1975
Banff
Festival of the Arts
August 7–23

presents for the first time in English

BEN-UR

by Jean Barbeau

translated by Philip London
in collaboration with Laurence R. Berard

Songs and music composed by Roger Perkins
Additional lyrics by Mary Humphrey Baldridge

AUGUST 14, 15, 16 and 18 at 8:00 p.m.
AUGUST 16 and 17 at 2:00 p.m.

MARGARET GREENHAM THEATRE

Director ..................... Claude Des Landes
Choreographer .............. Paul Draper
Scenery and Costume Designer: John W. Graham
Lighting Designer .......... David J. Hignell
Music Supervisor ............ Roger Perkins

The Banff Centre
SCHOOL OF FINE ARTS
by Jean Barbeau

Ben-Ur est une oeuvre importante parce qu'elle illustre l'évolution de la société québécoise au cours de la dernière décennie, soit depuis la "révolution tranquille".

Avec ironie et cynisme, Barbeau décrit le comportement d'un gars ordinaire, devenu héros malgré lui.

Benoît Urbain Théberge (Ben-Ur) représente ce québécois qui, à la recherche de son identité, se révolte contre sa condition et son milieu, contre toute cette mythologie folklorique qui l'opprime. Il se voit contraint de rêver sa vie à travers des bandes dessinées dont les héros ne lui appartiennent même pas. Pourtant, leur symbolisme évident devrait nous faire réfléchir.

Ben-Ur est au fond une pièce cauchemardesque écrite comme une suite d'épisodes à la fois tragiques et drôles. Barbeau, lors d'une entrevue, disait: "On ne rit pas des personnages mais à travers eux, d'un état dont ils ne sont pas responsables."

Finalement, la plupart des tragédies québécoises sont comiques... faut-il croire que l'espoir n'est pas loin.

Jean Barbeau est le plus prolifique des auteurs dramatiques québécois. Âgé de moins de 35 ans, il a écrit plus d'une vingtaine de pièces. Toutes ses œuvres ont été jouées et dix des entre elles ont déjà été publiées. Citrouille, sa dernière pièce, est en ce moment présentée à Paris.

Claude Des Landes
Metteur en scène

Ben-Ur is an important work because it illustrates the evolution of Québécois society during the last decade, since the "quiet revolution".

With irony and cynicism, Barbeau describes the behaviour of an ordinary fellow who has become a hero in spite of himself.

Benoit Urbain Théberge (Ben-Ur) represents this Québécois who, searching for his own identity, revolts against his condition and his surroundings, against all the oppressive folkloric mythology. He sees himself trapped and therefore spends his days dreaming away his life through comic strips; comic strips whose heroes are foreign to him. However, in this play, these heroic symbols are presented for more than just a two-dimensional effect. They are there to make us pause and reflect.

Ben-Ur, which has an essentially nightmarish quality, is written in a series of episodes which are both tragic and comic at the same time. During an interview Barbeau stated: "We do not laugh at the characters but rather through them at a state for which they are not responsible."

Finally, the majority of Québécois tragedies are also comedies... can hope be far away?

Jean Barbeau is the most prolific of all the Québécois dramatists. Less than 35 years of age, he has written more than 20 plays. All of his works have been produced and ten of them have already been published. His latest play, Citrouille, is currently being presented in Paris.

Claude Des Landes
Director

CLAUDE DES LANDES is the Director of the Centre d'essai des Auteurs Dramatiques (The Playwrights' Experimental Centre) in Montreal. CEAD is a co-operative, non-profit organization devoted to the promotion of Quebec playwrights.
COSTUME ASSISTANTS
Sue Bryson, Beverley Bushel, Gerry Forcea, Doris Harris, Steven Jung, Karen Moore,
Mary Nugent, Sarah Norquay

TECHNICAL PERSONNEL
Assistant to the Technical Director — Eric Richer
Chief Electrician — Malcolm Kibblewhite
Assistant Stage Manager, Eric Harvie Theatre — Mary Anne Neary
Assistant Stage Manager, Margaret Greenham Theatre — Terry Crack

Acknowledgements
Special thanks to the Centre d’Essai des Auteurs Dramatiques for their assistance towards
making the translation of Ben-Ur possible.
Richard Schick, Alberta Theatre Projects
Theatre Calgary
Théâtre Populaire du Québec
Miss Elizabeth Baldrige
Troubadour Costumes — Thom Guthrie
During the process of de-planing from an Air Canada flight at the Calgary airport last year I observed a middle-aged man raising his arm and cursing with all the vehemence of a melodrama. The object of his vengeance was a bilingual directional sign. The prejudice displayed didn’t surprise me, only the confused anger with which it was expressed.

Theatre art, at its best, illuminates in some way the human condition. Ben-ur, at its most serious, is play that attempts to illuminate the life condition of the young Quebecois prior to the days of the FLQ uprisings. Ben-ur when it is less serious, provides a light look at identity problems which perhaps exist not only in French-speaking Canada, but in Western Canada as well.

There is a wealth of theatre literature in Quebec that is being produced every year. Most of these plays are never seen by English-speaking Canadians. Ben-ur by Jean Barbeau is one of these plays. It has been our pleasure to assist in its realization in English at the Banff Centre.

Harold G. Baldridge
Acting Head, Drama Division

THE CAST AND MUSICIANS
(Consisting of the entire class in Senior Acting as well as certain students from the Intermediate and Junior sections)

CAST LIST
Acting Company (in alphabetical order) —
Chris Benson — Chorus, Mangy Cur, Sukulu, Hippy (Biker)
†Janet Brady — Chorus, Cheetah
Nick Breeden — Chorus, Cheyenne, Sukulu, Hippy, Ben-ur Understudy
David Clark — Chorus, Mike, Tonto, Sukulu, Photographer
Cynthia Cohen — Chorus, Witchdoctor
Joshua Dalfin — Chorus, Chief of Sukulus
Mario Diiorio — Chorus, Cheyenne, Young Lover
Diane Dowling — Chorus, Little Dancing Noodle, Sukulu, Hippy (Biker’s Girlfriend)
*Debbie Grover — Chorus, Diane
†James Holmes — Chorus, Priest, Verret, Swingate, Big Sam
Bruce Marwin — Ben-ur, Lone Ranger, Tarzan, Captain Clean
Astrid Roch — Chorus, “Stripper”, Cheyenne, Young Lover
†Gwynyth Walsh — Chorus, “Stripper”, Cheyenne, Sukulu, Hippy (Biker’s Girlfriend)
Martha Wehmecier — Chorus, Mother, Miss Fallowfield, Sister Mercy, Old Woman
†Gene Zegalski — Chorus, Cheyenne, Charley, Biker

Musicians —
Wendy Albrecht — Piano
†Brian Francis — Percussion, Recorder, Trumpet
†Janet McLachlan — Violin, Guitar
††Evian Muzychuck — Bass Guitar, Acoustic Guitar, Harmonica
Rehearsal Pianist — Wendy Albrecht
Faculty Speech Consultants — Mary Corrigan, Jeremy Dix-Hart
*Stage Manager — Ihor Sychylo

*By permission of Actors’ Equity
†Member of the Intermediate section
††Member of the Junior section

THERE WILL BE ONE INTERMISSION

produced with the permission of the playwright and his agents Suzanne Vachon-Pearson and Maureen Hendricks.

Ben-ur was first produced in French by The Théâtre Populaire du Québec
DRAMA FACULTY

Acting —
Harold G. Baldridge (Acting Division Head)
Howard Dallin
Charles W. Moore
Mel Tuck
Leonard White
Claude Des Landes (Guest Director)

Movement —
Paul Draper
Jacqueline Ogg
Voice and Speech —
Mary Corrigan
Jeremy Dix-Hart
Evangeline Machlin

Make-up —
Robin Carson
Richard Jefferey Lucas

Accompanists —
Wendy Albrecht
Ruth Morawetz

Head of the Division (on leave 1975) —
Thomas Peacocke

PRODUCTION STAFF FOR BEN-UR

Stage Manager — Ihor Sychylo*
Assistant Stage Managers — Diane Morrison, Richard L. Kolbenson
Scenic Artist — George Yates
Assisted by — Marilyn Vicary
Costume Designer — John Graham
Assisted by — Helen Hutton
Costume Mistress — Sue Bryson
Master Carpenter — Thomas Legg
Assisted by — Bradley Diddams, Robert Kennedy, George Venini
Sound — Avrom Ash
Lighting Board Operator — Marian Wihak
Lighting Crew — Malcolm Kilblewhite, Maureen Gulkelson, Dale Connery
Properties Supervisor — Janet Knechtel
Assisted by — Cathryn MacFarlane
Stage Crew — Walter Spitz, Claire McLean, Larry Coates