

C Canadian Culture in Olympic Limelight



Beginning three weeks prior to the opening ceremonies of the XV Olympic Winter Games and concluding at the closing of the Games, Calgary will open its concert halls, stages, galleries, museums and theatres to the world. Through the performing, literary and visual arts, a world-class showcase of local, national and international performers will pay tribute to the legends and culture of Canada.

The Olympic Arts Festival, the largest arts festival ever held as the cultural component of an Olympic Winter Games, will enhance the Olympic experience for a potential on-site audience of 1.2 million people. Millions more, worldwide, will share in the excitement through international broadcasts of some of the events.

"The policy guiding the [arts festival] programming is established in the Olympic Charter," says Michael Tabbitt, manager of the Arts Festival. "It mandates that there will be a festival of equal stature to the Games, to showcase the arts and culture of the host country. We looked on it as a

marvellous opportunity to show to the world the spectacular wealth of talent Canada has to offer."

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While national in focus as stipulated in the Olympic Charter, in the true international spirit of the Games the Arts Festival will also feature a variety of performers from other countries.

For 37 days, approximately 2 200 artists from 18 separate arts disciplines will be in the spotlight for more than 600 performances and exhibitions. The Festival will be held in a dozen theatres, five galleries, lobby spaces in six corporate and public buildings, the city's convention centre, two parks and the Saddledome and Corral at Stampede Park.

There are gala performances, plays and theatrical presentations, dance programs, musical events, visual arts projects and exhibitions, literary arts activities, a film festival and a series of special events encompassing an international snow-sculpting competition, a national ice-sculpting competition and, in true western tradition, a rodeo.

In addition, there is Wintershow '88, a showcase of 200 local performers and

visual artists which will take the Arts Festival to the street corners, sports venues, indoor and outdoor malls and the Calgary International Airport.

The resulting program covers a spectrum of productions within each discipline. The dance program features everything from re-creations of nineteenth-century masterpieces to world premières by Canada's leading contemporary choreographers. The music program presents choral and symphonic classics as well as commissioned works by the

country's most innovative composers. In theatre, audiences can experience a gamut of drama and comedy: Shaw's classic *You Never Can Tell*, a showcase of new Canadian plays and a theatrical circus. Visual arts exhibitions cover works in virtually every medium, from paintings and photographs from the last century to video installations and contemporary Canadian architecture.

From January 23 to February 28, Calgary will open its concert halls, stages, galleries, museums and theatres to the world.

