

A somewhat sporadic amateur phenomenon, the Winnipeg Little Theatre, flourished modestly, first in the twenties and later in the forties and fifties. It was sustained by the devoted efforts of a succession of enthusiasts: actors, directors and backstage buffs and, in its day, not only mounted some fine productions, but also developed a number of very sound performers. In 1957, a year-round lease of the Dominion theatre at a nominal rental gave promise of real expansion, a promise which was briefly fulfilled. The following year, however, the Manitoba Theatre Centre, brain-child of Tom Hendry, John Hirsch and Ogden Turner, with vigorous assists from many others, in effect absorbed both the Little Theatre and the year-old Theatre 77.

Along with its unique name, M.T.C. instituted an important new element, its theatre school, which expanded gratifyingly to include tours and high school visits. As well, children's theatre was greatly expanded with much excellent original material being produced. A somewhat later development, the Warehouse Theatre, an informal half-round setting offers various productions on a less pretentious scale than those of the main stage. This venture has steadily gained ground with such outstanding productions as *Jacques Brel* and *Jubalay*.

The demolition of the Dominion theatre in 1968 led to a somewhat trying interval filled with imported shows in the Centennial Hall. The happy ending came in November 1970 with the opening of the fine new M.T.C. complex, where artistic director Edward Gilbert strives to formulate annual programs appealing to the extremely varied audience which M.T.C. must satisfy. Various substantial grants, ever-expanding season ticket sales and a centennial surplus season all augur well for the future of this community theatre.

The advent of professional theatre has happily not destroyed amateur play-acting. Winnipeg, in fact, abounds in amateur theatrical associations presenting an astonishing variety of stage fare. Two of these groups quite well represent the work done by such bodies.

The first, Actor's Showcase, begun on a purely amateur basis, has not merely survived, but has built up a healthy clientèle. Showcase's success seems to rise chiefly from the fact that its director, Tony Pydee, demands a professional attitude of effort and responsibility from his actors, and consequently attracts and holds people of good and developing potential. A second factor in Showcase's popularity with the public is the remarkable variety of the productions given. In the current season, the offerings have included contemporary plays, classics ranging from Molière to Chekhov and an admirable interpretation of a Japanese