

THEATRE NEWS / Toronto's Mayworks art fest will include
a mini celebration of the 'working people's culture'

Political correctness hallmark of festival

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MAYWORKS, Toronto's politically correct arts festival, kicks off on April 22 with more than 50 events in union halls, church basements, small theatres and galleries.

Dubbed the largest labour/arts festival in North America, Mayworks "celebrates the imagery, struggles and experiences of the labour movement." Organizers have planned mini film, theatre and music festivals in recognition of the "working people's culture."

One of the festival's major events is a concert on April 28, in support of the Salvadorean trade-union federation, Fenastras. Juno Award winners Grievous Angels, Robert Priest and Teosinte will perform.

Throughout most of the festival, the Factory Studio Cafe will feature special theatrical performances, readings and performance art. To celebrate May Day, the theatre will hold a blue-jean gala featuring dub poet Clifton Joseph and Ontario Culture and Communications Minister Rosario Marchese. Organizers plan to auction off a pair of Toronto Councillor Jack Layton's suspenders. The proceeds will go to the Union of Unemployed Workers.

The film series at Mayworks, sponsored by the National Film Board, will kick off on May 1, with the premiere of Arthur Hammond's *Imperfect Union: Canadian Labour and the Left*. The four parts will examine the evolution of the relationship between labour and the socialist movement. The Toronto premieres of Mary Jane Gomes's *Canada: In the Time Between Ages* and Sara Diamond's *The Lull Be-*

fore the Storm, Parts 3 & 4 will also be featured.

The theatrical highlight promises to be the remounting of Daniel Brooks and Guillermo Verdecchia's hit play *The Noam Chomsky Lectures*, which examines arts criticism and political culture in Toronto.

Mayworks was inspired by Glasgow's Mayfest, which was set up to address "the seeming invisibility of working people's culture." Toronto's five-year-old festival continues until May 12.

Speaking of "socially relevant" productions, Toronto's Mixed Company Theatre will mount Arthur Milner's play *Masada*, which chronicles the history of the Jewish struggle, on April 12.

Directed by the company's artistic director, Simon Malbogot, the play will feature award-winning actor Gary Reineke in a one-man performance at the Theatre Centre.

Playwright Michel Tremblay will headline the celebrated writers seminar at the Stratford Festival this summer.

The weekend seminar, to be held June 14 to 16, will feature a panel discussion entitled *The State of the Art in Canadian Theatre — Canadian Voices on Stage*. The panel will be moderated by Martha Henry, artistic director of the Grand Theatre in London, Ont. It will feature Duncan McIntosh, artistic director of Toronto's Theatre Plus and actor/director Marti Maraden, who will be directing the Stratford company's 1991 production of Tremblay's *Les Belles Soeurs*.

The weekend package, which is

limited to 70 participants, costs \$260.

The 12th annual Dora Mavor Moore Awards will take place on June 17 at the Winter Garden Theatre in Toronto. Canadian director Kelly Robinson, who is well known for his work on the Stratford productions of *The Mikado*, *Pirates of Penzance* and *Cabaret*, will direct the gala awards show. Robinson has also worked as a director/choreographer for such musical groups as The Nylons, Canadian Brass and Celine Dion.

The Ontario parliamentary public relations branch is pumping tax dollars into a performers unit to create educational shows for students and guests visiting the legislature from April to August.

The professional company, headed by writers Theresa Sears and David Switzer and composer Paul Shilton, will create mini-musicals that mix original music and documentary material in educational performances. This year's shows will be *The Life and Times of Orland Q. Guffy, M.P.P.*, *J'm'appelle Julie* and *The Words and Music of Old Ontario*.

Topological Theatre, a new Toronto company, will present Raymond Storey's *God and the Big Blue Chair*, a play that examines religion and faith in the 20th century.

Directed by the company's co-artistic director, Edward Roy, *God and the Big Blue Chair* opens on April 12 at Theatre Passe Muraille Backspace.