

News of the arts

ROM presents heavenly display

The Royal Ontario Museum (ROM) and the Lands of the Bible Archeology Foundation are presenting, for the first time, a collection of ancient Near Eastern art.

The exhibition titled *Ladders to Heaven: Our Judeo-Christian Heritage (5,000 B.C. – A.D. 500)*, is scheduled to run until October 28. The show, which takes its title from the Old Testament story of Jacob's dream about a ladder stretching from heaven to earth, is intended to reflect the cultural and historic milieu out of which Jewish and Christian biblical traditions developed.

The display chronologically spanning the years from 5,000 B.C. to A.D. 500, includes more than 250 artifacts from Sumerian to Byzantine times. A wide range of ancient cultures related to the Old or New Testaments is represented in the show: Babylonian, Egyptian, Persian, Hittite, Syrian, Phoenician, Canaanite, Greek and Roman. Certain items are related to specific historical figures like Hammurapi and Naram-Sin, an Akkadian king of the third millenium, while others bear reference to biblical subjects such as the sacrifice of Isaac and the miracle of the loaves and fishes.

One notable item in this exhibition is part of a bronze trolley dating to the time of Solomon; the decorations on the trolley demonstrate the ritual practices and motifs of his temple. A small shell plaque,



A cherub, one of the favourite guardian images of the ancient Near East, is part of a bronze trolley, dated to the twelfth century B.C. Cherubim, with human faces and winged lion's bodies, were common pagan images and are referred to in the Old and New Testaments as symbolic protective beings. As well as guarding the garden of Eden, two cherubim guarded the Ark of the Covenant in Solomon's Temple.

incised with a seven-headed beast, recalls the legendary monster Leviathan mentioned in both the Old and New Testaments.

The most massive item is a stone sarcophagus carved with biblical scenes and dating to A.D. 330-340. It is believed to be the earliest Christian coffin in existence.

To celebrate the *Ladders to Heaven* exhibition, the ROM is sponsoring a variety of complementary events during July and August: a festival of films based on biblical themes on Sunday afternoons and evenings, open-air concerts of music from the Near East on Thursday evenings, and on Saturdays, creative story-telling programs based on biblical tales.

Jacob Two-Two goes to London

A Toronto children's musical, based on a book by Mordecai Richler, has been chosen as Canada's representative in an international children's festival to be held in London next October.

Jacob Two-Two Meets the Hooded Fang, was recently performed at Young People's Theatre Centre in Toronto.

Susan Rubes, producer at the centre, said she chose the play, which deals with a child's view of adults, as the Canadian entry in the festival because it is "the most universally acceptable children's play since Peter Pan".

There will be entrants from 28 countries in the festival, commemorating the International Year of the Child.

The 15-member cast will travel with financial assistance from the Department of External Affairs

Arts briefs

The first collection of South Asian sculpture to enter the National Gallery's permanent collection is currently on view in Ottawa until this September. The collection will form a travelling exhibition entitled *Brahma and Buddha: Indian Sculpture from the National Gallery of Canada: Gift of Mr. Max Tanenbaum*. The 33 Indian stone and three Nepalese wood sculptures come from the Nasli and Alice Heeramanek collection. The National Gallery of Canada joins three other major art museums with similar Indian collections, the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, the Los Angeles County Museum and the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts.

In recognition of the outstanding contribution of *Maestro Piero Gamba* to the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra and to

music in Manitoba, and to mark the thirtieth anniversary of the orchestra, the Manitoba government has established a \$1,000 annual scholarship for Canadian citizens to be known as the Piero Gamba Music Scholarship.

Rudolf Nureyev appeared as guest artist with The National Ballet of Canada recently at the New York State Theatre. The company performed three full length classics — *The Sleeping Beauty*, produced by Rudolf Nureyev for the National Ballet in 1972; Erik Bruhn's *Coppelia*, which featured a special guest appearance by Mr. Bruhn, and Peter Wright's production of *Giselle* and three short works: Frederick Ashton's *Monotones II*, set to music by Eric Satie; the ragtime ballet *Elite Syncopations*, choreographed by Kenneth MacMillan, and Roland Petit's tale of love and death, *Le Loup*.