

## YEV PRESS KIT



### **META winner Best Independent Production**

“A singularly eccentric treat.” Montreal Gazette

“Always promising a theatrical experience beyond the expected, Scapegoat Carnivale did it again with this strange chamber piece about a real-life Siberian hermit portrayed by Alison Darcy (she also designed the set). It ended with a sequence of savage violence played out like silent film comedy that sent one out into the night puzzled, intrigued and haunted.” Montreal Gazette top ten round- up 2019

“Go see [@SGCarnivale](#) production of Yev. It's deliciously enigmatic and does something theatre doesn't do often enough: surprise us.” Tweet Caitlin Murphy

“Scapegoat Carnivale have become one of Montreal’s most original and enjoyably eccentric companies.” Jim Burke, Theatrefunhouse

“Scapegoat Carnivale Theatre a l’habitude de créer des productions originales, qui sortent de l’ordinaire, mais des créations néanmoins enracinées dans les traditions théâtrales les plus pures.”  
theatralites.com

“Le troisième et dernier volet du triptyque est une bagarre physique chorégraphiée entre Yev et Savorin qui laisse le spectateur bouche bée. La coordination efficace des mouvements, créée par Andrew Turner, est époustouflante. Darcy et Samar exécutent ce numéro exigeant avec précision et lui donnent une crédibilité impressionnante. Cette dernière partie frappe particulièrement l’imaginaire du spectateur qui la portera longtemps dans sa mémoire. Un délice bien ficelé !”  
theatralites.com

“la pièce propose des personnages intéressants, des répliques fortes, une jolie poésie et a définitivement été touchée par la baguette magique de conteur des auteurs.” theatralites.com

“It’s too late to catch Yev, Scapegoat Carnivale’s play about solitude in the vast wilderness of the Siberia Taiga, but I have a feeling that this compact little gem will be turning up again in the future.” Jim Burke



Alison Darcy and Joseph Shragge's Yev, at the MAI, is about isolation, yet features a number of duets and a mystery neighbour. *SCAPEGOAT CARNIVALE*.

## SCAPEGOAT CARNIVALE'S YEV BRINGS A SIBERIAN RECLUSE IN FROM THE COLD



JIM BURKE

As winter enters its last phase, two upcoming independent theatre productions reflect the unforgiving cold of the season, with Scapegoat Carnivale taking us to a remote region of the Siberian Taiga, and Buddies in Bad Times Theatre bringing dispatches from the upper reaches of the Arctic.

**YEV**  
(March 14-24 at Mai Centre, 3680 Jeanne-Mance St.)

Scapegoat Carnivale follow up their magnificent, META-winning oddity *Sapientia* with another quirky study of a religious-minded woman forging her own path. Where *Sapientia* was playwright Joseph Shragge's reworking of an existing play, one written by 10th-century nun Hroswitha of Gandersheim, *Yev* is an original piece created by Shragge and Alison Darcy.

The pair came across the story of Siberian hermit Agafia Lykovaï in an old Russian documentary, again in a Vice report, then in a news item describing how she popped into a nearby village to wish everyone a Happy New Year, then disappeared again into her splendid isolation. As Shragge says, with characteristic understatement, "I think I have an affection for the lesser known."

Shragge was speaking by telephone to the Montreal Gazette, along with co-writer Darcy, who, as well as designing the set, plays Yev, as the character loosely based on Lykovaï is called.

The pair came across the story of Siberian hermit Agafia Lykovaï in an old Russian documentary, again in a Vice report, then in a news item describing how she popped into a nearby village to wish everyone a Happy New Year, then disappeared again into her splendid isolation. As Shragge says, with characteristic understatement, "I think I have an affection for the lesser known."

Shragge was speaking by telephone to the Montreal Gazette, along with co-writer Darcy, who, as well as designing the set, plays Yev, as the character loosely based on Lykovaï is called.

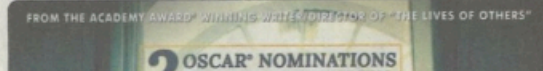
"We were captured by the image of the stoic lone figure and the romantic idea of that," says Darcy, "compared to the actual pain of being truly alone in an isolated location."

As with the martyrdom play *Sapientia*, Yev is about a woman absolutely dedicated to God, though Shragge says that, as agnostics, he and Darcy "wanted to keep it a bit vague in terms of which denomination it is. It's loosely based on a group of Russians called the Old Believers."

There are many mysteries to be unearthed in Yev, one of which, Darcy says, is the lead character's unexpected relationship with the outside world.

"Unusually for a play that's about isolation," Darcy explains, "we start with a group of sequences that are pretty much duets, with Yev exchanging letters with a young biology student. Then we move deeper into her life. Relationships start being revealed. And we learn she's got this surprising neighbour."

As with Scapegoat Carnivale's excursion into medieval martyrdom (*Sapientia*) and quirky readings of Greek tragedy (*Oedipus* and *The Bacchae*) and of obscure Jewish folklore (*Bar Kapra the Squirrel Hunter*), Yev promises to be a singularly eccentric treat. Call 514-982-3386 or visit [m-a-i-qc.ca](http://m-a-i-qc.ca).





## Theatre: Scapegoat Carnivale's Yev brings a recluse in from the cold

Plus more shows on the Arctic, female friendship, sexual politics and genius, plus a reimagining of Dickens's First Nations connection.

JIM BURKE, SPECIAL TO MONTREAL GAZETTE Updated: March 7, 2019



As winter enters its last phase, two upcoming independent theatre productions reflect the unforgiving cold of the season, with Scapegoat Carnivale taking us to a remote region of the Siberian Taiga, and Buddies in Bad Times Theatre bringing dispatches from the upper reaches of the Arctic. Watch out too for shows plunging us into the maelstrom of female friendship, the minefield of sexual politics and the emotional calculus of genius, plus a reimagining of Dickens's Canadian (and First Nations) connection.

Yev (March 14-24 at Mai Centre, 3680 Jeanne-Mance St.)

Scapegoat Carnivale follow up their magnificent, META-winning oddity Sapiencia with another quirky study of a religious-minded woman forging her own path. Where Sapiencia was playwright Joseph Shragge's reworking of an existing play, one written by 10th-century nun Hroswitha of Gandersheim, Yev is an original piece created by Shragge and Alison Darcy.

The pair came across the story of Siberian hermit Agafia Lykova in an old Russian documentary, again in a Vice report, then in a news item describing how she popped into a nearby village to wish everyone a happy New Year, then disappeared again into her splendid isolation. As Shragge says, with characteristic understatement, "I think I have an affection for the lesser known."

Shragge was speaking by telephone to the Montreal Gazette, along with co-writer Darcy, who, as well as designing the set, plays Yev, as the character loosely based on Lykova is called.

"We were captured by the image of the stoic lone figure and the romantic idea of that," says Darcy, "compared to the actual pain of being truly alone in an isolated location."

As with the martyrdom play Sapiencia, Yev is about a woman absolutely dedicated to God, though Shragge says that, as agnostics, he and Darcy "wanted to keep it a bit vague in terms of which denomination it is. It's loosely based on a group of Russians called the Old Believers."

There are many mysteries to be unearthed in Yev, one of which, Darcy says, is the lead character's unexpected relationship with the outside world.

"Unusually for a play that's about isolation," Darcy explains, "we start with a group of sequences that are pretty much duets, with Yev exchanging letters with a young biology student. Then we move deeper into her life. Relationships start being revealed. And we learn she's got this surprising neighbour."

As with Scapegoat Carnivale's previous excursion into medieval martyrdom (Sapiencia) and their quirky readings of Greek tragedy (Oedipus and The Bacchae) and of obscure Jewish folklore (Bar Kapra the Squirrel Hunter), Yev promises to be a singularly eccentric treat. Call 514-982-3386 or visit [m-a-i.qc.ca](http://m-a-i.qc.ca).

## Yev

Posted on [March 25, 2019](#)

This site uses cookies. By continuing to use this website, you agree to their use. [Learn more](#) or [change our settings](#) to see how to control cookies, see here: [Cookie Policy](#)



Yev (Alison Darcy) has a difference of opinion with her neighbour Savorin (Sasha Samar). Photo credit: Helena Vallès Escolà

**Presented by Scapegoat Carnivale Theatre at MAI Centre, March 14 – 24.**

It's too late to catch Yev, Scapegoat Carnivale's play about solitude in the vast wilderness of the Siberia Taiga, but I have a feeling that this compact little gem will be turning up again in the future.

Scapegoat Carnivale have become one of Montreal's most original and enjoyably eccentric companies. Their mounting last year of the 10th century oddity, Sapiaentia, written by ultra-devout nun Hroswitha of Gandersheim, showed a commitment to the peculiar way beyond the call of duty. What took it even further out of the way was the company's treatment of that obscure piece (apparently Europe's first ever female-authored play), with the Christian heroine, her three martyrdom-seeking daughters and their Roman persecutors all played by household objects. The result was one of the most wickedly funny and strangely powerful productions of the year (it picked up a Most Outstanding Independent Theatre Production gong at the METAs).

In some ways, Scapegoat's latest show touches on the religious themes of Sapiaentia. Its heroine, a member of the Russian sect of Old Believers, has fled into exile to escape Stalin's purges. But it also returns to the territory of Scapegoat's 2016 show Bar Kapra Squirrel Hunter, an intriguing if not wholly successful play about bizarre goings-on in a remote forest involving a savage conflict between said hunter and his wife.

Yev, which is loosely based on real life Siberian hermit Agafya Lykova, is a marked step forward from Bar Kapra. For one thing, unlike the rather sprawling structure of that play, Yev utilizes a strict commitment to three distinct theatre styles.

The first part is an epistolary dialogue between Yev (Alison Darcy) and McGill student, Matthew (Trevor Barrette), their long-distance communications mediated, with some amusing misunderstandings and gently stern corrections, by forest ranger and translator Nikolai (Davide Chiazzese). Matthew has been pondering a life of solitude, so his fascination with, and idealizing of, his strange pen pal have personal resonances which reverberate throughout the next two sections.

Section 2 sees Nikolai providing a running translation of the correspondences to Matthew from ageing geologist Savorin, played with a real flair for comic rage by Sasha Samar. Savorin, hobbling around on crutches after an unfortunate encounter with a bear trap, is Yev's neighbor. And, according to him, he has the real goods on her as he spins a garish yarn involving murder, incest and other dark doings in the forest. Can we believe him? Yev's description of him having an evil soul suggests perhaps not.

But then comes the eerie and darkly funny section 3, which gives a sense of the primal desperation that might well provide a fertile soil for the horrors described by Savorin. A wordless slice of physical theatre wonderfully choreographed as a mixture of slapstick and savagery by fight director Andrew Turner, this section sees Yev and Savorin locked in what looks like an eternal struggle over scraps of food, alcohol, territory and, it seems, sexual dominance.

It all ends with a shocking abruptness which, weirdly enough, gave me a similar sense of disorientation as the finale of *The Sopranos*, my initial thought being: "Really? That's it?" But it's left an echo in the air which is still resonating more than a week later.

If Darcy and Shragge's sometimes poetic, sometimes stark script takes us deeper into the conflicting realities of Yev's world one section at a time, Rashomon-style, then so does the set, which Darcy designed herself. At first, we get a narrow strip of playing area in front of black curtain. Then, for Savorin's Russian monologue (and Nikolai's translation), we get a blue-tinted diorama of the Taiga landscape. Finally, Yev's cottage, surrounded by birch trees, bursts into view. Its realism and solidity suggests that this is the only part of the play we can trust as the truth. Yet there's something surreal about it, as if it's a part of some ominous fairytale.

What Yev all adds up to, I'm still not sure. But it feels this sense of lingering uncertainty and disquiet is exactly what *Scapegoat* were after with this beautifully-constructed curiosity.