

News of the arts

Children's theatre tours U.S.S.R., participates in Geneva festival

Under the auspices of the Department of External Affairs, the Montreal-based national theatre for children — Les Pissenlits — will tour Tbilissi, Odessa and Moscow in the Soviet Union, from May 28 to June 15 with its production of Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver*. The company also opened the First International Festival of Children's Theatre in Geneva, Switzerland on May 21. Thirteen performances of *Gulliver* will be presented in the U.S.S.R. and four in Geneva.



Gulliver, a sad Chaplin-like clown.

The three-week tour of the U.S.S.R. is part of the program of exchanges for 1978 and 1979 governed by the 1971 General Exchanges Agreement between Canada and the Soviet Union. The current program of performing arts specifies an official exchange of three artistic groups.

Les Pissenlits was founded in Lac Saint-Jean, Quebec from an idea of its artistic director Jean-Yves Gaudreault, its sole mandate the entertainment of children and the awakening of their sense of theatre. During its 11-year existence Pissenlits has produced 11 plays and, to an audience of over a million, has given 2,712 performances in parks, schools, cultural centres and theatres across Canada and in the United States. The invitation to take part in the Geneva International Festival of Children's Theatre and to tour the U.S.S.R. marks the company's first appearance in Europe.

Gulliver, adapted by le Théâtre des Pissenlits from Jonathan Swift's famous story *Gulliver's Travels*, was first produced by the company during its 1976-77 season. It was with this production of *Gulliver* that, in November 1976, le Théâtre des Pissenlits became the first children's theatre company to perform for school children at the Place des Arts in Montreal. Following that, they toured Canada with the production, including the National Arts Centre in Ottawa.

Gulliver is a sad Chaplin-like clown, incapable of laughter, bored with his friends. He seeks happiness, unaware that true contentment lies not in foreign lands but in the heart.

Mariposa Festival program

The Mariposa Folk Festival, which has scheduled its nineteenth season on Toronto's Centre Island June 15-17, has announced the names of over 35 performers and groups representing the full range of folk music in North America.

Among the best-known are bluesman John Hammond and folksingers Robert Paquette, Colleen Peterson, Tom Paxton and Mike Seeger. Familiar names from past festivals include instrumentalist Ken Bloom, the Folk Tellers, the Original Sloth Band and fiddler Graham Townsend. First-timers include Big Redd Ford, the Honolulu Heartbreakers and Gatemouth Brown.

As in the past years, Mariposa will have six stages, with one set aside for children's activities and will host craft displays and workshops.

Canada/Scotland swap writers

The Canada Council and the Scottish Arts Council have announced the names of the recipients of the Canada-Scotland Writers-in-Residence Exchange Fellowships for the coming academic year. The Canadian recipient is Ken Mitchell; the Scottish winner is Cliff Hanley.

Under the terms of the exchange program, York University in Toronto will receive Mr. Hanley and a Scottish university will receive Mr. Mitchell, for the period from October 1 to June 30, 1980. The present participants are the Canadian writer Graeme Gibson and the Scottish writer Liz Lochhead.

Mr. Mitchell will be free to devote himself principally to his work, but he will also travel, give lectures and readings, make himself available to students for consultation and participate in seminars and literary meetings. Mr. Hanley's responsibilities in Canada will be similar. The fellowship is worth £5,000 (\$17,000 for the Scottish recipient), plus accommodation and return travel fares.

While at university, Ken Mitchell began to publish short stories in Canadian magazines and to write radio plays for CBC. After taking a B.A. and an M.A. in English from the University of Saskatchewan, he joined the faculty of the University of Regina, where he continues to teach writing and literature.

His first stage play, *Heroes*, was produced in 1971. Soon after he wrote the opera *Cruel Tears*, in which he collaborated with the country-and-western band, Humphrey and the Dumptrucks. His first novel, *Wandering Rafferty*, appeared in 1972. He has published numerous short stories, plays, poems, articles, and radio and TV scripts. His collection of short stories, *Everybody Gets Something Here*, was published in 1977, as was an anthology of prairie writing, *Horizon*. A new play, *The Politician*, appeared in March, and three more books are scheduled to be published this year.

Cliff Hanley, the Scottish winner, is a novelist, journalist, and broadcaster. The author of 15 books, he is president of the Scottish Pen Club and past president of the Writers' Guild.

Editor wins international award

Edith Baxter, editor of *Canadian Travel Press*, a bi-weekly travel trade journal, received the Golden Helm International Award for "editorial excellence" and in recognition of her contribution to the travel industry. It was presented in Berlin.

Among the previous recipients of the prize are: Berthold Furtwangler, director of the German National Tourist Office in Frankfurt; Dr. L. Gavio, head of the Italian National Tourist Office in Canada; Jakov Sarenac, president of the Yugoslav National Tourist Office in Belgrade; Dr. Manfred Busche, general director of the International Tourism Exchange in Berlin; Jose Augusto Louro Carrasco, director of the Portuguese National Tourist Board in Lisbon; Amelia Bragaglia, editor *Viaggiare Review*, Rome.