

News of the arts

Montreal troupe tours schools in New England

The Montreal-based company, Théâtre des Pissenlits (Dandelion Theatre), makes a tour of New England, U.S., this month under the auspices of the Department of External Affairs. The nine-year old troupe will tour Maine, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New Hampshire, and Vermont giving 15 school performances. They are performing *Les Ballons enchantés/Magic Ballons*, which has proved its appeal to young audiences in tours throughout Canada and in the southern United States.

The play is a mixture of the Hans Christian Anderson tale of *The Emperor and the Nightingale* and stories from Quebec folklore. The performance, which involves four actors and puppets, will be presented to Franco-American communities in the new England states.



Krieber photo

René Lemieux performs in *Les Ballons Enchantés/Magic Balloons*.

Wanted — a singing monkey

In preparing for Festival Canada '77, July 2 to 30, the National Arts Centre, Ottawa, finds that it needs a monkey — or someone willing to impersonate a monkey. Destined to appear in a non-singing role in Mozart's *The Magic Flute*, the person in question must be on hand for rehearsals, wear an appropriate costume and respond to specific directions in what is considered the most fanciful of all Mozart's operas. In other words, what is needed is an "operatic" rather than a "zoo" monkey, one more likely to win applause than peanuts from the audience.

As if that weren't enough, the Festival's opera productions also call for an armadillo, a baboon and a porcupine.

If it all sounds a bit ridiculous, the NAC explains that children and adults are urgently needed to fill these very important non-singing roles in the Mozart work as well as in Donizetti's *Don Pasquale* and Richard Strauss's *Ariadne auf Naxos*. In addition singers are required for the choruses in *The Magic Flute* and *Don Pasquale*. The National Arts Centre is inviting applications for any one of the positions mentioned above.

Guelph Spring Festival

The Guelph Spring Festival, which opens on April 30 and runs to May 22, includes a variety of musical events, a ballet performance and the *première* of a new play. The Festival, now in its tenth year is held in Guelph, Ontario, a town in southern Ontario just west of Toronto.

British organist Susan Landale, accompanied by the Toronto Brass Quintet, opens the Festival on April 30. The following day, the Toronto Mendelssohn Choir and the Hamilton Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Elmer Isler will perform the *première* of *Song for St. Cecilia's Day* by Canadian composer Charles Wilson. Irish actress Siobhan McKenna has been engaged to perform in a new play about the declining years of Sarah Bernhardt. *Memoire* is by Calgary playwright John Murrell and will run for the week of May 2-8. The Toronto Symphony Orchestra, under Andrew Davis, will be in concert May 6, with French pianist Michel Beroff, soloist. The following evening is the *première* of *Seabird Island*, an opera by Derek Healey and Norman Newton based on a West Coast Indian legend. Vancouver's string ensemble the Purcell Quartet, in concert

on May 8, gives the first Canadian performance of Benjamin Britten's *String Quartet No. 1*. Winners of the National Vocal Competition will be featured in two concerts on May 12 and 14. On May 15, popular Quebec *chanteuse*, Pauline Julien will give a concert. May 17 and 18 will be devoted to *The Return of the Tiger*, a celebration of the city of Guelph's one-hundred-and-fiftieth anniversary in a musical encounter between modern Guelph and one of its more colourful founders, "Tiger" Dunlop.

Bergman film

The Ingmar Bergman film *The Magic Flute* will be screened on May 19, and the next day, the Montreal company Les Grands Ballets Canadiens perform a selection of works that include dances set to music by Canadian composers Pierre Mercure and Murray Schafer. As *finalé* concerts to the Festival, on May 21, a recital will be given by Metropolitan Opera star Marilyn Horne, and on the 22nd the 400-voice Ontario Choral Federation and the National Arts Centre Orchestra conducted by David Willcocks will present Handel's dramatic oratorio *Israel in Egypt*.