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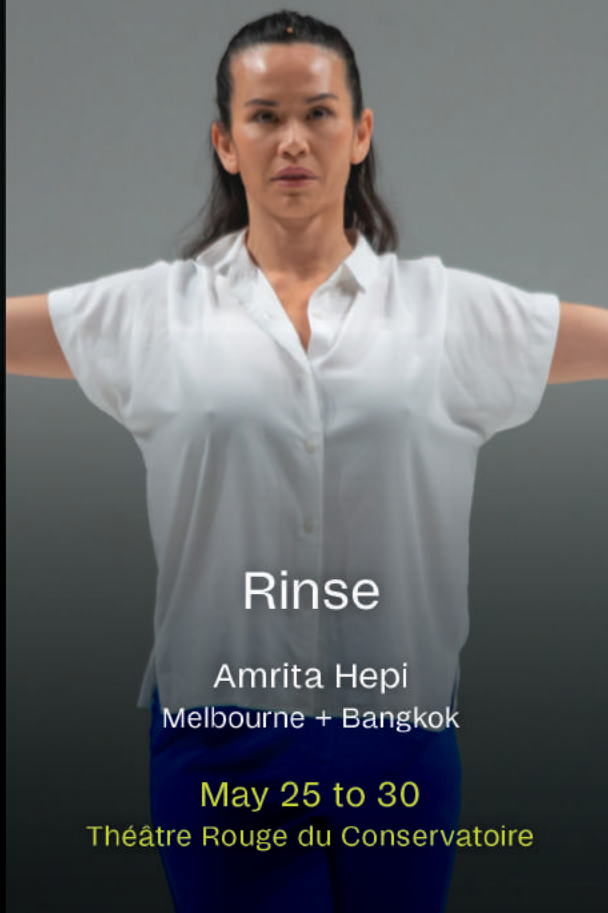
F T
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UNARMoured

Clara Furey
Montreal

May 29 + 30
Usine C



Rinse

Amrita Hepi
Melbourne + Bangkok

May 25 to 30
Théâtre Rouge du Conservatoire



Prophétique
(on est déjà né.es)

Nadia Beugré
Abidjan + Montpellier

May 28 to 30
Monument-National



Du temps où
ma mère racontait

Ali Chahrour
Beirut

May 22 to 24
Monument-National



asses.masses

Patrick Blenkarn + Milton Lim
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Audrey Hepburn (1929-1993), photographed at La Vigna, Hepburn's villa outside Rome, *Glamour*, December 1955 © Iconic Images / The Norman Parkinson Archive 2024

table of contents



These are the results of the 2024 Best of MTL readers poll.

Cover illustration by Whatisadam.

best of mtl	8
people & places	9
media	10
nightlife	12
music	16
film & arts	18
goods & services	22
food & drink	26
Resto wrongs	36
arts	
FTA highlights	38

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And the city has spoken.

Over the past four months, *Cult MTL* readers and other citizens who are invested in civic pride voted for their favourite Montreal things in the annual Best of MTL poll.

In an old city that sometimes seems as flawed as it is vibrant, where chatter from older generations steeped in nostalgia and overflowing with cynicism can be as loud as the power of the arts community and the spirit of the youth movements that keep government and industry in check, it's essential to be critical, yes, but never lose sight of the joie de vivre that makes this place magical. We like to think that this poll serves as a cheering section, a reminder, a connection to the things that make this city great, and something to celebrate.

Here at *Cult MTL*, we're grateful for all our readers and all the voters who took the time to think about everything they love in this city to fill out this poll. As always, it's our mandate to salute the artists, promoters, organizers, reporters, restaurateurs and retailers who keep Montreal's heart beating.

The Best of MTL poll is open and democratic, with no editorial influence or interference. Ballot-stuffing is automatically weeded out by our survey software, and

while we are always glad to see so many people make an event of voting via social media campaigns (and love seeing third-party get-out-the-vote tweets), we remain neutral during the polling period.

Cult MTL has been running the Best of MTL readers poll since 2013, but it bears mentioning that the survey follows in the tradition established by the city's defunct but fondly remembered alt-weekly newspaper the Mirror. Respect.

Our website cultmtl.com will feature all the individual categories in this poll over the course of the year, showcasing every winner in all the Top 5s.

We thank everyone who voted and promoted the poll. Participation continues to grow every year, making the 2023 results more representative of the city than ever.

(Anglos, if you're wondering why you don't recognize some names in these lists, it's because the other 70% of the population is now voting in a bilingual poll. Francos, désolé, les résultats sont unilingues.)

To all the winners: congratulations.

We're proud to bring you the Best of MTL.

People & Places

As this issue is going to print, the pro-Palestine encampment at McGill is showing the world where the city's social consciousness is at, so it's no surprise that the ceasefire movement dominated the Most Urgent Political/Social Cause category. François Legault's "various offences" (failures in healthcare and education, Bills 96 and 21, the 30% MNA salary increase, spending \$7M bringing the L.A. Kings to Quebec City) swept the Most Heinous Scandal category, with some of his decisions — a new roof for the Olympic Stadium and the tuition hike for out-of-province students at English universities — getting enough votes to stand alone in the same category. Our premier also won Tackiest Personality and got more votes than we've ever seen to land at #1 in Slimiest Politician. On a lighter note, welcome to Best Sports Personality, PWHL Montréal Captain Marie Philip-Poulin (#4), and welcome to the top of that category, Habs Captain Nick Suzuki.



"I've come a long way from being voted Best Weirdo and Best Drag Queen. Thank you for the love."
—Cary Tauben, #3 Best-Dressed Montrealer

Coolest Montreal Company

1. Ubisoft
2. Lightspeed
3. Moment Factory
4. Dime
5. Spooks and Spanks

Best Weirdo

1. Natasha Nebula
2. Nick Brutusgrass Younès
3. Murphy Cooper
4. Sergio da Silva
5. Walter J. Lyng

Most Urgent Political/Social Cause

1. Ceasefire in Gaza / Free Palestine
2. Affordable housing
3. Climate change / environment
4. Homelessness
5. Healthcare

Best Sports Personality

1. Nick Suzuki
2. Cole Caufield
3. P.K. Subban
4. Marie-Philip Poulin
5. Carey Price

Tackiest Personality

1. François Legault
2. Valérie Plante
3. Mado Lamotte
4. Sugar Sammy
5. Justin Trudeau

Best Politician

1. Valérie Plante
2. Gabriel Nadeau-Dubois
3. Manon Massé
4. Craig Sauv  
5. Justin Trudeau

Slimiest Politician

1. Fran  ois Legault
2. Justin Trudeau
3. Val  rie Plante
4. Denis Coderre
5. France-  laine Duranceau

Best Park

1. Parc La Fontaine
2. Mount Royal Park
3. Jarry Park
4. Jeanne Mance Park
5. Girouard Park

Most Heinous Scandal

1. Fran  ois Legault (various offences)
2. Olympic Stadium roof
3. Airbnb Fire
4. Tuition hike for anglos
5. Just for Laughs bankruptcy

Best Neighbourhood

1. Plateau
2. Verdun
3. NDG
4. Mile End
5. Villeray
6. Saint-Henri
7. Rosemont-La-Petite-Patrie

Best Tourist Attraction

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1. Old Port
2. Mount Royal
3. Biod  me
4. Botanical Gardens
5. The Ring



La Grande Roue de Montr  al in the Old Port

Cindy Lopez

Hottest Montrealer

1. Charlotte Cardin
2. Sugar Sammy
3. Justin Trudeau
4. Eugenie Bouchard
5. Kayleigh Choini  re

Best-Dressed Montrealer

1. Kayleigh Choini  re
2. Murphy Cooper
3. Cary Tauben
4. Sugar Sammy
5. Sergio da Silva

8. Little Italy
9. Hochelaga
10. Pointe St-Charles

Best Instagram Spot

1. Mount Royal
2. Old Port
3. Le Saint Motel
4. Gibeau Orange Julep
5. Botanical Gardens

Best Metro Station

1. Lionel-Groulx
2. Mont-Royal
3. Berri-UQAM
4. Place-des-Arts
5. Vendôme

Media

Despite serial layoffs, Bell Media dominates the airwaves, with #1 wins for CHOM in Best Radio Station, Bilal Butt in Best Radio Host, CTV in Best TV Station and reigning Best Newscaster Mutsumi Takahashi. It's great to see Jason Rockman going strong in Best Podcast (#2), and to see recognition for Montreal-centric social media accounts that are new to the poll, namely Montreal Then and Now (#2 Best Instagram), WalkMontréal (#2 Best Twitter) and MTL Stories (#4 Best TikTok). Some personal news: *Cult MTL* has returned to the Best Newspaper category (after disqualifying ourselves due to our more magazine-ey format) because a) we're still rocking newsprint and b) Montreal is one newspaper down from last year's Top 5 (RIP, *Journal Métro*). So thanks to our readers for once again voting us #1 Best Magazine and #1 Best Newspaper. We love you guys!



"WalkMontréal is honoured and thrilled to be voted into the Best of MTL poll this year. Thank you to Cult MTL and their audience, you are very kind indeed! WalkMontréal strives to share and explore the history and neighbourhoods of this great place!" —C & D of WalkMontréal, #2 Best Twitter

Best Radio Station

1. CHOM 97.7FM
2. CKUT 90.3FM
3. CJLO 1690AM
4. 95.9 Virgin Radio (FM)
5. CISM 89.3FM

Best Radio Host

1. Bilal Butt
2. Paul Arcand
3. Mitch Melnick
4. Daniel Carin
5. Gigi Brown

Best TV Station

1. CTV
2. CBC Montreal
3. Radio-Canada
4. Global
5. RDS

Best Magazine

1. *Cult MTL*
2. *Maisonneuve*
3. *Also Cool Mag*
4. *Elle Québec*
5. *Urbania*

Best Radio Show

1. *Advice by the Fireplace* (CJLO 1690AM)
2. *Melnick in the Afternoon* (TSN 690AM)
3. *The Gigi Brown Experience* (CJLO 1690AM)
4. *Puisqu'il faut se lever* (98.5 Montréal, FM)
5. *The Andrew Carter Morning Show* (CJAD 800AM)

Best Podcast

1. *The Sick Podcast With Tony Marinaro*
2. *The Rockman Power Hour*
3. *Mike Ward Sous Écoute*
4. *La journée (est encore jeune)*
5. *Côté Sombre*

Best Newscaster

1. Mutsumi Takahashi
2. Céline Galipeau
3. Laura Casella
4. Patrice Roy
5. Debra Arbec

Best Newspaper

1. *Cult MTL*
2. *The Gazette*
3. *Le Devoir*
4. *Journal de Montréal*
5. *The Suburban*

Best TV Personality

1. Tranna Wintour
2. Marc Labrèche
3. Véronique Cloutier
4. Arnaud Soly
5. Jay Baruchel

Best Website

1. cultmtl.com
2. pornhub.com
3. lapresse.ca
4. mtlblog.com
5. reddit.com/r/montreal

montréal, arts interculturels

m-a-i.qc.ca



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curator: eunice béliador
artists: Po B. K. Lomami + Zinnia Naqvi +
Shaya Ishaq + Lan Florence Yee

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MAY 15 - 18



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"CJLO has always been a part of my life because my dad's show, The Go-Go Radio Magic Show, has been on the air for the past 20 years. I'm really happy to be able to use my love for music to give something to this city that I love and it's nice to see that the city feels the same way about us! (Look Papa, I'm in the paper!)" —Gigi Brown, #3 Best Radio Show (The Gigi Brown Experience), #5 Best Radio Host

Best Twitter

1. @FNoMTL
2. @WalkMontreal
3. @TurboHaus
4. @ToulasTake
5. @harriweinreb

Best Instagram

1. @fucknomtl
2. @montreal.thenandnow
3. @arnaudsoly
4. @plateau_astro
5. @ponto_mtl

Best TikTok

1. @hash_the1
2. @sugarsammyk
3. @eveparkerfinley
4. @mtl_stories
5. @afrowasiu

Best Only Fans

1. Rainbowslut
2. H  l  ne Boudreau
3. No  mie Dufresne
4. Enshantay
5. Montreal BBC

Nightlife

Stereo's dominance as #1 Best Club continues, proving that Montreal party people still like it super late, and super loud. In the same category, Club Unity hangs on at #5, Datcha returns at #4 and the relatively mainstream Jet and la Vo  te make their Best Club debuts at #2 and #3, respectively. Best Terrasse is a timely reminder that warmth exists and will soon make a (consistent) comeback, with Sud-Ouest haunts Terrasse St-Ambroise (#1) and Messorem Bracitorium (#3) joining downtown mainstay le Sainte-  lisabeth (#4), Old Montreal's William Gray rooftop (#5) and St-Denis punk hotspot Turbo Ha  s (#2). And welcome to the Best Drag Queen club, Sami Landri, who brings a particular brand of sass to the category, which sees a return to the fold for OG Mado Lamotte (#1) after falling off the list last year (though Cabaret Mado made #4 in Best LGBT Bar / Club in 2023, as it did this year).

Best Bartender

1. Kat Anderson (Champs)
2. Sergio da Silva (Turbo Ha  s)
3. Arnesh Singh (Hurley's Irish Pub)
4. Saz (Champs)
5. Gwendolyn (Barfly)

Best Bar

1. Turbo Ha  s
2. Champs
3. Hurley's Irish Pub
4. Grumpy's
5. Darling

Best Sleazy Dive

1. Barfly
2. Champs
3. Brutopia
4. Turbo Ha  s
5. Bar de Courcelle

Best Wine Bar

1. vinvinvin
2. Pullman
3. Le Plongeur
4. Buvette Pompette
5. Buvette Chez Simone

Best Club

1. Stereo
2. Jet
3. La Vo  te
4. Datcha
5. Club Unity

Best Terrasse

1. Terrasse St-Ambroise
2. Turbo Ha  s
3. Messorem Bracitorium
4. Pub le Sainte-  lisabeth
5. Terrasse William Gray

Best Live Music Venue

1. MTELUS
2. Turbo Ha  s
3. Th   tre Beanfield
4. La Sala Rossa
5. Bell Centre

Best Promoter

1. Blue Skies Turn Black
2. Evenko
3. Extensive Enterprise
4. KickDrum
5. Saturgays

Best Strip Club

1. Caf   Cl  op  tre
2. Chez Par  e
3. Club Wanda's

4. Cabaret les Amazones
5. Cabaret Kingdom

Best LGBT Bar / Club

1. Champs
2. Notre Dame des Quilles
3. Club Unity
4. Cabaret Mado
5. Le Stud

Best Burlesque Performer

1. Sugar Vixen
2. Tristan Ginger
3. Lou Lou La Duchesse de Ri  re
4. Joy Rider
5. Roxy Torpedo

Best Drag King or Drag Queen

1. Mado Lamotte
2. Rita Baga
3. Barbada
4. Mona de Grenoble
5. Sami Landri

Best Bowling Alley

1. Quilles G Plus Rose Bowl
2. Darling Bowling
3. Laurentian Lanes
4. Notre Dame des Quilles
5. Quilles G Plus Le Forum

Best Comedy Club

1. Comedy Nest
2. Le Bordel Com  die Club
3. Le Terminal
4. Montreal Improv
5. 3rd Floor Comedy Club

DRAIN



TerroR SCORL ZATO JO TRAIL OF LIES

21 MAI 2024 - 19H00
CLUB SODA - 1225 ST LAURENT BLVD

ALPHA WOLF EMMURE

Chitty's Chamber

14 MAI 2024 - 19H00
CLUB SODA - 1225 ST-LAURENT

KNOCKED LOOSE

LOATHE SHOW ME THE BODY

4 JUIN 2024 - 19H00
L'OLYMPIA - 1004 STE-CATHERINE E

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DINGWASH mugshot

22 MAI 2024 - 18H30
L'OLYMPIA - 1004 STE-CATHERINE E

UPCOMING SHOWS

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+ GAG + PEELING FLESH
MAY 9 @ FOUFOUNES ELECTRIQUES

ABBATH + IMPERIAL TRIUMPHANT
+ BLACK ANVIL + FINAL GASP
MAY 10 @ CABARET LA TULIPE

WAYFARER + SONJA + VALDRIN
MAY 16 @ PIRANHA BAR

PERIPHERY + EDIOLA + JAKE BOWEN
MAY 17 @ MTELUS

SPECTRAL VOICE + SEDIMENTUM
+ SERPENT CORPSE
MAY 18 @ PIRANHA BAR

1349 + SPECTRAL WOUND
+ ANTICHRIST SIEGE MACHINE
+ SPIRIT POSSESSION
MAY 21 @ LE STUDIO TD

SIM + FAME ON FIRE + WITHIN DESTRUCTION
+ CRYSTAL LAKE
MAY 21 @ THÉÂTRE BEANFIELD

DEATH TO ALL + CRYPTOPSY
MAY 28 & 29 @ LE NATIONAL

ARCHSPIRE + ABORTED + CARCOSA + ALLUVIAL
JUNE 9 @ CLUB SODA

PALLBEARER + REZN + THE KEENING
JUNE 22 @ THÉÂTRE FAIRMOUNT

NORTHLANE + INVENT ANIMATE
+ THORNHILL + WINDWAKER
JULY 7 @ THÉÂTRE BEANFIELD

FALLUJAH + PERSEFONE + VULVODYNIA
+ DAWN OF OUROBOROS
JULY 11 @ FOUFOUNES ELECTRIQUES



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Best Comedy Night

1. The World's Smallest Comedy Night
2. Laval's Got Jokes
3. Stand Up Comedy in Girouard Park
4. Stand-up St. Henri
5. Best of Saturdays at 3rd Floor Comedy Club

Best Drug

1. Cannabis
2. Mushrooms
3. Cocaine
4. MDMA
5. Ketamine

Best Cocktail Bar

1. Atwater Cocktail Club
2. Cloakroom
3. Milky Way
4. The Coldroom
5. Le Mal Nécessaire

Best Karaoke Bar

1. La Normandie
2. Pang Pang Karaoke
3. Le Date Karaoke
4. 3 Minots
5. Turbo Haüs



"It's about time!" —Gwendolyn, #5 Best Bartender from Barfly, #1 Best Sleazy Dive

Ahsan Rahman

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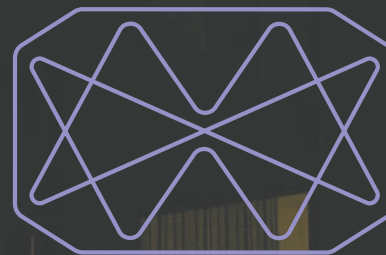
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Patrick Watson - Klô Pelgag - Daniel
Bélanger - Bibi Club - Jean-Michel Blais
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Dominique Fils-Aimé - Karkwa



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Music

Despite having been shadow-banned IRL across this continent for some time, Arcade Fire have hung on to the #3 spot in Best Band, while last year's #1 and #2 Montreal bands — the Damn Truth and Half Moon Run — have also retained their rankings. Congratulations to Choses Sauvages for making it into this category at #4, presumably on the strength of their wild live show. While Mike Shabb, L'il Andy, Kaytranada, Charlotte Cardin and Dominique Fils-Aimé are still #1 in Best Hip Hop Act, Best Country Folk Act, Best Electronic Act, Best Singer-songwriter and Best Jazz Act, respectively, other categories have seen major shakeups, with #1 spots going to previously unranked local talents, including the Great Sabatini (#1 Freakiest Act), Cryptopsy (#1 Heaviest Act) and DJ Coach (#1 Best Club DJ). Congrats to all the Top 5 winners and all the #1s, of course, but newcomers deserve some extra special accolades.

Best Band

1. The Damn Truth
2. Half Moon Run
3. Arcade Fire
4. Choses Sauvages
5. Bud Rice Band

Freakiest Act

1. The Great Sabatini
2. Hubert Lenoir
3. Backxwash
4. Screaming Demons
5. Jean Leloup

Most Pretentious Act

1. Arcade Fire
2. Charlotte Cardin
3. Hubert Lenoir
4. Bud Rice
5. Godspeed You! Black Emperor



"To everyone who's danced alongside me, your support is the bassline of my success. Thank you for amplifying my journey and making every gig unforgettable."
—NASTYA NVRSPLP, #4 Best Club DJ

Heaviest Act

1. Cryptopsy
2. Backxwash
3. Cell Press
4. Dead Velvet
5. Metalian

Best Electronic Act

1. Kaytranada
2. CRi
3. Marie Davidson
4. Jacques Greene
5. Ouri

Best Country/ Folk Act

1. Li'l Andy
2. Bud Rice
3. Ada Lea
4. The Hundred Footers
5. Bobby Dove

Best Hip Hop Act

1. Mike Shabb
2. Loud
3. Backxwash
4. Strange Froots
5. BeRosey

Best Club DJ

1. DJ Coach
2. DJ Blaster
3. Poirier
4. NASTYA NVRSPLP
5. Mint Simon



"It's an honour, foreal — Montreal, we on the map! Thanks to all my real supporters, my family, my friends and my city. 514, WE HERE TO STAY!" —Mike Shabb, #1 Best Hip Hop Act

Best Jazz Act

1. Dominique Fils-Aimé
2. Dave Gossage Septet
3. Colin Stetson
4. Fish Jones
5. Raneé Lee

Best Singer-songwriter

1. Charlotte Cardin
2. Patrick Watson
3. Paul Cargnello
4. Bud Rice
5. Vanille

Best Label

1. On A Roll
2. Stomp
3. Secret City
4. Constellation
5. Bonsound



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Film & Arts

While the incredible *Dune: Part Two* may not qualify as Can-con based on MAPL criteria, we're following our readers' lead and considering it a Montreal film, because of (#1 Best Filmmaker) Denis Villeneuve, and the inclusion of his hometown on the blockbuster's premiere world tour. We welcome two local actors who are new to the Best Actor category: Théodore Pellerin (#3) — who's appeared in *Beau Is Afraid*, *Solo* (#5 Best Local Film) and the series *Franklin* in the past year alone — and Juliette Gariépy (#4), star of *Les chambres rouges* (Best Local Film #3). And look who showed up in the Best Author category: *Toula Drimonis*! The longtime Cult MTL contributor and freelance columnist was voted into the #5 spot on the strength of her books *We, the Others: Allophones, Immigrants, and Belonging in Canada* and this year's follow-up *Seeking Asylum: Building a Shareable World*. Congratulations to her!



"Xavier! Always in the way. But really, it touches me deeply that people are interested in my work. I'd also like to say I personally really like Xavier Dolan's work." —Denis Villeneuve, #1 Best Filmmaker (after being told that Dolan was this category's winner for years and it has often been a tight race)

George Pimentel

Best Actor / Actress

1. Jay Baruchel
2. Sophie Nélisse
3. Théodore Pellerin
4. Juliette Gariépy
5. Marc-André Grondin

Best Filmmaker

1. Denis Villeneuve
2. Xavier Dolan
3. Monia Chokri
4. Ariane Louis-Seize
5. Adam Reider

Best Local Film (of 2023–2024)

1. *Dune: Part Two*
2. *Vampire humaniste cherche suicidaire consentant*
3. *Les chambres rouges*
4. *Simple comme Sylvain*
5. *Solo*

Best Theatre Company

1. Centaur Theatre
2. Segal Centre
3. Geordie
4. Black Theatre Workshop
5. Mainline

Best Local Play (of 2023–2024)

1. *Johnny Legdick – A Rock Opera*
2. *Prayer for the French Republic*
3. *Legally Blonde the Musical*
4. *The Motherfucker With the Hat*
5. *alterNatives*

Best Dance Company

1. Grands Ballets Canadiens
2. Marie Chouinard
3. Danse Danse
4. Tripoli Studios
5. We All Fall Down

Best Museum

1. Museum of Fine Arts
2. McCord Stewart Museum
3. Musée d'art contemporain
4. Pointe-à-Callière
5. Canadian Centre for Architecture

Best Gallery

1. S16 Gallery
2. PHI Centre
3. BBAM! Gallery
4. Arsenal Contemporary Art
5. Art Mûr

Best Multidisciplinary (Visual/Performing) Art Space

1. PHI Centre
2. SAT
3. Arsenal Contemporary Art
4. MAI
5. Usine C

Best Living Author

1. Heather O'Neill
2. Kevin Lambert
3. Élise Gravel
4. Michelle Franklin
5. Toula Drimonis



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Best Visual Artist

1. Kezna Dalz
2. Junko
3. Pony
4. MissMe
5. John Drew Munro

Best Comedian

1. Sugar Sammy
2. Mike Ward
3. Tranna Wintour
4. Ben Cardili
5. Zak Kik

Best Fashion Designer

1. Lucas Stowe
2. Eve Gravel
3. Jennifer Glasgow
4. Katrin Leblond
5. École de Pensée

Best Photographer

1. JF-Savaria
2. Eric Branover
3. Susan Moss
4. AJ Korkidakis
5. Richmond Lam

Best Video Game Company

1. Ubisoft
2. KO_OP
3. Behaviour Interactive
4. Compulsion Games
5. WB Games

Best Graffiti Artist/Crew

1. Kong
2. MissMe
3. Stikki Peaches
4. K6A
5. Squidgee

Best Cartoonist/Comic Artist

1. Aislin
2. Élise Gravel
3. Walter Scott
4. Andrina Learmonth
5. Michel Rabagliati

Best Festival

1. Jazz Festival
2. Just for Laughs
3. Osheaga
4. POP Montreal
5. Fringe



"I feel very honoured but mostly grateful to see that the work I do seems to resonate and touch people. The recognition touches me a lot. I wouldn't be where I am today without everyone's support."—Sophie Nélisse, #2 Best Actor / Actress

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Goods & Services

The story in all categories related to clothes, hair and ink is new blood and old flames. In Best Clothing Store, luxury/streetwear/indie retailer SSENSE makes a splash amid the mainstays at #3 while hipster go-to Jeans Jeans Jeans returns to the list at #5. The Plateau's Palmo Goods arrives at #5 in Best Vintage Clothing Store, while Apart Studios is also new at #5 in Best Hair Salon, and Best Barbershop has two fresh faces, Lucky's Hair Studio (#4) and la Chapelle Barbershop (#5). Salon Helmet, meanwhile, has made a comeback in both the Hair Salon and Barbershop categories, at #1 and #3, respectively. And while our readers have replicated the top 3 spots in Best Tattoo Parlour, Bait & Schlang (#4) has made a comeback and Coup d'État (#5) is here for the first time. Gratitude goes out to all of these businesses for their precious goods and treasured services.



"We are deeply appreciative of the unwavering support and affection from our fellow nail lovers who have made Candy Montreal's #1 Best Nail Salon for two consecutive years! This recognition holds a special significance this year as we joyfully mark our 15th anniversary."
—Tamara Di Lullo, owner of Candy Nail Bar, #1 Best Nail Salon

Best Clothing Store (New)

1. Uniqlo
2. Simons
3. SSENSE
4. H&M
5. Jeans Jeans Jeans

Best Vintage Clothing Store

1. Boutique Eva B
2. Renaissance
3. Kitsch 'n Swell
4. Annex Vintage
5. Boutique Palmo Goods

Best Hair Salon

1. Salon Helmet
2. Salon Freyja

3. Two Horses
4. Danny's Coiffure Unisex
5. Apart Studio

Best Barbershop

1. La Section
2. Blue Dog Barbershop
3. Salon Helmet
4. Lucky's Hair Studio
5. La Chapelle Barbershop

Best Tattoo Parlour

1. DFA Tattoos
2. Saving Grace Tattoo
3. Adrenaline
4. Bait & Schlang
5. Coup d'État

Best Tattoo Artist

1. Aimee Boucher (Morning Gory)
2. Angus Byers (DFA Tattoos)
3. Alex K'eh (Saving Grace Tattoo)
4. Nat Jean (Coup d'État Tattoo)
5. Eric Martinello (Adrenaline Tattoos)

Best New CD/Vinyl Store

1. Aux 33 Tours
2. Le Vacarme
3. Sound Central
4. Sunrise Records
5. Phonopolis

Best Used CD/Vinyl Store

1. Cheap Thrills
2. Death of Vinyl
3. Aux 33 Tours
4. Sound Central
5. Le Vacarme

Best Musical Instrument Store

1. Steve's Music
2. Long & McQuade
3. Diplomate Musique
4. Twigg Musique
5. Moog Audio

Best Internet Service Provider

1. Vidéotron
2. Fizz
3. Bell
4. EBox
5. Teksavvy

Best Electronics Store

1. Best Buy
2. Addison Électronique
3. Canada Computers
4. The Source
5. Centre Hi-Fi

Best Movie Theatre

1. Cinéma du Parc
2. Cinéma Cineplex Forum & VIP
3. Cinéma Moderne
4. Cinéma Beaubien
5. Cinéma Banque Scotia Montréal

Best Bicycle Shop

1. 514 BMX
2. BicyclesMcW
3. C&L Cycle
4. Bicycles Eddy
5. La Bicycletterie JR

Best Skating Rink

1. Esplanade Tranquille
2. Beaver Lake
3. Atrium Le 1000
4. Parc La Fontaine
5. Bleu Blanc Bouge

Best Bookstore (New)

1. Librairie Drawn & Quarterly
2. Indigo Books & Music
3. Librairie Pulp Books & Café
4. Librairie Saint-Henri Books
5. Livres Babar Books

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RAJNI PERERA
MARIGOLD SANTOS
Efflorescence/
The Way We Wake

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Rajni Perera and Marigold Santos, *Efflorescence/The Way We Wake* (detail), 2023. Polymer clay, styrofoam, paint, metallic powder, synthetic hair, pearls, steel, aluminum, floral foam, paper, plastic, 121.9 x 152.4 x 243.8 cm. Photo: Mikhail Mishin. Courtesy of the artists and Patel Brown Gallery.

Sonia Boyce, *Sofia wallpaper*, 2022. Printed wallpaper. Dimensions variable. Courtesy of the artist, APALAZZOGALLERY, and Hauser & Wirth



"The Ritz-Carlton, Montreal remains the most iconic address in the Golden Square Mile. With its rich history and endless memories, almost every Montrealer has a Ritz story near and dear — it's part of our cultural DNA."
 —Katia Piccolino, Sales and Marketing Director at The Ritz-Carlton, Montreal, #1 Best Hotel, #1 Best Afternoon Tea

Best Bookstore (Used)

1. Phoenix Books
2. Encore Books & Records
3. The Word Bookstore
4. Librairie l'Échange
5. Librairie Le Port de tête

Best Fitness Club/ Gym

1. Éconofitness
2. YMCA
3. Nautilus Plus
4. Anytime Fitness
5. Infinity Movement

Best Facial Treatments

1. Cara Cara Studio
2. PEAU'ésie
3. Bota Bota, spa-sur-l'eau
4. Beauties Lab
5. Strøm spa nordique

Best Hotel

1. The Ritz-Carlton, Montreal
2. Fairmont The Queen Elizabeth
3. Four Seasons Hotel Montreal
4. Hotel William Gray
5. Hotel 10

Best Florist

1. Dragon Flowers
2. Westmount Florist
3. Fleuriste Pourquoi Pas Fleurs
4. Fleuriste Binette et filles
5. Fleuriste Monarque

Best Comics Store

1. Crossover Comics
2. Librairie Drawn & Quarterly
3. Capitaine Québec
4. 1,000,000 Comix
5. Librairie Planète BD

Best Yoga Studio

1. Modo Yoga
2. Ashtanga Yoga Montreal
3. Idolem Hot Yoga Chaud
4. ensō yoga
5. Studio Mile End

Best Nail Salon

1. Candy Nail Bar
2. Studio LAK
3. Salon Vong
4. Joli Ongles Nails
5. My lil nailz fantasy

Best Kitsch/ Antique Store

1. Marché Underground
2. Marché aux puces St-Michel
3. Kitsch 'n Swell
4. Renaissance
5. The Little Shop

Best Drug Paraphernalia Store

1. SQDC
2. Prohibition
3. Psychonaut
4. Boutique Rock
5. Utopia

Best Spa

1. Bota Bota, spa-sur-l'eau
2. Strøm spa nordique
3. Scandinave Spa
4. Spa Le Finlandais
5. Spa St. James

Best Massage Spot

1. Tan Jai
2. Spa St. James
3. Espace Nomad
4. In Good Hands
5. Strøm spa nordique

Best Jewellery

1. Inchoo Bijoux
2. Tiffany & Co.
3. Maison Birks
4. Ora-C
5. Château d'Ivoire



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- 26 MAI:** SHANNON AND THE CLAMS + TROPA MAGICA - FOUFOUNES ÉLECTRIQUES
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- 06 JUIN:** DROWSE + thisquietarmy + INVITÉ(E)S - CABARET FOUFS
- 08 JUIN:** BOECKNER + INVITÉ(E)S - BAR LE RITZ PDB

- 09 JUIN:** PROTOMARTYR + INVITÉ(E)S - CABARET LA TULIPE
- 11 JUIN:** JENNY DON'T AND THE SPURS + BLOODSHOT BILL - CABARET FOUFS
- 14 JUIN:** QUASI + JEFFREY LEWIS - CABARET FOUFS
- 20 JUIN:** THIS WILL DESTROY YOU + INVITÉ(E)S - THÉÂTRE FAIRMOUNT

Food & Drink

As you'll see in his annual poll critique Resto Wrongs a couple of pages down, our Food Editor Clay Sandhu wasn't thrilled by the lack of evolution and adventure in this section, but he also couldn't argue with the inclusion of old faves like l'Express (#1 Best French Restaurant), Filipino food, which made its way into Best New Food Trend (#4) and Best New Restaurant in the form of NDG Filipino hotspot Buboy (#2), and #1 Best Mac and Cheese going to the all-around excellent Tavern on the Square. Elsewhere on the list, it's exciting to see categories like Best Fried Chicken, where Korean eateries do battle with popular new-school spots and KFC is nowhere to be found, and to have hot burger joints Double's and Mange Dans Mon Hood face off against established burger specialists Uniburger and Notre-Boeuf-de-Grâce — but again, no tired fast food to be seen. Bon appetit, Montreal!



"In a city filled with such talent, it is really incredible to be given such recognition. We wouldn't be who we are without our incredible community. Thank you so much, Montreal." —Danny Smiles, #1 Best Chef, from Double's, #1 Best New Restaurant, #3 Best Burger, #5 Best Late Night Eats

Best Fine Dining

1. Damas
2. Bouillon Bilk
3. Monarque
4. Au Pied de Cochon
5. Maison Boulud

Best Late Night Eats

1. La Banquise
2. Patati Patata
3. Boustan
4. La Belle Province
5. Double's

Best Breakfast/Brunch

1. Arthur's Nosh Bar
2. Cosmos
3. Régine
4. Le Vieux Vélo
5. Janine Café

Best Afternoon Tea

1. The Ritz-Carlton, Montreal
2. Cardinal Tea Room
3. Plentea
4. Thésaurus Thérrierium
5. Gryphon d'Or

Best Chef

1. Danny Smiles
2. Marc-Olivier Frappier
3. Chuck Hughes
4. Antonio Park
5. Johnny Hamilton

Best New Food Trend

1. Smash burgers
2. Arepas
3. Veganism
4. Filipino food
5. Korean BBQ

Restaurant With the Best Vibe

1. Keela
2. Bocadillo
3. Satay Brothers
4. Buboy
5. Darling

Best Hotel Bar or Restaurant

1. Bar George
2. Marcus
3. Maison Boulud
4. Terrasse Nelligan
5. Nacarat

Best Meal Kit Company

1. HelloFresh
2. Cook It
3. Lufa Farms
4. Factor
5. WeCook

Best New Restaurant

1. Double's
2. Buboy
3. Miracolo
4. Marci
5. Casavant

Most Beautiful Restaurant

1. Monarque
2. Maison Boulud
3. Damas
4. Pangea
5. Miracolo

Best Pub Grub

1. Ye Olde Orchard
2. McKibbin's Irish Pub
3. Hurley's Irish Pub
4. Burgundy Lion
5. Bishop & Bagg

Best Cheap Eats

1. Patati Patata
2. La Belle Province
3. Bocadillo
4. Boustan
5. Chez Mein

Best Delivery App

1. Uber Eats
2. DoorDash
3. SkipTheDishes
4. Radish
5. Amazon



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Ontario 

Best African Restaurant

1. Le Nil Bleu
2. Queen Sheba
3. Belle Afrique
4. East Africa
5. Maquis Yasolo

Best Eastern European Restaurant

1. Stash Café
2. Euro Deli Batory
3. Chez Anna
4. Avesta

Best Indian Restaurant

1. Bombay Mahal
2. Star of India
3. India Rosa
4. Palais d'Ajit
5. Classic India

Best Korean Restaurant

1. Mon Ami
2. Luna
3. Chez Bong
4. Omma
5. Comon

Best Middle Eastern Restaurant

1. Damas
2. Sumac
3. KazaMaza
4. Boustan
5. Garage Beirut

Best Caribbean Restaurant

1. Lloydie's
2. Pikliz
3. Boom J's Cuisine
4. Seasoned Dreams
5. Jardin du Cari

Best French Restaurant

1. L'Express
2. Leméac
3. Bistro la Franquette
4. Au Pied de Cochon
5. Maison Boulud

Best Italian Restaurant

1. Mano Cornuto
2. Da Emma
3. Nora Gray
4. Bossa
5. Moccione

Best Latin American Restaurant

1. Bocado
2. Arepera du Plateau
3. La Carreta
4. Sabor Latino
5. Los Planes

Best Portuguese Restaurant

1. Ma Poule Mouillée
2. Romados
3. Viana
4. Chez Doval
5. Casa Minhota

Best Chinese Restaurant

1. Dobe & Andy
2. Mon Nan
3. Beijing
4. Aunt Dai
5. Kam Shing

Best Greek Restaurant

1. Milos
2. Marathon Souvlaki
3. Marvens
4. Christina's
5. Mythos

Best Japanese Restaurant

1. Kazu
2. Jun I
3. Kyo
4. Fleurs et Cadeaux
5. Park

Best Mexican Restaurant

1. Tacos Frida
2. El Rey del Taco
3. 3 Amigos
4. Escondite
5. El Sabor de Mexico

Best Spanish Restaurant

1. Ibéricos
2. Tapeo
3. Club Espagnol de Québec
4. Tinc Set
5. La Croqueteria de Montréal



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"Our dishes offer a taste of home, reminiscent of Lola's kitchen. Come home to comfort at Buboy!"—Eric Lazaro from Buboy, #2 Best New Restaurant, #4 Restaurant With the Best Vibe

Best Thai Restaurant

1. Pumpui
2. Pamika
3. Pichai
4. Mae Sri
5. Thaïlande

Best Vietnamese Restaurant

1. Pho Bac 97
2. Pho Tay Ho
3. Vua
4. Le Petit Sao
5. Pho Bang New York

Best Bagel

1. St. Viateur
2. Fairmount
3. Bagel St-Lo
4. MTL Bagel
5. Dizz's Bagel & Deli

Best Burger

1. Notre-Boeuf-de-Grâce
2. Uniburger
3. Double's
4. Mange Dans Mon Hood
5. Burger de Ville

Best Chicken Wings

1. Hooters
2. Cunninghams Pub
3. Buffalo Bill's
4. La Cage
5. NextDoor Pub

Best Dim Sum

1. Kam Fung
2. Ruby Rouge
3. Imperial
4. Yum Yum Soupe Dumpling
5. Tong Por

Best Donuts

1. Bernie Beignes
2. Léché Desserts
3. La Beignerie
4. Homer's Donuts
5. Deux Becs

Best Dumplings

1. Sammi & Soupe Dumplings
2. Qing Hua Dumpling
3. Harbin Dumpling
4. La Maison de Mademoiselle Dumpling
5. Petit Poisson

Best Falafel

1. Falafel Yoni
2. Falafel St. Jacques
3. Nilufar
4. Boustan
5. Sumac

Best Fast Food

1. A&W
2. McDonald's
3. La Belle Province
4. Boustan
5. Five Guys

Best Fish and Chips

1. Brit & Chips
2. Cunninghams Pub
3. Burgundy Lion
4. Lucille's Oyster Dive
5. McKibbin's Irish Pub

Best Fried Chicken

1. Jack le Coq
2. Roch le Coq
3. Dawa
4. Comon
5. Mon Petit Poulet

Best Fries

1. Frites Alors
2. McDonald's
3. Patati Patata
4. La Belle Province
5. Paul Patates

Best Hot Dog

1. Montreal Pool Room
2. Décarie Hot Dog
3. La Belle Province
4. Restaurants Lafleur
5. Dirty Dogs

Best Mac and Cheese

1. Tavern on the Square
2. Dinette Triple Crown
3. Seasoned Dreams
4. Notre-Boeuf-de-Grâce
5. Nouveau Palais

Best Montreal Beer

1. Messorem Bracitorium
2. St-Ambroise
3. Dieu du Ciel
4. 4 Origines
5. WILLS

Best Pad Thai

1. Pumpui
2. Co Ut
3. Mae Sri
4. Mama Bangkok
5. Thai Express

Best Pho

1. Pho Lien
2. Pho Tay Ho
3. Pho Bang New York
4. Pho Nguyen
5. Pho Bac 97

Best Pizza

1. Pizza Bouquet
2. Fugazzi
3. Pizza Toni
4. Pizzeria No. 900
5. Elena

Best Poké

1. Boîte Geisha
2. Poke Monster
3. Ahi Poké
4. Olu Olu
5. Hawaii

Best Poutine

1. La Banquise
2. Ma Poule Mouillée
3. La Belle Province
4. Patati Patata
5. Poutineville

Students at John F. Kennedy Adult Education Centre are thriving in mathematics

BY TERRY HAIG



“The beautiful thing about learning is that no one can take it away from you.”

The thought comes from B.B. King. The words sit in a wall poster on the ground floor of the John F. Kennedy Adult Education Centre that occupies a healthy section of a formidable concrete building that has long housed this popular institution of lifelong learning in St. Michel.

The intersection is Rue Villieray and Blvd. St. Michel, part of a neighbourhood long known as a place where newcomers to Canada can settle to seek the wherewithal to find the place they want to get to in the so-called Canadian Mosaic.

Education, of course, is a key part of that search for a better life. Especially, the math part.

Turns out, math might be a terrific place to start in the quest to find a place—despite the heartache, frustration and panic trying to learn it can bring.

Math, especially as it is taught today, is about way more than just the numbers—especially when those numbers are as near as that phone in your palm.

Just ask ChatGPT:

“Mathematics is the study of patterns, structures, quantities and relationships, using numbers and symbols to describe and explain the world around us. Math is not just a subject; it’s a universal language that helps us understand and interpret phenomena in various fields like science, engineering, economics and even everyday life.”

Got that?

Luckily for a whole lot of people, the principal and vice-principal at the John F. Kennedy Adult Education Centre get it. Big Time!

And they are doing their level best to make sure that the 120 or so students, ranging in age from 16 to 45, who are currently taking math as part of their studies toward a high school diploma get it as well.

The students taking math here are part of a community that includes up to 600 students (both night and day) taking various levels of courses at the JFKAEC. Students shooting for a high school diploma are generally divided into three groups: Immigrants, “non-traditional learners” and students who are “upskilling,” (taking specific courses they need to get into a CEGEP).



Regardless of their differences, it appears they all caught some crucial breaks. “I would describe mathematics as a language,” said Vice-Principal Mauro Corneli. “Algebra is just learning a certain type of syntax. I always tell my students that, in fact, mathematics is an easier language than English or any other natural language. The syntax is simpler, the language is more precise. Yeah, it does cause anxiety and a lot of other associated learning behaviour challenges and that is the thing that a lot of our teachers are really directing and focusing their attention on...it’s not necessarily struggling with the content specifically, but the learning behaviours that come with learning math.”

Adult Education students learn math with the modular approach and not one end-of-the-year final exam. A nine-month course can be reduced to three months. “They will do a section of the program, do a pre-test, a practice test, then they will do an exam on that one section. If they pass, they go on to the next module,” Principal Elizabeth Lagodich explained.

While the students may come from many different backgrounds and circumstances, most—if not all—are seeking a second chance, after not fitting into their previous traditional education models for varying reasons.

When they succeed, the benefits can be heady.

“Mastering math opens doors,” Ms. Lagodich noted. “It opens a lot of doors, not only in terms of opportunities but also in confidence. Students realize, ‘Oh, I’m capable of doing this. I’m smarter than I think I am, than I thought I was.’”

So in the end, what’s the point of learning math in an age when the proper answer can be supplied by a store-bought device?

“It comes back to those analytical skills,” said Mr. Corneli. “That’s what’s really, really important. That’s what you really want to be training. What I tell my students...when they ask why we can’t just calculate something using a calculator, I tell them again, ‘if you are obsessed with the result, or the answer, you have a tendency to think that way. But if you are focused on the process, which is what we’re focused on, you get the sense that someone programmed that calculator, right? We want to figure out how that stuff works cause that’s the interesting stuff.’ And, yeah, most students see that, they recognize this.”

John F. Kennedy Adult Education Centre is located at 3030 Villieray.

For more information call 514-374-2888 or log on to www.jfkac.ca

Best Ramen

1. Yokato Yokabai
2. Kinton Ramen
3. Tsukuyomi
4. Umami
5. Misoya

Best Salad

1. Mandy's
2. Aux Vivres
3. LIV
4. Falafel St. Jacques
5. Abe & Mary's

Best Shish Taouk

1. Boustan
2. Amir
3. Sumac
4. Basha
5. Shawarmaz

Best Sushi

1. Momo
2. Park
3. Jun I
4. Maiko
5. Boîte Geisha

Best Bakery

1. Le Toledo
2. Automne
3. Guillaume
4. Les Co'Pains d'abord
5. Hof Kelsten

Best Ribs

1. Bâton Rouge
2. Bar B Barn (RIP)
3. Scores
4. Le Boucan
5. Côte St-Luc BBQ

Best Sandwich

1. Bossa
2. Clarke
3. Bocado
4. Capitaine Sandwich
5. Aux Vivres

Best Smoked Meat

1. Schwartz's Deli
2. Smoke Meat Pete
3. Dunn's Famous
4. Snowdon Deli
5. Lester's Deli

Best Taco

1. Tacos Frida
2. Tacos Victor
3. La Capital Tacos
4. El Rey del Taco
5. Escondite

Best Café (for ambiance)

1. Café Olimpico
2. Biblio Café
3. Café Reine Garçon
4. Myriade
5. Dépanneur Café

Best Rotisserie Chicken

1. Chalet Bar-B-Q
2. Ma Poule Mouillée
3. Coco Rico
4. Côte St-Luc BBQ
5. Romados

Best Seafood

1. Lucille's Oyster Dive
2. Estiatorio Milos
3. La Sirène de la Mer
4. Vargas
5. Maestro SVP

Best Steak

1. Gibby's
2. Moishes
3. The Keg
4. 40 West
5. L'Express

Best Vegetarian/ Vegan

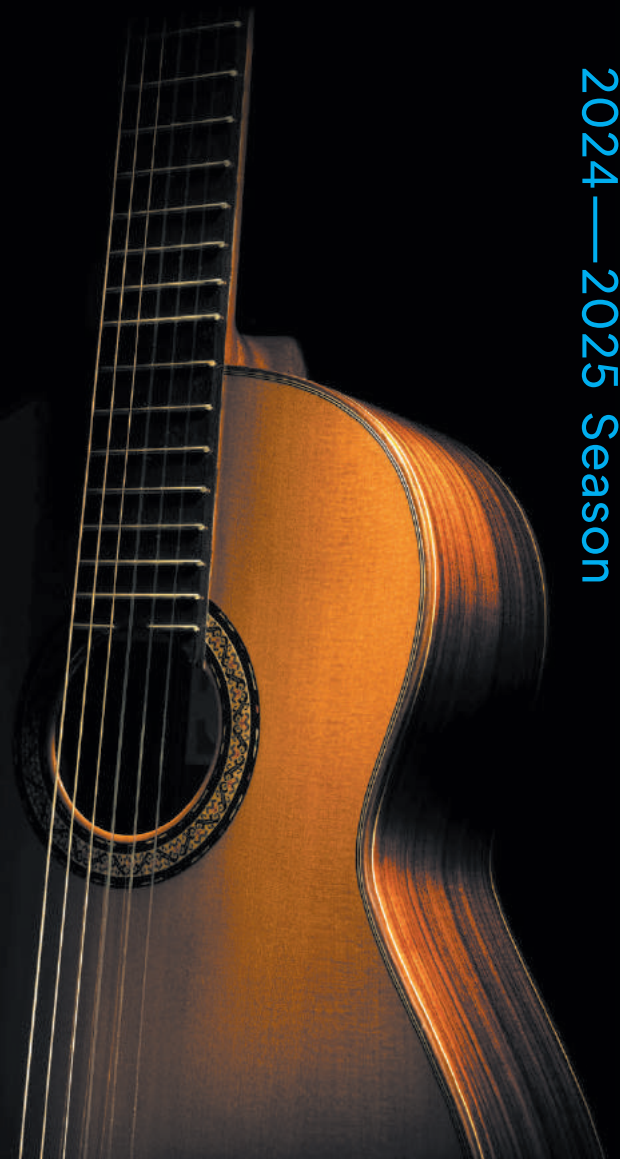
1. Aux Vivres
2. Momo
3. Chu Chai
4. Hello 123
5. Mandy's

Best Coffee (for coffee)

1. Café Olimpico
2. Myriade
3. Dispatch
4. Café Kuya
5. Pista

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Best Ice Cream

1. Iconoglace
2. Kem Coba
3. Ca Lem
4. Dalla Rose
5. Le Patio Bar Laitier

Best Grocery Store

1. Supermarché PA
2. Segal's
3. IGA
4. Maxi
5. Esposito

Best Health Food Store

1. Les Marchés TAU
2. Branche d'Olivier
3. Rachelle Béry
4. Avril
5. Allons Vert

Best Chocolate/Sweets

1. Chocolats de Chloé
2. Lecavalier Petrone
3. État de Choc
4. Chocolats Favoris
5. Sweet Hart Desserts

Best Produce Store

1. Jean-Talon Market
2. Sami Fruits
3. Supermarché PA
4. Segal's
5. Fruiterie Tsikinis

Best Fishmonger

1. Poissonnerie Falero
2. Poissonnerie La Mer
3. Poissonnerie Sami
4. Poissonnerie Shamrock Fish
5. Étoile Waldman

Best Teahouse

1. Cardinal Tea Room
2. Thésaurus Thérarium
3. Camellia Sinensis
4. Maison de Thé Cha Noir
5. Plentea

Best Fromagerie

1. Fromagerie Hamel
2. Fromagerie Atwater
3. Fromagerie Copette & Cie
4. Yannick Fromagerie Noir
5. Fromagerie Anne et frères

Best Butcher

1. Chez Vito
2. Pascal le Boucher
3. Mc Cormack Meats
4. Zinman
5. Le Maître Boucher

Best Organic Food Store

1. Les Marchés TAU
2. PA Nature
3. Avril
4. Rachelle Béry
5. Branche d'Olivier

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Resto Wrongs

BY CLAY SANDHU

We're back at it again with another edition of Resto Wrongs, the segment of the Best of MTL readers poll where I let you know where you messed up in your restaurant voting.

But before I dive into this year's results, I want to begin with a disclaimer: like what you like. I hope I can convince you to expand your horizons a bit, but if the same old spots really do it for you, then keep on keeping on, I guess.

As is becoming tradition, I want to start on a positive note. This year's results are actually quite good, with many quality restaurants cracking the top 5. The Best Chef category is stacked with the usual characters, although Johnny Hamilton from Keela is again somewhat of an unexpected addition. Danny Smiles remains the reigning champ and his newest project Double's nabbed the top spot for Best New Restaurant. That's perhaps a bit of a tough break for Marc-Olivier Frappier of Vin Mon Lapin who, last year, had his restaurant ranked #1 in all of Canada. In any case, both are excellent.

Buboy is a standout on the list, too. Ranking in both Best New Restaurant and Restaurant With the Best Vibe, I think we're really in the middle of a Filipino wave — something we should all be excited about. Veganism, which has been the top new food trend for some years, was finally dethroned by none other than the humble smash burger.

I was also pleased to see that l'Express, Leméac and Bistro la Franquette were voted the top 3 Best French Restaurants. All are excellent. Also, shoutout to Tavern on the Square for grabbing the top spot for Best Mac n' Cheese. If you haven't had it, go.

On to the negatives. This time around, it's about the omissions. No love shown for HENI or Lulu Épicerie? In my opinion, these are two of the best and most interesting additions to Saint-Henri. Parapluie, Lou's, la Marelle and Ohayo Café are all excellent new restaurants — none even gets a mention. I've been shouting this from the rooftops, but Mont Brise in Sainte-Anne-de-Bellvue should be considered one of the top 3 best Japanese restaurants in the city, as should Kitano Shokudo.

How neither of them are listed is beyond me. Mange Dans Mon Hood should have won Best Burger (although I think Lou's actually deserves it) and the best soup dumplings by far can be found at Fu Chun. The Best Fries category is a disaster, with McDonald's being the only spot on this list with a passable fry (sorry Patati Patata). The correct answer is Larrys (for a crispy but hefty fry), Leméac for a perfect *frites*, Mange Dans Mon Hood for a fully loaded fry and the Gibeau Orange Julep for a classic *casse-croûte* fry.

Ending on a better note, there are plenty of great spots and quality recommendations here. But there are also a bunch of



stinkers — always the same spots that get voted in year after year but that I doubt are actually visited. It's alright for the power rankings to switch up over time. Institutions sometimes crumble and new places will fill the gap — often eclipsing what came before. Get off the beaten path a bit, don't necessarily subscribe to the status quo and allow for something new and unexpected to surprise and delight you. And, if you're unsure where to go, read the Top 25 Montreal Restaurants list that I regularly put together at cultmtl.com. It's not definitive by any means, but it's a list of great spots that I personally love.

Until next year, *bon ap'!*



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Marie Baranova

BY SAVANNAH STEWART

Festival TransAmériques has been described as North America's largest performing arts festival, and this year's lineup reflects that statement of grandeur.

From May 22 to June 5, 20 works of dance and theatre from here and abroad will be presented, bringing Montreal audiences the best in avant-garde, trope-smashing performance art. And festivalgoers under 30 can take advantage of some affordable rates offered for many shows.

Ahead of this 18th edition of the festival, *Cult MTL* sat down with Martine Dennewald, co-artistic director of the 2024 season alongside Jessie Mill, to discuss the highlights.

يما ادهتور امك – DU TEMPS OÙ MA MÈRE RACONTAIT

Opening the festival is *Du temps où ma mère racontait*, a personal piece of theatre, song and dance by Ali Chahrour of Lebanon.

Recounting two true family stories, spoken in Arabic with English and French subtitles, Chahrour's work puts motherly love in the spotlight. The audience watches on as one mother loses her son, and another saves her son. The result is a memory play that epitomizes despair and points towards hope — something desperately needed at a time of rising conflict in the Middle East, as the world watches the death toll in Gaza grow ever higher. The decision to open the festival with *Du temps où ma mère racontait* is inherently a statement.

"Obviously, the piece is rooted in a specific region of the world, and having that show at the beginning of the festival is important to us," Dennewald says. "It's really about love, and loss."

At Monument-National Salle Ludger-Duvernay (1182 St-Laurent), May 22–24

PROPHÉTIQUE (ON EST DÉJÀ NÉ.ES)

Nadia Beugré's piece features six trans performers hailing from Abidjan, Ivory Coast.

"It's a super lively show that addresses the most

intimate issues in these performers' lives — political and emancipatory and liberatory issues," says Dennewald.

Set in a hair salon where the characters work, these larger-than-life personas vacillate between dancing with joy and condemning their oppression, crying out with humour and heartache. Incorporating voguing and traditional dance from Abidjan, the show is complete with its own onstage MC Kevin Kero, who will also be DJing at one of FTA's famous parties.

"[It's] a nice example of how many shows at FTA really touch something quite intimate about their performers' lives or about current social issues," says Dennewald. "The characters are super lively, irreverent, bold. And really beautiful to watch."

At Monument-National's Salle Ludger-Duvernay (1182 St-Laurent), May 28-30

UNARMoured

Montreal-based choreographer Clara Furey's work *UNARMoured* will premiere at the festival, bringing to the stage four dancers including Furey herself in this exploration of free, unashamed, uninhibited sexuality.

"It's going to be about 'cosmic eroticism,' those are the choreographer's words," says Dennewald. "An idea that maybe desire in our culture is very much linked to norms, behaviours, relationships, pornography even, and that there is this erotic force within us that goes so far beyond all of these classifications. Maybe dance, choreography, arts, is a way to sort of free up that energy."

The piece features music composed by the choreographer's brother Thomas Furey, better known by his artist name Twin Rising.

At Usine C (1345, Lalonde), May 29 and 30

WEATHERING

In *Weathering*, all that remains of humanity are the 10 bodies balancing precariously on a turning platform mattress taking centre stage. Like a living sculpture, the performers cling onto each other and contort as if bracing against the inevitability of their end.

American choreographer Faye Driscoll just won an Obie Award with this piece, a distinction which Dennewald says is further proof that it's high time Driscoll's work is introduced to Montreal audiences.

"Faye works with their bodies," she says, "but also with sounds and scents and liquids, and even the breath of these performers in order to create her piece."

Though it's an open-ended performance that could be contextualized in many different ways, Dennewald highlights its roots in a period of global uncertainty.

"Whatever haunts us as humanity right now, maybe the climate crisis or this feeling of being at the edge of something, trembling at a threshold, whatever haunts us is really in there," she says. "It's really something — you'll never see anything like it."

At Usine C (1345 Lalonde), June 3–5

FTA PLAYGROUNDS

In addition to presenting dance and theatre that pushes boundaries and challenges conventions, FTA's mission is also to create spaces for collaborative reflection and learning. That's where the FTA Playgrounds come in: a program of discussions, panels and workshops, the largest of which being the yearly Decolonial Ecology Day.

"This is a whole day where we get Indigenous artists and thinkers, and some non-Indigenous as well, to think about the intersection of the climate crisis and the colonial state of the world, and how those are linked, what the devastating effects of that are," Dennewald explains.

This year's focus is on forests, as they appear in many of the shows in the festival's 18th edition.

"A number of the subjects that these artists address are very present in the playground," Dennewald says. "It's a great opportunity for the audience to meet the artists to sort of have discussions with them and also walk up to them and ask their questions about their work."

All in all, Dennewald hopes that festivalgoers feel a renewed sense of solidarity in fighting against injustice.

"I hope they feel a sense that we're in this together, and that together, we can really make a difference," she says.

"That's what theatre is. We walk into the theatre as individual human beings and when we leave the theatre, we've made it together. And that's how theatre federates people, brings people together. It's one of the important missions of the festival."

→ For more, please visit fta.ca.

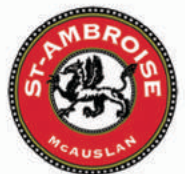


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Factory Floor ^{UK}

Film Scores for No One:

a Patrick Watson project ^{CA/QC}

Jacques ^{FR}

Jacques Greene & Nosaj Thing ^{CA/QC+US}

Kara-Lis Coverdale ^{CA}

Kode9 ^{UK}

Korea Town Acid ^{KR/CA}

Lamin Fofana ^{US}

Malibu ^{FR}

Marie Davidson ^{CA/QC}

Mathew Jonson ^{CA}

Meuko! Meuko! & NONEYE ^{TW}

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Piezo ^{IT}

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