

AVON THEATRE RESTORED

The playing of the Festival fanfare and a simple ceremony marked the opening of the newly-refurbished Avon Theatre at Stratford, Ontario, on July 3. On the stage, Mayor C.H. Meier of Stratford presented a baton to Conductor Louis Applebaum and the theatre was declared officially open. A glittering first-night audience viewed the first Stratford presentation of Gilbert and Sullivan's "The Yeomen of the Guard".

The Avon Theatre, purchased last year by the Stratford Festival, has been restored to its original turn-of-the-century atmosphere, with modern amenities. To many, the changes will be evident the moment they walk through the auditorium doors.

COMPLETE REJUVENATION

Planned by Robert Fairfield, the Toronto architect who was awarded the Governor-General's medal for the design of the Festival Theatre in 1957, the auditorium has been given a complete rejuvenation, with striking decor by Tanya Moiseiwitsch, designer of the Festival's renowned open stage. Gold-brocaded wallpaper and burnt orange carpeting have given the auditorium traditional elegance and charm. The seats have been re-upholstered and re-covered in deep olive green. An imposing seven-foot crystal chandelier commands the dome in the centre of the ceiling, complemented by seven matching ceiling and 16 wall fixtures.

Atop the proscenium arch is a 24-foot baroque cartouche, designed by Miss Moiseiwitsch and executed by Robert Ihrig of Stratford. The front stage curtain, hung so that it can be used either as a "traveller" or a "drop", consists of 210 square yards of gold velour and weighs an eighth of a ton.

Patrons will also find the new Avon comfortably cool, with an air-conditioning unit controlling the temperature at an even 73 degrees.

The National Festival Orchestra, under the direction of Louis Applebaum and John Cook, will be more easily accommodated in the enlarged orchestra pit, which will now seat 40 musicians.

OTHER BENEFITS

Behind the proscenium arch, the stage has been enlarged by a bow-front apron and its height has been increased by 16 feet with a new "grid" that makes for greater efficiency in the flying of scenery. An addition to the stage-house provides an extra 40 feet on stage right and houses the mechanical room, storage and workroom areas and dressing rooms. A new lighting system, in which a pre-set electronic lighting board controls the 140 stage lamps, has been installed.

Into the reconstruction have gone 200 tons of steel beams, replacing balcony and stage supports in the original building and the new wing; 6,000 board feet of Norway pine flooring has replaced the old stage boards; over 1,000 feet of metal duct-work have gone into the new air-conditioning system; more than a mile of cable, 3,000 feet of rope and seven tons of counterweighting have been rigged to handle the raising and lowering of scenery; 600 square yards of carpeting have been laid; the balcony floor has been completely replaced.

Months of work and hundreds of man hours have gone into the restoration. Now lighting technicians, painters, carpenters, stage-hands, interior decorators, bricklayers - well over 60 men - continue to work around the clock as the official opening draws nearer.

The "front of house" for this year is frankly and unapologetically makeshift, its shortcomings masked from public view on Downie Street by a facade of plywood and festive bunting. The next phase of reconstruction - which, it is hoped, can be undertaken soon - will be in this area, providing greater lobby space, exhibition facilities, box office, lounge and a reconstructed exterior.

When completed, the Avon Theatre will take its place with the Festival Theatre as one of the truly handsome playhouses of Canada.

CANADIAN WIND TUNNEL FOR INDIA

An aeronautical-research wind-tunnel designed and manufactured in Canada has been sold to India, according to Mr. Mitchell Sharp, the Minister of Trade and Commerce.

The Export Credits Insurance Corporation will lend \$4,200,000 to the Government of India to finance the purchase of Canadian equipment and services for the installation of a transonic wind-tunnel four feet square in the National Aeronautical Laboratory at Belur, Bangalore State. The tunnel will provide all the primary aerodynamic performance requirements for model testing, and will be available to Indian Government and commercial research agencies.

The new Indian wind-tunnel will be of the intermittent-blowdown type rather than the continuous-flow type. It will have a subsonic, transonic and supersonic capacity from Mach 0.2 to Mach 4. Coupled with an electronic data-handling system, this type of tunnel can provide, in 10 to 40 seconds, data that would require much longer periods of testing if conventional methods were employed.

The ECIC loan agreement was negotiated under the special credits committed to India by Canada as its contribution to the World Bank Aid India Consortium. This is the sixth such agreement signed between Canada and India to provide long-term financing to assist India's economic development. With the new agreement, contracts signed under the Special Credits for India reached \$60,500,000. Terms of the present loan call for repayment in 23 semi-annual instalments after a four-year grace period. The interest rate is 6 per cent.

EXHIBITION OF VINTAGE AIRCRAFT

Tourists and residents in Ottawa this summer will have the opportunity to view 19 famous aircraft chosen from the historical-aviation holdings of the of the Canadian War Museum, the National Aviation Museum, and the Royal Canadian Air Force.

The old 'planes will be on display at RCAF Station Rockcliffe every day until September 7.

In addition to the full-scale aircraft, there will be a series of panels cut from "Halifax" bombers, depicting various methods of decorating individual 'planes. These panels are from the Canadian War Museum collection.