



# Theatre Aurora

HISTORY OF THEATRE AURORA

November 1958, the young people wore crinolines and bobby socks, and danced to American Bandstand. George Armstrong was captain of the Maple Leafs, and John Diefenbaker was Prime Minister of our Country. Aurora was a rapidly growing population of 3,957. At this time a newly formed group, 'The Aurora Drama Workshop' was formed and was rehearsing a play called Tovarich. Under the sponsorship of the Hobby Craft Guild of Aurora, the group made its debut on November 7, 1958 at the Aurora District High School.

For the first fifteen years, rehearsals took place in basement rec-rooms, dilapidated buildings and anywhere else available to an enthusiastic cast and crew. The group was playing to a steadily growing audience.

Then in 1973, amalgamation with the 'Aurora Musical Theatre Society' resulted in the new Theatre Aurora. In 1974, the Town of Aurora offered a lease on the cement factory on Henderson Drive. Extensive renovations by Theatre Aurora members and patrons transformed the factory to the Factory Theatre - Home of Theatre Aurora.

We have never looked back...as audiences grew, so did our need for more space and better seating arrangements. The theatre was a hive of activity in the summer of 1980 as we again renovated, including a new spacious foyer and raised seating. Further changes to the tiered floor and seating arrangements took place in the summer of 1998, and in the summer of 1999, we installed new theatre fixed seating to complement the revised sightlines.

In 2004 we began a ten year lease at the Factory Theatre. With this lease comes the responsibility for us to repair and maintain both the interior and exterior of the building. To enable us to do this, Theatre Aurora was the proud recipient of a capital grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation. In 2005, a new lighting board and sound equipment enhanced our technical capabilities. An upgraded heating system, air conditioning, fire alarm and sprinkler system were installed.

We are very proud of our Theatre. Our group is a member of Theatre Ontario and the Association of Community Theatres - Central Ontario (ACT-CO). We have been nominated and awarded in ACT-CO's annual festival of plays and musical productions and have been honoured to remount a production for the Theatre Ontario Festival.

Our mandate is education. Fifteen years ago a Youth Group for children aged 7 - 17 years was initiated. Theatre Aurora has provided a talented resource of members and professionals to augment this invaluable programme. The Youth Group has been nominated and awarded frequently in the ACT-CO festivals, competing with Central Ontario's adult theatre groups. In 2000, an Intermediate Youth Group was formed to increase the number of children we can include in the program.

We honour our members who have maintained active membership for over twenty-five years with a Life Time Membership. At this time 25 members have been awarded Life Time Membership. One of our founding members is still active with Theatre Aurora.

Each season we support a local non-profit charitable organization by providing an additional performance of our current production. In the past, organizations have also held receptions to honour their volunteers prior to the performance.