

Shakespeare staged in schools

An abridged version of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is being performed by the Penguin Theatre Company of Ottawa in high schools and community halls in a number of eastern Ontario centres.

Penguin's artistic director Maureen LaBonte said there has been some "very judicious" editing of the text, because the company will be playing to predominantly high-school audiences on its tour, and she is aiming at a running time of about 40 minutes.

The cast of seven — Malcolm Delaney, Dorian Ellis, Heather Esdon, Paul Rainville, Brigitte Robinson, Murray Twist and Beverley Wolfe — will play more than 20 characters by doubling and tripling roles.

Rehearsal costumes give them a feeling for what they will wear in the play. In the Pyramus and Thisbe scene, for instance, Fluke wears a fringed black shawl that covers his head, his jeans and his sweater. Titania wears a blue-and-green striped caftan over black tights and high-heeled white sandals, while the girl playing Quince sports a crocheted-balaclava helmet with thick, matching socks.

The audience will see something quite different. LaBonte describes the lovers' costumes designed by Kathleen Irwin as "classical modern", pointing out that in Shakespeare's own day the actors wore modern costumes — it is just that "modern" was Elizabethan then.

Although both Hermia and Helena will wear trousers, LaBonte said, "we haven't tried to shock in any way with the costumes".

The fairy world of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* will be basically black, with lots of glitter, and the clowns will be a bit like Fellini clowns, in oversize sweaters of wool and patchwork.

The set consists of thin panels of rice-paper with the shapes of trees appliquéd on to the backs of them so that they will show through in silhouette to represent "a wood near Athens".

The music for the play consists of mysterious whirrings, rattles, vibrations and muffled bells, conveying the feeling that there is always something going on in the forest around Shakespeare's quarrelling lovers.

The abridged version of Shakespeare's work is being financed by the Ontario Arts Council and a grant from the Ottawa newspaper, *The Citizen*.

Public Archives signs pact

The Public Archives of Canada has signed an agreement with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) designed to ensure the preservation of CBC archival documents of historical interest to Canada.

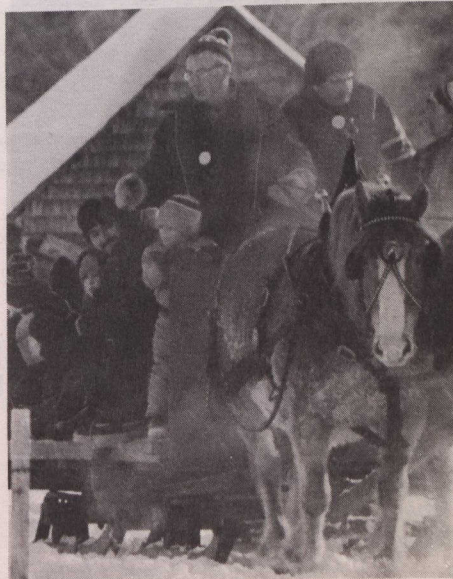
Under the agreement, the Public Archives will acquire all types of documents relating to CBC radio and television administration as well as programming, at both the national and international levels.

This is the first time a formal agreement such as this has been reached with the CBC and is one which makes full use of Public Archives storage and preservation facilities. Although regular transfers of recent documents have not yet started, the federal archives division of the Public Archives has already received over 100 metres of archival documents. The National Film, Television and Sound Archives Division has acquired hundreds of hours of CBC radio and television programming over the past five years.

Museum tours by sleigh ride

The Cumberland Township Heritage Museum introduced a new approach to museum visiting recently. It was a day of winter fun with tours of the grounds on horse drawn sleighs.

Cumberland township is located east of Ottawa in the regional municipality of Ottawa-Carleton. The museum, which opened in 1975 consists of a number of heritage buildings, many of them built in



Museum offers sleigh rides.

the 1930s and the century-old Vars train station, donated to the township by the Canadian National Railway.

Visitors to some of the buildings were treated to a number of events which are unusual at museums. Foubert House offered a craft sale and at the old church hall, the Rockland Band played for visitors, who drank hot chocolate.

Outdoor activities included winter sports and games and a huge bonfire which burned nearly 100 used Christmas trees.

The museum is scheduled to become a fully-developed outdoor attraction within five years. Restoration to the interiors of the buildings is expected to be completed within two years.

Toronto theatre awards presented

The second annual Dora Mavor Moore Awards were presented recently in Toronto. The awards were inaugurated last year to honour Moore's outstanding accomplishments in Toronto theatre.

The award for the outstanding new play went to Allan Stratton for *Rexy*, a play about former Canadian Prime Minister Mackenzie King. Graham Harley of the Phoenix Theatre received an award for producing the play.

Best actor and actress

Brent Carver won the best actor award for his performance in *Bent* and Roberta Maxwell was named best actress for her work in *Stevie*.

George F. Walker's *Theatre of the Film Noir*, a satire on the black movie melodramas of the 1940s, received four subsidiary awards, one of them for outstanding production. Walker himself was named best director, Jim Plaxton best lighting designer and John Ruby won for best original score.

Other awards included: outstanding production of a musical, *The Boy Friend*, produced by Errant Productions; outstanding production of a revue, *Toronto Toronto*, produced by Wrrack Productions; outstanding performance by a male in a featured role, Ed McNamara for *Generations*; outstanding female performance in a featured role, Kate Reid for *Stevie*; outstanding female performance in a musical, Susan Cox for *Valentine Browne*; outstanding male performance in a musical, Heath Lamberts for *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* and outstanding set design, Jim Plaxton for *Loose Ends*.