

Foreword

IT GIVES ME TREMENDOUS pleasure to welcome you to Shakespeare—Made in Canada, a unique and dazzling exhibition and celebration of history, culture, and country.

You will have the opportunity to view traditional and contemporary art, learn about theatre design, test your knowledge of the Bard, see authentic costumes and rare works from theatre archives, take a turn at centre stage, and even try out a most modern Shakespearean adaptation: a state-of-the-art video game. Along the way, you'll learn how the most produced playwright in history has influenced Canada's artists, writers, actors, and scholars, and, in the process, Canada's evolving sense of itself as a nation. At the centre of this spectacle is the Sanders portrait of William Shakespeare, widely thought to be the only image of the Bard painted while he was alive. This magnificent painting is believed to depict Shakespeare at age thirty-nine and is matched in drama only by the tale of its discovery.

The portrait was held in Canadian Lloyd Sullivan's family for some four hundred years and, at one time, was stored under his grandmother's bed. It is believed that Shakespeare sat for an ancestor of Sullivan's, an actor and painter called John Sanders, in 1603. You will discover how this painting came to be connected to the University of Guelph. Suffice it to say, it is a wonderful example of the important role of universities and scholarly research in uncovering national treasures.

Indeed, this entire exhibition is illustrative of the many ways Canadian scholarship helps provide the necessary social, historical, economic, religious, and archival contexts for better understanding the past and exploring our futures. It is also a way for us to showcase the cultural excellence of our city and our region, from theatre and music to other educational programs and events, and to highlight the importance of the relationship we share with our community.

By working together, we have created a regional cultural synergy that allows us to produce collaborations such as Shakespeare—Made in Canada. So open your eyes and your minds and feast on the visual and intellectual treasures that await you inside this uniquely Canadian exhibition.

Alastair J. S. Summerlee
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