

THE DECEMBER MAN (L'homme de décembre) This site-specific production, part of the 2019 Toronto Fringe Festival, is performed near the site of the 2018 Danforth shooting and explores survivor's guilt following acts of public violence.

The December Man (*L'homme de décembre*), by Canadian playwright Colleen Murphy, is set in the aftermath of the 1989 Montreal Massacre.

Benoît and Kathleen Fournier do everything they can to help their beloved son, engineering student Jean, cope with his guilt and rage from witnessing the massacre... but Jean's young life becomes unglued in both subtle and overt ways.

Murphy intuitively takes the audience backwards, beginning with the moment Kathleen and Benoît accept there will be no more chances to save each other, and working back in time to the fateful day when Jean, the only ray of hope in this working-class family, escaped the massacre...or thought he did.

As the play progresses, we see the decline of the Fournier family's cozy and optimistic existence, and witness Jean's cries for help. Time and again, the Fourniers miss opportunities to save Jean, who the community around them would widely view as a survivor, but for whom survival ultimately becomes unbearable. In this way, we come to understand that, when dealing with unspeakable tragedy, hindsight is 20/20. In the face of suffering, however, supports are often unavailable, or else those who would offer them are ill-equipped to do so.

Using humour and the mundane routines of everyday life, juxtaposed against an extraordinary event in Canadian history, *The December Man (L'homme de décembre)*, which received the 2007 Governor General's Award, invites audiences to examine the impact mass violence has on survivors, their families and communities, and how we can reach out to those who need our help.