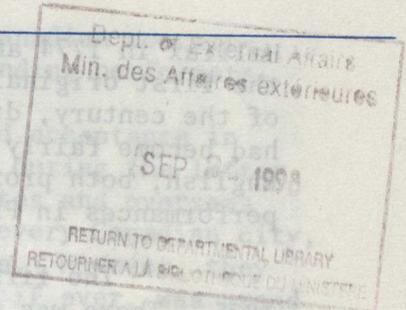


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THE PERFORMING ARTS IN CANADA

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For a number of years, progress and growth -- in particular economic growth -- have been regarded as synonymous and most Canadians have tended to equate a rising gross national product with a rise in both national and individual well-being. Yet there are those who have now begun to question this view. To them, the measuring of human satisfaction purely in terms of material advance is not enough but must include those elements which contribute to spiritual and social enrichment. Most persons also have more leisure than their parents and grandparents and this, along with higher levels of education and modern communications, has resulted in the pursuit of a fuller life. More and more people are looking to the arts to add beauty and grace to their existence. For many, a stimulating program can provide help in understanding the challenging issues of a changing world and the perspective for possible action and solution to problems of the day. Music, drama and the dance are also evolving as vital parts of the educational curriculum. The emphasis is on the arts as a tool in the learning process and a stimulus to creative expression and personal development of all young people. Developmental drama (dramatic activity within human development both personal and cultural) has a growing number of applications. These include the use of drama programs in teacher-training, in recreation, in social work, in therapy, in medical practice, in industry and in the field of human relations.

The Early Developments in Drama

Theatre in Canada traces its origins to Acadia and New France. The first dramatic presentation to be offered in what is now Canada was a marine masque, *Le Théâtre de Neptune*. The play, which was a welcome to Samuel de Champlain on his return from one of his expeditions, was performed by Indians and *voyageurs* and the performance took place on the shores of the Annapolis River on the Bay of Fundy on November 14, 1606. The first play to be presented in Quebec was a tragedy performed in 1640 to celebrate the birthday of the Dauphin of France. One of the earliest Canadian plays had dialogue in French and also the languages of the Huron and Algonquin peoples, and was staged in Quebec in 1658.

During the eighteenth century, touring companies of English and American professionals began to appear in Canada. The plays performed were those then current in the London repertoire. A three-act comedy written in

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