



## Hockey Noir: The Opera

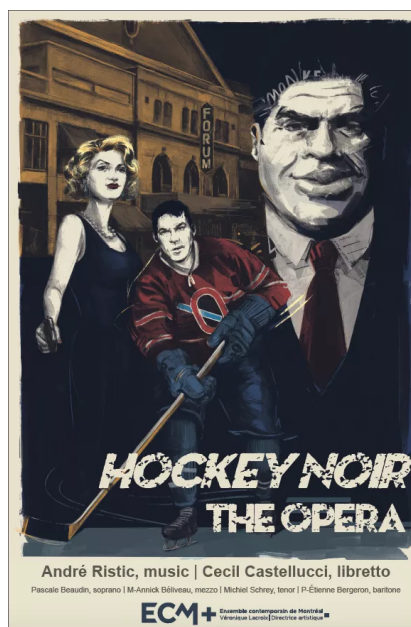
*By Cecil Castellucci*

A bunch of years ago, I was sitting at a LA Kings Hockey game, noticing the music the game made. The skates on the ice. The slap of the sticks. The puck being handled and passed around. The grunts. The whistles. The roar of the crowd. The bursts of music clips. The Zamboni. And in that moment, I knew that I had come up with the idea that for my new opera it would have something to do with Hockey.

I once heard that Bertolt Brecht said something along the lines that the purest form of theater is live sports. That in the arena, the drama is in the game. The ending is not yet written. And there is a direct conversation between the players and the spectators.

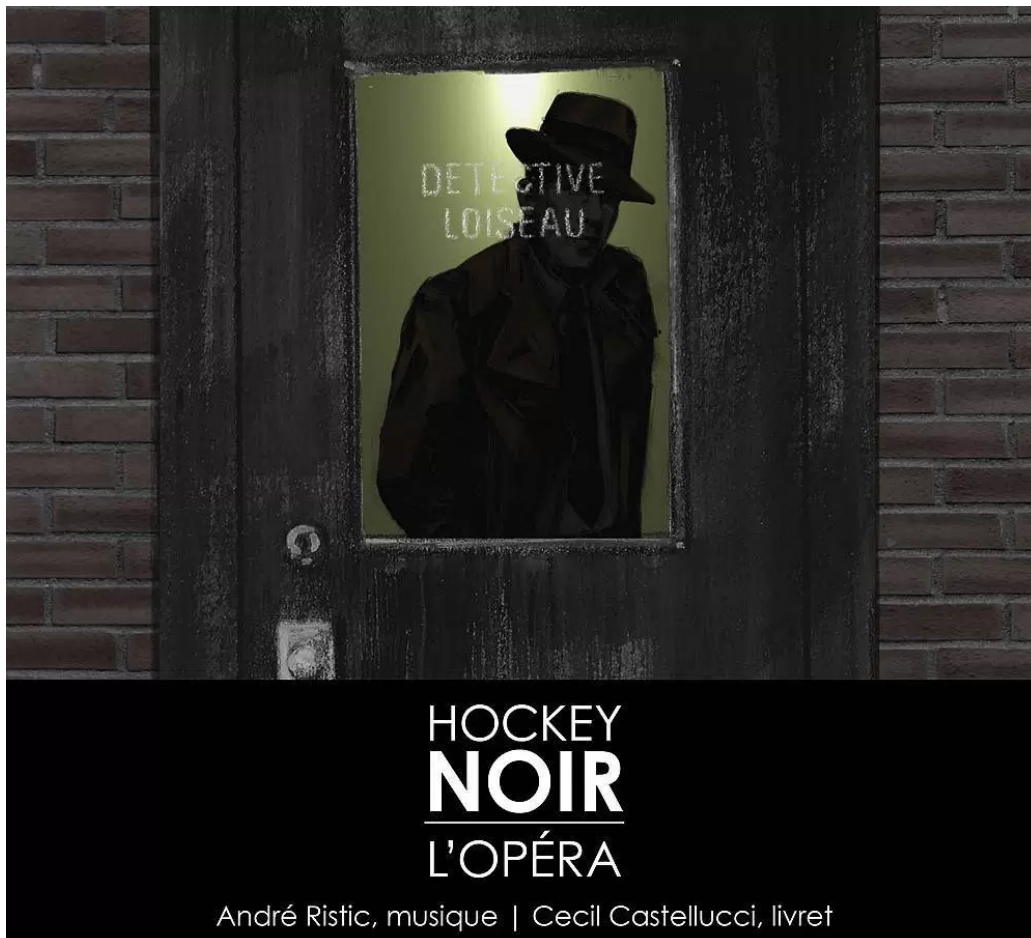
Maybe this is the reason why I have always been a sucker for a sports story. Although I don't play at all, I love to watch a game. Hockey is my preference, mostly because of the intense drama that it brings. I know that this is the reason that I wrote a Hockey Noir Opera which is having its world premiere in Montreal May 3 & 4th with **ECM+**.

Andre Ristic, my composer and collaborator and I had previously done a comic book opera together, **LES AVENTURES DE MADAME MERVEILLE**. Here we blended opera and comics. I came up with the concept because it struck me that opera's making use of supertitles functioned as a sort of stand in for comic book captions. That opera was made up of four movements, we stitched together a piece that was supposed to give the impression of sifting through a random pile of genre comics. I worked with four comic book artists, Michael Cho, Cameron Stewart, Pascal Girard and Scott Hepburn on the art elements



and those were with projected to along with the singers to give the impression of being comic book page come to life. It worked really well, and I knew that it was an idea that I wanted to push further.

Being a comic book writer myself (currently writing **Shade, the Changing Woman** at DC Comics and **Soupy Leaves Home** at Dark Horse) who is very interested in hybrids in graphic storytelling, I wanted to use the same concept of sequential art mixed with supertitles and captions that we experimented with in our previous opera and use that our new opera. But I knew that I wanted it to be more dynamic than what we'd done before, which had some movement, but felt more like a page. I knew that I wanted there to be more flexibility in the images. This time I wanted a little more of a three-dimensional aspect to it. I was trying to find another genre that used strong visuals to tell a story and could lend itself well to using aspects of comics, but that was slightly different than what we had done before with mixing comics and opera.



I had settled on it being a hockey story, but it took me a moment to get to the idea of using Film Noir as the visual construct for story and imagery. I am a huge Noir fan, and in thinking about Noir and the play of shadow and light and what a profound visual language it has, it seemed perfect for our purposes. Noir also has the benefit of having easily identifiable iconic characters like the detective, the femme fatale, the mobster. Once I hit on noir, a story about the disappearance of a hockey player during the playoffs between Montreal and Toronto in the 1950s and the subsequent search for what happened emerged. While it doesn't seem like the most traditional two genres to do a mash up with to me it makes perfect sense. Game on!

I wanted the Hockey Noir to feel as though the story had more movement and layers than we had accomplished before. I discovered and recruited a fabulous young artist **Kimberlyn Porter**, who had done her grad thesis telling a story sequentially through noir posters. It was exactly what I was looking for. Kimberlyn and I set about coming up with the basic visual elements for the story, which will be projected with captions and dialogues on multiple screens. Through layering, we have more control over the sequential elements of the story and get the singers acting the story, in concert with it being told visually. It's all brought together by the director **Marie Josee Chartier**.

### Hockey Noir, l'Opéra (bande-annonce, 2018)



And at long last, on May 3 & 4th in **Montreal** (and May 10th and 11th in Toronto in conjunction with **TCAF/Continuum Music**) **HOCKEY NOIR: THE OPERA** for which I wrote a libretto, will have its world premiere.

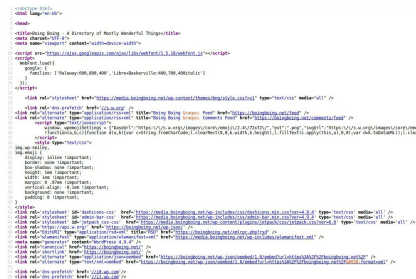
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### The technologies that would make the web more participatory

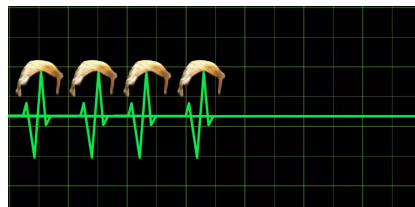
The early web was heralded as a revolution in participatory media where everyone could make media as well as consuming it.

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### Analysis of all the elections since Trump produces no clear answers on the class and suburban/urban correlates of flippability

Fivethirtyeight studied every election since Trump -- 99 special elections plus regular state elections in NJ and Virginia -- and checked whether there were any strong predictors of whether Trump voters would support a Democratic candidate.



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### A ball that inverts and changes color when it is midair, and the scientific literature that explains it

The Hoberman Switch Pitch Throwing Ball is a \$12 toy that instantiates a dual polyhedron: every time you throw it, it turns inside-out; there's a wealth of scientific literature that explains how this works, including this open-access paper from the Journal of the International Association for Shell and Spatial Structures. Here's JWZ's summary: "The curved [...]"

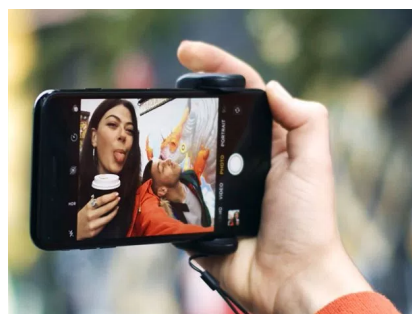
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### This smartphone grip is insurance against selfie butterfingers

Our smartphones boast pretty powerful cameras, but no matter how advanced they get, they never quite fix the shakiness that comes with trying to take a photo one-handed. This understanding is what produced the ShutterGrip Smartphone Camera Controller, a sturdy smartphone attachment that cuts down on that shaky-cam feel while letting you comfortably snap photos on [...]



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Smart home speakers are nothing new, but Apple has finally gotten into the game with its HomePod speaker. Blending Apple Music and Siri together, this innovative speaker makes it easy to handle everyday tasks while blasting your favorite tunes. The HomePod retails for \$349, but you can get your own without spending a dime by [...]



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