

News of the arts

Alberta art to tour Japan

The Alberta Art Foundation is sending an exhibition of about 75 works from its permanent collection for display in Japan.

The foundation has selected sculptures, paintings, graphics, ceramics and woven hangings for the exhibition in conjunction with the principles outlined in a Japanese-Canadian cultural agreement. Most of the items are recent works by Alberta artists.

The show, to go to Japan in January, represents the development of civilization on the Canadian Prairies and is in return for a Japanese art exhibition which recently toured Alberta.

The Federal Government will pay shipping charges as well as making cultural representatives available from the Canadian Embassy in Japan.

Report on music training

The Canada Council has released a report entitled *A National Music School for Canada* which may have major repercussions on music training in Canada, especially on the professional training of orchestral musicians. The 105-page document is the result of an intensive study, carried out since early 1976, by Professor Helmut Blume of Montreal, at the request of the Canada Council.

Foremost among the recommendations contained in the report is the establishment of a national music school to bridge the gap between theoretical and practical courses now offered by the specialized schools (university schools and conservatories), and the requirements of a professional career in music. Arguing that one should build on what already exists, Professor Blume sees the transformation of the Banff School of Fine Arts in Alberta into a "National School of Music and Fine Arts" as the best way to achieve this objective.

The national school envisaged by Professor Blume would offer year-round courses in performance and orchestral disciplines and would initiate a professional program of orchestral conducting. It would also train coaches, stage designers, opera producers and solo pianists. Funding of the school would be along the same lines as that of the National Theatre School in Montreal, except that the music school would not charge tuition fees.

The report also advocates various measures to improve music education and the training of performers at the university and pre-university levels. They include the upgrading of admission criteria, teaching standards and graduation requirements; the appointment of music specialists in elementary schools; the establishment of preparatory schools under the aegis of university music schools; and the provision of free musical instruction to all talented children in every province, as already exists in the province of Quebec.

For music organizations, recommendations are made to facilitate the recruiting of professional musicians, to achieve a higher combined public subsidy for all, and assure greater co-operation between orchestras on the one hand and opera, dance and musical theatre companies on the other. It also proposes the formation of small chamber opera companies.

Among other observations the author noted:

- According to the *Directory of Canadian Orchestras and Youth Orchestras, 1976-77*, there are 45 orchestras in Canada, not counting youth and student orchestras. Of these, half are considered to be "amateur", 16 are "fully professional" (including four chamber orchestras) and eight are described as "semi-professional".

- Canadians make up approximately two-thirds of the musicians employed by professional orchestras, but scarcely one-third of these received their entire training in Canada.

- There are 40 professional schools of music in Canada at the university level, including the seven branches of the Quebec Conservatory. The schools and conservatories shared a total of 5,600 students in 1976-77. The number of post-graduate students majoring in performance was very low — scarcely 200 (of whom only 60 majored in orchestral instruments). Further, these schools "are simply not geared at present to produce orchestral instrumentalists sufficiently knowledgeable of repertoire and experienced in symphonic performance to qualify as professionals".

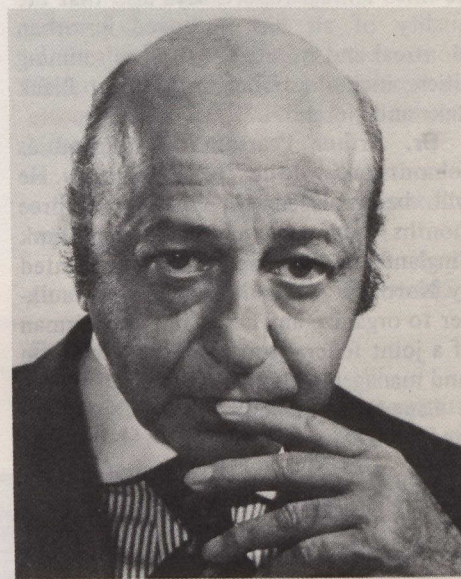
- The difficulties and shortcomings of the professional music schools are said to be rooted in the weaknesses of pre-university institutions, where the value of music as an intellectual discipline is often ignored.

Professor Blume visited over 70 schools, orchestras, government depart-

ments and music centres across Canada, had discussions and exchanges of correspondence with hundreds of persons professionally connected with music, distributed four questionnaires and analyzed over 500 replies.

Professor Blume was for several years dean of the Faculty of Music at McGill University, and participated in numerous music broadcasts on the CBC radio network. His report is published and distributed free of charge by the Canada Council, P.O. Box 1047, Ottawa, Ontario, K1P 5V8.

Canadians captured on film



Yousef Karsh (above), internationally-known Canadian photographer, has finished another book — this one devoted to Canadian subjects, photographed over the last five decades. Karsh's *Canadians* features 79 personalities, including writers Margaret Atwood, Margaret Laurence, Pierre Burton, Robertson Davies and Stephen Leacock, dancer Karen Kain, Inuit artist Kenojuk, skaters Karen Magnussen and Barbara Ann Scott, and former Prime Minister Mackenzie King. The book is published by University of Toronto Press.

Arts brief

Renata Scotto and Carlo Bergonzi, two of opera's most renowned artists, were featured recently in a Canadian Opera Company gala tribute to the bicentennial of the La Scala Opera House, Milan, Italy.