

News of the arts

An Oscar for National Film Board

The National Film Board received its fifth Oscar April 9, just in time to celebrate its fortieth anniversary.

Special Delivery, a seven-minute comedy directed by John Weldon and Eunice Macaulay, won in the best animated short category.

"We're bringing you home a birthday present!" said Ms. Macaulay when she and Weldon accepted the prize at the 1979 Academy Awards presentation in Los Angeles, California.

Special Delivery is about "love and death...sex and suicide...and the Post Office". It's a film for everyone who has put off shovelling snow from the front walk, then wondered if the mailman would come to grief braving the icy drifts. In this case he does — passing on to greener and less slippery pastures, as the hero lives to regret his wife's request to clear the front steps. But the story just gets spicier as the love and death triangle of hero, wife and postman unfolds.

The Oscar for *Special Delivery* follows last year's double win — by *Sand Castle* in the animation category and *I'll Find A Way* for best live action short film.

The NFB has received 50 Oscar nominations in its 40-year history, most of them for animation work. The Board won its first Academy Award in 1941 for the documentary *Churchill's Island* and the second in 1952 for Norman McLaren's animated film *Neighbours*.

Toronto — a stage for lively theatre

From the grandeur of the O'Keefe Centre, to the coziness of the Young People's Theatre Centre, Toronto's performing arts facilities are keeping pace with the city's growing reputation as a cultural provincial capital.

One of the more exciting new facilities belongs to Adelaide Court, a non-profit organization consisting of three theatre groups — Open Circle, New Theatre and Le Théâtre du P'tit Bonheur.

Two years ago, the Adelaide Court group leased the 126-year-old York County Court House from the city for \$1 a year. They then worked with the Toronto Historical Board and the Ontario Heritage Foundation to restore the building and convert it to a theatre.

The Court House, built in 1852, be-



Nir Bareket

Open Circle, a Toronto group, is seen here in *Mackerel* by Israel Horovitz, its first production at Adelaide Court which it shares with two other theatre companies.

came the County of York Municipal Hall in 1900, and later a Police Magistrates' Court. In more recent years the structure has been vacant.

When restoration started, many original characteristics, such as window, door and ceiling trim and moulding, were uncovered. These, plus the judge's bench, the spiral staircase and basement jail cells, were restored and made an integral part of the theatre.

The building was renovated to include a restaurant, lounge, summer café, offices and rehearsal halls, and two performing areas which the three groups share — Adelaide Theatre, with portable seating for 281, and Court Theatre, seating 150. It is the first time in Canada that three theatre groups have attempted to share facilities, costs and ideas while still maintaining separate identities.

Open Circle, founded in 1972, provides entertainment with strong social themes; Le Théâtre du P'tit Bonheur performs French-language plays in a primarily English city (almost half their audience is English); and New Theatre, founded in 1973, presents plays new to Canada.

Children's theatre

Another new facility in Toronto is the Young People's Theatre Centre, one of the world's most unusual and complete centres for children's drama.

Young People's Theatre (YPT), founded 12 years ago, reaches more than 400,000 children annually in schools and communities across the province. Three years ago, YPT leased a former stable and transformer building from the Toronto Transit Commission and, following a \$2.2-million fund-raising campaign, opened the doors to young theatre-goers in December 1977.

The Centre includes the main theatre, accommodating up to 330, with moveable stage and seating units; the studio theatre on the third floor holding 100; a production workshop for carpentry, costumes, painting and photography; a rehearsal hall; film workshop and Green Room; a lobby for art shows and mini-performances; and a restaurant. Carpeted catwalks and stairways also serve as comfortable story-telling areas.

Second City, one of Toronto's most popular theatre groups, also has historic accommodations. This group, which specializes in improvisational comedy, works in The Old Firehall, an impressive building dating back to Confederation in 1867.

The structure was renovated to include a theatre seating 200 and a restaurant holding 135. The red interior is reminiscent of the building's original purpose, and features a shiny, gold firepole in the corner.