

News of the arts

Musicians off to European festivals

Oscar Peterson and vocalist Salome Bey are among the Canadian musicians who will be performing at three major European jazz festivals in July, Radio-Canada International, the CBC's international service, recently announced.

They will play at the Bracknell Festival in England, July 8, at the Northsea Jazz Festival in Holland, July 13, and at the Montreux Festival in Switzerland, July 16.

Canadian jazz groups going to the festivals are the Ed Bickert Trio from Toronto, the All Star Jazz Sextet and Vancouver's Fraser MacPherson and Friends.

The Montreux Jazz Festival will open with a special all-Canadian day featuring concerts by the White River Bluegrass Band of Montreal and Quebec singer Robert Paquette.

The discovery of Inuit art

In September 1948, a young Ontario artist named James Houston, then living in Quebec, paid his first visit to the Arctic. His destination was an isolated community on the eastern shore of Hudson Bay called Port Harrison, a once-thriving trading post that had fallen on hard times. On his arrival, an Inuit presented him with a small stone figure of a bear in return for one of his sketches, and by the time he returned south late in the autumn, Mr. Houston had acquired a score of small pieces of Inuit art.

That winter, he took his collection to the Canadian Handicrafts Guild in Montreal. They promised him travelling expenses to return to the Arctic, provided him with \$1,000-credit at the Hudson's Bay Company, and charged him to discover whether the Inuit "could produce carvings in quantity and of a quality that would be saleable".

He returned to Montreal with 300 small carvings which he had bought at an average price of just over \$5. "I was flabbergasted when I heard that they proposed to mark them up as much as 20 per cent," said the artist. He need not have been concerned. The carvings were sold in three days.

Communities such as Arctic Bay, Pond Inlet, Eskimo Point, Holman Island, Great Whale River, and Baker Lake — re-

mote dots on the Arctic map — are today on the regular itinerary of hundreds of art dealers and collectors. Names like Pangnark, Pauloosie, Pitseolak, Pauta, Pillepussie, and Pudlo — names that even federal administrators once found so confusing that in 1941 they assigned numbers to the Inuit — come familiarly to the tongues of many international art connoisseurs. Exhibitions of Inuit art have been mounted in London, Paris, Copenhagen, Moscow, Leningrad and Tokyo, as well as in major centres in the United States.

While James Houston was primarily responsible for initiating the production of contemporary Inuit art, the Inuit have carved for nearly 3,000 years. However, in the century or so preceding 1948, they had carved, not as an art activity, but to make utensils, tools, weapons, toys and the occasional souvenir for visiting whites. Objects unknown to the Arctic such as airplanes, snowmobiles, clocks, sunglasses and cigarettes are now appearing in increasing numbers in Inuit prints. It is both understandable and poignant that some young carvers are seeking old catalogues of Inuit sculpture to acquaint themselves with the work of their elders.

(Article by Wynne Thomas, reprinted in *Canadian Scene*, March 1979.)

Star of the silent screen dies

Canadian-born Mary Pickford, Hollywood's first movie queen and "America's Sweetheart" of the silent film era, died recently at Santa Monica Hospital in California. She was 86.

The tiny, golden-curved actress was one of the pioneers of American motion pictures and became a symbol of that period along with such figures as comedian Charlie Chaplin, who was a close friend.

Born Gladys Smith in Toronto, April 8, 1893, Miss Pickford began her career in 1898, when at the age of five she played in *Boote's Baby* put on by the Valentine Stock Company of Toronto.

A couple of years later, her mother went on a road tour with a production of *The Little Red Schoolhouse*. Gladys and her sister Lottie also had roles. In 1906, Mrs. Smith adopted the name Pickford — after the children's grandmother — as her family's stage name.

When she was 14, the tour took Gladys to New Jersey across from Manhattan.

Determined to become a Broadway star, she rode the ferry across the Hudson River and asked to see producer David Belasco.

He cast her in *The Warrens of Virginia*, in which she made her Broadway debut on December 3, 1907. A year later, Belasco renamed her Mary Pickford.

She began her movie career in 1909. Her first leading role was in D.W. Grif-



Mary Pickford sent her photograph to former Prime Minister MacKenzie King.

fith's *The Violin Maker of Cremona*.

Her best remembered silent films included *Hearts Adrift* — her first big hit — *Tess of the Storm Country*, *Daddy Long Legs*, *Pollyanna*, *Poor Little Rich Girl* and *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm*.

Summer festival at the NAC

This year's Festival Ottawa is scheduled to take place at the National Arts Centre in Ottawa, July 3-28.

The festival will offer four performances of three operas (one first and two revivals) and nine chamber music programs by a trio, three quartets and a chamber orchestra. The performers include the Beaux Arts Trio, Vermeer Quartet, Fine Arts Quartet, Scottish Chamber Orchestra and Orford Quartet.

The season's new production is Masenet's *Cendrillon*, which features American mezzo-soprano, Frederica von Stade, who is making her Canadian operatic debut in the title role. The cast includes Maureen Forrester as Madame de la Haltiere (Cinderella's stepmother).