

Fit For A King

By Kate Gilderdale
Stouffville Free Press

York Durham Academy of the Performing Arts will present *The King and I* at EastRidge Church from May 29 to 31.

As with all YDAPA productions, costumes are a key element in creating a visually stunning show to match the virtuosity of the performances. And that's where the amazing talents of Dorothy Clark and Ada Seebach come in.

"I have been with YDAPA since its first year, six years ago, and have found it to be a very satisfying retirement hobby to do the costuming over the winter months," said Dorothy, a former home economics teacher with the Toronto School Board.

The creation process begins when she and Ada watch the movie version of the play in question. "We then analyze, discuss and plan how best to get MGM quality out of a YDAPA budget," she said, with a smile. "Then it's countless trips to Fabricland where we always wait for sales, or scout the sale bins."

Care and Share, Value Village and Goodwill also play a leading role in the hunt for costumes, she said. "These sources yield excellent finds for many items and certain types of plays - generally the more modern ones."

Dorothy got involved with YDAPA when she rang Ada's doorbell one day and found her neighbour knee-deep in costumes for *The Sound of Music*. "She asked me what I was doing and I told her I was trying to get all this sewing done," recalled Ada.

A wonderful partnership was born, and it has flourished ever since. "I was

at home and I really enjoyed working with (artistic director) Wayne (Hill), and the people were great fun. My background is in family studies and sewing," Ada said.

Doing a show may be fun, but it's also hard work. "*Music Man* was probably the most demanding, with over 150 costumes and changes," she said. "That's huge, even just keeping track of it all." People have suggested that they could rent out the costumes, "but then it becomes a business, and this is all volunteer."

There is one person whose presence they both keenly miss. "We must mention Pam Mandich and her outstandingly creative, original ideas over the years," said Dorothy, noting that when Pam left for Abu Dhabi with her family in December, she donated a wonderful assortment of fabrics, trims and other items for future costumes.

Although neither Dorothy nor Ada has children performing in YDAPA productions, Dorothy does have a strong family connection: three generations of her family are involved. "My daughter, Rebecca Romaniuk, is costume coordinator along with me, her husband John plays the king, and their twin daughters, Erica and Hilary, play the king's twin royal children. And Gramma sews!"

And the end result is magical, said YDAPA director Neil Bennett, director. "*The King and I* is a wonderful story and the music is superb. Our costumes are outstanding and through them and our dedicated actors we will make the world of 19th century Siam come to life."

For tickets and information call 905-640-0823 ext. 3 or email tickets@ydapa.com.



Ada Seebach and Dorothy Clark display a fine example of their handiwork, the coat of many colours, which will be worn once again in the January 2009 production of *Joseph*. The pair are currently hard at work creating costumes for *The King and I*, which will be performed at EastRidge from May 29 to 31.



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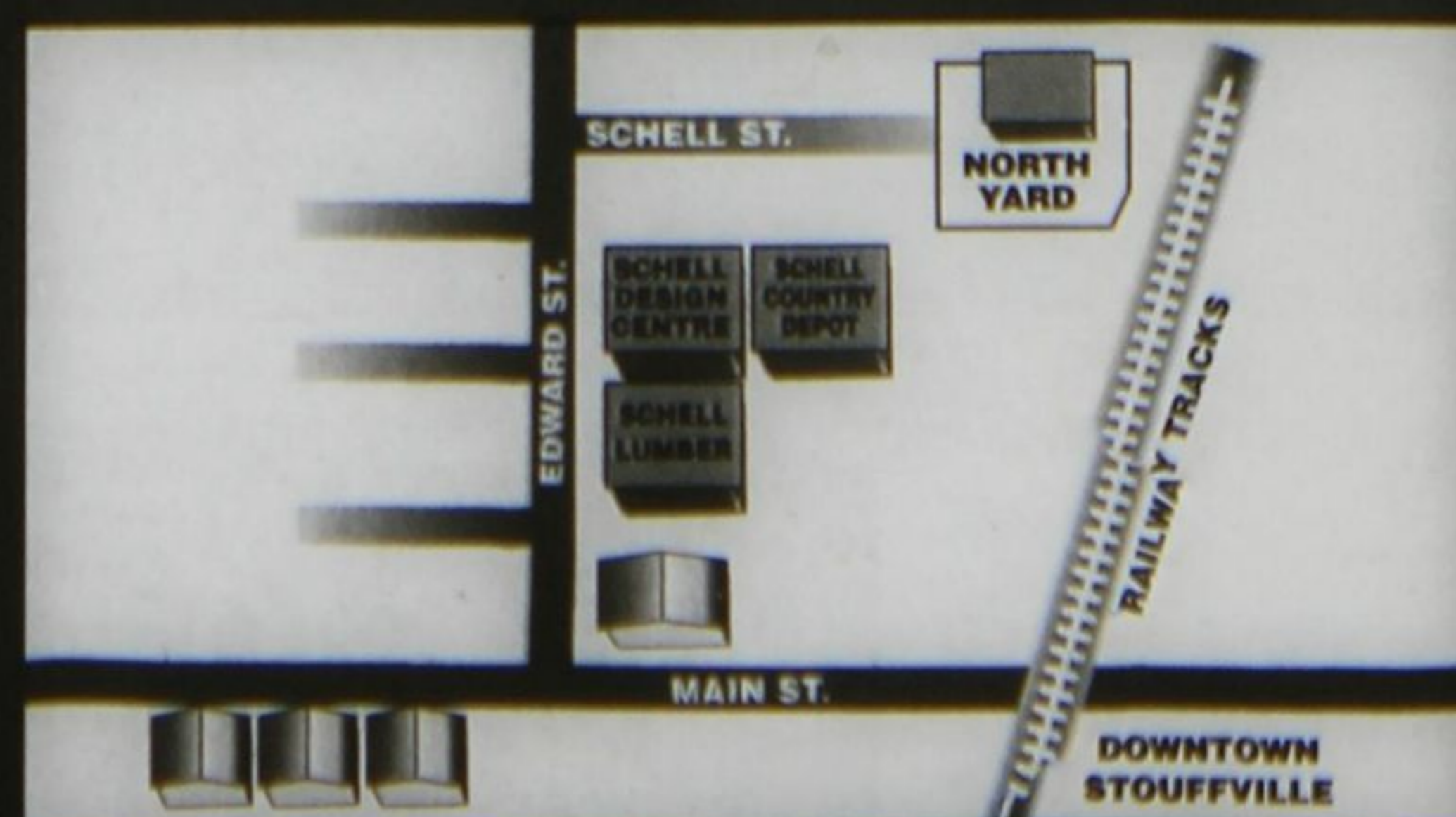
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