REGINA - Darke Hall was built as a result of an agreement between Regina lawyer Frank N. Darke, M.P., and Regina College, signed in 1924, "...to provide for the erection of a Music and Arts Building in Regina to be used for the benefit of the College and, so far as the college sees fit, for the benefit of citizens generally..."

Architecture was by J.H. Puntin of Regina who drew up plans for construction to start in 1928. The building was completed in 1929 and was used extensively by Regina College, the forerunner of the University of Regina, and the Regina and greater Saskatchewan arts community.

In 1962, Clifford Wiens of Regina designed an addition to the old building, creating badly needed dressing rooms and stage property areas. A ventilation system was added to the main floor and lower areas of the building, and the floors between the columns and the main area basement walls were replaced.

Over the years, considerable deformation of the basement floors was noted, the extent varying seasonally and with soil water conditions. Doors had to be adjusted constantly, cracks in walls and ceilings had to be patched and repainting was frequent. In 1970, Keith Consulting Engineers co-ordinated the removal of the basement floors, and structural slabs were installed.

Cracks in the concrete slabs and beams supporting the auditorium portion of the building became evident in 1982. The installation of wooden bolsters and columns under the cracked sections of beams failed to remedy the problem. Conditions continued to deteriorate.

Concerned about safety, the University of Regina's board of governors ordered the hall closed in April, 1983. The closure, a shock to the Saskatchewan arts community, came in the middle of a season heavily booked by local and touring performance groups, in addition to everyday university use for frequent student recitals and rehearsals.

In September 1983, a consultant's report on cultural resources in Regina recommended extensive renovations to Darke Hall to accommodate local performing arts groups. The restoration of the theatre was recognized also as a pressing heritage project by the City of Regina and marked by inclusion in the first annual municipal heritage awards. Cultural arts and performance groups and thousands of concerned citizens formed the Save Darke Hall Coalition, a consortium devoted to the repair, restoration and re-opening of this grand old theatre.
Now, with the injection of money from the University Renewal and Development Fund forecast in the provincial budget last spring, Darke Hall may soon open its doors again to the university, the greater Saskatchewan community and local and touring performers.

Some of these groups have included the Regina Little Theatre; the Regina Lyric Light Opera Society; Heritage Regina; the Transition Area Community Society; the Children's Summer Musical Theatre; the A.U.U.C. Poltava Ensemble of Song, Music and Dance; the Regina Male Voice Choir; the Saskatchewan Theatre Ballet; the Regina Musical Club; the Saskatchewan Drama Association; DDF-Theatre Saskatchewan; the St. David's Welsh Society; the Royal Canadian College of Organists; Association Canadienne-Francaise de Regina; Association Culturelle Franco-Canadienne de la Saskatchewan; the Saskatchewan Music Festival Association; the Kodaly Hungarian Dancers of Regina; Tye Productions Inc.; the Treble Clef Ensemble; the India Canada Association of Saskatchewan; The Sunshine Company; the Chaban Ukrainian Dance Ensemble; Rapsodia Romanian Folklore Ensemble; Chateau; the IODE; the South Saskatchewan Irish Club; and the Regina Ladies' Choir.

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