

By now BESS WIDDER (Hester) has firmly established herself as a character actress for Fort Smith Little Theatre. She delighted her audience as the choir singer in ONE FOOT IN HEAVEN and as Mary Belle Tucker, the conductor of Natchez tours in SOUTHERN EXPOSURE. Tonight her performance will arouse both sympathy and animosity in the complex character of Aunt Hester. Born and raised a Fort Smithian, Mrs. Widder was queen of the city's Centennial in 1918. During a longtime residence on Long Island she was active in the Fortnightly Players.

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RALPH BLAIR (Dr. Alliot) is a management examiner for the Government. We haven't a management to be examined, but if he does it in the wise and kind way he plays Dr. Alliot we don't think it would hurt a bit! The Blairs have a 10-year-old son; Ralph's a hunting-and-fishing man. He admits to a gap of some years since schoolday acting, but finds his theatre-in-the-round experience with us thoroughly enjoyable. We hope he's found a brand new hobby.

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ALIECE O'NEAL (Bassett) has performed in public more often as musician than as actress, though she must have been adorable as Amy in LITTLE WOMEN, the McAlester high school senior play. At OCW she was majoring in voice and piano—along came the war—and she married her high school sweetheart. Since then, she and a total of three little O'Neals have followed Army husband James to many assignments, including a recently completed three years in Japan.

PRODUCTION AND BUSINESS STAFF  
For A BILL OF DIVORCEMENT

Production.....	Payne Morrow, Ben Pollock, Jesse Winner, Mike Maloney
Lights.....	Happ Schultz, Mike Maloney
Sound.....	Ben Pollock, Happ Schultz
Set.....	Newt Pollock
Properties.....	Jean Swearingen, Mrs. James Fleming, Mrs. Katherine Alexander, Jerry Smith
Costumes.....	Mrs. C. B. Marquis, Mrs. Ralph Hetherington
Make-Up.....	Mrs. John Holt, Wanda Lee Price
Scripts.....	Kathryn Gamble
Prompters.....	Ann Sims, Mrs. Erma Doris Thomson
Program.....	Mrs. Burley C. Johnston, Jr.
Ushers.....	Dave Speer, Newt Pollock, Tom Ross, Harry Sher, Larry Randolph, Jesse Winner
Coffee Service.....	Mrs. Payne Morrow
Reservations.....	Ruth May Morton
Season Tickets.....	Charles Dixon

THANK YOU!

Because of the difficulty of obtaining complete information in time to meet our printing deadline, it will be our policy to publicise our "thank-yous" in the subsequent program.

The President's Report\* . . .

The year 1952 was an eventful year for the Fort Smith Little Theatre. It saw the planning, the hopes and dreams of the previous four years culminate in the acquisition of a playhouse.

To begin the year, an important decision was made by the Board of Directors with regard to a sponsoring organization. The decision was to announce that our organization had come of age and that we would have no sponsoring organization. Plans were made to handle the sale of season tickets ourselves and the results were gratifying. More season tickets were sold than in any previous year.

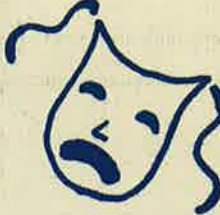
A committee headed by Jim Pattee was organized to solicit donations for our building fund. Some excellent work was done, and the results netted the fund approximately three thousand dollars. Two thousand of this total was donated by one person, Miss Ed Louise Ballman, who has recently contributed an additional five hundred dollars. Her contribution is so generous that we are quite overcome with gratitude. We can truthfully say that without this single gift our plans for a building would have been laid aside for a future time. Many other people contributed according to their means and all gave in a spirit of trust in the future of the organization. Every effort that we make must always be with this purpose in mind—to guarantee that their trust is well-placed.

When the Building Committee's report was in, it was decided to purchase the building on North O Street, known as the Baby Grand, for \$15,000. A fifteen year first mortgage loan was secured from the Peoples Federal Savings & Loan Association in the amount of \$7,500—another evidence of trust placed in the future of the Little Theatre organization. A second mortgage in the amount of \$3600 was carried by the Baby Grand, Inc., and the balance of the purchase price was paid in cash. \$3,000 of this \$3,600 second mortgage was later retired.

Jesse Winner headed the committee which converted the new building from one used to sell groceries to our use—displaying hams . . . Because of an abundant supply of blood, sweat, and tears in the persons of Jesse, Jim Pattee, Payne Morrow, Happ Schultz, Dave Speer, Mike Maloney, Larry Randolph, Bob Speer, Tonya Moran, Betty Sanders—and a host of others—the building was made ready for our second production of the year, SKYLARK, during the month of October. Your ballots during the last show indicated SKYLARK our best-liked production, with SOUTHERN EXPOSURE and BLITHE SPIRIT next in favor.

The unselfish devotion by those mentioned above and others who contributed their time, effort, and money to the transformation of this building is the highlight of Little Theatre's record for 1952.

\*(excerpts from the report of Charles V. Dixon, outgoing president, to the Annual Meeting of Fort Smith Little Theatre, Inc., Jan. 2, 1953)



The  
Fort Smith Little Theatre, Inc.

presents

A Bill of Divorcement

A Play in Three Acts

by

CLEMENCE DANE

Directed by

MARGARET MONTAGUE

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February 16-20

Little Theatre Playhouse

8:15 P. M.

3800 North O Street

Sixth Season 1953





THE  
*Fort Smith Little Theatre, Inc.*

presents

## A Bill of Divorcement

A PLAY IN THREE ACTS

By  
CLEMENCE DANE

Directed By  
MARGARET MONTAGUE

### The Cast

Margaret Fairfield .....	MARTHA WOOD CONCANNON
Miss Hester Fairfield .....	BESS HARRIS WIDDER
Sydney Fairfield .....	JULIE ORR
Bassett .....	ALIECE O'NEAL
Gray Meredith .....	AL COHEN
Kit Pumphrey .....	JOHN HOLLAND
Hilary Fairfield .....	JAMES PARTAIN
Dr. Alliot .....	RALPH W. BLAIR
The Rev. Christopher Pumphrey .....	JOHN D. WOODS

### THE SCENE

In Our Time.

The living-room of a small house in the English countryside.

ACT I — Morning

ACT II — Early Afternoon

ACT III — Late Afternoon

— Smoking in the foyer only, please —

## Who's A-round . . .

Directing her first play for our organization, MISS MARGARET MONTAGUE found several of her players already attuned to her direction. Martha Wood Concannon, Julie Orr, James Partain, John Holland, and John Woods have all been her students, both in private work and in school and civic productions.

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MRS. CONCANNON (Margaret) began her public emoting at the tender age of seven and continued study with Miss Montague through the public school years. Then on to Briarcliff Junior College and Stanford University, where she majored in speech and drama and was leading lady in many college productions. On Fort Smith stages, she recently appeared in Service League's "Follies of '52" and for Little Theatre she more than capably furnished the love-interest in SOUTHERN EXPOSURE—right down to the difficult bit of stage-business that called for enamelling her toenails onstage! Her ability to play an entirely different character as the gentle and winsome Margaret proves our claim that she's a real actress.

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JULIE ORR (Sydney), daughter of the Raymond Orrs, is a high school sophomore who has "always been interested in the theatre and in any form of dramatics." Another interest is horseback riding, and nice days frequently find her out for a canter. Julie's been in school and church plays, has done some public speaking and a good bit of narrative work. Her ambition is to major in dramatic studies. Talent, training, and ambition—we think our ingenue has all the qualifications for a coming star.

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Born in Wonder, Nev., JAMES PARTAIN (Hilary) grew up in Fort Smith and was prominent in school theatricals. He helped found the Junior College dramatic group, Sock and Buskin, and worked with the Montague Players. At the University of Arkansas he had major roles in DOLL'S HOUSE, WINTER'S TALE, IF I WERE KING. During the war, Jim was in the executive office of G-2 in Washington and an administrative official and intelligence specialist for the Central Intelligence Agency. He has his M.A. in English literature and is at present working on his Ph.D. at Columbia University. We're glad he could do some of his work at home and use his "spare time" and special talent for the splendid performance he gives tonight.

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JOHN HOLLAND (Kit) attended Fort Smith schools, LSU, and the U of A—where he was president of Kappa Sigma fraternity and received his law degree in 1951. He has figured prominently in local productions of THE MOON IS DOWN, FOUR DAUGHTERS, THE NIGHT OF JANUARY 16th. John saw combat duty with the infantry in France and Germany in World War II. He is presently engaged in the practice of law in this city.

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JOHN WOODS (Mr. Pumphrey) is another actor making a decided switch of character. His last stage appearance was as an Apache-type hoodlum in the Follies bar-room scene. Tonight, for us, he's a believable Very Reverend! His experience, too, dates back to schooldays. Workdays nowadays you'll find him at Woods Manufacturing Co. Wife Carol and the two daughters have sacrificed a good many of Daddy's evenings for the good of Little Theatre.

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When we asked for an amusing incident, AL COHEN (Gray) confessed that the funniest thing that ever happened to him was landing as a cook in the army! "When I started I couldn't boil water. Now I can heat, steam, simmer, stew, and burn it!" We are again indebted to our neighboring camp for importing actors of ability. Al's native Chicago has afforded him experience in radio and TV shows over NBC, MBS, and ABC. He is one of the founders of a stock company known as the Lakefront Players. When he serves his hitch, Al hopes to concentrate on further dramatic training at California's Pasadena Playhouse.

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