



Mid-December brings
Holiday entertainment

Description

Four cheerful musical events and one brooding drama

By **Byron Toben**

December 10, 2021

More cheerful than Scrooge's ghosts are these four visitations of the recent past, present and near future musical events in mid-December.

Recent past

The eight days of Chanukah, being based on a lunar calendar, shift their dates, thus sometimes edging or overlapping Christmas. This year, they ran from November 29 to December 6. On the evening of December 5, the annual ***Lyrics and Latkes*** took place in the **Segal Centre** studio, both live and streamed.

Narrated by **Bronna Levy**, **Mikey Samra** and **Jodi Lackman**, it featured 21 songs mostly in Yiddish with some Hebrew and English. Singers in addition to the three narrators, included **Sam Stein** and **Aron Gonshor** (both long-time stalwarts of the Dora Wasserman Yiddish Theatre), **Chana Alper-Orenstein**, **Daisy Sigal** and **David Peterman**.

I particularly enjoyed the translation into Yiddish by Aron Gonshor and Edit Kuper of Alexander's Ragtime Band, Irving Berlin's first big hit here sung by Sam Stein and Daisy Sigal.

While most songs were classic Yiddish tunes on such subjects as lights, soup, wine, hope, faith and dreidels, I particularly enjoyed the translation into Yiddish by Aron Gonshor and **Edit Kuper** of *Alexander's Ragtime Band*, Irving Berlin's first big hit here sung by Sam Stein and Daisy Sigal.

Closing this songfest was a solo by **Bronna Levy** of *Those Were The Days* in English, French and Yiddish.

Not having access to any music from this year's Lyrics and Latkes, here is a more contemporary video from **The Manhattan Jewish Experience** parody **West Side Chanukah Story**.

The present

December 11 at 7 pm

MARY ANN LACEY QUINTET

Jazz singer **Mary Ann Lacey** performs **every second Saturday of the month** at the latest hot spot, the spacious **La Petite Marche** pub at 5035 St-Denis, opposite the National Theatre School. Her style resonates with the classic styles of the 1930s, 40s and 50s, such as Doris Day, Anita O'Day, Julie London and Sheila Jordan, with whom she studied. The band features harmonica, bass, drums and piano.



Mary Ann Lacey performing – Image: courtesy of Mary Ann Lacey

No minimum, no cover. Pass the hat donations. Full COVID protocols.

She also appears here on the **last Thursday of the month** in a stripped-down 5 pm version.

lapetitemarche.ca

December 12 at 2 pm

JENNIFER GASOI HOLIDAY CONCERT

An afternoon delight as **Jennifer Gasoi** sings and dances at 2 pm at the **Segal Centre**. She is a 2014 Grammy award winner and a two-time Juno nominee. Choice of in-person (\$15 adults, \$5 children) or streamed (\$10). The show lasts two hours and is designed to appeal to children and adults alike.

segalcentre.org



Jennifer Gasoi with Chad Linsley on keyboard – Image: courtesy of the Cummings Centre

The near future

December 16 to 19

CANDLELIGHT CHRISTMAS TOGETHER AGAIN!

Two of my greatest pleasures over the past years have been reviewing the **Montreal Lyric Theatre Singers'** annual concerts – Jazz in June and Christmas in December. While the electricity of in-person viewing has been abated during the pandemic, one benefit of streaming has been that a much wider, indeed worldwide audience, can now enjoy the shows on [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com) or [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com).

A separate recent [WestmountMag article](#) describes this concert in greater length. As a reminder, it is free on December 16 and 17 at 7:30 pm and on December 18 and 19 at 4:30 pm (both are Eastern time zones). After that, it continues on demand throughout the Holidays.

thelyrictheatre.ca



Candlelight Christmas with the Lyric Theatre Singers – Image: Tam Truong

One brooding drama

December 13-14 and 18-19

ANTIOCH

Talisman Theatre, founded in 2005 by **Lynn Paquette** and **Emma Tibaldo**, who had first met while both attended the National Theatre School, has been dedicated to bringing French-language Quebec plays to English Audiences. This practice continues with the latest, ***Antioch***, which is a riff on Sophocles' *Antigone*.





Antioch – Image: courtesy of Talisman Theatre

I have seen various versions of that play a number of times. Brecht had a Germanic tone to it and Anouilh, a Gallic one. Lesser-known local playwrights have played with it in Montreal and Toronto. One source has dubbed Antigone (daughter of Oedipus) the “most pissed off woman in theatrical literature.”

The Talisman version was written by **Sarah Berthiaume** and translated into English by **Iris Cronin**. Set in modern times on the border of Syria. A mother and daughter agonize over intergenerational communication, connection and acceptance.

All this is done as an “enhanced” reading and it’s free (donations welcome). After I watch it, I will attempt to channel the ghost of Sophocles and see what he makes of all this.

talisman-theatre.com

Feature image: Bob Bachelor leading the Lyric Theatre Singers, by Tam Truong

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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.

Hatley



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