



Some recent reviews and reminders

## Description

# A wide variety of entertainment to liven up the holidays

By **Byron Toben**

Hi, Stay-at-Homers, during this festive though introspective season. And now a quickie review of some recent streamed plays, including reminders of upcoming good stuff!

## Three Sisters

On **December 8**, and extended for a week, the **New York Bedlam Theatre** streamed a modernized version of the Chekov classic. The original cast of eight was cut to four and the siblings used cell phones. Bereft by the recent death of their father, they all dreamed of moving to Moscow from their boring small town in the boonies. Masha, the eldest, bemoaned her marital failure. Olga felt stuck forever as a local teacher. Irina, the youngest, was about to escape by marrying a prosperous though much older military officer. Alas, he was killed in a duel just before they could leave.

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The frustration was heightened by the bossiness of their sister-in-law Natasha, who effectively controlled their house although it was nominally now in the name of their sole brother. Excellent portrayals by **Lauren Modica**, **Jessica Frey**, **Kathryn Tkel** and **Violeta Picayo**. Voluntary donations to a charity.

[bedlam.org](http://bedlam.org)

## Meet Me In St. Louis

On **December 11** (and running **to January 2**), New York's **Irish Repertory Theatre** streamed this adaptation of the



charming musical, which had originated as a movie starring Judy Garland. It includes four sisters, a mother, a father and takes place during the St. Louis World's Fair of 1903. The show managed to merge far-flung performers (no mere head shots here), so there was the effect of all on one or more sets.

[irishrep.org](http://irishrep.org)



The Irish Repertory Theatre performs Meet Me in St. Louis – Image: courtesy of the Irish Repertory Theatre

## Underneath the Lintel

On **December 12 and 13**, the **Segal Centre** teamed with the fine French-language **Théâtre du Nouveau Monde** in what promises to be a productive cross-fertilization of Montréal's two main language cultures. The Segal has long since given space to the Black Theatre Workshop, Teesri Duniya and others, so hopefully, this could be the start of a beautiful friendship. The show, which originated in California and has been seen around the world, had its debut in Montreal in French and now in English with the same team of director and actor.

The one-man show revolves around a Jewish librarian who discovers a book returned after about 100 years. Puzzled about who took it out and who returned it, his research takes him to London, then Bonn and other points further afield. To my mind, sort of a treasure hunt as each destination revealed a clue to the next. Inevitably, the legend of the Wandering Jew seems summoned,

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To some fundamentalists, Jews are destined to forever wander as a punishment for killing Christ. To others, they have wandered due to local laws forbidding them to participate in many occupations A filmed version continues on **December 19 and 20.**

[segalcentre.org](http://segalcentre.org)



Gingold Theatrical Group Super Shaw actors – Image: courtesy of Gingold Theatrical Group

## Super Shaw

On **December 14**, the **Gingold Theatrical Group** streamed, as part of New York's **Stars in the House**, 90 minutes of its assemblage of professional actors vigorously reading monologues taken from **G. Bernard Shaw's 65 plays**. Great fun.

Also, each actor (and host **David Stoller**) contributed quips from the Shaviana collection (I believe only Mark Twain and Oscar Wilde are as witty). One that I often use is, "The problem with communication is the illusion that it has taken place." One that was new to me was, "All the world's economists, laid end to end, could not reach a conclusion."

**Super Shaw** continues **until December 18.**

[gingoldgroup.org](http://gingoldgroup.org)

## Candlelight Concert

Montréal's **Lyric Theatre Singers** stream their annual Christmas concert beginning tonight, **December 17**. Originally scheduled through December 19, it now appears it will be available for the ensuing week as well.



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

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

## 15 Days Of Christmas

The **Hudson Village Theatre** began this series of readings on December 10. The second group of five began December 15 with ***Do You Call That A Christmas Present?*** and continued on December 16 with ***Great Joy***.

Beginning tonight, **December 17**, is ***Simon and The Bear – A Hanukkah Tale***.

On **December 18** is ***If Economists Ran Christmas*** (as printed in the famous magazine *The Economist*.)

On **December 19**, O. Henry's great short story ***Gift of The Magi***.

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

Feature image: frame from *Do You Call That A Christmas Present?*, Hudson Village Theatre

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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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