

Holiday House Party @ Centaur

Featuring McGill Jazz Performance Students
Under the Direction of Jazz Legend Ranee Lee

Dec 5 & 6 at 8pm



Land Acknowledgment

Montreal is an incredible place in which to have the privilege to make theatre. It has such a rich and unique story of its own.

Long before Cartier sailed up the St. Lawrence and encountered a nation of Iroquoian people in a place called Hochelaga, the island that the European settlers chose to call Montreal had been a point of conflict, conference, creativity and exchange since time immemorial for many Indigenous peoples including the Haudenosaunee, Anishinaabeg, Huron-Wendat, and Abénaki Nations. The people of the Kanienkéha:ka Nation — known in English as the Mohawk — are now considered the caretakers of the unceded land and water around Montreal. In their language, this island bears the name of Tiohtià:ke, which means “broken in two,” because of the way the river breaks around it.

It is striking how the Kanienkéha language identifies the island as part of the river because it reminds us that we are all in the flow of a much larger story. This mighty river has for centuries carried people here from all over the world in search of new opportunities and new lives, and the Lachine Rapids that sit just off the western tip of this island have given pause to many of those journeys. The river has made contemporary Montreal into a vibrantly diverse city. We find that diversity inspiring because it is by telling each other our stories that we build bridges between our different cultures and languages.

Centaur Theatre



Kick off the holiday season at the Holiday House Party @ Centaur, featuring the talents of 16 students from McGill's Jazz Performance program, led by the legendary jazz vocalist Ranee Lee herself.

Join us as we reinvent holiday classics with a fresh, jazzy twist!

This homey evening of holiday music is the perfect way to launch the season of lights. For an exclusive 2-night run taking place December 5 and 6, the next generation of jazz artists will transform Centaur into the perfect place to escape the winter weather and enjoy an evening of music and merriment.





Yannick Anctil

MUSICAL DIRECTOR



Yannick Anctil is an accomplished Montreal-based musician specializing in jazz and improvised music. After studying at the Université de Montréal, he made a name for himself as an accompanist, collaborating with numerous artists and bringing a unique touch to each performance. For several years, Yannick has worked closely with Raneé Lee at McGill University, accompanying her students. Over the years, he has developed a singular sound, showing great sensitivity and unique creativity. Renowned for his bold approach, Yannick is always on the lookout for new musical experiences and continues to explore the frontiers of his art through various innovative projects.

Ryan Bennett

DRUMS



Ryan Bennett aims to serve the music as the driving force of the band behind the drumkit. Award winner of the Lou Williamson Award for drummers and currently based in Montréal, he's performed alongside legendary jazz musicians such as Kevin Dean and Sam Kirmayer and strives to put the sound of the band as the top priority. Not only as a drummer but as a musician. Originally from Nanaimo, British Columbia, Ryan comes from a long and growing lineage of jazz musicians from the region including Diana Krall, Ingrid and Christine Jensen. He's performed in many different halls and venues such as Upstairs and Hermann's Jazz Clubs in small jazz groups, chamber ensembles, big bands, and pit bands. He is currently studying at the Schulich School of Music at McGill University in jazz performance.

Sarah Boutin

VOCALIST



Born and raised in Abitibi, Sarah is a jazz vocalist currently pursuing her studies at McGill in the Jazz Performance program. Her interest towards singing and music began as a teenager when she heard Ella Fitzgerald for the first time, who then became her greatest influence. Boutin's bebop and swing inspirations as well as her smooth vocals make her performances a delight to any jazz lover.



Élizabeth Cormier

VOCALIST

Élizabeth Cormier is a young emerging jazz singer, composer and lyricist based in Montréal. She has studied under the wings of great singers such as Gisele Poulin (Cégep Marie-Victorin), Sophie Day, Bohdanna Novak and Ranee Lee (McGill University). Currently completing her bachelor's degree in performance jazz at McGill University and being involved in the jazz world for a few years now, she has been performing as a musician since she was 5 years old and has always pursued her passion for music. Elizabeth brings with her warm and deep voice a playfulness towards rhythm and phrasing that comes directly from the influence of her favorite singers such as Sarah Vaughan and Carmen McRae.



Seraphina Crema Black

VOCALIST

Seraphina Crema Black is a musician and composer from Vancouver who studies vocal jazz and philosophy at McGill University. She has a strong musical theatre and drama background with 10 years of experience. Seraphina is very grateful to have had the opportunity to study with Ranee Lee, Jean-Michel Pilc, and Dan Reynolds. She has also participated in workshops with jazz legend, Charles Tolliver, and prolific gospel composer and arranger, Karen Burke. She enjoys exploring various genres such as Jazz, Latin, Country, R&B, Musical Theatre, and Soul.



Najib Fenaoui

VOCALIST

Najib Fenaoui is a singer who displays a passionate interest in the art of improvisation. He has found his sound in the jazz idiom and has been developing his skill while performing in the Montreal scene ever since 2020. He aims to follow the footsteps of Al Jarreau, Ella Fitzgerald, Bobby McFerrin, Sarah Vaughan, and Stevie Wonder. With a unique sense of phrasing and an inkling for R&B, soul, and gospel, Najib is eager to inject his intricate blend of each style into The Great American Songbook; contributing to the jazz tradition with each joyful performance.





Juno Hamilton

BASS

Juno is a 21-year-old bassist and composer, who's energetic and musical perspective has led them to be an active member of the Canadian jazz scene. Since moving to Montreal in 2021, Juno has been involved in such projects as Kevin Dean and Friends, Reach Quartet, and the Jesse Cahill Trio, and has performed at such venues as Upstairs Jazz Bar (Montreal), Frankie's Jazz Club (Vancouver) and at Mel Lastman Square (Toronto). As a composer, Juno takes great influence from American folk music, and has premiered their works at TU JazzFest and Upstairs Jazz Bar with various ensembles. Juno's goal in their music is to make art that is simple, expressive, and honors the traditions of their heritage and the music they make.



Sarah Leroux

VOCALIST

Sarah Leroux is a singer, composer and lyricist from Quebec City. She started doing music within la Maîtrise des Petits Chanteurs de Québec and did 3 European tours, ten operas and musicals with that ensemble. For the last years, she has been studying with Julie Cimon Racine (Campus-Notre-Dame-de-Foy), Sienna Dahlen, Camille Thurman and Rane Lee (McGill University). Having both classical and jazz backgrounds, she also has a significant interest in improvisation, the multiple textures of music from different cultures, musical theatre and composing. The voices of Blossom Dearie, Nancy Wilson and Betty Carter lend to the purity of her sound and her playfulness with rhythms.



Daniel Marmer

GUITAR

Daniel Marmer's music blends the Black American jazz tradition with contemporary exploration, focusing on collaborative improvisation and emotional storytelling. His performances invite audiences on reflective journeys, using music to process emotions and evoke memories. A 2023 recipient of the Oscar Peterson Jazz Award and finalist in the Fraser MacPherson Jazz Competition, Daniel is celebrated for his empathetic compositions and uplifting presence as a sideman. Originally from Vancouver and now based in Montreal, he has performed alongside mentors like Jodi Proznick, Kevin Dean, and Camille Thurman, as well as McGill guest artists Melissa Aldana and Charles Tolliver. A graduate of McGill's Jazz Performance program, Daniel performed with the McGill Jazz Orchestra 1 and Chamber Jazz 1. His trio and quartet draw inspiration from the fluid arcs of Miles Davis' Second Great Quintet, Wayne Shorter, and contemporary artists like Kenny Wheeler and Immanuel Wilkins.





Jane Mei

PIANO

Jane Mei is a Montreal-based jazz pianist currently studying in Performance at the McGill Schulich School of Music. Currently active in a number of big bands, vocal ensembles and small combos, she has performed for different audiences in settings ranging from senior residences and community centres, all the way to the Montreal Jazz Festival and the renowned Upstairs Jazz Bar and Grill. Regardless of venue and audience, lyricism and engagement always remain at the forefront of Jane's music: while she seeks to connect with her fellow band members with calls and responses, she also emphasizes catching the audience's attention with twists on familiar melodies.



Bogi Orban-Ducos

VOCALIST

Bogi is a versatile jazz musician with classical roots from Hungary – the land of Bartók and Ligeti. She incorporates a diverse range of music, including alternative and folk styles from Budapest. After graduating from high school, she relocated to Montréal to start a degree in classical piano performance at McGill University. During this time, she played piano in a production of the musical Cabaret at the National Theatre School while also serving as a section leader in the choir of Saint Patrick's Basilica. She has been passionate about jazz for a long time and decided to pursue this interest full-time, studying jazz voice performance at McGill for the past two years. Her musical inspirations include great jazz singers like Dianne Reeves or Carmen McRae. Her rich and round alto pairs a warm sound to expressive storytelling.



Maia Prasad

VOCALIST

Maia is a Montreal based jazz vocalist, and songwriter. Coming from a classical background, Maia studied with Johanne Raby, a respected vocal coach and author amongst the French community in Quebec. She is currently pursuing a bachelor's degree in jazz performance at McGill under the instruction of the wonderful Ranee Lee, and has had the opportunity to study with saxophonist/vocalist Camille Thurman. Her influences, such as Sarah Vaughan, Betty Carter, Nina Simone, and Erykah Badu, among others, lend to her warm sound and sense of storytelling. With Maia's blues, soul, and folk influences, you'll find yourself transported into a world of velvety tones and raw feeling.





Dayhana Santos

VOCALIST



Dayhana Santos, a Christian singer from the Dominican Republic, grew up in Abitibi-Témiscamingue before settling in Montreal. Immersed in a French-speaking environment from an early age, she joined the St. Gilbert parish choir at 5, igniting her passion for Gospel singing. Trained in dance, theater, and multiple languages, Dayhana began performing in French, English, Spanish, Italian, and Creole. At 18, she pursued musical theater at L'ETHEM: l'École Supérieure de Comédie Musicale, marking a pivotal step in her artistic journey. In 2003, she joined the Montreal Jubilation Gospel Choir, launching her professional career in evangelical music. Over 16 years, she toured Europe and performed across Canada. After earning a DEC in Jazz singing from Cégep Marie-Victorin in 2019, Dayhana continued her studies in Jazz Performance at McGill University. Today, she serves as a worship leader at MCI Canada and is committed to using her talents and education to serve the evangelical community.

Julian Shively

CELLO



A virtuosic, creative and versatile musician, Julian performs in multiple ensembles throughout Quebec, Ontario and the northeast of the U.S. in jazz and rock while maintaining his proficiency in classical music on both piano and cello. He is also a composer and arranger of music in a variety of genres. Julian has recorded for various independent labels and has appeared in venues such as Bar Ste-Angèle in Quebec City, Upstairs Jazz Bar in Montreal, Studio TD, Montreal as part of the Montreal International Jazz Festival among others.

Brooklyn Wood

VIOLIN



Violinist and composer Brooklyn Wood is 20 years old, and in her 3rd year of undergraduate studies in Music Performance and Composition at McGill University. She is a member of the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra since the 2023 summer season as a substitute violinist, and will be performing with the Orchestre de l'Agora in Montréal. She was featured in CBC's 2022 "30 Hot Canadian classical musicians under the age of 30" and plays jazz violin, as well as fiddle. Brooklyn has received many awards for music performance and composition, including a CMC Barbara Pentland Composition Award, first-place at the BC Arts Provincials and has performed as soloist with several orchestras. Brooklyn was commissioned and made Composer in Residence by Music on Main in 2021.



Ranee Lee

MENTOR



Ranee Lee embodies jazz. Her career has been a relentless pursuit to see where the music would take her, what she could learn, what she could pass on, how she could take new and exciting paths. She accepts challenges and constantly redefines herself. What is indisputable is that she is one of Canada's premiere jazz vocalists.

Lee has lived in Montreal now for over 50 years, moving from New York in 1970. She's released 13 acclaimed albums on the Justin Time label, the newest of which is 2022's *Because You Loved Me*, her radical, innovative interpretations of songs made famous by another Quebec heroine, Celine Dion. She's a Juno Award-winner, a songwriter, an award-winning actress, a celebrated educator, and an author of the children's book *Nana What Do You Say?* inspired by her song of the same title.

Ranee's impressive discography is filled with masterworks: *The Musical, Jazz on Broadway*, being one of them, was a successful marriage of jazz standards and the music of Broadway. In 1994 and again in 1995, Ranee received the Top Canadian Female Jazz Vocalist Award presented by Jazz Report magazine. She has been nominated for several Juno Awards and in 2010 – won the Juno for Vocal Jazz Album of the year for her recording *Ranee Lee Lives Upstairs*. Her performance as Billie Holiday in the play *Lady Day at Emerson's Bar & Grill* won her a Dora Mavor Moore.

Throughout her career Ranee has performed with many jazz notables, including Clark Terry, Bill Mayes, Herb Ellis, Red Mitchell, Milt Hinton, Oliver Jones and Terry Clarke, to name a few. Lee is no stranger to the road; she has toured with her own group in the United States and has played at many prestigious jazz festivals throughout Canada as well as Spain, France, England and Haiti.

For outstanding service to jazz education, at the twenty-first IAJE conference in 1994, Ranee received the International Association of Jazz Educators Award. As an educator, Ranee has been part of the University of Laval faculty in Quebec City and The Schulich School of Music of McGill University faculty for over twenty years. She was appointed as a Member Of The Order Of Canada and in 2007 was given an award for appreciation and contribution to the development of the McGill Jazz Program by the McGill Schulich School of Music.

SET LIST

1. **“A Charlie Brown Christmas”** (Vince Guaraldi; arr. Ryan Bennett)
2. **“Winter Wonderland”** (Felix Bernard, Richard B. Smith; arr. Élizabeth Cormier, Maia Prasad)
3. **“Spring Will Be a Little Late This Year”** (Frank Loesser; arr. Sarah Leroux)
4. **“Winter Song”** (Original) (Yannick Anctil, Maia Prasad)
5. **“I’ve Got My Love to Keep Me Warm/Let It Snow”** – (Irving Berlin/Sammy Cahn, Jule Styne; arr. Sarah Boutin)
6. **“Christmas Time Is Here”** (Vince Guaraldi, Lee Mendelson; arr. Sarah Leroux)
7. **“Wonderful Christmastime”** (Paul McCartney; arr. Seraphina Crema Black)
8. **“The Secret of Christmas”** (Sammy Cahn, Jimmy Van Heusen; arr. Élizabeth Cormier)
9. **“Little Drummer Boy”** (Katherine Kennicott Davis; arr. Kim Burnell)
10. **“The Christmas Song”** (Robert Wells, Mel Tormé; arr. Najib Fenaoui)
11. **“Carol of the Bells”** (Mykola Leontovych, Peter Wilhousky; arr. Bogi Orban-Ducos)
12. **“What Are You Doing New Year’s Eve?”** (Frank Loesser; arr. Najib Fenaoui)
13. **“What Child Is This?”** (Ralph Vaughan Williams, Thomas Hewitt Jones; arr. Rane Lee, Yannick Anctil)



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