

# News of the arts

## Canada Council gets cash

The Secretary of State Department has announced a substantial increase in the financing of the Canada Council for 1980-81. The Treasury Board has authorized an increase of \$5.5 million on the Council's present budget of \$39.1 million.

The Canada Council has been in a financing freeze for the past four years, which has caused cutbacks and raised the possibility of ending support for some arts groups altogether. The 14 percent rise marks the first time in five years that the Council has had an increase over the inflation rate.

## Tenth Festival Ottawa salutes the music of France

Some of France's top musical artists will join international opera stars in Ottawa July 3-27 for a salute to the music of France as part of Festival Ottawa, now preparing for its tenth consecutive season.

French artists, who will attend the festival include: tenor Alain Vanzo, pianists Jean-Philippe Collard, Michel Béroff and Pascal Rogé, the Via Nova Quartet, the Pasquier Trio, violinist Pierre Amoyal, cellist Frédéric Lodéon and harpist Marie-Claire Jamet. International opera personalities who will participate in the festival include Iranian-born director Lotfi Mansouri, Italian conductor Paolo Peloso, American singers Maria Ewing, Alan Titus, Diana Soviero and Neil Shicoff, designers José Varona of Argentina and Beni Montresor of Italy and Canadian stars Victor Braun, Maria Pellegrini, Maureen Forrester and Louis Quilico.

Debussy's opera *Pelléas et Mélisande* will open the festival on July 3, with further performances July 5, 9 and 16. Conducted by Mario Bernardi, Festival Ottawa's artistic director, and directed by the Houston Grand Opera's Frank Corsaro, the production will be designed by Lloyd Evans and will star Maria Ewing, Alan Titus, Victor Braun, Pierre Charbonneau and Gabrielle Lavigne. On July 12, 15, 18, 23 and 24 Puccini's *La Bohème* will be staged. Directed by Sonja Frisell, a Canadian associated with La Scala, Milan, the opera will be conducted by Mario Bernardi and feature Diana Soviero, Neil Shicoff, Maria Pellegrini, Allan Monk, Ara Berberian and Gary Relyea; sets are by José Varona.



Mario Bernardi

Donizetti's *La Fille du Régiment* will be directed by Lotfi Mansouri of the Canadian Opera Company and conducted by Paolo Peloso; Ruth Welting, Rockwell Blake, Maureen Forrester and Claude Corbeil will perform. The opera will be designed by Beni Montresor. All three works will be staged in the National Arts Centre's 2,300-seat opera house.

A fourth opera, Massenet's *Thérèse*, will be performed in concert version on July 27 with the National Arts Centre Orchestra and chorus under Mario Bernardi. Maria Ewing, Alain Vanzo and Louis Quilico will be featured soloists. Festival Ottawa 1980 also includes an eleven-concert chamber music series celebrating the impressionist composer Debussy and his French contemporaries.



Maria Ewing will appear as *Pelléas*.

## Magazine format revised

The successor to Canada's two major rotogravure magazines, *Weekend Magazine* and *The Canadian*, came out in a new format and under a new title, *Today Magazine*, on March 15.

The magazine is circulated in most major markets in Canada as a supplement in Saturday newspapers and has a circulation of 2.8 million.

*Weekend Magazine* and *The Canadian* were merged October 27 and the initial product was renamed *Canadian Weekend*. Publisher Gordon Pape said the redesigned publication was renamed to stress its complete overhaul.

*Today Magazine* carries about twice as many stories as the former publication — about 18, compared with the previous eight or nine. Two stories in each issue are feature length, and the remainder somewhat shorter than those used previously.

## Arts briefs

Quebec poet François Charron was awarded the 1979 Emile Neilligan prize for poetry. Charron, 27, recently published a collection of poems entitled *Blessures*, translatable as *Wounds*. The prize and award of \$3,000 is named for Emile Neilligan, who lived from 1879 to 1941. His symbolist poems written in adolescence are considered by many as the beginning of modern literature in French-Canada. The annual award is given to French-language poets under the age of 35 residing in North America.

One of Canada's most famous murder case and trials — the Coffin Affair — is being recreated in a major motion picture now before the cameras in Quebec. Entitled *Coffin*, the film stars Canadian actors August Schellenberg, Yvon Dufour, Raymond Cloutier and actress Micheline Lanctot. Jacques Benoit wrote the script and Jean-Claude Labreque is directing the movie. Wilbert Coffin was accused in 1953 of murdering three American hunters in the Gaspé bush. The police set out to prove his guilt and public opinion was divided as Coffin went on trial, was sentenced to be hanged, escaped from jail, and numerous appeals were made, keeping the case in headlines before and long after his hanging in Montreal's Bordeaux jail February 1956.