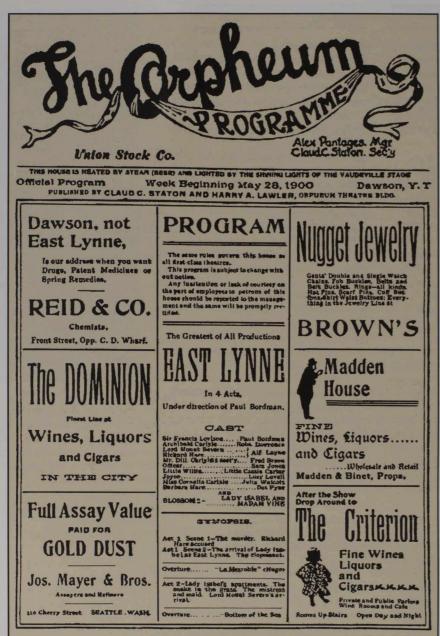
Major Exhibition displays



↑ Programme from the Orpheum Theatre in Dawson, Yukon, 1900.

Collection: National Archives of Canada, Performing Arts Collection MG 28, I 139, voulme 1.

For the first time ever, Canada's major opera, ballet, dance and theatre collections have collaborated to produce a unique and timely exhibition exploring how the country's performing arts heritage is being preserved.

Preserving the Performing Arts Heritage is a voyage of discovery through Canada's diverse theatrical past. It comprises hundreds of rare (and sometimes controversial) letters, documents, photographs and printed pieces, and it will be on show at the Canada House Gallery in Trafalgar Square from July 19 to August 25.

Fragile 19th-century silk playbills will be exhibited alongside their modern, four-colour lithographed counterparts; and ambrotypes will be displayed next to laser videodiscs containing more than 1500 historic dance photographs.

Putting it back together

In addition, there will be a wide selection of original artistic materials including promptbooks and stage management records, original scripts, dance notations, scores and libretti, as well as wardrobe bibles, design renderings, set models, costumes, properties and even set pieces.

The costumes exhibited will range from the delicate silk dress worn by the six-year-old Nesta Toumine in a 1918 production of The Bluebird to the 20 foot velvet coronation cape created for Alex Guiness in the title role of the Stratford Festival's inaugural 1953 production of Richard III.

The original renderings will span more than half a century, beginning with Eric Aldwinkle's surprisingly modern designs for the 1936-37 Hart House Theatre production of The Snow Queen.

Set models from a range of productions will be on display, including those for classical ballet and opera productions as well as those created for classical works at the Shaw festival and contemporary plays at Le Theatre du P'Tit

Other exhibits will explore how 20th century technology is creating new forms of theatrical documentation. In the audiovisual module, vintage dance films will be shown in a montage comprising footage from backstage 'home movies' as well as modern production videotapes.

In the computer module, visitors will be invited to make their own on-line searches through the records of three of the largest theatrical databases and computer catalogues in

Another section will be devoted to the innovative choreographic reconstruction programmes of Dance Collection Danse, and there will be a special exhibit showcasing the Elgin and Winter Garden Project's momentous restoration of these unique and historic theatre buildings.

Putting it back together will provide many surprises for those who think that performing arts archives are no more than dusty repositories for forgotten pieces of paper. Dozens of theatres, hundreds of productions, and thousands of

