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Wu Tsang, *The Looks*, 2015. Two-channel colour  
HD video projection, stereo sound. 10 min.  
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# AGORA DE LA DANSE



**LES JOLIES CHOSES**

**CATHERINE GAUDET**

March 1-2-3 — 7 p.m.

Photo: © Julie Artacho



**OLD**

**MARGIE GILLIS**

March 9-10 — 7 p.m.

March 11-12 — 4 p.m.

Photo: © Sasha Onyshchenko



**MOUNTAINS ARE MOUNTAINS**

**DANA GINGRAS**

March 22-23-24 — 7 p.m.

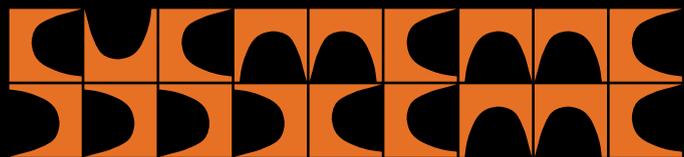
March 25 — 4 p.m.

Photo: © Yannick Grandmont

**AGORA**  
agoradanse.com

<b>1</b> Leef	<b>2</b> Joe Toner	<b>3</b> DJ Voices	<b>4</b> <b>Josh Peim:</b> <b>Documentary Film</b> <b>Theatre release</b> Richard Ura Kore Sebastian Puslan
<b>8</b> New Girl	<b>9</b> Roland Gonzales Kris Guilty	<b>10</b> <b>LOOSE</b> <b>SCREWS:</b> Bazaar & Dubson (live) Bunzinelli Faux Sommets	<b>11</b> Jamie Tiller
<b>15</b> n10.as <b>presents:</b> Stand on the Word	<b>16</b> Nahash Isa Boom OJPB	<b>17</b> Josh Cheon Faux Sommets	<b>18</b> Emissive (live/dj) Liv K.
<b>21</b> <b>Karaoke</b> <b>with Aly</b> <b>&amp; Pascale</b>	<b>22</b> n10.as <b>presents:</b> Zemple	<b>23</b> <b>COZMIQUE</b> <b>presents:</b> GRONDINI DOCTRIN STEFANIE CHEW	<b>25</b> <b>CKUT</b> <b>Fundraiser</b> DJ Andy Williams CND GFLEX GPS TONY
<b>28</b> Zach Frampton invites...	<b>29</b> n10.as <b>presents:</b> EEJUNGNJI	<b>30</b> Lexis Icky Magdala	<b>31</b> Glowzi IAIINNOTMNYHISTORY
			<b>1</b> <b>Fofu</b> <b>presents...</b>

7119 rue Saint-Hubert



# table of contents



We spoke with the Montreal indie/dream/jangle pop duo Bibi Club, whose debut album *Le soleil et la mer* made multiple year-end lists internationally, and whose song "Femme-Lady" topped our own list of the Top 52 Montreal Songs of 2022.

Cover photo by Dominic Berthiaume

<b>city</b>	<b>8</b>
:the 1st half	8
CF Montreal season preview	12
<b>food &amp; drink</b>	<b>14</b>
Foxy	14
<b>music</b>	<b>18</b>
Bibi Club	18
Baby Horse Records	20
:hammer of the mods	22
Album reviews	22
<b>film</b>	<b>24</b>
<i>Shazam! Fury of the gods</i>	24
On Screen	26
<b>arts</b>	<b>30</b>
Centaur	30
Parall(elles) exhibition	34
:game jam	38

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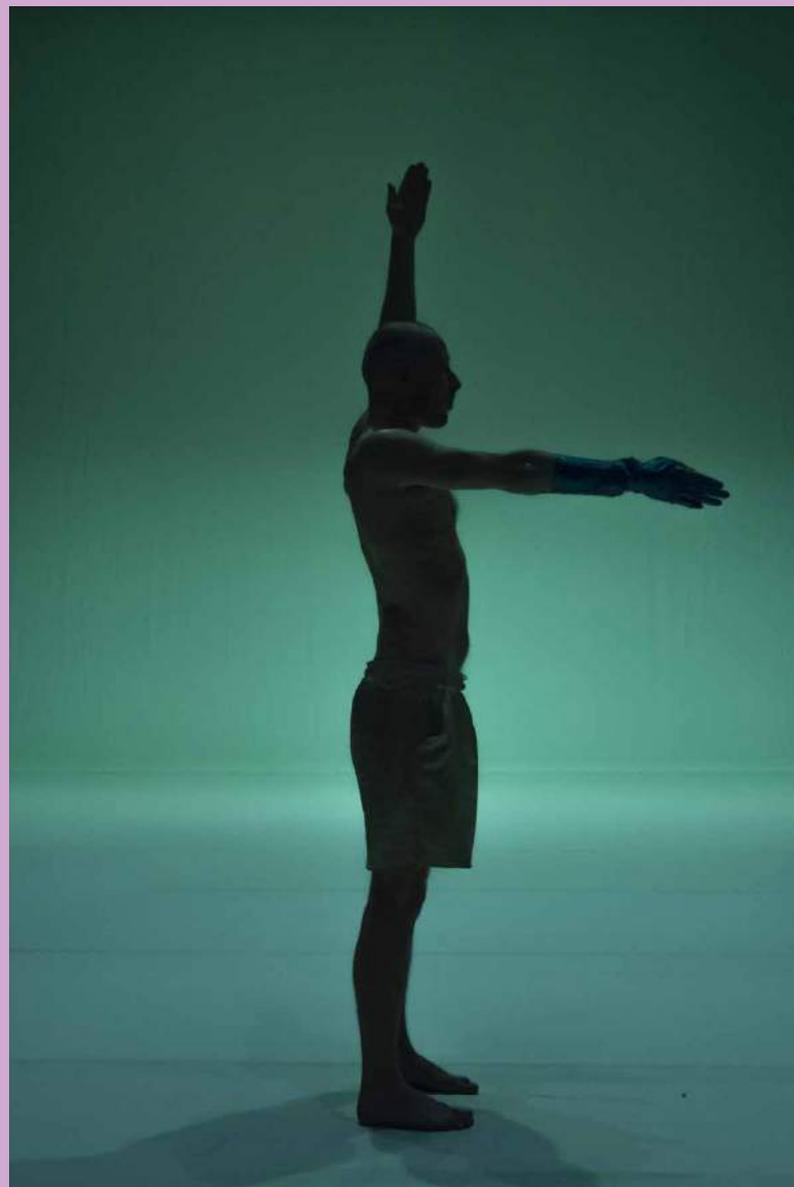


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# :the 1st half



BY PAUL DESBAILLETS

It's the 28th season of the MLS and the yearly start for the CF Montréal season. If you were not excited already, I will bring the hype and dispense some important information to get you up to speed.

The Montreal football landscape has changed and we need to take a minute to recap just what has happened since the crazy months of November and December have now passed us by. CF Montreal's DNA has changed. On Jan. 1, 2023, super talent Ismaël Koné was transferred to English second division Club Watford FC for a cool \$9-million. 20-year-old Koné, born in Abidjan, Ivory Coast, grew up in Montreal. After playing in St-Laurent and then joining CFM's Academy for a few months, he signed his first professional contract in 2021.

In 2022, he played 26 games, 18 as a starter, logging 1,587 minutes of play, collecting two goals and five assists in the MLS regular season. He also started both of Montreal's 2022 MLS Cup playoff games and scored the game-winning goal against Orlando City SC. In the CONCACAF Champions League, Koné also scored against Santos Laguna on Feb. 23, his first professional goal. Koné received his first international call-up with the Canadian Men's National Team during the last World Cup qualifying phase in March and he was with Canada at the FIFA World Cup in Qatar this past November where he played all three group stage games as a substitute. Koné is a future star.

At the same time, CFM transferred Canadian fullback Alistair Johnston to Celtic FC, the reigning Scottish Premier League champions, (you are very welcome Sir Rod Stewart!). Johnston, 24, was acquired from Nashville SC in 2021, in exchange for \$1-million in general allocation money. In 2022, he scored four goals and added five assists in 33 MLS regular season games. At the end of the year, *Cult MTL* was there when Johnston was named the Club's Defensive Player of the Year. Like Koné, Alistair played for Team Canada at the FIFA World Cup in Qatar. He played 90 minutes in all three games during the group stage. He was sold to Celtic FC for \$5-million. (Those dollars must have bought some nice holiday gifts in December.)

Montreal hired new coach Hernan Losada during this rebuild. The 40-year-old from Argentina was head

coach of D.C. United and a Belgian Club Beerschot V.A. in Europe. Coach Losada had a good playing career that lasted from 2003–18, with 101 goals and 55 assists in 370 games. He played for Independiente in Argentina before moving to Europe, where he played most of his career in Belgium.

The core of the CFM from last year are still in the house representing Montreal. Some fan favourites, to name a few, are Victor Wanyama, Rudy Camacho, Samuel Piette, Mathieu Choiniere, Kamal Miller, Mason Toye and Goal Initiative Foundation Ambassador Joel Waterman. They'll be looking to go further and do better in this year's MLS playoffs.

The way we viewed MLS has changed this year.

Apple is now paying \$250-million annually to showcase the action exclusively. MLS struck the deal with Apple to make it easier to access all the matches across all iOS devices so you can watch anywhere, anytime. Apple has also promised to help accelerate the growth of MLS and strengthen the connections between supporters and their clubs with personalized experiences. Once a fan selects their favourite club, their matches will automatically appear in the Up Next watchlist on the Apple TV app so they will never miss a moment. Fans can also opt into receiving a notification on iPhone and iPad whenever their match is about to start. You will still be able to catch a few matches on TSN/RDS, like the season opener vs. Inter Miami that went down on Feb 25th. (Montreal lost the match, 2–0.)

The next match, vs. Austin FC, will take place on March 4, 8:30 p.m.

All CFM matches can also be seen at Pub Burgundy Lion, home of football in Montreal (which, full disclosure, I also co-founded).

Now you must also be made aware that CFM, along with all other MLS clubs, are part of a very exciting new North American wide competition called the Leagues Cup. 47 football clubs will take part in this football super party, 18 from LIGA MX in Mexico and 29 from MLS. CFM will participate in this officially sanctioned CONCACAF competition where 15 groups will face off in a World Cup style tournament that will qualify three clubs for the 2024 CONCACAF Champions League. The Leagues Cup will take place from July 21 to Aug. 19, 2023. Montreal will be facing D.C. United and Pumas from LIGA MX, a club based in Mexico City. Founded in 1954, Pumas has won the Mexican Championship seven times.

The groups in this tournament were divided up into four regions, West, Central, South and East. Every team will play two matches in the group stage, with the top two teams from each group, decided by points, advancing to the knockout stage round of 32. No matches in the Leagues Cup group

stage will end in a tie. If a game is tied after 90 minutes, the game will proceed to a penalty shoot-out. (GET RIGHT TO THE POINT I say, could not be happier with this set-up!)

Montreal's Leagues Cup group looks like this:

East

- East 1: Philadelphia Union (#1 MLS), Club Tijuana (#15 LIGA MX), Querétaro (#17 LIGA MX)
- East 2: CF Montréal (#2 MLS), Pumas (#14 LIGA MX), D.C. United (#27 MLS)
- East 3: New York City FC (#4 MLS), Atlas (#12 LIGA MX), Toronto FC (#26 MLS)
- East 4: New York Red Bulls (#5 MLS), Atlético de San Luis (#11 LIGA MX), New England Revolution (#19 MLS)

I am excited and hopeful that this tournament will create a whole new level of fan in North America, much like the mid-year World Cup created this past November in Qatar.

Now let's talk shirts & shorts. MLS and Adidas have agreed to a multiyear extension of their current partnership. The deal was announced days before MLS kicked off at the end of February and is valued at \$830-million. The relationship will continue until 2030 and yes, this deal represents Adidas's largest-ever investment in North American soccer. On the merch front, clubs have gone all out with special edition kits and collaborations that we will dig into later this month.

Montreal is still missing its new look and rebranded home kit. Therefore, this year's CFM start to the season will be in last year's away kit with the new logo. Let's get ready for the football roller-coaster ride that we all love and loathe at the same time.

I want to say how much I, GOAL INITIATIVES FOUNDATION and the city of Montreal will miss Kei Kamera and wish him and his family the best in his next chapter. GOAL INITIATIVES FOUNDATION will stay committed to what we have promised, in terms of raising funds to support the very important work Kei and Heart Shaped Hands are doing in Africa in this year's fundraising endeavours.

"There is no pressure when you are making a dream come true." —Neymar

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# montréal, arts interculturels march 2023

visual arts



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dance



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- APR 01**

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MAR 02- 5PM**

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MAR 09- 5PM**

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Assistant Director **Vlad Alexis** Stage Manager **Melanie St-Jacques** Assistant Stage Manager **Brianna Bagshaw-Stocks**



Patrick Emmanuel Abellard in *King Dave*. Photo by Danny Taillon

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Montréal

## The dawn of a new season



John David Mercer

BY DAVE MACINTYRE

Calling this a transitional year for CF Montréal is quite the understatement — and that’s not even including the logo change.

The MLS franchise have made headlines in recent months for selling three of their brightest young stars from last season to European clubs: Alistair Johnston (Celtic in the Scottish Premiership), Ismaël Koné (Watford in the English Championship) and midfield stalwart Djordje Mihailovic (AZ Alkmaar in the Dutch Eredivisie).

Winger Joaquin Torres was traded to the Philadelphia Union, and multiple other players (e.g. Zorhan Bassong, Bjorn Johnsen, Sebastian Breza, Gabriele Corbo) are also departing the club. Centre-backs Kamal Miller and Joel Waterman — both of whom went to Qatar with the Canadian national men’s team for the World Cup this past December — are reportedly attracting European interest. Striker Kei Kamara also requested a trade in January, though he remains with

the club as of this writing.

As if all this weren’t enough, former player Sandro Grande was hired as CF Montréal’s reserve team head coach, only to have his offer quickly rescinded after Parti Québécois leader Paul St-Pierre Plamondon tweeted about Grande’s controversial 2012 tweets about former premier Pauline Marois (Grande apologized to Marois in writing following his dismissal, and his family has reportedly received threats over his comments).

Although CF Montréal have recouped quite the windfall for Mihailovic, Johnston and Koné combined (at least €17.5-million, or more than \$25-million CAD), the most heartbreaking and consequential departure may be former head coach Wilfried Nancy, who left to manage the Columbus Crew. His exit comes after a bust-up with owner Joey Saputo following a 2–1 loss in July against Sporting Kansas City. Saputo was enraged following the defeat and wanted to speak to the players, but Nancy refused to let him into the dressing room, leading to a shouting match between the two. Replacing Nancy is Hernan Losada, a 40-year-old Argentine known for his strict, fitness-heavy management

style, and for previously spending 15 months (and only 41 matches) managing D.C. United after joining the MLS from Belgian club Beerschot.

“It seemed pretty clear that Wilfried Nancy had turned the page on CF Montréal, and that’s something the club had to deal with,” says journalist Tristan D’Amours. “I don’t think that Joey Saputo helped his case, but then again, the Columbus Crew are an ambitious team that zeroed in on Nancy to help link up their academy to their first team, while trying to win trophies. It’s a step forward for Nancy. However, it wasn’t a good look for Montreal.”

So how will things go down for CF Montréal when their new season kicks off Feb. 25 away at Inter Miami? And why should fans still look forward to the upcoming season, despite the gusty winds of change within the club? First, it’s worth remembering there’s no guarantee the 2023 campaign wouldn’t have been a transitional one even without this much upheaval.

“Even if Wilfried Nancy stayed with his whole staff, it would have been a bit of a reset with all the changes,” says Sofiane

Benzaza, content creator for KAN Football Club, a French-language podcast dedicated to soccer in Quebec. “With Hernan Losada, it’s a bigger change than we maybe expected back in September or October.

“It seems like the philosophy of this coach aligns with the philosophy of the club, to say, ‘We’re going to play this style: offensive, pressing etc.’ They seem to have players to do that, but they’re missing a few players to be able to be as competitive as last year. You’ll have to wait until April to see how this team’s doing.”

For Benzaza, the club’s biggest need remains a striker (as well as another midfielder), even if Kamara sticks around. Ideally, that striker’s profile would be an expensive fox in the box between the ages of 24 and 30, though he realizes CF Montréal takes a lower-budget approach to building their squad. But there’s always room for internal surprises, particularly within the youth setup.

“Last year, I didn’t see Ismaël Koné coming at all,” he admits. “I was kind of worried (before last season). You had Torres, (Ahmed) Hamdi and Mihailovic, who was going to get better, but the midfield was a bit light. Then Koné came over and cemented himself with (Victor) Wanyama and (Samuel) Piette.”

The squad’s primary architect is Olivier Renard, CF Montréal’s vice president and chief sporting officer (previously sporting director). A goalkeeper in his playing days who has since gained valuable experience in directorial, scouting and consulting roles at Standard Liège and Royal Antwerp in Belgium, Renard has made an array of shrewd transactions since his arrival in Montreal in September 2019.

Working alongside club president/CEO Gabriel Gervais and assistant sporting director Vasili Cremanzidis, Renard’s perceived “buy low, sell high” approach has helped CF Montréal finish second in the Eastern Conference last season, a new record for the club. However, rumours out of Turkey emerged in January linking CF Montréal to striker Edin Dzeko. Although the lynchpin of the attack remains the Honduran striker/winger Romell Quioto, confidence levels by fans and media in Renard’s philosophy should nonetheless remain high, even without any big names incoming.

“He has a strategy and a vision, and there are no question marks. There are no weird dealings. It’s very clear,” says Benzaza. “The previous sporting directors, Adam Braz and Nick DeSantis, knew their football, but sometimes the strategy of the club as a whole wasn’t necessarily cohesive in a league that has accelerated.

“Clubs (in MLS now) have a huge staff of scouts and technical directors. You can look at Toronto FC’s technical staff — it’s humongous. It looks like a Premier League club’s staff for scouting. This has caught up to them, and now they have a clear vision.”

Despite the money earned from selling Mihailovic, Johnston and Koné, the club has yet to truly reinvest that money into players who can elevate them (a rumoured signing of American midfielder Alan Soñora didn’t materialize). This may be partly due to major financial losses over the past few years, including a loss of \$12-million from last season despite gaining \$30-million in revenue. CF Montréal is also the second-least valuable franchise in MLS according to Forbes, with only the Colorado Rapids trailing them. (Recent reports, however, suggest CF Montréal’s financial fortunes could soon change.)

If anything, fans can probably expect this team’s squad construction to remind them of the 2002 “moneyball” Oakland Athletics in Major League Baseball. “This is not a

team that will be a big spender within MLS,” says D’Amours. “This might be the Oakland Athletics of MLS, where they get a lot of lesser-known players who end up being stars somewhere else, or who end up being stars within the team and then move on. The positive aspect of that is you might be in the black at some point, and make a lot of money off of them. But you’re not necessarily going to see a well-known designated player (come in).”

CF Montréal have already acquired new players from within MLS, adding a centre-back from Atlanta United in George Campbell as well as a right-back in Aaron Herrera from Real Salt Lake to replace Johnston. The club inked Toronto-born midfielder Ilias Iliadis from Panathinaikos in Greece in mid-January before later signing Montreal native Jules-Anthony Vilsaint — a 20-year-old who’d most recently been in Royal Antwerp’s youth system.

Some younger players could also fill a void internally: Rida Zouhir, Mathieu Choinière, Sean Rea, Nathan-Dylan Saliba and goalkeeper Jonathan Sirois are all local boys (in addition to Vilsaint) with considerable upside, while Matko Miljevic (who will unfortunately be sidelined for two to three months with a left meniscus tear), Chinonso Offor and Sunusi Ibrahim are foreign players who could fit that same bill — each under the age of 23. Another example is Róbert Orri Thorkelsson, a young centre-back who’s already gotten reps with the Icelandic senior national team, though he’s made only four appearances with CF Montréal to date.

“He hasn’t played a lot of minutes thus far with our club, but I think he’s ready to step up and play more this year,” says Patrick Leduc, CF Montreal’s director of soccer culture (and former Montreal Impact player from 2000–2010). “I’m not saying he’ll end up being a starter, but I think he’s got the potential to play a lot more. Other players in a similar profile will benefit from having the opportunities.”

If you ask D’Amours, Sean Rea in particular — a 20-year-old attacking midfielder from Laval who’s spent two seasons on loan at Valour FC in Winnipeg in the Canadian Premier League, where he was the league’s U21 Player of the Year in 2022 — is a candidate to take a big step forward this season. Rea has also made it public that he likely wouldn’t be returning to the CPL for the upcoming campaign. But it’s also worth being gentle with him, and not counting on him too much to be an immediate difference-maker.

“We’re going to have to be a bit patient, even though he’s stated his intentions,” D’Amours adds. “I hope that fans don’t expect him to be Ismaël Koné from the get-go. Ismaël Koné was an unknown before he scored his first goal in the (CONCACAF) Champions League, and then it lit a fire under everyone. Patience is probably going to be a virtue with Rea if we want him to succeed. He’s got an opportunity, and I like the gusto.”

Meanwhile, Hernan Losada’s hiring hasn’t been met without controversy. This isn’t simply because of the swift and sudden nature of Nancy’s departure, but also Losada’s reputation for emphasizing fitness (specifically players’ diets and weight) and putting his players through intense training sessions, as well as his underwhelming record at D.C. United.

The Argentine also came under fire by former D.C. United goalkeeper Chris Seitz in a tweet thread last May for confronting him about a two-year-old photo he posted on Mother’s Day of his wife and kids having a picnic. Though Seitz was not in the photo himself, Losada criticized him for his “poor food choices,” leading to Seitz hitting “rock bottom” and experiencing depression, with his wife fearing that he’d developed an eating disorder and that he’d “lost his joy.” Losada has also been accused by another player,

Julian Gressel, of handing out fines to players who were over his desired weight, among other things. It doesn’t help, either, that Losada is yet another pony in the club’s coaching carousel in MLS under Joey Saputo’s ownership — their ninth in less than 12 years.

But Losada, CF Montreal’s youngest-ever head coach who also happens to be a French-speaking polyglot, has vowed to correct his previous coaching mistakes, and his tactical approach lines up nicely with the style the club has played with since Renard arrived. Having a warm persona away from the pitch doesn’t hurt, either.

“I’ll use a word that might surprise you, but I think he’s been charming in all of his interviews,” says Leduc. “First of all, he’s able to speak multiple languages. I think that’s a touchy subject here in Montreal, but it’s something that is really well-received by our fanbase. He’s also been smiling in every interview. And obviously, any fanbase will like a coach who brings wins. If we can understand where he’s trying to go, what he’s trying to do with the team, I think it helps everybody be on the same page.”

The club has been holding training camp since Jan. 9, having first spent a month at the Big O — where they played a scrimmage as well as a friendly against the PLSQ All-Stars — before heading down south to continue camp in Fort Lauderdale, FL, to get used to playing on grass before facing Inter Miami. Leduc tells us the players had “heavy physical sessions” in Montreal before travelling to Florida, where they’ve had “a little bit of a *Top Gun* feel” to their camp by playing beach volleyball, as well as having team-bonding exercises.

Though there are plenty of takeaways, both positive and negative, from the months since the club’s heartbreaking early playoff exit to New York City FC in October, the 2023 season should be nothing if not intriguing. Many are already predicting a lower-table finish in the Eastern Conference this season. Benzaza, for one, definitely doesn’t see CF Montréal as a team that could finish top-three in the East again.

“Too many clubs have gotten better, and Losada is a question mark,” he adds. “I would say we’re a mid-table club — 10th to 13th in the (Eastern Conference) standings.”

The club will once again go into a season as a relative underdog in MLS. But once you tune out that noise, there are some definite silver linings worth focusing on. “I think we will have an ambitious team, a team that wants to take the game to their opponents. I expect a team that is willing to take the initiative, take some risks. That’s exciting,” says Leduc.

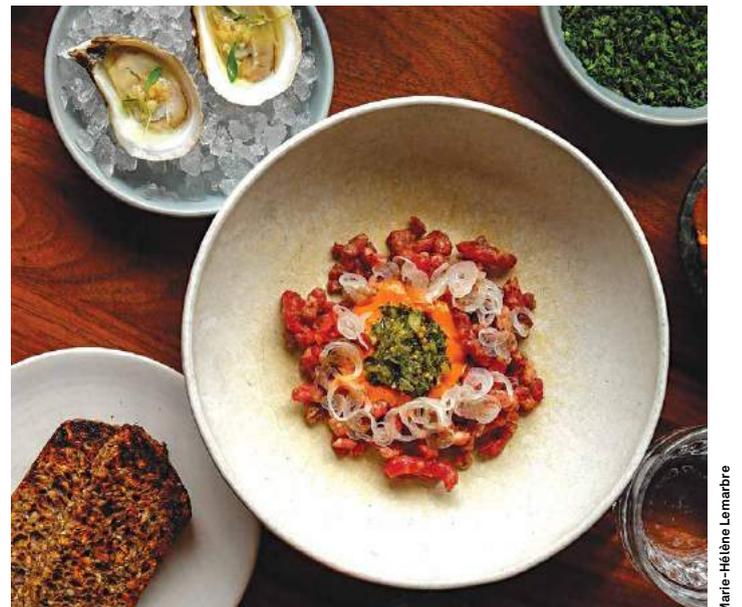
“Also, you have to remember the defensive foundation has not changed much from last year. That’s always where you’re building from. Our core is pretty solid. We’ll try to get every player to contribute to the attack, and that’s where the focus might be early in the year. We’ll be eager to surprise again. I can understand how other clubs might underestimate us. I actually hope they will, because it gives you the challenge. If our players are hungry, and they’re up for it, then we have a better chance of success.”

Given all the uncertainty about how the coaching change and squad turnover will unfold, not to mention the opportunities that will surely be given to relatively unproven younger players, it’s understandable to be anxious about the impending campaign. But perhaps that’s part of the fun behind the dawn of a new season.

“The cool thing about question marks is that you see them slowly answered as you watch the players on the field,” D’Amours says. “It might be for the best, it might also be for the worst. But there is some intrigue in this CF Montréal squad, and we’re all going to find out about it together.”

# food

## An exceptional experience



Marie-Hélène Lemarbre

BY CLAY SANDHU

Intentionality is a trait that often gets overlooked in the restaurant industry.

It's more than what a restaurant serves, its concept or what's on the wine list. Intentionality is self-reflective and can be felt in every aspect, from the decor to the service and from the menu to the soundtrack. When a restaurant's intention is clearly defined, and the team understands that each element of the restaurant works in support of the other, you get something extraordinary. There are only a few restaurants that I can think of that have a strongly considered intention and even fewer that manage to clearly articulate that intention while pulling off a faultless dining

experience. I'm happy to say that, after an exceptional meal, I can comfortably add Foxy to that list.

Opened in 2015, the restaurant owned and operated by Dyan Solomon (Olive + Gourmando and Un Po di Piu) and Éric Girard has earned a reputation for being very good. As a chef-owner, Solomon gets a lot of praise for the exceptional quality of the food at her restaurants but she would be the first to acknowledge that the success of her establishments rests in large part with the staff and management who run them. That's her real gift, I think — she, more than almost anyone, is able to identify, nourish and empower talent. That, and I believe she truly understands hospitality. Her vision is comprehensive, which is to say she gets the bigger picture and she nails all the details. In other words: she just gets it, and not everyone does.

Despite being widely beloved, Foxy somehow doesn't come up much in the circles I run in. I can't say exactly why that is. Maybe it's the tucked-away Griffintown location, or the name, which sounds more like a supper club than a proper restaurant. But if you'd asked me two weeks ago what I had to say about Foxy, I'd say that people seem to like it and that it's known for wood-fired cooking. Both those things are true, but that description is far too reductive — Foxy is the only restaurant of its type in Montreal, and based on my most recent meal, I'd argue that it's one of the best restaurants in the city.

My dining companion and I came to eat on a particularly frigid Friday evening. It was -20 or so, perfect weather for sitting by the fire. Immediately upon entering, the room envelopes you in this dark and moody atmosphere; not

dark and brooding though, more cozy and sophisticated — romantic even. You get the sense that you're not in Montreal anymore, maybe New York or London. I digress, I made the point before that Solomon's gift is surrounding herself with talent and that starts at the front door where we were greeted by Montreal hospitality stalwart and Foxy's director of hospitality, Véronique Dalle. Dalle, who has been called Montreal's "Grande Dame of Sommellerie" by legendary sommelière Veronique Rivest, is a wine educator who has trained a generation of the city's best wine minds and who has put together exceptional wine lists across the city — most notably at Pullman, where she oversaw the wine program for over a decade. Not a bad team captain.

As we settled into our seats by the front window overlooking a scene of frozen city streets, the sweet and unmistakable scent of the wood oven wafted to our table. Suddenly, as if by magic, it was as if we were cozying up to the fireplace for a hearty winter dinner. Back to the décor for a moment. The room has this mid-century modern meets industrial look. Wood and metal combine in different ways throughout the space and the colour palette is decidedly black and brown with touches of gold and brass. With the scent of wood and smoke lingering in my nose, I suddenly got it: the entire room is designed to recall the wood oven. Even the brick wall, which is painted matte-black evokes charcoal — it's all on purpose. No matter where you're seated in the restaurant, you can smell the oven and you're reminded of its existence. A point for intentionality in design.

Okay, time for a cocktail. Foxy's cocktail list, like most everything at the restaurant, is unconventional but highly considered — it's also a bit on the pricey side, with drinks ranging from \$16–\$30. My dining companion opted for a classic martini, which she described as being the best that she's had. I for my part took the recommendation of the Labrusco (\$16), a mix of gin and Chilean pisco with sage, lime, long pepper and a concord grape syrup made of last season's preserves. Served up, the indigo-hued libation was vibrant and spirit-forward. The gin's juniper profile pinged off the long-pepper's floral spice and the vinous quality of the concord grape added body and structure for a drink that properly whetted the palate. A perfect aperitif that arrived just in time for a trio of snacks.

The menu opens with a succinct selection of snacks: oysters with a seasonal dressing, a "three-layer" dip and gougères. We opted for the works. The oysters, served on the half-shell, came dressed with a sort of ginger and coriander mignonette that made for a very pho-like profile. Simple, tasty and great with a cocktail. The three-layer dip, served with a side of crispy potato chips, consisted of a sort of brandade, which was topped with Mujjol caviar and finished with a blanket of chives and dill. Beautifully seasoned, the brandade had the texture of a light rilette and spread easily onto the chips. If you're a chip and dip person — and I am — you will love this dip. The gougères, I am almost ashamed to admit, were one of the best bites of the night (among an unrelenting parade of delicious bites). These messy morsels are craquelin-covered profiteroles filled with a luscious mornay-like smoked cheddar sauce flecked with little bits of crispy prosciutto that burst from the beautifully airy chou pastry and onto your fingers and plate. As I said, it's a bit messy but it had us smiling from ear to ear. What can I say, I guess I'm a sucker for a cheeseball.

Foxy's reputation, since 2015, was owed in large part to Leigh Roper, a Vin Papillon alumnus who ran the kitchen until 2021. Under her direction and in collaboration with Solomon, Foxy's menu focused heavily on animal protein — that is to say, meats on the grill. Nothing wrong with that. However, after permanently stepping back from the kitchen two years

ago, Foxy's hearth is now under the direction of a new chef, Catherine Couvet Desrosiers. Roper leaves behind big shoes to fill, especially for Desrosiers as this is her first ever time leading the kitchen as its chef. She is, without a doubt, equipped for the role. Though quite young, Desrosiers's resumé includes time spent at Marconi, Bouillon Bilk, the late Hotel Herman, le Petit Mouso and, most notably, the Michelin-starred Manfreds in Copenhagen — some of the most meticulous, creative and technique-driven restaurants around the world. Dalle and Solomon each view Desrosiers with admiration and see her as a welcome change of pace for the restaurant. Under her direction, animal proteins are down by nearly half in favour of seasonal vegetables.

One thing that hasn't changed on the menu, however, is the feta. A staple since day one, the cheese is always the same — only the garnish changes. On this particular occasion, the feta (my guess is that it's a blend of sheep's and cow's milk) was topped with tender rounds of braised leeks, a soft-boiled egg and a handful of parsley all dressed in an anchovy vinaigrette. It's an exquisite little plate of cheese and herbs. The feta is silky and fragrant and briny without being overly salty. It acts as the perfect counterpart for the richness of the egg yolk. The herbs bring a touch of vibrancy, as does the vinaigrette, but if I'm splitting hairs, I would have liked the dressing to have a touch more anchovy. What makes this dish, however, is actually on the plate next to it — a beautifully puffed and charred round of pita cooked to order over charcoal. Brilliant.

Accompanying the feta was an order of beef tartare. Put through the meat grinder, Foxy's tartare may have a slightly unusual look if you're used to hand-cut tartare. That method, however, has its advantages; having been gently ground (only a single pass-through) means that any tough bits of meat get mixed in with the more tender parts, yielding a more consistent texture overall. Taking a North African approach, the tartare is topped with a roasted pepper and chilli condiment that tastes like the middle ground between Turkish ajvar and Spanish romesco. The lot is topped with a small pool of preserved ramps in oil. After the recommended vigorous mixing, the resulting dish is electric. The tender beef is enlivened by the warm bite of chilli and the smokey quality of roasted pepper, the ramp adds depth but also a touch of welcome acidity. The tartare is served with a few slices of sprouted rye bread, which adds a bit of crunch for texture. It's an absolute pleasure to eat and one of the best tartares I've had in recent memory.

Our next course presented the most iconoclastic duo of dishes of the evening: cacio e pepe spaghetti with black truffle and a flatbread — a pizzette, really — topped with squash purée and kimchi. Before I talk about these dishes, I want to briefly comment on the wine. Dalle's list is long and the references are deep — suffice to say, there is no shortage of exceptional wine at all price points on this list. Dalle herself, however, is the cellar's greatest resource. As we discussed the wine, I see the gears turning; she's combing over the list and digging through the cellar. We briefly talk Burgundy — maybe deep rosato from Tuscany. Ultimately, she emerges from the cellar with the last bottle of Karmin No. 9 from Austrian winemakers Christine & Franz Strohmeier. A complex rosé made of Blauer Wildbacher, it's elegant and somewhat earthy, with just the right amount of young red fruit and present acidity. "You're having this," she says with authority. She couldn't have been more right. The menu at Foxy is eclectic — it jumps around in terms of style and cuisine seemingly at will. While that's a quality that I usually see as a negative, it makes perfect sense at Foxy. They're not creating a menu in accordance with a region or cuisine or a particular style, but based on seasonal availability and the ingredients that are best suited to the

open flame. That presents a challenge for anyone building a wine list because it requires flexibility, creativity, an ability to select wines and winemakers that are atypical. It also requires the know-how of a sommelier who can pick a wine that can start with feta and tartare and carry over to a kimchi flatbread. If anyone would be up to the task, it's Dalle.

We all acknowledge that the rosé and the cacio e pepe isn't the greatest pairing, but who cares? We're at peak truffle season and the toothsome pasta finished in a pan over an open flame has taken on the slightest hint of smoke that seems to have awakened some usually more muted qualities of black pepper. It's not entirely traditional but it is entirely delicious. The pizzette, however, is the wine's perfect match. The bubbled, gently charred crust works perfectly with the earthy and somewhat flinty quality of the wine. The sweet and creamy squash purée is lent acidity by the wine and funky notes of fermentation present in both the wine and the kimchi find balance and harmony in each other. When a pairing is right, the food is made better by the wine and vice versa. Both dishes were fantastic and a perfect example of the range of cooking that this kitchen can execute.

The final dish was, for me, revelatory: a take on chou-farci, a Savoyard dish of cabbage stuffed with minced pork. Desrosiers gives her chou-farci a mille-feuille treatment, layering mint-inflected braised lamb between layers of steamed savoy cabbage. Pressed, seared, and served by the slice, it's a dish that is seemingly simple and that tastes so beautifully complex. It reminds me so much of what I loved about Hotel Herman and what many of my favourite restaurants do so well, to restrict themselves from unnecessary flourishes and to cook with precision. This is a dish that was about two things: cabbage and lamb and not only did Desrosiers succeed in celebrating both ingredients, but she also managed to produce the best dish I've had all year. Sensing that our rosé might be a touch too acidic, Dalle arrived with perfect timing to serve us a glass of Grenache Noir from Laurence Many Krief of Domaine YoYo in Banyuls. Rich and bold, Krief's Grenache tastes of dark fruit, wildflowers and Herbs de Provence and it sings alongside our chou.

Each course, the pacing, the wine and the ambiance is dialled in. Each dish is ordered to build an arc for the meal. For dessert, we shared the mignardise for two, which included tender paté de fruits, crisp chocolate chip cookies with chewy centres, miniature bites of tarte au citron and two profiteroles filled with what I'd guess was a take on banoffee. All the bites were excellent but bookending our meal with the sweet rendition of the gougères that kicked off the meal was a subtle wink and a stroke of genius.

We in Montreal have such an entrenched restaurant culture. Dining out comes as second nature. I think that it can make us complacent, or at least our exposure to it means that we see dining out as quotidian. Foxy reminds us that dining out can and maybe should be an occasion. I left my meal not just impressed with the beauty of the room, the competency of the service or the quality of the food — I left with the sense of having experienced hospitality in its truest form. My experience as a diner was left in the hands of a team of professionals who, at every stage, ensured that I was being taken care of. More remarkably, as I looked around the room, Dalle and her team were working it with poise and efficiency yet always had time to share an embrace with a regular, to discuss wine and the menu at length, to fill a glass with champagne or fetch a coat from the rack, all with seamless orchestration. All around me, delighted guests were experiencing exactly what I had experienced. It takes a lot to make an impression like that on one person, but on an entire dining room on a busy Friday night? That is the sign of a truly exceptional restaurant.

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## Babies, chandeliers and LSD

BY DAVE MACINTYRE

Montreal, meet the king and queen of living room party music.

Bibi Club, comprised of real-life couple Nicolas Basque (one-third of Plants and Animals) and Adèle Trottier-Rivard, have emerged as a force within Montreal's music scene in a relatively short time since their debut album, *Le soleil et la mer*, was released last August on Secret City.

Mixing genres like indie pop, jangle pop and dream pop (as well as jazz, folk, post-punk and plenty of others in between), their tunes immediately stand out with their heavy use of reverb, bilingual vocals and glistening instrumentation. Bibi Club's palette of influences is a diverse one, too: Stereolab, Suicide, Alice Coltrane, Air, Mount Kimbie and Talking Heads, to name a few.

*Le soleil et la mer* had been recorded between 2020 and 2021, during peak pandemic times. The duo attributes the delay to indecision as to whether or not to self-release the album, coupled with not having a team at the time to help guide them.

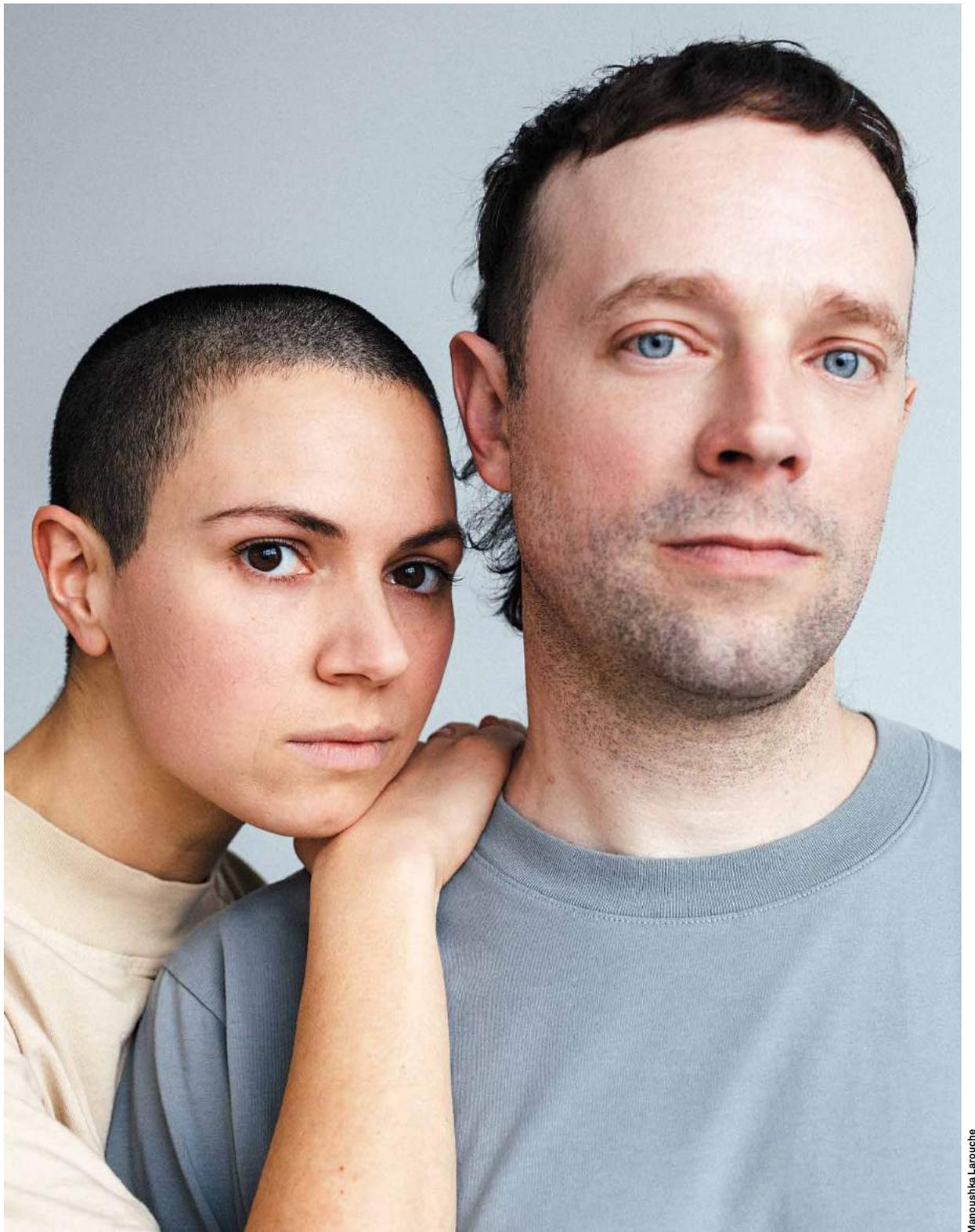
"Because we're a couple, we were like, 'We need to have people to help us out, because we'll go crazy if that's all we do with our lives,'" Basque says. "We got lucky. We found management, then they helped us out and we sent the record around. That's why it took a while. It's just long. Every label and everybody in the music industry was exhausted because they had to cancel and rebook so many things. They had a pile of records that were not released, or had to be released, or that they maybe didn't even want to release anymore."

The past half-year since the album came out has been exciting for the duo — a busy time, of course, but one where it feels like a foundation is being built. While the logistics can be challenging at times, since the couple have children at home (one child together and two from Basque's previous relationship), Basque says they're "really well-surrounded" by their families and their team.

"We've been travelling a lot since the release, which is great. Not really eco-friendly or planet-friendly (laughs), but I'm quite happy about that," adds Trottier-Rivard, who mentions they've been meeting tons of new people while touring, as the band recently performed in Brazil and have played shows in France on several occasions.

"I feel we're learning a lot about ourselves, playing live," Basque adds. "When the codes are different, you start almost forgetting about yourself, and you can let loose in a different way. There's something that's been really fun about playing in places where nobody knows who we are. It's almost like you're the underdog. You have to not really convince them, but invite them to be part of that musical experience."

Their partnership started out as a musical one before gradually blooming into something more. Trottier-Rivard met



Manoushka Larouche

Basque while she was touring alongside Plants and Animals, and while she'd also been working with their frontman Warren Spicer on an album for Ludovic Alarie.

The two met through Spicer, and Trottier-Rivard then started coming to Plants and Animals' sessions. She and Basque would also go to the same shows in Montreal (watching artists like Suuns and Moonface), and occasionally play together on stage. While on the road in Canada and the U.S., the two started sharing musical ideas with one another, which they'd continue upon returning to Montreal.

"I was working on some ideas by myself, but I knew that I needed someone else to share ideas with," says Trottier-Rivard. "Nico was this huge artistic revelation (for me). I was like, 'That's the person I want to share those things with.'"

The two had another band prior to Bibi Club, which started as a project with video artists. "It was a bit more epic and darker, in a way," Basque continues. "At some point, we took the time to start working on the record, and we were like, 'You know what? We want to start from scratch. That's not what we want to be musically.'"

After resetting their musical approach, Bibi Club released their self-titled debut EP in May 2019. The name originates

from their living room where they and their loved ones — their "bibis," aka their children, friends and family — would come and have a mini dance-party. It also pulls from the Arabic word "habibi," meaning "darling" or "my dear" (Trottier-Rivard's aunt is from Morocco, and would frequently call her "bibi" growing up).

"Adèle calls everybody she likes 'bibi,'" Basque continues. "At some point during the pandemic, it was madness in the house. Through all the sounds, she's like, 'I think I've got a name for the band! What about Bibi Club?' We're like, 'Ah, that feels right!'"

"There's also something (in the name) that felt connected to the music. There's something a bit joyful in the music. At the same time, we always try to keep tension. So there's the 'club' part, but at the same time, it sounds like it's not a 'happy' project."

Trottier-Rivard, who says that dichotomy reminds her of artists like British post-punks Dry Cleaning, adds that she and Basque are inspired by "music that has a certain spirituality or depth, but is still joyful, playful and not dark."

As a temporary respite from their lives as parents (their kids are often around while they're rehearsing in their basement and/or recording demos of new songs on their phones),

Basque and Trottier-Rivard took LSD one night during lockdown. “It was a long journey,” Trottier-Rivard says of their eight-hour trip — no travelling puns intended.

“It had been six months. Schools were closed,” adds Basque. “At the time, we were living in a smaller apartment, the five of us, and doing school at home. We were going crazy. At some point, we booked the studio, and we were like, ‘We can’t just be parents. We’ve got to be artists.’”

The two had an instrumental number they’d been wanting to track whilst in the studio. “I didn’t have to sing on that song, so we thought, ‘We could get high!’” Trottier-Rivard says.

Though it was a fun experience, their booked studio time meant they’d be going down the rabbit hole during broad daylight. By 4 p.m., the song was tracked and recorded. “We did two takes, and then it was just like, ‘Oh, that’s just too much for us!’” Basque says while Trottier-Rivard takes a swig of water next to him and nearly spits it out laughing.

The end result of their afternoon acid-fuelled adventures? “Bellini,” the nine-and-a-half minute instrumental that serves as *Le Soleil et la mer*’s woozily danceable penultimate track. “That’s the LSD song,” Trottier-Rivard adds.

In case you’re reading that and asking if that’s why it wound up being such a long song, it was already structured that way beforehand. Right before COVID hit in March 2020, Basque hosted a dual-night event at Ursa (Martha Wainwright’s community space on Parc Avenue) where he and different friends would jam and improvise. Adèle was there with him one night, and already had “Bellini”’s chords locked down. Basque wrote the melody, and the two tested the song out that night.

“A lot of friends after the show were like, ‘You should record that song! There’s something good in that jam,’” he continues. “We always had it in the back of our mind... It was improv, so I had a timer for 10 minutes. We knew what would happen at each moment. But when we recorded it, it was the inner clock! (laughs)”

Another track borne from one of those jam nights at Ursa was “Femme-Lady,” which *Cult MTL* placed atop our Top 52 Montreal Songs of 2022 list. While jamming there with Erika Angell of Thus Owls, Basque was working on a beat and chord progression he’d eventually bring to the studio, where Trottier-Rivard would lay down vocals.

“We could imagine a group of people singing that song,” she adds. “At some point, we invited my sister and my mom to sing at the end. It felt like a genuine thing to do, to reunite for a song and have the three of us sing together. We had our launch at POP Montreal last fall, and we had a group of friends singing this song with us on stage.”

The “Femme-Lady” in question is also neither a femme nor a lady, but an “ugly” pineapple-shaped chandelier given to Trottier-Rivard’s sister by their mother that they randomly decided to christen with that name. “Because (Adèle’s) mom and her sister were on (the song), we kept the inside joke,” Basque says. “At the same time, there’s a meaning behind it. It resonates in a weird way, ‘femme-lady’ — it feels like it’s from another era, or something!”

Bibi Cub haven’t just been making waves locally, either. In March, they’ll be heading to Austin, TX for SXSW and Boise, ID for the Treefort Music Fest. Shows have also been booked later this spring in France, Germany and Wales, as well as for the Great Escape festival in Brighton, England in May. The duo have also headed back into the studio to record more new music (“We have a bunch of new ideas,” Trottier-Rivard says).

In late January, they travelled all the way to Brazil to perform at the SIM festival in São Paulo. Alongside fellow Montreal artist Fernie (who was born there and speaks Portuguese), Bibi Club spent an “intense” week down in Brazil’s biggest city, where they played two shows.

“We saw some beautiful things, beautiful plants. We ate some amazing food, and also met really nice people,” Trottier-Rivard says about their experience. The duo played two showcases, including one for the Brazilian

indie label Balaclava, who’ve had artists play POP Montreal in the past.

“They were asking us, ‘Do you know Beaver? Do you know Dan Seligman?’” Basque adds. “It felt like we made friends... Now we have people we know over there. Musically, it was a rich experience. We came back burnt out from the whole thing, and at the same time, enriched from all the meetings! (laughs)”

Clearly, Basque and Trottier-Rivard make quite the musical pair, and not just a romantic one, and they’ve jokingly referred to each other in the past as “both our favourite artist to work with.” So what makes their mutual musical chemistry come so naturally? They speak the “same musical language” — in fact, Basque thought Trottier-Rivard was the best singer he’d ever heard from the first time she tracked vocals next to him, and Trottier-Rivard has felt a similar euphoria while hearing him play guitar.

“Once, I cried during Nico’s guitar solo,” she continues. “I’d never cried during a guitar solo in my life. He was playing with his other project, and it’s like he was dying onstage. I started to cry. It was really moving.”

Though they bring different areas of musical expertise to the table, their skill sets complement one another nicely, whether they’re focused on the more creative or technical side of their music. Since it’s just the two of them while in the studio, it also gives them a lot of space to themselves to experiment.

“We get the chance to try things for the first time,” Trottier-Rivard says. “I’ve been trying a bit more to engineer (songs) — more than I ever did in the past, because Nico let me try.”

The dynamic of performing live as a duo is also one they enjoy, and Basque describes it as “a bit like being in a circus without a net. If one of us stops playing or singing, everything falls apart. It demands that we have to be focused and ready, but it’s really nourishing at the same time. It’s wild, so it’s fun.”



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# Rockin' horse

By Stephan Boissonneault

There's a kitchenette and resting on top of it is a can of Brunswick sardines and a row of crackers. A group of six guys grab a few crackers and the salted fish before gravitating towards a room full of reel-to-reel tape machines, speakers, patch cables, a lava lamp, a hanging bass guitar and various vintage music memorabilia and gear. Together they listen to an unreleased recording of dulcet acoustic guitar and vocals — almost with a lightly sarcastic Country & Western cadence.

We're in the control room of Sud-Ouest Recording Services in Verdun, the physical home of Baby Horse Records, a fledgling artist-run label that has so far focused on releasing bits of alt-country, indie folk, Canadiana and good ol' rock 'n' roll. The man behind the mixer is Matt Damron, co-founder of Baby Horse Records, alongside William Poulin — who also both run Sud-Ouest Recording Services.

Poulin looks through the window of the control room into the live studio room, a space full of vintage instruments and gear, like a Hohner organ, soft cherry red Gretsch guitar or a warm Fender vintage tube amp. The walls surrounding the control room window are covered in wood paneling, resembling that of a vintage barn door and the ground is decked out in a psychedelic red rug. It's like taking a snapshot out of the old '60s recording studios, having the same aura as a place where a band like Crosby, Stills & Nash would have recorded their debut.

"Matt and I are kind of obsessed with old vintage gear and we definitely nerd out on how they recorded songs back then," Poulin says. "This kind of bygone era vibe is sort of modeled after Sun Records or like the Motown Studios. It's music made by musicians for musicians."

Baby Horse Records got its start around three years ago, but really started to take off a few months into the pandemic. Before June 2020, Poulin and Damron were looking to upgrade from their old band's studio in Rosemont and wanted to move closer to the Sud-Ouest, where they were getting to know a community of musicians who more or less all met each other at the Bar de Courcelle open mics in Saint-Henri.

"It was a very DIY project to find this space and build it into what you see now," Poulin says. "We all had CERB and I told Matt, 'If we're going to try and do a better built studio, maybe we should do it now.'"

Since then, Baby Horse has been steadily releasing material from artists like Joe Abbott, That Nikki You Know, Bluebird and other artists who have roots in Montreal's Sud-Ouest.

"You could definitely say there was a shortage of not musicians, but ways to get music heard from the Sud-Ouest," Damron says.

"We needed an outlet to put out this music and put Sud-Ouest on the map, but also let people know we're all making this stuff together," Poulin adds.

The word "together" sums up the thematic glue and aesthetic of Baby Horse Records. While Poulin and Damron are the founders and main engineers of Baby Horse Records, they have a rotating network of musician friends that form the house band of Sud-Ouest Recording Services, and guest on various Baby Horse projects. They're also all multi-



Stephan Boissonneault

instrumentalists who play a bit of everything, feature on each other's projects and help promote the label in various ways.

We have: Erik Fines (whose new country EP is currently playing on the studio speakers), Frisco Lee, another wizard keyboard player who brings in talent to the studio by "poaching" musicians from the Bar de Courcelle open mic, and Freddy Poulin, the studio drummer who is on a bulk of the Baby Horse recordings.

"For most of the stuff, Will and I are the engineers, producers, mixers — whatever you wanna call it — but everyone kind of does a bit of everything," Damron says. "We're all very fortunate that we all speak the same language and we are all doing stuff in the service of the song or the project. It's not about us."

Continuing, we have Dan Beasy, the core songwriter of the Baby Horse project, Bluebird, who also fills the role as the studio painter (he's currently painting the studio door a nice burnt orange) and general handyman.

Basically, Baby Horse is a kind of musical collective — a smaller, but similar version of the Wrecking Crew from Los Angeles in the '60s and '70s.

"We want people to know that it's kind of like a family-run studio and label," Lee says. "I think there are people who want to know that something like this exists."

The crew also all built the Sud-Ouest studio together, learning carpentry from their friend Nick Clayton, rigging up lights, assembling walls, brushing the wood panels and creating a very welcoming ambiance to the whole space. The aforementioned wood wall — which really ties the room together — is made out of close to 100-year-old wood stripped from a friend's house.

"We got a truck and loaded it and since our neighbours in the building are woodworkers, they were able to take all the planks and cut them so they were parallel. Then Erik and the gang brushed them and oiled them," Poulin says.

Another member of Baby Horse is one James Healey, a sound engineer who enjoys taking recording projects outside of the Sud-Ouest space and using old school mono recording techniques inside of places like century-old churches or log cabins.

"Stuff where you surround a bluegrass band around a single mic and then apply that to modern stereo techniques," Healey chimes in. "Every room has its own reflection and gets baked into the record. We did that first Baby Horse recording in a church in Wakefield."

"It's cool 'cause we can go from a bigger production with a full band live or do a field recording session with James," Damron says. "We have one coming out called the Lac Sam Sessions that was recorded in a cabin."

The Baby Horse family is definitely making music for themselves but is still looking to carve out a piece of the musical map for their artists. They're still quite new and only have room to grow, already working with a few artists outside of Montreal, with plans to do more.

"It's hard to play and write songs and have nobody encourage you to actually do something with it, so that's what Baby Horse does for me," Beasy says. "We're looking at a scene that is constantly getting devastated, like with the Sirius XM thing, so it's nice to have this community and solidarity in a climate that is not very, let's face it, friendly for the DIY artist."

The conversation with the Baby Horse crew soon turns into a free jam with Fines on drums, Beasy on bass, Poulin on guitar and Lee on a wurlitzer. It's rock 'n' roll with a surfy edge made by musicians who have a chemistry that transcends the label.

"Should we start a surf band?" Poulin laughs.

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AMY LEE LAVOIE and  
OMARI NEWTON

Directed by  
MICHELINE CHEVRIER  
and KWAKU OKYERE

Presented in English  
with French surtitles

# Redbone Coonhound



“A razor-sharp, intense, dramatic, and often hilarious commentary of context. *Redbone Coonhound* invites us to mean what we say and say what we mean.”  
– *Our Theatre Voice*

“What’s increasingly riveting is how the play and production keep multiple and very different perspectives on these questions in tension.”  
– *Toronto Star*

“...Biting, funny, and complex ...this is going to be taught in schools.” – *Broadway World*

“...As things get explosive, Newton and Lavoie repeatedly open a valve of comic relief, in the shape of broadly satirical interludes that skewer racism and sexism, past, present and future.” – *The Globe and Mail*

“The most fun you’ll have this year confronting terrible and terribly pervasive truths.” – *Stir*

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DEBORAH DRAKEFORD,  
JESSE DWYRE  
and CHALA HUNTER

“Quick-paced, brilliantly funny and lacerating.” – *Vancouver Sun*

“The funniness of the play can’t be overstated: *Redbone Coonhound* swings hard, and under the direction of Micheline Chevrier with Kwaku Okyere it hits its targets...such a satire seems well overdue.”  
– *Intermission Magazine*

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# :hammer of the mods

BY JOHNSON CUMMINS

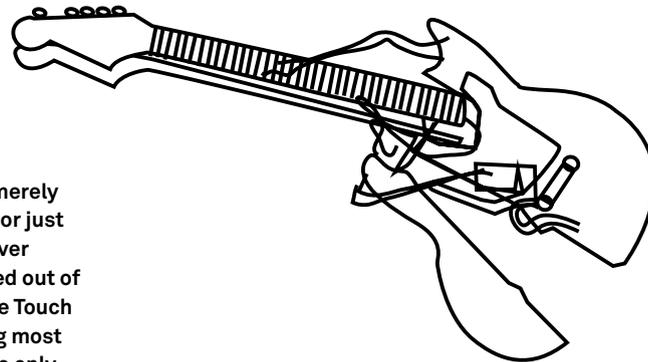
## ALL PIGS MUST DIE!

Did I get your attention? To mangle a Bukowski quote to suit my needs, “I wouldn’t say I hate cops, it’s just I feel a lot better when they aren’t around.” With most people now possessing cameras in their pocket, police forces are being kept in check a bit more, but not too long ago, the only defence you had against police oppression and violence was protesting in numbers, organizing locally and good ol’ tubthumping.

In the ’80s, you just weren’t a tried and true hardcore band unless you had at least two anti-cop songs squeezed into your 30-song, 15-minute set. One of my favourite Canadian hardcore records of the ’80s was *Born Too Soon* by local hardcore legends S.C.U.M. — who indeed took the Montreal police force to task as part of their anti-cop crusade. Originally released on Montreal label Psyche Industry at the tail end of 1985, this absolute classic MTLHC record gets a gussied up vinyl re-mastering by killer reissue California label Porterhouse. This new version is absolutely crushing and is guaranteed to rattle the windows with newfound gusto.

1985 was a rough year for hardcore as most bands merely stepped up the tempos into an unrecognizable blur or just aped metal riffage within the newly hatched crossover genre. Within one year, the heart had just been ripped out of hardcore. By ’85, Swans, Sonic Youth and most of the Touch and Go roster were clearly ahead of the pack leaving most hardcore bands to just pick up the pieces. One of the only unquestionable “hardcore” records that could still remain fresh while retaining hardcore’s touchstones, heart and principles was S.C.U.M.’s *Born Too Soon*. Even decades later, this record is positively seething with white hot rage, its blood still pumping strong. S.C.U.M.’s name was a clear thorn in the side of the MUC (Montreal Urban Community police, as it was then called), whose insignia was bastardized by the band. When singer Anthony Mark screams, “It’s war between us and the M.U.C./cops hate us and won’t let us be,” it still cuts right to the marrow — take that, Ice Cube. The battle against cop oppression continues with searing shrapnel like “Exit Death” and “Pyramid Mall Blues,” while other ragers take aim on drug dependency and the good old hardcore staples of war and religion. If you’re looking for politically charged, call-to-arms hardcore, this is as good as it gets.

But as barbed and righteous as the lyrics are — does the album really rock? In short, fuck yeah. S.C.U.M. absolutely obliterate with a mid-tempo attack that levels everything in its path like a Panzer tank. S.C.U.M. was not a band looking over its shoulder at the thrashers of the day, preferring to



remain true to themselves. This is why *Born Too Soon* still sounds as fresh today as it did almost 40 years ago. In a ballsy song sequence move, the band truly challenges with record opener “Home Away From Home,” a magnum opus that has more to do with prog rock than garden variety *Maximum RockNRoll* spew. Truthfully I still think their skater anthem “Pool Hunt” would’ve made more sense on the cutting room floor, but outside of that, this record should provide the perfect soundtrack to your next cop-car torching.

Get S.C.U.M.’s *Born Too Soon* exclusively at Sound Central (4486 Coloniale) in Montreal.

jonathan.cummings@gmail.com

## Album reviews



Erik Fines, *Country Ghost* (Baby Horse)

It’s hard to determine why the outlaw country sound never died, but goddamn are we thankful it didn’t. Throwing his own mysterious and catchy spin on the now-evolving genre, the new EP by Montreal’s Erik Fines at times sounds like it was inspired

by Marty Robbins’ *Gunfighter Ballads and Trail Songs* or Waylon Jennings’ work in the ’70s. Though Erik Fines has never lived the outlaw country lifestyle, he and his band are excellent at musically summarizing why we continue to love it on this short EP. The forlorn and sentimental storytelling, the saloon-piano crescendos, the upright bass riffs, the twang of the lap steel guitar, the acoustic live-off-the-floor chemistry of the band, the heartbreaking vocal harmonies that you can’t help but sing along with — all of this is heard on *Country Ghost* and it’s simply gorgeous. 9/10 Trial Track: “Country Ghost” (Stephan Boissonneault)



Kelela, *Raven* (Warp)

It’s been a long five and a half years for a follow-up to Kelela’s debut LP, *Take Me Apart*, but we’re thrilled to say it was damn well worth it. The D.C. songstress has returned with a vengeance with her sophomore LP *Raven*, and the end result

is an even more cohesive, purposeful and enchanting album than last time around. With dazzling, kaleidoscopic production

that sounds just as dark and watery as the album cover, we hear Kelela and her icy cool voice hitting higher notes than usual on opener “Washed Away” and dabbling effortlessly in U.K. garage on “Contact.” Whether the tempo is turned up (“Bruises”) or slowed all the way down (“Divorce”), *Raven* is the sound of Kelela’s artistry hitting a whole new peak. 9/10 Trial Track: “Contact” (Dave MacIntyre)



Gorillaz, *Cracker Island* (Parlophone/Warner)

Gorillaz are nothing if not vibrant and eclectic, and their eighth album *Cracker Island* delivers on that front yet again. It’s also the sound of Damon Albarn ostensibly correcting course on the chaotic and bloated nature of prior releases like 2017’s *Humanz*. Though its first two singles — the title track and “New Gold” — remain among the album’s best moments, the ones they saved for release day were well worth the wait. The elegant, gorgeous Stevie Nicks duet “Oil” is an early contender for song of the year, and the bouncy “Tarantula” and the Bad Bunny-featuring “Tormenta” are also standouts. Some Gorillaz fans may bemoan its glossier pop sheen, but *Cracker Island* is also more focused, concise and spirited than anything they’ve released since *Plastic Beach*. 8.5/10 Trial Track: “New Gold” (Dave MacIntyre)

Patche, *Patche* (popop)

The first few minutes of the debut album by Patche — a new local experimental electronic-krautrock five-piece that pushes the boundaries of modular synthesizers —

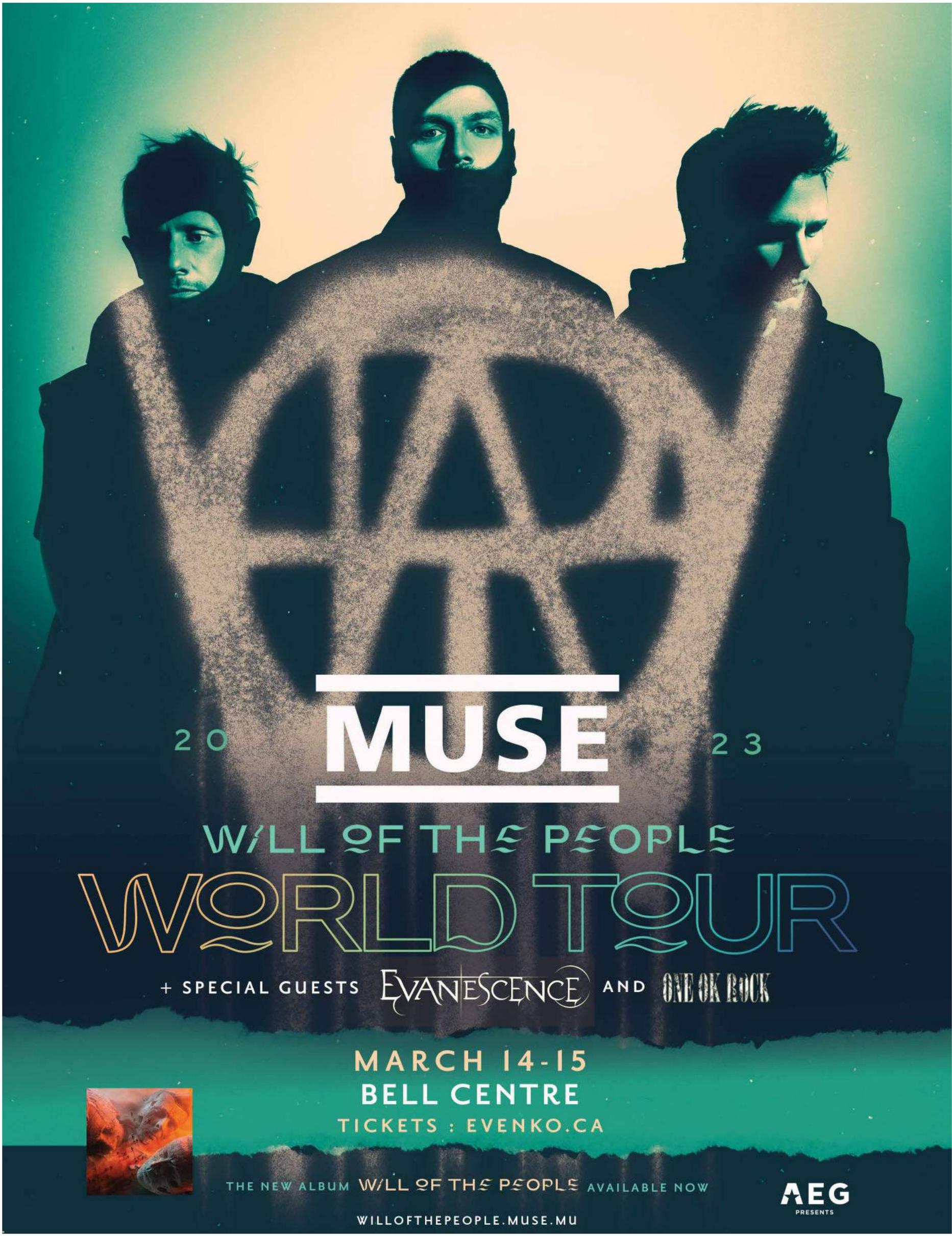


feels like taking an elevator in a surrealist dream, as the walls slowly begin to melt, the door opens and the floor disintegrates. It’s a constant stream of sound, synthy melodies, tasty bass lines, motorik drum beats, art rock guitars — like PJ Harvey if she ever jammed with the

musical German collective Popul Vuh, and Brian Eno was the producer. Ultimately, it’s an album to listen to front-to-back if you’re looking for unconventional, multilayered, instrumental music that follows no real roadmap, sometimes jumping into club-ready electro or calm ambient textures. These musicians (members of past and present groups like Lumière, Duu, zouz, Mon Doux Saigneur and Zombie Life Mon Coeur) are highly skilled and some of the sounds they create together are nothing short of extraordinary. 8/10 Trial Track: “Motorik” (Stephan Boissonneault)

Bonnie Trash, *Hail, Hale!* (Hand Drawn Dracula)

The atmosphere on a track by Bonnie Trash (from Guelph, ON) has always been tense, gothic and downright calamitous, and on the new EP *Hail, Hale!*, following up the fantastic debut album *Malocchio* from last year, twin sisters Emmalia and Sarafina Bortolon-Vettor have gone even more nebulous. *Hail, Hale!* consists of only three songs and could be considered a darkwave drone EP, as the lyrics take the backseat and are instead replaced by sinister guitar work, noise synths and an overall nightmarish aura. Of course, the opening single “Shades of You” is Bonnie Trash at their most accessible, with hair-raising lyrics like “I will eat your tongue,” but with a drone-rock groove that any alternative rock fan will enjoy. It’s interesting that the sisters decided to put this song on *Hail, Hale!* because it would have made more sense on *Malocchio* and kind of feels out of place opening this EP. Still, the track could be considered one of Bonnie Trash’s best. 7.5/10 Trial Track: “Shades of You” (Stephan Boissonneault)



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PRESENTS

# film

## Super size



BY JUSTINE SMITH

Before making his feature debut with the 2016 horror film *Lights Out*, director David F. Sandberg had already attracted an online niche of fans who pored over the short horror films that he'd made with his wife Lotta Losten. He continues to have a vibrant presence online, where he breaks down the tricks, visual effects and techniques that he uses to make his films. As he's graduated to becoming a superhero film director in more recent years, his videos showcase what it's like to work on a mega-blockbuster, particularly as an introvert.

With the release of *Shazam! Fury of the Gods* on the horizon, Sandberg sat down with *Cult MTL* via Zoom to discuss his online presence and tease out what to expect from the latest *Shazam!* film.

**JUSTINE SMITH:** I watched your videos before you made your first feature, and it's cool that you continue to make them, even if you're less prolific. What motivates you to create online content as well as your feature films?

**DAVID F. SANDBERG:** It's what I always wanted to see myself. I've always wanted this insight into how movies are made, how filmmakers think, how they solve problems, and the whole process. When I see a great movie, I want to know how it's made and the challenges they face. But it's very hard to find that stuff. When DVDs came around, there would be extras and behind the scenes, and I would devour them, but often (the extras) were just publicity stuff. Since that's rarely made, I decided that, well, I'll do my part. I'd love to do more

of it, and you can do that when making little shorts, but with a movie like *Shazam!*, it's a whole machine, and you can't reveal everything. It's why I still try to make short films and smaller things every now and then, so I can talk about it, because I really love it.

**JS:** With a film of this scale, particularly one with a light and vibrant tone, you must create the right atmosphere on set. How do you go about doing that?

**DS:** I think it's about giving people room. Certainly, with *Shazam!* there's a lot of ad-libbing, tweaking lines and coming up with new things. In particular, Zach (Levi) and Jack (Dylan Grazer) are great at bringing their own thing to the characters. I like to do a lot of takes on these movies, not because anything is wrong, it's just like, "Well, let's see what happens this time," because they're always changing things up. We've been very fortunate with casting and finding people who get along well. The whole *Shazam!* crew, they hang out outside the movies and know each other very well. It's very nice not to work with difficult people, divas or anything like that. They're all very happy to make movies and get a chance to do this.

**JS:** Do you feel there's an evolution in those relationships since the first film, as you're working with many of the same cast and crew?

**DS:** Absolutely. I mean, it's both. Most of the cast is returning, but most of the crew is new this time. It was a bigger deal making the first movie, where everything was new. I'd never made a superhero movie before. How does it work? What's the whole process like? At least I knew what I was getting into going into this movie, but there's always a sense of dread, like, how are we going to do this? Is it going to be possible? When you read a script like this one, where everything that happens is action, it's easy to be overwhelmed. You really have to take things one step at a time and just focus on one scene. Like, how are we going to do this part? Then it takes a long time and a lot of work to do it.

**JS:** Many of your short films were horror or thrillers. Without reducing too much, the *Shazam!* films are more comedy —

they're certainly funny. Both comedy and horror are such visceral experiences for an audience; you're making them jump or laugh. How do you see the connection between the genres?

**DS:** They're very similar in that it's all about timing, and a similar experience with the audience. You get immediate feedback from the crowd. What I like with horror as well is having those moments of levity. I'd love to do a horror comedy one day where you can get both laughter and screams. If you can pull that off, that's great. I'm a big fan of Sam Raimi, the horror comedy master.

I think movies don't have to be one narrow thing. Some of the best movies have a bit of everything. *Raiders of the Lost Ark* has action, comedy and pretty terrifying stuff like faces melting. It makes for a more rich experience.

**JS:** Can you talk about the importance of sound in a film like *Shazam! Fury of the Gods*?

**DS:** It's what makes the world real, where you can really feel it. I love low-frequency effects like bass, where you have a physical feeling; you know, explosions, or in a horror film when you feel that rumble. The process is probably my favourite part of moviemaking in general. I'm very fortunate to work with people who made movies I grew up with. You work with sound mixers who did *Top Gun* back in the day, and they tell all these stories about filmmaking. Sound is so important to me. If I had to choose between subpar image and subpar sound, I'd rather have good sound because it does so much.

**JS:** For fans of the first *Shazam!* film, what can they expect going into this one?

**DS:** We get to see more of the characters and more of the family, which we only got glimpses of in the first one. We get to see them deal with something on a much bigger scale. The first movie was kind of contained for a superhero movie, it wasn't a very big budget, so we had to lean into the characters and humour more than spectacle, but now we can do both. We still have those characters and the great tone, but we get to go big. It's very exciting.

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IN THEATRES MARCH 17

# On Screen



Godland



Scream VI



Smoking Causes Coughing



I Like Movies

BY JUSTINE SMITH

For Montrealers, this month's must-see movie is *Scream VI* (March 10).

Shot in Montreal and starring Jenna Ortega (of *Wednesday* fame), *Scream VI* follows four survivors of the Ghostface murders who leave Woodsboro behind for a fresh start in New York City. However, they soon find themselves fighting for their lives when a new killer embarks on a bloody rampage. The trailer already had some hints of Montreal. How many will you be able to spot in the full feature film?

Marvel takes a backseat to DC in March as the much-anticipated sequel to *Shazam!* hits the big screen. *Shazam! Fury of the Gods* (March 17) reunites most of the old cast (including primaries Zachary Levi and Jack Dylan Grazer), with a few new surprises. The sequel had a much bigger budget than the previous film, so this movie will likely be more spectacular — hopefully without sacrificing the playful tone that made the first film so successful.

With so many franchise films out, March promises at least one original blockbuster-style film. *65* (March 17) is a sci-fi action thriller starring Adam Driver. After a catastrophic crash on an unknown planet, pilot Mills quickly discovers he is stranded on Earth — 65 million years ago. With one

chance at rescue, Mills and the only other survivor, Koa (Ariana Greenblatt), must make their way across an unknown terrain riddled with dangerous prehistoric creatures in an epic fight to survive.

For something on the opposite end of the originality spectrum, Chris Pine stars in *Dungeons & Dragons: Honor Among Thieves* (March 31). A group of thieves travel to a realm to stop a great evil from enslaving the world. Inspired by D&D, the trailer hints at post-Buffy Joss Whedon-level banter, which may or may not be your thing. The film co-stars Michelle Rodriguez, Justice Smith, Regé-Jean Page and Hugh Grant.

If you're a cinephile looking for some feel-good cinema, look no further than Chandler Levack's crowd pleaser *I Like Movies* (March 10). A coming-of-age dramedy, the film follows an awkward high school student, Lawrence Kweller (Isaiah Lehtinen), who wants to be a filmmaker and gets his first job at a video store. He develops a complicated relationship with his older female manager and has to reckon with some difficult aspects of his past.

With the Oscars happening this month (March 12), we're in the final stretch to catch up with the big Oscar contenders. The *Quiet Girl* (March 3) is nominated in the Best International Feature Category and is set in rural Ireland circa 1981. It's the story of a neglected girl who's sent away from her

dysfunctional family to live with foster parents for the summer, and as she starts to blossom, she discovers a secret.

Two critically acclaimed films from the festival circuit hit theatres this month. *Return to Seoul* (March 3) is about a 25-year-old French woman going back to her birthplace, South Korea, for the first time. She decides to look for her biological parents, but her journey takes a surprising turn. The dreamy Icelandic film *Godland* (March 24), inspired by a set of photographs, involves a young 19th century Danish priest who begins to lose touch with reality and his moral duty as he travels deeper into a remote part of Iceland.

For something lighthearted, the increasingly essential Quentin Dupieux (aka Mr. Oizo) returns with another absurd comedy: *Smoking Causes Coughing* (March 31). The director of *Rubber* and *Deerskin* brings to the screen another wild proposition: A group of vigilantes called the «tobacco forces» is falling apart; to rebuild team spirit, their leader suggests that they meet for a week-long retreat before returning to save the world.

One sign that winter is on the way out is that Cinéma du Parc is returning with a new Parc at Midnight program. Starting the weekend of March 3, this month's line-up includes *Blue Velvet*, *Millennium Mambo*, *Extra Ordinary*, *The Beyond* and *Down by Law*.



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- THE NEW YORK TIMES

WHAT GETS LOST - AND FOUND - IN TRANSLATION



# ENGLISH

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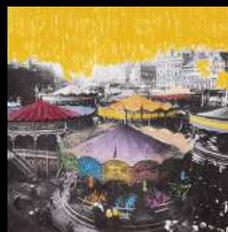
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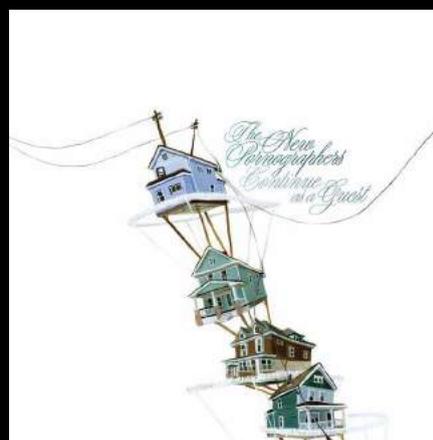
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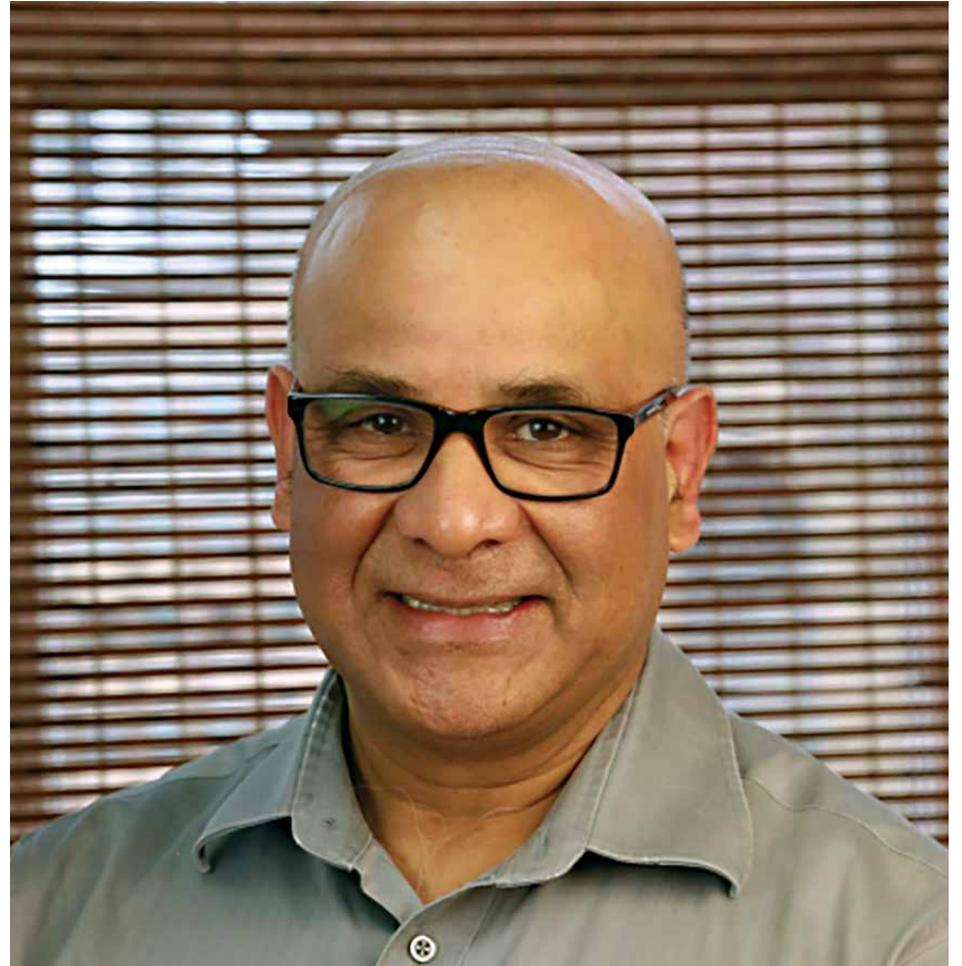
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## Same as it ever was



Murdoch Schon



Rahul Varma

BY SAVANNAH STEWART

When Rahul Varma's play *Counter Offence* premiered in 1996, it sparked a conversation about racism, violence against women and how these things collide with a biased justice system.

Presented by Teesri Duniya Theatre, *Counter Offence* returns to the stage this month, bringing with it a message that's just as timely now as it was almost 30 years ago. After all, Quebec saw 14 femicides in 2022, an alarming rise that has carried over into 2023. A report released last month by Tracking (In)Justice Project shows that police-involved deaths are on the rise in Canada, with Black and Indigenous peoples overrepresented.

"I wish this play could have been declared as irrelevant because the problems no longer existed. Unfortunately, they do," says Varma, who's also the Artistic Director of Teesri Duniya Theatre. "The significance of this play, sadly, still is there."

The play centres on the relationship between Shazia (Amanda Silveira), a first-generation Quebecer with traditional South Asian Muslim parents, and her husband Shapoor (Arash Ebrahimi) of Iran. The authorities become involved when Shapoor is arrested on domestic violence charges, bringing their prejudices with them, as well as community workers with their judgment clouded by their own agendas and experiences. When fatal tragedy strikes, characters and audience members alike are left wondering where to find the line between right and wrong, truth and intolerance.

"The story is of violence and race. Violence against women must end. Racial profiling must also end. What do we do when the two come into conflict with each other?" Varma explains.

The events take place under the shadow of the fallout of the 1995 referendum on Quebec sovereignty, with then-Quebec premier Jacques Parizeau's comment on "the ethnic vote" still reverberating across the province, escalating tensions and leaving marginalized communities with a heightened fear of discrimination.

Director Murdoch Schon decided to retain the mid-'90s setting of *Counter Offence*, thus highlighting the persisting similarities in the discourse years later. To do so, they pulled from four different versions of the script, which was revisited in 2020 when COVID stopped the production in its tracks, and again in 2022 before Schon came on.

"Identity politics were fraught in the '90s, just like they are now," Schon says. "Has the conversation about justice changed since then? How has it changed? That's the issue the play is getting at."

Immigration and the safety or lack of safety it provides to an immigrant are considered in the play, too. Shapoor is dealing with the difficulties of an irregular immigration status — to what extent does the stress of that inform his actions? Irregular border crossing has returned to dominate the Quebec news cycle in recent weeks via Roxham Road, bringing an added layer of real-world pertinence to the story told in *Counter Offence*.

"All art imitates life imitates art imitates life," Schon remarks about the ongoing parallels between the themes of the play and current events. "Artists are trained to reflect on reality

through their practice, so it's par for the course to work with it. But it is hard."

"I also wanted to make the story more intercultural because our streets are very intercultural," Varma says. "When stories are told from a very monochromatic and monocultural point of view, they do not become universal."

The cast hails from around the world, and to facilitate the discussions around the portrayal of the various cultures represented in the piece, the production worked with intercultural dramaturge Eric Holmes.

"The cast is naturally diverse," Varma explains. "It's not because somebody had to tick a box to show those characters. And you're going to see some actors that usually don't get to be seen because we don't write for them."

"We've managed to get eight different people in the room at the same time, which very rarely happens in Canadian theatre," says Schon. They added that they are thankful for the cast's willingness to embark on an extensive exploration phase, to find movements to bring further meaning to the text beyond the stage directions.

The Sunday matinee performances of *Counter Offence* will end with talkback sessions, featuring a panel of experts to talk about the issues of violence against women, racism and discrimination in the justice system.

"It feels like really vital work," says Schon. "We're aware of the gravity of it in the room."

→ *Counter Offence* is on at the Segal Centre for the Performing Arts (5170 Côte-Ste-Catherine) from March 15 to April 2.

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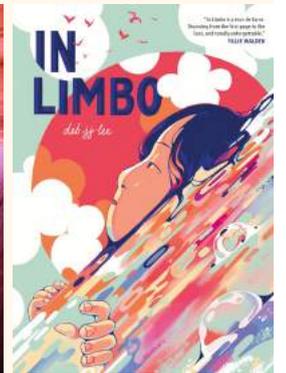
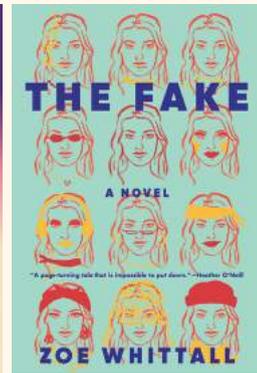
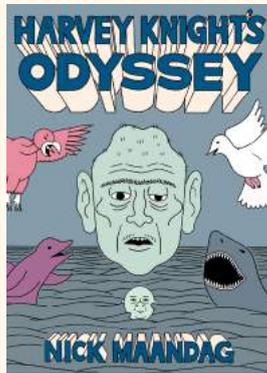
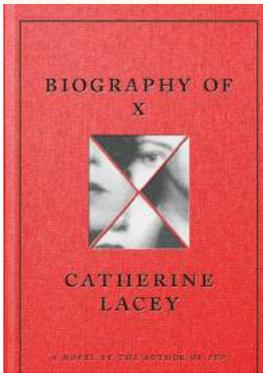
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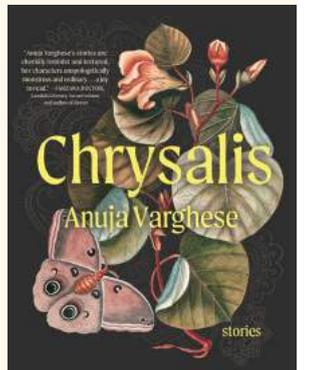
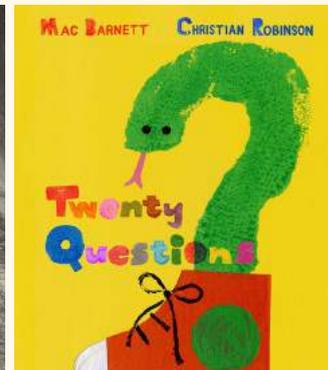
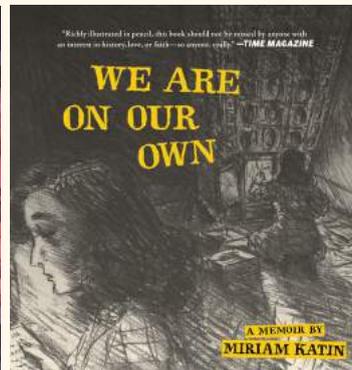
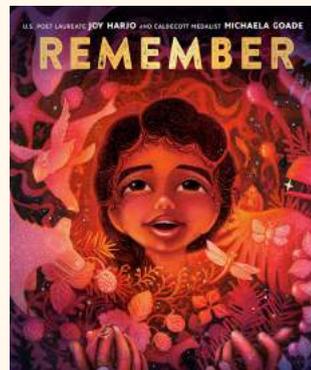
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# Art herstory

BY CONNOR HARRISON

The first piece of design you see at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts' *Parall(elles)* exhibition is a pristine silver-olive Corvette.

Designed by Ruth Glennie in 1958 for the General Motors Feminine Auto Show, the Corvette stands at the entrance both stunning and pointed, for this is easily the exhibit's most traditionally masculine object on display. Glennie's prototype, the only survivor of the auto show, immediately establishes the tone of *Parall(elles)*, a show dedicated to North American women designers.

"The exhibition," says curator Jennifer Laurent, "aims to broaden and enrich the complex narrative of women and this branch of art by reappraising the historical work through a modern-day lens and fostering a deeper understanding of contemporary contributions."

A brief moment in 1958, then, before we return to the emergence of industrialization. Displayed in a monochrome room, these initial pieces — some of the first "professional" design work crafted by American women — resist the anonymity of mass production. As the accompanying text summarizes, "the Arts and Crafts movement emerged as a reaction against the damaging effects of machine-based production on society and the poor quality of mass-manufactured goods." Here, at least in part, is a moral enterprise; an effort by artisans to retain creative agency. To treat the daily objects of our life with the same care and originality we expect from Art, as Maria Longworth Nichols Storer does with her "Vase" from 1880, awash with fish swimming in jade green waters. Like the best pieces on display, this one reveals that Storer has treated her medium as a painter would a canvas.

Moving through the decades towards the modern day, the developing history of women's design is one of expansion. A brief itinerary of materials includes books, jewellery, shoes, lamps and their shades, radios, furniture, wallpapers, carpets and objects that cross the line entirely from utility to the abstract. This feeling of an expanding system is achieved in no small part by the space and colour of the curation, especially the huge, bright red room that covers the 1970s and onwards. "In search for a uniquely 'female aesthetic,'" we read here, "many 1970s feminist artists aimed to elevate traditional forms of 'women's work' to the status of 'fine art.'" What arrives at this time is what might be called a literary element: poetry woven into Faith Ringgold's nostalgic "Tar Beach 2 Quilt," and Judy Chicago's Test Plates, each presented like a muscular Georgia O'Keefe painting. Other work defies any binary between art and craft, between any consideration of high or low, like Jane Kaufman's "Untitled," a wall of crow-black feathers and glass beads, which reaches an aesthetic both feminine and completely alien. Or Dextra Quotskuyva's "Awatovi Birds," crafted with such vivid colour and fine detail, it becomes a living creature, as if found perfectly formed at the floor of an ocean.

After these spacious, deeply textured exhibits, the small, white room of the 21st century feels almost like Appendix A to a sprawling novel. Our century has of course only recently begun, but the work on display is a little cramped in, and while some of the garishness of previous decades has been slipped off, there is perhaps a loss of the organic, or the chaotic. There is of course still beautiful work here. McCauley Wanner's various covers for prosthetic legs, for example, decorated in a way that sits somewhere between an electric tattoo sleeve and Ruth Glennie's Corvette. However, while it may end on something of an anti-climax, in its mission to "develop alternative readings of traditional histories and find new ways to illuminate women's extraordinary contributions to design," *Parall(elles)* is overall a huge success. It is a show curated not in spite of the patriarchal estate, but in celebration of a more complete and kaleidoscopic map of artistic memory.



View of the exhibition *Parall(elles): A History of Women in Design*

Denis Farley



Corvette for General Motors by Ruth Glennie

Denis Farley

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# : game jam



Goodbye Volcano High

BY NATALIA YANCHAK

Springtime generally kicks off a round of hard games-release announcements and launches. From GDC in March to MEGAMIGS in October, all of the games biz is in high gear, with developers watching to see what's on the horizon while scoping out the competition.

**This includes lots of activity from studios here in Montreal. This month's column explores some of the very cool stuff happening in our own city.**

## UBISOFT INDIE SERIES

A big event that kicks off the year is the Ubisoft Indie Series, presented by National Bank. Running since 2017, this regional competition offers cash prizes, mentorship, creative and financial tools to help Quebec-based independent development studios and their games reach new heights.

This year's \$50K grand prize went to Astrolabe Interactive, a Montreal studio whose latest title, *Aloft*, is an "atmospheric soft survival" game that

has you floating in the clouds. The second place prize of \$25K went to Montreal's Lucid Dreams Studio, who are making *Biomorph*, a soulslike metroidvania game.

## GOODBYE VOLCANO HIGH

The highly anticipated title from the artist-owned cooperative KO\_OP Studio, *Goodbye Volcano High*, finally gets a launch date (June 15, 2023) and new release trailer, announced as part of Sony's State of Play event in February. *Goodbye Volcano High* is an emo, story-driven, choice-based cinematic adventure game chock-full of teen angst, garage bands, yearbook committees and heart-wrenching drama. Also, you are a highly stylish indie sleaze-inspired mythical beast. The game will be ported to Steam, PS4 and PS5 on launch.

## THE ASYLUM DIRECT

A different type of non-traditional co-op, Indie Asylum, held its own annual announcement event this year as a semi-ironic nod to annual events held by giant studios. The Asylum Direct livestream highlighted the games coming this year, including standouts *This Bed We Made* (a noir-inspired mystery adventure that gives serious *Hotel Dusk* vibes) from Lowbirth Games, and *Broken Edge* (a VR multiplayer fantasy historical duelling game with a hand drawn, Moebius aesthetic) from Trebuchet. Located in Mile Ex, Indie Asylum houses nine indie dev studios and service providers under one roof, sharing office facilities and other resources.

## DOUBLE STALLION CELEBRATES 10 YEARS

Major kudos to Double Stallion for celebrating its 10th year in 2023. This Saint Henri-based studio is notorious for its button-mashing crossover titles plus self-published *Speed Brawl* (*Sonic the Hedgehog* meets *Streets of Rage* in a dystopian Victorian England). Right now they are developing *CONV/RGENCE: A League of Legends Story*, published by Riot Forge. *CONV/RGENCE* is a 2D action platformer that explores the LoL character Ekko. The title offers dynamic combat combined with unique exploration opportunities that allow the player to bend space and time.

## JOURNEY TO THE SAVAGE PLANET GETS NEW AND IMPROVED!

Plateau-based studio Raccoon Logic has released a major update on its flagship title *Journey to the Savage Planet*. Published by 505 Games, this title is a tongue-in-cheek take on the open-world survival crafting genre. It's meant to be at once ridiculous, silly, gross and deadly.

The Employee of the Month Edition was launched to Playstation and Xbox, and includes the original game and Hot Garbage DLC with optimized 4K Graphics for high-end consoles, a new batch of the game's signature in-game ads and new Martin Tweed videos, among other things. If you haven't tried this game, here's an excellent chance to give it a go.

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