



BON DÉBARRAS

Press review

www.bondebarras.ca



« Quebec's high energy folk trio Bon Débarras in concert Aug. 20 & 21 »

Daily Bulldog, Maine (États-Unis), 16 août 2014

<http://www.dailybulldog.com/db/arts/quebecs-high-energy-folk-trio-bon-debarras-in-concert-aug-20-21/>

SOUTH CARTHAGE - New England Celtic Arts with the support of the American Folk Festival and Folk Quebec will present Bon Débarras. Performances are at Skye Theatre Performing Arts Center in South Carthage on Wednesday, Aug.20; and at Phillips Area Community Center in Phillips on Thursday, Aug. 21. Curtain is at 7 p.m. at both locations and a jam session at Skye will start at 6:15 p.m.

Bon Débarras is the result of the unexpected meeting of three dynamic creators involved in music, dance and poetry. The trio opens a door to their recollections of America and their music is at the intersection of various traditions. Their energy taps into the rhythms of today and ventures boldly on the multi-faceted road to tomorrow's dreams.

Folklore (from folk, meaning "people," and lore, meaning "knowledge") refers to all collective productions by the people that are orally transmitted from generation to generation (tales, stories, songs) or through example (music, dance, rites, beliefs, savoir-faire).

Folklore defines who we are and traces our origins. Bon Débarras' inspiration comes from their home base, Montreal, one of the most cosmopolitan cities in North America. While remaining true to their roots, the three musicians, who are equally passionate about music, dance and poetry, are drawing on living traditions and various influences to explore new avenues.

Bon Débarras' folk music is deeply rooted in the memory of French-speaking America. On their guitars, banjo, mandolin, accordion, washboard and harmonicas, and integrating foot percussion, jig and body percussion, the trio creates musical atmospheres that transcend boundaries and ages.

The American Folk Festival is Maine premier Folk event held Aug. 22 thru 24 on the Bangor Waterfront. This years schedule is available at <http://www.americanfolkfestival.com>



Bon débarras

Bon Débarras are featured throughout the festival with performances and workshops.

More information is available at:
<http://www.necelticarts.com>



“St. Albert Children’s Festival fun for all ages”

Colin Maclean, Edmonton Sun, Alberta, 28 mai 2014

<http://www.edmontonsun.com/2014/05/28/st-albert-childrens-festival-fun-for-all-ages>

When the final yellow bus filled with happy kids drove away and the final volunteer wearily went home June 1st of last year, 57,137 patrons had turned up to sample the many pleasures of the St. Albert International Children’s Festival. And over 23,000 of those paid to see a show.

Much like the Fringe, the quality of entertainment at the St. Albert Festival has drifted upward over the years. This year with a banquet of entertainments to choose from, let me lead you through the feast with a few morsels you might consider.

On the streets (and free) consider Phileas Flash and Dan The One Man Band. Both of these fast-talking entertainers feature snappy patter, and an act that holds the attention of children — of all ages. Flash is a motor-mouthed

Brit with an amazing facility with balloons. His act includes a hypnotizing device you stare at — and when he moves it away — his head blows up like, well, a balloon. Dan The One Man Band walks around the Festival dressed in a suit of instruments — drums, triangles, cymbals and the like while playing a guitar, a kazoo and a mouth organ and working the audience like a vaudeville clown.

On the (also free) outdoor stage, my favourite act is Kimberly and Daniel Craig who are a complete circus all by themselves — juggling, fire juggling, hand-to-hand acrobatics and a stunning turn by Daniel on a spinning hoop. He gives the impression he will go out of control at any second but he rules the stage. You’ve probably seen these kinds of acts before but never better or performed by just two people.

On the mainstages, I was particularly impressed with the French Canadian trio Bon Debarras (“Good Riddance”). The act is based on traditional French Canadian folk music but the manic trio certainly blow the doors off anything fusty or old-fashioned. First of all, they are superlative musicians playing in many styles and on many instruments. That includes the human body. At one point they had an entire sell-out audience of young people syncopating various rhythms by slapping sundry parts of their bodies. (“The most accessible instrument in the world. And the cheapest.”)

My favourite was a simple, yet continent spanning rhythm, first played on an Inuit drum that morphed into a French Canadian two-step and finally into a barn burning Cajun melody. You leave Bon Debarras with a goofy smile on your face and a spring in your step.

From India, by way of L.A., a dance company called Blue 13 comes with Ghungroos and Whistles, a very practiced and precise high energy company of seven that celebrates the exuberance of Bollywood dancing. The costumes are gorgeous, the music infectious and the dances are diverse — much like India itself.

The Edmonton Sun is proud to present Train Theatre — an Israeli puppet theatre in the riveting *A Touch of Light*. It’s the story of Louis Braille, who lost his sight when he was three and at the age of 15 invented a method of reading and writing for the blind. It doesn’t sound like much of a gripper but in the hands of master storyteller Patricia O’Donovan, there wasn’t a sound in the hall until the audience broke into enthusiastic applause at the end. The very basic puppets are all made of paper but with music, lighting and use of shadow this story of a little boy who changed the lives of blind people everywhere becomes very real and touching.

And finally, a spectacular production on the mainstage of the Arden Theatre. There may be just three actors on stage but the Austin, Texas company The Robot Planet presents a cast of dozens in *The Intergalactic Nemesis*, a lurid, melodramatic 1933 comic book about an intrepid (female) reporter and her faithful sidekick who undertake a dangerous intergalactic journey to save the earth. (Of course!) There’s music, sound effects and over 700 huge comic style drawings. The production was a bit leaden but the audience loved it.

The shows are available right through the week but Friday night and all day Saturday the buses full of kids stop and families are more apt to find tickets available. But beware — many shows are sold out already. The St. Albert International Children’s Festival runs through May 31.

“Joyful, energetic music with Bon Débarras”

Anna Borowiecki, St. Albert Gazette, Alberta, 7 mai 2014

<http://www.stalbertgazette.com/article/20140507/SAG0302/305079978/joyful-energetic-music-with-bon-d%C3%A9barras>

Every year the Northern Alberta International Children's Festival books a lively foot-stomping group. And this year the bouncy, up-tempo Bon Débarras fills the slot.

The Montreal-based trio's name roughly translates into “Good Riddance.” But in an odd paradox, the group's energetic traditional step dancing generally evokes a “wow.”

Bon Débarras spokesperson Jean-Francoise Dumas patiently explains that the choice of their quirky moniker was based on two things.

“Bon Débarras has two meanings. One is ‘good riddance’ and good riddance is about getting rid of sorrow, anger and all negative energy. We let it go when we play music. We let it out. Also in French, débarras is a place to keep old stuff you don't want to get rid of. We are like a storage closet where we can go and find traditional influences and inspiration.”

Dumas is the trio's drummer, even though snare, kick and cymbals are not part of his toolkit. He specializes in podorythmie – a popular French form playing percussion using only feet and the floor.

His longtime band mate Dominic Desrochers, a well-known Quebecois singer and step-dancer, also plays banjo, guitar and washboard. Rounding out the ensemble is virtuoso Cedric Dind-Lavoie on upright bass and accordion.

Together they are a high-powered trio melding American and Quebec influences to form a distinct sound of their own.

Bon Débarras was born after three dynamic creators pooled their energy. While remaining true to their roots, they also tapped into the rhythms of today creating a one-of-a-kind fusion that has echoes of Scottish, country, bluegrass and rockabilly.

In 2013, the ensemble dropped its second album, *Errance*, meaning “wanderer.”

“It was inspired by the francophone memory of America. We are like the Acadian, the Cajun. We all have a French connection. We wander all over the map.”

Unlike other Quebec-based bands such as *Le Vent du Nord* that use the traditional fiddle, strings and accordion, Bon Débarras prefers banjo, piano and accordion.

“And we include dance. Dominic comes from a tap dancing background. He went looking for more vocabulary in his research and discovered a gum boot dance, Hungarian dance and body percussion.”

Unlike Bon Débarras' first self-title album that hinged mostly on traditional works, *Errance* is mainly original tunes each with their own vibe.

Reel facile has a strong start right out the gate and is loaded with tight harmonies, a funky harmonica and serious banjo action.

Chanson du forcat translated into the “song of the convict” creates a tempo with a chain-gang feel whereas *Vagancia* is more delicate with the use of a mouth harp and good support from the double bass.



GOOD RIDDANCE – Bon Débarras, the Montreal-based trio whose name roughly translates into “Good Riddance,” is coming to this year's children's festival.
Supplied photo

Humour is a big part of *Chien fidèle*, a song about the singer's dying dog, which you might think would bring on a rush of tears. But after the dog dies, the percussion gears up and the singer dances a jig on the car that killed his dog and stomps the hell out of it.

Yes, Bon Débarras is promising a lot of fun.

“Come, you'll feel better. Music is joyful and there's a lot of energy in it. It makes me feel alive when I play and it makes you feel alive. Hopefully you will dance too.”

“Bon Débarras offers up a foot-stomping party”

Alexander Varty, The Georgia Straight, 22 février 2012

<http://www.straight.com/music/bon-debarras-offers-foot-stomping-party>

Bon Débarras's name translates as “Good Riddance”, but that's the last thing anyone's likely to say when the Montreal-based trio leaves a stage. “Wow!” is the more usual response, thanks to the group's energetic fusion of traditional step-dancing, Québécois folk music, and influences from around the globe.

Most of all, audiences are going to be knocked out by the fancy footwork of Jean-François Dumas. In addition to playing harmonica, banjo, and guitar, he's effectively Bon Débarras's drummer, even though snare, kick, and cymbals are noticeably absent from his musical toolkit. That's because he specializes in *podorythmie*—playing percussion using only his feet and the floor.

“It's very typical of Quebec, this kind of art, but when we go out of Quebec, in France or the United States, people are very fascinated by it,” says Dumas's bandmate Dominic Desrochers, an acclaimed singer and step-dancer who also plays banjo, guitar, and washboard. On the line from a Winnipeg tour stop, he explains that in Québécois folk music, foot percussion predates the 19th-century introduction of the piano and the 20th-century adoption of the guitar.

“It's the original accompaniment to fiddle or accordion music,” he notes. “You're dancing, sitting on a chair, and playing percussion—and with Jean-François, he's playing banjo and harmonica at the same time, as well as singing. It's really impressive.”

Add Luzio Altobelli's accordion virtuosity and you've got what Desrochers calls “acoustic rock groove music”, but even that's a misleadingly reductive explanation of what Bon Débarras has to offer. As documented on its eponymous debut, the band combines elegant original songs with the considerably more rustic sounds that Desrochers was exposed to during his family's multigenerational jam sessions. As well, it draws on the melting-pot reality of contemporary Montreal.

“Traditional French-Canadian music was inspired by immigration—the old immigration, with Irish music, Scottish music, English music, and music from France, too,” the multi-instrumentalist stresses. “And today the immigration's still going on, with African and Latin American



The members of Bon Débarras model the type of ensembles that pass as formal evening wear among fans of traditional French-Canadian folk music.

people, people from around the world. So we're inspired by all these cultures, and want to integrate them into our culture.”

To bolster his argument, Desrochers points out that Dumas will make a bonus appearance at this weekend's Festival du Bois, tapping his feet along to Argentine-born guitarist Juan Sebastian Larobina's innovative take on the tango. Don't think that Québécois folk music has entirely abandoned its national-treasure status in favour of international exploration, though. Giving the Straight an impromptu French lesson, Desrochers explains the secondary meanings of his band's punning name.

“Débarras also means a storage room: it's a place where we store old memories and old things in case we need them one day,” he says. “But sometimes those things can grow in value. That's why we search for old songs that can also be a reality today. That's why we go into the archives or draw on family repertoire.

“And, too, débarras can mean a release or deliverance from something,” he continues. “In that way, we see music as kind of an antioxidant of the soul. It makes us feel good when we play so, yeah, it's good riddance—good riddance to sad feelings.”

Bon Débarras plays the Festival du Bois in Maillardville's Mackin Park on Saturday and Sunday (March 3 and 4).