



MONTREAL HIGH LIGHTS FESTIVAL



News release
For immediate distribution

The 9th edition of the MONTREAL HIGH LIGHTS Festival

1,000 invitations... accepted

Montreal, Monday, March 3, 2008 — More than ever, the **MONTREAL HIGH LIGHTS Festival** and its 300 partners fulfilled their mandate to light up the heart of winter and entice Montrealers out of hibernation. In fact, this Festival has become the light at the end of the tunnel of winter—even though this year's winter has, in fact, been gloriously sunny and snowy! Sure, a few may have grumbled at yet another snowfall, but that beautiful white stuff thrilled all of our visitors and guests.

This **9th edition** offered a large and diversified schedule. With its three programs devoted to culture, gastronomy and urban entertainment, as well as the Montreal Downtown & Underground Event and the wild Montreal All-Nighter, fans enjoyed 11 days packed with 1,000 possibilities and opportunities to join in activities, take in a show or event, enjoy a delicious meal, taste fine Quebec cheeses and Chilean wines, and walk, run, dance, discover, watch and listen to their hearts' content...

Yes, the MONTREAL HIGH LIGHTS Festival left everyone breathless... but cheering their hearts out!

This year, the MONTREAL HIGH LIGHTS Festival welcomed **Quebec City**, helping to celebrate its 400th anniversary, as well as **Toronto**, the Queen City, which has experienced a genuine gastronomic metamorphosis over the past 20 years, and **Chile**, a passionate country bursting with young chefs, wine-growers and talented artists.

The Hydro-Québec Celebration of Light – the festive and free outdoor program

The **Hydro-Québec Celebration of Light** has definitively made itself at home in Old Montréal and on the Quays of the Old Port! Like a comfortable old coat you pull un and never want to take off, they're a perfect fit, confirmed by each visit: the thrilling 120-metre **Milk Ice Slide** entirely made of ice, the **artistic illumination of De la Commune St.**, whose coloured lights still twinkle in the mind's eye, the stunning 20-metre **GiveltYourMinimum AXA Sphere**, a heated, inflatable pleasure zone, as well as the **Milk Jumpai**, the braziers, the **Bistro SAQ** and the new 15-metre **giant LED screen**, where fans could project the designs they'd created at the interactive console at the **Hydro-Québec Stage**. And while **Loto-Québec Fireworks** lit up the scene, the **Hydro-Québec Concerts** warmed up the masses, who danced, sang and cheered along madly to performances by **Les Respectables** and **Antoine Gratton, Taktika, Numéro#**, and **CEA!** The wildly popular GiveltYourMinimum AXA Sphere, the evening home to super-contemporary DJ and VJ sets, found an afternoon purpose as well, welcoming the **Little Winter Circus by Milk**, thrilling all the kids. And let's not leave out the brave bathers of Quebec City and Montreal who, wearing nothing but bathing suits and cheered on by the Bonhomme Carnaval, plunged into the **Snow Bath** presented in collaboration with the **Office du tourisme de Québec** and the **Société du 400^e anniversaire de Québec**. Long story short—every day offered different, dynamic, uninterrupted programming that thrilled our discerning crowd of High Lighters!

The Sun Life Financial Performing Arts – the cultural program

The MONTREAL HIGH LIGHTS artistic program offered Montrealers a rendez-vous with passion, courtesy of our honorary co-presidents, **Margie Gillis** and **Eva Yerbabuena**, as well as French icons **Jane Birkin** and **Michel Fugain**, who once again entranced their Quebec fans. What more can be said about such original creations as **FLASH**, or Australian **Stewart D'Arrietta's** dizzying **Belly of a Drunken Piano** packing them in for a tribute to Tom Waits, or D'Arrietta's countrymen **Spaghetti Western Orchestra**? And let's not forget the captivating portrait presented in **HOUDINI, The Musical**, a piece worthy of Broadway, created by Montrealers Ben Gonshor and Elan Kunin and brilliantly directed by Bryna Wasserman; the Festival is very proud to have

invested, in co-production with the **Segal Centre for the Performing Arts at the Saidye**, in this masterpiece of the program. Expanded to a record number of shows (69), the program also featured brilliant performances from **Chris Botti**, **Bobby McFerrin** and **Les Violons du Roy**. No wonder ticket revenues were up 75%.

The Air France Wine & Dine Experience presented by American Express – the food and wine program

It's no secret: Montreal is home to the most important gastronomic event in North America! In less than a decade, the MONTREAL HIGH LIGHTS Festival has become the ambassador for Montreal gastronomy, for its chefs, and for the city's reputation as a gourmet destination. We were thrilled by the flavours of **Toronto**, featured city of this edition represented by a delegation of 15 chefs including honorary president **Susur Lee**—whose *cuisine* was absolutely exquisite!—the tastes of **Chile**, our featured country, and **Quebec City**, whose 400th anniversary we helped celebrate. However, the gourmet experience was also on the menus of the 50 **Festival's Finest Tables** and the **Festival Lunch Menus**, eight restaurants offering prix fixe lunch hours — which registered a record number (more than 80%) of full houses. Let's not forget the free activities at **Jean-Talon Market**, including the **Gourmet Route** and its flavours of regional Québec. The flavours of the **Festival of Our Cheeses** in **Complexe Desjardins** were just as popular, with 22 guest cheese makers enjoying a wildly successful event, offering 60 Quebec cheeses for delicious discovery.

The Montreal Downtown & Underground Event presented by Hydro-Québec in collaboration with Milk

With 1,000 participants—a 33% increase over last year—this indoor and underground race, the only one of its kind in the world, was a rave success for its professionalism. After racing over 5,000 metres and 1,000 steps, from Carrefour Industrielle Alliance all the way to Complexe Desjardins and the party awaiting there, runners gave way to walkers, who enjoyed the all-new *Other City* treasure hunt and the Pathway to Discovery through the public artwork of the underground city.

The 5th Montreal All-Nighter presented by Hydro-Québec

There may be 15 of them worldwide, but the **Montreal All-Nighter** once again set itself apart with the unique cachet of its blend of art, culture and nightlife. Fully **123 mostly free activities**—compared to 86 last year—were offered up to ignite Montrealers' festive spirit. All-Nighter headquarters, the Celebration of Light site in Old Montréal and the Quays of the Old Port, featured Ultimate Frisbee in the snow (and the dark!), and the ever-charming **Christopher Williams** and his *Siberian Experience*. The Night played out in three *quartiers* connected by a free shuttle service organized in collaboration with the STM! Night-owls flocked to Chilean DJs in the **SAT (Digital Chile Road Show)**, the **Nuit Elektronik** in **Métropolis** and **L'ART DU NU** in **Ex-Centris**, filling the city from Place des Arts to St. Laurent Blvd. Finally, our tired party-animals ended the night at the free **Convivial Breakfast** presented by **Milk**. Mostly, this Montreal All-Nighter will be remembered for its ambience and the energy of a happy, fully-engaged audience discovering the city's charms by night.

The media join the party!

Press coverage in Quebec media outlets was more impressive than ever, and MONTREAL HIGH LIGHTS thanks them all for informing readers, viewers and listeners of the many activities (over 1,000) included in our three programs and two special events. Add that to some forty print and electronic media from outside Quebec, in particular from **Toronto** and the rest of **Canada** (About.com, Canadian Living, Globe & Mail, Gremolata, L'Express, McLean, National Post, Ottawa Life, Wish Magazine, West of the City), from **Germany** (Radio Deutche Welle), **Brazil** (TV Cultura), **Bulgaria** (Bacchus Magazine, National Bulgaria Radio), the **Caribbean** (Caribbean Star), **Chile** (CoBe, El Mostrador, Le Petit Journal, Santiago Times), the **United States** (Atlanta Voice, Bon Appétit, Gatehouse Media, Gourmet.com, Press Republican, Rochester Magazine, Stone Magazine), **France** (France 2, Francophonie Express, RéserVair), **Mexico** (Canal Once, Diario Monitor, IMER/Horizonte, Radio Formula, Reforma) and the **United Kingdom** (Fresh Magazine, The Guardian).

A balanced budget for a 5th year?

For a 5th consecutive year, the MONTREAL HIGH LIGHTS Festival closes with a balanced budget, totaling \$6 million this year (revenue and expenditures). The Board of Directors, composed of members from Montreal's tourism, economic and cultural communities is pleased to offer Montrealers a quality event presented within a rigorous budget.

A collaborative event with over 250 partners

It is important to remember that the very existence of this event—conceived and executed by **L'Équipe Spectra**—required the indispensable support of many, including all three levels of government. We extend warm thanks to the **Government of Canada**, specifically, **Economic Development Canada** and **Heritage Canada**, the **Government of Québec**, through the auspices of the **Ministry of Tourism** and the **Minister of Municipal Affairs and Regions**, **Sodec** and the **Minister of Culture, Communications and the Status of Women**, as well as the **City of Montréal** and the **Conseil des arts de Montréal**.

Let us also emphasize the involvement of our official presenter, **Hydro-Québec**, our principal sponsors, **Sun Life Financial**, **Air France**, **American Express**, **Milk**, the **Société des alcools du Québec**, **Loto-Québec**, **AXA Insurance**, and our official partners, the **Old Port of Montréal Corporation**, the **Old Montréal Business Development Corporation**, the **Government of Chile (Pro Chile)** and **Wines of Chile**, **Tourism Toronto**, **Porter Airlines**, **CAA Québec Travel**, the **Office du tourisme de Québec** and **complexe Desjardins**.

This festive event took shape and was developed over 10 years with the creative and financial involvement of the **Hotel Association of Greater Montreal** and **Tourisme Montréal**.

In the end, the entire Montreal community worked together to put the city in the spotlight, with 300 partners associated with the event.

Next stop – 10th anniversary!

Programming for the 10th anniversary is already well underway. Paris, the City of Light, will be the star of our anniversary edition, and the wines of France will be front and centre. Fifteen renowned chefs have already confirmed their presence. Chef Alain Passard of the Arpège restaurant has accepted the honorary presidency of the Wine & Dine Experience, and chefs Yves Camdeborde and Christian Constant have also accepted our invitations. Ten-star meals for a 10th anniversary, spectacular shows, a tribute to the Paris All-Nighter—those are just a few of the luminous ideas on the program for 2009!

Join us, from **Thursday, February 19 to Sunday, March 1, 2009!**

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Download photos and press kits from <ftp://ftp.festivalmontrealenlumiere.com>
username: [fmlcommclient](#) password: [fmlcomm2008](#)

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