

## Conference examines theatre

A conference looking at the status of Canadian theatre was held recently in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

The five-day Canadian Theatre Today Conference was organized by the English and drama departments of the University of Saskatchewan with financial help from governments and major corporations. It drew writers, performers, directors and academics from across Canada.

During the conference, five new plays were performed by a number of smaller alternate theatre groups, as well as the *début* of a new one-man show by veteran actor-comic Chris Wiggins.

Morning and afternoon sessions included speeches and panel discussions involving a cross-section of theatre writing, acting and directing talent. The keynote speech was delivered by Thomas Peacocke, the 1980 Genie award winner as best actor for his portrayal of Athol Murray in the *Hounds of Notre Dame*.

## Athleticism is dancer's hallmark

Margie Gillis, a Canadian dancer who has performed for audiences around the world, appeared for the first time recently at the National Arts Centre in Ottawa.

Ms. Gillis began dancing at age three with classes in ballet, pointe, theatre and gymnastics, but by the time she reached her teens she departed from the more traditional kinds of dance to develop her own personal style as a form of self-expression. She has been performing solo shows of her own choreography since 1974. It was in 1977 that she ventured onto the national dance scene with performances at the Dance in Canada Conference in Winnipeg.

In 1979, Ms. Gillis travelled to the People's Republic of China where she had plans to dance in parks. However, by the time she left she was booked into 2,000-seat theatres, greeted by mayors and invited to give master classes to the Shanghai and Peking Ballets. She became the first modern dancer ever to perform and teach in that country.

Her extraordinary talents have since touched crowds in Japan, Hawaii, New York, London, France, Asia and the South Pacific. In Canada, where she toured extensively in 1979 and 1980, she performed to consistently sold-out audiences.



Margie Gillis

Ms. Gillis comes from a family of athletes: her parents were both Olympic champions, her older brother dances with the Paul Taylor Dance Company and her younger brother plays hockey with the New York Rangers. The athleticism shows in the way in which she hurls her muscular, flexible body around the stage in death-defying leaps and bone-shattering falls that have become her trademark.

For her NAC performance, Ms. Gillis danced: *Jersey Girl*, *Woman*, *La Lune*, *Waltzing Matilda* (the piece with which she is most closely identified), *Broken English*, *The Window*, *Once Upon a Time*, *Right Now* and *Mercy* — all her own choreography.

## International TV festival at Banff

An Italian film received the Grand Prize at the Banff International Television Festival held recently in Banff, Alberta.

*Castelporziano Ostia dei Poeti*, by director Andrea Andermann took the award at the ten-day competition.

Two Canadian programs both from the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation also won top honours. In the Documentary: Social and Political category, the award went to *Just Another Missing Kid*, by John Zaritsky. (The show was also singled out for the best documentary script.) An episode of CBC's *For the Record* series, *Final Edition*, took the prize in the Drama Specials category.

The five-person jury named *Cream in My Coffee* from Britain as the Features Division winner. An episode from a British series, entitled *Agony*, triumphed in the situation comedy category. Each of the productions came from London Weekend Television, which was deemed most worthy "participating organization" at the festival. It also produced two other visitors: *The Flipside of Dominick Hide*, which received both a special jury prize and a citation for best dramatic script and *Metal Mickey*, a children's comedy series, won in the children's programming sector.

In a catch-all category called Documentary: Travel, Leisure, Wildlife, Pat Ferrero's short film, *Quilts in Women's Lives* was named the winner. *Docteur Teyran* from France took the award in the limited series competition.

The Bank of Montreal, the festival's major private sponsor gave its award of excellence to veteran director Norman Campbell for his "outstanding contribution to Canadian television programming".

## Quebec singer sweeps awards



Diane Tell won four Felix awards recently at the annual gala ceremony honouring the best in the Quebec music field. Ms. Tell won her awards for female singer of the year, album of the year for a composer-singer with the record, *En Flèche*, and song of the year, *Si j'étais un homme* (If I Were a Man). *The Discovery of the Year Award* went to *Martine Saint-Clair*, while *Daniel Lavoie* was selected as male singer of the year. *Luc Plamondon* won two awards — rock album of the year and best show of the year — for his album *Starmania*.