

Press Review

BON DÉBARRAS REPÈRES



Repères, by Bon Débarras: For a decade the band has been making its mark on the trad music scene.

Ici Musique

The strength of this trio lies in the class, the elegance, and the versatility of their orchestrations.

Philippe Renaud,
Le Devoir

A 4th album of Bon Débarras that feels good!

Catherine Richer,
Le 15-18, ICI Première

About *Repères*

A trio whose strength lies in the class, elegance, and versatility of its orchestrations, especially the vocal arrangements, so colorful and dynamic. After an intoxicating “Reel à Cofa” which opens the album, the aptly named “Rince-Bouche” highlights how harmoniously these three vocal timbres cohabit in **turlute** songs. On “Batèche”, an astonishing song simply propelled with a violin, a harmonica, a Jew’s harp and podorythmics, the trio even seems to recapture rap’s prosody. There are guests on the album who add another wave of emotional impact: Like Simon Gauthier with his simple and touching text entitled **Regarde**, or Joséphine Bacon, the Innu poetess and her moving presence on **Nutshimit**... another of this album’s gems.

Philippe Renaud, Le Devoir

Leaving their mark on the trad music landscape, the trio Bon Débarras is back in full poetic mode with energetic tunes and more lulling ones. Enter this lair of trad-folk music, where you may find both frenzy and peace of mind!

Ici Musique



Bon Debarras | Good riddance to sorrow!

High-energy trio from Montreal entertains in Helena and Bozeman

On Stage > Apr 25, 2022



Bon Debarras delivers a high-energy evening of traditional Quèbècois fiddle, step-dancing, banjo and harmonica fused with spoken-word and body percussion.



Photo © Vitor Munhoz

Bon Debarras, an award-winning trio from Montreal, takes to The Myrna Loy stage in Helena Thursday, May 5, and performs Friday, May 6, at The Ellen in Bozeman.

Expect a delightful, high-energy evening of traditional Quèbècois fiddle, step-dancing, banjo and harmonica fused with spoken-word, slam poetry, and body percussion.

The group will play tunes from their *Reperes* album, which just won Quebec Music Council's Felix Award for Best Traditional Music Album of the Year.

Group co-founder Dominique Desrochers describes their performance as “a journey of storytelling, poetry, dance, movement, energetic music and also the deeper energy of ballads – with a lot of vocals and movement.”

On guitar, banjo, violin and harmonica, the group carries an identity, a style and an energy-filled zest for life that’s quite unique.

Their music goes beyond just entertainment, says Bon Debarras’ other co-founder, Jean-Francois Dumas. “The music we carry forward is traditional. Transmitting something is at the core of what we do.”

Multi-instrumentalist Desrochers is a talented step dancer or *gigueur* (jigger), who is also known for using his body as a percussion instrument. Dumas is an international traveler fascinated with music from around the world and also a multi-instrumentalist.

The newest member of the trio, Veronique Plasse, contributes viola and violin and a rich knowledge of Québec’s traditional music.

The name Bon Debarras means “good riddance” in French, and Desrochers says it aptly describes their musical aspirations. “We get rid of sorrow and sadness when we play our music.”

The name has a second meaning, as well. “It means a place where you put your old stuff that you don’t want to get rid of ... like an attic. These things can become treasures.”

Helena: 7:30 p.m. May 5 at The Myrna Loy. Tickets are \$24 and are available at 15 N. Ewing St. and [online](#). For more information, call 406-443-0287.

Bozeman: 7:30 p.m. May 6 at The Ellen. Tickets are \$24, and available [online](#). Call 406-585-5885 for details.



Qèbècois folk-fusion group Bon Debarras bring their high-energy performance to The Myrna Loy in Helena May 5 and to The Ellen in Bozeman May 6.

Photo © Vitor Munhoz

<https://livelytimes.com/2022/04/bon-debarras-good-riddance-to-sorrow/>

Join Bon Débarras for a night of foot-stomping fun

The Center presents French Canadian trio at the Argyros

Chris Melville Jan 9, 2019

“When I think of the music of Québec, it puts a smile on my face because it’s just plain fun.”

Kristine Bretall, Director of Performing Arts at the Center

French Canadian fur trappers, known colloquially as *coureurs des bois*, or “runners of the woods,” were among the first wanderers of European descent to explore the American West.

They crossed into Idaho in the early 19th century, leaving linguistic marks upon much the state’s landscape and people. Boise, Coeur d’Alene, Paris (obviously) and even the eponym Nez Perce all bear evidence of French Canadian influence.

Though toponymical remnants are clear to behold, the cultural predilections of these francophone trailblazers did not take root as firmly in Idaho. Partly, that’s due to the fact that the cultural identity of what was then “le Canada” was still evolving. Since becoming the Canadian province Québec, a more distinct cultural, and especially musical, tradition emerged.

Defined by its roots in northern France and featuring a noticeably Celtic lilt introduced by Scottish and Irish immigrants in the later 19th century, Québécois folk music often features fiddles, guitars and a healthy dose of raucous foot-stomping.

Now, to bridge that gap of more than 2,500 miles, the Sun Valley Center for the Arts is reintroducing some French Canadian heritage to the mountains of Idaho.

Residents of and visitors to the Wood River Valley can prepare their boots for stomping and their hands for clapping in warm welcome to the Québécois musical trio Bon Débarras (which, ironically, translates into English as “good riddance”).

The band consists of three Montréal-based artists, Dominic Desrochers, Jean-François Dumas and Marie-Pierre Lecault.

With four instruments among the three of them (guitar, banjo, harmonica and violin) the members of Bon Débarras create a sonic fusion of traditional French Canadian folk styles and contemporary rhythms from around the world to produce a unique musical blend.

Though rooted in this historical style, Bon Débarras’ repertoire consists entirely of original compositions.

“We build upon the traditional heritage and we do our own stuff,” Dumas explained. “It’s all original lyrics and original music inspired by the language.”

Courtesy of the Sun Valley Center for the Arts, the Argyros Performing Arts Center in Ketchum will play host to a one-night-only concert from the trio on Friday, Jan. 18, at 7:30 p.m.

“When I think of the music of Québec, it puts a smile on my face because it’s just plain fun,” said Kristine Bretall, The Center’s director of performing arts. “[Bon Débarras] fuse Québécois folk music, step-dancing and more into a high-energy, rhythmically driven show.”

In contribution to The Center’s ongoing educational outreach efforts, Bon Débarras, like the other musical groups participating in The Center’s 2018-19 Performing Arts Series, will perform their music and lecture before every elementary school in the Wood River Valley.

Their educational programs, taking place from Jan. 16-18, will delve into the rich tapestry of the French Canadian folk music tradition, its mixed heritage from different immigrant nationalities, its technical musicality and more.

“It’s important for the translation of the culture,” Dumas said. “Here in Québec, traditional music is a bit on the fringe. The children are not aware of their own culture. It’s important for us to actualize and show where Québec’s traditional music and culture come from.”

Since “food” is the theme of The Center’s winter exhibition, “At the Table: Kitchen as Home,” Bon Débarras’ Sun Valley sojourn will include an appropriately culinary soirée at The Center’s Hailey House location.

At 7 p.m. on Thursday, Jan. 17, the band will perform a short set at the Winter Warmup Veillée. Appropriately brumal libations, namely mulled wine and cider, will be served to complement an array of Québec-inspired desserts.

Regular admission to the event is \$10 per person, though The Center is offering an extra incentive to those who wish to help foster a sense of community at the evening gathering. Anyone who comes bearing a homemade dessert to share will have the cost of admission waived. In a sense, The Center hopes to make this event a community potluck.

“This evening promises to be a fun way to get a taste of the project in a setting that speaks to

https://www.mtexpress.com/arts_and_events/events/join-bon-d-barras-for-a-night-of-foot-stomping/article_5773da18-138f-11e9-a13d-7baa5524823a.html

home,” said Kristin Poole, The Center’s artistic director. “Besides, who doesn’t like good food, good music and good people?”

The Center’s Hailey House, the historic birthplace of modernist poet and literary critic Ezra Pound, is at 314 Second Ave. S. Pound spent several years living in Paris, so the French connection strengthens further. He was later arrested for treason after voicing support for Mussolini’s fascist regime and spreading anti-American and anti-Semitic propaganda.

Tickets for both the Winter Warmup Veillée and the concert are now on sale from The Center at a range of prices. For premium seating, tickets retail at \$55 for members, \$65 for nonmembers and \$27.50 for students. Regular seating runs \$30 for members, \$40 for nonmembers and only \$15 for students.

Bon Débarras is currently working on their fourth studio album, which they anticipate completing next year.

For more information on Bon Débarras, visit the band’s website at bondebarras.ca. To purchase tickets or for more information on the concert, visit sunvalleycenter.org or theargyros.org.

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3 Quebecois 3

It's foot-tapping in all directions for music of the Canadian province. Tony Montague profiles three of the current hot outfits.



More than forty years since the first renewal of popular interest in traditional music, fronted by bands such as La Bottine Souriante and Le Réve du Diable, the roots scene in Quebec has acquired the maturity to experiment and push constantly at boundaries of genre and style.

The artists of Montreal-based trio Bon Débarras have carved out a unique place for themselves with witty and verbally nimble songs, sharp musicianship, smart arrangements, and more than a touch of the variety show.

"I was born into a family of musicians, singers, storytellers, and step dancers and I fell into traditional music when I was a small kid," says Dominique Desrochers, who writes and sings, plays various instruments, and is an agile step dancer, or *gigueur*. "Like every teen I got into other stuff later – rock, heavy metal, and so on – but I also really connected with traditional gigue. I was in folklore ensembles and it's there I had my first classes in gigue from masters. At the same time I did international dances, and the ones that grabbed me the most involved using the body as a percussion instrument – such as South African gumboot dancing. At the same time I developed a career as a musician."

The different strands of Dominique's art as a performer came together after co-founding Bon Debarras [Good Riddance] with Jean-François Dumas ten years ago. A fellow multi-instrumentalist and songwriter, Jean-François picked up his skills in the course of travelling the world with his guitar for many years, entertaining people – and above all learning. "I was interested in every culture and tradition I encountered. Quebecois music came later. I started to play mandolin, then picked up banjo. I'd also heard Alain Lamontagne play harmonica when I was thirteen and it marked me for life. I longed to play like him and to tap my feet like a madman. Like Dominique I'm also influenced by American folk, Cajun, and country."

Bon Debarras's self-titled debut in 2009 was nominated for an ADISQ – the big music award in Quebec. They followed up in 2013 with *Errance*, moving more towards their own compositions. Fiddle and viola player Marie-Pierre Lecault joined three years ago to replace bassist Cédric Dind-Lavoie, adding a woman's voice to the singing and injecting new drive into the trio's sound. "I was born into a family of musicians, and I've been playing violin since I was two and majored in classical violin up to university. But at the same time I played traditional music."

La Grondeuse A Fille/Reel Bipolaire, the folk-instrumental set that opens Bon Débarras's third album *En Panne De Silence*, showcases Marie-Pierre's supple and spirited fiddling. She also sings lead on the hilarious *Rill Pour Rire* – an urban lowlife ditty that was a big hit forty years ago. You don't need to speak French to enjoy the rhymes and rhythms of this brilliant put-down of an aspiring bed companion. "The guys wanted to cover it for a long time but it needed a female interpreter," she says. "It's hard to see a man doing it! As



Bon Débarras

Photo: Vitor Munhoz

soon as I joined they asked if I was interested. We play it in a stripped-down acoustic way with repeating patterns. It's the only song on which I sing the lead."

Dominique contributes four compositions, and commands a range of different idioms from rural folk to slam poetry. "I dived into traditional music and research into songwriting. I put together a step-dancing spectacle for a dance company, and wrote a show around the poetry of Gaston Miron [1928-96], which made me want to work with that kind of popular language and approach. I like urban music a lot, and slam attracted me in particular. There's a strong community in Montreal."

"So I wrote some 'portraits', like *All You Can Beat* – the psychological sketch of a *tapageur* [roisterer] or step-dancer, all of it flavoured with traditional music and fragments of text. Bon Débarras is very percussive – as much in our words as our music. For the first album we took traditional texts from the archives and gave them new arrangements. Little by little we added our own material. Jean-François and I have our own distinctive styles, ways of talking, and delivery of a song, which gives colour to our show. We like playing with that."

Jean-François's contribution *Le Théâtre De La Ville* is a beautifully crafted short-story-in-song – a tale of childhood trauma. "It's something that happened to me, but I didn't want to put it in the first person. Everything in the song is true. I went back to the theatre and met the technicians who had worked there. They knew what I experienced, and told me that a child died there, and the theatre had a ghost – which I hadn't known at the time."

How do such relatively long, word-rich songs go over with English-speaking audiences? "We play a lot for Anglophones in the US and Canada, and came to the UK in 2014 for three weeks," says Jean-François. "People may not understand all the words but they appreciate the rhythmic aspects and recognise the Anglo-Celtic side of our music. It's in the jigs and reels of course, but there are other close links and resonances – those between Dominique's danc-

ing and English clogging for instance."

With solo dance and body percussion, frequent instrumental changes, and of course the audience animation that's such a strong feature of Quebecois bands, Bon Débarras's live performance carries echoes of the old-time variety show. "The first thing that our US agent said to me when we met was, 'there's something about the circus in what you do'," recalls Jean-François.

Le Vent Du Nord, Les Chauffeurs A Pieds, and Bon Débarras embrace a growing awareness and respect for North America's First Nations and their culture. Le Vent Du Nord were inspired to write *La Marche Des Iroquois* for their current album *Têtu*; Les Chauffeurs' 400-km canoe trip downriver for the book and album *De Ses Couteaux Microscopiques* is interspersed with reference and allusion to 'les autochtones' and their knowledge of the natural world; and Bon Débarras end *En Panne De Silence* with *Makushami/Nitassinan*, a traditional dance of the Innu or Montagnais from north-east Quebec.

"Makushami is a gathering, a feast and celebration to the rhythm of the Innu's traditional drum the *teueikan*, and Nitassinan means 'our land' in Innu-aimun," explains Jean-François. "We've added a reel and some *turlutte* [mouth music] to it. I've got a job outside of Bon Débarras, working for Wapikomi Mobile, an organisation that brings cinema to autochtone communities. It's a great project and has taken me all over Quebec – which is home to eleven First Nations. Dominique has also been to these communities, and it made us want to write a song as a homage. Quebecois folk and roots music is often identified with particular places and regions, and there's a nationalistic side to that. We want to see things from a wider perspective, and draw attention to the people who were here so long before us and that we love so much."

leventdunord.com/en

leschauffeurs.com

bondebarras.ca/en



LE DEVOIR

LIBRE DE PENSER

« Repères »

Philippe Renaud, Le Devoir, 10 novembre 2020

<https://www.ledevoir.com/culture/musique/589418/disque-via-pangee-un-regard-frais-sur-le-trad>

Quatrième album en un peu plus de dix ans de carrière pour le trio Bon Débarras, constitué des chanteurs et multi-instrumentistes Dominic Desrochers, Jean-François Dumas et Véronique Plasse, trio dont la force réside dans la classe, l'élégance et la polyvalence de ses orchestrations, particulièrement les arrangements vocaux, colorés et dynamiques : passé l'enivrant *Reel* à *Cofa* en ouverture, la bien nommée *Rince-Bouche* (qui incorpore un extrait d'une composition de Michel

Faubert) illustre combien ces trois timbres de voix turbulentes cohabitent harmonieusement. Sur l'étonnante *Batèche*, simplement propulsée par un violon, un harmonica, une guimbarde et de la podorythmie, le trio semble même imiter la prosodie du rap. La présence d'invités injecte une autre vague d'émotions : simple et touchant texte du conteur Simon Gauthier intitulé *Regarde*, poignante apparition de la poète innue Joséphine Bacon sur *Nutshimit*, une autre des perles de l'album.

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#5 Pour mieux se retrouver

MUSIQUE

Le trio folk Bon Débarras lance *Repères*, son quatrième album, qui compte 13 chansons. Le disque, qui honore les plumes de Joséphine Bacon, Gaston Miron et Michel Faubert, ancre des «repères identitaires, géographiques, linguistiques, culturels, mais aussi des repaires intérieurs forgés au fil des rencontres, des voyages, des expériences de vie», selon les membres du groupe. bondebarras.ca



« Repères, de Bon Débarras : une décennie à marquer le paysage trad québécois »

Ici musique, 23 octobre 2020



Le trio Bon Débarras revient tout en poésie, laissant ses airs énergiques, d'autres plus berçants, marquer le paysage de la musique traditionnelle. Avec les mots de Joséphine Bacon sur la pièce *Nutshimit*, ceux de Gaston Miron sur *Batèche* et de Gilles Vigneault sur *Avec un peu d'âme*, ou encore avec des hommages à des oeuvres de Michel Faubert, *Repères* est ancré dans les racines québécoises. Entrez dans ce repaire trad, vous trouverez peut-être la fois la frénésie et le repos de l'esprit.



« BON DÉBARRAS – REPÈRES »

Musicomania, novembre 2020

http://www.musicomania.ca/chroniques_musicales.htm#Bon%20D%C3%A9barras

Le trio traditionnel québécois propose son quatrième album, *Repères*, sept mois après le mini-album *Repaires*. Neuf pièces s'ajoutent ici aux quatre titres de cet EP, explorant les repères identitaires, géographiques, linguistiques et culturels. Du « Reel à Cofa » au « Reel du rêve », *Repères* présente des liens puissants avec les traditions québécoises, incluant des collaborations judicieusement choisies avec **Joséphine Bacon** (« Nutshimit »), **Gaston Miron** (« Batèche »), **Michel Faubert** (« Suite Faubert », « Rince-bouche »), en plus du directeur artistique **Edgar Bori** et du réalisateur / contrebassiste **Cédric Dind-Lavoie**. Le résultat s'avère très agréable à écouter et vous reconnectera avec vos origines québécoises tout en vous faisant assurément taper du pied. (octobre 2020)

