

A 'dictator' at Stratford

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in its premiere run. After serving as theater director of England's Nottingham Playhouse, he came to Canada to direct a play, then served as artistic director for theaters in Edmonton and Halifax before coming to Stratford.

He performed as a senior member of Stratford's Young Company, the next season acted on the Main Stage and then became director of the Young Company. In 1989 he will start his fourth and final season as artistic director at Stratford. Newville's contract was for three years, but he was "persuaded to renew."

He was polite, composed, unpretentious, as he answered questions in his distinctive but untheatrical voice.

"I'm tired. It's a very exhausting job," he declared. "It's time I had a rest. I may just freelance — direct or act."

He said he had just finished performing three times a week, as well as carrying out his administrative duties. The actor starred as Henry Higgins in the festival's 1988 production of the musical "My Fair Lady."

"I've acted all my life. I don't enjoy acting all that much anymore," he said. But he enjoyed the challenge of playing Henry Higgins in "My Fair Lady" (he had previously played the old dustman in Shaw's "Pygmalion" in Edmonton). "It was a huge success," he said of Stratford's "My Fair Lady."

'The audience from the United States is quite substantial, particularly from here.'

— John Neville



NEVILLE SAID the idea of bringing Stratford to the Music Hall originated with him three years ago when "I was doing something with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra at Temple Bethel in Birmingham. I was taken around to the Music Hall. It was dark, and they were trying to refurbish it. I thought it would be a good place for Stratford to perform."

He noted, "The audience from the United States is quite substantial, particularly from here." Neville said there's always a part of the "audience" that cannot make the trip to Stratford, so bringing "Two Gentlemen of Verona" to Detroit offers "a taste" of the festival. "Stratford started out as a Shakespearean Festival but, 'We do other things as well,' Neville said,

"The festival has grown enormously since. It started off in a tent, with an eight-week summer season. Now it runs from May to October, with 11-12 productions each season."

Neville is a Canadian citizen. He and his wife, a former actress, whom he married in England, have six children — five in Canada and one in Great Britain. None of their children has gone into acting, although one has become a stage manager.

"I'm not unhappy," he said, when asked how he feels about them not following in his footsteps. He believes one should become an actor only "if you feel you'd die if you didn't — because it's tough. It's fraught with rejection."

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them prepared for college... I do that from 3 o'clock until 10 p.m."

He also leads groups of students on educational trips. During the coming spring break — March 23 to April 2 — he will lead his 17th excursion, this time to England, Switzerland and Italy. Interested students from the Bloomfield Hills, West Bloomfield and Birmingham School Districts can get more information about the trip by telephoning Sima at 540-9800, Ext. 209.

He declared, "I was a very serious student — very serious. Grade seven through 12, I never skipped school once. I had perfect attendance."

It was in seventh grade that Sima decided to become a teacher. He was inspired by his teacher Olga Neu-

'I love being here with the kids. I don't feel any difference in my enthusiasm, my excitement for learning or for teaching as I did in 1959 when I began.'

— Jerry Sima

ma. He described her as "a wild teacher, fresh out of college."

"I don't know what I learned in her class. All I know is that when I came out of it, that was it. There

was nothing left for me to do except teach high school English."

"I've been teaching for 30 years. I'm 50 years old. And when you're 50, and you've taught for 30 years, you're going to retire. And I'm looking at that, not immediately, but in the real near future. There are a lot of other things I want to do, travel extensively and have time for the family... and just time — time to have time for things I want to do, whether it's gardening or reading."

For ticket information about the production, which runs through Sunday, Dec. 4, call the Players Guild of Dearborn at 356-0951.

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