

Program

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“Tout feu tout femme” program with L’Unique Guilda, Théâtre des Variétés,
March 1977. 16 pages.

Accession Number 2018.22.28

Marchand Théâtre des Variétés

Date 1977-03

Medium and Support ink, paper

Measurements 27,5 x 21,2 cm

Historical context

This “Tout feu tout femme” program from the Théâtre des Variétés in March 1977 shows Jean Guilda wearing a feminine outfit on one side, and a masculine one on the other.

Born Jean Guilda in Paris in 1924, Guilda settled in Montreal in 1955 until her death in 2012. Alongside Lana St-Cyr, Lili St-Clair and Bella Belle, multidisciplinary artist Guilda is recognized as one of the first major figures of transvestism in Montreal, and for her important contribution to the city’s artistic life.

By the 1940s, the burlesque tradition was well established in Montreal cabarets, and performances involving female impersonation were a regular feature of the shows. However, these were humorous numbers. From the 1950s onwards, despite repression and thanks to the perseverance of artists such as Lana St-Cyr, who fought for the right to practice her craft, cross-dressing became a serious business and took root in Montreal cabarets and theaters. The shows featured talented singers and dancers, including the famous Guilda. After her first show in 1955 at the Chez Parée cabaret, Guilda’s career continued for over thirty years, and was not limited to transvestism. She appeared on television, in films and in numerous cabarets. His career also extended to the theater, where he performed for over thirty years at the Théâtre des Variétés with Jean Grimaldi’s troupe. Guilda was the first transvestite artist to perform at the Théâtre des Variétés before 1976. Her first show there, with the revue *À plume et à poil*, was on March 18, 1972. Guilda went on to perform numerous times at the Théâtre des Variétés, notably in 1977 with the musical revue *Tout feu tout femme*. Like many other transvestite artists of her time, Guilda worked mainly in cabarets frequented by a heterosexual clientele, performing as a

woman.

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On display