

A saint, a cabbie and a facelift for Bronfman stage

By **MARIANNE ACKERMAN**
Gazette Theatre Critic

A Caughnawaga saint and a hot-headed Montreal cab driver will be among the fictional personalities called upon to break in the newly renovated stage at the Saidye Bronfman Centre this season.

Although executive producer Harry Gulkin is keeping the season under wraps through the Labor Day weekend, there is strong reason to believe SBC — which is undergoing a \$3 million facelift this year — will present the world premiere of *Lily of the Mohawks*, a work about the 17th-century saint Kateri Tekakwitha, the first native North American to be beatified by the Roman Catholic Church.

Big egos

And early in the new year, director Alexandre Hausvater will begin work on a stage adaptation of Seymour Blicher's novel *Shmucks*, about a cab driver and a salesman who find themselves nose to nose on a narrow Montreal street. Big egos both of them, they refuse to budge, resulting in a 24-hour stalemate full of verbal fireworks, recollection and hilarity. The novel has been retitled *Up Your Alley*.

The two plays (there will be a third) are by Montreal writers and have never been produced before. But if their sources are any indications, theatre-goers are being offered a glimpse at two of their society's many extremes.

Universal theme

When it was published by McClelland and Stewart in 1972, *Shmucks* was praised as a fine and closely observed portrait of Montreal with a strong universal theme: man's determination to stick to his position, whatever the uncomfortable — or tragic — consequences. Said one reviewer, "Never has a Canadian novel been more ribald, more explicitly sexual."

In the wake of his success, Blicher was commissioned to write a screenplay, but the film was never made. According to Hausvater, he has finished a solid first draft of the stage adaptation and will be working on revision between now and rehearsals in January.

A few months ago, former Stratford Festival chief Robin Phillips expressed interest in directing Patricia Rodriguez's *Lily of the Mohawks*, but decided against it when he accepted an offer to head up Stratford Festival's Young Company next year. So, SBC will go with a local director, Jack Langedijk, artistic director of the Association of Producing Artists.

Mystical saint

It will be a co-production with Sam Gesser and Douglas M. Cohen, whose scheme to turn Mordecai Richler's novel *Duddy* into a stage musical was put on a long hold after it debuted to bad reviews in Edmonton. Asked whether he and Cohen have plans for *Lily* after the Montreal premiere, Gesser said, "Sure, we always have those plans."

Writer of children's plays and journalism, Rodriguez spent 31 years in Montreal before returning to London recently with her husband. Her five-character play about the Mohawk saint is a rare — perhaps the only — full-length fictional treatment of the mystical native



KATERI TEKAKWITHA
Painting of 17th-century saint

person. (Leonard Cohen's novel *Beautiful Losers* evokes her spirit as a kind of pantheistic female power, but she's more an inspiration to his poetic fantasy than flesh-and-blood saint.)

Having rejected several marriage proposals, the teenage Kateri (Catherine) Tekakwitha was persecuted for letting the Jesuits baptize her a Christian, and fled to St. Francois Xavier mission, where she died at the age of 24. Her relics are preserved at a shrine on the Caughnawaga reserve, near Montreal, where reports of miracles have convinced the Vatican to send her on the road to sainthood.

Enlightened idea

As announced earlier, Saidye Bronfman Centre will be doing co-productions with theatres in town instead of repeating the more typical single-director season to fill its expanded, 390-seat theatre.

Although executive producer Gulkin is pioneering a new and enlightened idea about how to tap the diverse theatrical talent of Montreal, he'll be launching the revamped space Nov. 9 with a well-established local stage institution. Dora Wasserman's Yiddish Theatre will present *Hagana*, a dramatization of Chaim Grade's novel about a woman abandoned by her husband 15 years ago who seeks rabbinical permission to remarry. Two rabbis offer conflicting opinions, each using scripture to justify his position. The result is tragic.

Says Wasserman on the prospect of playing once again at SBC, "It will be so good to be home."

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SEAWAY A THREAT TO IROQUOIS STUDY

Priest and Historian Racing to Complete Excavations at Site of Indian Refuge

Special to The New York Times.

MONTREAL, Sept. 19.—On a little road along the St. Lawrence River a few miles west of Montreal, a Jesuit priest and a university historian are fighting against time.

Not far from the Indian village of Caughnawaga, they are excavating an area now identified as the fourth site of an Iroquois Roman Catholic refuge. The refuge has been connected with the revered American Indian maiden, Kateri Takakwitha, known as the Lily of the Mohawk.

In the last few days, as gigantic trucks carrying St. Lawrence Seaway materials thundred past on the road, the Rev. Henri Bechard of the mission of St. Francis Xavier et Caughnawaga and Prof. Wilfrid Jury, curator of the Museum of Indian Archaeology at the University of Western Ontario, found several artifacts.

The artifacts are being added to the collection that is reconstructing the story of the mission's move upriver in the seventeenth century to its present site at Caughnawaga.

The Seaway furnishes the element of time. Already some of the Indian lands in the reservation have been expropriated.

Dikes are going up at the edge of the river. Canals, channels, locks and highway projects are pushing back the lands.

Talk of a New Dam

Now there is talk that a new power dam to harness the raging waters of the Lachine Rapids is being planned for electric power purposes. It would flood the fourth site, which the Indians knew as Kanatakwenke.

Last year, the two men definitely identified the site. They located bedlogs of what appeared to be a longhouse built by the early French fathers. Remnants of both French and Indian pipe stems are among the relics identified this season.

Now Father Bechard and Professor Jury believe that the building was a Jesuit residence and that the church and cemetery may be just across the road. They are hoping to find the grave of Father James de Lam-

berville, who baptized Kateri and who left written records of her story.

Kateri was declared venerable several years ago, and Catholic churchmen are continuing efforts to obtain for her the next steps in beatification and sainthood. She would be the first American-born saint.

She endured suffering at the hands of Indian pagans. When she came to the mission, she practiced mortification.

After her death in 1680 at the age of 24, many miracles of healing were attributed to her.

Mission of the laity

Synod works at two levels

No Roman synod has raised so much interest among Canadian dioceses as that on the vocation and mission of the laity. This synod began in Rome on October 1 of this year and will continue until the end of October. What can we expect of this gathering of bishops called together by the Pope?

A synod of the universal Church takes place on two levels. The work carried out in Rome during the month of October by the participating members constitutes, in a real sense, the synod on the laity. The media will keep us posted on the individual presentations that will capture the most attention at the assembly. However, one would have to be very perceptive to be able to tell now what choices the fathers of the synod will make and what the content of the decisions and recommendations made to Pope John Paul II will be. For my part, I expect an enormous disparity of viewpoints and perspectives concerning the vocation and mission of the laity in the Church and in society.

The synod also mobilizes certain energies in each particular Church. There is always a group of Christians interested in the theme proposed to the synod assembly. The fact that a great number of baptized people are alert to the pastoral action of the Church explains the interest encountered this year in the subject treated by the synod on the laity. Several Christian people of our diocese have taken part in public hearings held by the Canadian delegates, or in consultations made by the bishops' confer-

ence. This diocesan level of the Roman synod is not to be dismissed lightly. It is a fertile ground for pastoral and spiritual fruits.

Our diocesan Church is committed to a vast pastoral undertaking called RENEW. In the course of the coming years, all baptized people of our diocese will be able, if they so desire, to take stock of their commitment as a disciple of Jesus within the Church and in the world. This process of spiritual renewal is a very practical and efficient way to raise among ourselves the question of the vocation and mission of the laity in the Church and in the world. I do hope that many Christian people of our diocese follow attentively, through the media, the progress of the synod on the laity. In particular, we shall benefit by reflecting on the text of the presentations by Canadian delegates in Rome. They reflect deeply what we are living in our Church. All this will help launch RENEW.

I have another expectation in relation to the synod on the laity. This expectation has to do with the mutual relationship between the fact of being baptized and family life. Some groups will take a great deal of time discussing the duality of clergy-laity, suggesting that we should move beyond these distinctions of statute and role to focus on the Church of the baptized. In our milieu this debate has made great headway. We can allow ourselves now to look at what priests, laity and religious are to experience together in complementing and uniting their charisms and roles. In this case my wish is that our Church give particular attention to what the baptized people have done with the family. It is in the family that the first experiences of commitment find their source of inspiration and their test of truth.

A diocesan Church has its own projects. Yet it lives in companionship with sister Churches in universal communion. The Roman synod is an event that is rich in information and in sharing of experiences. May we lend a listening ear to what the Holy Spirit will tell our Church in the course of the coming weeks. In my view, the synod on the vocation and mission of the laity will bring us challenges and suggestions that will be relevant for the daily life of our Christian communities. May the behaviour of the Church on this occasion be an example of hope for our world.

Bernard Hubert

Bishop of St. Jean-Longueuil



Deacon Ronald Boyer with his wife, Sheila and ordaining bishop, Bishop Hubert.

First permanent deacon ordained for Kahnawake

Ronald Boyer was ordained permanent deacon at St. Francis Xavier Mission in Kahnawake Oct. 11 by Bishop Bernard Hubert of the diocese of St. Jean-Longueuil.

Boyer, an Ojibway Indian, was born in Mississauga Indian Reserve, Ontario. He moved to Kahnawake in the early 60's. He and his wife Sheila have been married for thirty years, and blessed with six children and five grandchildren.

In 1972 he left the construction job at which he was working in another community to come home and work for his town and the people. He helped in building the Youth Centre, which also houses the town's Public Library. In 1985, he built the new Kateri Hall which has been used for many functions in its short history. He was also involved in the distribution of bread and pastries to the less fortunate in our community.

In 1981, he returned to his birthplace for the sad occasion of his brother's funeral. God chose this time to open up Ron's mind and heart to Him in an even deeper way. He was touched by the ministry and music of the Kateri Prayer Group and thereafter travelled with them, singing out and speaking about their love for God and their devotion to Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha. The Kateri Prayer Group consists of a few Ojibway singers from Northern Ontario. They are charismatics and have held healing services wherever they go.

Ron took his training at Anishinabe Spiritual Centre at Anderson Lake, Ontario, studying for approximately three years under the direction of Father George Leach, S.J. He is continuing his studies at Regis College, Toronto, in Foundation of Ministry and hopes to obtain his bachelor's degree in theology.

At Ronny's request, the afternoon and the evening before the ordination, a prayer service was held. Many of our diocesan friends and parishioners came. Some came for the Reconciliation Service, but many came for God's blessings upon our people, and especially upon Ron's ministry.

The ordination itself was unique in that native spirituality was evident throughout. Friends of Ronald's came from Akwesasne, Plattsburgh, Montreal, as well as Ontario and Kahnawake, to take part in the purification rite, the burning of sweet grass by Deacon Dominic Eshkawkogan, who had previously performed this same ceremony for the Pope when he was in Midland, Ontario.

The ceremony of Investiture of a Deacon, like that of a priest, is most moving. The candidate vows obedience in all matters to

the Bishop of the diocese and his successors. He lies down at the altar to symbolize that he is willing to give his life for the Church. In return he receives the gifts of the Holy Spirit through the "laying on of hands" performed by the bishop.

The newly ordained received his stole, symbol of his status within the church. Brenda Rice, a member of the Church Committee presented it to his wife, Sheila, who vested Ronald as an outward and public sign of her consent to her husband's commitment to the service of the Church. The stole was decorated with a traditional native symbol within which is the symbol of the cross. When Ronald was presented with the Book of the Gospels, the bishop exhorted him to "believe what you read, teach what you believe and practice what you teach."

This ceremony occurred at a most opportune time coinciding with the Thanksgiving holiday. Ron is thankful for having been called by God to the ministry; and we are thankful that Ron listened to, and acted upon this call.

Ronny, we are all rooting for you, and praying for your ministry!

Nancy Phillips,
Parishioner

MACDONALD-CARTIER CORNER

"Share your gifts"

This year students and members of the school community are working hard to raise funds for the research of children's diseases at the Montreal Children's and Ste. Justine hospitals. Our efforts over the last three years contributed \$23,000 to the Telethon of Stars. This year's goal is \$7,000.

The activities featured in the campaign are the Telethon Pen Sale, the Dance for Life, and a special youth musical, "Keep On Singin'". The pens are selling very well at one dollar each, with some students having sold up to one hundred. The Dance for Life will be held during the school dance, Oct. 30, and will once again be a "sponsor dance". The youth musical, "Keep On Singin'" will be performed by Ottawa's Galilee Proclaims on Nov. 7. This show should not be missed! Tickets are available from me at the school at \$6.00.

I would like to extend my thanks to all who are working hard to make this event a success.

God bless!

Jack Adams
Pastoral Animator



Bishop Bernard Hubert