

\$6,070,000 in box office receipts in 1980, it still needs the subsidy as well as support from the Province of Ontario.)

The Council has its rules, one of which requires beneficiaries to make a search for qualified Canadians when hiring, before going abroad. Mavor Moore, the Council chairman, said that when the Festival Board failed to do so it "painted itself into a corner." He pointed out that "Canada has been the most fertile ground for theatre people from abroad" and that it encourages the hiring of foreigners in appropriate circumstances. He added, however, that he feels a true international exchange involves both giving as well as receiving and that "what is sometimes called internationalism is often homogenization. The Stratford Festival should have its own stamp. It is not Stratford-on-Avon or Stratford, Connecticut, and the world would be poorer if they were all alike."

David Silcox, Director of Cultural Affairs for the Corporation of Metropolitan Toronto, believes that while there were unfortunate aspects to the confrontation between the Festival Board and Equity and the Department of Immigration, there were also some positive ones: "Anything that puts the arts on the front page every day for weeks is, in the long run, good for the arts. People now realize more clearly that the arts are a great economic force."

Stratford's New Director

John Hirsch is tall, slim, bearded and intense. In rehearsals he often snaps his fingers as the actors go through their paces, but not in impatience—he is working toward a rhythm in the presentation.

He is, in the opinion of many of his peers, the best director of Chekhov in North America.

He came to Winnipeg from Hungary in 1947. After graduating from the University of Manitoba, he helped found Winnipeg's Rainbow Stage and the Manitoba Theatre Centre. As the Centre's first artistic director he staged a rich variety of entertainments, from *A Streetcar Named Desire* to *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*.

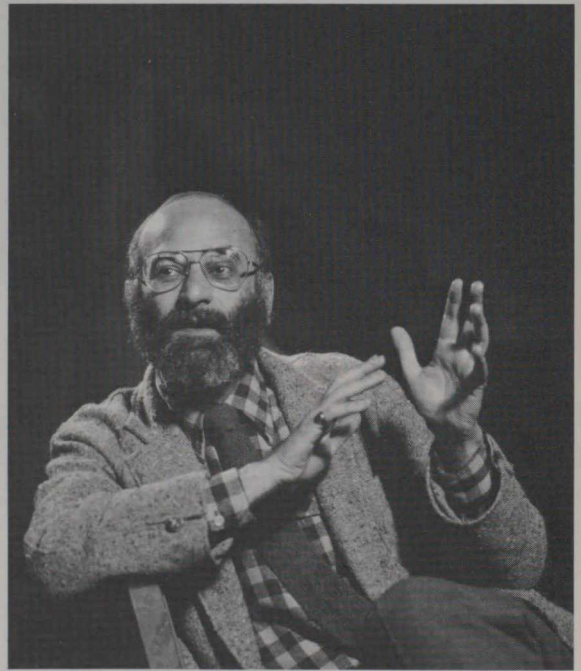
After that he directed all over Canada and at the Lincoln Center Repertory Theater in New York. In 1965 he directed his first Stratford production, and in 1967 he was named the Festival's associate artistic director (under Jean Gascon). He directed eight plays at the Festival between 1965 and 1969. One of them, his *Satyri-con*, caused quite a stir. It featured Jerry Arthur, a New York stripper, who was nude under a sheet with a hole in it, which she moved around energetically. The play was considered particularly daring in 1969. Hirsch resigned the same year and went to New York where he directed several plays for Lincoln Center and other theatres and *A Masked Ball* for the New York City Opera.

He did many other plays in Canada (including *The Three Sisters* at Stratford in 1976) and directed for stage and TV in the United States, where he won various awards, including the New York Outer Circle Critics' Award and the Los Angeles Drama Critics' Circle Award. He also directed the

opening production of *The Seagull* at the Habimah, Israel's national theatre.

In 1976 he took over as head of TV drama for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation for a three-year stint.

Mr. Hirsch was named artistic director of the Stratford Festival last December. He will serve as consulting director until July 1, at which point he will have completed his contract as consulting artistic director at the Seattle Repertory Theatre.



John Hirsch on Stratford

Mr. Hirsch recently gave CANADA TODAY/D'AUJOURD'HUI some thoughts on his new job.

We are now, thankfully, entering a positive stage—not that all our troubles or worries are completely over, but then in the theatre they never are.

We are working very hard on what is shaping up to be an exciting 1981 season.

Contrary to some rumoured opinions, the artistic standards of the Festival will certainly remain of international caliber. This is something which is extremely important to myself and my collaborators and will be guaranteed by the presence of some of the finest actors, directors, designers and musicians that the continent has to offer. I have always maintained that this Festival, which is Canadian at heart and in spirit, should not neglect an international and cosmopolitan character.

This is, after all, something it has had from its earliest days of Guthrie, Moiseiwitsch and Langham.

This year American, British and French artists will be working side by side with the Canadians. I believe this kind of artistic synthesis will benefit all those involved, but above all the audience will get a varied and rewarding theatre experience. This is what theatre should be all about, and I'm positive that everyone who will be coming to Stratford, whether for the first or twenty-ninth time, will be pleased.