

One of Tippet's central purposes is to cure cultural nationalists of their tendency to treat the Massey Commission as creationist myth. *Making Culture* demonstrates conclusively that English Canada enjoyed a lively arts scene throughout the first half of the century. This is not startling news for anyone who has more than a passing acquaintance with the subject, but what Tippet really seems to be getting at is that modern cultural nationalists have mistreated this earlier period because they have misread its significance. They have celebrated select subjects like the Group of Seven that seem appropriately national and professional, while ignoring a broader realm of cultural activity that was more voluntary, British and participatory in nature. The implication is that they are embarrassed by an earlier arts scene that appears amateurish and colonial compared to the state-subsidized, professional, and self-consciously "Canadian" culture that emerged in the postwar period. Tippet corrects their ahistorical assumption that a national culture emerged full-blown in the heady climate of postwar nationalism, by demonstrating that it came, instead, as a result of trends towards institutionalization, national organization, and government support that had been evident for decades before. The final chapter of the book explores how these developments matured as the Second World War experience promoted both nationalist sentiment and an association of the arts with the civilization Canadians were fighting to defend.

Indeed, the struggle to develop a national institutional infrastructure for the arts emerges as the dominant theme of Tippet's book. There were some fine ironies inherent in the process. It becomes clear that English Canadians' early identification with British traditions in the arts offered certain advantages in the perennial Canadian struggle to be un-American. British culture had such a long and honourable history that its superiority to "American" commercial culture and other vulgar phenomena of modern North American life was unquestioned. The "Canadian" culture which displaced it was an unknown and unproven commodity. It had to be professional so it could achieve high standards and prove its worth, it had to be organized on a vast scale in order to serve as a national culture, and it had to be funded by the government so it would not be overwhelmed by the competition of continental commercial culture. To an extent, these developments were also the result of technological progress in communications and the media. Nevertheless, Canadians erected a national system of culture that in many ways resembled the American culture it was designed to resist.

Has Tippet met her own challenge and proven the value of having historians write cultural history? *Making Culture* certainly provides the synthesis and context that Tippet thought was lacking in existing works in the field. It weaves together the various arts activities of English Canadians into a coherent pattern that complements and enhances our general understanding of Canadian history. At the same time it equips Canadians who are concerned about contemporary cultural issues with a deeper, more sophisticated knowledge of the background of their cause. If the historical and arts communities can learn from each other, this could be the start of a beautiful friendship.

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Early Stages: Theatre in Ontario, 1800 - 1914. (Ontario Historical Society Series). ANN SADDLEMYER, ed. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990. 412 p. ISBN 0-8020-2738-5 (cloth) ISBN 0-8020-6779-4 (paper).

To those interested in the cultural history of Ontario prior to the First World War and in the history of theatre in particular, *Early Stages* represents a welcome addition to the existing literature. The collection of essays in this volume should serve as a useful introduction for many readers not familiar with the field. Indeed the editor seems to have had this purpose in mind, for the essays tend to be general overviews of their respective topics. Beyond this, *Early Stages* also includes a detailed chronological list of theatre-related events in Ontario up to 1914.

Ann Saddlemeyer, the editor, begins the book with an introduction that touches on many of the themes dealt with by the other contributors. She notes the dominant role played by the great metropolitan centres of Britain and the United States in the theatrical life of Ontario: the touring companies, the repertoire, with a few exceptions, the stage stars—all of these tended to come from outside the province. Yet, despite this outside dominance, internal factors also played an important role. Saddlemeyer notes that a strong amateur tradition took root in the province; that a close link existed between Ontario's economic development and the growth of the theatre; and that those in the theatre often had to allay public concerns about the morality and educational value of their performances.

If Saddlemeyer has outlined the themes which appear in the essays of this volume, J.M.S. Careless sets out to provide the general historical context in which theatrical performances took place in Ontario. Careless deftly makes the point that both material and cultural factors shaped the development of theatre in the province. He notes, for example, that the rise of urban communities created new potential audiences for theatre, and that the prosperity of the mid-nineteenth century resulted in the construction of numerous town halls with auditoriums or "opera houses." On the other hand, the powerful strains of Calvinism and Methodism in Ontario society helped create a public opinion that was often censorious and mistrustful towards the stage. Material development, then, in conjunction with a host of social, religious and intellectual factors, created the cultural setting in which the theatre existed. By delineating what that setting was, in all its complexity, Careless has made an important contribution to this book; his piece complements the more sharply focused essays that follow.

Of these essays, the one by Robertson Davies is clearly the best. Elegantly written, the essay provides a fine survey of the repertoire that Ontario theatre audiences saw on the stage. Davies makes the point that in the nineteenth century the "theatre" included a much wider range of performances than is now the case. In addition to serious fare, the playhouses featured a good deal of light, even trivial, entertainment and catchpenny shows—the genre of entertainment which we in our day would most likely find in the movie theatre or on television. With this in mind, Davies examines not only the nineteenth-century taste for melodramatic Shakespearean tragedies, but also the attractions of costume drama, popular melodramas such as "Uncle Tom's Cabin," comedy and farce, opera, minstrel and burlesque shows, as well as the lectures of touring elocutionists (such as Oscar Wilde who toured Ontario in 1882).

Davies does well to note that this repertoire often reflected the outlook of the age, an outlook that Ontario audiences shared with the English-speaking world at large. Melodrama, for example, enjoyed great popularity because it captured the romantic spirit of the century. As Davies puts it, "melodrama was not merely a genre of theatrical writing: it was a prevailing spirit that influenced the way in which the nineteenth century looked at life and desired to see life presented in art" (p.93). Certainly, Ontario theatre

goers had plenty of opportunities to see it on the stage, and Davies makes it plain that they were not ill served in this regard. Ontario, he argues, received “the best that the stage of the two principal English-speaking theatres (Britain and the United States) had to offer” (p.90).

In contrast to the work of Careless and Davies, the essays by Leslie O’Dell (“Amateurs of the Regiment, 1815-1870”), Mary M. Brown (“Entertainers of the Road”) and Gerald Lenton-Young (“Variety Theatre”) are more specific in terms of the topics chosen, and partly because of this, they tend to lack the same breadth of argument. Even so, these pieces still serve primarily as overviews of their material. O’Dell examines the theatrical activity of the British troops garrisoned in Ontario during the nineteenth century. She delineates the relationship between the British soldiers and local community elites in such centres as Kingston and London, and shows just how important the regiments were in the early years of the theatre in those communities. In doing so, she points out that the garrisons helped lay the groundwork for a tradition of amateur theatre in Ontario.

Touring was an integral part of the life of the theatre in nineteenth-century Ontario, and Mary M. Brown offers a fascinating portrait of the stage performers who travelled from town to town, the entrepreneurs who controlled the theatre circuits, and the managers who operated the theatres in which the performances took place. If theatre was a form of show business, then this essay provides an insight into how the structure of that business developed in the 1800s from the first haphazard performances in taverns or inns to the building of proper theatres, the establishment of syndicates that controlled the booking of touring companies, and finally to the advent of vaudeville and silent film. Brown is sensitive to the fact that business management alone did not explain the growth of the touring stage in Ontario: individuals, especially those actors and actresses that gained international acclaim on the stage, also played a central role. Several of these stage stars had roots in Ontario, and Brown provides some illuminating biographical sketches of these figures. Her essay would be worth reading for these sketches alone.

In some respects, the essays by Mary Brown and Gerald Lenton-Young represent opposite sides of the same coin; whereas Brown examines the world of “legitimate” theatre in Victorian Ontario, Lenton-Young turns his attention to variety entertainment. Variety theatre may have suffered in comparisons based on critical artistic merit, but Lenton-Young makes it clear that variety entertainment more than made up for this in terms of popularity. In 1914, for example, Toronto’s variety theatre halls (principally vaudeville and burlesque) outnumbered the seating capacity of the legitimate theatres by more than five to one. In the nineteenth century variety entertainment took many forms, including panoramas that brought exotic, far away places to Ontario audiences, live spectacles such as men crossing the gorge at Niagara Falls on a tightrope, menageries and circuses, minstrel shows, burlesque, and, of course, vaudeville. Lenton-Young does a fine job in tracing the growing popularity of these forms of entertainment in Ontario. Beyond this, at times he is able to place important venues of variety entertainment, such as the concert saloon, in their social context, and this adds more depth to his analysis. His discussion of vaudeville and the large theatres in which it took place is another case in point.

The final piece in this collection is not really an essay at all. “Theatres and Performance Halls” by Robert Fairfield concerns itself with the theatre architecture of

nineteenth-century Ontario; it is more an annotated inventory of theatre buildings than anything else. Inevitably, the accent here is on reference rather than on historical interpretation. Certainly, the research is impressive, and the information Fairfield provides about the "opera houses" of small-town Ontario as well as large establishments such as Toronto's Royal Alexander Theatre is often fascinating. Still, one wishes that the author had attempted to do more with his material; a work of historical synthesis based on the material gathered would have made a significant contribution to this book. What, for example, was the relationship between theatre and theatre architecture in Ontario? (a question that Fairfield actually alludes to).

Together, the essays, Fairfield's study of theatre buildings, and the chronological list of theatre-related events ensure that *Early Stages* will be a good introductory reference book for readers interested in the field. Still, there are areas where this volume, even as a reference work, could have been improved. First, while the bibliography and the endnotes provide the reader with a sense of what exists in the secondary and thesis literature, little specific information is given about primary source material. Readers will have to consult a forthcoming companion volume for this. Second, *Early Stages* contains virtually no discussion of historiography. Surely an essay dealing with the present state of research and writing in the field would have been appropriate in a book such as this.

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The NFB Film Guide: The Productions of The National Film Board of Canada From 1939 to 1989. DONALD W. BIDD, Editor-in-Chief. Canada: The National Film Board of Canada, 1991. English 960 p.; French 758 p. ISBN 0-660-56485-8.

The National Film Board of Canada, long buffeted by the political winds of change, has, under the helmsmanship of Editor-in-Chief Donald W. Bidd, given the film/video community a work which is both practical and politically astute. A valiant first effort, *The NFB Film Guide* is a welcome addition to any reference shelf.

The NFB Film Guide in English and *Le Répertoire des films de l'ONF* in French form a companion set. Although they are similar in format, the one is not a direct translation of the other, either in text or visuals. For maximum use they should be consulted in tandem.

The basic structure consists of ten parts. Beginning with introductions including endorsing essays and an explanatory foreword, the work also provides a summary user's guide, information on access to the films and videos described, a detailed set of parallel timelines of the NFB and the Canadian Film Industry, several informative essays, and a statement of method, before launching into the heart of the work — the filmographies themselves. Extensive subject, series, director, producer and production year indices accompany the filmographies. A bibliography and guide to research resources complete the work. Three photograph sections complement the text.

With one exception, the layout and presentation of the information is clear and easy to understand. One of the items both scholars and cataloguers will want to check is the