

High Hopes for Anne of Green Gables

The Board of Directors of Confederation Centre of the Arts has decided to seek the necessary financial support to conduct a tour of the Charlottetown Festival hit musical "Anne of Green Gables," either in the fall of 1979 or in the spring of 1980.

Hugh Palmer, Executive Director, Confederation Centre of the Arts, today announced that corporate and Canada Council sponsorship will be sought during the coming months in order to mount a tour of Canada's best-loved musical stage production. He said that the Charlottetown Festival is examining the feasibility of mounting with a national tour of "Anne", or possibly eastern or western tours of that musical.

"Much will depend on the response we get from

Canada Council Touring Office and from a corporate sponsor or sponsors," he said.

The decision to lay the groundwork for an "Anne" tour was made at a national meeting of the board held in Ottawa on Thursday, November 2.

"The board recognizes that because Confederation Centre is a national memorial it should present as many Canadians as possible with the opportunity to see productions of the Charlottetown Festival, especially Canada's foremost musical, Anne of Green Gables.

"The board is very aware of the importance of touring, but it believes we must first build a sound financial base in order to make a tour viable," he said.

Mr. Palmer said that

the board last week discussed program and financial planning for the 1979 and 1980 Charlottetown Festivals. The board, officially known as the Fathers of Confederation Buildings Trust, is composed of prominent Canadians, representative of most regions across Canada.

In June of this year, tentative plans for a fall '78 Anne of Green Gables tour of 15 Ontario cities were shelved because a wide gap between revenues and expenditures could not be bridged, despite a promise of a \$35,000 grant from the Canada Council. Serious attempts to muster corporate support for the tour as early as February of this year did not prove successful.

Mr. Palmer stressed that with Canada Council sup-

port, corporate backing could come from one, or from several sponsors.

The costs of producing Anne of Green Gables on tour are far more costly than presenting the show at Confederation Centre of the Arts.

Anne of Green Gables is renowned as Canada's most successful musical stage production, currently approaching its fifteenth consecutive season in Charlottetown. The production has also completed two national Canadian tours and immensely successful engagements in Japan and in New York City.

The Charlottetown Festival and Anne of Green Gables are produced by Confederation Centre of the Arts.

The Life And Death Of Benjamin Chee Chee

On the night of March 11, 1977, a Canadian Indian was picked up in an Ottawa restaurant and charged with creating a disturbance. Less than half-an-hour after being arrested he was found hanging from the bars of a cell in the city jail. Two days later he was dead. So ended the promising career of 32-year-old Benjamin Chee Chee, who was just beginning to realize his potential as an artist. Art critics were raving about his work, and a Vancouver exhibition of 45 of his paintings had sold out in one day at an average price of \$400, with some going for as much as \$1200.

A few days before his death, Benjy Chee Chee recorded an interview in which he told his own story to freelance broadcaster Barry Penhale. CBC Radio's BETWEEN OURSELVES presents it on Saturday, Nov. 25, at 6:15 p.m. (7:15 a.m., 9:25 n.m.) Production: Arthur Crighton in Toronto. The program also includes a look at the development of sculpture and graphic art in the Canadian north over the last 20 years, prepared by Bob McKeown and produced by Nicloe Belanger in Ottawa. Executive producer: Doug MacDonald in Toronto.

For Benjy Chee Chee his last four years were his greatest, because he was winning success and recognition on the Canadian art scene. He had such a love of life that his friends wouldn't believe he would try to kill himself. He was happy with his work and was beginning to enjoy the fruits of prosperity. They think perhaps success came too fast for him.

Benjy Chee Chee had had a rough life as a child in northern Ontario. His father, a trapper, drowned while Benjy was only a few months old. His mother made a living as a domestic, and often was forced to leave him alone. By the time he was 12, Benjy had been drunk several times, had gotten into trouble with the law, and had been confined in an Ontario Training School. He spent his next 10 years in and out of training schools and jails, and lost track of his mother.

Some of his friends will be heard on Between Ourselves: Mrs. Marie Gaignery of the Nicholas Gallery in Ottawa, the first to show his work; Tom Hill an Indian artist to whom Benjy Chee Chee sold his first painting, for \$800; and Neil Sneyd, proprietor of Toronto's Wildlife Gallery, who handled Benjy's

works and was proud to be called his friend.

Between Ourselves will also try to answer such questions as: How have concepts of Inuit art drifted away from traditional roots? What about charges of commercialism?

What's ahead as the Inuit art industry comes under the control of the artists? Among those heard from

are Jim and Alma Houston, native art historian George Swinton, Bill Taylor of the Museum of Man, and,

of course, the artists of the north. The program

will include original Inuit music recorded in the Arctic by Stefan Pel-

linski of the Faculty of Music at the Univ. of Montreal.



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