

Ten companies with deep roots in Montreal's English-language arts community have reached major anniversaries in 2010-11. On the evening of March 10th, the English-Language Arts Network and le Conseil des arts de Montréal will celebrate their contributions and raise a glass to their continued success.

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Marking Milestones

Atrium of the Maison du Conseil des arts de Montréal (1210 Sherbrooke E.)
March 10, 6-9 p.m., Attendance by invite or request

(MONTREAL) Following a flurry of major national and international prizes to Montreal-based artists like Johanna Skibsrud, Daniel Barrow and Arcade Fire, amidst the critical response to works like *Incendies* and *Funkytown*, the value of Montreal's diversity is turning heads at home and abroad.

It is in this climate, therefore, that ELAN invites you to take a look back at the achievements of ten companies marking milestone anniversaries this year, and join us in celebrating their contributions to making Montreal the "métropole 'cool' et multilingue"* it is today. Together these groups paint a portrait of the city's continued transformation: from strengthening specific communities, to embracing the complexities of the city that Montreal has become.

*La Presse, 15 February 2011

THE COMPANIES:

Black Theatre Workshop (40 years – Theatre)

BTW's story is central to the story of Black theatre in Quebec. Its roots reach back to the late 60s, to the work of Victor Phillips, the Negro Theatre Guild and the Trinidad and Tobago Drama Guild. As Canada's oldest, most established Black theatre company, BTW has been home to some of Canada's most significant Black artists and continues to play a vital role in the creation of a more multicultural theatre arts ecology.

For its 40th anniversary season, BTW paid homage to those who came before with a production at the Centaur of *A Raisin in the Sun*, a play the company first produced in 1979. *Raisin* was the first African American play ever produced on Broadway. It voiced the hopes, wishes and even the despair of the Black Everyman and showed White audiences that his hopes, dreams and hardships were not much different than their own. The season also included Amiri Baraka's *Dutchman*, a searing drama that asked, with defiant intensity, "Is assimilation an acceptable price for inclusion?"

www.blacktheatreworkshop.ca

Geordie Productions (30 years – Theatre)

As one of Canada's leading professional Theatre for Young Audiences companies, Geordie delivers more than 300 performances per season, primarily to schools in Quebec, Ontario and New Brunswick. Geordie has also toured extensively throughout North America - from Ungava Bay to Washington DC - with seminal Canadian plays such as *Billy Bishop Goes to War*, *A Promise is a Promise* and *The Jungle Book*. In addition to mainstage creations and presentations at Montreal's Centaur Theatre, Geordie is also Quebec's only company to tour annually to communities throughout the Eastern Townships, Lower North Shore, Gaspé, Magdalen Islands, Abitibi, Outaouais, and James Bay regions.

www.geordie.ca

Teesri Duniya Theatre (30 years – Theatre)

Teesri Duniya produces socially and politically relevant theatre that supports a multicultural vision of society, promoting interculturalism and theatrical styles based on the cultural experiences of visible minorities. The company produces original professional theatre, publishes the quarterly magazine *alt.theatre: cultural diversity and the stage*, develops new works through its *Fireworks* program, and conducts Theatre and Community programs designed to enhance intercultural interaction and develop creative skills among emerging visible minorities artists.

www.teesriduniyatheatre.com

For more information, press photos or to schedule an interview, please contact:
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Montreal Serai (25 years – Theatre, Magazine)

Initially founded as a touring theatre troupe and arts magazine, by 1992 *Montreal Serai* had evolved into one of Canada's first online magazines of art, culture and politics. Named after the Persian word for a "resting place" for a traveler or caravan, *Serai* publishes quarterly with a mission of "Bringing the margins to the centre," attracting over a quarter million monthly hits.

www.montrealserei.com

Choeur Maha (20 years – Music)

An all-woman choir known for innovative feminist music, high energy performances and a decidedly non-traditional take on choral music, Maha delights with a repertoire spanning Hildegard von Bingen to Hildegard Westerkamp, from Mozart to Madonna. The choir has produced many memorable musical interventions, including guerrilla performances, electro-acoustic experiments and large-scale outdoor sonic choreographies. Consult Maha's website for info about special anniversary events in April and May.

www.choeurmaha.org

Montreal FRINGE Festival (20 years –Multidisciplinary Performing Arts Festival)

A bilingual festival of the performing arts (theatre, dance, music, and more), the Montreal FRINGE is the first in a chain of FRINGE fests that crisscross the country every summer. FRINGEs select shows by lottery and return the full ticket price to the artist, creating an incubator for local talent (such as choreographer Dave St-Pierre or *Funkytown* screenwriter Steve Galluccio) and a platform for powerful and offbeat artists from across the country and around the world. Like its city, the Montreal FRINGE is renowned for its *joie de vivre*, hardworking DIY ethic, late nights and great outdoor music.

www.montrealfringe.ca

The Other Theatre (20 years – Theatre)

A hybrid group that performs in English, French and bilingually, The Other Theatre emphasizes the ensemble as a primary source of inspiration, privileging the physical and the imagistic. From the straight-up to the avant-garde, the company has produced collective creations, installations and text-based theatre that is both visual and thought provoking. The company has performed in theatres, found spaces, galleries and a moving elevator, showcasing the work of playwrights such as Fernando Arrabal, Peter Handke, Heiner Müller, R.W. Fassbinder, Sarah Kane, Kurt Vonnegut, Wallace Shawn and Greg MacArthur – often as Quebec premieres.

www.othertheatre.com

Expozine (10 years – Publishing, Market) & Distroboto (10 years – Multidisciplinary)

Two projects of the bilingual not-for-profit **Arcmtl**. The **Expozine** small press, comic and zine fair is one of the very largest in North America with 300 publishers taking part annually. **Distroboto** is a network of cigarette vending machines converted to sell miniature samples of work in public places by emerging or independent artists, writers, musicians, filmmakers, photographers, etc. The machines are located in various cafés, bars and libraries in Montreal as well as in southern France, and have sold the works of over 700 artists since 2001.

www.expozine.ca, www.distroboto.com, www.arcmtl.org

Pop Montreal (10 years – Music/Multidisciplinary Festival)

A bilingual, grassroots festival created and supported by people who love music, art and live performance. Deeply engaged in the ethic and aesthetics of Montreal's underground music community, POP is where you see the headliners of the future play to their first excited crowds alongside superstars and forgotten legends.

www.popmontreal.com

Porte Parole (10 years – Theatre)

A bilingual company devoted to the creation and production of documentary theatre that turns complex social conflicts (like Monsanto's copyright infringement suit against an organic farmer, or the Concorde overpass collapse) into deeply human stories. Their 7 original creations dive deep into urgent current events, empowering the audience to understand the root causes of social conflicts and inspiring them to play an active role in confronting them.

www.porteparole.org

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For information on the English-Language Arts Network, please visit www.quebec-elan.org