The conventional opinion is that professional Canadian theatre began in 1953 with the founding of the Stratford Festival. But Susan McNicoll asks how this could be, when the majority of those taking the stage at Stratford were professional Canadian actors. To answer this question, McNicoll delves into the period to show how in fact the unbroken chain of Canadian professional theatre began just after WWII, when a host of theatre people decided that Canada needed its own professional theatre groups. Drawing on personal interviews with many of the actors and directors active in the period after the war, McNicoll explores the role of such companies as Everyman in Vancouver, New Play Society in Toronto, Canadian Repertory Theatre in Ottawa, Theatre du Nouveau Monde in Montreal, and many more. in 1953 the Stratford Shakespeare Festival ultimately showed the world that Canada was ready for centre stage, but the real birth of professional theatre happened in the years leading up to that moment. The volume includes over 50 photos of scenes from plays of the time and selections from McNicolls interviews with such luminaries as Christopher Plummer, Joy Coghill, Amelia Hall and Herbert Wittaker.

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