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APPOINTMENT OF JEAN HERBIET  
AS DIRECTOR OF THE  
CANADIAN CULTURAL CENTRE IN PARIS

The Department of External Affairs announced today the appointment of Jean Herbiet as Director of the Canadian Cultural Centre in Paris. Mr. Herbiet is currently Director of French-language theatre at the National Arts Centre in Ottawa.

Jean Herbiet was born in Namur, Belgium, in 1930. He emigrated to Canada following completion of his studies in business administration and drama in Brussels and began his artistic career here in the late 1950s. He started as a drama teacher at the University of Ottawa where between 1958 and 1970, he staged more than 30 plays, earning the Gold Medal and Second prize in 1964 for the University's Drama Society at Nancy's International University Drama Festival for his staging of Ionesco's La Cantatrice chauve.

In 1967, Jean Herbiet was appointed associate-director of the University's Fine Arts Department. He set up, for both the French and English-language sections, studies programmes and numerous cultural activities in visual arts, cinema, theatre and music.

Mr. Herbiet joined the National Arts Centre in 1970 and, under his direction, French-language theatre there expanded rapidly. Including the 1980-81 season, he will have either produced or presented 180 plays for a total of 3,320 presentations to an audience of 1,144,602. Through his decentralization policy, the French-language theatre of the National Arts Centre performed in Canada from coast to coast.

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Jean Herbiet's theatre work has earned him public and critical acclaim on both the national and international level and won numerous prizes. In particular, his staging of Büchner's Woyzeck and Strinberg's Dream Play, in collaboration with Felix Mirbt, was greeted in Canada and in Europe by the exceptionally warm praise of both theatre critics and the public who admired the imaginative use of actors and puppets in both productions.

In 1975, Mr. Herbiet also co-operated in the staging of Stravinski's Histoire du soldat and, in 1980, of Cocteau-Poulenc's La Voix humaine for the National Arts Centre's Orchestra. In July 1981, he staged Rigoletto for Festival Ottawa, a production which set the Festival's audience record, together with Le Mariage de Figaro in 1971.

At the Canadian Cultural Centre in Paris, Mr. Herbiet will be responsible for planning and implementing a programme of cultural activities in the visual, performing and literary arts. Working in close collaboration with the Canadian Embassy in Paris and the Department's Bureau of International Cultural Relations, he will also provide facilitative assistance to the Canadian cultural community in the development of relations with its French counterpart.