

Backgrounder

ABOUT THEATRE AURORA

Theatre Aurora at the combined ripe old age of 54 has been a member of the Association of Community Theatres - Central Ontario (ACT-CO) for many years, and a member of Theatre Ontario. The organization has received many nominations and awards at the annual ACT-CO festival and has been honoured with an invitation to remount a production for the Theatre Ontario Festival.

With a strong mandate for education, especially for young members, Theatre Aurora has two active Youth Groups, covering the 11 to 18 age range. Theatre Aurora provides the talent resources, through volunteer members and professionals in the field, to enhance this work.

Theatre Aurora's volunteers currently produce five shows and two youth group shows each year.

A Short Chronological History

- In November **1958**, a group called The Aurora Drama Workshop presented the play *Tovarich* at the Aurora District High School
- In **1973**, The Aurora Drama Workshop amalgamated with The Aurora Musical Theatre Society to form Theatre Aurora (the Factory Theatre)
- The following year, in **1974**, the Town of Aurora offered a lease on a disused cement factory at 150 Henderson Drive; and, through the efforts of Theatre Aurora's members and patrons extensive renovations and modifications were made transforming it into a theatre
- There were more changes made in **1980**, with new foyer and raised seating additions
- In **1996**, Theatre Aurora was Incorporated in the Province of Ontario
- In **1999**, the current seats were installed in the theatre
- By **2003**, Theatre Aurora became a Registered Charity
- In **2005**, with the support of the Ontario Trillium Foundation, Theatre Aurora moved into the 21st Century, adding a full HVAC system, a sprinkler system and increasing its lighting capacity and sound capacity. This allowed Theatre Aurora to expand its season and add a summer show to the slate.
- In **2007**, Theatre Aurora launched the first Playwrights of Spring Festival with the generous support of the Ontario Trillium Foundation grant, and mounted one full and two one-act plays and used a jurist system and dramaturge to choose and support the plays, while it added an increased educational element for members and patrons
- During the **2007/2008** season, Theatre Aurora (50 years old) honoured its past by surveying all its members and patrons to find out which of the multitude of shows that were performed over the last 49 years, they would like to see again. Theatre Aurora deeply respects its history and so the slate is what would today be called 'the viewer's choice'.

- Theatre Aurora honoured those who have supported the group throughout the years in **August 2007**, and local media was honoured, specifically Mr. Dick Illingworth.
- In **September 2007**, Theatre Aurora recognized the support of the Town of Aurora.
- In **November 2007**, 13 Past-Presidents of Theatre Aurora were presented with a plaque and certificates, thanking them for their foresight.
- In **February 2008**, 21 Lifetime Members were similarly recognized and former youth-group members were invited back to the opening night performance of the Youth Group show - Theatre Aurora's 50th Anniversary was a season of celebrations.
- On **March 29, 2008**, Theatre Aurora opened the second annual Playwrights of Spring Festival (POS Festival) with a community Fundraiser at the theatre, and it featured many talented performers of improv, comedy and dancers.
- On **April 3, 2008**, *A Rustling* by playwright Dalene Flannigan premiered at the POS Festival as the chosen feature length play, at Opening Gala, to a full audience, highlighting a true story of Beeton (Ontario) in 1927.
- On **April 3, 2008**, Town of Aurora Mayor Morris presented Theatre Aurora's President Anne Currie-O'Brien with a commemorative plaque for its contribution to the Aurora Arts Year celebrations, at the opening Gala ceremonies for the POS Festival.
- On **April 19, 2008**, all three one-act plays - *Connections* (Carol Libman), *Naked in the Kitchen* (Lynda Martens) and *Midnight Rubes* (Ron Fromstein), closed the POS Festival ceremonies with these memorable performances for audiences at Theatre Aurora

Today, the old is balanced with the new as we mount shows that are over 70 years old while the Playwrights of Spring Festival brings us works that are a few months old.

While once our theatre was a cement block factory, today it inches ever closer to becoming a state of the art facility - with a newly paved parking lot, wheelchair seating, 154 comfortable theatre seats, a full proscenium stage, new lighting, audio and video equipment and full heating and air conditioning unit. It's a place you will want to visit and enjoy more of. It represents celebrating our own cultural heritage while also presenting some of the finest works through our regular productions and Theatre Aurora's Playwrights of Spring Festival.