



DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
MINISTÈRE DES AFFAIRES EXTÉRIEURES

REF

COMMUNIQUÉ

No: 17
No.:

MAR 16 1978
OTTAWA
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DIFFUSION: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
RELEASE: FEBRUARY 21, 1978

TWO MONTREAL THEATRE COMPANIES TO REPRESENT CANADA AT THE FESTIVAL D'AVIGNON

The Department of External Affairs announced today that it would sponsor representation of French-speaking Canadian theatre at the prestigious Festival d'Avignon, France, from July 10 to August 10.

Together with the Province of New Brunswick, the Department will introduce Acadian drama to the Festival. This assistance will enable the Montreal company, Le Théâtre du Rideau Vert to accept the Festival's invitation to present three plays by Acadian playwright, Antonine Maillet whose most recent work "Les Cordes de Bois" recently won the Quatre Jurys Literary Prize in Paris. The three plays by Ms Maillet to be performed at Avignon are: La Sagouine, Gapi and Evangeline Deusse. A total of ten performances of these works is scheduled during the Festival. The Province of New Brunswick is sponsoring the attendance of Antonine Maillet, who will take part in writers' seminars and discussion groups during the Festival.

In addition to the Rideau Vert performances at Avignon, the Department is also sending Quebec playwright Michel Garneau and six Quebec actors to the Festival. Michel Garneau has been invited to conduct a workshop on writing for experimental theatre, as part of the "open theatre" activities. He will work on a text, along with the actors and any members of the general public who wish to attend the daily sessions. The audience can participate in the creation of the play through their interaction with the company. If a viable dramatic production emerges from the workshops, M. Garneau will present the play at the end of the Festival.

This will be the second year that the Department has assisted Canadian representation at the Festival d'Avignon. Last year the Théâtre Populaire du Québec presented Roland Lepage's Le Temps d'une Vie which was one of the major artistic successes of the Festival.

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