

News of the arts

Ottawa's Cinderella a hit

A Canadian production of the Jules Massenet opera *Cendrillon* recently received the acclaim of audiences and critics in two North American capitals. The rarely-performed work, produced by the National Arts Centre's Festival Ottawa last July, attracted immediate international attention; in Washington's Kennedy Centre two months later, the same production achieved even more media coverage and praise.

The opera, directed by Brian Macdonald, one of Canada's most distinguished choreographers, starred Frederica von Stade in the title role and was conducted by Festival Ottawa's artistic director, Mario Bernardi.

The prolonged standing ovation that greeted the *première* was headlined in newspapers across Canada, from Newfoundland's St. John's *Evening Telegram* to British Columbia's *Vancouver Province*.

The *New Yorker* magazine sent a correspondent to the Canadian capital whose three-page article on Festival Ottawa praised everything from the National Arts Centre ("so admirable and versatile a building") to the smallest details of Miss von Stade's performance.



Fernand R. Leclair

Frederica von Stade as *Cendrillon*.

The British magazine *Opera* also devoted an article to the production, headlined "Stunning *Cendrillon*" and praising the design and the music.

In Washington D.C., the work elicited raves from both the *Washington Star* ("It

is a production to see and savour, musically and scenically as beautiful a rendition of Massenet's exquisite romance as you are likely to find. There are no weak links in the show") and the *Washington Post* ("It would be hard to imagine a more auspicious vehicle for the launching of the Washington Opera's 1979-80 season...it would be hard to overpraise the authority, refinement and vibrancy of Bernardi's conducting.... Equal praise must go to the stage direction and choreography of another Canadian, Brian Macdonald").

The *New York Times* wrote that "the Washington performance, superbly cast and elegantly staged, conveyed all of this in a stylish and handsome production... von Stade is the perfect *Cendrillon*", while the American national magazine *Newsweek* said: "All of the diverse elements of farce and fantasy have been blended magnificently. Even in such a magnificent cast, Frederica von Stade stood out...she and the others were immensely aided by conductor Mario Bernardi — a fairy godfather with his own magic wand. One came away not only inspired by the performance but overjoyed at this renaissance of a work".

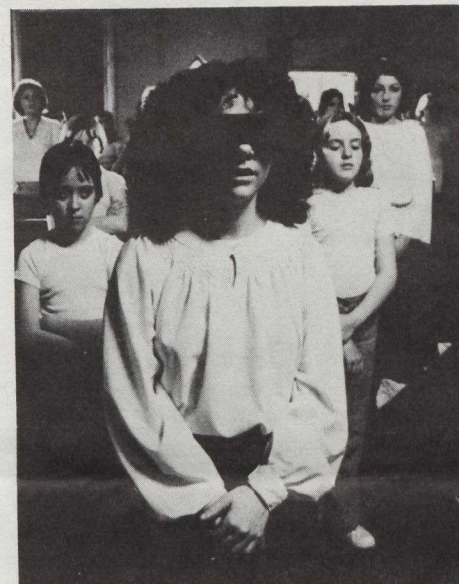
The other operas in last summer's Festival, Mozart's *Così fan tutte* and Tchaikovsky's *The Queen of Spades*, received almost equal praise; both operas had been seen at Festival Ottawa before. Next summer, from July 3-27, Festival Ottawa celebrates its tenth season with three operas, two operas in concert and ten performances of chamber music. For information, write to Festival Ottawa, National Arts Centre, Ottawa, Canada, K1R 5W1.

Film Board scores in Chicago

The National Film Board of Canada won six awards at the 1979 Chicago International Film Festival, November 2-18.

Mourir à tue tête (The Primal Fear), directed by Anne-Claire Poirier, was awarded a gold plaque in the feature-film category; the film's star, Julie Vincent, was named top actress. Miss Poirier's film has been presented, out of competition, in festivals in Cannes, New York, Chicago, London, Greece, the Netherlands and Belgium.

A Gold Hugo, the Grand Prize of the Festival, was presented to *L'âge de la chaise (Age of the Chair)*, as the top ani-



NFB

A scene from *The Primal Fear*.

mation film. It was directed by Jean Thomas Bédard.

Two other NFB animation films were honoured. A silver plaque went to *Every Child (Chaque Enfant)*, directed by Eugene Fedorenko and a certificate of merit went to Lynn Smith's *This Is Your Museum Speaking*.

The Bronze Hugo was awarded to John Smith for his *Revolution's Orphans* in the short drama category and a gold plaque was awarded to Margaret Laurence, *First Lady of Manawaka*, directed by Robert Duncan, in the documentary category.

Arts briefs

The *Devil and Daniel Mouse* was awarded first prize at the recent Child's Film Festival, an annual event sponsored by the Canadian Association for Young Children. This animated fantasy, made by Toronto's Nelvana Films with original music by John Sebastian, was selected over 50 other entries from the United States, Czechoslovakia, Sweden, The Netherlands and Canada.

Quebec's film-financing agency, the Institut Québécois du Cinéma, has announced an end to grants from its special development fund until March 31, 1980, because of the unusually high number of requests met this summer. The \$350,000-fund provides filmmakers with funds for script development and other forms of pre-production assistance. Grants normally range from \$3,000 to \$9,000.