



## Stratford Ontario Festival Theatre New Lighting Installation

*Bruce Buck\**

It is not surprising that Stratford, situated on the Avon River in Ontario, Canada, should have been chosen as the site for a theatre holding a festival of Shakespeare's plays. Stratford is however nearly 100 miles from Toronto and required the complete dedication of its founders in order to overcome the doubts of its success. The theatre is now known internationally and its performances attended by people from all over Canada and the U.S.A. and many other parts of the world.

The idea was first conceived by Tom Patterson, a local journalist from Stratford, and developed into reality by Sir Tyrone Guthrie with very definite views on what the venture should consist of. "It must be closed in and not open air as earlier planned (there are too many distractions) but must

have an open stage", was his edict. The latter became a famous feature, the Stratford pillared, porticoed thrust stage designed by Tanya Moiseiwitsch and Tyrone Guthrie.

Soon its success was established. Contributions had come from private individuals and large companies alike, including The Rank Organisation.

The theatre started in a tent in 1953, this enclosure serving it well for some three seasons until in 1956 it was taken down in order to prepare for a more permanent structure. This structure designed by Robert Fairfield, still resembles to a large extent the atmosphere created by its tent predecessor.

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