

News of the arts

Pottery and bronze from Thailand

The Fine Arts Department of the Royal Thai Government and the National Museum of Bangkok have made possible the acquisition by the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, of several examples of painted pottery and bronze ornaments from northeastern Thailand.

The ceramics and bronzes, which are now on exhibition at the Royal Ontario Museum, are representative of the prehistoric Ban Chiang culture which has been discovered in recent years in northeastern Thailand.

Negotiations for the purchase of these items were carried out on behalf of the Royal Ontario Museum through the Canadian embassy in Thailand. This is the first acquisition of archaeological material by the Royal Ontario Museum in accordance with its policy to support the UNESCO Convention regarding the export and import of cultural property.

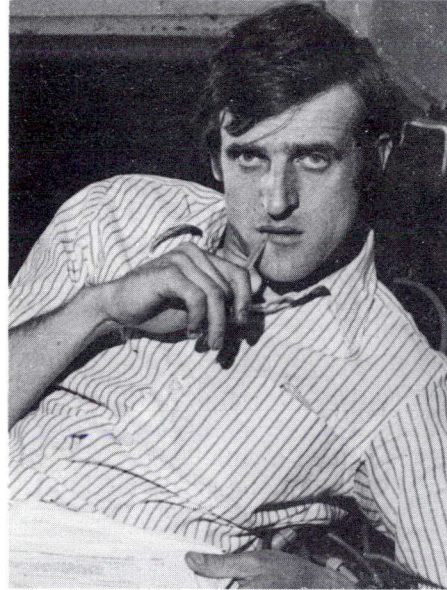
Canada/Australia literary prize

The Department of External Affairs, the Canada Council and the Australia Council announced on November 10 that Australian playwright John Romeril had won the first Canada/Australia Literary Prize.

The prize, valued at \$2,500 (Cdn.) is intended to help make better known in Australia and Canada the work of writers of the other country, and has been established following the success of the Canada/Belgium Literary Prize, first awarded in 1971 for French-language authors. The Canada/Australia award honours English-language authors.

Each year an Australian or a Canadian writer will be chosen by a panel of judges from the other country. This year the Australia Council submitted works by six young authors to a Canadian jury. Next year the procedure will be reversed. The prize is not restricted to any particular category of writing (novelists, poets and playwrights are equally eligible) and is awarded for a writer's total output rather than for a single work.

John Romeril has published three plays, *Chicago, Chicago, I Don't Know Who To Feel Sorry For* and *The Floating World*. Since 1970 he has been



The Canada/Australia Literary Prize was awarded to John Romeril in Melbourne by Canadian High Commissioner in Australia J.J. McCardle, following a performance of The Dudders, by Romeril and John Timlin at the Pram Factory Theatre on November 13. Thirty-four-year-old Romeril (above) is one of Australia's most successful playwrights.

closely associated with the Australian Performing Group and many of his individual works and collective scripts have been presented by this company at The Pram Factory Theatre in Melbourne. The Australian Performing Group grew to a professional theatre from a workshop of young actors, writers and filmmakers who gravitated together at the Le Mama theatre in Melbourne in the late Sixties.

Canadian participation is financed by the Department of External Affairs as part of its program of cultural relations with foreign countries. The award is administered for the Department by the Canada Council which also selects the jury.

Log opera house

The tiny town of Canmore, 65 miles west of Calgary, Alberta boasts of possessing at one time what was probably the only log opera house in the world.

Built back in 1896, because the Canmore band needed a place to practise,

it measured 40 feet by 20 feet, with a 16-foot stage.

Internationally-known artists played there at one time or another — including Madame Melba, Jack Benny, and Beatrice Lillie. The British National Opera staged *The Bohemian Girl* and the International Welsh Choir sang there.

The building, converted to a movie house in 1913, was found particularly well adapted to sound pictures when they arrived in the mid-Twenties, because the pine logs provided almost perfect acoustics. Even now, it is reported that "a dropped pin can be heard all over the building".

In 1966, the Canmore Mines donated the building to Calgary's Heritage Park, where it has become a year-round centre for old-style entertainment.

It was carefully dismantled log by log in Canmore, then transported and erected at Heritage Park, a rebuilt pioneer prairie settlement, covering 60 acres of land bordering on Glenmore Dam in southwest Calgary.

New National Gallery for Canada

One of the most coveted architectural awards ever given by the Federal Government will go to the winner of a design competition for the new National Gallery of Canada to be built on a 12.5-acre site on Wellington Street, west of Parliament Hill, overlooking the Ottawa River.

The submissions of the ten competing teams are due on February 15, 1977, and the winner is to be announced on March 30. Of the ten teams, six are from Toronto, and each will be eligible for a \$35,000-honorarium, to defray expenses, on presentation of the official entry.

Since 1960, the Gallery has been housed in a government office building just off Confederation Square, and previously its home for 70 years was a museum building in south central Ottawa, which now houses the Museum of Man and the Museum of Natural History. Architectural guidelines for the new gallery envisage a fine arts museum which gives expression to "the vitality of the Canadian imagination", and where "a sense of our life and our history" would be conveyed in artistic works.