



Together again  
for 10 days of Magic!

## Description

# The 16th Montreal Intercultural Storytelling Festival will be held October 22 to 31

The **16th Montreal Intercultural Storytelling Festival**, which will be held **October 22 to 31**, 2021, will offer a rich and inclusive program featuring 50 artists from Quebec, Canada, First Nations, and the world totalling 45 events. « It will be good, after more than a year of isolation and trauma, to be together again to share stories that speak to our common humanity. In the midst of an environmental crisis and deep divisions in civil society, stories can help us listen deeply to others and forge bonds of empathy beyond individual differences,» director **Stéphanie Bénéteau** says.

A rich and inclusive program featuring 50 artists from Quebec, Canada, First Nations, and the world totalling 45 events.

Founded in 1993, the Montreal Intercultural Storytelling Festival is one of the most important oral storytelling events in the world. Every second year, the Festival invites artists from all over the world to share traditional and contemporary storytelling with live audiences.



On the English side, the Festival is featuring two guest artists from English Canada. From British Columbia, **Shayna Jones** is an award-winning professional performance artist specializing in the traditional oral storytelling of African and Afro-Diasporic Folklore. As a professionally trained actor, vocalist, and dancer, Shayna has performed for audiences across Canada.

As a folklorist, Shayna combines her passion for live performance with the in-depth study of Afro-centric folk history, folklore and contemporary experience. Wherever she has gone, she hypnotizes viewers with her interwoven stories, reconstructed from various traditions of the African diaspora. “Discovering, shaping, and sharing tales keeps me steeped in the awareness of our common humanity, and of our deeply threatened need for slowing-down, unplugged, heart-to-heart connection with one another and with the world around us,” says Jones of her work.

‘The Montreal Intercultural Storytelling Festival is one of the most important oral storytelling events in the world.’

From Ottawa, artist **Kim Kilpatrick** will present *Flying in the dark*, an autobiographical account of the life and development of a blind person in a seeing world. With humour, wit, a deep sense of ridicule, and considerable courage, Kim guides her listeners through the experiences of a fiercely independent blind child. Kim enjoys performing for audiences of all ages and sizes and is proud to be an artist with a disability and to promote disability in the arts.



Mike Burns – photo: Angel Montiel

**Mike Burns**, an internationally acclaimed storyteller with roots in County Kerry, is a long-time favourite of the Festival. “I have been telling stories for nigh on 50 years and I have the feeling I may yet come good at it. I got a lazy start, not having to leave the fireplace in my father’s house to hear stories and “seanchas.”

My stories are the stories of Iveragh (South Kerry),” says Mike, with his characteristic humour and Irish lilt. He will be performing in the opening night gala as well as presenting two short films he created with Montréal filmmaker **G. Scott McLeod**.

## Highlights of the English program

### **Generations: Opening Night Gala of the Montreal Intercultural Storytelling Festival**

with Oro Anahory-Librowicz, Mike Burns, Selina Eisenberg, Shayna Jones et Kim Kilpatrick  
**October 23**

The English opening night gala of the Montreal Intercultural Storytelling Festival will celebrate our elders through story and affirm the importance of the connection between generations. The pandemic cast a brutal light on the way our culture treats older people and on the breakdown of the pathways of transmission between the generations. Ranging from stories of African and African diasporic traditions told by Shayna Jones to stories from Morocco, Ireland, Eastern Europe and more, the evening will bring people together to celebrate our elders and trace a way forward towards healing and justice after a year of trauma and isolation. **October 23**, 8 pm., at Maison de la culture Notre-Dame-de-Grâce – Passes available at the [Maison de la culture or https://montreal.ca/evenements/gala-douverture-festival-interculturel-du-conte-de-montreal-17783](https://montreal.ca/evenements/gala-douverture-festival-interculturel-du-conte-de-montreal-17783)

### **FolkPlay: Wisdom Tales of Africa & Her Diaspora**



with Shayna Jones  
**October 24**



Shayna Jones – photo: Carlo Alcos

You never know just what you will get in this lighthearted yet deeply meaningful mix of Afro-diasporic traditional lore. *FolkPlay: Wisdom Tales of Africa & Her Diaspora* is a smorgasbord of wise words, rhythm, song and movement that weaves together humour and play with poignant windows into our humanity. Come prepared to travel deep into a village of mice haunted by a wily feline or find yourself planted in the middle of a contest between the fiercest animals of an African jungle. Audience participation lovingly required!

Packed with suspense, humour, thought-provoking themes and a whole lot of fun, *FolkPlay: Wisdom Tales of Africa & Her Diaspora* is a delight for listeners of all ages. **October 24**, 2 pm. at Victoria Hall. Free admission, reservations required, <https://folkplay-wisdom-tales-of-africa-and-her-diaspora.eventbrite.ca>

### **Grandmama Speak**

with Shayna Jones  
**October 28**

*Grandmama Speak* is a kaleidoscope of Afro-centric folklore and fact, old wives' tales and history. With song, rhythm and fine movement infused throughout the telling, Shayna Jones mesmerizes her listeners with tale upon interlocking tale pieced together from the diverse traditions of the African Diaspora. Love and loss, pride and pain, hambones and redfish take center stage in a show packed with bold vocal and physical dynamism. Listeners will be left laughing, sighing, and lingering over the age-old wisdom of *Grandmama Speak*. At Maison de la culture Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, **October 28**, 8 pm. Passes available <https://montreal.ca/evenements/grandmama-speak-shayna-jones-ficm-17789>

### **The Irishman and The Saga of Murdo MacLeod**



film screening  
October 28

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G Scott MacLeod – photo: Melanie Elliot

The Cinémathèque Québécoise will host a screening of two short animated films that are the product of a collaboration between Irish storyteller **Mike Burns**, film director/ animator/illustrator **G. Scott MacLeod** and The National Film Board of Canada, at 7:30 pm.

A multitasking storyteller, G. Scott MacLeod has been using a myriad of mediums – including film, music and visual arts – for decades. MacLeod first became acquainted with fellow storyteller Mike Burns when he heard Burns speak at an event at Hurley’s Irish Pub in downtown Montreal.

“I was captivated by Mike’s presentation of the storytelling art form and his County Kerry accent,” MacLeod says of his friend and co-creator, who was born in Ireland but now resides in Wilton, Maine.

“As I got to know him, I discovered that he had learned the ancient art of the seanachie, the traditional storyteller of Ireland, as a child from his grandmother. Mike has maintained the custom by performing extensively for more than 40 years in Canada, the U.S. and Europe. Through this work, he has committed hundreds of traditional Irish stories to memory.”

‘These two short films recount the dramatic stories of Irish immigrant experiences in Canada in the 1800s as well as an unlikely alliance with First Nations inhabitants that saved a group of 19th-century Scottish immigrants from certain death.’



MacLeod himself has explored the topic of the Irish diaspora during the Great Famine through his own paintings. As he developed a friendship with Burns, a collaboration became inevitable, and Macleod aimed to adapt Burns' stories to the screen.

These two short films recount the dramatic stories of Irish immigrant experiences in Canada in the 1800s as well as an unlikely alliance with First Nations inhabitants that saved a group of 19th-century Scottish immigrants from certain death. A conversation with the two artists will occur after the screening. Cinémathèque québécoise, salle Fernand-Séguin. Admission \$ 10. Reservations <https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/171267003217>

**Flying in the dark**  
with Kim Kilpatrick  
**October 29**



Kim Kilpatrick – photo : Joan Anderson

*Flying in the Dark* is an autobiographical tale about living and thriving as a blind person in a sighted world. With humour, wit, a deeply felt sense of the ridiculous and considerable courage, **Kim Kilpatrick** guides her listeners through the experiences of a fiercely independent blind child.

She shares her boundless enthusiasm for acquiring the skills she needs to be self-sufficient, chronicling the process of becoming an adult with new potentials opening and new complexities revealed. Is there darkness? Yes, but it comes mainly from others: those who patronize her, who will not accept her competence.

In response, Kim has created *Flying in the Dark* as a deep, funny, but gentle adventure. Through her show, she brings her audiences an evening of insight and entertainment. (Théâtre Sainte-Catherine, **October 29**, 8 pm. Voluntary contribution).



Programming: [festival-conte.qc.ca/en/](https://festival-conte.qc.ca/en/)

Images: Courtesy of Montreal Intercultural Storytelling Festival – Feature image: Carlo Alcos

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The [Montreal Intercultural Storytelling Festival](#) is the biggest event of its kind in Canada and is now recognized throughout the world as a major celebration of oral storytelling. Founder Marc Laberge—an ethnographer, storyteller and writer—had the idea for the festival when he realized how the oral storytelling tradition, which had been so strong in Quebec, was being lost. He firmly believed that “if all the others forms of artistic expression had their own broad public forum, storytelling should have one, too.” [Full program available](#)



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**Date Created**

October 2021