

Culture

Projecting Canadian Culture Abroad in 2000

Culture, it's been said, is the face of Canada abroad. This has long been recognized by the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade. In 1966 DFAIT created a Cultural Affairs Division to formulate, co-ordinate and execute Canada's cultural policy. Long before that, Canadian diplomats in embassies abroad often took the initiative of organizing cultural events to showcase the best of Canada's rich cultural diversity. In 1995, the government went a step further: as one of the "pillars" of our foreign policy, it named the promotion and projection of Canadian culture and values abroad. In the year 2000, the tradition of showcasing Canadian excellence abroad continues. And in offering its best, Canada is gaining worldwide renown.

- Led by Music Director Jukka-Pekka Saraste, the Toronto Symphony Orchestra delighted music critics and audiences alike on its European tour this winter.

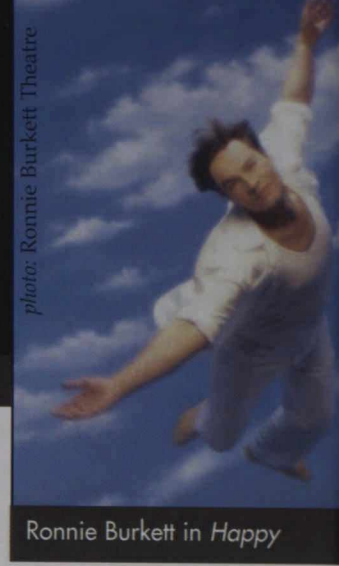
- The Cirque Éloize—organized along the lines of the Cirque du Soleil—received rave reviews at the renowned Edinburgh Festival last August. Booked to tour the United States from January to May, the troupe agreed to make time in April to perform at the Bogotá Festival in Colombia. In the summer and fall, Cirque Éloize will tour Europe.
- From September to December, the Royal British Columbia Museum (RBCM) will present the art of Nuu-chah-nulth masks in Denver, Colorado. The masks are the work of 16 artists, including the world-famous Art Thompson. They vividly represent the relationship between the Nuu-chah-nulth Aboriginal people (formerly known as the Nootka) and the spectacular natural panorama of their ancestral home on Canada's West Coast.

Highlighting the experimental side of the arts in Canada will be *Magnetic North*—a major retrospective exhibit being organized by Video Pool of Winnipeg and presented in collaboration with the Walker Art Center of Minneapolis, Minnesota. The exhibit will showcase the recent explosion of experimental videos by Canadians, and will give a historical perspective of experimental video art from the 1970s and 1980s. From Minneapolis, the exhibit will move on to major institutions in the United States, Europe and Canada, touring until December 2001.



Nuu-chah-nulth mask

photo: RBCM collection



Ronnie Burkett in *Happy*

photo: Ronnie Burkett Theatre

Other highlights of the 2000 schedule:

- From June 18 to October 29, Canada will participate in the seventh Venice Biennale of Architecture. DFAIT and the Canada Council for the Arts have commissioned Phyllis Lambert and the Canadian Centre for Architecture to organize Canada's representation at the Biennale. The theme will be "The City: Less Aesthetics, More Ethics."
- Canada's literary talent takes the spotlight at the 10th Prague Writers' Festival in April. Established by Czech President Václav Havel after the fall of the communist regime, the Festival always draws massive media coverage. For the first time ever, the Festival is welcoming Canadian writers, including Margaret Atwood, Gérald LeBlanc, Antonine Maillet, Ann Michaels and Michael Ondaatje.
- After drawing crowds in Mexico since September 1999, an exhibit of paintings by members of Canada's famed Group of Seven will tour Scandinavia in May.
- The Ronnie Burkett Theatre of Marionettes will tour Denmark and Germany this summer, presenting the award-winning *Tinka's New Dress* and the première of a new creation, *Happy*. ●—

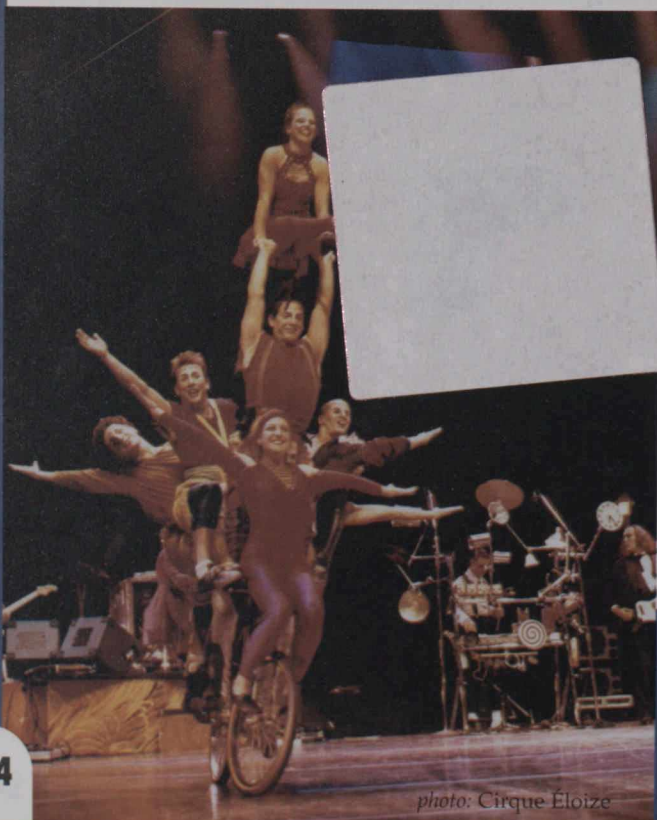


photo: Cirque Éloize

For more information about DFAIT programs that promote Canadian art and culture abroad, visit the Department's Web site (www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca) or contact Louis Hamel, Director, Arts and Cultural Industries Promotion Division (ACA), Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, 125 Sussex Drive, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0G2, tel. (613) 992-9948.