



Festival co-ordinators, Lillian Sievanen (left) and John Storey (far right) congratulate some of the award winners adjudicated during Theatre Ontario week at Markham Theatre. From the left are Paul Farrelly, best supporting actor, Trevor Smith Diggins, best actor, Zdenka Novotna-Cole, best actress and Dusan Toth, best director. — Markham Photo



The Hon. Lincoln Alexander, Lieutenant Governor (right) opened the week of festivities at Chimo Hotel Monday during a civic reception. From the left are Lillian Sievanen, John Storey and Mayor Carole Bell. — Markham Photo



Toronto Irish Players presented *The Plough and the Stars*.



The Bear and the Proposal



Guelph Little Theatre presented *The Elephant Man*.



Adjudicator Mira Friedlander (right) presents Dusan Toth with his award for best director in *The Bear and the Proposal*. — Markham Photo

Theatre Ontario results

What a week it was for theatre buffs

The *Bear and the Proposal*, two one-act plays by Anton Chekhov, walked away with top honors in last week's Theatre Ontario Festival '87. In naming the Ontario Multicultural Theatre Association's entry best production, adjudicator Mira Friedlander echoed the opinion of many festival-goers, for whom it was the highlight of a week of fine theatre.

At the awards dinner held at the Sheraton Parkway Hotel on Saturday, Ms. Friedlander emphasized the high quality of all five productions. "What we've seen here this week puts to shame a lot of the theatre you see in downtown Toronto," she said.

The top production also won awards for its director, Dusan Toth, and its leading actress, Zdenka Novotna-Cole, as the elegant, indecisive Popova of *The Bear* and the feisty Natalia of *The Proposal*. Tomas Masek, her co-star, in both plays, was awarded a Stratford audition.

Five awards for Guelph

Guelph Little Theatre and Sault Theatre Workshop each

garnered five awards. Guelph's production of *The Elephant Man* won best visual presentation for its evocative costumes and dramatic set and lighting.

Trevor Smith Diggins' powerful and moving interpretation of the tragic John Merrick won him the best leading actor award and a Stratford audition. Liz Stokes, who was named best supporting actress as Mrs. Kendal, also received an audition to the Stratford company.

Masks a highlight

The Sault's colorful production of Moliere's *The Imaginary Invalid* was cited for best technical achievement and won three adjudicator's awards — for the imagination, inventiveness and choreography of its director, Nancy Winters, for Madge Gosjean's stage management and for the masks worn by its players. Christopher Brauer, as the young Cleante, received a Stratford audition.

Noteworthy music

Paul Farrelly, the young Covey of *The Plough and the Stars*, was named best supporting actor. Director Keven O'Shea and the Toronto Irish Players won an adjudicator's award for ensemble playing, as did Eithne O'Kane for her singing in the musical interludes during the same production.

Jan Crowley's sensitive performance as Nora Clitheroe won her a Stratford audition.

Best cameo performance

The Tara Players of Ottawa, who also presented a Sean O'Casey classic, *Juno and the Paycock*, took the best cameo performance for Lois Thomas as the grieving Mrs. Tancred, an adjudicator's award for acting excellence for Kathleen Marsh as Juno and a Stratford audition for Lorraine Ansell as Mary Boyle.

Life memberships

Theatre Ontario's annual Maggie Bassett award for out-

standing contribution to theatre in Ontario went to 82-year-old playwright Herman Voaden, who was first president of the Canadian Confederation of the Arts. Life memberships in Theatre Ontario were presented to Michael Galvin, Michael Spence and Ed Procnunier for distinguished service to the organization.

Hon. Lincoln Alexander

The weeklong festival was opened on May 18 by the Hon. Lincoln Alexander, Lieutenant Governor of the province, at a civic reception at the Chimo Hotel given by Mayor Carole Bell and the town council. It was the culmination of a year and a half of planning by members of Markham Little Theatre.

Co-chaired by Lillian Sievanen and John Storey, the festival committee was made up of Bunty Webb, secretary and box office, Fred Green, treasurer, Bill Monahan, festival stage manager and awards designer, Martin Smith, technical support, Barrie Robinson, fund-raiser, Michele Browne, hospitality,

Lyn Jones, green rooms, Elizabeth Wyatt, publicity and programmes and Terry Browne, awards ball chairman.

Howard Eaton and Mary Nemes represented the Association of Community Theatres-Central Ontario, co-hosts of the festival, and Sandra Tulloch was Theatre Ontario liaison.

Excitement all week

In summing up Theatre Ontario Festival '87, Mr. Storey said on Saturday, "We in Markham were privileged to showcase the best in community theatre in Ontario at our town's beautiful new theatre. The excitement continued all week, from the moment the Toronto Irish Players arrived at the stage door with their truck at 8 o'clock on Monday morning to set up.

"Tonight we celebrate the splendid work of the five participating companies, the enthusiastic audiences and 18 months of hard work and dedication by a superb planning committee."