

*Fort Smith Little Theatre, Inc. presents*

## DIRECTOR'S LETTER

As you're reading this, I hope you are enjoying "Those Girls Who Sing at the Theatre." Tina Miller has put together an assortment of song purely for your entertainment. Feel free to mingle and converse as if they were our pre-recorded music.

I was blessed in my debut as a director, to have such experience and talent grace this production. This cast is phenomenally strong. They embody a range of talent that scope the range of emotions this story demands. From the beginning of rehearsals, each actor has fallen into their roles with dedication and the complexity of their characters, and they have been chomping at the bit to tell this story. I can only hope that I have led them in a direction that brings this story home to you.

We've tried to create a means for you to see into the Sloper home, to be an unacknowledged witness to the dynamics that inhabit this household and push it toward its destiny. Dr. Sloper is "Everyman" who has loved and lost something precious. Catherine is "Everywoman" who has tried to be a good daughter and fiancée. Lavinia is "Anyone" who has tried to find a place to belong. Morris is "Every Youngman" who has tried to better his position in society. The Supporting cast is as necessary and important as the air we breathe. Trying to find "Truth" in a maze of "Individualist Motives" is as common a dilemma today as the day this play was written. How we choose our ultimate outcome often becomes the skin that has defined us. Catherine has never known what it is to be loved, and the one time she defines it for herself, it is overshadowed by the deeds of others. Only she can decipher the truth. Her final decision (be it right or wrong) is based on her hardened experience and inner strength. *The Heiress* is sure to please some, unsettle others, and provoke discussion with the remaining.

I was equally fortunate in the set design, dressing, and construction. Lindy Cotner is a dynamic resource of vision. Rob Ledbetter constructed the Sloper home. I am as changing as the themes of this story, and they have kept up with my wishes. The wardrobe team of Kay, Phanita, and Wilma are legend around here, and I'm so glad they consented to work with me. Art Corey is nothing less than the consummate professional.

My dad once told me that directing is to acting like apples are to oranges. I have found this artery of expression to be just that, and I am eternally grateful to my producers, my wardrobe team, my backstage heroes, my cast and crew for making this experience on I'll always cherish.

Please join Mikki, Ray, Kurt, Nancy, Mary Beth, Ginny, Siobhan, Todd, and Margo as they introduce you into the making of *The Heiress*. I invite all of you to come backstage after the show and meet the cast. I hope you have a pleasant evening,

Leslie Kidder

In loving memory of our friend, Ray Moore. See you in the Green Room, Ray.

# THE HEIRESS

*by Ruth & Augustus Goetz*

*Directed by Leslie Kidder*

*June 2 - 11, 2005*

Produced by special arrangement with  
Dramatists Play Services, Inc.

---

## SCENES

Front parlor of Dr. Sloper's home in Washington Square. The year is 1850.

- |        |  |
|--------|--|
| Act I  | Scene I: An October evening.<br>Scene II: An afternoon two weeks later<br>Scene III: The next morning  |
| Act II | Scene I: An April night six months later<br>Scene II: Two hours later.<br>Scene III: A morning three days later.<br>Scene IV: A summer evening almost two years later. |

## CAST

Catherine Sloper - Nikki McDaniel  
Dr. Austin Sloper - Ray Coleman  
Lavinia Penniman - Nancy Moon  
Morris Townsend - Kurt Smith  
Elizabeth Almond - Siobhan Kremers

Arthur Townsend - Todd Thomas  
Maria - Mary Beth Koprovic  
Mrs. Montgomery - Margo Cameron  
Coachman's Voice - Art Corey

## CREW

Director - Leslie Kidder  
Assistant Director - Mary Beth Koprovic  
Producers - Charlie Dye, Margo Cameron  
Stage Manager - Micki Voelkel  
Wardrobe - Kaye Birkhead, Wilma McCauley, Phanita Williams, Sarah Woods  
Set Design & Lighting Design - Lindy Cotner  
Set Construction - Rob Ledbetter, Lindy Cotner, Jeff Jones, Ed Chamberlain,  
James Bradley  
Lights & Sound - JoAnn Waldroupe, Jim Moody, Micki Voelkel, Jody Vyorstek,  
Dustin Westphal  
Props - Art Corey, Micki Voelkel, Sarah Woods, Todd Thomas, Paulette Faris  
Poster & T-shirt Design - Bruce Birkhead  
Musical Director - Tina Miller  
Assistant to Ms. McDaniel - Sarah Woods  
Those Girls Who Sing at the Theatre - Tina Miller, Rosemary Johnson,  
Siobhan Kremers

## CAST BIOS

**Nikki (Catherine)** — After a quarter of a century in theatre, I'm thrilled to be in the world of hoop skirts and corsets! Thanks to Leslie for this fabulous role, my mom for endless free babysitting, and sweet Chloe, who will be outshining me very soon.

**Kurt (Morris)** — After a few plays at UA Fort Smith, I thought I should try FSLT. I hope to continue my experience here. Lend me your daughters.

**Ray (Dr. Sloper)** — One night almost exactly 25 years ago, I followed my cousin Don into a house in the Belle Grove Historic District to help him carry out a radiator he had purchased there. This house was being used as a rehearsal space for a melodrama planned for that year's Old Fort River Festival. The director was still short one important character - the villain. She was so desperate to fill this role that as my cousin and I walked through the hallway, she blurted out, "Would one of you like to be in a play?" My taciturn cousin immediately said "no." Ordinarily, I would have declined, too. Potential stage fright would have paralyzed me. But for some combination of reasons - one of which, no doubt, was the false bravado that comes from what politicians now call youthful indiscretions - I said 'yes' to her question that night. When I left that house two hours later, I was no longer a mere radiator-carrier; I was

something much nobler; I was an actor! That serendipitous decision completely changed my life. In the intervening years, I've had the thrill to play marvelous characters like Stanley Kowalski, Cyrano, Hildy Johnson, Pseudolus, Big Daddy - and now the brooding Austin Sloper. Community theater, and FSLT in particular, has been a source of my greatest delight. I will always be grateful for the opportunities it has given me, and hope that those opportunities will always be there for everyone who - like me - shares a passion for theater that they might not yet even realize they have. One final note: my cousin Don's first child was born within a month of the radiator raid. As she grew up, it was obvious very early that she loved being on stage. She is appearing in this very production, playing Marian Almond. So it is, that my second cousin Siobhan Kremers and I are sharing 25<sup>th</sup> birthdays as we appear on stage together during "The Heiress" - her 25<sup>th</sup> on earth, and my 25<sup>th</sup> at FSLT. I think that's kind of sweet. Don't you?

**Nancy (Aunt Lavinia)** - FSLT has been tremendously important to me at different times in my life. Back in high school, I felt like I was born here (or rather, on North O at the old FSLT). Since then, I have returned every few years and each time felt "reborn." I spent a decade in the professional theatre, but have always known that my purest, best theatre experiences have been right here at good old FSLT - one of the main reasons (IMHO) that "life's worth living in Fort Smith!"

**Ginny (Mrs. Almond)** - New to Fort Smith but not to the stage, I have experienced acting, directing and producing. My first role at FSLT was Mrs. Shaw in *Stage Door*. Previously, I have appeared in numerous professional productions, mostly in Houston and Connecticut, including major roles in *Into the Woods*, *Six Degrees of Separation*, *Working*, *Serious Money*, *Jaques Brel*, and lots of vintage musicals. I am delighted to be included - and having a wonderful time - as a member of the cast in *The Heiress*.

**Siobhan (Marian)** - <Insert witty comments here>

**Todd (Arthur)** - I'm the newest addition to FSLT. In my second appearance onstage, I am a proud banker...at a "small" bank.

**Mary Beth (Maria)** - I don't do housework.

**Margo (Mrs. Montgomery)** - I wish Ray Coleman would write my bio.

## SPECIAL THANK YOU TO

- Kevin Ray of Taylor's Pipe & Tobacco Shop for loaning the humidior. Call 452-1449 or visit the shop at 5304 Rogers Avenue if you are interested in owning this lovely artifact.
- Carla Fisher, Smurfit-Stone Corrugated Container Div. for the cardboard
- The Fort Smith Museum of History, for the use of the paintings
- Bill Edwards, The Clock Shop, Barling
- Ron Plunkett, Plunkett Music & Furniture
- Rob Rowton, Midwest Pool, Spa & Fireplace
- The Fort Smith Art Center
- Paulette Faris
- Micki Voelkel