

# News of the arts

## Computer graphics star in film

When Paramount Pictures Corp. releases the movie *Star Trek III* in theatres across North America this summer, the faithful legion of Canadian fans who follow the exploits of Captain Kirk, played by Montreal-born actor William Shatner, will be treated to even more home-grown talent.

The video computer graphics and effects used in the film are the brainchild of John Pennie, president and chief executive of Omnibus Computer Graphics Inc. of Toronto.

Pennie hopes this exposure will put his two-year-old firm, which specializes in computer animation and special effects for advertising, television and films, on the map.

In fact, Paramount and Omnibus are putting the final touches on a deal that will see the Canadian firm set up shop in Hollywood in June, with a production facility linked *via* satellite to Omnibus's Toronto headquarters and its new American subsidiary — Omnibus Computer Graphics Centre Inc. — which opens this month in New York City.

## Symphony wins rave reviews

The Montreal Symphony Orchestra capped a triumphant West European tour recently with rave reviews from Britain's newspaper critics.

Edward Greenfield of *The Guardian*, who once called the orchestra "the finest French orchestra in the world today", outdid even that high praise.

After "the most gruelling of European tours (14 concerts in 15 days in four countries) I feel like upping the estimate", wrote Greenfield, "and proclaiming them not just the finest French orchestra of all time, but the most beautiful orchestra from North America".

He added: "What triumphantly kept coming out of this long and taxing program — Ravel's *Rapsodie Espagnole*, Prokofiev's *Piano Concerto No. 3* and Berlioz's *Symphonie Fantastique* followed by Verdi's *Forza del Destino* overture as an encore — was the happy marriage between French and American traditions."

Greenfield's enthusiasm for the single London performance by the orchestra on its fiftieth anniversary was matched by critics from *The Times* and *The Financial*

*Times* Dominic Gill of *The Financial Times* termed the orchestra "a hugely accomplished band, in spirit and technical polish unarguably of world class".

Argentine pianist Martha Argerich — the soloist for Prokofiev's concerto who appeared in seven of the orchestra's European concerts — also won unanimous acclaim.

Gill called Miss Argerich's work "a consummate soaring display which (conductor Charles) Dutoit needed only to, as he did, stand back and courteously take his cue".

And *The Times'* Hilary Finch added: "This is an orchestra which equally unashamedly operates under the hypnotism of Charles Dutoit. This implies not passivity — far from it — but an almost unnaturally heightened awareness, an immediacy of response more inspired than inspired. Only an orchestra as rigorously trained to anticipate, listen and respond with such consistently confident virtuosity could have avoided getting at least one finger burnt during Martha Argerich's white-hot performance," she wrote.

Charles Dutoit, the 47-year-old Swiss-born conductor who has become enormously popular in Montreal, won individual praise for his charismatic — sometimes almost frenetic — handling of the orchestra.

"In the slow introduction to the Berlioz Symphony and again in the slow movement, Dutoit was daring in encouraging such a whisper of sound yet... each strand in the texture was perfectly



Montreal Symphony Orchestra conductor Charles Dutoit in rehearsal during the group's triumphant European tour.

clear, delicate and transparent," said Greenfield.

The critical acclaim echoed the warm ovation from the packed 2 000-seat Barbican Hall where the orchestra completed its first European tour in eight years.

For Dutoit, a European tour has been a goal since he took over as the orchestra's music director in 1977.

Critics on the continent raved about the orchestra as did their counterparts in London.

With five concerts in Dutoit's native Switzerland and eight in West Germany as well as performances in Paris and London, the tour was by far the most ambitious — and most successful — ever undertaken by the Montreal Symphony.

## Arts briefs

"*Willie, a Romance*", Heather Robertson's rollicking fact-fiction novel about the early life of William Lyon Mackenzie King, has been awarded the \$1 000 first prize that comes with the eighth annual Books in Canada Award for best first novel of 1983. Miss Robertson, a native of Winnipeg now living in Toronto, has written a number of non-fiction books. Her portrait of the late prime minister is the first in a planned three-volume series called *The King Years*. It is published by James Lorimer of Toronto.

Toronto will once again host a commercial trade fair for visual art. Scheduled to take place at the new Metro Convention Centre November 2 to 4, Art Expo Toronto will feature booths for commercial art dealers, periodicals and arts organizations. It will also be the occasion of an exhibition called Happy Birthday Toronto, now being organized by Joan Murray, director of Oshawa's Robert McLaughlin Gallery. More than 15 000 people are expected to attend the three-day weekend.

A group of well-known Canadian artists from across the country will take part in a cultural exchange with Israel, May 21 to June 4. Organized by the Toronto-based Canada-Israel Foundation, the trip to Israel will include meetings with prominent Israeli artists, curators and museum directors, as well as tours to various sites of historic and cultural importance. Invited artists are Richard Prince, Ron Moppett, John McEwen, Joyce Wieland, Stephen Cruise, Bill Vazan, Irene Whittome, Sylvain Cousineau and Molly Lamb Bobak.

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