



## Byron's Fringe Picks Sight Unseen 2022

### Description

# A look at some promising St-Ambroise Montreal Fringe Festival shows

By **Byron Toben**

June 13, 2022

I have been covering the **Montreal Fringe theatre festival** since its inception for various print or digital outlets. In recent years, I have produced my **Top Picks, Sight Unseen** feature at the start of the festival, based on my experience and the promotional literature sent by the companies attending, with generally good results.

This year is a difficult one, what with the two-year delay due to COVID-19 and the absence of many tried and true “regulars” with a local track record. As before, I am limiting my selection to English-language shows, with one exception. There are many excellent French language shows that I often see and enjoy but do not feel competent to review. Same for many non-verbal dance shows.

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Ticket prices vary a bit depending on the length of the performance. Many individual tickets are \$12.50 with a \$2,75 surcharge for taxes and service. The best deal is to purchase one or more of the special cards – a “Ménage à trois” (3 shows for \$39), a “Gold” (6 for \$74 ), a “Platinum” (10 for \$119) and a “Carte Blanche” (all shows for \$325).

And now, for the 2022 Sight Unseen Picks...

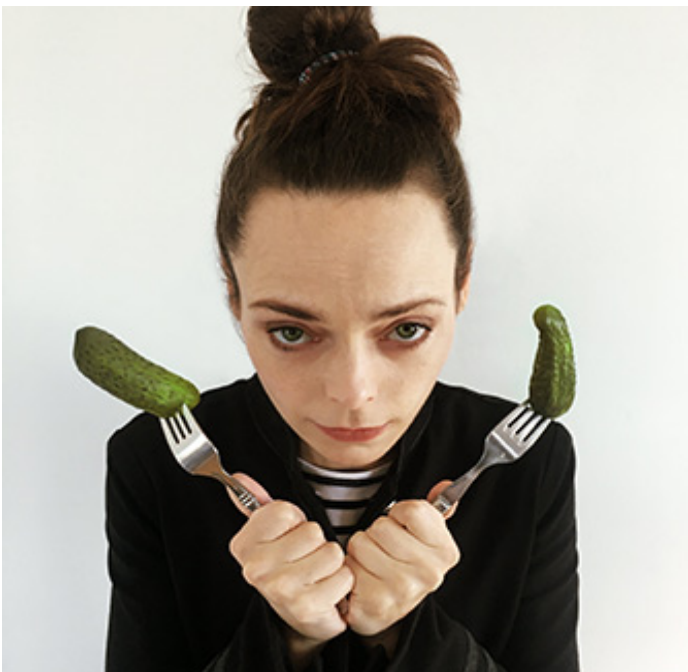


Jem Rolls

## The Walk in the Snow

Written and performed by **Jem Rolls**. This fringe stalwart from England has lived around the world (including a stay in Canada) and has made a career out of his rapid-fire, sardonic informative talks. Here, he discusses the real-life story of nuclear physicist **Lise Meitner** who, taking a walk in the snow in Sweden with her scientist nephew, solved the practical problems of unleashing nuclear energy that Einstein had set the stage for. (Venue 8, 75 minutes)

## Cornichon



Nisha Coleman

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A story told in French by Fringe English language star **Nisha Coleman**. This sometimes waif-like gal has won many fans, and I'm unabashedly one of them. Don't miss even if your French is only basic. (Venue 2, 60 minutes)

## Josephine

Visiting from Florida, this show has won twenty International awards. It tells the true story of **Josephine Baker**, the world's first international Afro-American dancing star who had to go to 1920s Paris to be properly recognized. Another don't miss experience, I predict. (Venue 5, 75 minutes)

## Je demeure en Montréal

Visiting from California is Brooklyn-raised **Murray Meyer**, who once lived in Montreal and now is both a lawyer and a comedian in the golden state. Here, he reflects on his Montreal days where he was involved with Judaism and Zionism, smoked meat and pot, love and nightlife but, alas, flunking French. Is this show not tailor-made for a Montreal audience, or what? (Venue 2, 45 minutes)

## Adam and Eve



Josephine

The story of the first couple has captivated retelling over the eons, serious stuff from the Bible to Milton, and comedic from G. Bernard Shaw to Mark Twain. It's timeless and great for apple sales. (Venue 7, 60 minutes)

## Midsummer Bushwa

This show caught my eye as it purports to be a bilingual multi-disciplinary performance loosely based on **Shakespeare's *Midsummer's Night Dream***. Even if "loosely" proves to be the operative word, it's good marketing to hitch your wagon to a famous commodity or two (worked back when all-time Fringe Star **Rick Miller** blended Mac Beth and the Simpsons into *Mac Homer*). Seems worth a look-see. (Venue 1, 75 minutes )

## Niggas in Pontréal

Why is blackface a thing? **Niggas in Pontréal** is a court-based play that questions three accused of blackface. Based on the true realities of the consistent dehumanization of black folks, this new work is ready to disrupt FringeMTL. Using humour, art, song, and dance, this cast of five Black artists investigates while also practising the care for the black psyche. (Venue 5, 60 minutes)

## What About Albert?



Niggas in Pontreal

Billed as an absurdist comedy inspired by **Samuel Beckett's *Waiting For Godot***. Here, the two tramps are renamed Pick and Pod. How do you do an absurdist play modelled on another absurdist play? Perhaps it is more a parody? Ah, words, words. Let's check it out. (Venue 3, 60 minutes)

## The Captain

A California group tells the true story of the final voyage of the Canadian naval officer who claimed much of the eastern Arctic for Canada (Venue 7, 50 minutes )

## Down the Rabbit Hole

This comedy is billed as "Intricacies of the conspirator mind." What could be more topical today with January 6 hearings, electoral vote juggling and vaccination questioning? (Venue 6, 40 minutes)



**St-Ambroise Montreal Fringe Festival** shows run **until June 19**.

514 849FEST

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

*Images: courtesy of the St-Ambroise Montreal Fringe Festival*

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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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