

# CULT



FREE

MARCH 2024 • Vol. 12 No. 6 • CULTMTL.COM

\* Denis Villeneuve \* Godzilla x Kong \* Quebec v immigrants \* Chelsea Wolfe \* Trams





"Flacks is such a warm,  
funny and generous  
performer ... full of  
bravado and chutzpah"

TORONTO STAR

MARCH 12 – 30

CENTAUR THEATRE PRESENTS THE TARRAGON THEATRE PRODUCTION OF

# GUILT

(a love story)

**Diane Flacks**

Playwright and Performer

**Alisa Palmer**

Director

**Rebecca Harper**

Choreography & Intimacy Coordinator

**Jung-Hye Kim**

Set & Costume Designer

**Leigh Ann Vardy**

Lighting Designer

**Deanna H Choi**

Sound Designer

**Sandy Plunkett**

Stage Manager

**Angela Mae Bago**

Apprentice Stage Manager



Diane Flacks



centaurtheatre.com  
514-288-3161

Canada

Canada Council  
for the Arts  
Conseil des arts  
du Canada

Québec

CONSEIL  
DES ARTS  
DE MONTRÉAL

Montréal





# NATION

ENTER FOR A CHANCE  
TO PERFORM AT THE

# JIM BEAM<sup>®</sup>

## NATIONAL TALENT SEARCH

FINALS TO BE HELD AT

**DRAKE UNDERGROUND**  
**SUNDAY JUNE 2 | 2024**

VISIT: **INDIES.CA** FOR DETAILS

**CMW** 2024 CANADIAN  
MUSIC WEEK



DRINK  SMART<sup>®</sup>

# table of contents



We spoke with Montreal filmmaker Denis Villeneuve about his masterpiece *Dune: Part Two*.  
Cover photo by Jack Davison

<b>city</b>	6
Day without immigrants	6
Trams	8
<b>:best buds</b>	10
<b>:the 1st half</b>	11
<b>food &amp; drink</b>	12
Casavant	12
<b>music</b>	14
Chelsea Wolfe	14
<b>:hammer of the mods</b>	18
Album reviews	20
<b>film</b>	22
<i>Dune: Part Two</i>	22
<i>Godzilla x Kong: The New Empire</i>	24
On Screen	26
<b>arts</b>	28
Spring arts calendar	28
<b>:weird era</b>	30
<b>:game jam</b>	30

# Cult MTL is...

Lorraine Carpenter  
editor-in-chief  
lorraine.carpenter@cultmontreal.com

Justine Smith  
film editor  
justine.smith@cultmontreal.com

Clayton Sandhu  
food editor

Dave MacIntyre  
contributing editor (music)

Savannah Stewart  
contributing editor (arts)

Paul Desbaillets  
contributing editor (football culture)

Chris Tucker  
art director

Advertising  
ads@cultmontreal.com

Contributors:  
Stephan Boissoneault  
Johnson Cummins  
Toula Drimonis  
Sruti Islam  
Darcy MacDonald  
Taylor C. Noakes  
Alex Nierenhausen  
Chico Peres Smith  
Natalia Yanchak

Special Thanks: Ceilidh Michelle

General inquiries + feedback  
info@cultmontreal.com



Cult MTL is a daily arts, film, music, food and city life site. Visit us at

**cultmtl.com**

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

We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada.

Funded by the Government of Canada |



Coming soon to  
**cultmtl.com**





BASED ON THE GILLER® PRIZE-WINNING BOOK

A SEGAL CENTRE FOR PERFORMING ARTS PRODUCTION OF



# FIFTEEN DOGS

ADAPTED AND DIRECTED FOR THE STAGE BY MARIE FARSI

BASED ON THE NOVEL BY ANDRÉ ALEXIS

COMMISSIONED AND ORIGINALLY PRODUCED BY CROW'S THEATRE, TORONTO  
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR, CHRIS ABRAHAM, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, SHERRIE JOHNSON

**\$20**  
**Tickets!**

\*CONDITIONS APPLY

**CLASS ACT**

FOR STUDENTS AND PEOPLE UNDER 30

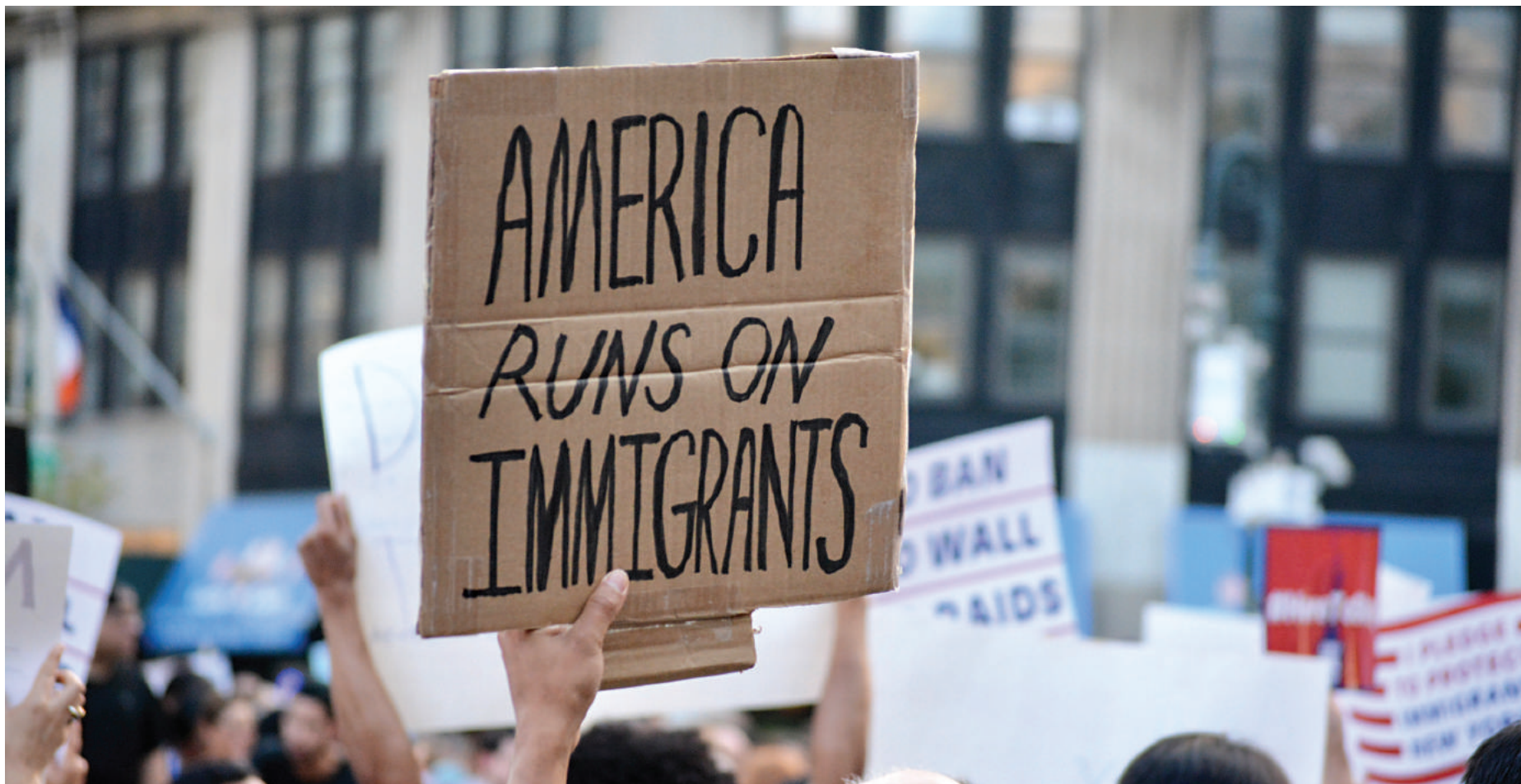
**BUY TICKETS & SUBSCRIBE NOW!**

514-739-7944 / [segalcentre.org](https://segalcentre.org)

Mar 31  
- Apr 21  
**2024**



# A Day Without Immigrants, QC



Christopher Penler

BY TOULA DRIMONIS

It's been frustrating to watch anti-immigrant sentiment ramp up in Quebec over the last five years, aided by a CAQ government that irresponsibly continues to treat immigration as a constant threat to Quebec's identity and language. This scapegoating persists, even though, outside of Montreal, Quebec is Canada's least racially diverse province and French remains the first official language spoken by more than 90% of the population in most of Quebec's regions.

While, south of the border, immigration is listed as the primary reason the American economy has rebounded so well, even propelling the country's economic recovery from the pandemic as the most robust in the world, here, the provincial government insists on treating immigration solely as a problem, never as part of the solution.

I've often thought that Quebec needs its own Lysistrata moment — a strike or boycott to remind our government and fellow Quebecers how much we, as a society and as an economy, rely on immigrants, temporary foreign workers and, yes, even asylum seekers for our healthcare and daycare services, our agriculture and food production sectors, our factories and warehouses and many of our frontline services.

Lysistrata — an ancient Greek comedy in which the protagonist, in an effort to persuade the warring men of Greek city states to end the Peloponnesian War, convinces all the women to go on a sex strike — and, in a similar vein, Iceland's women's strike in 1975 (in which close to 90% of Iceland's women refused to work inside or outside the home, hoping to strike a blow against pay inequity) are, of course, about gender politics, but they're essentially about power dynamics. They're about a marginalized group, whose contributions are undervalued and who initially appear the "weakest," showing the real power they have.

Immigrants have long been targeted by and long resisted lazy scapegoating. In 2017, in response to then-U.S. President Donald Trump's anti-immigration agenda (which included a Muslim ban and plans to build a border wall with Mexico), a boycott was organized. A Day Without Immigrants aimed to highlight immigrants' contributions and importance to the U.S. economy; immigrants did not go to work, refrained from purchasing anything and many restaurants and businesses that heavily relied on their labour closed their doors in solidarity.

Since elected, the CAQ government has been lacking both in empathy and even rudimentary acknowledgment of our reliance on both temporary and permanent migration. Premier Legault continues to play politics on the backs of people who are often the most vulnerable and the least vocal because they're too busy surviving or often too scared that criticism could somehow compromise their asylum requests, their applications for permanent residency or even their jobs — often directly linked to their temporary worker status.

Under the guise of language protection, politicians and pundits treat the most essential of workers as disposable humans, often ascribing to them the worst motives. Recently, the government even decided to spend public money to contest the right of asylum seekers — currently working essential jobs — to have access to subsidized daycare. We're essentially signalling to this vulnerable group, many of them single moms, "We'll take your labour, but figure out childcare on your own!" How progressive and feminist of us!

The CAQ government has a long track record of not treating immigrants well. It attempted to throw out 18,000 skilled-worker applications without any thought to how it would affect them. It refused to expand a special federal program to regularize more "guardian angels" and the many asylum seekers who tirelessly and bravely worked during the pandemic to ensure Quebec's hospitals, restaurants, warehouses and CHSLDs kept operating.

Quebec's former Immigration (and Social Solidarity!) minister Jean Boulet also spoke of immigrants as people who "don't integrate, don't work, don't speak French," without any statistics to back up those claims.

Currently, the CAQ stubbornly refuses to increase its annual immigration quotas for political reasons, while hypocritically increasing temporary workers five-fold,

severely compromising family reunification applications for many Quebecers and their foreign partners and creating processing delays that are three times longer than in the rest of the country.

Last October, when the government of Canada announced that it would open the door to 11,000 people from Colombia, Haiti and Venezuela who have immediate family members living here either as citizens or permanent residents, the CAQ government made it clear that it was opting out of the program, preventing many Haitian Quebecers from being able to bring their family members here.

Immigration and the presence of asylum seekers have also been irresponsibly linked by this government to the housing crisis, the education crisis, the healthcare crisis and the lack of daycare spaces. Yes, we have shortages, but instead of taking responsibility for failing to properly allocate the funds and spaces it promised, the government has resorted to deflecting by scapegoating immigrants and asylum seekers, leading to even more marginalization and resentment of people this province benefits from daily.

Immigrants in Quebec are teachers, doctors, dep owners, daycare workers, bus drivers, nurses, Hydro-Québec engineers, etc. Temporary foreign workers are propping up Quebec's agricultural sector. International students are working menial service jobs in downtown hotels, restaurant kitchens, retail stores and fast-food chains — you know, the places constantly posting "Employees Wanted" signs. Asylum seekers are working as sanitation workers and personal support workers in CHSLDs and hospitals. If these people just... stopped, what would it look like? Would our economy just come to a screeching halt?

Would some of the folks currently yelling for people to be deported or bussed to another province or prevented from applying for asylum finally stop vilifying people who also offer us so much in return?

Immigrants and asylum seekers are of course human beings that should be valued and respected for far more than simply what they can do for us. But, while our government insists on treating them as a constant financial burden and a cultural and linguistic threat, wouldn't it be brilliant to remind our politicians that we need them as much as they need us? And that, if they were to suddenly and collectively stop working or leave the province, we would be beyond inconvenienced — we would be, forgive my French, quite screwed.



# AGORA DE LA DANSE

AMOUR, ACIDE ET NOIX

Daniel Léveillé

March 13-14-15 — 7 p.m.

A timeless masterpiece!

"[...] releases a rage  
hard as steel and,  
paradoxically,  
soft as the skin."

– Le Monde, Paris

AGORA

AGORADANSE.COM

Photo: © Julie Artacho

# PJ HARVEY

North American Tour 2024

*September 21*  
**LAVAL, QC**  
**PLACE BELL**

**ON SALE NOW**  
**TICKETS AT EVENKO.CA**

evenko





# The trouble with trams



San Francisco

BY TAYLOR C. NOAKES

Eastern Montreal is not getting a REM — the elevated light-rail system that could conceivably run underground or at ground level.

Instead, it will maybe get a ground-level tram, which is also a light-rail system. Perhaps it will be something like a cross between a metro and a tram — that’s what they thought parts of the REM de l’Est might have been like anyway. Who knows? The important thing is that every few months, politicians are heard talking about public transit development in Eastern Montreal, and isn’t that the most important thing?

Read two different articles about the same transit development proposal and you can come to two different conclusions. *CBC Montreal* seems to think the door is still open on a variety of different systems that could make up the new “Projet structurant de l’Est (PSE).” *La Presse* seems confident that Legault will build a new tram, at more than half the cost of the former REM de l’Est proposal (which had been estimated to cost an absolutely incomprehensible \$36-billion).

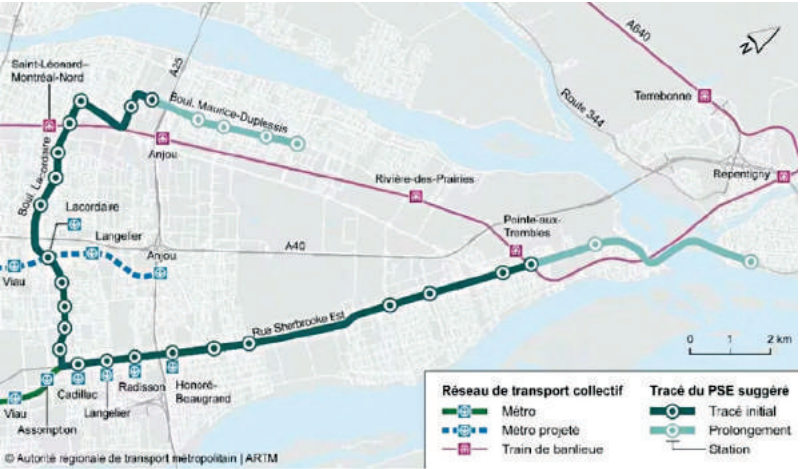
Let’s assume we’re getting a tram — but don’t hold your breath; the Blue Line extension to Anjou was proposed in the 1970s and, due to the most recent delay, won’t be operational until 2030. According to *La Presse*, the plan is a 31-kilometre tram system with 28 stations, spaced about 1.1 km apart. The CBC reports the tram could travel at about 30 kms per hour. By contrast, the metro’s top speed is about 75 kms per hour. The REM has a top speed of 100 kms per hour. The Mascouche EXO line can travel up to 120 kms per hour.

So it will be a slow ride downtown from the East End. The new proposal isn’t going to provide a new direct route — unlike earlier proposals for the REM de l’Est— which proposed an entirely new link right into the heart of the city. While this might seem like a steal at the corruption-unadjusted cost of \$13-billion, consider that Paris is adding 200 kms of new metro (four new lines, two line extensions and 68 new stations) for about \$62-billion. The Grand Paris Express will serve an estimated two million more passengers per day.

And how many new trips will the Tram de l’Est provide? Between 23,000 and 27,000 per day.

We’re getting hosed. Even at \$13-billion, the Tram de l’Est is an inexcusable waste of money: it costs far too much, will provide too little and serve too few.

While the government argues that this is more affordable, transit experts have already come up with a far less expensive and more comprehensive tram proposal for the eastern part of the island. In August, UQAM urban planning professor Jean-François Lefebvre proposed a 40-kilometre,



50-station tram network that would include connections to both Laval and the eastern off-island suburbs, at only \$4-billion.

## HOW DID WE GET HERE?

There are a few problems here, namely that Quebec government estimates for new transit development are exceedingly high, and that in an effort to make it seem like they’re getting a better deal, are coming up with cheaper proposals that provide far too little return for one investment.

These are interrelated problems, as we’re dealing with finite financial resources and are simultaneously racing against the clock. What ought to be the overriding concern is how quickly we can get the most people out of their cars and into public transit for the express purposes of reducing vehicle emissions and traffic congestion. There’s a considerable economic angle to this as well: climate change is already wreaking havoc on the global economy, but pollution and congestion affects our local economy more directly and on a daily basis (pollution-related illnesses are a drag on the healthcare system; traffic congestion was estimated to cost the Canadian economy \$6-billion annually over a decade ago, a figure that’s likely increased significantly since).

Not every dollar spent on transit necessarily improves the situation. The REM was excessively expensive, sapping financial resources that might have been used more effectively elsewhere. But more significantly, the REM actually cost Montreal transit infrastructure assets: The Deux-Montagnes commuter rail line was sacrificed for the REM, and the tens of thousands of daily riders didn’t transition to the limited options provided as an alternative.

If transit in the Montreal region were planned uniquely from a condition of “what will get Montrealers to stop driving and take public transit instead,” the money spent on the REM would have been dedicated to increasing bus and metro

service across the system first and foremost, and there would have been plenty left over to run more trains, more frequently, on the rest of the commuter rail network.

The Tram de l’Est proposal is the marriage of a local-use vehicle to an almost regional level travel distance. Worse still, this is the wrong vehicle and the wrong speed/pace for what is primarily suburb-to-city commuting.

Long distances at slow speeds isn’t going to encourage anyone to take public transit.

## TRAMS MORE EFFECTIVE ELSEWHERE

When Richard Bergeron founded *Projet Montréal* 20 years ago, his big idea was to build a tram network in downtown Montreal. It’s still the best transit idea anyone’s had in this city since the construction of the metro.

The reason is simple. In a densely populated area, a tram provides higher passenger volume than a bus, and with priority signaling and/or a dedicated lane, can travel faster and more efficiently than average city traffic.

It’s also far less expensive than building a subway, and essentially uses the same basic infrastructure as the existing bus network (i.e. bus stops, bus shelters). It’s obviously much easier to embed rails in the roadway and run electric wires overhead than it is tunneling underground. So a tram in the city centre would carry more passengers, faster, than the bus network, and use fewer vehicles to do so. Bergeron had sketched out potential routes based on the busiest STM lines. Not surprisingly, his plan involved trams on Cote-des-Neiges, René-Lévesque, Mont Royal and St-Denis, among others.

There are two other important advantages to consider. First, trams don’t replace buses as much as they would displace them: the buses no longer needed downtown could be sent to the suburbs to boost service there. Second, running a tram along any commercial thoroughfare is a lot like a moving carpet running through a shopping mall—the whole street is connected and easily accessible. This means fewer cars congesting busy retail streets, and that’s good for both the economy and the environment.

So trams are still a good idea, just not for long-distance, commuter-focused routes out to the suburbs. It would make much more sense to revisit building a downtown Montreal tram and repurposing surplus buses for East End service. Those buses could funnel commuters towards the underused Mascouche line as an alternative to the metro.

On a final note, it continues to boggle my mind that Montreal hasn’t revisited trolleybuses in recent years. We had an expansive tram and trolley network throughout the first half of the 20th century, and trolleys may actually be more cost effective, environmentally friendly and energy efficient than hybrid or even battery-electric buses.

Both trolleys and trams get their power — in our case, renewable hydroelectricity — from overhead wires, but trolleys have the advantage of being able to move around on a street — such as from a middle lane to the curb (trams have to stay on their rails).

From what I’ve read, it seems trolleys would be less expensive than a new fleet of battery-electric buses, namely because it’s well-established and widely used technology with comparatively low overhead costs. The interoperability of trams and trolleys (they draw power from the same overhead wires) could also be exploited.

Moving in this direction would go a long way to freeing downtown from car traffic, making it more livable and encouraging pedestrianization.

Making the city more accommodating to new housing development by eliminating the least enjoyable part of city living would likely prove a more effective strategy to help Montreal get back on its feet than building a long, slow, tram to Repentigny.



BUSINESS SKILLS  
OF CREATIVE SOULS  
ARTISTS CONFERENCE

Yes  
Employment  
+ Entrepreneurship



Secure your  
spot now!  
[yesmontreal.ca](https://yesmontreal.ca)

# Strategies for Thriving as an Artist

Speakers, Panel Discussions, Networking + More!

March 11, 2024 | 12:30PM–5:00PM

Unitarian Church of Montreal, 5035 Boulevard de Maisonneuve West

Join us at this exciting and informative  
in-person + livestream artist event!

Supported by:



Canadian  
Heritage

Patrimoine  
canadien

Media Partner:

CULT  
MTL



Hosted by **Sonali Karnick**  
Host of CBC's All in a Weekend



Keynote **Victoria Sanchez**  
Actress + Filmmaker



SOCIETY FOR ARTS  
AND TECHNOLOGY

# SAT<sup>2024</sup> FEST

27/03 >  
04/05

## Discover the best of fulldome immersive creativity

[sat.qc.ca](https://sat.qc.ca)

À la Société des arts technologiques  
1201, Boulevard St-Laurent, Montréal



Québec

FONDS  
de solidarité FTQ



# : best buds



BY DAVE MACINTYRE

How the fuck is it already March?

Whether because I'm losing all concept of space and time or because of the unnervingly warm temperatures this winter, this hasn't felt like a winter at all. In that case, I suppose it's nice that I have enough days where it's nice enough to go for an alleyway stroll with a joint in hand. Thus, I've reviewed some more pre-rolls — indica this time — for this month's column.

Smoking a variety this month appropriately known as "guédilles" ("rolls" en français) from a strain known as grape pie, the parent company behind these joints (C3 Innovative Solutions, based in Vaudreuil-Dorion) tell me to "Get ready to embark on a taste adventure that's a true Québécois delight!" Let's see how much of a delight it really is — after all, those kinds of slogans should usually be reserved for poutine.

FLEURONS GUÉDILLES (INDICA)

This strain is fine — not exceptional, but it gets the job done. It gives me a nice, soothing head high (the kind you expect from an indica when you need to do some serious unwinding), but they can be a bit hard to light for very long. The joints are fairly small and tightly packed, and come in packs of six. The aroma for these bad boys is referred to as fruity and earthy, but it feels like more of the latter when I actually inhale it. Strong and fast-acting as the weed is (never mind the fact that these can be as high as 28% THC), it can also be a bit harsh on my throat.

These joints serve their purpose admirably enough, and gets me in a positive headspace, albeit a bit of a sleepy one. But it doesn't put me to sleep so much as it just relaxes me and makes me loathe to leave my bed once I've laid down comfortably in it. It doesn't get me tooooooo tired or hungry, and I go down a disco-funk rabbit hole (think Nile Rodgers and all the music his distinctive guitar playing technique inspired) on Apple Music.

Unfortunately for me, I also light one of these up while caught in a torrential downpour, during an unseasonably warm February evening right before a 25 degree drop the next morning. Climate change is real, folks. Adding to my existential dread, that means I'll have limited amounts of time to smoke these. As I go outside, it's already quite windy and therefore difficult to smoke. I also am greeted by a fallen tree branch directly in front of the spot I normally go outside to light up at. Great. 7/10

## THE NATIONAL THE WAR ON DRUGS

LUCIUS

ZEN ——— DIAGRAM ——— TOUR ——— 2024

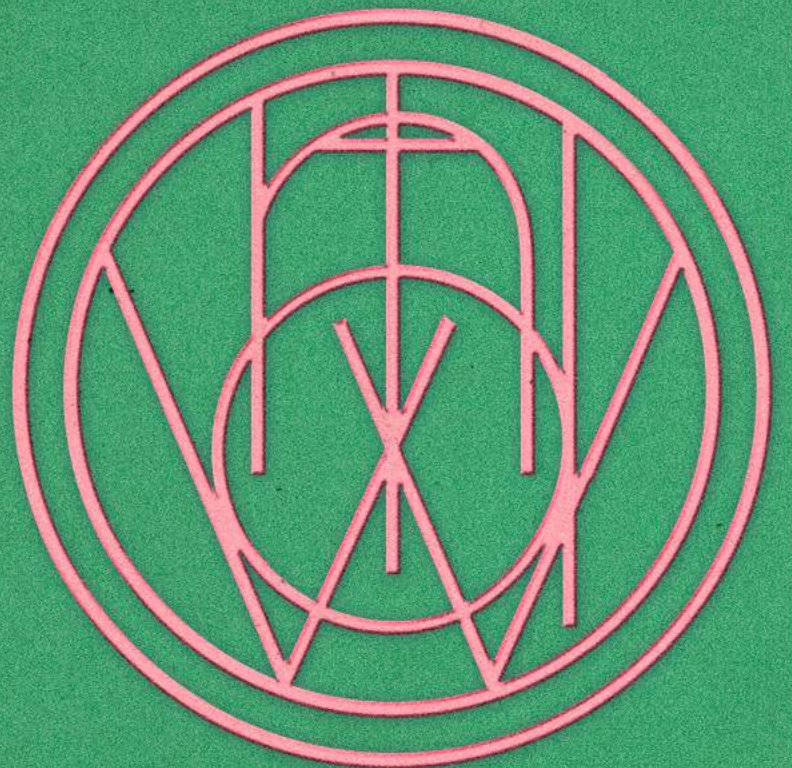
SEPT 19  
PLACE BELL

TICKETS: [EVENKO.CA](https://evenko.ca)

evenko

LIVE NATION

OSHEAGA  
PRESENTS





# :the 1st half



BY PAUL DESBAILLETS

The Canadian women's soccer team is embroiled in a significant legal dispute with Canada Soccer, stemming from issues of pay equity and funding.

The Canadian Soccer Players' Association (CSPA), the union representing players on the women's senior national team, has filed a \$40-million lawsuit against 15 current and former Canada Soccer board members who signed a media and sponsorship contract in 2018 with the private company Canadian Soccer Business (CSB).

This lawsuit comes against a backdrop of financial constraints that Canada Soccer claims are affecting both the men's and women's programs. Despite the success of both national teams, including the women's team's gold medal win at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics and the men's team qualifying for the World Cup for the first time in 36 years, there have been extensive cuts across both programs. The players argue that soccer in Canada has never been more popular or successful, yet they are facing inadequate funding, which they believe threatens

to reverse the progress made in Canadian soccer and push the sport back into obscurity.

Canada Soccer, in response to the lawsuit and the concerns raised by the players, has stated its commitment to resolving these issues, emphasizing that pay equity is at the core of ongoing negotiations with the players. A meeting was planned with the women's national team to discuss these matters further, highlighting Canada Soccer's desire to find a resolution not just for the women's team but for soccer in Canada as a whole.

This legal battle and the issues at its heart reflect broader concerns in sports regarding gender equity and the allocation of resources. The outcome of this lawsuit and the ongoing negotiations could have significant implications for the future of soccer in Canada, potentially setting precedents for how sports organizations address gender equity and funding at a national level.

To the streaming world we know, Apple TV+ has announced the "first-ever, all-access" documentary series about the 2024 season of Major League Soccer (MLS).

This is being brought to life by the award-winning Box To Box Films, known for their captivating sports

documentaries like *Formula 1: Drive to Survive* and the surfing series *Make or Break*. The eight-part series aims to provide a proper view of the MLS season, from preseason training to the intensity of the MLS Cup final, with unprecedented access to players, coaches and teams.

On the local front, some exciting news: TSN 690 Montreal and *The 1st Half Culture Show* have teamed up to launch a radio show on Fridays at 6 p.m. as of March 1.

The city's leading sports radio authority is teaming up with me, myself, this guy Paul Desbaillets, for an exclusive three-month collaboration, brought to you by Quincaillerie Notre-Dame. The show will dive deep into the heart of soccer culture and community, offering a local perspective on a worldwide phenomenon that's gaining traction in Montreal and across North America as we fast approach United 2026. Expect engaging and insightful discussions about the beautiful game with interviews with athletes and remarkable Montrealers.

*The 1st Half Culture Show* podcast will continue as always on Spotify, Apple Podcasts, iHeart Podcasts and YouTube as well as on all our socials (IG, TikTok, X) @ the1sthalf\_

*The 1st Half* radio show airs on Fridays at 6PM ET on 690AM, and via audio live stream on iHeartRadio.ca, the iHeartRadio Canada app and TSN.ca.

"Success is no accident. It is hard work, perseverance, learning, studying, sacrifice and most of all, love of what you are doing or learning to do." —Pelé

# EVERY DAY SHE ROSE



Director | Metteuse en scène  
**Dian Marie Bridge**

By | Par  
**Andrea Scott & Nick Green**

STARRING | AVEC Emerjade Simms & François Macdonald

SET DESIGN | DÉCORS Zoe Roux

COSTUME DESIGN | CONCEPTION DES COSTUMES Georges Michael Fanfan

COMPOSER | COMPOSITEUR Rob Denton

LIGHTING & VIDEO DESIGN | CONCEPTION VIDÉO ET D'ÉCLAIRAGES  
potatoCakes\_digital (Emily Soussana & Andrew Scriver)

STAGE MANAGER | RÉGIE Kate Hagemeyer

TECHNICAL DIRECTION | DIRECTION TECHNIQUE Shopdogs

MUSICAL COLLABORATORS | COLLABORATEURS MUSICAUX Alex Cameron  
& Riel Reddick-Stevens

BOARD OPERATOR | Opératrice de console Abi Sanie

**Théâtre Espace Libre**

1945 Rue Fullum, Montréal QC H2K 3N3  
(Studio Espace Libre)

Box Office | Billeterie

[www.blacktheatreworkshop.ca](http://www.blacktheatreworkshop.ca), [boxoffice@theatrebtw.ca](mailto:boxoffice@theatrebtw.ca)

[www.blacktheatreworkshop.ca/every-day-she-rose](http://www.blacktheatreworkshop.ca/every-day-she-rose)

**4-13** APRIL  
AVRIL  
2024

La pièce *Every Day She Rose* sera présentée en anglais avec surtitres français.





# food

## Brass tacks



Dominique Lafond

BY CLAYTON SANDHU

Casavant, which opened in the fall of 2023, takes its name from the grandmother of co-owner Matisse Deslauriers (ex-vinvinvin).

Conceptually, it's a place that's steeped in nostalgia — a neo-brasserie that romanticizes Parisian institutions while allowing itself the freedom of exploration and innovation. Occupying a sweet corner storefront in a picturesque part of Villieray, it feels like a place ripe with potential — a neighbourhood restaurant with staying power. I could feel the buzzy energy of the place as I approached the door, and despite the frigid winter weather, I can already picture groups of good-looking 30-somethings spilling out of the doors, wine glasses in hand, for a mid-meal cigarette. I immediately liked Casavant; I like what it stands for and the type of Parisian restaurant magic it's attempting to import.

Joining Deslauriers in the venture are Geoffrey Gravel (also ex-vinvinvin), Amélie Demchuk and Chef Charles-Tristan Prévost, who most recently worked as the sous-chef of Club Chasse & Pêche. It's the first solo venture for the foursome and the first head-chef job for Prévost. As a concept, the brasserie is a good jumping-off point. It's beloved and uncomplicated. It can be upscale and pricey (like Paris's Grande Brasserie) or far more utilitarian. In any case, the recipe is fairly simple: make the food good, don't reinvent the wheel and don't bite off more than you can chew. In my pre-dining research, I came to learn that the goal of Casavant was to become the new "after-work" hangout for the restaurant industry — l'Express for a new generation. Big shoes to fill if you ask me.

Casavant is beautiful and striking in its design, which was realized by powerhouse design firm Ménard Dworkin. It's contemporary, for sure, and I like the fact that they've made no attempt to recreate a typical French brasserie. Instead, they've used an elegant and elaborate tile mosaic on the floors, burnt ochre banquettes and white oak (or a similar light wood) tables. The main attraction, however, is the back bar — a spectacular wooden cabinet bursting at the seams with neatly organized bottles of wine. It's got a Bar Raval look to it (although far less brooding than that Toronto establishment) and it's absolutely lovely.

So too is the wine list by Deslauriers, the man behind the import agency À boire debout. Deslauriers's list features

plenty of products from his portfolio along with a decent helping of references from the world's best producers. It's worth mentioning, I think, that creating an exciting wine list (especially a natural wine list) is becoming harder and harder. With limited allocations for sought-after producers and small quantities in general, it's often the established spots that get all the best stuff. The occasion called for something good and something French — to me that nearly always spells Burgundy and so we selected a bottle of '21 Bigotes from Frédéric Cossard. It's a lighting-in-a-bottle type of Chardonnay, the kind of wine that's generous yet energetic and textured (in a round and silky way) while having driving minerality that makes the wine an absolute pleasure to revisit sip after sip.

The menu is structured in what is becoming the new standard format: smaller plates at the top and bigger ones at the bottom. We started with a duo of surf 'n' turf-style dishes, beef tartare with smoked mackerel and scallop crudo with chorizo from Pascal le Boucher. At face value, beef tartare with mackerel is not a particularly tasty-sounding proposition. I've eaten many a tartare in many formats and I have particularly liked versions that incorporate high-quality anchovy, and though smoked mackerel and anchovy are quite different fish, I figured they earned the benefit of the doubt. Good thing, because the combination absolutely works. The beef tartare receives the same basic preparation as any classic tartare save for the addition of the smoked mackerel, which has been whipped with mayo to make a sort of rilette that's folded into the tartare. It brings the additional depth of flavour you'd expect from oily fish but the smoke is also a quite pleasant addition.

The scallop dish was a bit disappointing to me. When I read it on the menu, I thought, "How clever," a rendition of the oyster and chipolata dish famously served at l'Avant Comptoir Mer in Paris — where, I should add, sausages are served in scallop shells. It was a conceptual home run for me. My disappointment, I admit, comes in large part because the dish I was presented with did not at all resemble the dish I had concocted in my mind. Hardly their fault but, then again, it's a bit of a missed opportunity, no? The dish we received was a much more elaborate composition of sliced raw scallops in a shallow pool of green oil, topped with pickled red onion, Mujjol caviar, a heap of microgreens and a middling chorizo crumble. It's not a bad dish but it's not particularly interesting either. If you call the dish scallops and chorizo on the menu, that's what you should get. Instead, this was a dish that felt overworked and a bit insincere. In my particular dish,

the chorizo seemed almost entirely absent. I think it's a combination that could easily work well, say a few chunks of well-seared chorizo served with princess scallops dressed with lemon and the rendered chorizo fat — just spitballing. In any case, not bad but not great either.

For the main course, we opted for something opulent — half a pintade (guinea fowl), roasted until golden and served with a vin jaune sauce and morels. A rendition of the classic Bressane dish poularde aux morilles, this is all about luxurious ingredients and rock-solid cooking. Casavant's version is generous in portion, meant to serve two but could comfortably serve more. The pintade is as golden as advertised and sits in a glossy, dark brown pool of jus. The sauce, which is delicious, is also atypical. Generally, a vin jaune sauce will be made with a good dose of cream and have a much paler complexion, but I actually prefer Casavant's version. The morels were roughly torn and lacked their characteristic plumpness but it's not exactly morel season in February so they can't be held accountable for that. Although it does beg the question, why put a morel-centric dish on the menu when it's not morel season? To round out the dish and add a bit of starch, Prévost included some roasted sunchokes whose natural nuttiness was a perfect match for the oxidative qualities of the vin jaune sauce. While the dish was impressive, it also fell a bit short in terms of cuisson. Pintade is meant to be cooked medium-rare or medium at a maximum, like duck in that respect, but I found the cooking to be on the rarer side of medium-rare, even for my tastes. It was a busy Friday night and I suspect that the bird was not given sufficient time to rest before hitting the plate — a somewhat understandable error, but an error nonetheless.

On the whole, Casavant is a beautiful restaurant with a really stellar beverage program. As for the food, it's got promise for sure but it definitely needs some fine-tuning. I think what it boils down to isn't a lack of skill or know-how but more that the menu is missing an established point of view. I expect that the confidence and cohesive vision will come as the team matures within their space — it is, after all, still early days for Casavant. With that said, there is already great maturity in the service, which is effortlessly warm and consummately professional — something I'm overjoyed to see. For the time being, I'm not convinced that Casavant will become the next l'Express but I am confident that it will establish itself as a well-loved restaurant in this city. Though it may not go down as one of Montreal's most revered and cherished institutions, being a good restaurant in this town is still something to be very proud of.



cinéma  
thèque  
qc

# Mel Brooks a hilarious wit

March 27 — April 21

*Young Frankenstein* by Mel Brooks

cinematheque.qc.ca

335 De Maisonneuve Blvd. East  
@ berri-uqam



Ouvert 7 jours: midi, soir et pour emporter!  
Stationnement gratuit à partir de 17h00 avec réservation!

pimentrouge.ca

Open 7 days a week for lunch, dinner and takeout!  
Free parking from 5 PM with reservation!

514-866-7816

495 Beaumont (corner Querbes)



# music

## Cone of power



BY STEPHAN BOISSONNEAULT

We have all gone through moments, especially post-pandemic, when we have wanted to rewrite our own stories. Sometimes this process is coming to terms with who you were years earlier, or in the case of the dubbed “queen of gothic industrial guitar,” Chelsea Wolfe, who you will become.

Her latest, seventh album, *She Reaches Out to She* feels very much like a murky and noisy celestial guide. The California-born and -raised musician and singer-songwriter communicates with past and future versions of herself, while sounds of twisting metal, heavy crashes and creaking floorboards, both literal and metaphorical, make their presence known as the songs consume and cannibalize themselves. The result is epic and gargantuan, sometimes terrifying yet cerebral and cleansing.

“I’ve actually done guided meditations and hypnotizations where I saw a future version of myself and that definitely made it into the music and helped me finish this album,” Wolfe says over a spotty Google Meets line at a rest stop during the first leg of her Divide and Dissolve tour.

As she was working on this new album during the pandemic, Wolfe went on an independent journey: deciding to get sober. She says the trance-like guided meditations she experienced during her throes of heavy drinking were definitely

channeled into *She Reaches Out To...*

“I knew that I could get sober because I saw this future version of myself as very powerful and alcohol-free,” Wolfe says. “It’s interesting, too, because after I got sober, this album became very prophetic for me.”

While she was writing these songs, they practically became real breathing entities; beings that demanded to be lived and experienced in Wolfe’s actual life. She would be writing about cutting the cord of a toxic relationship, or something in a song like “Whispers in the Echo Chamber,” and then would have to actually do it.

“Healing is not something that’s linear, it’s something that we kind of go through in cycles and in spirals, and once we think we have healed, something pops back up again,” Wolfe says. “This album is very much within the in-between — when you are cutting ties with your old life and starting to let it go, but you haven’t quite stepped into your new one yet.”

Nothing Wolfe does is without purpose and her decision to make this album more electronic and almost trip hop-based (she references Depeche Mode’s *Violator* as a huge influence) was resolute. She has always been a musical shapeshifter, and the themes within the album all centre around transformation. So this musical shift to a more electro-focused sound makes sense.

“The demos started off more rock-based, but when I gave them to Dave Sitek [TV on the Radio, Yeah Yeah Yeahs], they became more electronic and trip hop-focused, and it seems that was where these songs wanted to live, so that really resonated with me,” Wolfe says.

The album cover, featuring Wolfe holding a glass egg like a coveted crystal ball, has heavy symbolism as well. Eggs are, of course, the universal symbol of rebirth. After being recommended the film by a friend, Wolfe was inspired by the ’80s Mamoru Oshii [*Ghost in the Shell*] anime film *Angel’s Egg*.

“In the film, there is this girl protecting this egg and you don’t know what is inside, but it feels very much full of possibility. So I resonated hard with that and I wanted (the album cover) to feel like I am embracing and nurturing all of these mysteries waiting for me within this egg,” Wolfe says.

In recent years, Wolfe has also become more and more open to talking about her spiritual paths — specifically witchcraft. While reporting on witchcraft is usually focused on a repossession of power with a feminist edge, for Wolfe, it’s more gentle.

“It’s a personal thing for me, and yes, I have become more open to talking about it, but I’m kind of protective of it still,” Wolfe says. “Before a show, I definitely need to take time to myself, to meditate or pull a Tarot card or just do certain rituals to get myself in a headspace of focusing on what I’m there to do.”

For her — and she knows it sounds “cheesy” — the rituals are all about keeping love at her centre.

“I haven’t played too many shows since the pandemic and since I got sober, so I need to be more centered and keep this idea of love within me, my singing and the people in the room with me. That’s become my ritual.”

→ Chelsea Wolfe brings her Divide and Dissolve tour to Club Soda (1225 St-Laurent) on March 16, doors 7 p.m., show 8 p.m., SOLD OUT



Happy Saint-Patrick's Day!

*Monsef*  
**DERRAJI**

Député de/MNA for Nelligan

LEADER PARLEMENTAIRE  
DE L'OPPOSITION OFFICIELLE  
Official Opposition House Leader



**VOTRE VOIX AU PARLEMENT**  
YOUR VOICE IN PARLIAMENT

3535, boul. Saint-Charles, bur. 400 Kirkland Qc H9H 5B9  
514 695-2440 - Monsef.Derraji.NELL@assnat.qc.ca

*Suivez-moi / Follow me!*

f derrajimonsef  
x monsefderraji  
i monsefderraji\_depute  
v Monsef Derraji  
globe www.monsefderraji.com

Teesri Duniya Theatre presents a Broadleaf Creative Production of



**Broadleaf  
Creative**

# THE CHEMICAL VALLEY PROJECT

by Julia Howman and Kevin Matthew Wong

*Central image by Dhalia Katz*

**MARCH 13 - 24, 2024**

Evening Shows 8pm | Matinees 2pm

**Cité-des-Hospitalières,  
251 Avenue des Pins O, H2W 1R6**





# Local newspapers produce game-changing coverage

“We have boots on the ground, and often our stories get picked up by larger media.”

Nikki Mantell, publisher, Low Down to Hull and Back News

**COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS** do a lot with a little. The result is game-changing coverage that not only informs the immediate regions they serve, but reflects the issues that contribute to the public conversations on a provincial and national scale.

While large media outlets were debating the possible ramifications of Bill 21, Quebec’s so-called secularism law that prohibits civil servants and other public-sector workers from wearing religious clothing or jewelry, the editor of *The Low Down to Hull and Back News* was interviewing Grade 3 teacher, Fatemeh Anvari, in the little town of Chelsea, Que., in the Outaouais region. She had just been fired for wearing a hijab.

“That’s one of the stories that wouldn’t get picked up if we wouldn’t do them,” said *The Low Down*’s publisher Nikki Mantell.

The story, broken by a newsroom with a staff of three, was picked up by the *Ottawa Citizen*, *The Globe and Mail*, the *National Post* and international outlets, including *Newsweek* and *The Guardian*.

It put a human face on Quebec’s often-virulent secularism debate. And, as Mantell put it, “changed the discourse.”

Mantell continued: “Before *The Low Down* published Ms. Fatemeh’s story, support for Bill 21 was hovering around 64 per cent. Following the story, which every major news outlet in Canada picked up, support for the bill dropped to 55 per cent.”

In another corner of the province, in the Vaudreuil-Soulanges region west of Montreal, when Bill 96 threatened to strip small bilingual towns of their dual-language status, the mayor of one of those tiny communities appeared set to let the deadline for the municipal council to affirm its will to keep the status expire. The local English-language paper in the region, *The 1019 Report*, questioned the mayor. On repeated occasions that spanned months, the mayor refused to commit whether council would vote on the needed resolution.

In response to the coverage, residents in the tiny town of 120 grew concerned. Two reporters with *The 1019 Report* started working the phones and going door to door. By the time they were done, the paper reported on the results of an exhaustive survey: a clear majority of residents of the island community of Île Cadieux wanted the town

to keep its official bilingual status.

“Most of the residents credit the paper” when the resolution was finally renewed, said *The 1019 Report*’s editor Brenda O’Farrell, adding that large media outlets would never have bothered to do the legwork.

“We spread ourselves thin. We work really hard. And we’re good at stretching a buck,” said Mantell. “We put our hearts and souls into this.”

This is the type of journalism the Local Journalism Initiative helps produce. The federal funding program provides resources to hire journalists who produce civic content – coverage of health, education, rights, public policy and other essential issues.

It also ensures that members of Quebec’s English-speaking community continue to be informed. As Lily Ryan, publisher of *The Aylmer Bulletin* and the *West Quebec Post*, points out, as the province’s language of business and politics is French, English-language papers offer the minority community the opportunity to stay in touch with what is going on in their communities and government decisions.



BY THE NUMBERS	10,815	4	518	Number of local news operations that closed between 2008 and Feb. 1, 2024. SOURCE: LOCAL NEWS RESEARCH PROJECT
	Number of LJI articles on civic issues produced at QCNA publications between April 2019 and February 2024. SOURCE: QCNA	Number of community newspapers launched in Quebec serving the English-speaking community since 2020. SOURCE: QCNA	547	The number of job cuts announced by Quebec television network TVA in November 2023. SOURCE: TVA
			800	The number of job cuts announced by CBC in December 2023. SOURCE: CBC
			1269	Number of media jobs eliminated in Canada during first year of the COVID pandemic. SOURCE: LOCAL NEWS RESEARCH PROJECT
			4800	The number of job cuts announced by Bell Media in February 2024. SOURCE: BELL MEDIA





# Community newspapers emerging as last journalistic soldiers standing

**LAST MONTH**, Bell Media announced its largest workforce restructuring in 30 years, laying off 4,800 workers.

In December, CBC/Radio-Canada announced plans to cut 800 jobs.

One month earlier, Quebec television network TVA cut 547 jobs.

Earlier in 2023, Postmedia, one of the largest media companies in Canada with a daily newspaper in almost every major city in the country, announced it was cutting 10 per cent of its staff, just the latest in a long string of downsizing moves that has spanned more than a decade. The cuts planned for Quebec went much deeper.

Almost every month, evidence of the continuing shift in the media landscape can be seen. And the result is fewer and fewer journalists reporting the stories that keep Canadians informed.

But in many communities a singular journalistic soldier remains standing: The community newspaper. These small, often privately-owned outlets are the last providers of reliable, professional local news.

“Community newspapers aren’t just filling the gap, they’re the whole fabric,”

said veteran journalist and president of the Quebec Community Newspaper Association Brenda O’Farrell.

That is why support for community newspapers is so important, O’Farrell says. As the media landscape continues to shift, the role these news outlets play is not only crucial, but gaining importance.

And they need to be supported by initiatives like the federal government’s Local Journalism Initiative, O’Farrell explains, referring to the funding program that helps qualified outlets hire reporters in communities across the country. But readers in these communities, have to do their part, too, she added, by subscribing to papers that offer that option, especially in Quebec where the minority-language community needs to maintain access to information in English.

Without programs like LJI and reader support, many community papers would struggle to survive.

Since 2012, journalist Marie-Ève Martel has tracked community news outlet closures across Quebec.

“For the moment, I’ve counted more than 80,” she reported late last year, af-

ter the abrupt shuttering of the Montreal daily *Metro* and its offshoots in several Montreal suburbs and Quebec City.

Each closure represents not only jobs lost, but “a hole in our social cement,” as Martel describes it.

Local media “makes us more informed, more aware and more likely to vote,” she said.

“CBC and the *Ottawa Citizen* aren’t going to cover a byelection in Chelsea,” said Nikki Mantell, the publisher of *The Low Down to Hull and Back News*, which covers the small towns in the Gatineau hills. “We have boots on the ground, and often our stories get picked up by larger media.”

“Local papers are where you hear about the most important things — health care, schools, getting your roads paved, the environment,” said Sharon McCully, publisher of *The Record* in Sherbrooke and the *Brome County News*, two papers that cover about 30 municipalities for the English-speaking community in the Eastern Townships. “These are stories that impact people directly.”

*“Community newspapers aren’t just filling the gap, they’re the whole fabric.”*

Brenda O’Farrell, journalist and QCNA president



Hey-o, warriors of the night. Only  
hipping you L7's to one gig this  
month, so shut the fuck up and  
buckle up.

and while using my booze-addled deductive logic just figured he was probably holding up the bar at our favourite watering hole.

I left the Rialto and while completely covered in sticky “blood” glistening under the Parc Avenue street lights while at least one litre of Bloody Caesars swished around in my bloodstream, I figured I should catch a cab and meet my drinking buddy. This would need to be done tout suite as being between drinks after that much vodka would surely mean a night of blacking out in an alley. As the Rialto crowd spilled out into the street, I figured I would have to be as animated as possible in order to snag a cab before the rest of the crowd. Being an aggressive type when drinking clear alcohol, I stood in the middle of the street demanding that a cab stop for me while waving my hands frantically over my head. In my mind, this was, uh, “very emergency,” so being in the middle of the road with arms akimbo was a necessary action.

Decades ago, GWAR was playing at Rialto and my friend Mike Banas and I made up a heap of spicy Bloody Caesars and threw the whole clammy mess into an emptied out two-litre bottle and snuck it into the show. How they let Gwar's show into the Rialto is still beyond any reason at all as the fake blood started spraying into the crowd from the get-go, followed quickly by gallons of "pus" and "man goo." By the end of the show, the entire sold-out room was completely covered from the blood bath. After swigging from a two-litre bottle of Bloody Caesars for an hour and a half, I was completely out of my mind drunk. In the drunken melee, I had lost my drinking partner Mike

Of course I was utterly oblivious to the fact that I was covered head to toe in crimson liquid and white goo. When the cab stopped, I jumped quickly into the back seat and slurred "Bifteck! And step on it." It was at this point that I noticed a young child beside me in the backseat, who met my sloppy grin with a face of terror. Once I turned my gaze into the two sets of saucer eyes in the front seat I realized that I was actually not in a cab at all, but in a station wagon with a mortified

**Asian family that spoke no English. They obviously thought I had escaped a horrifically violent event but the plan was already in motion, so who was I to put the brakes on.**

God love them. As they came to a screeching halt in front of the entrance of Hotel Dieu, I protested with a King Diamond-worthy scream that seemed to come directly from the bowels of my vodka-soaked soul, “NOOOOOO, Bifteck!!!” I then gave them the necessary directions to drop me off directly in front of the bar. I entered through the Western-style doors, sat down beside Mike and ordered a... Boréale Rousse. Ordering a Bloody Caesar at that point would’ve been downright barbaric.

Current Obsession: Various Artists, "Songs the Cramps Taught Us"

1

# POUZZA

2

---

**POWERED BY**

**INSTRUMENTS DE MUSIQUE**

## WAVVES STRIKE ANYWHERE LAURA JANE GRACE AGAINST ALL AUTHORITY ALEX LAHEY ROLLER STARTER DIESEL BOY DIRECT HIT! ROZWELL KID THE ERGS

**WAYS AWAY CATBITE JER KIWI JR WORRIERS THIS IS HELL MAKEWAR  
PETE BERNHARD CRAZY & THE BRAINS KALI MASI LES DOROTHÉE  
PETITE LEAGUE THE ANTI QUEENS THE PENSKE FILE JON SNODGRASS  
SKATING POLLY THE IRON ROSES BILLY LIAR PEANUT BUTTER SUNDAY REBUILDER**

A.S.K. AMERICAN TELEVISION ANOTHER MICHAEL ASK OPHELIA ATHLETE AVEM BAD BAD BIRD BASEMENT DWELLER BIRDS OF PRREY  
BLACK GUY FAWKES BLIND ADAM AND THE FEDERAL LEAGUE BOIDS CAPABLE! CHOU CHUCK COLES COLIN MOORE CONFLIT MAJEUR  
COUNTERPUNCH CRACHAT CROSS DOG DARKO DAVID DONDERO DEAD ALRIGHT DEATHNAP DECENT CRIMINAL DEFORESTERS DESERT SHARKS  
DEVON KAY & THE SOLUTIONS DIRTY CHEETAH DIRTY FRENCHKISS DOLLAR SIGNS DYLAN LANA EARLY FLIGHTS FAKEYOU FAMILY DINNER  
FELICITY HAMER & BLACK LEATHER ROSE FLYCATCHER FRONTROW FUCK TOUTE GUTSER HANDHELD HEAVY LAG HELL BEACH HER HEAD'S ON FIRE  
HIPSHOT HIT LIKE A GIRL IN THE MEANTIME INTENABLE JASON PAUL & THE KNOW IT ALLS JENNY WOO JO BERGERON (FULL-BAND) JOEY AFFATATO  
JOSH & THE DIRTY RAGS JULIUS SUMNER MILLER KENNEDY KILLING DAISIES KMAN & THE 45S LATEWAVES LE PLAN CANETON LIKE A  
MOTORCYCLE LITTLE JUNIOR LO(U)SER LORD FRIDAY THE 13TH MATT PLESS MÉTROPOLE MIDDLE-AGED QUEERS MIKEY ERG NO WAVES  
NORTHWALK OMNIGONE ONE LAST THREAT ONETIMER OUTLIER PANIC ATTACK PASMORT PEOPLEVIOLENCE PINK LEATHER JACKETS PONY  
PRINCESSE ALXLA RAD OWL RODEO BOYS RUBY SLIPPER RUST RING SADLANDS SAM RUSSO SCREAMING AT TRAFFIC SHIFT-D SHIT PRESENT  
SKUNCH STEVE & GINIE JACKSON STILL ALIVE STILL INSANE STOP THE PRESSES SUN JUNKIES SUNDAY AT THE WARD SUNLINER  
TESS & THE DETAILS THE ABRUPTORS THE BIG EASY THE CORPS THE FLY DOWNS THE GHOSTWRITE THE HYBRIDS THE JUKEBOX ROMANTICS  
THE LOOKOUT THE PUNK CELLIST THE SPEAKEASY THE WRITE UPS TIM HOLEHOUSE TINY STILLS TOTAL WASTE VARLOPE VIRGINITY  
WAG WHOREDROBE WISE GUISE WOLVES&WOLVES&WOLVES&WOLVES YOU VANDAL

Tourisme Québec
**FOUFONNES ELECTRIQUES**
**LE CENTRAL**  
MANGER - MONTRÉAL
**LE NOÏSE**

Première Music **BIG BILL**
turbo HAUS
**QUITE ALRIGHT**
Brendain & Bélanger GARAGE
**123 LUITE!**
ai marché
LES GARS DE RIPE
CARTe CACHÉE
ROCK

BTB
 KOOVE
THÉÂTRE SAINT-CATHERINE
kanit

Café Cléopâtre
RIDE CARRELAGE
**"BAD CREW"**
Singi

## MAY 17/18/19 MAI • [POUZZAFEST.COM](http://POUZZAFEST.COM)



# THE PERFECT BEER FOR THE SUGARING-OFF SEASON

CELEBRATES  
OUR UNIQUE  
QUEBEC  
SUGARING-OFF  
TRADITION.



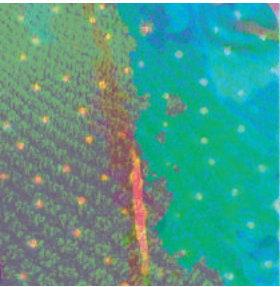
MCAUSLAN.COM



MCAUSLAN

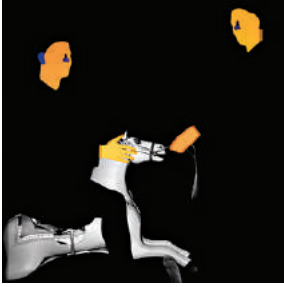


# Album reviews



Gulfer, *Third Wind* (Topshelf)  
That moment when “selling out” musically pays off in spades. Local emo/math rock four-piece Gulfer have toned down their more complex instrumentation and frenzied song structures in exchange for tighter, more melodic songwriting. By and large, the results are stellar. Early Weezer and Jimmy Eat World sound like musical guideposts on songs like “Cherry Seed,” “Drainer” and lead single and album opener “Clean,” the latter a gleefully dark tune about a dude going on the run after killing his boss. “Heartshape” combines these more straightforward melodies with their trademark guitar noodling still at its core, while “No Brainer” takes some influence from post-punk before launching into a full-on rocker somewhere between Yo La Tengo and Built to Spill. Though the hooks can sometimes feel overly repetitive, Gulfer nonetheless deliver a knockout of an LP that tests their pop songwriting chops while not sacrificing too much of what made them stand out in this sometimes crowded Montreal scene to start with. 8.5/10 Trial Track: “Clean” (Dave MacIntyre)

MGMT, *Loss of Life* (Mom + Pop)  
Though it’s impossible to discuss MGMT’s legacy without mentioning their late-aughts trifecta of hits (“Time to Pretend,” “Electric Feel,” “Kids”) from debut album *Oracular Spectacular*, reducing their impact on music to those songs would be unfair. Newest LP *Loss of Life* — the band’s first in six years — shows there’s plenty of quality music still left in the tank for Andrew VanWyngarden and Ben Goldwasser,



as they (mostly) strike a delicate balance between their more spaced-out psychedelic tendencies and the pop songwriting that helped them write those old hits in the first place. The album feels like it has some folky ’60s pixie dust sprinkled onto it, the results taking the band to almost Beatlesque places (“Mother Nature,” “Bubblegum Dog”). Other highlights include the poignant “Dancing in Babylon” featuring Christine and the Queens, and the acoustic-driven, emotionally charged “Nothing Changes,” which sounds like a mid-’90s Smashing Pumpkins ballad that also has a distinctly Bowie-like feel. While the album starts to feel a bit repetitive after the first half, it’s a consistently strong effort from MGMT, and one showing significant growth and maturity to boot. 8/10 Trial Track: “Mother Nature” (Dave MacIntyre)



of quality output, assuming his moment in the spotlight had

Schoolboy Q, *Blue Lips* (Top Dawg)  
Even some of the nicest MCs miss out on the longevity that their early presence suggests. And as the last few years have been decidedly blink-and-miss-it in general, you’re to be forgiven if you didn’t realize the once ubiquitous L.A. rapper hasn’t made a peep after a non-stop barrage

passed. From his 2008 mixtape debut to his most acclaimed LP, 2014’s *Oxymoron* and its relatively deserving successors up to *Crash Talk* in 2019, it’s been a stretch. Top Dawg’s roster has since found mass pop appeal with SZA but lost its flagship artist, Kendrick Lamar. The Black Hippy era is over. So the escalating buzz around Schoolboy Q’s return with his first album in five years wasn’t for nothing. We could throw around terms like “maturity” and “evolution,” but instead, let’s say *Blue Lips* marks calculated progress for a talent who came out strong and didn’t sweat whether it took five minutes or half a decade to pen another classic. What’s changed? In a word, the “Collard Greens” rapper’s latest is a steadier diet of seasoned gangsta soul. 8/10 Trial Track: “Cooties” (Darcy MacDonald)



Whoredrobe, *Mirror Games* (No Exit)  
Montreal four-piece Whoredrobe is fit and ready to explode, with echoes of bands like Anthrax, the Slits, Black Flag and Bikini Kill all rolled up into a ball of chaotic energy. They’ve made waves in the punk rock community since their 2022 debut single “Get in My Van,” making ridiculously catchy earworms with riff-tastic guitar, gritty aggressive vocal work and an explosive rhythm and percussion section. The first two songs on this debut EP, *Mirror Games*, are fun straightforward punk offerings with some metal influence, but Whoredrobe really finds their stride halfway through these six songs. “Slut Prayer” cuts heavy, deep and quick with witty lyrics about female empowerment, while palm-muted, thrash metal pinch harmonics fill the space. We get this same volatile energy on “Riot Kissing,” which could easily be the next song blasted aloud during Montreal’s many protests. “Family Planning” has a colossal aura to it, starting off as a doomy slow dirge and then morphing into a fast-paced epic that screams for an unruly mosh. 8/10 Trial Track “Family Planning” (Stephan Boissonneault)

KEVIN JAMES THORNTON

KEVIN ON EARTH

2024 TOUR



APRIL 27 MONTREAL PICCOLO RIALTO



Admit ONE MRG LIVE

TICKETS AVAILABLE AT ADMITONE.COM

ANDREW BIRD

SUMMER TOUR 2024

WITH SPECIAL GUEST

AMADOUS MARIAM

8/12

MONTREAL, QC

L'OLYMPIA



MRG LIVE







Commercial  
Photography  
AEC Program

**Dawson** — COLLEGE **READY TO CREATE?**



Independent  
Video Game Design  
AEC Program

Bring your vision to life!

\*Applications open until May 5 2024  
[www.dawsoncollege.qc.ca/AEC](http://www.dawsoncollege.qc.ca/AEC)





## Quiet revolution



Niko Tavernise

BY JUSTINE SMITH

In 1948, during la Grande Noirceur (the Great Darkness), Paul-Émile Borduas published “Refus Global,” an artistic manifesto that is seen as a precursor to modern Quebec and the Quiet Revolution. The text rejected tradition and the religious oppression imposed on the province under the Maurice Duplessis government. Borduas writes, “Our destiny seems harshly fixed,” before offering his vision of a world without religion, without the oppressive fist of power crushing the Québécois spirit. It’s a vision for the world where art will liberate the minds and hearts of an oppressed people. The author said it was born from “an untamed need for liberation.”

It’s a text that Denis Villeneuve references in his approach to adapting Frank Herbert’s *Dune*. Delving into the epic science-fiction world torn apart by spice and dogmatic belief, Villeneuve dives deeper into his world, finding threads of connection between his upbringing and his profound connection with the source material. It’s not something that was immediately conscious but became increasingly obvious as he engaged in self-reflection.

*Dune* might be a sci-fi epic set thousands of years in the future, but it feels rooted squarely in the perspectives of the moment. The movie’s grandeur is counterbalanced by its intimacy. The world of Arrakis, the desert planet at the heart of *Dune*, can be harsh and unforgiving, but it’s also a story of hope and revolution as the landscape peels open to expose its secrets. The intricacies of the Fremen culture and survival unveil the endurance of a people living in extremis and how

the desert shapes their beliefs and values.

Building off the events of the first *Dune* film, released in 2021, *Dune: Part Two* explores the intricacies of faith, politics and prophecy. It’s a mesmerizing and unexpectedly strange film that unravels the mechanics of power. It’s a movie that views the dogmatism of religion and prophecy as tools of control that attempt to derail a legitimate revolutionary movement’s plea for liberation.

Denis Villeneuve sat down with *Cult MTL* in Montreal to talk about the power of the image and Quebec’s influence on *Dune*.

Justine Smith: In a recent interview, you spoke about the importance of the “image” in your work. In the context of *Dune: Part Two*, particularly the sequence that unfolds at Giedi Prime, we have a sequence that references the imagery and aesthetics of fascism, inspired, in part, by the works of Leni Riefenstahl. In this sequence, we see the “danger” of the image in action. Do you consider the dangers of aesthetics when making your film?

Denis Villeneuve: Absolutely. Images have incredible power and are capable of incredible manipulation. A powerful image has the ability to change the perception of reality itself. That’s why it’s the filmmaker’s responsibility to use cinema for good. Obviously, propaganda can be incredibly dangerous.

JS: I’m also interested in the image of the desert in your work. It appears as early as *Un 32 août sur terre*, your first film, and nearly every single one afterwards. What is it about the desert as a cinematic landscape that fascinates you?

Denis Villeneuve: I don’t know how interesting this answer will be, but something about the desert invites introspection that forces you to look inward. Even the sound seems to cut off; we hear the sound of our beating heart, our breathing. It’s otherwise silent. It’s a moment of existential questions as we face a mirror to infinity. It’s incredibly powerful, and it touches me profoundly. I find it reassuring as well. It’s a space where we feel a direct connection with death, and it reconnects us to humanity’s place in the natural order.

And why does it fascinate me so much? I don’t know. I’ve always been fascinated. The first time I was in the desert, I felt at home. The only explanation I can come up with is that I was born on the edge of the St. Lawrence, the plains and the river, and the desert is a lot like the horizon, the sky. It was like discovering reality itself. So there is a connection to the melancholy of solitude, then facing the immensity that reassures me. I love not knowing the answer, but it’s a driving force.

JS: When you recently presented *Dune: Part Two* in New York City, you mentioned the Quiet Revolution. Could you elaborate on what you meant and why the Quiet Revolution resonated in your adaptation of *Dune*?

Denis Villeneuve: I’ll say it resonates because I’m a product of the Quiet Revolution. I was born in 1967, when Quebec had just separated from the church, and the intellectuals of the province were working to separate church and state. Before that, the church had a hold on politics in Quebec that was very unhealthy. Artists and young politicians, with the *Réfus Global* and what follows, decided to break with the church and create a secular state. That idea helped me in my adaptation of and my approach to the people of this world (in *Dune*), which is to say, I didn’t want them to be homogenous, that they’d have different sets of beliefs, different processes of thought and that we have a youth movement that puts into question established dogmas that are still being embraced by an older generation. I had the idea that Chanie was a reaction against the alienation of this older generation and the religion of her elders and that it’s maybe a little like that generation in Quebec, who were reacting against their parents.

The thing is, when you’re adapting something, you’re making so many choices. Millions of choices to adapt it for the screen. All those choices reflect who I am. I wondered how this idea came to me; it felt so spontaneous but powerful, and it hit me because it’s part of my roots.

→ *Dune: Part Two* is now playing in Montreal theatres.



**VOTE!**

**CULT**

**BEST OF**

**MTL**

**2024**

**[CULTMTL.COM/VOTEBESTOFMTL](https://cultmtl.com/votebestofmtl)**



# Scary monsters



BY CHICO PERES SMITH

Prepare for an epic showdown as we gear up to witness a new installment of the silver screen clash of two cinematic titans in *Godzilla x Kong: The New Empire*.

Director Adam Wingard and stars Rebecca Hall and Kaylee Hottle sat down via Zoom to share a glimpse of the making of this monstrous film spectacle. From the director's vision to the actors' experiences, this is a sneak behind the curtain of big blockbuster filmmaking that goes beyond the monster battles.

The upcoming film takes place after the events of 2021's *Godzilla vs. Kong*. In this new adventure, Godzilla and Kong must unite their forces against a colossal undiscovered threat hidden within our world, challenging their very existence — and our own.

Director Adam Wingard — renowned for his unique approach to horror in films like *You're Next*, *The Guest* and the action genre with *Godzilla vs. Kong* — conveyed his excitement for steering the colossal clash of Godzilla and King Kong. "I wanted to honour the classic monster movie legacy while infusing my distinct visual style, offering a fresh take on this iconic battle," shared Wingard. He discussed the collaborative energy on set and the first film's success as a motivating factor to create an even bigger monster clash.

Rebecca Hall, who returns as Dr. Ilene Andrews, spoke about the creativity and collaboration on set with her cast and crew, specifically Wingard. "It's always great to work with someone who has a real vision, and he's just a sort of delightful weirdo. I just love him," she says. "There was one day where Adam couldn't direct because he was laughing so hard at something stupid that we were doing!"

Hall shared the excitement of being part of this historic franchise, "It's exciting. It feels like being a part of a particular kind of film history that I am excited about and enjoy." Hall shares that the camaraderie among the cast, including Brian Tyree Henry (*Atlanta*) and Dan Stevens (*Downton Abbey*, Wingard's *The Guest*), transformed the filmmaking process into a gleeful experience reminiscent of a group of kids in a candy store. Wingard's ability to balance humour, action and family-friendly elements while maintaining a signature aesthetic left a lasting impression on Hall.

Adam Wingard tells us that making a film like this is a lot like being a big kid. "It is like being a kid playing with toys. The only difference is, in this case, there are lots of people spending millions of dollars looking over your shoulder, making sure you don't break the toys. But you still get to have fun. It becomes an experience of expressing pure imagination. Whatever you can dream up, you know, you can create." Speaking of filmmakers who influenced him, Wingard mentions Peter Jackson, who "inspired me many years ago. It's like being a kid in a giant sandbox with giant, expensive toys."

Mixing practical effects with CGI, Wingard says he can

turn anything he can imagine into reality through the collaboration and synergy between all the creative teams involved in making the film. From imagination to the meticulous preparation in the pre-production phase to the final complex sequences we see realized on screen, it all comes down to a vast creative effort.

Kaylee Hottle (who is deaf), reprising her role as Jia, hinted at the emotional depth her character experiences when discussing the challenges of portraying telecommunication scenes with Kong. "The growth of Jia, in her connection with Kong and interactions with her on-screen family, promises a compelling narrative that adds a human touch to the monstrous tale."

Regarding Hottle, Hall says of the young actress, "Kaylee Hottle's contribution is exceptional, not just in acting but also in bringing a unique dimension to Jia through American Sign Language (ASL)."

As *Godzilla x Kong: The New Empire* prepares to stomp into theatres, the look behind-the-scenes from the director and stars hints at a film that not only satisfies the cravings of classic kaiju monster movie enthusiasts but also breaks new ground in the Kong/Godzilla MonsterVerse by being an all-around inclusive family film. Get ready for an immersive experience filled with epic monster-bashing team-ups, witty humour and colossal action.

→ *Godzilla x Kong: The New Empire* will open in Montreal theatres on Wednesday, March 27.



WHAT IS THE NEXT STEP TO

GROW MY BUSINESS?

We can answer that.

### BUSINESS COACHING

Work one-on-one with a business coach to develop a customized plan that's focused on your needs and your business. Open to any age and stage of business.\*

### BUSINESS BOOTCAMP: KICKSTART YOUR ENTREPRENEURIAL JOURNEY

FREE\* | Thursdays, March 7, 14, 21 & 28  
6:00PM–8:30PM

### NEW! BRANDING, PRODUCT POSITIONING AND CAMPAIGN DEVELOPMENT

\$20 | Tuesday, March 12 | 6:30PM–8:30PM

### NEW! IDEA GENERATOR: KICKSTART YOUR BUSINESS JOURNEY

FREE | Wednesday, March 13 | 2:00PM–3:30PM

### SELLING ON AMAZON: HOW TO GET STARTED

\$20 | Tuesday, March 19 | 6:30PM–8:00PM

### NEW! UNLOCK THE SECRETS OF DIGITAL MARKETING SUCCESS

\$20 | Tuesday, March 26 | 6:30PM–8:30PM

### NEW! FINANCING OPTIONS FOR YOUR BUSINESS

FREE | Wednesday, March 27 | 2:00PM–3:00PM



Register now at [yesmontreal.ca](http://yesmontreal.ca) or call 514-878-9788

Join us in person at 666 Sherbrooke Street West, 7th floor or attend online. Learn in a dynamic environment, meet new people, and discover new skills. Don't wait – pre-register now!

\*For \$30, you'll have access to specialized services including coaching, Business Bootcamp, legal information, and accounting clinics for a full year.

Funded by:



Canada Economic  
Development  
for Quebec Regions

Développement  
économique Canada  
pour les régions du Québec

YES is a non-profit organization



**BUT EVEN IF YOU CAN'T,  
TUNE IN FOR SPECIAL #METALMARCH  
PROGRAMMING & GIVEAWAYS  
ALL MONTH LONG ON CJLO 1690AM!**



# On Screen



*Ghostbusters: Frozen Empire*



*About Dry Grasses*



*La Vénus d'argent*



*Love Lies Bleeding*

BY JUSTINE SMITH

Much like our topsy-turvy climate-change weather, it feels strange that the Academy Awards seem to have permanently migrated to March. The already interminable award season finally winds down on March 10 at an event hosted by Jimmy Kimmel, which is available to watch on ABC (and for free on the big screen at Cinéma du Parc). For die-hard Oscar fans, it's important to note that this year's show will start at 7 p.m., one hour earlier than it used to.

With *Dune: Part Two* dominating the big screen, most of the month's major releases are pushed to the tail end. As far as blockbuster releases, we have *Ghostbusters: Frozen Empire* (March 22) and *Godzilla x Kong: The New Empire* (March 29). Can the *Ghostbusters* reboot sequel escape the cloying fan service of the first one? Will *Godzilla x Kong* be able to stand strong against the monumental artistry of Japan's *Godzilla Minus One*? We'll have to watch and find out!

For some family-friendly fare, there's the much-anticipated *Kung Fu Panda 4* (March 8). It's been eight years since the last film and much of the cast is back, including Jack Black in the lead role, with new additions Awkwafina and Viola

Davis. Disney is also releasing the critically acclaimed 2021 film *Luca* in theatres (March 22) for the first time.

If you want to get scared, your best bet is *Imaginary* (March 8), a PG-13 horror film about a woman who returns to her childhood home to discover that the imaginary friend she left behind — a teddy bear — is very real and unhappy that she abandoned him.

Two festival hits that have some genre-adjacent vibes — *Love Lies Bleeding* (March 15) and *Riddle of Fire* (March 22) — also hit the big screen this month. Fresh off its release at Sundance, *Love Lies Bleeding* is best described as the “lesbian bodybuilder revenge film” starring Kristen Stewart and Katy O'Brian. It was directed by Rose Glass, whose feature debut *Saint Maud* was a beguiling and haunting horror film about religious obsession. *Riddle of Fire* premiered last year as part of TIFF's Midnight Madness program and was an instant fan favourite. It's a comedy adventure about three mischievous kids who embark on a woodland odyssey when their mother sends them on an errand.

Director Michael Mohan's erotic thriller *The Voyeurs*, set in Montreal, flew under the radar when it was released during the pandemic, but it was one of the unexpected cinematic highlights of 2021. His follow-up, *Immaculate* (March 22), also starring Sydney Sweeney, is about an American nun whose journey to a picturesque Italian convent devolves into a nightmare.

*About Dry Grasses* (March 8), the latest film from Turkish auteur Nuri Bilge Ceylan, screened last year as part of

the Festival du Nouveau Cinéma and became an instant favourite. Now that it has a wider theatrical release, we encourage you to check out one of the best films of recent years on the big screen — a film about platitudes, inaction and entitlement that feels extremely of the moment.

Among other notable releases, Anthony Hopkins stars in *One Life* (March 15), a biopic about Sir Nicholas Winton as he looks back on his past efforts to help groups of Jewish children in German-occupied Czechoslovakia to hide and flee in 1938–'39. *La Vénus d'argent*, aka *Spirit of Ecstasy* (March 22), is the feature-acting debut of pop star Pomme, a beguiling and occasionally surreal film about a gender-bending woman trying to escape her difficult life in the world of finance.

*Onze jours en février* (March 29) depicts the downfall of Claude Jutra, who went from one of the most celebrated Quebec filmmakers to a pariah after being exposed as a paedophile. The documentary explores the week the exposé was published and the aftermath.

For film festival goers, March means movies. The 42nd edition of *FIFA*, a film festival devoted to art on film, runs from March 14–24 (online component March 22–31) with films covering a wide range of artists including Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, Pussy Riot and Mark Rothko. There's also *SAT Fest*, the immersive film festival in the Satosphère dome, which features 33 films from March 21–24. The unusual cinematic experience is a feast for audiences looking to redefine their understanding of screen arts.

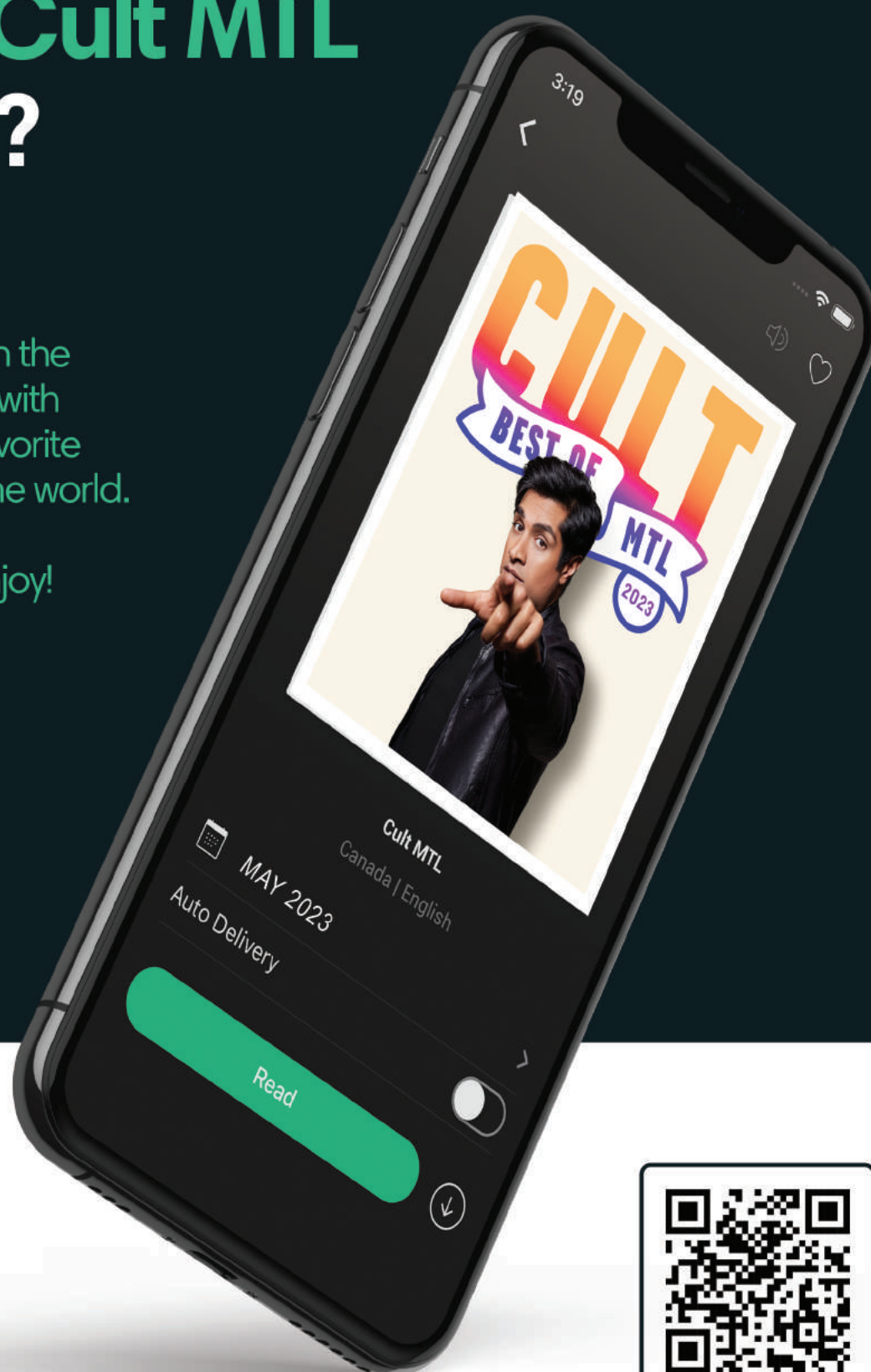




# Did you know you can read **Cult MTL** anywhere?

Cult MTL is now available in the PressReader app—along with thousands of your other favorite magazines from around the world.

Download the app and enjoy!





# arts

## Spring arts calendar



Georgia O'Keeffe's Series I White & Blue Flower Shapes (1919)

BY SAVANNAH STEWART

### Wampum: Beads of Diplomacy

Long before the arrival of Europeans, First Nations across the northeast of North America were practising diplomacy and reaching political agreements between nations. These were marked with wampum, belts made of shell beads that recorded the moment and today prove the longstanding practice of political mediation and conciliation on the lands making up Canada and the United States. The McCord Museum's exhibit *Wampum: Beads of Diplomacy* presents dozens of these wampum, drawn from public and private collections, that trace histories of agreements made between nations, including European ones, and provides insight into the crucial messages they contain. *McCord Stewart Museum (690 Sherbrooke W.) through March 10*

### Colored: The Unknown Life of Claudette Colvin

The PHI Centre's latest AR experience introduces the audience to Claudette Colvin, a civil rights activist whose name has been eclipsed, and whose act of protest has been all but forgotten. The experience brings us to segregated Montgomery, Alabama, to witness Colvin's life and story with the help of HoloLens 2 headsets. Nine months before Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat on the bus to a white passenger, Colvin did the same. And the rest is history. *407 St-Pierre, through April 28*

### Sensing the Unspoken

In a first group exhibition for contemporary art gallery TIAN Contemporain, *Sensing the Unspoken* explores themes of memory and connection as points of departure to study the interrelationship of humans and their environment. The exhibition brings together paintings, sculptures and drawings that explore the central theme in abstract and conceptual ways, featuring works by artists from Ecuador, the United States, Germany, Taiwan and Canada. *819 Atwater, March 9–April 20*

### Message in a Bottle and IMA

Montreal dance promoters Danse Danse are bringing two international works to Place des Arts stages this month. *Message in a Bottle* by renowned U.K. choreographer Kate Prince tells the story of migration through the experience of one family — accompanied by Sting's greatest hits. Down the halls of PdA, Italian dancer and choreographer Sofia Nappi's *IMA* will feature a quintet blending dance and theatre, meditating on the importance of living the present moment. *Salle Wilfrid-Pelletier and Cinquième Salle, respectively (175 Ste-Catherine W.), both March 12–16*

### GUILT (a love story)

The Centaur presents the Tarragon Theatre production of *GUILT (a love story)*, a one-woman show performed by playwright Diane Flacks exploring this uncomfortable emotion and how it has appeared in her life as a mother and “instigator of family dissolution.” Promising humour, wit and a cutting meditation of the human experience, *GUILT (a love story)* is Flacks' fifth solo show in a career marked by many accolades. *Centaur Theatre (453 St-Francois-Xavier), March 12–30*

### The Chemical Valley Project

In 2021, the Aamjiwnaang First Nation in Ontario was finally granted access to data proving what members had long suspected: the dozens of petrochemical facilities surrounding their territory were polluting the air, land and waters with high levels of carcinogens. Teesri Dunya Theatre presents *The Chemical Valley Project*, a work of documentary theatre that looks back on the fight for information and action on “Chemical Valley” and prompts conversations on Indigenous land and treaty rights and ongoing colonization in Canada. *Cité-des-Hospitalières (251 des Pins W.), March 14–24*

### Hybrid Condition

Artist Tam Khoa Vu takes us to an imagined space between his Vietnamese origins and his home in Canada in this exhibition at the MAI: the space of the diaspora. Vu explores this *Hybrid Condition* through video and audio installations using a mix of personal and archival footage, all showing the artist's signature playfulness. On Saturday, March 9, Vu will lead two commented tours of the exhibition, one in English and one in French. *3680 Jeanne-Mance, #103, through March 30*

### The Horizon of Khufu

In conjunction with “immersive expedition” specialists Excurio, PHI presents the North American premiere of a 45-minute journey into ancient Egypt and inside the Great Pyramid of Giza — one of the Seven Wonders of the World. *The Horizon of Khufu*, a VR experience that's as fun as it is educational, is the result of three years of research by Emissive and Harvard Egyptology Professor Peter Der Manuelian. It's located in the same space in the Montreal Science Centre-adjacent building where PHI previously hosted their hit VR experience *The Infinite. 2 de la Commune W., through May 31*





From Kate Prince's *Message in a Bottle*



The Horizon of Khufu / Excurio

### *The Heart and Soul of Saint-Henri*

Montrealers today know Saint-Henri as one of the trendiest neighbourhoods outside the city centre. Still, its history as a working-class community rooted in the business of tanning animal hides is often forgotten. Pointe-à-Callière, Montreal's museum of archaeology, is shining a spotlight on this district that encompasses 350 years of history, from its humble beginnings to what it has become today. With artifacts found in archaeological digs that trace its evolution, the exhibition tells its story through the eyes of its inhabitants, their struggles, and their mark on modern Quebec. *350 Place Royale, through May 11*

### Georgia O'Keeffe and Henry Moore

Giants of modern art Georgia O'Keeffe and Henry Moore are featured at the Museum of Fine Arts,

offering an up-close view of the work of two artists, firmly rooted in the natural world. The exhibition also includes reconstructions of their personal workshop spaces, allowing for a glimpse into how O'Keeffe and Moore worked on the pieces that would garner them international recognition in the surrealist and modern art movements. The exhibit was organized by the San Diego Museum of Art. *1380 Sherbrooke W., through June 2*

### *Fifteen Dogs*

The Giller Prize-winning novel *Fifteen Dogs* is coming to the stage at the Segal Centre, bringing a tale of reckoning with morality, mortality and the complicated nature of being human. The story is set in motion when the gods Hermes and Apollo grant 15 dogs the gift of human consciousness, with hilarious and disastrous results. *5170 Côte-Ste-Catherine, March 31–April 21*

### *Every Day She Rose*

Black Theatre Workshop will present the Montreal premiere of *Every Day She Rose*, a piece inspired by the 2016 Toronto Pride Parade and the Black Lives Matter protest that drew the pride festivities to a halt to call out the presence of police at the event. Playwrights Andrea Scott and Nick Green tell the story of two roommates, a straight Black woman and a Queer white man, who experience the protest differently and are left to reconcile their perspectives. What follows is a tale examining privilege, friendship and allyship, bringing together communities on a divisive issue. *Théâtre Espace Libre (1945 Fullum), April 4–13*

PRESENTED BY



FRIDAYS @ 6PM



PAUL DESBAILLETS



@THE1STHALF\_



# : weird era



BY SRUTI ISLAM AND ALEX NIERENHAUSEN

More about books you should read, and the authors who wrote them, that were recently featured on the Weird Era podcast.

## *Mother Doll* by Katya Apekina

When our narrator, Zhenia, finds herself pregnant in a relationship with a partner who precisely never wanted children, she also finds herself on the receiving end of a call from a strange psychic. He says he's calling on behalf of her great grandmother — or at least, on behalf of a version of her soul that's in a sort of limbo. She needs to translate her story to pass on. The most satisfying part of this read is the way in which Zhenia takes this call and just... sits down. She thinks it's a prank, she's not totally sure what's going on, but given the recent loss of her grandmother, and her current situation as an expectant mother, she knows she needs answers. What unfolds is a truly fun exploration of the historical fiction genre, as well

as a glimpse into the lives of women who do wrong, but mean well. In this episode, Katya and I talk about mean ethnic humour, “wanting” as a definition of purity, living as different versions of yourself in one lifetime and the underrated joys of motherhood. (SI)

## *Norma* by Sarah Mintz

Meet Norma. She's an elderly woman whose husband has recently passed. Is she bitter about it? It's uncertain given that she oddly seems at peace with the loss of what she now recounts as a marriage more about dependency than love. Isn't that the fate of a lucky marriage, however? Well, Norma needs to think about other things. Norma works as a transcriber who's given access to private conversations she would otherwise have no business in. In particular, Norma is assigned to transcribe a series of conversations in a family fraught with the discomfort and grief of sexual abuse. But Norma's spiraling, too, facing an exile from society as the elderly so often do. Norma finds herself grasping uncomfortably at this story, hoping to align herself with a new narrative, now that she's aged out of her young ones. In this episode, Sarah Mintz and

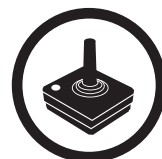
I talk about “terrible freedoms,” whether we can get old without getting wiser, the definition of parasocial and why watching someone else watch TV is so embarrassing. (SI)

## *Beautyland* by Marie-Helene Bertino

This book shook me to my core. This seemingly simple coming-of-age story follows one woman, Adina, from the moment of her birth to that of the end of her life — a life so rich with humanity, it's hard to believe she might be an alien born into a human body. But this is Bertino's world, and this alien narrative device works as Adina observes and interprets the world around her and relays the information to alien relatives in a distant galaxy. I had an amazing time talking to Bertino about this book, asking her some big questions about the meaning of life and whether writing *Beautyland* brought her any closer to defining exactly what makes us human. (AN)

→ The Weird Era podcast is available via Apple and Spotify.  
@weirdera.ca

# : game jam



BY NATALIA YANCHAK

*No Love Lost* by Saint-Henri indie studio Ratloop Games is an intergalactic space adventure that blends elements of PvPvE and competitive questing. You play as a member of an outlaw space cowboy crew sent to a carnivorous alien planet to gather a lucrative resource.

With elements of the looter-shooter and extraction genres, *No Love Lost* is satisfyingly fast-paced: pick a team, zoom around on your hoverboard, and harvest as much nectar as you can while blasting alien creatures. With a distinctive yet playful pastel and purple-hued art style, you'll want to grab your friends (up to 10 can play simultaneously) and drop into this sci-fi-inspired Wild West world.

We spoke with game director James Anderson about the studio culture and the development of *No Love Lost*. “Our true goal with *No Love Lost* was to make a multiplayer game that our entire team could enjoy. We had an underlying philosophy that, since we are a mixed bunch of gamers of differing skill levels and tastes, if we could create a group experience that we enjoyed together, it would translate into the real world for groups of friends who play together.”

When making *No Love Lost*, the team strived to “follow the fun.” This team-first approach reaches across not only the game but is also at the heart of how the studio's culture has evolved. “It's all about having a happy, healthy and motivated team that knows how to work well together. Prioritizing attitude and team-fit over pure skill or talent was something we've turned towards over the years.”

Game development comes with a built-in set of challenges, the main one being finding an audience. (“Making the actual game is the easy part!”) Having already released two titles, Ratloop took a community-first approach. Anderson explains: “We held monthly playtests with our community from the very earliest playable build. It really kept us focused on what's important, and the feedback that we received was invaluable. The community playtests permitted our audience to speak to us directly, informing us of the things they liked and what frustrated them years before our game launches.”

Anderson adds that the team put a big focus on replayability and world-building. “Our game is, at its core, a PvP game, a battle between two teams. The whole world is however populated with quests more similar to an open-world single player game.”

“We have a procedural quest manager that will drop you off at a random location and guide you on a chain

of quests across the surface of the planet. This same quest manager will then bring down an extraction ship to pick you up at the end of that chain in a random location. This means that each time you play, you get to experience different content in different orders in different locations. All of this is done ‘under the hood’ so the players aren't even thinking about it, they're just playing the game.”

“As we drop more and more quests into the world, the sense of discovery and richness of the world increases with almost no management from our side, which is great for us and the players. The way we've set up our content pipeline is unique for this kind of multiplayer game.”

Ratloop Games fully embraces the Montreal vibe in capturing the vision of their games. “There's a certain uniqueness to the mindset and culture of the people here, it's a creative place and we enjoy working with the talent here. It's hard to identify specifically or put it in writing but there's a certain appreciation for arts, innovation and creativity that is deeply rooted in the Montreal culture.”

→ *No Love Lost* is available as a free demo and releases March 12 on Steam.





**LOOKING  
FOR NOW?**  
*Look No Further.*

**SQUIRT**  
.org



Join the action at  
**www.squirt.org** today.





### LE VOYAGEUR

2 eggs, bacon or pork & beef sausages or ham, 2 pancakes or 2 French toast, sugar cream or chocolate sauce, toasts

**\$12.25**

TAX NOT INCL

resto  
**la BANQUISE**  
24th  
Since 1968

**LA BANQUISE**

994, rue Rachel Est  
(514) 525-2415  
labanquise.com



**BREAKFASTS**  
7 AM TO 11 AM



SEE MENU

