

NOTES

- 1 Ottawa Little Theatre was founded May 9, 1913, as the Society for the Study and Production of Dramatic Art. The group changed its name six months later to the Ottawa Drama League. Its first dedicated venue, the Ottawa Little Theatre, was acquired in 1928. The League formally changed its name to Ottawa Little Theatre in 1951 (Winston).

Alumnae Theatre Company was founded October 19, 1919, as an all-female group of graduates from the University of Toronto's University College. In the spring of 1920 it became the Dramatic Club of the University College Alumnae Association. In 1922 members allowed men to be involved as "guests" when they decided that operating as a women-only group was "frustrating as well as boring" (Halpenny 1). The company dropped "University College" from its name in 1942 to indicate that female graduates from any university were welcome as members, calling itself the University Alumnae Dramatic Club or UADC (Halpenny 1; University 1).

It subsequently updated the name to Alumnae Theatre Company as official ties to the university were shed in a series of off-campus relocations. Now located in an old firehall on Berkley Street, Alumnae Theatre allows only women to be full members of the company to this day, though everyone is welcome to participate.

Regina Little Theatre was founded in June 1926 with productions at the Regina College auditorium and the Grand Theatre. It moved into Darke Hall after 1931 but rehearsed and performed in a variety of venues (Stuart 95–98). It is now located in its own theatre, the Regina Little Theatre, on Angus Street.

The Victoria Theatre Guild at Langham Court Theatre was founded in 1929 as The Mimes' and Masquers' Guild. It changed its name to the Victoria Little Theatre Association in 1931 and again in 1938, when it moved into the new "fully functional theatre" known as the Victoria Little Theatre and Dramatic School. In 1950 the building was renamed Langham Court Theatre (Langham).

- 2 A 2001 survey commissioned by the Edmonton Arts Council found that when Edmontonians "were asked unaided which theatre companies they are aware of in Edmonton," Walterdale (the only amateur company mentioned) tied for fourth with Fringe Theatre Adventures (7%), after The Citadel Theatre (44%), Mayfield Dinner Theatre (26%), and Celebrations Dinner Theatre (9%). If 7% seems low, consider that more than twenty companies were mentioned less frequently than Walterdale and that 31% of those surveyed, unaided, were "not aware of any theatre companies" (Criterion).
- 3 In her master's degree thesis, long-time Walterdale participant Mary Glenfield lists Jack McCreath, Roman Charnetski, Larry Hertzog, Vera Rourke, Margaret Tewnion, and Bud D'Amur as signatories (with witness Connie Hertzog) to the company's incorporation (Glenfield 48). In a letter to the editor printed in the *Edmonton Journal* in 1974, long-time Edmonton thespian Mickey Macdonald lists the founders as McCreath, Charnetski, Herzog, and Jack Downey. She also lists Tewnion and

D'Amur as replacing Charnetski and Downey on the executive during the first year and Barry Vogel as joining the executive two years later (Macdonald).

- 4 During these early years a Theatre Associates “membership” simply entailed the purchase of a \$1.00 admission ticket to the current show. This system allowed the company to operate as a “club theatre,” as the exits in the school house were too small for it to be acknowledged by the city fire marshal as a “public hall” (Rivet 6).
- 5 From 1913 to 1976, Canadians seeking membership in a professional actors union joined American Actors’ Equity.
- 6 Theatre 3 (1970–81) folded in 1981 and was replaced by Phoenix Theatre (1981–97). Following its last season in 1996–97, Phoenix Theatre publicly handed to Theatre Network (1975–) its “artistic vision” in order to add “contemporary, edgy” non-Canadian work to the latter’s extant new Canadian play mandate (Nicholls). I am indebted to one of my anonymous readers for alerting me to the nuances of Phoenix Theatre’s brief aesthetic (but not administrative) amalgamation with Theatre Network. The University of Alberta Special Collections Library holds the records of a number of professional theatres in Edmonton. The online finding aid for Theatre 3 notes that Mark Schoenberg and Anne Green founded the company as “an alternative to The Citadel Theatre and the Walterdale Theatre [sic]”—the other “two” theatres, as it were—with “a mandate of developing new plays, local talent, and less commercial work” (Frogner).

In contrast, Catalyst Theatre (1977–), though today an aesthetic-based professional company, was founded by David Barnet out of his interests in social action theatre and in “acting done by the nonprofessional” (quoted in Bessai 153). Referring to non-conservatory actor training such as that which he teaches as a professor in the Department of Drama at the University of Alberta, Barnet defines this type of “nonprofessional” acting as “acting which is real and meaningful and has impact without being compared negatively to the professional acting which comes out of the centre of somebody” (153). Barnet’s distinction between professional and nonprofessional here refers primarily to the focus of the actor’s training, whether that training prepares one for the theatre profession or for social action. Rather than offering a comparison of quality between practices, it offers an important statement on the purpose and place of the type of social action theatre that the early Catalyst Theatre practised. Thus, like Walterdale’s nonprofessionalized work, Catalyst’s early work operated outside of professionalized strictures, though the two differed significantly in purpose. Still, the two companies did cross paths when Catalyst’s collective play *Family Portrait*, “on intergenerational stress,” ran at Walterdale in 1982 (Bessai 155), and Walterdale documents reveal that Catalyst used Walterdale’s building for rehearsals from time to time during the early 1980s.

- 7 American playwright Mart Crowley’s play *The Boys in the Band* also created a stir at Walterdale in April 1977. The *Edmonton Journal* concluded its mention of *The Boys in the Band* by noting the success of the controversial production: “What bigger tribute could you get, after all, than a standing ovation from artistic director John Neville and the other Citadel Theatre members who went along with him one night?” (“Footlights”).

- 8 Walterdale's six Sterling Awards for Outstanding Amateur Production were awarded for productions of Hare's *A Map of the World* (February–March 1988), Levin's *Deathtrap* (November 1988), Knott's *Wait Until Dark* (January–February 1990), Shaffer's *The Royal Hunt of the Sun* (April 1991), French's *Jitters* (April–May 1992), and Anderson's *Elizabeth the Queen* (April–May 1993).
- 9 For example, frequent Edmonton Fringe playwright Chris Craddock notes one discursive inconsistency in that “Despite being produced on Equity contracts, the Playwrights Guild of Canada refuses to allow Fringe productions to be considered as professional productions” (quoted in Belke).
- 10 I use the term “paraprofessional” in the sense of “a person to whom a particular aspect of a professional task is delegated, but who is not licensed to practise as a fully qualified professional” (*OED*). The designation of a theatre practitioner in these terms draws from the prefix “para”: “Forming miscellaneous terms in the sense ‘analogous or parallel to, but separate from or going beyond, what is denoted by the root word’” (*OED*). As practitioners operating outside of a designated “profession,” but using skills parallel to professional practice, theatre practitioners who engage in both amateur and professional theatre at the same point in their career are thus “paraprofessionals.” I would like to thank one of my anonymous readers for urging me to promote the comparability of the playwriting craft's demands across all three categories of paraprofessional, preprofessional, and amateur.
- 11 Theatre professionals, even those who were, during the mid-twentieth century, dedicated to staging Canadian voices when they could, occasionally used the success of amateur companies as leverage against amateur practice in order to recontextualize professional work. For example, Manitoba Theatre Centre, Toronto Free Theatre, and Playwrights Guild (then Playwrights Co-op) co-founder Tom Hendry remarked, “The very strength of the amateur movement is, to some extent, inhibiting the spread of professional theatre” (258). Such views, not uncommon, frequently led to exaggerated statements such as those made by Canadian actor and educator Emrys Jones: “I don't think there is any connection between amateur and professional at all. I can't conceive of any bridge” (quoted in Lee 301).
- 12 In 2003 Playwrights Canada Press published *Seven Short Plays from Theatre Ontario* (Doucette and Shand, eds.). Importantly, three of the seven plays premiered at a “community theatre.”
- 13 Though it is not included here, Ryga's *Nothing But a Man* (March 1967) also contains lines from “O Canada.”
- 14 Watson: “[I] like working underground, unless of course I could buy my own productions but not even Marshall [McLuhan] has got that sort of power” (Draft of letter to Shadbolt). Edmonton's regional theatre, The Citadel, never touched Watson's work. In fact, it was six years before The Citadel attempted a new Canadian work when it commissioned three plays for young audiences from local writer and actor Isobelle Foord and a new full-length mainstage play by Calgarian Stewart Boston, *Counsellor Extraordinary* (Peacock, “Edmonton Theatre” 62).

- 15 Wilfred Watson said of McLuhan, “I [...] readily fell in with his way of thinking, drawn to him because I felt that he had something vital to teach me about the writing of plays” (from the unpublished Introduction to *From Cliché to Archetype*, quoted in Tiessen 114).
- 16 In his general introduction to a collection of Watson’s plays, Gordon Peacock explains: “During his stay in the Paris of the 1950s Watson realized that the actors rehearsing in the plays of the Absurdists could successfully quit the prevalent school of realistic character acting. He saw that rational justification of character response could be substituted for one in which all disbelief was suspended” (“Wilfred Watson” 9–10). And Watson, writing in the late 1960s, discussed one of McLuhan’s notions that “banality itself, because it saves energy, is a great reservoir of psychic power. It was not hard to test the truth of this hypothesis, especially since I was under the spell of writers like Ionesco, Beckett, Genet, and Sartre” (from unpublished Introduction to *From Cliché to Archetype*, quoted in Tiessen 114).
- 17 A year before acquiring the schoolhouse, Theatre Associates presented at the Yardbird Suite readings of Shaw’s *Man of Destiny* (October 1960) and Fry’s *Venus Observed* (November 1960), as well as a production of Knott’s *Dial M For Murder* (November 1960). The eclectic venue had been a jazz club on Whyte Avenue (near 104 Street) since March 1957, including the time during which Bud D’Amur was on the Walterdale executive. When D’Amur became the Yardbird’s manager in the fall of 1964, he ran it more broadly as an intimate performing arts venue for poetry, music, and theatre, notably to showcase Watson’s work. In March 1965 D’Amur moved the Yardbird to 81 Avenue and 102 Street. He closed it down in August 1966. It was revived as a jazz club in 1973, independent of D’Amur. Today it is a dedicated jazz club, rehearsal space, and summer Fringe theatre venue located at 11 Tommy Banks Way. I acknowledge one of my anonymous readers for emphasizing some of the details of the Yardbird’s history, particularly D’Amur’s central place within this history, during the 1960s. The venue’s website provides further context.
- 18 Barry Westgate begins his review by noting that the play had introduced to Edmonton theatre a “very distinctive four-letter obscenity.” He returns to the point later by stating that “[director Bernard] Engel has placed a gaggle of weird characters on stage and made them curse and swear right royally” (Westgate, “Wilfred Watson’s” 59). This was not the first time Watson’s complex performances had received such a scolding. As historian E. Ross Stuart notes of the 1961 University of Alberta Studio Theatre premiere of *Cockcrow and the Gulls*, “In the middle of a performance a spectator rose to proclaim the play obscene” (235).
- 19 Further biographical detail can be found in Diane Bessai’s “Wilfred Watson” and Paul Tiessen’s “‘Shall I Say, It Is Necessary to Restore the Dialogue?’”
- 20 Certainly, the thought of an amateur theatre in Canada producing a theatre of the absurd play during the 1960s was hardly novel. By the spring of 1967, when *The Canadian Fact* opened, Theatre Associates had already introduced Harold Pinter’s work to Edmonton audiences (*The Caretaker*, October 1963) and earlier, Toronto’s Alumnae Theatre had staged the Canadian premiere of *Waiting for Godot* (March 1957).

- 21 For apt examples of mid-twentieth-century views on Canadian theatre with a nod toward British and French theatre in the context of cultural policy, see Robertson Davies's "The Theatre" and Robert Fulford's "The Yearning for Professionalism." Both pieces offer important discussions and warnings, regarding the virtues and vices of professionalization in Canadian theatre at the time.
- 22 Walterdale produced *Lady Audley's Secret* or *The Wages of Sin* precisely ten years later (again directed by Walterdale's lead founder Jack McCreath) and thirty years later (directed by Sheila Dodd).
- 23 Edmonton's Klondike Days Festival adopted its gold rush theme in 1962, but the festival itself is the progeny of the 1879 Edmonton Agricultural Society's local exhibition. In 2006 the Klondike Days name was changed to Edmonton's Capital City Exhibition (Capital EX) (Northlands 2007).
- 24 On the whole, the 1977/78 season was an unsuccessful one for Walterdale, with productions affected by poor reviews, a series of actor and director illnesses, and a car accident. However, by that season the Walterdale Melodrama had gained such a reputation for drawing audiences that income was generated not only from sold-out houses (as was the norm), but also from a series of one-time "substantial donations" from public and private sources, including the Alberta Government, the EFFORT Society, Imperial Oil, Ford, and Northwest Utilities. The Melodrama, Walterdale's president reported at season's end, "was responsible for about 60 percent of the income from shows and 47 percent of the total income that year" (Crowther).
- 25 Booth enumerates the main stock character types of traditional melodrama: "the hero, heroine, villain, comic man, comic woman, old man, old woman, and character actor (usually comic)" (10).
- 26 An *Edmonton Journal* review of Walterdale's 1970 production of Naughton's *All in Good Time* called Graves "an incredible star" and "a Walterdale stalwart who here is clearly in another league. [Y]ou, the audience, can't help loving him" (Ashwell, "Laughs"). A year later a different *Journal* reviewer lavished further praise on Graves's work in Walterdale's production of Brown's *The Girl in the Freudian Slip*: "Warren Graves, the Walterdale artistic director, gives a truly masterful performance as the unfortunate psychiatrist. His acting, timing and splendid delivery form not only the highlight of the play but also an object lesson for newcomers to the group. For the audience he is a sheer delight" (Woolner).
- 27 In Edmonton alone, Graves wrote twenty-two episodes for CITV's *Country Joy* as well as the plays *Goodbye, Cruel World* (1978), which he produced himself at The Citadel's Rice Theatre in collaboration with ITV; *Mors Draculae* (1979) for Stage West; the children's adaptations *Scrooge* (1978), *Beauty and the Beast* (1979), and *Alice* (1981) for Theatre 3; and *Alberta Song* (1981) for the province's 75th anniversary. His one-act *Would You Like a Cup of Tea?* (1984) ran at Walterdale. As well, Graves's *The Prisoner of Zenda* (1983) played at Toronto's Young People's Theatre, directed by Robin Philips, and was remounted by Philips at the Grand

Theatre (formerly Theatre London) in London, Ontario, and staged variously at The Citadel Theatre, the National Arts Centre, and the UK's Theatre Brambly and Chichester Festival. *The Last Real Summer* (1981), initially commissioned by Theatre 3, has proven popular at Canadian high school drama festivals. Halifax's Theatre Neptune commissioned Graves to write what was to be his last play, *Sleeping Beauty* (2002).

- 28 Walterdale presented *The Mumberly Inheritance* (July 1981, July 1987, July 1998), *Chief Shaking Spear Rides Again* (July 1989), *The Hand that Cradles the Rock* (October 1989), and *Beauty and the Beast* (December 1995). The *Edmonton Sun* reported of *Pamela Frankenstein or Adam and Eve Meet Apple II*, "The Walterdale executive unanimously approved the script. And the Apple computer company likes it a lot, and has provided real Apple machines for the show, plus free training for the cast" (Charles). As Graves explained, his melodrama deals with the serious matter of nuclear war. Eve is tempted by the Apple computer, "which is a great system for providing information [b]ut there's the old question of what *use* you put the information to—inventing bombs again?" (quoted in Charles, italics in original). One is reminded here of the ominous Orwellian television commercial that Apple aired to launch its new computer, Macintosh, during Superbowl XVIII (January, 22 1984), six months before *Pamela Frankenstein* opened.
- 29 A second melodrama was also produced during the Klondike Days Festival that week. Edmonton's Prestige Productions, a professional group headed by early Walterdale personalities Wally McSween and Ron Wigmore, remounted Walterdale's inaugural 1965 Klondike Days Melodrama *Dirty Work at the Crossroads or Tempted, Tried and True* "with six members of the original company re-creating their roles" (Adams). The reason Wigmore gave to the *Edmonton Journal* at the time was that because the Walterdale Melodrama had been selling out so fast every year, a second offering would be welcomed by the festival-goers, adding "We aren't here to compete with Walterdale" (Adams).
- 30 For more on the pioneer and gold rush types of nineteenth-century melodrama, see Booth (33–35). For further discussion of *Chief Shaking Spear Rides Again*, particularly its controversial treatment of racial stereotypes, see Fischlin (*Chief*) and Graves's subsequent response ("Interview") on the *Canadian Adaptations of Shakespeare Project* website.
- 31 George F. Walker's *Zastrozzi*, Fraser's *Mutants*, Gordon Pengilly's *Swipe*, and Warren Graves's summer melodrama *The Mumberly Inheritance* shared the stage that season with Ibsen's *The Lady from the Sea*, an adaptation of the Brothers Grimm folktale *The Valiant Tailor*, Labiche's *The Italian Straw Hat*, and Bigelow's *The Peacock Season*.
- 32 This point was not only mentioned at a Walterdale board meeting, but was also noted in a subsequent issue of *Canadian Forum* (Bessai 36), and for good reason. Thompson and Theatre Passe Muraille, particularly since the success of their 1972 collective creation *The Farm Show*, had been sharing their process across Canada, making them "probably the most influential company in Canada" at the time (Johnston 109). Fraser had, as they say, caught a break.

- 33 Vivien Bosley, artistic director at the time, noted in the play's program that the idea for the competition came from long-time Walterdale member Jack Wilson. Initially, the board intended the contest to be limited to entries from the province of Alberta, but by June 1980, having secured grant money from the city for the project, the board decided that the competition should be open to "all Canadian playwrights, due to the difficulty in defining an 'Alberta writer.'"
- 34 When *Swipe* was chosen as the winning entry, Wigmore stepped down as director in favour of Larry Farley because the play had already received Farley's attention in previous drafts.
- 35 In 1974 Pengilly's play *Sea Shanty* won first prize in the Alberta Cultural Television competition and *Peck the Woodstick* won second prize in the Alberta Culture competition. His prize-winning play *Brawler Takes the Count* was produced at the University of Alberta in 1976. *Seeds* won four awards in 1977 and was produced on CBC Radio (1978) and Global Television (1979).
- 36 Pengilly's plays include *Seeds* (1977, University of Alberta Studio Theatre), *Hard Hats and Stolen Hearts: A Tar Sands Myth* (1977, co-written with Theatre Network; 1978, The Performance Garage, New York), *Alice on Stage* (1985, Theatre Calgary), *God's Dice* (1989, Banff Centre), *Yours 'Till the Moon Falls Down* (1992, Lunch Box Theatre, Calgary), *Metastasis* (1995, Northern Light Theatre; 1998, Montreal Fringe Festival), *Drumheller or Dangerous Times* (2001, Prime Stock Theatre Company, Red Deer), *The Work Play* (2001, Actor's Loft, New York), and *Contraption* (2003, Jagged Edge Theatre, Edmonton). Pengilly's recently commissioned works include *Harm's Way* (2005, Alberta Playwrights' Network), *Tom Form and the Speed of Love* (2006, New Works Theatre, Toronto), and *Steffi's Garden* (2007, Lunchbox Theatre, Calgary).
- 37 In an *Edmonton Journal* interview with Pengilly following *Swipe*'s first-place selection, Keith Ashwell reported that Pengilly planned to spend his winnings on "records for 'an old rockie'. The rest goes against a daunting collection of T4 slips and buys the time to continue writing" ("Winner").
- 38 The workshop participants, limited to twenty, received a copy of the script beforehand and were obliged to attend all of the two-day event.
- 39 In labelling Glenfield's *The Three Sillies* "children's theatre," I maintain Dennis Foon's distinction between that form and theatre for young audiences (TYA): the former emphasizes entertainment and spectacle, while the latter emphasizes social coping mechanisms for children (Foon 253). Undoubtedly, Glenfield's play hedges toward entertainment and spectacle. See Foon's "Theatre for Young Audiences in English Canada" as well as Joyce Doolittle and Zina Barnieh's *A Mirror of Our Dreams* and M. Bronwyn Weaver's dissertation "Empowering the Children: Theatre for Young Audiences in Anglophone Canada."

- 40 Joyce Doolittle and Zina Barnieh record that professional theatre for young audiences began in Canada one year earlier, in 1953, when Holiday Theatre in Vancouver opened. Their important study, however, ignores on principle children's theatre work "by the young or amateurs" (11).
- 41 From 1973 to 1995 (except for 1982, when *The Fantasticks* occupied the slot), Walterdale presented shows that either gave young actors the chance to act in appropriate plays or provided young audiences the chance to experience children's theatre. These were normally offered in December or January. As Young Walterdale, the company presented Reach's *David and Lisa* (December 1973, dir. David Nattress), Ferber and Kaufman's *Stage Door* (January 1975, dir. Judy Unwin), Sills's *Story Theatre* (May 1976, dir. Larry Farley, the production remounted for the Canadian Child and Youth Drama Association), Raspant's *I Never Saw Another Butterfly* (January 1977, dir. Valerie Mills), Herlihn and Noble's *Blue Denim* (February 1978, dir. Rose Bene), and Swan's *Out of the Frying Pan* (February 1979, dir. George Bertwell). During this time Walterdale also presented two "Children's Theatre" productions, Cullin's *The Bephele* (December 1976, dir. Stephanie Coldwell) and Wingate and Friedman's *The Lion Who Wouldn't* (December 1977, dir. Troy Sprenke).

As the Christmas Show, Walterdale presented Bolt's *The Thwarting of Baron Bolligrew* (December 1979, dir. Troy Sprenke), *The Valiant Tailor* (December 1980, dir. Carla Nolan), Krauss's *The Ice Wolf* (December 1981, dir. Troy Sprenke), and Mary Glenfield's *The Three Sillies* (December 1983, dir. Frank Glenfield). Three one-act plays were presented in the slot in 1984 and 1985, followed by *Jack and the Beanstalk* (December 1986, dir. Sheila Dodd), *Cinderella* (December 1987, dir. Gaye LePage), Greg Palmer's *Puss in Boots* (December 1988, dir. Petra Hammond), Reakes's *Sinbad the Sailor* (December 1989, dir. Robin Bovey), Robbin's *Humpty Dumpty* (December 1990, dir. Jack Almond), Hayes's *Jardy* (December 1991, dir. Jane Barclay), Reakes's *Little Jack Horner* (December 1992, dir. Petra Duncan), Robbins's *Hickory Dickory Dock* (December 1993), Lloyd's *The Christmas Cavalier* (December 1994, dir. Robin Bovey), and Graves's *Beauty and the Beast* (December 1995, dir. Andrew Freund).

- 42 As reported in the December 1983 *Walterdale Newsletter*, "Mary made the auditions extra enjoyable by singing the songs she has composed as well as narrating."