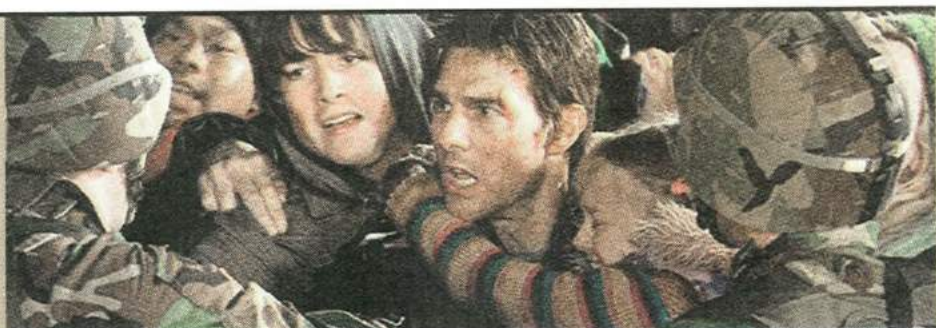


# POP CULTURE

THE GAZETTE | MONTREAL | SATURDAY, JUNE 25, 2005 | SECTION EDITOR: MARK TREMBLAY | 514 987 2560 | mtremblay@thegazette.canwest.com

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Spielberg's *War of the Worlds* is not just a 'scary alien movie.' It's also about the 'American refugee experience,' D8



COURTESY OF ALLIANCE ATLANTIS

It's been 85 years since she was murdered at age 10, but Aurore Gagnon is still a very strong presence in Fortierville, especially as a new film on the case is headed to cinemas across Quebec. Marianne Fortier plays the title role in *Aurore*, set to debut July 8.

'Here we go again,' says Louise Dubé of Fortierville, who fears that a new movie about an infamous case of child abuse in 1920 will bring even more strangers to her front door

## Haunted by Aurore

MARK CARDWELL  
SPECIAL TO THE GAZETTE

**F**ORTIERVILLE, QUE. — Most people would be thrilled if their home was the setting for a movie that could be this summer's blockbuster in la belle province.

Not Louise Dubé. "Here we go again," Dubé said in the kitchen of her farmhouse on the outskirts of this rural village, halfway between Trois Rivières and Quebec City.

It was in this house — in this very room, even — that one of the most infamous cases of child abuse in Canadian history occurred.

The victim was Aurore Gagnon, a farmer's daughter who suffered unimaginable horrors at the hands of her stepmother and father.

The day after her death at the age of 10 on Feb. 12, 1920, an autopsy found 54 wounds on the girl's body.

In a subsequent trial, the injuries were found to be caused by blows from fists, feet, sticks, bars and belts, as well as burns from pokers, matches and a stove. Most were inflicted by the girl's stepmother, Marie-Anne Houde.

Houde was convicted of murder and sentenced to hang. That conviction was later reduced to life imprisonment after Houde gave birth to twins in prison.

Aurore's father, Téléphore Gagnon, was found to have played a marginal



MARK CARDWELL THE GAZETTE

"This is a small place and a lot of people are either related to or know somebody who's related to the Gagnon family," says Roland Baril, 77. Above is the grave of Aurore Gagnon behind the village church.

role in the death. He served five years in prison before returning to live here — and remarrying.

The sadistic nature of the case made headlines across Canada. Over the years, it has inspired a play, five books and a 1952 movie, *La petite Aurore*, l'enfant martyre, which set box-office records in Quebec that were only broken in recent years.

Luc Dionne's remake of that hit is set to open in theatres across Quebec on July 8.

Titled simply *Aurore*, the new movie stars Hélène Bourgeois Leclerc, from the TV series *Les Bougon*, in the role of Houde. Marianne Fortier makes her film debut as Aurore. She

was selected from almost 10,000 candidates for the role of the girl from age 8 to 10. Other well-known Quebec actors in the film include Rémy Girard, Michel Forget and Yves Jacques.

*Aurore* was filmed mostly in Village d'Antan, a historic Lower Canadian village just outside Drummondville.

The film, which was shot over 43 days last fall and in February, has received critical acclaim from a half-dozen pre-release screenings.

That has Dubé worried.

Almost every day in the 30 years that she and her dairy-farmer husband have lived in this house and raised three children, cars carrying curious onlookers have driven slowly by.

Many stop, get out and take pictures. Some, however, come to the front door, knock and ask for a tour.

While much of the abuse Aurore endured took place in the kitchen (the young girl was found to be frequently burned on the wood stove while bound and gagged), Dubé said most people want to see the attic room where Aurore lived and died.

"We never let anybody go there, so don't ask," said Dubé, adding the room is the same today as it was in Aurore's time.

Like her husband, Dubé said she politely but firmly sends all uninvited visitors away.

Please see AURORE, Page D2

## Biggest jazz fête on Earth

Party this huge takes serious organization



JOHN GRIFFIN  
ON JAZZ FESTIVAL

When the Montreal International Jazz Festival throws open the doors on its 20th annual edition next Thursday, it will be shouldering heavy numbers and heavier responsibilities.

About 2 million people are expected to attend 500 concerts, including 100 free outdoor shows, performed by 2,000 artists from 30 countries on 30 stages over 11 days and nights in the very heart of our city.

Starring plagues of locusts or raining reptiles, the high-grip cultural behemoth will generate \$100 million for the local economy including \$40 million in spin-offs for Montreal in tourist spending alone.

Since its modest inception in 1980, the jazz festival has increasingly become the event by which we define our urban moment, and the world defines Montreal.

This is heady stuff. It did not happen on its own.

As the barricades go up around a site that closes the entire Place Des Arts area from Bleury St. to St. Urbain St. and De Maisonneuve Blvd. W to St. Catherine St. W to traffic for the better or worse, for drivers part of two weeks, an army of 2,000 is at work.

It takes into account 500 full-time employees of the notoriously well-oiled festival machinery.

*Spectra*, now one of the largest private cultural providers in Quebec, plus north or 1,700 hired for the duration.

They include executive committees, musicians, directors, governmental go-betweens and over-seeing managers, whose job it is to raise the \$40 million needed to do better than a party that is listed with the Guinness Book of Records as the largest jazz festival on the planet.

It takes programmers, producers, technicians, ticket sellers, scheduling weeks, site co-ordinators, food and beverage experts and portable toilet wranglers.

Please see ORGANIZE, Page D3  
Jazz fest 20 series guide, Page D5

Section 1 in today's Gazette is our Montreal International Jazz Festival guide. It has full listings of the fest's free outdoor shows, a site map and profiles of some prominent performers.



**OPENING**

Stadium seating  
Dolby digital  
Curved floating  
screens

**CINÉMAS GUZZO**

"The show starts at the door"

**Mega-Plex Marché Central 18 901 Blvd. Cremazie W. 514-385-5566**

**JUNE 29TH**

Hollywood cafe  
Kiddy park  
Cine games and  
Bumper cars.



## A black and white photograph of a woman with curly hair, smiling and sitting at a table. Her hands are clasped together on the table. She is wearing a dark, textured sweater and a watch on her left wrist. In the foreground, there is a striped mug and some papers. The background shows a kitchen with a stove, a range hood, and various items on the counter.

CONTINUED FROM D1

Both described the film as "emotional" and "powerful."

"Child abuse is still a big problem today, which is why I think there's continued in-

**Aurore** is scheduled to open in local theatres on Friday, July 8.

One Person Shows

In association with **VIA+**  
VIA Radio/Canada

# TOMMY TIERNAN

## Loose

July 18 to 24, 9:30 PM  
Gazlo Centre de Création  
(514) 790-1245

Following his stand-up comedy performance at last year's Gala, we proudly welcome back this Irish specialist.

## JUDY GOLD

G-D DOESN'T PAY RENT HERE

Opens July 19, 7:30 PM  
Cartier Theatre  
(514) 288-2101

A moving and humorous portrait of what makes a Jewish mother a Jewish mother.

## 3 Blonde Moms

July 21 to 23, 7:00 PM  
Gazlo Centre de Création  
(514) 790-1245

An energetic stand-up show packed full of hysterical material about being a mom, having a mom and much, much more... ah, moms.

Starring stand-up blonde Maryselle Neugebauer, very blonde Anne Neugebauer and dry blonde Helen Neugebauer.

### Packages

#### THE AFFICIONADO

The ultimate package  
• 1 show  
• 1 movie  
• 1 ticket  
• 1 drink  
• 1 drink

3 shows and a movie: \$95.50

#### GIRLS' NIGHT OUT

• 1 show  
• 1 movie  
• 1 ticket  
• 1 drink  
• 1 drink

3 shows and a movie: \$69.50

#### JUST FOR FAMILIES

Family's movie package  
• 1 show  
• 1 movie  
• 1 ticket  
• 1 drink  
• 1 drink

4 tickets for: \$57.50

FOR THESE OR OTHER PACKAGES:  
(514) 845-2322 or [www.hahaha.com](http://www.hahaha.com)

limited quantities, select dates and times only. Taxes included, additional service charges may apply. Subject to change without notice.

### Special Events

#### EVERYBODY LOVES RAYMOND

July 20 & 21, 7:00 PM

Just for laughs takes you inside the Emmy Award-winning minds of TV's funniest team, featuring historical video clips and never-before-heard stories from the smash-hit series!

Join The WRITERS ROOM

#### he's just not that into you

July 20 & 21, 9:30 PM

Is love on Oprah.com more like Sex and the City's consultant and writer, Greg Behndt and his friends, as they tell how the book changed the rules of dating for women everywhere.

#### From "Sex and the City"

July 20 & 21, 9:30 PM

See Sam Raimi and the writers cast perform one of their favorite episodes followed by a lively panel discussion and Q&A. From every ticket sold, \$1.00 will be donated to the Montreal Children's Hospital Foundation.

### Just For Kids

RECOMMENDED FOR KIDS AGES 1-8

#### RALPH'S WORLD

July 21 to 24, various times  
Cartier Theatre  
(514) 288-2101

Come laugh and dream with Ralph as he plays it fairly, keeps it real and keeps it clean with material bound to make him the next star in children's entertainment.

### Prestige Series

#### LE QUATUOR

Music, comedy and theatre in hilarious harmony!

July 12 to 24, 7:00 PM  
Theatre du Nouveau Monde  
(514) 855-8555

### Theatre

SAO presents

## BIGGER THAN JESUS

by Rick Miller and Daniel Brooks

Opens July 12, various times  
Cartier Theatre  
(514) 288-2101

An outrageously funny one-man show starring Montreal's Rick Miller, creator of the critically acclaimed MacMormon.

7 OSCAR AWARDS!

### Club Series

(514) 908-9090

#### THE WISEGUYS

THE ITALIAN STAND-UP COMEDY SHOW

All New Show!

July 20 & 21, 7:00 & 9:30 PM and July 22, 7:00 PM

Evade the Italian within with host Nick DiPuccio and fellow panthers Frank Spadone, John Caporaso, Tracy Esposito and more!

### Bubbling with Slaughter

at Club Soda

July 19, 9:30 PM  
Hosted by Jamie Kennedy

Sam Raimi  
Greg Kinnear  
The Rock  
Adam Carolla  
and more

July 20, 9:30 PM  
Hosted by Jamie Kennedy

Sam Raimi  
Greg Kinnear  
The Rock  
Adam Carolla  
and more

July 21, 9:30 PM  
Hosted by Jamie Kennedy

Sam Raimi  
Greg Kinnear  
The Rock  
Adam Carolla  
and more

July 22, 9:30 PM  
Hosted by Jamie Kennedy

Sam Raimi  
Greg Kinnear  
The Rock  
Adam Carolla  
and more