

# New musical 'The Adventures of Eva the Louse' enchants children as well as parents

Red carpet launch in Laval starred 175 students from English Montreal School Board

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"Our ultimate goal is to inspire these young participants to fall in love with singing and music," said Dimitris Ilias, the project's co-artistic director.

Since most parents and school-age children these days can easily relate to something like an annoying infestation of head lice, it was only a matter of time before someone developed the idea into a musical production, with a symphony orchestra and an enchanting chorus of children's voices.

After eighteen months of auditions, rehearsals, recording and production, *The Adventures of Eva Louse* is the culmination of those efforts.

## Unique musical journey

"It has been a unique educational journey, showing how literature and music can inspire and educate our children in remarkable ways," said Dimitris Ilias, who, along with his wife, Maria Diamantis, led the project from beginning to end as artistic directors.

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Under their guidance (their previous credits on the Chroma Musika label include *The Golden Touch* and *Time for Flowers Time for Snow*), *The Adventures of Eva Louse* is a labour of love, involving international orchestral recording sessions with the Sofia Session Orchestra in Bulgaria.

## Red carpet treatment

Development of the massive, multi-level, educational and artistic project culminated in style on Oct. 30 at The Palace convention centre

in Laval with a performance of highlights, as well as the official release of a children's picture/ audio book.

The evening wasn't just a chance to see a performance – it was the culmination of a year and a half of dedication, teamwork and learning, highlighting the power of creativity in conjunction with community. The red-carpet affair was an event the young participants are sure to remember all their lives.

*The Adventures of Eva the Louse* follows the humorous and heartwarming journey of Eva, a tiny louse living on nine-year-old protagonist Paul's head. When Paul's aversion to soap and scissors reaches a crisis stage, Eva and her louse village must face reality: dreaded soap and a terrifying haircut.

## A formula for success

The project, developed using a winning formula that contributed to Chroma Musika's previous successes, brought together the talents of 175 young choristers from 13 English Montreal School Board schools, as well as the imagination of illustrator Philippe Béha, and the musical brilliance of composer Giannis Georgantelis (both of whom collaborated on the earlier projects).

The EMSB Chorale, under the direction of Pat Abbott and Marie-Eve Arseneault, made a stunning contribution in their recording of *Sanctuary*, the finale of *Eva the Louse*, which guests had the chance to enjoy during the première.

## A real group effort

Helping teach the choral parts was associate music director Kerry Roebuck, who was not only the rehearsal director of a Tuesday night group at the EMSB's Royal Vale Elementary School in Montreal, but was also the orchestra conductor at the première.

Also providing musical direction were Veronica Graniero, a music teacher at Honoré Mercier School (she had a starring role as Paul's mother, Mrs. Goober), as well as Maria Alongi who teaches music at Pierre de Coubertin Elementary, and Yee Kit Lo, a music teacher at Elizabeth Ballantyne Elementary.

EMSB director-general Nick Katalifos, one of several dignitaries present as guests, called *The Adventures of Eva the Louse* "not just a musical performance; it represents a harmonious blend of our community's values –creativity, education, and resilience."

## A shared musical vision

"I'd like to extend my deepest thanks to Dimitris Ilias and Maria Diamantis, whose dedication and artistry have transformed a simple idea into this magnificent celebration," said Katalifos. "Dimitri and Maria, we have journeyed through many musical endeavors together, and each time, I am reminded of the power of collaborative spirit and shared vision."

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Volunteers who helped make *The Adventures of Eva Louse* a reality.



The school principals were presented with copies of the published book.




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The evening was marked by the dramatic arrival of the 175 young choristers, making a grand entrance while arriving in stretch limou-

sines. They walked the red carpet alongside Philippe Béha and Giannis Georgantelis. After the performance, the young stars signed

copies of the book, again alongside the illustrator and composer, bringing the magic of Eva's world to life.

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