. 179 Jean-Talon W., 8 p.m., \$84

For people who just think guitars are for landlords, lawyers, uncles and other shiddy people, you can get your danger on sans guilt with NYC's anarcho-fuelled electronic mayhem of Blu Anxxiety, with the equally crucial Mickey Dagger. Openers are Ilusion, at l'Hemisphere Gauche. It's a youthOfNausea joint, so you know it's rad. 221 Beaubien E., 9 p.m.

Current Obsession: The Ruts, "The Crack"

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Everything Everywhere All at Once

BY JUSTINE SMITH

Nearly two decades ago, actor Ke Huy Quan decided to retire from acting.

After his success as a child actor in *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom* and *The Goonies*, he struggled to find roles. “When I started in the business, I would read a lot of scripts that featured Asian characters that were very marginalized, stereotypical,” Quan explained over Zoom. “You had two or three lines. If you were lucky, you would get featured in two or three pages. It was one of the reasons I stepped away from acting.” By the early 2000s, he had decided to leave acting behind to find new opportunities behind the camera working in stunts and assistant directing (most notably on Wong Kar-Wai’s *2046*).

Just a few years ago, things changed. *Crazy Rich Asians* was a smashing success, and the industry started offering more complex roles to BIPOC actors. Quan was inspired to make another go at it. Around this time, he first read *Everything Everywhere All at Once*. “It was the script that I wanted to read for decades that just didn’t exist before,” he says. “I loved the script so much and wanted this role so bad.”

Written and directed by the Daniels (the beautifully deranged minds behind *Swiss Army Man*), *Everything Everywhere All at Once* is a day-in-the-life, multiverse-hopping, genre-defying adventure following Evelyn, an aging Chinese immigrant, swept up in an insane adventure, where

she alone can save the world by exploring other universes connecting with the lives she could have led. Michelle Yeoh stars as Evelyn, and Quan stars as her hapless, soft-spoken husband, Waymond.

In the film’s universe, there are different iterations of the same person co-existing within infinite possible universes. By engaging in “improbable” actions, you can tap into the endless possibilities of all your selves. For an actor, this role poses unique opportunities and challenges. Quan not only plays Waymond from “our” universe but also at least two other ones. He had to speak multiple different languages and pull off complex fight scenes and convincingly play three different versions of the same person.

“I was so nervous because I hadn’t done it for so long. It’s been over two decades,” Quan says. “Luckily, I had three months to prepare. I hired an acting coach, a dialect coach and a voice coach. Then I hired a body movement coach because I wanted to make sure that the audience can distinguish each version of Waymond just by how he sits, stands, moves and walks.”

While acting and voice coaches are pretty standard, body movement coaches are not usually part of an actor’s repertoire. Quan explained that the process involved picking a specific animal to match the different versions of Waymond. Alpha Waymond is an eagle, CEO Waymond from the movie star-universe is a fox (“you know because he’s very cool”) and the Waymond in this universe was a squirrel.

He’d watch hours of video on nothing but squirrels, how they move, how they crawl and eat. “The process starts with me in his theatre, 100% squirrels. I would be on the ground on all fours crawling and moving, eating like a squirrel and then slowly transforming myself 100% into my character,” he explains.

“I remember the first week of shooting. I was so nervous because I was sitting in front of Jamie Lee Curtis. Behind me was Michelle Yeoh and to my left was James Hong. All freaking legends!” He kept asking the Daniels if he was doing a good job and needed to make changes. “It wasn’t until Jamie Lee Curtis, after one shot, came up, and she gave me the biggest hug and the warmest smile and said, ‘Ke, that was fricking awesome.’ Getting that praise from her meant the world to me and gave me so much confidence.”

Everything Everywhere All at Once has already had a release in other markets, so by the time Quan spoke with *Cult MTL*, he’s already had an opportunity to enjoy the film’s success. “The last time they saw me,” he says, “I was a kid or an awkward teenager.” The response has been more than positive. “Being able to read and hear all these wonderful, positive comments embracing my return to acting has brought tears to my eyes. I am grateful for their love. I’m in a very happy place right now: This is where I want it to be for a long, long time. I finally get to be here.”

→ *Everything Everywhere All at Once* is in theatres now.

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On Screen



The Scary of Sixty-First



Les Olympiades



Ambulance



The Unbearable Weight of Massive Talent

BY JUSTINE SMITH

Blockbusters are back with a vengeance in April, heralding a fresh period for filmgoing.

Marvel's much delayed *Morbius* (April 1), starring Jared Leto as the vampire doctor, finally sees the light of day. *Sonic the Hedgehog 2* and a Johnny Depp-less *Fantastic Beasts: The Secrets of Dumbledore* hit the big screens on April 8. Michael Bay fans will also be happy to see the maestro of maximalism back with a non-Transformers project with the release of *Ambulance* (April 8), starring Taylor Swift's ex, Jake Gyllenhaal.

The movie you should be most excited to watch on the big screen, though, is *Everything Everywhere All at Once* (April 8). A groundbreaking and mind-bending film starring Michelle Yeoh as an aging Chinese immigrant facing down the worst day of her life, whose entire universe suddenly opens up to the infinite possibilities of the multiverse. From the makers of *Swiss Army Man* (aka the farting corpse film), *Everything Everywhere All at Once* is hilarious, heartfelt and

completely bonkers; a future cult classic in the making.

Thanks to his bizarre and subversive genre films *The Witch* and *The Lighthouse*, Robert Eggers has amassed a fiendish following. *The Northman* (April 22), his latest starring Alexander Skarsgård, Nicole Kidman, Ethan Hawke, Anya Taylor-Joy and Willem Dafoe, takes us back on an epic quest as a Viking prince sets out to avenge his father's murder.

For more arthouse fare, we have the latest film from Jacques Audiard (*The Sisters Brothers* and *A Prophet*); *Les Olympiades* (April 15) is the story of four students who become friends and lovers. Documentary fans can check out *Damascus Dreams* (April 11), a reimagined coming-of-age story that follows a filmmaker's journey to her inaccessible homeland. In *The Unbearable Weight of Massive Talent* (April 22), Nicolas Cage plays a version of himself as a creatively unfulfilled actor facing financial ruin who must accept a \$1-million offer to attend the birthday of a dangerous superfan.

The Rendez-vous du Cinéma Québécois is back in person with the 40th edition (April 20–30). The annual spotlight on

Quebec cinema will feature some of the major highlights from last year, including *Brain Freeze*, *Souterrain*, *Aline*, *Maria Chapdelaine* and *Beans*. It will also feature many world premieres, including the opening night's *Noémie dit oui*. Many (but not all) films will also be available to stream online.

Celebrating its first anniversary, Cinéma Public is launching a new program, Les insomniaacs. The Friday night screening series "gives free rein to our whimsical instincts and desires, presenting wild and uncompromising films for the most daring movie lovers." The program features *Tampopo*, *Carnival of Souls*, *Trouble Every Day*, *Eraserhead* and the Quebec premiere of Dasha Nekrasova's *The Scary of Sixty-First*.

Other big cinematic events this month? There are retrospectives for Miklós Jancsó and Rock Demers at the Cinémathèque Québécoise, the Vues d'Afrique film festival (April 1–10), also at the Cinémathèque Québécoise. Cinéma Moderne will also be doing some retrospective screenings of *Chungking Express*, *Adoption*, *Vive L'Amour* and a spotlight on contemporary Ukrainian cinema with *The Earth Is Blue as an Orange*.

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L'ANNEXE
— ST-AMBROISE —

Standing out

BY SAVANNAH STEWART

She released seven studio albums, made several film appearances, garnered a Juno nomination and she owns the Montreal café/event space URSA. Now, singer-songwriter Martha Wainwright can add a memoir to her list of accomplishments.

Released on March 29, *Stories I Might Regret Telling You* follows her life from her childhood growing up in Montreal, through love and heartbreak and her storied musical career, to motherhood and finally achieving a sense of having charted her own course in life, independent from the successes of her musical family.

But it would not be possible to write an autobiography without discussing the discographies of her brother Rufus Wainwright, her father Loudon Wainwright III and her mother Kate of the duo Kate & Anna McGarrigle.

“I think people asked me to write a book because of my story, because of my parents, my brother and the people that I’ve met. So it wasn’t going to be a book of recipes, or my thoughts on politics,” she says about her thoughts in those early days conceptualizing the book.

“But with that in mind, and also with the title already set, I wanted to do something that was not really about my family, but about me. And also, of course, it’s touching on subjects that are very taboo and that really relate to not only my life but a lot of people’s lives. I think the more personal, the more universal it becomes.”

Sure, there’s enough taboo to go around when it comes to sex, drugs and rock ’n’ roll, which makes for some very entertaining reading. But the soul of the book, at least for this reader, is in Wainwright navigating persistent feelings of insecurity, in many aspects of her life.

She admits to loving fiercely in her romantic relationships, but also with the unshakeable fear that she’s not loved so fiercely in return. It often feels like she’s saying she wishes she behaved differently, looked differently and thought differently.

She’s a talented musician, but she writes of a concern that she is known by the accomplishments of others in her family. Getting out of the shadow of the successes of her relatives almost seems like the crux of the entire book.

As she explains, it “has been something that has been both my calling card but also a bit of a burden in some way for my life, as an artist, as a musician.”

“I will say that I was always conflicted with my worth next to these other people in my family and put them up on pedestals and I think rightfully so in some cases, and always considered myself, because of insecurity, lesser than or not as talented and all that.”

But there is a shift that happens, that the reader can follow along as the years pass in the book.

“My ability to feel equal has been more about the long road that I’ve taken. It’s after 25 years of performing, and after making many records, and after learning a lot, and after writing many songs and now after writing this book that I finally feel that there is no difference as artists between me and many of these people. The path is different for people.”



Carl Lessard

Much of the book takes place in Montreal and New York, but Los Angeles and the United Kingdom are also featured. Montrealers will appreciate nostalgic accounts of St-Laurent Blvd. before gentrification irreparably damaged its nightlife, or witty comments about the city’s anglophone community.

“Because I’m not super philosophical, I felt that I can be descriptive of these places and these times. Because otherwise, it’s just a bunch of young people getting shit-faced. Unless you put it in the context of the space and get a sense of what that feeling was in that place, it’s not as interesting,” she says.

“And for me as a young person travelling and having the opportunity to travel to those places, it was very affecting. When I showed up in Los Angeles, and when you get up and you walk out of the airport, and there’s that heat, and there are those differences, the different trees and the different air and different smells and all of those things reflect back to the past.”

New York, Los Angeles, London: music centres of the world.

“You’re arriving in these places going, ‘Can I make it here? How am I going to fit in here? Am I a part of this story?’” she says. “I think that that’s why those details sort of felt

important, because it really gave a sense of that kind of wanting to belong in a way.”

Though Wainwright has written many songs in her life, she said that writing the memoir was not an easy task for her. She almost didn’t complete it.

But one of the strengths of the book might very well originate in her songwriting skills, a medium in which every word must serve a purpose. *Stories I Might Regret Telling You* has something to say, and Wainwright does not waste time belabouring the points she is making. Her observations are concise, but they cut right to the meat of what’s going on.

Though she discusses her songs and those of her family members, the book remains accessible to readers who aren’t familiar with her music or that of her parents and brother — those who are are sure to gain some valuable insight into the meaning and context of the many discographies she brings up.

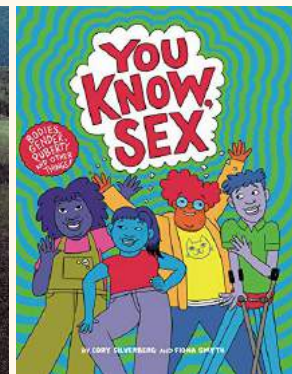
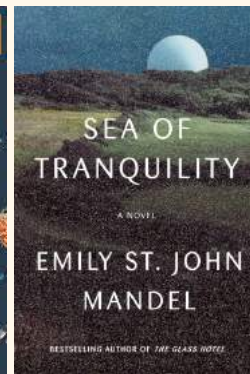
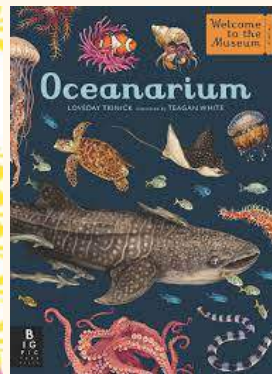
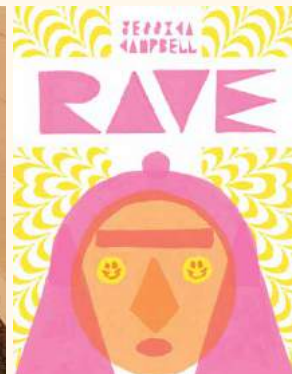
“My hope was to widen my audience,” she explains, “that the book is not for the people who are in the book.”

→Martha Wainwright launches *Stories I Might Regret Telling You* with host Mitch Melnick at the Rialto Hall (5711 Parc, 2nd floor) on April 12, 7 p.m., \$20/\$40 with a copy of the book (via Paragraphe bookstore)

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Re:Incarnation

Carl Lessard

BY SAVANNAH STEWART

Montreal's international performance art event Festival TransAmériques is gearing up for a major return after two years of travel restrictions and pandemic restrictions.

"The 16th edition of Festival TransAmériques explores where our world is headed. It marks the return of a full line-up of international programming following a two-year wait," said the joint artistic directors Martine Dennewald and Jessie Mill and executive director David Lavoie.

This year's FTA, running from May 25 to June 9, will include 23 works of dance and theatre performed by artists from 18 countries. This includes seven world premieres and nine North American premieres.

Most shows are presented in at least two languages with subtitles in French and English for international languages, and most include English subtitles for French content and vice-versa.

Festival-goers have many intriguing events to choose from that explore a variety of themes, but two recurring themes are getting extra attention, with a day of special programming planned for each.

One is about water. As the schedule announcement reads: "Water Day will interrogate our relationship to water as an

essential resource, an ecosystem, a living space."

One show to look out for that explores the theme of water is *La conquête du béluga*, a production by Gaspésian performers created by multidisciplinary artist Maryse Goudreau and Théâtre À tour de rôle. The show is made up of snippets of 150 years of beluga legislation discussion in Canada's House of Commons, and it will take place mornings and evenings by the St. Lawrence River on Clock Tower Beach.

Another associated production is *Dans le ventre de la baleine*, an immersive sonic and tactile experience for one viewer at a time, also created by Goudreau. It is free and open to all, presented at the Quartier général in UQAM's Cœur des sciences.

A noteworthy event in the Water Day programming is a conversation with Kanien'kehà:ka artist Lindsay Katsitsakatste Delaronde and others from her community of Kahnawake. The conversation will explore the reclamation of stewardship to Indigenous land and water, and introduce listeners to the devastating consequences the St. Lawrence Seaway's construction had on this community on the South Shore. It will also be at the Quartier général.

Then there is Indigenous Creation and Languages Day.

"This year marks the start of the United Nations' International Decade of Indigenous Languages. What can the performing arts do to stimulate the vitality of the languages of Kanata and elsewhere?" reads the announcement.

To celebrate, Indigenous artists Natasha Kanapé Fontaine, Émilie Monnet and Nancy Saunders (Niap) are invited to discuss the Indigenous languages with which they create their art. Barbara Fillion from the Canadian Commission for UNESCO will discuss her work with Indigenous communities to preserve and revitalize their languages.

In terms of international programming, there is no shortage of shows to choose from.

Keep an eye out for *Re:Incarnation*, a celebration of Nigerian culture both past and present with 10 dancers from Lagos, Nigeria. Another one to watch is *Altamira 2042*, a futuristic eco-feminist interactive installation exploring the Xingu River in Brazil and the River people displaced by the construction of the Belo Monte Dam.

And for professionals in the performing arts, some events are on the schedule just for you. FTA Clinics, workshops and a discussion about eco-friendly costumes are just some of the events put on for professionals.

Finally, people with neurological and/or anxiety disorders as well as families with young children are welcome to attend one performance of *Save the last dance for me* and four performances of *Qaumma*. These performances will be adapted to foster a calm and inclusive environment, and noise and movement during the performance will be allowed.

→For more information on FTA, visit the festival's website, fta.ca.

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Trollface



By Ryan Diduck

Marlon Brando's Academy Award refusal for *The Godfather*, March 27, 1973 (NBC)

The best night in the history of television, Mr. Rock? Puhlease. Aren't we forgetting *The Sopranos* series finale? Or *Cheers*, perhaps? What about Wu-Tang Is for the Children? It wasn't even the best TV slap ever. That honour would, hands-down, pun intended, go to wrestler Jerry Lawler, who, on July 28, 1982, whalloped comedian Andy Kaufman right out of his chair, live on the set of *Late Night With David Letterman*. Now, that was the slap heard 'round the world. It still stings.

For my money, the Academy Award for Best Academy Awards goes to the 45th broadcast, when Sacheen Littlefeather refused Marlon Brando's Best Actor statue on his behalf. On that night in 1973, Oscar was as red as a warhorse.

"Based"

A number of Twitter users took to the platform following le Slap to praise Mr. Smith for his "based" behaviour.

Based is an interesting word, with multiple meanings, I've been discovering. It can mean the place from which one operates, i.e. Ryan Diduck is a Montreal-based author. Or, it can mean the basis upon which an assertion or statement or object is made, i.e. *The Godfather* is based upon the Mario Puzo novel, or based upon our current knowledge, O.J. is still out there looking for the real killers.

But based as-the-kids-say has come to mean something synonymous with "cool" or "fire," "dope" or "rad," "sick," "nice," or any of the other pimply hyperbole for overall approval. Based is fundamental to popular culture right now, and it's no coincidence. Based is fundament.

In Ancient Rome, as elsewhere, people constructed the solid base of their dwellings out of literal dung, the foundation, the fundamental fudge upon which this world is packed. It's shitty.

Perel featuring Marie Davidson, "Jesus Was An Alien," *Jesus Was An Alien* (Kompakt)

An update from the dep owner downstairs, who said that he is moving back to Iran if things in Montreal don't improve this summer. Apparently, even with the downtown downturn because of COVID-19, and the constant struggles of immigrants in Quebec to hang on for dear life to their small businesses, a new Couche-Tard is opening up in the quartier, just a stone's throw away from several other deps — one, a Chinese-owned convenience store that also, as a neighbourhood service, houses the closest Canada Post office. Well, that's one way to support local after a pandemic: give your friendly neighbourhood billionaire licence to corner the market.

On another note, this Iranian dep owner was recounting how much he missed the vastly superior standard of living in Iran. He pointed an indignant finger out the window at the shoddy, uneven Montreal



Perel and Marie Davidson

pavement: "Look at the streets here!" he exclaimed. "Do you know what the streets are like in my country?" he asked? I didn't. He held one hand down at his waist to signify Montreal-level, and the other hand high above his head to indicate Iran's superior infrastructure. I believe him. This is the city you get when you leave billionaires in charge.

LEYA, "Dankworld" (Actress Remix), *Eyeline* (NNA Tapes)

One of the many problems with being a writer is that you're not a writer as soon as you put down your pen. But there's so much more to writing than physically writing, whether by quill, by laptop, or by skywriter — whatever. First off, there's rewriting, which is like polishing if you're a sculptor, or apologizing if you're a Best Actor winner. Most of writing is done collecting things about which to write, or remembering, or inventing them. And then backpedalling afterwards and feeling remorse. You think this is easy, surrealism?

Plus, people these days imagine that anyone can be a writer just because everyone has a writing machine. They don't understand that it's really very difficult to put thoughts into words, and then put those words into sentences, and then have those sentences make sense in someone else's thoughts, if they care enough to have gotten that far.

As well, as a writer, your trade is plied dozens of times per day on unproductive things. We had the phone, but no — writing in 2022 has become our preferred mode of communication, for everything from text messages and tweets to commenting on *The New York Times*. It's my livelihood, but it's also necessary, for instance, for filing a complaint with your favourite Régie.

No other profession has this problem. A sex worker, let's just say for the sake of absolute absurdity, doesn't have to give blowjobs in order to set up a dentist appointment, and to request restitution from Amazon for a delivery that wasn't delivered, as well as to simply make a living. Knowing these Bezos-y types as we do, maybe they'd respond better to the blowjobs than the indignant emails.

George Jones, "Big Fool of the Year," b/w "A Girl I Used to Know" (United Artists, 1962)

Awaiting a recent flight, I met an interesting chap. His name is J. Paul Nadeau. He looks a bit like a petite Raveen, all angular cheekbones and manicured beard. But he's kind of a big deal in the self-help business. Nadeau was a cop previously, and then worked as a hostage negotiator in the Middle East. He's written a bunch of books, one of which he gave me, called *Take Control of Your Life*. He has parlayed his experience talking people down from ledges and out of explosive-loaded vests into a tidy career as an author, keynote speaker and somewhat of a power-of-positive-thinking guru.

Nadeau's metaphor is that we are all at some point in our lives "taken hostage" — by an ideology, an ex lover, or even by ourselves. It is a helpful way to think; we need to negotiate our way into and out of hostage-like crises every day. And our thoughts about them can persist and take our memory hostage long after we've indeed been freed.

But love is a mutual-hostage situation. True love takes no prisoners.

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