

# News of the arts

## Stratford Festival celebrates anniversary season

Ten plays, including five by William Shakespeare, as well as a number of concerts, films and speakers, are being presented at the Stratford Festival in Stratford, Ontario. The festival, celebrating its thirtieth anniversary, opened in June and will close October 23.

The festival's artistic director John Hirsch said that "it is a season of variety and substance through which we will be able to celebrate the festival's thirtieth anniversary with great pride and joy".



Marie Baron plays the role of Yum-Yum in *The Mikado*.

Presentations in the Festival Theatre, the largest of the three theatres, include Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, *The Tempest* and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, all of which opened in June. George Bernard Shaw's *Arms and the Man* joined the repertory in August.

### Strong view of a decadent society

*Julius Caesar*, directed by Derek Goldby, opened the festival with a forceful and direct depiction of political, social and moral order in disintegration. James Bradford appears in the role of Caesar while Len Cariou portrays Brutus and a young Canadian actor R.H. Thomson portrays Antony.

In *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, Pat Galloway and Susan Wright appear as the wives with Douglas Campbell as Sir John Falstaff. Opulent designs and special effects were created by Desmond Heeley for *The Tempest*, which is directed by John Hirsch and stars Len Cariou as Prospero and Sharry Flett as Miranda.

In September two special productions of *The Tempest* are being presented with sign language interpreters for the hearing-impaired.

*Arms and the Man*, a comedy which takes aim at and effectively shatters romantic illusions surrounding war and marriage is being directed by the festival's former artistic director Michael Langhan. The cast includes Brian Bedford, Douglas Campbell, Helen Carey, Len Cariou, Carole Shelly and Susan Wright.

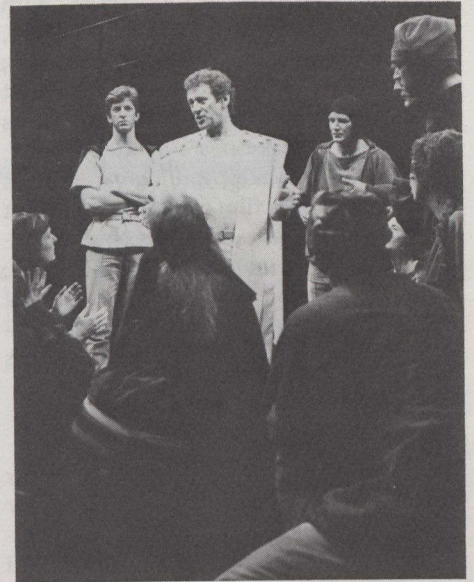
Gilbert and Sullivan's Victorian view of Japan is depicted in *The Mikado* which opened in the Avon Theatre on June 7, with direction by Brian Macdonald, musical direction by Berthold Carriere, designs by Susan Benson and Douglas McLean and lighting by Michael J. Whitfield. Marie Baron appears as Yum-Yum and Eric Donkin as Ko-Ko, the Lord High Executioner.

*Translations*, Brian Friel's play about Ireland in 1833 received its North American premiere on July 17 in the Avon Theatre where it played until September 4. Guy Sprung directed and Sharry Flett, Lewis Gordon, Miles Potter and Kate Trotter appeared in the production.

Also being presented in the Avon Theatre are Friedrich Schiller's *Mary Stuart*, which recounts the final days of Mary Queen of Scots, and Noel Coward's *Blithe Spirit*, a comedy about a beleaguered husband with two wives, one living



A scene from *The Tempest*. Left to right: Miles Potter as Caliban, Ian Deakin as Ariel and Len Cariou as Prospero.



Scene from *Julius Caesar*. Left to right: R.H. Thomson and Len Cariou with members of the company.

and one an irrepressible ghost. Margot Dionne appears as Mary, and Pat Galloway as Elizabeth I in *Mary Stuart* while Brian Bedford stars as Charles Condomine with Tammy Grimes and Carole Shelley in *Blithe Spirit*.

### New acting company formed

The Shakespeare 3 Company, a new acting company comprising 16 actors, appeared for the first time at the festival from July 16 until September 5, with two presentations at the Third Stage. Under the supervision of Kristin Linklater, the company presented two plays, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *All's Well that Ends Well*, focusing on text and language rather than costumes and sets.

Another innovation at the festival this year was the Virtuoso Performance series with Nicholas Pennell appearing alone in *A Variable Passion*, Lewis Gordon alone in *Damien* and Len Cariou and the Primavera Quartet in a *A Musical Theatre Piece*. Irene Worth also appeared in a special one-woman show *Letters of Love and Affection* in a single performance on June 21.

A series of concerts were also presented at the Stratford Festival during the summer months offering a wide variety of jazz and popular music and including such celebrities as singer Kris Kristofferson and Canadian pianist Oscar Peterson.

In addition, a wide range of activities to provide theatregoers spending a few days in Stratford with a more complete artistic and educational experience were offered during July and August: a Sunday

Robert C. Fagsdale photos