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MARTHA ALLAN 30th ANNIVERSARY PRODUCTION

montreal repertory theatre

Hamlet

by

William Shakespeare

Next Production

THE GREAT SEBASTIANS

by Howard Lindsay
and Russel Crouse

Lobby Display . . .

Althea Douglas, costume designer for McGill University's English Department productions, has arranged in our lobby a display which she says is "not an art exhibit. My sketches were never intended as pretty pictures."

When Kay Kinsman first arranged with Mrs. Douglas to exhibit examples of her work, it was understood that it would be a visual representation of the working process of costume design. The sketches are drawings from which the actual costumes were made and they show the structure upon which a colour scheme is planned. They include directions to the sewers (usually Mrs. Douglas herself) in somewhat cryptic form ("cut on the bias — let ankles show").

Here is a glimpse of the imagination, research and work which go on behind the scenes before you see costumes on a stage. It provides the basic recipe which this particular designer-craftsman has created and followed to produce a finished product.

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Three Stratfords . . .

Renaissance is a pleasant word to use in past or present cultures. It breathes invigoratingly through one's nostrils and stimulates a mental image of the importance of what one is saying. So, without apology, I use it now in relation to Shakespeare in the modern theatre.

In the past half-dozen years it is surely indisputable to state that the plays of Shakespeare have flowered into a theatrical renaissance. On this continent, two Shakespearean festivals have taken root and become permanent features of the theatrical scene. In England, the Shakespearean festival plans to transplant a winter season to London. Here at MRT, a production of "Hamlet" gives me pause to consider, however sketchily, some of the background in which this renaissance has grown.

"In all interpretative arts the classics provide the basis of technical education;" wrote Tyrone Guthrie, "they are the only possible artistic measuring rods." For English theatre, Shakespeare's plays remain the undisputed classics of all time. Any serious production of one of Shakespeare's plays is a challenge to directors, actors, designers and audience. Deeper thought, harder work, higher standards are demanded for Shakespearean productions, and these investments of concentration, energy, time and talent usually result in greater rewards.

Three Shakespearean Festivals — related by birth, united in aim, individualistic in development — have risen to devote themselves to the production of classic drama within the past century. The parent of two twentieth-century children, Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire, was first conceived in 1864 as a means to commemorate the date of Shakespeare's birth.

It was ten years before the idea took sufficient shape to develop beyond the abstract. Charles Edward Flower presented property to the Town Council of Stratford, and a year later the Shakespeare Memorial Association was formed.

The old Memorial Theatre in Stratford-upon-Avon, like its Connecticut counterpart, was architecturally akin to the old Globe Theatre of Shakespeare's day and it was cheerfully incomplete at the time the first Festival started. "Don't run," Mrs. Flower, wife of the Association's chairman, had warned, "*walk*. If you are in such a hurry, there will be no roots in the thing, and in a few years it will die."

Despite the outspoken, and sharply written, criticisms of Londoners, the Memorial Theatre survived. It survived visiting opera companies, lack of adequate endowments, destruction by fire in 1926, two world wars and innumerable changes of management. Unlike its two children, the Stratford-upon-Avon Festival was from the first the favoured child and dear delight of the Stratford community. The citizens loved the theatre, the players, and the plays with almost uncritical affection. Their goal, like that of the Memorial Theatre, was, quite simply, Shakespeare.

In the years since 1879, many young English players received

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The Montreal Repertory Theatre

presents

HAMLET

by WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Directed by ROGER RACINE

Assistant LEO CICERI

Setting designed by EARL PRESTON

Costumes designed by TOM OWEN

To the memory of our founder, the late Martha Allan, this production of Shakespeare's Hamlet is respectfully and affectionately dedicated.

THE PLAYERS

(In order of their appearance)

BERNARDO	DAVID BERLIN
FRANCISCO	HENRY HOVENKAMP
HORATIO	WILLIAM ARMSTRONG
MARCELLUS	JOHN FOSTER
GHOST OF HAMLET'S FATHER	JOHN CHERER
CLAUDIUS, KING OF DENMARK	DOUGLAS PETERSON
LAERTES, SON TO POLONIUS	LOUIS TURENNE
(to be played Wednesday's by Eric Kosky)	
POLONIUS	TOM OWEN
HAMLET	LEO CICERI
GERTRUDE, QUEEN OF DENMARK	BERYL BAXTER
OPHELIA, DAUGHTER TO POLONIUS	SUZANNE GROSSMANN
ROSENCRANTZ	ERIC DONKIN
GUILDENSTERN	ERIC KOSKY
(to be played Wednesday's by Richard Hogan)	
PLAYER KING	JOHN CHERER
PLAYER QUEEN	ANNE McALLAN
PROLOGUE	LIAM SWEENEY
LUCIANUS	JOHN FOSTER
PLAYER	JOSEPH DRBLIK
FORTINBRAS	HENRY HOVENKAMP
FORTINBRAS' CAPTAIN	RICHARD HOGAN
(to be played Wednesday's by John Foster)	
SAILOR	JOSEPH DRBLIK
1st GRAVEDIGGER	ALLAN DOBBY
2nd GRAVEDIGGER	LIAM SWEENEY
PRIEST	DAVID BERLIN
OSRIC	JOHN CODNER
RECORDER PLAYER	JACQUELINE LEMAY

LORDS, LADIES, SOLDIERS, ATTENDANTS:

DIANA BOND, INA DE PAGTER, MARILYN GARDNER, ANNA TORJUSEN, ALLAN CANTWELL, JOSEPH DRBLIK, JOHN FOSTER, CLAUDE MACDONALD, MICHAEL TERENCE, LIAM SWEENEY.

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Three Stratfords . . .

Continued from page 3

the grounding to which Tyrone Guthrie refers in the Memorial Theatre at Stratford-upon-Avon. Those with especial talent sometimes achieved their first real recognition in the Memorial Theatre — the old or the new — whose base at one side touches the Avon river. Training and experience, too, came from the tours undertaken by the Stratford company.

The Stratford-upon-Avon Festival season no longer flourishes only at the time of Shakespeare's birth. It extends through the summer and attracts to it theatre-lovers from all over the British Isles, Europe and North America. Plans now even include a winter season of the Stratford company in London. This ideal training ground for players and artists offers English audiences golden opportunities to deepen their own enjoyment and appreciation of classic drama.

In North America, in addition to various groups which have devoted themselves to Shakespeare in Canada and the United States for many years, two Shakespearean Festivals have been born since 1950. In 1952, Tom Patterson of Stratford, Ontario, succeeded — by transatlantic telephone — in interesting Tyrone Guthrie in coming to Canada to give advice about the forming of a Canadian Shakespearean Festival.

The crises, the set-backs, the discouragements and the indomitable faith, energy and determination which went into the forming of the Canadian festival are sufficiently recent to be remembered by all of us. They probably form a basic pattern common to all three festivals. There are, however, three factors about the Canadian festival which still cause me to marvel.

From the first, the Shakespearean Festival Foundation in Stratford, Ontario, was united in its stand on quality—the highest standard obtainable. Now this is a sufficiently laudable and unusual decision to take when one's pocket book is slim, but to me it is startling in the extreme when I consider two apparently irreconcilable concomitants. The Foundation was determined that the Festival would be a Canadian project; in 1952, there existed in Canada desperately little in the way of professional theatre.

"I have never felt the distinction between professional and amateur," wrote Guthrie, with his usual hearty emphasis, after interviewing some 300 Canadians, "to have much more than monetary significance."

Importing six exceptionally gifted and experienced theatre people from England, and sticking fanatically to its demand for quality, the Canadian Shakespearean Festival opened its first season in a tent — but the very best tent imaginable — on the banks of Stratford's Avon in 1953. From its own community, and from all over Canada, in an incredibly short time, the Festival had drawn players, artists, artisans, workers, contractors, architects, and money to achieve its goal. The Festival, wisely gaining by the advice, experience and artistry of its half-dozen imports, had quality and was Canadian.

During the time the Canadian festival was being conceived and born, Lawrence Langner in New York was dreaming and writing of an American Shakespearean Festival to be held somewhere on the banks of the Housatonic river. In 1955, Stratford, Connecticut, became the home of the American Shakespeare Festival and Academy, housed in a supremely comfortable, modern adaptation of the old Globe Theatre. It was a theatre as incomplete as its 1874 counterpart had been in England's Stratford, but less cheerfully so. Frenzied effort had gone into its erection, and continued until the end of the first season.

To an outsider and foreigner, the Connecticut venture seems to have a different approach to the same goal as our Canadian Stratford's. The Academy which forms an essential and distinctive part of the American festival is indicative of the determination of its founders to concentrate on training. In Ontario, too, training is provided, but it is an adjunct and does not hold equal status with the productions. In Ontario, quality always seems the primary aim. It is reflected in everything the Canadian festival undertakes. In Connecticut, I feel learning and teaching hold first place. This results, it seems to me, in a youthful, eager quality in the plays. In Canada, I always find polish, imagination and excitement; in the United States, judging by only one visit, I find vitality, enthusiasm and the promise of better things to come. Both companies — with the American one leading in the matter of touring and winter-time playing — are seeking to develop an indigenous national theatre.

"Any distinctive national style," wrote Tyrone Guthrie, "whether of acting, producing, writing or criticising plays, will be founded on the study of the classics."

— Beatrice Munro Brown

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