

## COLOURFUL START TO STRATFORD SEASON

The nineteenth Stratford Festival season opened last month with a flourish of trumpets, when the Company presented its production, *Much Ado About Nothing*. An innovation was a noon-hour ceremony at Stratford's City Hall, when Mayor Donald Davis proclaimed the Festival officially open. Dr. Ian Lindsay, Festival President, Mr. Fred Boyer, Director of Tourism and Information for Ontario and Mr. Robert Stanbury, the federal Minister without Portfolio, were also present.

The festivities included an opening night gala held in the foyers of the Festival Theatre following the performance, attended by 2,000 first-nighters.

### FORT HENRY GUARD

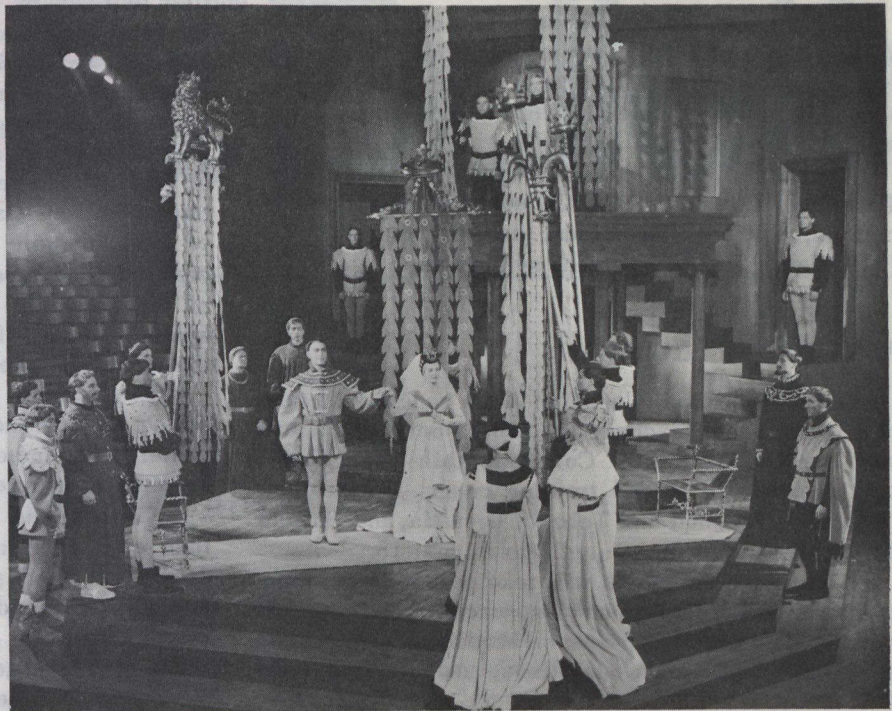
The Guard from old Fort Henry and Stratford's 4th Royal Canadian Regiment Pipes and Drums also took part in the noon celebrations; the former unit has twice before performed at Stratford. In 1969 and 1970, it presented its impressive display of drill and tactics in Chicago for the opening of the Stratford Company's annual spring tour.

### IN THE BEGINNING

The Festival has come a long way since its opening night, July 13, 1953 in the tent theatre, when Sir Alec Guinness performed the title role in *Richard III*.



*Christopher Plummer and Ginette Letondal in a scene from Henry V at Stratford.*



Festival productions have travelled to other parts of the world – to Edinburgh, to New York and, in 1964 for the first time, to England. The Chichester Festival theatre in which they performed was inspired by the theatre at Stratford, Ontario.

Two of the Gilbert and Sullivan operettas in the Company's repertoire were presented in London under another management before being taken on an extended tour. In the winter of 1962 Michael Langham also devised and directed *Two Programmes of Shakespearean Comedy*, a study in approaches to staging, for presentation at 11 universities in Canada and one in the United States. In February and March 1967, The Stratford Festival Company made its first coast-to-coast tour of Canada, under the auspices of Festival Canada, as part of the centennial celebrations. Since becoming the Stratford National Theatre of Canada in December 1967, the Company has undertaken four spring tours (1968, 1969, 1970 and 1971) in major centres in Canada and the United States and has presented a seven-month program at the National Arts Centre in Ottawa during 1969-1970.

Audiences are drawn from every province in Canada, every state in the United States, and as many as 50 other countries from Bermuda to Uganda.

*Fort Henry Guards put on an impressive display of drill and tactics as part of the opening ceremonies of the Stratford Festival season this year. Their uniforms are modelled on the uniforms of British infantry of the line, 1867, such as the Royal Welch Fusiliers.*