



Mid-November reviews  
and events to come

## Description

# Some mid-month shows appearing on the local scene

By **Byron Toben**

## Theatre

NOVEMBER 14

*Ireland Meets Quebec in Words and Music* was presented by **Bloomsday Montréal** at the **Wheel Club** as part of its interim events to keep in the public mind before its annual celebration in and around June 16. (This interim practice is common with our other festivals like the Jazz, Just for Laughs comedy and Blue Metropolis literary events.)

Moderated by Bloomsday Montréal artistic director **Kathleen Fee**, this event was built around readings from **Suzanne Aubrey's** now nine-volume bestseller saga series *Fanette*, which chronicles an Irish family fleeing the great hunger in coffin ships to Canada and the USA. Tribulations, including rotten food, seasickness, vomiting, onboard typhoid and deaths, are depicted. Joining Ms. Aubrey in her French readings was her trilingual (English, French and Gaelic) translator, **Martina Branahan**, reading in English.



Irish arriving in Canada – Image: Grosse Île and the Irish Memorial National Historic Site

Initial safety in Quebec was not easy but perseverance and spirit eventually prevailed for many as they worked their way up from beggary to a sort of Bourgeoisie. Augmenting these dramatic readings by Ms. Aubrey (a graduate of the National Theatre School as well as being the current head of UNEQ, the Quebec Union of writers) and Ms. Branahan, (editor in chief of *Nuacht*, the community newsletter of the Saint Patrick Society), was the musical duo **The Swindlers**, comprised of **Jonathan Moorman** on fiddle and **Sean Dagher** on guitar and both on vocals at appropriate intervals.

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After the show, brief comments were made by the co-founder of Bloomsday Montréal, **David Schurman**, and current president **Kevin Wright**.

For a **free streaming** of the event go to [youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com)

CONTINUING UNTIL NOVEMBER 21

**Hudson Village Theatre** presents **The Bench**. A satirical comedy by **Keir McAllister** and directed by **Clint Ward**, it stars **John Elliott** and **Steve Walters**, both well known to Lakeshore Community audiences. Tickets are \$25.

[villagetheatre.ca](https://www.villagetheatre.ca)



All I Want for Christmas – Image: Andre?e Lanthier

CONTINUING UNTIL DECEMBER 5

**Centaur Theatre** presents *All I Want for Christmas* by **Rebecca Northan**, who also directs. Centaur audiences will remember her hit show, *Blind Date*, from the 2019 season. This one features an elf in Santa's workshop when things go wrong on December 23. Tickets range from \$32 to \$60.

[centaurtheatre.com](http://centaurtheatre.com)

NOVEMBER 19 TO 21

**Théâtre MainLine** presents *Jesus Hopped the "A" Train*. Set in Rikers prison in NYC, this play by **Stephen Adly Guirgis** and directed by **Rahul Gandhi** features five actors on murderer's row. It's 2 hours long, including one intermission. Tickets are \$20.

[mainlinetheatre.ca](http://mainlinetheatre.ca)

## Film

CONTINUING UNTIL NOVEMBER 21

**Cinemanía**, this hugely popular annual festival of French films with English subtitles, has finished its in-person showings but the bulk of its selections are still available by streaming until November 21. Here are reviews of two of its selections by **Faith Langston**.

[festivalcinemanía.com](http://festivalcinemanía.com)

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## La Place d'une autre or A Secret Name

In 2021, identity theft is unscrupulous but impersonal, a covert transaction made for financial gain. Though the stealing of another character's name and background is key to the plot of *La Place d'une autre* or *Secret Name*

, identity theft in this movie touches on different issues – questions of entitlement and social injustice.

‘Can taking over another person’s identity be justified as a means of survival? The answers are found in George’s skilful, fresh treatment of this subject.’

The themes for this superbly acted film are drawn from a book entitled *The New Magdalene*, written in 1873(!) by the then-popular British novelist **Wilkie Collins**. Director **Aurelia Georges** has astutely moved the time frame of the story forward to World War 1. It is 1914 and Nelie (**Lyna Khoudri**) has escaped her life of poverty and become a nurse’s auxiliary on the wartime front. When Rose (**Maud Wyler**), a young woman from a well-established family seemingly dies, Nelie takes over her identity. Can taking over another person’s identity be justified as a means of survival? The answers are found in George’s skilful, fresh treatment of this subject.



Frame from Ibrahim

## Ibrahim

*Ibrahim* (released in 2020) was **Samir Guesmi**’s directorial debut. Its official selection at Cannes for best movie and best director was well deserved. Conceived as a tribute to his father, Samir Guesmi together with **Rosa Attab**, **Camille Lugan**, and **Sylvie Verheyde** have crafted a moving but realistic portrayal of a father-son relationship.

‘*Ibrahim*... was Samir Guesmi’s directorial debut. Its official selection at Cannes for best movie and best director was well deserved.’



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Ibrahim (**Abdel Bendaher**) is a young man torn between his father and the delinquent world of his contemporary, Achille (**Rabah Nait Oufella**). His friend's shady world of risky dealings and plentiful but wrongfully gained money contrasts with the deteriorating financial circumstances experienced by Ibrahim's father. Though Ahmed (played by Samir Guesmi) sometimes deals with his son harshly, we sense that a deeply felt affection between the two exists. Finally, it is forgiveness which liberates the love in this difficult relationship.

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## Music

NOVEMBER 13

The **Mary Ann Lacey Quartet** played indoors at the spacious **La Petite Marche**, free of charge (pass the hat contributions). This pitch-perfect singer recalls the great standards from the 30s, 40s and 50s, with some in French and even Spanish sprinkled in.

Prolific Jazz drummer **Jim Doxas** was featured at the **Upstairs Jazz Bar and Grill**.

And also on November 13, pianist **Felix Stussi's** two groups, **Auguste Quintet** and **Jazzlab Orchestra**, launched two new albums, *Exacta Cosma*, and the unusually named *Loguslabusmusikus* at Gesu hall.



Felix Stussi – Image: courtesy of Felixstussi.com

NOVEMBER 14



The **Honeysuckle Sisters** harmonized at the CAS (Centre des Arts Stanstead). Their ensemble singing, some say, recalls the Andrews Sisters of days of yore.

NOVEMBER 18

Singer **Mira Choquette** performed at the **Upstairs Jazz Bar and Grill**.

NOVEMBER 19

Juno recipient singer **Dawn Tyler Watson** performs at the **Upstairs Jazz Bar and Grill**. \$16.50 plus tax.

[upstairsjazz.com](http://upstairsjazz.com)

Feature image: frame from *La Place d'une autre*

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**Byron Toben**, a past president of *The Montreal Press Club*, has been *WestmountMag.ca*'s theatre reviewer since July 2015. Previously, he wrote for since terminated web sites *Rover Arts* and *Charlebois Post*, print weekly *The Downtowner* and print monthly *The Senior Times*. He also is an expert consultant on U.S. work permits for Canadians.

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