

News of the arts

Unusual film at the ROM

A poignant Ojibway legend has been made into an unusual film, titled *The Man, the Snake and the Fox*, which was shown recently at the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto.

The film, 15 minutes long, combines live action and puppetry, as Basil Johnston of the museum's Ethnology Department relates the legend to a group of Indian children. Large puppets, fully articulated, with moving heads, arms, legs, mouths and eyes, act out the tale. One of them is able to notch his bow and arrow and shoot it.

The Man, the Snake and the Fox, based on a traditional tale, was written by Basil Johnston and directed and produced by Tony Snowsill. The character voices are all done by Indian actors. The audience of children featured in the film come from the Wandering Spirits Survival School in Toronto, and the title song is sung in Ojibway by Edna Manitouwabi. The film, which is in colour, is sponsored by the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. It will be distributed by the National Film Board of Canada.

New organ hits right chord — and is bound for Chicago

Electronics technician Neil Shaw has developed an electronic organ that he claims sounds like a traditional pipe organ.

The evaluation committee of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra thinks so too, calling the Shaw instrument "the only electronic organ that has the integrity, warmth and versatility necessary to be a fit companion to our great orchestra".

When he began, Mr. Shaw designed electronic organs which were, in his words, "not much better than those produced by other manufacturers — they mixed sounds electronically rather than acoustically as done with the traditional pipe organ — I thought I could make some improvements".

The improvements created a brand new instrument: a "multi-channel, multi-sound" organ, each note separately generated through its own electronic circuit. The notes "mix with themselves in the auditorium space rather than within electronic circuitry".

The electronic hardware fits into a

compact bank of drawers about one-eighth the space required for organ pipes and costs about 35 percent less to build. Maintenance costs are also lower. As well, the Shaw organ is always in tune — not the case with the traditional models.

Aided by the Ontario government's \$52,000-venture capital loan in the early 1970s, Mr. Shaw proceeded to take out international patents and to market his new Concept Organ. Custom installations were made in schools and churches in both the U.S. and Canada.

Negotiations concerning the installation of a Shaw concert model (the first of its kind) in Chicago's Orchestra Hall are now in progress. Cost of the instrument is estimated at \$250,000.

The Burlington, Ontario, technician looks forward to expanding his business abroad, especially in the European market.



Neil Shaw, president and founder of Shaw Organs Inc., has developed a new electronic organ which evokes enthusiastic responses from both musicians and purchasers.

Stereo views of James Esson

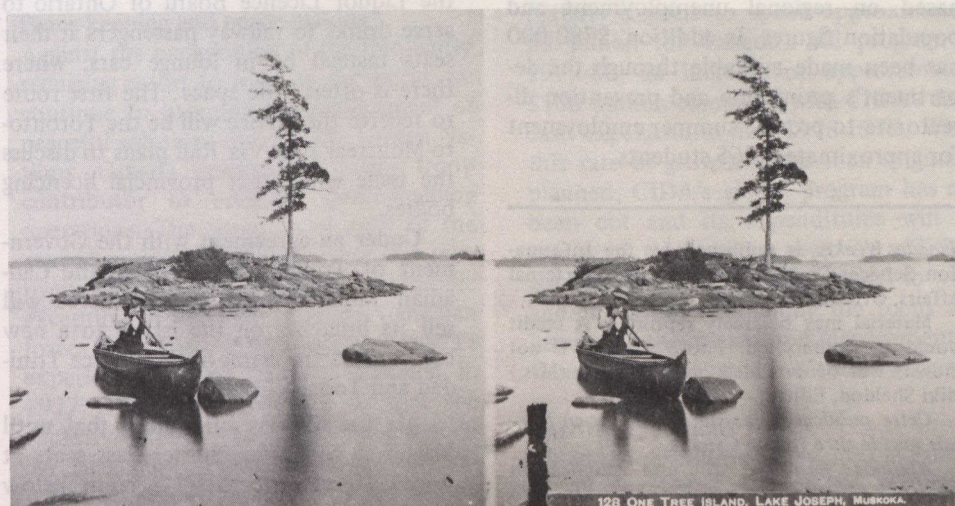
Fifty-seven photographs printed from the James Esson collection of original stereo glass negatives will be on view at the Public Archives until April 30.

Esson's stereographs date from the late 1870s and early 1880s, when he travelled widely to produce hundreds of titles in a dozen series, each defined by theme or geography. Buildings, street scenes and parks form views devoted to such cities as Ottawa, Toronto, Hamilton and Guelph; natural landscape and recreational pastimes make up much of his larger collections, *Among the 1,000 Islands* and *The Scenery of the Northern Lakes of Canada*.

Archivist Joan Schwartz explained how stereographs like *One Tree Island*,

Lake Joseph, Muskoka, were produced: "Esson used a binocular camera fitted with two lenses several inches apart to record the same scene from slightly different angles roughly corresponding to the perspective of the human eye. The resultant double image on a single glass plate facilitated the printing of card-mounted stereographs which, when viewed through a device known as a stereoscope, produced a single image with the realistic sensation of three-dimensional space."

"A box of stereo views and a stereoscope were common fixtures in the Victorian parlour. Card-mounted stereographs provided an entertaining and educational diversion until the early decades of the twentieth century," she added.



James Esson's One Tree Island, Lake Joseph, Muskoka.