

50,000 face cuts as landlords, cable TV firm dispute fees

By JACK MILLER
Star staff writer

Rogers Cable TV is threatening to cut off 13 cable channels servicing 50,000 clients in the Metro area because of a dispute with the owners of the apartment buildings they live in.

These are buildings in which Rogers bills the landlords in bulk for all the apartments at a reduced

rate and tenants get cable TV service included in their rent.

Among buildings which could lose service are those managed by Metropolitan Trust, Bramalea Consolidated Corp., W. B. Sullivan, and the Manufacturers Life Co.

The cable firm a few months ago was granted permission by federal authorities to raise its monthly rates and has tried to

apply this increase to these bulk-service deals.

But several of the landlords have refused to pay more, saying they have contracts with Rogers at the old rate, with three or four years to run.

Rogers has countered by saying the contracts envisaged only the basic 12-channel service. The company in fact supplies signals on 13 extra channels for which viewers need a converter at-

tached to their set. These channels carry five extra TV stations, a multi-cultural foreign-language program service, a newspaper service, and other specialized material.

Rogers says that unless the landlords cough up an average increase of \$1.45 a month for each apartment, they will place filters on the lines leading into the buildings, in effect jamming the 13 converter channels and

letting only the standard 12 get through.

A major problem is that in the 50,000 apartments affected, about 25,000 clients have rented converters from Rogers at \$3 a month and have become used to having more than two dozen channels to choose from. If Rogers carries out its threat they would be cut back to 12.

Several others may have

bought converters in stores at an average price of \$100 and these investments would be lost to them.

Yesterday Dan Pickett, marketing manager for Rogers, said the company was collecting new, higher rates for more than 130,000 customers and it was not willing to settle for the old price for the remaining 50,000.

Other major cable opera-

tors in the Metro area have decided not to act this way.

"It's ironic," one executive said yesterday. "Rogers Cable cuts commercials out of the Buffalo stations here. The owners of those stations say that as a result, they may not be able to make money on their service here so they'll jam their signals, and Rogers thinks that's terrible of the Buffalo people. But then Rogers

turns around and says if it can't make money on its service it will jam its signals in the local apartments."

However, a spokesman for the Canadian Radio-Television Commission, contacted yesterday in Ottawa, said it was not clear whether Rogers had the right to jam its converter channels this way. "If they do it and we get a formal complaint from any custom-

er, we will be obliged to act on it, and I think we would act very quickly," he said.

Pickett said Rogers serves about 80,000 apartments on such bulk contracts and that the building owners for 30,000 of them had agreed to rate increases. These were the UDI group, including the Cadillac, Greenwin, Meridian, Belmont, Delzotto, Campeau, and ManuLife Centre buildings. None of these are affected.

ENTERTAINMENT

Theatrical vagabonds dig up Prairie sagas

By FRANK RASKY
Star staff writer

Paul Thompson regrets he won't be able to gallop onstage on a live horse tomorrow when The West Show opens a one-week run at the 350-seat sanctuary of Bathurst St. United Church.

The ebullient artistic director of Theatre Passe Muraille did just that last month at a special performance in Saskatoon's Centennial Theatre. As a tribute to John Diefenbaker who was seated in the audience, Thompson rode a horse onstage and pretended to be Gabriel Dumont, the heroic buffalo hunter of the Louis Riel rebellion who taught the 10-year-old Diefenbaker how to shoot a gun.

"Though we may be horseless here, we're bringing a genuine Red River cart onstage," says Thompson. "And I'm promising that Toronto audiences will be excited and touched by the true sagas of the Canadian West we've dramatized in our collective musical history."

Climax of trip

For the 35-year-old director and his wandering troupe of seven actors, the Toronto engagement will be the climax of a four-month, 5,000-mile trip into the heart of Prairie folklore, made possible by a \$25,000 grant from the Canada Council.

Last August the band of amateur historians fanned out from Batoche, Sask., with pickup trucks, tents, canoes and note pads to begin their highly personalized research.

"Because Prairie folk most enjoy talking at their community festivals, we became, in effect, festival groups," Thompson said. "We talked to oldtimers at rodeos, Indian powwows, and Ukrainian and Mennonite get-togethers."

"Unlike the past collective creations

we did in Ontario, such as The Farm Show, Baby Blue, and Adventures of An Immigrant, we were more interested in stories than portraits. We wanted to convey the mythic sense of the West through personal experiences as they were actually lived. And we were told such marvellous stories—about the idealists, dreamers and strivers who pioneered our Canadian West."

Thompson is proud of having discovered three near-legendary figures whose stories have not been told in our history books.

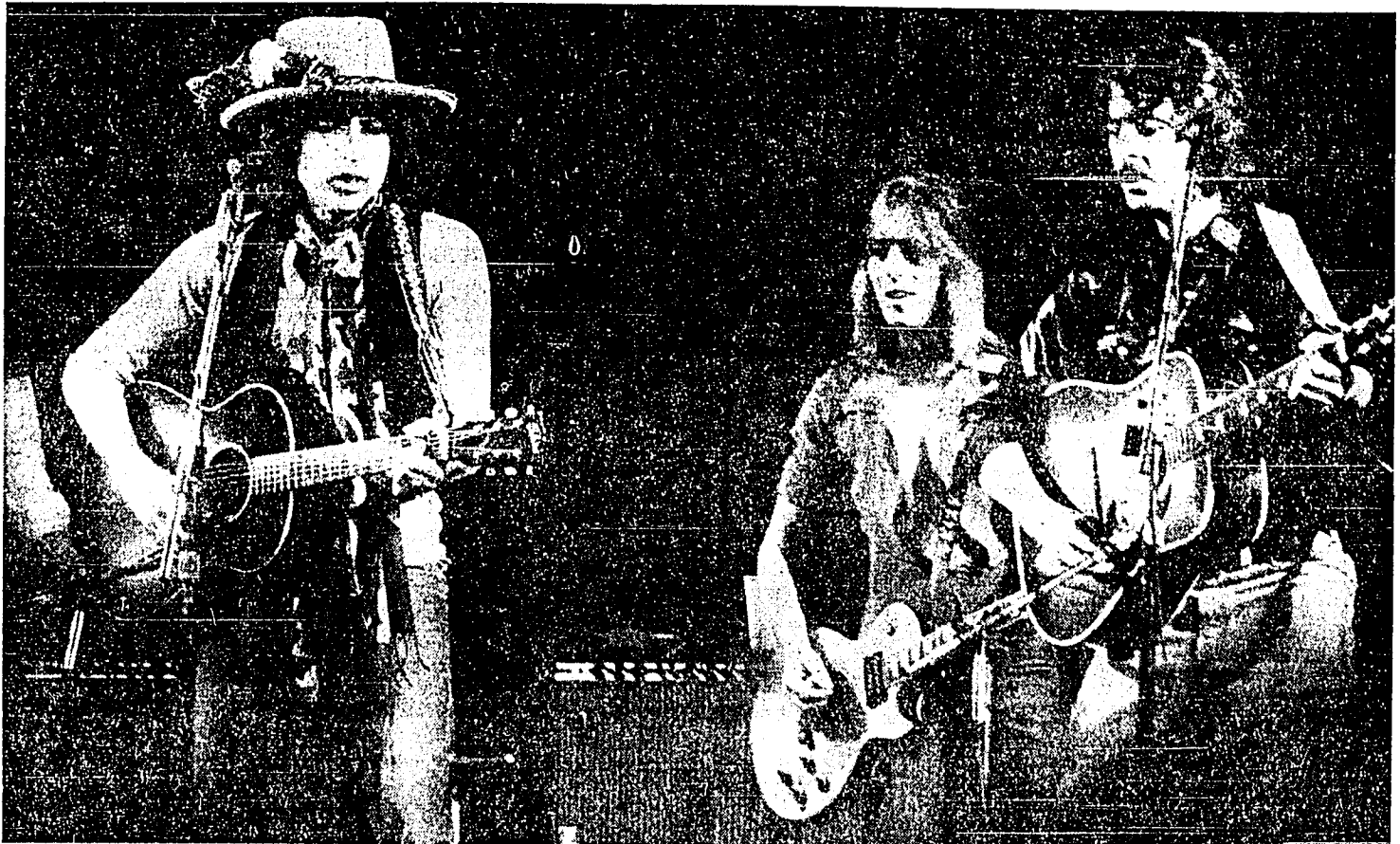
Unknown heroine

One is Madame Tourond, the unknown heroine of the Riel Rebellion. Her husband was killed during Riel's first Red River Uprising in Winnipeg. Then she and her two Metis sons gave their lives fighting beside Riel and Dumont at the Battle of Batoche in 1885.

Another heroic figure was Louise Lucas, the "mother of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation party." In 1939, this early liberated woman ran for political office, and though she was defeated, she succeeded in humanizing politics.

Still another was a Finnish homesteader, Tom Sukanen, who spent 10 years and \$9,000 in the '30s building a 30-foot-by-40-foot, 12,000 pound sailboat right in the middle of the Prairies at McCrorie, Sask. He was determined to sail a shipment of wheat down the Saskatchewan River and through Hudson Strait to hungry people in Finland. The obsessed man died at the age of 50 trying to drag his mercy ship 17 miles across land to Saskatchewan River.

The West Show's concluding vignette, titled The Triumph of the Tractor Demonstration of 1969, depicts striking farmers pelting Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau with rotting grain in front of the Bessborough Hotel in Saskatoon.



—Star photo by Frank Lennon

HIS ROLLING THUNDER REVUE making its way toward New York, Bob Dylan (left) last night took centre stage before 16,000 people at Gardens, accom-

panied by a host of other folk music personalities including Mick Ronson (centre) and Bobby Neuwirth. Joni Mitchell was there, and Ramblin' Jack Elliott and

Ronee Blakley and Roger McQuinn and Gordon Lightfoot. Joan Baez joined in duet with Dylan, her dignity filling hall, according to Star writer Peter Goddard.

Most of all, there was Dylan

By PETER GODDARD
Star staff writer

His face was smeared with white grease-paint, his lips and nose were red. He was an electric Picasso clown who said every song was a "true story."

"Listen carefully," Bob Dylan told the 16,000 people at last night's four-hour long Maple Leaf Gardens concert, to be repeated tonight.

And who didn't? For his Rolling Thunder Revue, soon to end its two months of wandering in New York,

was something of a folk circus in which many of the side shows might have occupied the centre ring.

There were four songs by Joni Mitchell, each an emotional strip without any tease. Then some vintage Woody Guthrie from the equally vintage Ramblin' Jack Elliott, who looked, as one song ran, as if he had "been lived in too long to tear down."

There was Ronee Blakley, from the film Nashville, looking like an actress

playing a part. And Roger McQuinn, Gordon Lightfoot, Bobby Neuwirth and the English guitarist, Mick Ronson, conjuring up letter perfect solos at the drop of a tune.

And there was Joan Baez, a dark angel in duet with Dylan in his gypsy rags, her very dark dignity filling the hall. Elton John was backstage up to intermission. And David Clayton-Thomas dropped by.

But most of all, there was Dylan.

He ended the first half of the concert, his knees and waist bent as he leaned to ward the microphone, crackling out new songs like Durango and Isis in his saw-toothed voice.

As he began and ended the second half with his friends, first Baez, then, as

the thunder rolled to a close, with everyone on stage.

His last Toronto concert, also at the Gardens but backed by The Band, was a moody affair.

Last night he was caught up in the whirl around him (the excellent band swelled at times to eight members), a jiving, romping Petroushka in baggy blue jeans dancing at his own fair.

Suddenly, it was easy to remember the little rooms you were sitting in when you first heard the warn-

ing from the song, "and you who philosophize disgrace." You could remember the people you were with, the hunger and unease you felt and, even stranger, the sense he was saying it all for you.

For he was saying it all again last night.

Eye on Entertainment By Sid Adilman

Outsiders only for CNE post

Canadian National Exhibition employees from top to bottom have been told not to apply for the vacant general manager post. Outsiders only are being approached to replace David Garrick, who resigned abruptly to head CN Tower operations. . . . Gordon Pinsent is converting The Rowdymen into a musical for next year's Charlottetown Festival. . . . More on New Year's Eve: At the Travellodge, \$35 per couple, free overnight accommodation, musical group Cargo and buffet; Lord Stanley's Restaurant, \$35 per couple, meal, singer/Rick Avery and the Tommy Danton Duo; Teller's Cafe, \$70 per couple, meal and the Sweet Reason revue with Barbara Hamilton and Sandra O'Neill; and ManuLife Centre's Le Soleil, \$45 per couple, buffet and the Ginni Grant Band. . . . All Harborfront activities are likely to be halted during March and April while planners try to get firm government approval for permanent programming. No one, even on the inside, has a clear idea of what Harborfront should do.

Yvonne De Carlo headlines show

Yvonne De Carlo will headline yet another Toronto production of Dames At Sea, the musical revue that satirizes Dick Powell-Ruby Keeler movies. Producer Marlene Smith has set a Jan. 28 opening at Club Embassy, Bloor and Bellair Sts. Also in the cast are Toronto performers Barbara Basky, Grant Cowan, Etta Ghurek, Graham Teer and Blaine Parker. Joel Greenberg directs.

An intentionally nomadic Theatre Passe Muraille is settling down. The 7-year-old alternate theatre enterprise of producer Paul Thompson has bought a home, a former bakery on Ryerson St. in the Queen-Bathurst area. Aiming at a late January occupancy, it will house two theatres, seating 125 each, on two floors.

"But," says Thompson, who delights in staging presentations throughout Metro, "we're still going to do some of our bigger audience things all over town." Most of the downpayment came from proceeds of Passe Muraille's controversial play, I Love You Baby Blue, busted by police after 12 weeks. A trial is scheduled to start in January. That month, Passe Muraille will be staging a drama documentary by Betty Jane Wylie about the late Rev. Russell Horsburg, who in 1964 was the central figure in a church sex scandal in Chatham. It resulted in his imprisonment on a morals charge, of which he was later cleared. Don Harmon will star as Horschburg for two weeks on tour and then in Toronto.

A polished Minnelli autobiography

Book Briefs: I Remember It Well, by Vincente Minnelli (\$1.75, Berkley Medallion Books) Director Minnelli (An American in Paris and other romantically sophisticated movies) has turned out a polished autobiography of insights, advice and regret. He admits that he didn't know enough about drugs to help his first wife, Judy Garland, and didn't know how to hold her together long enough to save their marriage. He passes on sage advice to young filmmakers.



—Star photo by Ren Bull

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR of Theatre Passe Muraille, Paul Thompson will stage The West Show for one week at Bathurst St. United Church. Production is the result of 5,000-mile trip his troupe made throughout the West picking up folklore.

Music review

Pianist's premise proved nonsense

By RONALD HAMBLETON

If pianist Monica Gaylord had talked just a little less in introducing her recital last night at Walter Hall, devoted to music of Canadian women composers, the evening would have been perhaps what she intended, a genuine tribute to good composers through their own music.

But Gaylord said these women were neglected, which is nonsense, as she herself revealed in introducing them one by one.

Eckhardt-Grammate, until her death last year, was widely travelled and performed, as is Jean Coulthard today. Pentland and Archer travel less, but not so their music. And all four appear in Creative Canada, the biographical dictionary of Canadian

artists: Eckhardt-Grammate and Archer both with very lengthy entries.

Gaylord's other two composers, Southam and Coulombe Saint-Marcoux were comparatively unknown when the book was published. Their works today may not be played as much as they would like, but they are by no means ignored.

And Gaylord showed why their music is not neglected, by playing some examples: Variations, impressionistic minuitae, sonatas and sonatinas, etudes, composed jazz, and an extravagant Spanish dance.

Composed by women, yes, but are they women composers? All of it was well worth the elegant Gaylord technique and warm musicianship.



—Photo by Ken Regan, Camera 5

JONI MITCHELL AT DYLAN CONCERT Sang an emotional strip without any tease

Ballet greats come alive in film series

By WILLIAM LITTLER
Star dance critic

In case you've never seen him on stage and are wondering what the National Ballet's new artistic director looks like as a dancer, the Art Gallery of Ontario can oblige your curiosity this month by showing you not only Alexander Grant but the full Royal Ballet.

Bolshoi Ballet and Kirou Ballet as well.

The dancers appear on three films scheduled for 8 p.m. screenings at the AGO: the Royal Ballet tomorrow, the Bolshoi Ballet on Thursday, and the Kirou Ballet next Wednesday and Thursday.

Grant appears in a 1960 film, produced and directed by Paul Czinner on the

stage of Covent Garden, starring Margot Fonteyn in three of her greatest roles: Odette in Swan Lake Act II, The Firebird and Ondine.

Sir Frederick Ashton's Ondine can be seen virtually intact, with Fonteyn as the water sprite whose love for a mortal ultimately destroys him, and Grant as a kind of wild spirit who makes life difficult for the

ballet's mortals. If Fonteyn is unforgettable in her tenderness, Grant is no less memorable in his triumphantly dramatic athleticism.

The Bolshoi film, made during its first Western visit to Covent Garden in 1956, has among its assets the 46-year-old Galina Ulanova, seen opposite the Bolshoi's prince of princes, Nikolai

Faddeychev in Giselle and alone in that great Pavlova specialty, The Dying Swan.

The Soviet-made film version of the Kirou Sleeping Beauty features Makarova and Panov in the Bluebird pas de deux, or rather in the adagio section of it. They are so good that one wishes Kiev director Konstantin Sergeev hadn't deleted their solo variations.