

# News of the arts

## Canadian sets Pope's poems to music

A Canadian composer and lyricist has been commissioned to turn the poetry of Pope John Paul into popular songs.

Gene Lees, 56, who now lives in California, visited Toronto recently to meet officials of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Toronto to discuss a concert of songs during the Pope's visit later this year. The poems, written by the Pope when he was a young priest, have been translated into more than 90 languages.

But the task before Lees — whose songs have been recorded by Frank Sinatra, Tony Bennett and Peggy Lee — is to make them suitable for singing.

"I've read them in four languages now," said Gene Lees, who was born in Hamilton, Ontario. "They're very beautiful and moving, humanist more than spiritual. I hope I can bring them to a wider audience."

The project was awarded to Lees about two years ago through the Vatican after several other composers were rejected.

"The problem was that the poetry is in such free form that there's no pattern to the rhythms," he said. "Nobody could lick them. I had the same problem and I was inclined to give up. Then a composer named Tito Fontana worked it out and licked it."

Gene Lees has translated eight of ten poems by the Pope and says the Vatican is enthusiastic about them.

## Alberta artist wins in Tokyo

Jean Richards, an artist from Edmonton, Alberta, has won a prize in the prestigious *Tokyo Times* calligraphy exhibition.

"I just couldn't believe it when I was notified," she said. "Imagine, an artist from Edmonton, Alberta, winning in a competition based on an Oriental art form."

Jean Richards was the only non-Japanese artist in the exhibition, and the only Canadian. Entering the competition came about through a woman she met during last summer's World University Games held in Edmonton.

The woman took several of Jean Richards' works back to Japan and showed them to the curator of the exhibition who, in turn, invited her to participate.

## Major exhibit marks Jacques Cartier's first voyage to Canada

To celebrate the four-hundred-and-fiftieth anniversary of Jacques Cartier's first voyage to Canada, the National Library of Canada has mounted an exhibition *Jacques Cartier in Canada*, which explores facets of Jacques Cartier's Canadian explorations, recreates images of what he saw, and offers a profile of the man.

*Jacques Cartier in Canada* documents the conditions that greeted the first French explorers of North America as they sought the elusive westward passage to Asia. With materials drawn from a variety of sources in both hemispheres, it illustrates the natural and human factors that first drew Cartier and his party down the St. Lawrence River as far west as the present site of Montreal.

The exhibition is divided into five parts. After outlining the political and economic background of westward exploration in the early fifteenth century, it treats in detail various aspects of Cartier's three voyages, from relations with the natives to the health of the unsuspecting Europeans as they faced their first Canadian winter. The last section focuses on Jacques Cartier the man.

A wide range of manuscripts, drawings, paintings, sculpture, maps, plans, and photographs, all help to illuminate the exploits of Jacques Cartier.

A large photo of the excavation by H. Ingstad (1960-67) at L'Anse, confirming the existence on the coast of Newfoundland of a village founded by the Vikings from Greenland around 1000 B.C., dominates the first section.

With its mounded grassy forms, it is a green and ghostly reminder of a human



PAC, C-43934

settlement that had existed and vanished long before Cartier set out at the behest of François I in search of "certain islands and lands where it is said that a great quantity of gold and other precious things are to be found".

Jacques Cartier made two exploratory voyages to Canada in 1534 and 1535. In 1541 he returned not only to further his knowledge about the area but also to establish a colony.

*Jacques Cartier in Canada* is open until March 31, 1984, at the National Library, 395 Wellington Street, Ottawa. The exhibition will then move to the Canadian Cultural Centre in Paris where it will open in May. It will also be shown in Saint-Malo, Jacques Cartier's birthplace and at the Canadian consulates general in Marseille, Bordeaux and Strasbourg.



Jacques Cartier planting a cross on Canadian soil.

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