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We spoke with Eric Gauthier of Gauthier Dance, whose upcoming three-part production at Place des Arts features a reimagining of Swan Lake by the great Montreal choreographer Marie Chouinard.

Photo by Gauthier Dance//Dance Company Theaterhaus Stuttgart @ Jeanette Bak

Choreographer Marie Chouinard. Dancer Anneleen Dedroog.

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The Trumpification of Canadian politics



BY TOULA DRIMONIS

Toxic online behaviour is nothing new. As far back as 2015, I joined forces with other Quebec women to write a letter published in French-language daily *Le Devoir* imploring for the adoption of new editorial policies, better online moderating practices and legal tools to tackle online hate speech. We also denounced pervasive online threats targeting women.

In 2018, I argued that some online platforms had become so bad, we ran the risk of letting tech companies stand as unaccountable platforms for content.

A decade later, things have only gotten worse. In some circles, online abuse and threats issued to public figures are almost accepted as being part of “the job” — an ugly necessity or expected consequence. “If you can’t stand the heat, get out of the kitchen” is what I often see people callously comment after a politician or pundit shares that they’ve been a target of hate.

TRUMP-STYLE POLITICS CROSSED THE BORDER

I like to call it the Trumpification of Canada. Like Donald Trump, who’s long been engaging in his “war” against “fake news” or mocking political adversaries, certain Canadian politicians are now also comfortable demonizing the press. Some don’t think twice about doing the same with their political opponents. Trump has succeeded in normalizing this type of nastiness, which only amplifies online abuse and emboldens partisans to feel that they can behave that way, too. I see far too many online accounts these days comfortably and openly spewing racist, misogynist, xenophobic, antisemitic or Islamophobic language. Some of that has certainly seeped into our politics.

Much of what I saw written on signs and banners during the infamous “Freedom Convoy” in 2022 was beyond the pale. It deeply worried me. You can disagree with a democratically elected politician all you want, but to be walking around with a sign or piece of clothing displaying a noose and Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau’s name is dangerous. It’s an incitement to violence.

Last week, Trump posted a video that featured a disturbing image of President Joe Biden hogtied in the back of a pickup

truck. Only a few months ago, Trump casually endorsed the idea that he should be able to assassinate opponents without being prosecuted, an idea put forward by his lawyers. He implied that a president should be able to enjoy immunity no matter what.

None of this should be normalized.

TOXIC POST-PANDEMIC POLITICAL CLIMATE

Since the pandemic, I’m sure most of us have noticed an uptick in rude, aggressive behaviour. I sometimes suspect something snapped in people already dealing with an emotionally fragile mental state. People don’t think twice about lashing out violently — online or in real life — at those they disagree with politically or ideologically.

“Not only did the pandemic worsen deep-seated issues such as mental health, homelessness, healthcare and political polarization,” Dalhousie University assistant sociology professor Michael Halpin told CTV, “it has made people think differently about one another.”

That anger has manifested itself in increased threats towards politicians and public figures. Politics has become more confrontational, more rage-filled, more hostile.

In 2019, Québec solidaire member Christine Labrie filed complaints after receiving online abuse and targeted hate.

A woman was recently arrested for allegedly harassing Longueuil Mayor Catherine Fournier, who was targeted by death threats in connection with the city’s plan to cull white-tailed deer living in a local park.

A few weeks ago, a man was arrested for issuing threats against Parti Québécois leader Paul St-Pierre Plamondon.

Liberal MNA Marwah Rizqy faced death threats while she was pregnant and campaigning in 2022.

Last month, Gatineau Mayor France Bélisle, the city’s first female mayor, announced she was stepping down, citing a hostile political climate and death threats as the main reasons.

Of course, the risk of violence in politics isn’t new. Most Quebecers remember only too well the attempted shooting of PQ leader Pauline Marois at Metropolis in 2012, which left one person dead and another injured.

But threats against Canadian politicians have become increasingly normalized. This could affect our democracy, as it could potentially discourage quality candidates from entering politics at all.

A newly released intelligence report by a federal task force warned that threats against politicians have become increasingly normalized due to “extremist narratives prompted by personal grievances and fuelled by misinformation or deliberate lies.” The report found that “political polarization, conspiracy theories and growing distrust in the integrity of the state fuelled much of this vitriol.”

POLITICAL RHETORIC NOT HELPING THE SITUATION

Yes, there are extremist narratives that some groups are peddling, but we should also be paying close attention to political rhetoric that undermines trust in our institutions. In the current climate, some politicians’ insistence on capitalizing on political discontent about “corrupt” or “compromised” institutions that can’t be trusted, fueling increasingly angry skepticism, runs the risk of aggravating the vitriol.

Despite the very real danger of such political manoeuvres backfiring and undermining the public’s trust in our institutions, more and more politicians appear comfortable playing this game. A game that Trump is very familiar with.

The Quebec Bar recently criticized Premier Francois Legault for attacking the impartiality and independence of the courts by insinuating they are beholden to a particular level of government. It was a completely unfounded declaration, yet the premier made it in the hopes of undermining their work — and casting doubt on any potentially unfavourable-to-him legal rulings. It was a cynical political move.

Along similar lines, when Conservative Party leader Pierre Poilievre states that “Canada is broken” or when he mocks and criticizes reporters and “corporate media” and “established interests,” he’s taking a page from the Trump playbook. He’s deliberately and preemptively trying to cast doubt about any critical coverage of him.

Moves like those may have short-term political gain, but they’re dangerous. They risk eroding public trust and forever altering the Canadian political landscape. They cross a line, which then allows others to cross it, too.

Political strategy that thrives on aggressive conflict and opposition and leverages pre-existing anxiety and discontent, which often fixates on elected officials, could lead to the steady deterioration and undermining of our political institutions. We cannot afford to take it lightly.

AGORA DE LA DANSE



**BETWEEN ME
AND YOU**

Heidi Strauss / adelheid

April 10-11-12 — 7 p.m.

Photo: © Jeremy Mimmagh



CUTTING THROUGH THE NOISE

Alexandre Morin / Other Animals

April 4-5 — 7 p.m.

April 6 — 4 p.m.

Photo: © Jonathan Goulet

TRANSES

Isabelle Van Grimde
Van Grimde Corps Secrets

April 24-25-26 — 7 p.m.

April 27 — 4 p.m.



Photo: © Marilène Oliver

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House rules



BY TAYLOR C. NOAKES

Sergio Da Silva can't catch a break.

The beloved, curmudgeonly entrepreneur and owner of Quartier Latin show and cocktail bar Turbo Haüs, as well as its recently added le Café Big Trouble, discovered on March 1 that he had some unwelcome new competition.

A temporary, White Claw-branded bar and terrasse had been installed directly in front of Turbo Haüs's entrance. It was part of the city's Nuit Blanche festivities, that magical winter night when everything stays open late and citizens are encouraged to shake off their seasonal affective disorder by going out and patronizing their favourite haunts — exactly the kind of secular holiday dreamt up by merchants' associations and boards of trade, both municipal and metropolitan.

"We made less than half what we would have made had it been any other weekend," said Da Silva. "Nuit Blanche cost us money, and over three nights no less."

I called around to try to see if anyone would take responsibility, and naturally enough, everyone passed the buck. It was no different for Sergio, who also tried to find out why, on a street that has too many vacant storefronts, the temporary bar and terrasse had to go directly in front of his businesses. No one seemed to know, no two people had identical or even similar answers, but everyone swore they'd come up with a solution and that it wouldn't happen again.

"It was like being backstage at a concert," said Da Silva in an interview with Cult MTL. Some temporary signage was put up to point out that there was in fact a perfectly good bar and café behind the temporary wooden walls, power cables, coolers, ski and snowboard paraphernalia, and other various detritus that cut off viable small businesses from what might have been their customers.

That Turbo Haüs survived the pandemic on Lower St-Denis borders on the miraculous. A great many restaurants, cafés, clubs and bars — all viable businesses with loyal customers — did not. Turbo Haüs was a recent addition to the strip,

having expanded to new digs after a few years punking out above Saint-Henri hotspot Loic. While the pandemic was brutal on just about everyone in the hospitality sector, Turbo Haüs was ripped off several times, a particularly tough loss so early in the game.

As the public gave the proverbial inch on public health measures, the government took the proverbial mile cracking down on fun wherever they could. I say this as an enthusiastic supporter of pandemic mitigation strategies, of both the pharmaceutical and non-pharmaceutical variety: Mon'onc Frank Lego massively overstepped his authority as premier during COVID-19. It was the inevitable 'equal and opposite reaction' to the unmitigated dumpster fire of a disaster that occurred at the privatized long-term and elder care facilities early on in the pandemic. The initial foot-dragging, finger-pointing and buck-passing was followed by curfews and, in case you forgot, a ban on dancing in bars.

Sergio occupied at least some of his time pointing out the obviously ineffective so-called public health measures on social media. Unlike yours truly, who lost part of 2020 and 2021 to endless pandemic-related doom-scrolling, Da Silva leveraged the power of community that helped Turbo Haüs expand in the first place. A move to merchandise helped keep the operation afloat right through the worst of the pandemic, as loyal patrons snapped up Turbo Haüs branded t-shirts, sweats and mosh shorts. It was more than a gimmick — people genuinely wanted to see the business survive.

I don't know if he's sat down to write out his business philosophy, but if I had to guess, it would begin and end with something like 'be the change you want to see in others, treat people like you would like to be treated and remember it's really not just about the money.' These are not the principles that would get Sergio a job lecturing at any of the city's schools of business, but it sure as hell has allowed his tiny empire to thrive in adverse conditions.

Da Silva is the kind of small business owner the city needs more of — many more of. When politicians and urban planners talk about the necessity of small business owners who are more committed to their neighbourhood and community than even their own bottom line, it's people like

Sergio they're imagining. He's not alone, but I worry greedy landlords and predatory renovicers have squeezed out a lot of the old stock of community-first small business owners in this city. The long list of age-old businesses that have gone under in this city in recent years confirms my suspicions. It's not just the pandemic — the trend of Montrealers being priced out of their own city long predates the pandemic.

That's what makes the whole Nuit Blanche thing so frustrating. You'd figure all the glad-handers and professional schmooze artists who talk a good game about building viable urban neighbourhoods in this city would be pulling out all the stops to make sure Da Silva's businesses didn't have to fight to survive.

Equally frustrating are the noise complaints from the people who pay extra to live in a clearly defined entertainment district yet apparently object to the sounds of people being entertained. If you've heard of Sergio, it's probably in this context: he hasn't kept quiet about the noise complaints he's received, and how silly and hypocritical it is for people and politicians alike to valorize and venerate the nightlife while simultaneously expecting a show bar to keep it down after 11 p.m. And let's not kid ourselves: the amount of scratch carried by a given venue's clientele seems to influence how disturbing the noise really is. People have been complaining about the incessant cacophonous Eurotrash drone of the Grand Prix for decades and it's all fallen on deaf ears.

Even though the complaints are ludicrous, this didn't stop Da Silva from trying to address the problem in the most proactive way imaginable. How many other bars in this city have bought the apartments above to act as a sound barrier?

If that wasn't enough, he took it a step further by offering the furnished apartments to bands traveling through the city in need of accommodation, irrespective of where they might be playing. And if all that weren't enough, he offers the apartments to bands pro bono. He makes his sound barrier apartments free to bands in need for the same reason he doesn't list them on Airbnb.

Sergio Da Silva is not going to be a part of the problem.

L'INCONSISTANCE

VÂTCHIK DANSE:
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dance

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food

Love at first bite



BY CLAYTON SANDHU

I first took notice of Parapluie by way of an Instagram story from their soft-open. The elegant, understated, overtly French dining room hit all the right notes for a Francophile like me.

Sometimes I can read a menu, look over a wine list or look at a picture of a plated dish and tell that I won't like a restaurant. Other times, like on this occasion, I see a litany of green flags — we just speak the same language.

By now, we all know the bistro is back, but the more formal French restaurant is still just threatening to make its return. Parapluie is a place that falls somewhere between the two — it's a bit like Salle Climatée (which is right around the corner) in that respect. I tend to like restaurants like these because they're usually owned and operated by restaurant geeks. These are the restaurants dreamed up by cooks and sommeliers, the “one day I'll have a place like this” kind of joints — and that's exactly the kind of place that co-owners Karelle Voyer and Robin Filteau Boucher aimed to deliver when they opened Parapluie earlier this year.

The restaurant is located inside the white-bricked buildings on the industrial side of Beaubien, where it meets Clark. It's a busy intersection and not a particularly charming one, but it hardly matters because you're immediately transported elsewhere from the moment you walk in. You feel like you could be waiting for a table at le Saint-Eutrope or le Baratin, thanks to the room's simple yet sophisticated decor, which blends warm white walls with rich wood details and subtle yet exceptionally well-chosen pieces of decor. It's timeless and it's French, but most impressively, it achieves those qualities without feeling at all put on. It's genuine.

The high point of the Parapluie experience is, without question, the food. Filteau Boucher keeps the menu concise with six to seven savoury dishes (excluding bread, oysters, fries and a small salad) and a single dessert. With such a selective menu, the expectation is that the cooking is dialled in — Parapluie doesn't disappoint.

Voyer's wine list is also quite solid with a few sought-after references and plenty of well-priced bottles from great winemakers and, while not particularly abundant, still offers ample choice for the average (and even above average) wine

drinker. The options by the glass were a bit lacklustre, and for a place that seems to be about approachability without compromising quality, I might have expected a bit more, but the wines were, ultimately, still alright.

Service was polite and welcoming for the most part, but noticeably forgetful on more than one occasion. Usually, a small mix-up here or there won't deter much from the meal but waiting on empty wine glasses for longer than an entire course, being served hot dishes with no cutlery and a dining room (which is entirely open) with no staff besides the cooks in sight is something that needs to be worked on. I'm all for a fun, casual service, but let's make sure folks can actually eat and drink, you know? This is a restaurant after all.

If you've googled Parapluie or caught a glimpse of it online, you'll have seen the signature dish of the house: lobster *oeuf mayonnaise*. This pastel green and coral-hued dish is composed of jammy boiled egg, split lengthwise and put into a pool of chilled lobster bisque and covered with a delightfully pale green tarragon mayonnaise. For a final luxurious flourish, two hearty pieces of perfectly poached lobster tail are added to the plate. It's delicious — a classic revisited that feels like it was pulled from an old French cookbook. The mayo is light but the tarragon shines through, the bisque has just the right amount of mellow sweetness and that good old funk of roast lobster shell, and the eggs and lobster taste almost equally luxurious.

Next, seared scallops with cauliflower two ways and bagna cauda. This was an incredibly beige dish — but, somehow, in a very nice way. It kind of emulated the decor and, all said and done, it made a compelling case for how even the palest of ingredients have the power to pack in a lot of serious flavour. The scallops were plump and beautifully seared. I was pleased to see a cooked scallop dish these days as so many restaurants will give into the simple crudo temptation. The cauliflower purée was as silky and unctuous as I hoped it would be and the bagna cauda added a throughline of briny salinity and acidity that helped to offer balance. My only gripe is the mandolined florets of cauliflower, which are nice to look at and add a bit of crunch, but don't do much otherwise — pickled might have been a more interesting direction.

At some point in between courses, bread and fries were served. The bread comes from neighbouring boulangerie Louise — it was good (but not great), and was perplexingly served without butter. I don't know, there must be some philosophical reason behind it, but if you ask me, that's

bullshit. If you're serving bread and you're charging for it (and by all means you should), serve it with good butter and make sure it's salted. Again, this is a restaurant. The fries, a chunky pont-neuf style, were also a bit starchy for my taste and could have been crisped up a bit more. They look a lot like the old Lawrence fries but they ain't got half the crisp. Quality mayo, though.

The last dish of the night was rolled lamb breast served with roasted peppers, arugula and a crimson beef and pepper jus. Holy hell was this good — simple, ingredient-driven and just beautifully cooked. The lamb, from Pêché Moutons, was spectacularly good. Having been braised and then roasted, it was tender as can be and so incredibly flavourful without falling into that pungent “lamby” camp that can be overbearing. The peppers were bright and sweet and the jus was rich and complex. A small service suggestion: Bring the bread out for this course, and the sauce will get mopped up. My favourite element of the dish was the blisteringly peppery arugula, which added an unexpected but altogether welcome new dimension to this dish. Where chillies or vinegar might have been used to add a sharpness to the very round and rich dish, the choice to use this peppery green was inspired.

The dessert, a vanilla panna cotta, was heavily flecked with high-quality vanilla and was undeniably tasty, but ultimately one of the least impressive dishes. The panna cotta itself wasn't fully set and the lot was covered in bee pollen, which, for me, is just flavourless seeds that do little more than get stuck in your teeth. I love a good panna cotta, but when this is your only dessert, make sure it's set, put it on a plate and let us see the damn thing wobble — panna cotta is about the show! An option for a bit of cheese at the end wouldn't have gone unappreciated, either.

All in all, Parapluie is great. It's got some kinks to iron out but it already looks and feels like a place that's been around for two decades. I'm sure that once they build up a bit of patina, it'll feel like the restaurant that Voyer and Filteau Boucher mean it to be.

On another note, I recently spoke with a friend who had visited the restaurant, too, and we agreed that the bill seemed very fair. That's something I haven't felt in a while. Restaurants are fucking expensive these days. To get a meal of this quality in a nice room with a few decent glasses of wine and leave without having to give up your right arm is something noteworthy. I hope it stays this way.

Two Food Photographers



MYRIADE

music

Snakes and ladders

BY DAVE MACINTYRE

It's not often you hear a krautrocky psychedelic jazz-funk band making references to phrases like "tokébakicitte" in their lyrics — but Population II are not your average psychedelic jazz-funk band.

The trio, comprised of singing drummer Pierre-Luc Gratton, guitarist/keyboardist Tristan Lacombe and bassist Sébastien Provençal have generated plenty of buzz through their dizzying, jammy, musically complex (and heavily improvisational) tracks, as well as their ferociously energetic and airtight live shows. Their band name comes from Randy Holden's same-named 1970 psychedelic metal album.

Their sophomore album, *Électrons libres du québec*, dropped in October on Bonsound, generating buzz for them both locally and outside Quebec. Now, the trio are about to unleash more new music in the form of a four-track EP titled *Serpent Échelle* (that's French for "snakes and ladders"), due April 19.

In an interview via Zoom from their rehearsal space, Lacombe and Provençal told me that the EP is essentially a continuation from where their last full-length left off. "They were songs we felt didn't fit on the record, but at the same time, it was heartbreaking (to cut them), because we thought they were very good songs," says Lacombe.

Some tracks have been gestating for quite a while now, too: for example, the band has been playing the EP's opening number "Hélène" live for four or five years now. Three of its songs were also made around the same time as *Électrons libres du québec*.

The instrumental track, "Le Serpent," was recorded during the sessions for their debut album, 2020's *À la Ô Terre*, and was first laid down by the band in December 2018. Lacombe tells us the track had been recorded for 20 minutes before cutting it down. Second track "R.B." was also initially planned as *Électrons libres du québec*'s first single.

So why get these songs out in the world merely six months after their last full-length? It's essentially a companion piece to that album, if you ask Provençal.

"All of these songs were written in a time where we were structuring the songwriting more," he adds. "We felt that they didn't fit on *Électrons libres*, but they had their own place. We created a small oasis of weird songs — the little bastard child brother (of the LP). *Électrons libres* has a clear direction. The little brother's like, 'I want to do everything!'"

Traces of a wide range of genres can be heard in the band's music: psychedelia, jazz, funk, electronic, punk, progressive rock, art rock and krautrock, to name a handful.

Provençal attributes the jazz and funk influences specifically to Lacombe's dad. "Tristan and I, we've known each other for 15 years or something like that," he continues. "(His) father had a big impression on us.

"He's like, 'Hey, if you come down to jam with us, you've got to listen to Funkadelic, Bootsy Collins... He gave us a bunch of good records. We decided to explore (stuff that was) more



Didier Pigeon-Perrault

out there. He would listen to Miles Davis, but he wouldn't listen to (his funk-influenced 1972 album) *On the Corner*. We're like, 'Hey, listen to this!' He's like, 'This is weird, guys!' But we're like, 'Hey, the weirder the better!'"

In case you were wondering: no, the title didn't come from them playing a round of the board game. "We wanted to have a title that referred to the lyrics," says Lacombe.

"A bunch of lyrics were dealing with apples, wine and sins. It was a biblical reference. Also, it was a nod to a prog band we love called Gilgamesh. They have a record (where) the cover is a game of Snakes and Ladders. It was mostly for fun."

Additional inspiration for the title came from their own environment. The members of Population II formed the band in the Lower Laurentians — more specifically, the 7,000-population municipality of Saint-Joseph-du-Lac. Not only is it a place that helped shape the band's creative process, it's also a town with apple orchards needing to be accessed using a ladder. Drummer/lead vocalist Gratton hails from nearby Pointe-Calumet, home of the soon-to-be-defunct Beachclub.

"(That area) is kind of a swampy place. It's kind of trashy," Lacombe says. "It's a very good vibe, and it feels good because that's where we started to play music. The houses are cheap, and I guess that's where our parents could afford to live. It's a very calm and beautiful place, not too far from the city."

Given how the area is a good place to cultivate food and drink, the members of Population II have side hobbies in that realm. Gratton makes wine, while Provençal makes beer and maple syrup. This begs the question: can fans expect Population II-branded beer or maple syrup soon?

"We'd really love to make some sort of weird product for the merch table, that's for sure," Provençal says while he and Lacombe are laughing. Lacombe later tells me the band also want to start making their own Troll dolls, as they have a huge collection of them.

"We call (Pierre-Luc's) wine 'Pépérino' or 'Pépévino'. Wine would be more our thing (to sell) than maple syrup for now, though. We'll see!"

A press release for the EP (which they're also releasing in limited edition cassette tape form with exclusive hidden tracks) details it as putting an emphasis on "wilder, more adventurous sounds and a heavier atmosphere."

Lacombe attributes most of that quote to the guitars on second track "R.B." being "pretty gnarly and extremely saturated," as well as "Hélène" sounding more intense than many of their other tunes.

"Our next record that we're working on now, we're going even wilder," says Lacombe, who also tells me they're already playing some of those tracks live. "We have another album maybe 90% done."

Provençal adds that they have more songs to fit onto another album or LP, but the plan for now is to release the EP and finish their upcoming full-length. "We're all gas, and it's not us hitting the brakes," Lacombe adds while laughing.

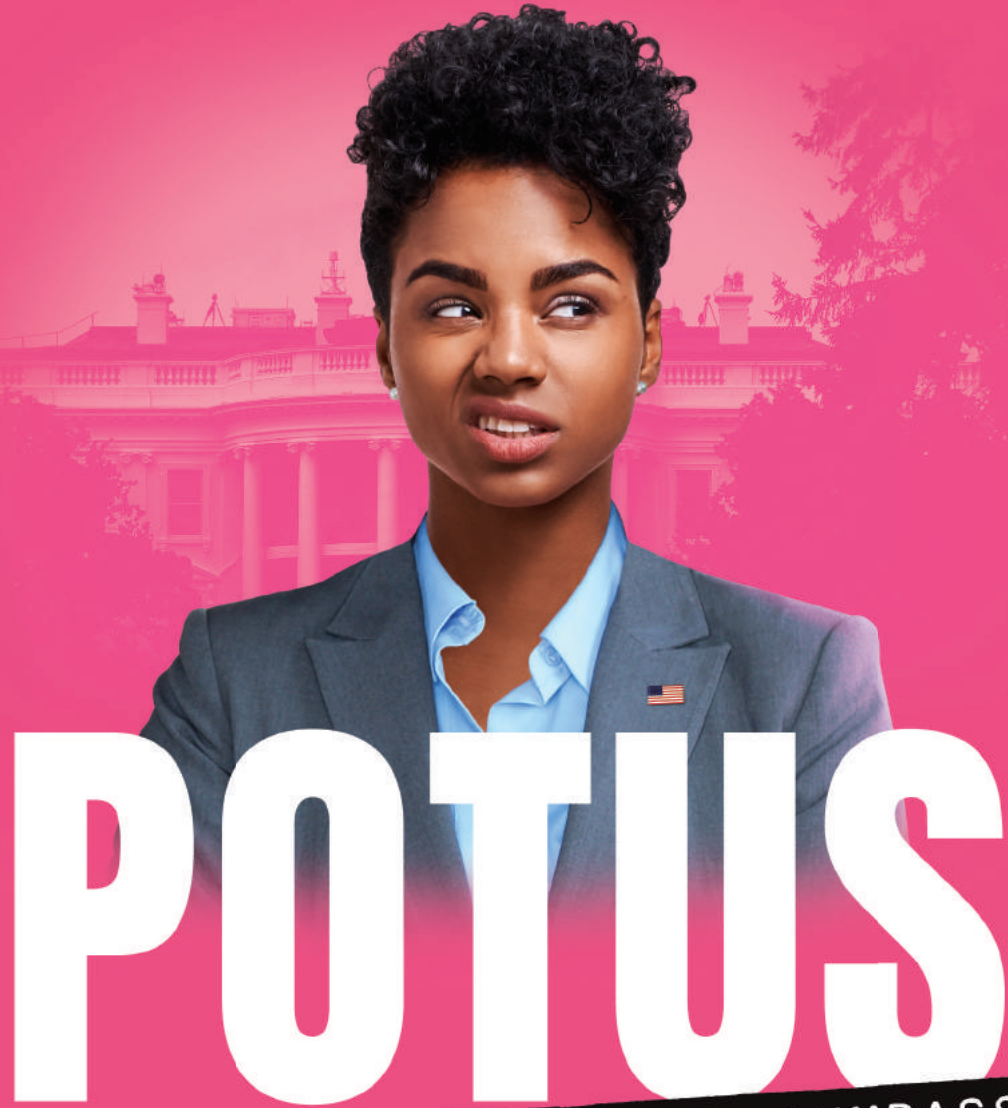
The band has also just gotten back from Austin, TX, where they played several shows at SXSW. They'll also play a run of U.S. dates later in April opening for L.A. psych-rockers Meatbodies, with several shows in Quebec and the rest of Canada — including festivals — scheduled for the summer.

"We've never truly done a lot of shows in Quebec other than Quebec City, Montreal, Trois-Rivières and Sherbrooke," admits Lacombe.

The trio have also been described as a band "dedicated to its disengagement," something Lacombe says is partially representative of their role within Montreal's musical ecosystem.

"We always felt like outcasts," he says. "There's a beautiful music scene here, but we're that weird black sheep in the corner — a face-melting explosion of punky riffs. We're dedicated to doing our own thing."

A #\$\$@!% GOOD TIME!



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:hammer of the mods

BY JOHNSON CUMMINS

Fiiiiinally, April has reared its head in Montreal. The month is a cruel mistress to say the least, with the promise of calendar days not completely blotted with gray being undercut by rollerbladers, unicycles, dirt, dog shit and last year's flotsam freed from their snow-covered cocoons. And that's not to mention the peckerwood legs of Vancouver transplants and tech bros parading around town as if it were July. What a time to be alive!

Thankfully, there is also a host of shows happening over this awkward month — as well as an eclipse for you psychonauts — that will take you right into planting season.

APRIL 8

Those of us who are deeply entrenched in all things John Carpenter, Goblin and other synth-driven soundtrack composers will not want to miss the cinemascopic prog/psych of **Zombi**, with **Overcalc**

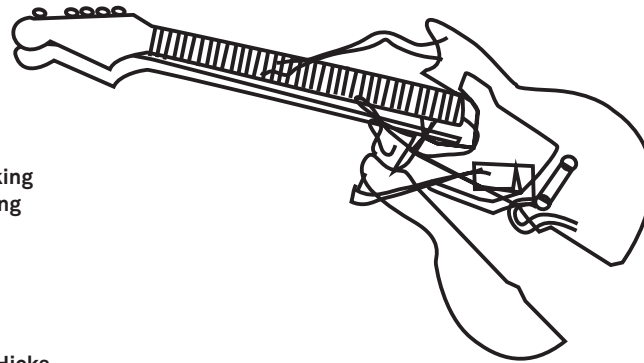
at la Sotterenea. Expect a room full of chin-stroking Magma fans that will definitely include me holding up the back wall. (And don't blind yourself in the afternoon, this is eclipse day!) **4848 St-Laurent (basement), doors 7 p.m., show 8 p.m., \$24.56**

APRIL 16

Now that it has been years since the mighty Bill Hicks shuffled off this mortal coil, and Doug Stanhope struggles with not getting cancelled, the last great man of yucks still standing has to be "America's Funny Man," Neil Hamburger. The first time he made it to town to open for proggy instrumentalists **Trans Am** at the Just for Laughs Museum, he actually stunned the entire audience who completely failed to get the funnies he was throwing down. One of the greatest/most awkward nights of comedy I have ever witnessed. If you're ready to be offended, you have to make it down to **Bar le Ritz**, where Hamburger is sharing the bill with **Major Entertainer** — which has to be amazing with a moniker like that. **179 Jean-Talon W., doors 7 p.m., show 8 p.m., \$36.35**

MAY 1

Easily one of the greatest power pop strummers to come our way since **Big Star**, Scotland's **Teenage Fanclub** are still stompin' the pines with all of the sweet jingle-jangle and harmonies perfectly in place. If you like to gently sway as heaven-sent melodies melt you like butter, you should definitely be at **Théâtre Fairmount**. **5240 Parc, doors 7 p.m., show 8 p.m., \$41.47**



On the flippity-flop, at the same time as one of my fave pop bands, a night of brutal heaviosity also demands my presence. **Dying Fetus**, **Full of Hell**, **200 Stab Wounds** and **Kruelty** play **Théâtre Beanfield**. Not kidding, just thinking about which show I should go to is already giving me a brain hemorrhage as **Full of Hell** are utterly pulverizing. Hmmm....? **2490 Notre-Dame W., 7 p.m., \$49.25, all ages**

May 2

Okay, there are a fair number of prolific bands these days. Instantly, **King Gizzard** and the **Lizard Wizard** and **Osees** come to mind. **Ty Segall** is easily as prolific as either of those bands and like his product-pushing brethren, he is easily able to reinvent himself with every release, whether under his own name or **Fuzz** or his many garage incarnations. The kid from **Laguna Beach** can definitely slay in the live setting, so do not miss his show at **Club Soda** with **Sharpie Smile**. **1225 St-Laurent, doors 7 p.m., show 8 p.m., \$37.35, all ages**

Current Obsession: Depeche Mode, *Violator*

Album reviews



Justice, *Hyperdrama*
(Ed Banger/Because)

After making an instant classic debut in 2007 with *Cross*, Justice have spent years struggling to build on that momentum. Follow-ups *Audio, Video, Disco* and *Woman* both failed to show more than just occasional flashes of brilliance. Luckily,

the French duo's new effort (out April 26) is easily their most consistently enjoyable project since *Cross*. Part of that is down to their tasteful usage of guests: Tame Impala's Kevin Parker, Thundercat, Miguel and Dutch singer Rimon all add their own touch to Justice's energizing, bass-slappy musical universe. The fact that Justice have dropped an album this strong in 2024 is a huge win. 8.5/10 Trial Track: "Neverender (feat. Tame Impala)" (Dave MacIntyre)



Beyoncé, *Cowboy Carter*
(Parkwood/Sony)

First off, Beyoncé doesn't need anyone's critical approval. And yes, this album is really fun. Beyoncé, to the surprise of no one who has paid attention to pop culture for the last 25 years, has penned a number of truly inspired, likely timeless

new songs. The covers are a mixed bag. The length of the whole project is a little lofty but an intuitive track skip or two gets things back on the rails. And if anyone is going to go out on a limb and bother having fun making a self-aware mark on Americana, I'd put my moon money on Queen Bey. 8/10 Trial Track: "16 CARRIAGES" (Darcy MacDonald)



The Wesleys, *The Wesleys*
(Little Village)

The highly anticipated debut album from this scrappy Montreal garage pop band is finally upon us and it was well worth the wait. Alongside universal themes — love, battling demons, fucking up, fighting against stacked odds — the bass is

fat and grooving and riffs spill out of a melting pot of '60s- and '70s-style guitar with a touch of surf and punk. The drums are crisp throughout, acting as the anchor for some of the more out-there riffery, and the album also feels DIY, having been recorded, mixed and produced by the band, with guitar pops and imperfections purposely left in for raw punk rock effect. An excellent choice. 8/10 Trial Track: "25" (Stephan Boissonneault)



DahL, *That's It*
(independent)

It's rare to find a band that sounds and feels completely distinctive, but DahL, an experimental trip-hop/post-punk group from Montreal, is one such band. This debut album nails the darkened and chaotic atmosphere, backed

by heavy synth work and sporadic guitar and bass riffs under a blanket of drum machine noise. But the vocals, usually only spoken or quietly sung like a mantra (sometimes as if it's been put through a dirty mic or hushed megaphone), give the whole album an uncanny-valley feel. These songs seem to follow you, almost like a drugged-out jinn on the back of your shoulder. 8/10 Trial Track "Una Minutes" (Stephan Boissonneault)



Alix Fernz, *Bizou*
(Mothland)

When I first heard this album, I wasn't sure what to make of it. The topsy-turvy atmosphere felt a bit like Captain Beefheart mixed with Devo, and the general wackiness rung chaotic. But on my second listen, I

picked out all of the intricacies within the mixes that added to the lunacy: the in-the-red scratchy guitars, the vintage Moog organ samples, the fuzzy screams layered within the vocals, which are apparently sung through an iPhone. An intentionally challenging listen evoking an artist losing his mind in real time, the album throws convention out a high-rise window, where it smashes onto Old Montreal's unforgiving cobblestones. 7.5/10 Trial Track: "Défigurée" (Stephan Boissonneault)



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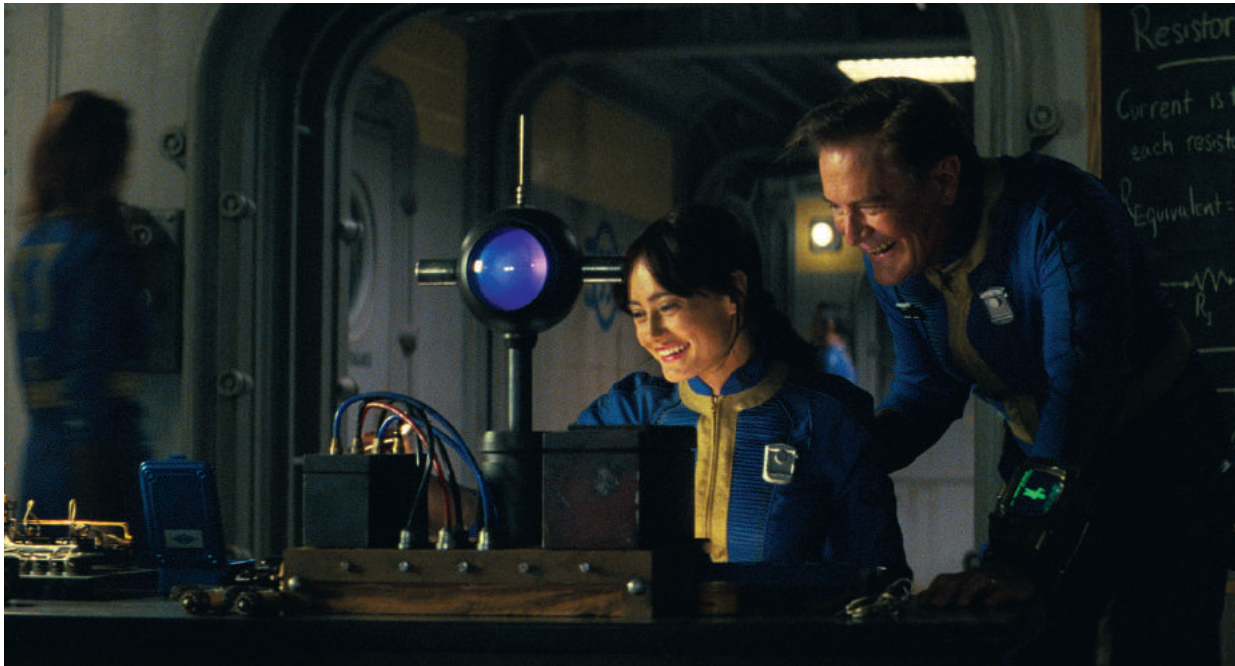
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film

Survival mode



BY LORRAINE CARPENTER

Growing up in a house full of cinephiles during the height of daytime and primetime soaps completely prepped me for *Twin Peaks*.

The unlikely mainstream popularity of a TV series co-created by David Lynch meant that even my elementary school friends were buzzing every week about the show's atmosphere, its terrifying moments and whether Agent Cooper would ever figure out who killed Laura Palmer. (No spoilers, but if you haven't seen the series yet, time to get on it.)

34 years later, I had the opportunity to interview Kyle MacLachlan about a new series he's part of: *Fallout*, a video game adaptation set in post-nuclear Los Angeles. As a fan of *Westworld*, MacLachlan was drawn to the project, in part, because it was executive-produced and partly directed by Jonathan Nolan — the co-creator of *Westworld* and co-writer of five films helmed by his brother Christopher — and because of the complexity of his role as Overseer Hank, the leader of one of *Fallout*'s luxury underground vaults where the lucky few live radiation-free.

"I was flattered that they thought of me, honestly, and I liked Hank's upbeat personality. He was a leader by example who could speak well and was passionate about what he did, he was a great dad — all wonderful qualities. And there's another side to him that we just scratch the surface of at the end of the first episode. They planted the seeds really well, and there's a deeper story going on here that's going to be interesting to explore as only a series can."

In *Fallout*, there's a vast post-apocalyptic world to discover through its lead characters, among them Hank's daughter Lucy (Ella Purnell), whose heroic traits emerge as she's forced to leave the vault, to the Brotherhood of Steel armored soldier Maximus (Aaron Moten) to the undead cowboy known as the Ghoul (Walton Goggins), a source of comic relief despite his grotesque appearance. While not

quite as bleak as HBO's *The Last of Us*, *Fallout* is part of a long line of dystopic titles that have flourished in the 21st century, a trend I asked MacLachlan to comment on.

"People love stories about people who can survive. Survival is such a big theme in *Fallout*, and what you have to do to survive, and I think we all believe that regardless of whatever circumstances might be around the corner, that we will be the person who can make it. All humans think we're gonna get through this somehow, and we like to see stories about endurance.

"But maybe we are in sort of a bleak period right now — although we did have *Barbie* as one of the top films of last year, that was sort of a fun romp, although asking a lot of serious questions. You could also point to *Oppenheimer* as part of the fascination with destruction."

Having played Paul Atreides in David Lynch's adaptation of *Dune* in 1984, MacLachlan jokingly advised Timothée Chalamet to "go easy on the spice" when Chalamet was first cast in the role in 2019. The two Pauls later met at an Oscar afterparty in 2022.

"Timothée and I had a brief but very lovely conversation about the challenges of Paul and working on that role, which was a nice shared moment. I was looking forward to the (first) movie as much as anybody else, and it was good, I enjoyed it," MacLachlan said (our interview took place in early February, prior to the release of *Dune: Part Two*). "I just really, really love the book and I love the world of *Dune*."

MacLachlan last worked with David Lynch in 2016 on Showtime's batshit *Twin Peaks: The Return* — a third season of the series that had MacLachlan playing evil and halfwit incarnations of Dale Cooper over 18 episodes (a fascinating exercise with fantastic moments that was ultimately unsatisfying, if you ask me). Though they don't have any plans for another project at the moment ("It would be a thrill," MacLachlan says), they do see each other socially — along with one of their fellow *Blue Velvet* alumni.

"Oh yeah, we're practically neighbours in Hollywood. When I'm in town, I see David every few months. In fact, I was talking with Laura Dern, who is also a friend, and her birthday is coming up and my birthday is coming up so we were going to try and have a little brunch over at David's house, the three of us. Sometimes we just get together and reminisce and tell funny stories about each other. We have such a long history — gosh."

Asked about whether he'd been to Montreal, MacLachlan recalled shooting the TV movie *Thunder Point* here in 1998. "It was my one attempt to play sort of an action-hero/mercenary. It didn't turn out very well," he said.

"It's a beautiful city. It didn't feel like you were in an American or Canadian city, it was a different vibe. I really enjoyed it there. And the food there is unbelievable."

As for whether he tried poutine, MacLachlan said, "Yeah. It's good! It makes sense. I like a hearty meal, so it was perfect. It was alright by me."

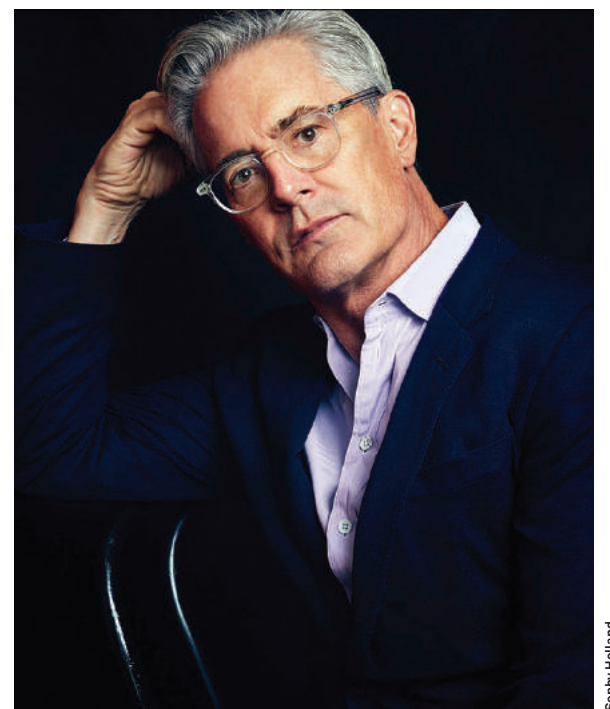
My final question for MacLachlan was about acting — specifically where he finds inspiration and whether any performances that he's seen recently have been particularly impressive.

"The best place to go for inspiration is to watch a film. I was watching *The Holdovers* not long ago, and Paul Giamatti really immersed himself in that character so completely. I really enjoyed that.

"I recently watched *Heat* again, and you get the chance to see Pacino and De Niro together, which, at the time when that film came out, I remember it was a really big deal amongst actors in L.A., and probably around the world. You saw this wonderful respect between the two of them, like an appreciation for what the other one was doing. Nobody tried to take over the scene, it was very mutual, very watchful — very rich performances. I thought it was an incredible and mesmerizing scene. Revisiting things like that are always inspiring.

"Gene Hackman's performance in *The French Connection* and how balls to the wall he was in that, and Ethan Hawke's performance in *Training Day* — I looked at that and I said, 'Wow, well these are people who do what I do at the top of their game.' So I'm continually inspired and impressed by performances like those."

→ *FALLOUT* WILL PREMIERE ON PRIME VIDEO ON APRIL 11.



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On Screen



Boy Kills World



Do Not Expect Too Much From the End of the World



Monkey Man



Une année difficile

BY JUSTINE SMITH

Love him or hate him, you can't accuse director Alex Garland of playing it safe. His latest, *Civil War* (April 12), is set in the near future as the United States is on the brink of a new Civil War. It follows war journalists covering the event and features an all-star cast, including Kirsten Dunst, Nick Offerman and Jesse Plemons. The three-hour epic continues Garland's obsession with the zeitgeist, explored in series like *Devs* and movies like *Ex-Machina*.

Two other films that radically capture "the moment we live in" are Radu Jude's *Do Not Expect Too Much From the End of the World* (April 19) and Bertrand Bonello's *The Beast* (April 19). The critically acclaimed festival hits are anything but stuffy arthouse films; instead, they're odes to the chaotic, digital landscape of 2024 living. Though drastically different, they complement each other beautifully, and are absolutely essential viewing on the big screen.

Dev Patel stars in and makes his directorial debut with *Monkey Man* (April 5), an action-thriller about an anonymous young man who unleashes a campaign of vengeance against the corrupt leaders who murdered his mother and continue to systemically victimize the poor and powerless. Brimming with over-the-top violence and visceral hand to hand combat, reviews from SXSW call this an early contender for action film of the year.

Another action flick hitting the big screen this month is *Boy Kills World* (April 26). The film premiered at TIFF's Midnight Madness last year to middling reviews, but they've recast the narrator with H. Jon Benjamin (*Bob's Burgers*, *Archer*), which will surely inject some life into it. Bill Skarsgård stars as the deaf-mute «boy» who has been trained by a mysterious shaman to be an instrument of death in an oppressive dystopian future state filled with violence and inequality.

For some springtime spookies, look no further than *Abigail* (April 19), a horror thriller starring Melissa Barrera (*Scream*) and Dan Stevens (*Downton Abbey*) about a group of criminals who kidnap the ballerina daughter of a powerful underworld figure. They retreat to an isolated mansion, unaware they're locked inside with no normal little girl. Caitlin Cronenberg (David's daughter) makes her feature debut with the sci-fi horror thriller, *Humane* (April 26). Set in the wake of an environmental collapse that has forced humanity to shed 20% of its population, a family dinner erupts into chaos when a father's plan to enlist in the government's new euthanasia program goes horribly awry. The film stars two homegrown heroes, Jay Baruchel and Emily Hampshire (*Schitt's Creek*), as well as Peter Gallagher.

One of the best movies screened at festivals last year, *La Chimera* (April 5), finally gets a Montreal release. Josh O'Connor (*The Crown*) stars as a grave robber recently released from prison, searching the Italian countryside for his lover. A strange and bewildering film that is magical and beautiful.

The great Ken Loach returns with another socially conscious drama, *The Old Oak* (April 12). The film focuses on the future

for the last remaining pub in a northeast English village where people are leaving as the mines are closed. Houses are cheap and available, thus making it an ideal location for Syrian refugees. Loach is one of the most politically active and engaged leftist filmmakers we have right now, and this is essential viewing.

For a more liberal approach to politics, director duo Éric Toledano and Olivier Nakache (*Intouchables*) return with *Une année difficile* (April 12). The satirical comedy is about two swindlers, deep in debt, who infiltrate a group of climate activists when they are attracted to the free food and drinks they are offered. The film stars Pio Marmai, Jonathan Cohen, Noémie Merlant and Mathieu Amalric.

One of Quebec's greatest living filmmakers, Robert Morin (*Infiltration* and *Requiem pour un beau sans-cœur*), returns to the big screen with *Festin boréal* (April 5), an experimental documentary about the life after death of a moose killed by a hunter.

The legendary Louise Archambault releases her film *Irene's Vow* (April 19). It follows the life of Polish nurse Irene Gut Opdyke, who was awarded the Righteous Among the Nations medal for showing remarkable courage in her attempt to save Polish Jews during World War II.

From April 12 to 21, Cinéma du Parc is hosting the 12th edition of the Latino Film Festival (FCLM). This year's edition features screenings of critically acclaimed films that have been rarely (if ever) screened in Montreal, including *Trenque Lauquen*, *Pictures of Ghosts*, *Samsara* and *The Klezmer Project*.

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Icons at work



Gauthier Dance//Dance Company Theaterhaus Stuttgart © Jeanette Bak

BY SAVANNAH STEWART

Quebec-born, Stuttgart-based choreographer Eric Gauthier is coming home, bringing his internationally acclaimed dance company to Montreal as part of a Canadian tour.

On the bill for the shows, running from May 1 to 4, is a work choreographed by Quebec's giant of dance Marie Chouinard, never before seen by a Canadian audience.

Chouinard's contemporary reimagining of Tchaikovsky's classic ballet *Swan Lake* is among three pieces that Gauthier Dance//Dance Company Theaterhaus Stuttgart will be performing for their four nights in Montreal.

"Gauthier Dance is renowned for doing shows with often a lot of works within one evening — it's like our trademark," says Gauthier. "I always want to feed the audience a lot of different things."

Gauthier Dance resident choreographer Hofesh Shechter's take on *Swan Lake*, a piece called *Swan Cake*, is one of four *Swan Lake*-inspired works commissioned by Gauthier, but only these two are making it across the ocean for this tour.

"I was thinking, 'Let's make a *Swan Lake*: Why not? It's cool, right? The title will attract and there's a lot of stuff, there's a lot there to play with for a contemporary choreographer,'" says Gauthier. "One of the *Lakes* is, of course, super special because it's a creation from Marie that Canada has never seen."

Chouinard's *Le Chant du cygne: le lac* features the eight women of Gauthier Dance dressed as swans with a pointe shoe tied to one hand, mimicking a swan's beak and long neck.

"(Marie) was quite clear. She said, 'I want to do it just with the women,'" Gauthier recounts. He says that Chouinard's piece has a feminist message, using the swan as an analogy for women.

"The swan is this beautiful, pristine creature that you look at because you're like, 'Wow, it's so amazing. It's a swan.' This is how women are portrayed as well — you just stare at them if they're pretty. But just like the bird, they have something to say."

Each swan has a meter-tall block of wood, "like a pedestal where you put the women. That's why the swans stand on these woodblocks, like, 'Take the woman, put her there, she's good to look at' bullshit."

The audience watches the women, portraying silent, beautiful swans, explode into movement and noise, yelling at the audience in Spanish.

"It's a very strong moment because you've been enjoying the swans so much, and then they just get serious."

Gauthier sought out Chouinard for his *Swan Lakes* project, saying she is among his favourite choreographers.

"I do have this philosophy that women choreographers don't get used enough, you know, so every evening that I try to put together, I'm trying to find a good balance to support the ecosystem of choreographers," he says.

"Working with Marie was always a dream. And we like each other a lot. We also have a personal contact, a bit like a big sister. It was kind of a match made in heaven."

Chouinard couldn't make it to Germany to create the work, so the eight dancers travelled to Montreal to rehearse in her studios.

"The creation took place in the deep of winter. It was end of January, and the girls were like, 'Boss there's snow everywhere!'"

As for Shechter's work, "a full-blown energy overload, let's say. It brings the house down, always."

"Hofesh (Shechter) is like the rock 'n' roll choreographer of the times today. He lives in London, he writes his own music always, which is very cool," Gauthier says. He recounted how the music evolved at the same time as the choreography as Shechter's vision continued to develop.

Rounding out the evening is Gauthier Dance's version of *Minus 16*, choreographed by Ohad Naharin.

"*Minus 16* is like a shapeshifter piece — everywhere you'll see it in the world, it has different parts to it," says Gauthier.

"What's fun about it is that the piece starts in the intermission already, there's actually one male dancer that dances through the whole intermission. But then when the piece starts, they all join him."

It, too, promises a high-energy performance, with a surprise for the audience at the end.

Gauthier Dance's Canadian tour will also take them to Quebec City, Sherbrooke and Toronto — another city Gauthier knows well, from his time studying at the National Ballet School.

"I'm so thankful that Danse Danse brings us (to Montreal) again," he says. "For me, it's like really coming home. I was waiting for this tour for a long time. I'm very close to my roots in Montreal."

→ Gauthier Dance's *Swan Lakes* and *Minus 16* will be performed at Place des Arts's Théâtre Maisonneuve (175 Ste-Catherine W.) from May 1 to 4, \$39-\$79

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: 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.

I Love You So Much, It's Killing Us Both by Mariah Stovall

I know there's a Montreal hardcore culture out there, and while so much of this book is about being a young woman, suffering from an ED, loving other women and loving other men — at its core, it's about going to dingy DIY venues and meeting up with other people who feel alive when thrashing out to their favourite underground bands and their elusive tour stops. This, too, is also a kind of Montreal culture. The book is heavy, yes, but once again I am asking you, do you want to read something, or do you want to read something good? Our central character, Khaki, finds herself having to mourn a toxic relationship and using

the ticket stamps collected over the years to do so. In this episode, I talk to Mariah Stovall about her favourite Jawbreaker album, how music wants you and how some of us can get love so wrong, even when it's intended as something pure. (SI)

Worry by Alexandra Tanner

The terms “*Frances Ha* millennial” and “*Seinfeldian*” are used in the tagline for this novel, which was enough of a draw for me! Jules and Poppy are sisters, and thus they fight, and it's totally gripping, funny and sad. (I am possibly projecting here, as a sister myself). The book is, in fact, full of millennial dread. Jules hates/loves her mindless publishing job, and Poppy has a hard time pinning one down at all. The two unite, however, in their similar critique of their mother (who I often like to think of as the third sister). The book is absolutely hilarious, and there's a dog named Amy Klobuchar, so you get sentences like, “Amy Klobachur pissed on the floor,” etc, so there's lots to look forward to. I spoke with Alexandra about sisters (rivals?)

best friends? BOTH), what if we only communicated intended love, what a non-job is and how that's uniquely millennial, and much more. (SI)

The Hearing Test Eliza Barry Callahan

Eliza Barry Callahan's debut, *The Hearing Test*, is a short piece of autofiction not to miss. When the narrator of this novel wakes one morning to a deep droning in her ears, she is diagnosed with sudden deafness and goes on to record her experience over the next year as total deafness looms. Based on Eliza's real experience with sudden deafness (she is currently in remission), the novel is at once a story about listening and about observation as an extreme sensory shift slowly takes over. Listen to my interview with Eliza to hear about this experience, and for her answer to what dictates composure in the face of adversity. (AN)

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

: game jam



BY NATALIA YANCHAK AND MARC SHAKOUR

With more than 300 video game studios in Quebec, it's not unusual for several games to be released by Montreal studios every month.

These five games being released in April — highly polished, super fun titles in a variety of genres — are the result of years of development by small, hyper talented local teams. There's something for everything coming out of Montreal's indie game scene this month.

BIOMORPH (Lucid Dreams Studio)

In this thrilling 2D metroidvania title (tagged as “the fusion of *Hollow Knight* and *Kirby*), you play as an anthropomorphic character with the ability to take on the appearance and skills of your enemies. This mighty morphing power allows the player to attack certain enemies and solve puzzles as they explore the moody and dark environments. This is highly replayable, as the powers you unlock also grant access to previously inaccessible areas. A fun, fast-paced, button-smashing romp. *On Steam April 5, free demo available now.*

SPIRIT CITY: LOFI SESSIONS (Mooncube Games)

Maybe you've heard of the ultra popular Lofi Girl on YouTube? Part productivity app, part playlist manager, *Spirit City: Lofi Sessions* is an interactive version of this experience, designed to help you focus on work or tasks you are trying to accomplish. Customize your character, camera angle and companions as you listen to ultra-chill music. The game has tons of music, with more available externally through a custom browser. Manage your tasks by creating in-game to-do lists, then set timers, moods, breaks and goals to get things done. *Out April 8 on Steam, free demo available now.*

TURBO KID (Outerminds)

From the studio that brought you branded experiences from YouTubers like H3H3 and PewDiePie, Outerminds specializes in fast-paced pixel art gems. In this pixelated metroidvania from the Turbo Kid franchise, you can unlock and upgrade ludicrous weapons and skills as you burn through tricky levels on your BMX-style bike — as Turbo Kid, of course. The studio brags about the game's “over-the-top gore, rendered in glorious pixel-art and painstakingly precise ragdoll physics.” Great for speedrunners, *Turbo Kid* is a fun platformer set in a campy, '90s themed dystopian wasteland. *Out April 10 on Steam, free demo available now.*

GOONS: LEGENDS & MAYHEM (RageCure)

This multiplayer beat-em-up arcade hockey title is more fun with friends, either locally, online or with bots. Travel to the cute and cartoony land of Zambonia where you'll slapshot your way through challenges and boss battles. Choose from whimsical characters and grab power-ups to win. (RageCure is based in Quebec City but we will give them a pass here as some of their team work from Montreal.) *Goons* is a guaranteed fun time. *Out April 11 on Steam and coming soon on Nintendo Switch, Xbox, Playstation.*

ANARCHITECTS (Squido Studio)

A unique, social sandbox VR title with a big focus on UGC. Players can design their own mini-games and connect with friends in a fun and colourful VR/MR environment. Through the user-friendly in-game tools, you can craft a zero-gravity gun battle or kick off a football match — either by editing your own maps or starting with templates. Taking inspiration from creative platforms like Roblox and RecRoom, *Anarchitects* incorporates physics-based mechanics with an anything-goes approach, while adding a social multiplayer dimension to the mix. *Out April 23 on Meta Quest App Lab for free with in-app purchases.*



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