

The pursuit of truth

Angélique, by Lorena Gale, opens at the Segal Mar. 15

By Pauline Nesbitt
The Suburban

The Black Theatre Workshop has joined forces with Tableau D'Hôte Theatre to present the Quebec premiere of *Angélique*, an award-winning play by the late Lorena Gale, that is based on the true experience of Marie-Joseph Angélique, an 18th century black slave who was publicly executed for allegedly starting a fire that destroyed most of New France, modern-day Old Montreal. The evidence presented at her trial was inconclusive.

The backdrop for this story is the pursuit of truth about Angélique's life from a contemporary perspective, said Mike Payette, its director.

"This production respects all the structures Gale created that embraces various types of artistic and cultural practices and takes what we can identify in the story and has stripped it to the most human, raw levels of interaction, so that all the characters are unapologetic," Payette explained. "It calls for us to be provocative in terms of imagery, staging and how we embrace the use of choreography; either from Indigenous or African traditions, as well as the different styles of music that stem from these experiences."

Jenny Brizard (*Angélique*) said that the play focuses on the last four years of Angélique's life and presents her as a young adult, full of hopes and dreams with a burning desire for freedom. "I lure them [the audience] into her world, so they can understand where she is coming from."

"*Angélique* is not about being timely, it is about being timeless," added Payette.

"The Black Lives Matter movement speaks of the cyclical resonance and relevance of this play that doesn't seem to be going away."

Yet, he nurtures a hope that Angélique would inspire recognition that Montreal's history has deep roots in systemic oppression that is no different from other cities in North America and Europe, but that we have to move forward.

"Black Theatre Workshop's mission of fostering and promoting black Canadian experience along with that of Tableau D'Hôte Theatre, which is to increase the presence of Canadian works on stages around Montreal, makes for quite a natural partnership, and it's very rare that we can have this kind of collaboration within the community, so when it happens it's quite gold," said Payette.

This presentation of *Angélique*, in celebration of Montreal's 375th anniversary,



PHOTO: PAULINE NESBITT / THE SUBURBAN

"*Angélique* is not about being timely, it is about being timeless," said director Mike Payette.

enjoys a heavy Montreal presence in that the director, many cast members and musicians are natives. Its playwright, Gale, was born in Montreal and was a vibrant force within its artistic circles.



PHOTO: COURTESY BLACK THEATRE WORKSHOP

Jenny Brizard stars as Marie-Joseph Angélique.

Angélique will run March 15 to April 2 at the Segal Centre for Performing Arts, 5170 Côte Ste. Catherine Rd. For more information, visit www.blacktheatreworkshop.ca or www.tableaudhote.ca or call the box office at 514-739-7944. ■

ADVERTISING FEATURE

Annual CJCS Foundation Sports Celebrity Breakfast to honour Joel Leonoff, Mike Bossy and Andre Dawson

By Mike Cohen
The Suburban

High profile personalities from the world of sports will be on hand for the 13th annual Cummings Jewish Centre for Seniors Foundation Sports Celebrity Breakfast on Sunday, March 26. The event, which will once again attract more than 600 people, has been completely sold out for many weeks now.

Event Co-chairs Michael Wagen and Bram Naimer, as well as Honorary Chair Morden "Cookie" Lazarus, note that the total amount of money raised since the fundraiser's inception is more than \$1.8 million. Seniors in Crisis, a program that delivers much needed assistance to seniors who are unable to financially look after their needs, is the direct beneficiary.

The Guest of Honour will be Joel Leonoff, who serves as Executive Director, President and CEO of Paysafe Group Plc, which is now a leading global payment provider quoted on the London Stock Exchange's AIM Listing (PAYS). Leonoff is also a noted philanthropist, supporting many charities in Canada.

Former New York Islanders star and Hockey Hall of Famer Mike Bossy will be honoured as the Sports Personality of the Year while former Montreal Expos outfielder and a member of Major League Baseball's Hall of Fame Andre Dawson will be presented with the Expos Baseball Legends Award.

Bossy, a standout with the former Laval Nationals junior hockey team, was nothing less than the most prolific goal scorer in New York Islanders history. He played right wing and won four consecutive Stanley Cups from 1980 to 1983 while scoring 573 goals. He netted an



Bram Naimer, Morden "Cookie" Lazarus, 2016 Sports Personality of the Year Larry Robinson, and Michael Wagen.

NHL record 50 or more goals in nine of his 10 seasons to go with 553 assists and also won the Calder Trophy in 1978-79, the Conn Smythe Trophy in 1981-82 and three Lady Byngs. He presently works for the TVA Sports Network and remains an Islanders ambassador.

During a 21-year baseball career, Dawson,

nicknamed "The Hawk" played for four different teams as a centre and right fielder, spending most of his career with the Montreal Expos (1976-1986) and Chicago Cubs (1987-1992). An eight-time National League (NL) All-Star, he was named the league's Rookie of the Year in 1977 after batting .282 with 19 home runs

and 65 runs batted in (RBI) and won the Most Valuable Player Award in 1987 after leading the league with 49 homers and 137 RBI. He batted .300 five times, drove in 100 runs four times and had 13 seasons of 20 home runs. He is one of eight MLB players with at least 300 home runs and 300 stolen bases during his career. Dawson was inducted into baseball's Hall of Fame in 2010.

Over the years, the breakfast has attracted a wide range of present-day sports celebrities and alumni, including those from the Canadiens, Alouettes, Expos, Montreal Impact, as well as Canadian Olympic athletes. Veteran journalist Rodger Brulotte from *Le Journal de Montréal* and *TVA Sports* will receive the Larry Fredericks Media Award. Some of the other confirmed guests include former Habs Mathieu Darche and Chris Nilan as well as former NHL disciplinarian Brian O'Neill, some members of the Montreal Alouettes, other sports celebrities and sports media. A silent auction for a variety of sports memorabilia will also be held.

The Foundation provides support to the Centre through a variety of fundraising initiatives. Unique in the way it integrates wellness, educational programming, volunteering and social service, the Cummings Centre is a non-profit, community organization that offers a full continuum of life-long learning and fitness programs to the 50 plus community. The Foundation raises significant funding to help support the Centre in addition to Federation CJA.

For more information visit www.cummingscentre.org/sportsbreakfast