

News of the arts

Ballet duo acclaimed in Moscow

Karen Kain and Frank Augustyn, principal dancers with the National Ballet of Canada, recently made a triumphant appearance with the Bolshoi Ballet Company in Moscow.

A capacity audience at the Moscow Bolshoi Theatre gave the duo a nine-minute standing ovation and six curtain calls for their performance in *Giselle* on January 14.

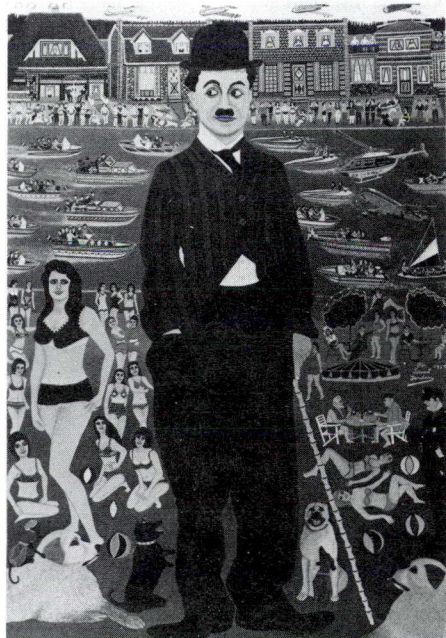
Kain and Augustyn added *Swan Lake* to their repertoire for the rest of the tour of the Soviet Union that took them to Tallin, Vilnius and Kiev.

The two Canadians are the first dancers from a North American ballet company to star with the Bolshoi Ballet in a regularly scheduled performance. The pair won the Pas de Deux award in the Moscow international ballet competition in June 1973, and their return to the U.S.S.R. was widely acclaimed by the Soviet critics.

Ex-boxer now successful artist

An exhibition by Ernest Gendron, self-taught artist who was once a boxer and wrestler, returned to Canada from France recently and went on display at the Vancouver Art Gallery till the end of January.

His work was shown for the first time



Gendron considers this painting of Charlie Chaplin his masterpiece.

in Europe at the Canadian Cultural Centre in Paris from November 9 to December 12, where his portrait of General de Gaulle was of special interest to French visitors. Six hundred layers of paint – applied with a matchstick and toothpicks – were used to give the famous de Gaulle nose its august relief.

The exhibition was shown at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts when the galleries were reopened last May after a three-year renovation program that cost \$10 million, as well as in Rouyn-Noranda, Saint-Hyacinthe, Vaudreuil in Quebec as well as Toronto.

Gendron has a "particular genius... in rendering the technicoloured dream, the so-called reality as presented by the media", states the Museum poster accompanying the exhibition.

The exhibition, called *Québec télé et compagnie*, is funded by National Museums Canada. Following its presentation in Paris, it already has been booked as far ahead as next December.

Gendron the man

Gendron was born in 1912 at Saint-Marc-des-Carrières, Portneuf county, Quebec, to settler-parents. After a brief education, he became a lumberjack. To escape poverty, he moved to Montreal and when the Second World War broke out, he joined the Canadian Armed Forces. After demobilization, he used the training he had received as a commando to become a boxer. Then he became a wrestler and an acrobat. He even tried show business and, for a time, performed in cabarets as an actor or a singer. He was, however, unsuccessful and was forced to turn to manual labour, including work as a miner. When he fell seriously ill in 1950, he began to paint.

Gendron's first exhibition was at the Saidye Bronfman Centre, Montreal, in 1974. Three paintings were sold. The same year, *Vie des Arts* published an article on him. In 1975, German television personnel travelled to Montreal to film the man and his work.

The artist, using a matchstick and toothpicks, applies layers of commercial enamel, usually on masonite. His vibrant colours are obtained by superimposing layers of paint. The work consists mainly of portraits of celebrities from photographs – President Kennedy, Pope Pius XII, René Lévesque, John Diefenbaker,

Churchill – even Hitler is included. Other public figures are of Marilyn Monroe shown nude on a river bank separating her from an adoring public; Lise Payette interviewing Prime Minister Trudeau; and the one that Gendron considers to be his masterpiece – Charlie Chaplin – which took him more than a year to complete.

Library acquires historic titles

The National Library recently added about 1,000 titles of Canadiana to its collection by purchasing part of the library of the Olivier family of Joliette, Quebec.

Réjean Olivier, a librarian of the Collège de l'Assomption, Joliette, spent more than ten years making a ten-volume manuscript inventory of his entire 12,000-volume collection.

Among the more interesting titles are those on Frédéric-Alexandre Baillargé, the versatile Canadian writer, and his family, and those on Université Laval's dispute in Montreal. There is also a fairly exhaustive collection of books written in and on the subject of Joliette and surrounding region since the establishment of that town's printing house.

The highly prized six-volume *Histoire et description de la Nouvelle-France*, by Pierre Charlevoix, published in Paris by Pierre François Giffard in 1744, and Etienne Faillon's *Vie de soeur Bourgeoys*, published in Ville-Marie by the Sisters of the Congregation of Notre-Dame in 1853, are among the publications of historical interest that were acquired. The following are also worthy of note: the *Manuscrits venus de Ste-Hélène d'une manière inconnue*, by Jacob Lullin de Chateauvieux (Montreal, 1818), *Papers and See of Kingston* (Brockville, 1856), the leaflet entitled *Comité pour promouvoir le commerce du Bas-Canada et du Haut-Canada*, dated at Montreal, April 30, 1821, and Benjamin Franklin's *Ecrits populaires*, DeBartzch, des presses de l'Echo du pays, 1834. DeBartzch publications are difficult to find nowadays.

Religion and education

The National Library's collection is now also enriched by many documents on religious affairs in French Canada, namely pastoral letters by bishops such