



# SPOTLIGHT

401 North 6th Street

September 7, 2023

www.fslt.org

**Dates:** Opening Night of *Arsenic and Old Lace* will be Thursday, September 21. Regular performances will be September 22-23 and 27-30. A matinee will be offered on Sunday, September 24.

**Show Times:** Evening performances begin at 7:30 p.m. Patrons may be seated after 6:45 p.m. Matinees begin at 2:00 p.m. Patrons may be seated after 1:15 p.m.

**Season Flex Pass Seat Selection:**

Seat selection begins 7:00 a.m.

**Saturday, September 9** for Flex Pass patrons. Select seats online at fslt.org or call the Box Office at 479-783-2966 (extn. 2) to request seats on the phone. Flex Pass patrons may also purchase an additional ticket for every pass they have.

**General Public Tickets:** General public tickets are available beginning 7:00 a.m. **Thursday, September 14.** Purchase online at fslt.org or call the Box Office at 479-783-2966 (extn. 2) to purchase on the phone. Opening Nights are \$20. All other performances \$12.

**Box Office Phone Calls:** Be prepared to leave a message with details about your seat/ticket request including a phone number where you can easily be reached. Volunteers will return calls during variable hours.

## SIP SIP HOORAY!

Oh the excitement of Opening Night! Courtesy of **Sodie's Wine and Spirits**, wine and champagne is served pre-show. At intermission, a special dessert is served along with brew from **Fort Smith Coffee**. Tickets are \$20. (By calling the Box Office, Flex Pass and Wednesday Night Subscribers can attend Opening Night for an \$8 fee.)



## COMEDY CLASSIC ARSENIC AND OLD LACE OPENS AT FSLT IN SEPTEMBER

**"WELL DEAR, FOR A GALLON OF ELDERBERRY WINE I TAKE ONE TEASPOONFUL OF ARSENIC, THEN ADD A HALF TEASPOONFUL OF STRYCHNINE AND THEN JUST A PINCH OF CYANIDE."  
- AUNT MARTHA, ARSENIC AND OLD LACE**

The perennial comedy favorite *Arsenic and Old Lace* will usher in fall with spooky fun at the Fort Smith Little Theatre. Written by Joseph Kesselring, the play runs September 21 through 30. Director Brandon Bolin promises "to introduce this classic to the 'next generation,' or at the very least, to acquaint people to it who may have seen it in the past."

The 1941 script debuted on Broadway starring acclaimed character actresses Josephine Hull and Jean Adair as a pair of sweet, elderly Brooklyn sisters who have a disturbing hobby – poisoning lonely old men and burying them in the cellar. Legendary horror film actor Boris Karloff starred as their menacing nephew Jonathan Brewster. The 1944 Frank Capra film starred Cary Grant, Raymond Massey, Peter Lorre, and Hull and Adair who reprised their Broadway roles. The show has been an FSLT favorite with previous productions in 1956, 1983, and 2005.

The characters include New York dramatic critic Mortimer Brewster (Rham Cunningham) who frequently visits his aunts, Miss Abby (Barbara Richardson) and Miss Martha (Micki Voelkel), in their Brooklyn mansion. He is courting Elaine (Carol Sikes), the minister's



See *Arsenic* on page 3

## Show Sponsor Applauded



We are pleased to recognize AT&T as our show sponsor for *Arsenic and Old Lace*. For well over a century, AT&T has been connecting America to help people live, learn, work, and succeed. In Arkansas, over the past three years alone, they have invested nearly \$725 million in their wireless and wireline networks to connect people to greater possibilities. They believe every American should be connected to the internet and are working with governments and non-profit organizations to help bridge the digital divide and tackle barriers to broadband access, adoption and affordability.



## Director's Letter



I am so thrilled to be a part of the creative team that is bringing this classic comedy to life on the FSLT stage. I was lucky enough to be in this play while in college, and ever since then, I have wanted to be on THIS side of the production, and I have had nothing short of the time of my life so far. I have been amazed (although not surprised) by the incredible work ethic of this unbelievably talented cast and the impressive work of our backstage crew. There are FSLT veterans, newcomers, and everything in between, and every night, they come ready to work. But we also manage to have a ton of fun in the process. This group of individuals has formed a close-knit team, and they have me cracking up each night, no matter how many times I've heard their lines. If you're not familiar with this story, I don't want to spoil any surprises, but imagine this: your favorite aunts, sweet, classy ladies both, surprise and scandalize you in a way you never thought possible. Add an impending marriage, one brother with murder on his mind, and another brother with an identity crisis. Be prepared to laugh a lot (and maybe disturbed a little!). The Brewster family and friends can't wait to welcome you to their home!

-Brandon Bolin, *Director*



## Support for the Kiddos

Thanks to two generous FSLT supporters, lots of local kiddos were able to attend *Cinderella*. **Arvest Bank** sponsored a special Dress Rehearsal performance for area youth groups including the Fort Smith Boys & Girls Club, Girls Inc., and Girl Scouts. **Bill Engles** (Engles Financial Services) sponsored Half Price Kids Tickets for two performances. (Some of those attendees and *Cinderella* crew members are shown here with a thank you banner.) On behalf of the parents and grandparents whose children were able to experience the magic of live theatre – we say Many Thanks to Arvest and Bill!



## Arsenic and Old Lace opens Sept 21

daughter, who lives next door. Mortimer's troubles begin when he discovers a body in the window seat of his aunts' house and learns that the women aren't simply aware of the dead man – they actually killed him!

Mortimer's plans are further disrupted by the unexpected return of his vicious criminal brother Jonathan (Charles Belt) and his sidekick, drunken plastic surgeon Dr. Herman Einstein (Steven Howard). Amidst the craziness is Mortimer's other brother Teddy (Brad Nance) who, believing he is President Theodore Roosevelt, is happily occupied blowing his bugle, writing presidential proclamations, and digging locks for the Panama Canal in the cellar. Add in friendly Officers Brophy and Klein (Kurt Marine and Megan Henley), aspiring playwright Officer O'Hara (Malcolm Nobles) and irritable Lieutenant Rooney (Steve Dwiggin), and the show bubbles over with fun and physical comedy. The cast is rounded out by a trio of older gentlemen – Elaine's father Dr. Harper (Duff Taylor), potential lodger Mr. Gibbs (Gary Cameron), and sanitarium superintendent Dr. Witherspoon (Jon Gustafson) who may or may not be potential victims of the Brewster sisters.

The talented cast is complemented by an equally able crew. Brandon Bolin is the director with Tina Dale serving as producer. Jamie Lambdin-Bolin is assistant director, Audra Sargent is stage manager, Sharla Cameron is props mistress, and Lynne Gustafson and Sandy McPherson are responsible for costumes. Set design is by Gary Cameron and Hayden Bolin, lighting design is by Gray Ashton, and sound design is by Brandon Bolin.

Having performed in FSLT's 2005 production of *Arsenic*, Rham Cunningham is now having fun creating a different character in this year's show. "Eighteen years ago

I played Teddy who was a little cuckoo, and that role certainly fit me at the time! Mortimer, who I play now, is attempting to stay sane, but he's having trouble controlling things that are out of his control. I can certainly relate!"

Barbara Richardson who plays Miss Abby is delighted to return to center stage: "The best thing about being back at FSLT is getting to work with the wonderful people here. It's a great experience that I wish you all could share. And to answer everyone's question – no, I never imagined I'd ever play a murderer!"

Brad Nance says, "I think the audience will enjoy my character Teddy because sometimes we all need a little break from reality. It's a relief to whoop and holler and charge about willy-nilly. We all have a little Teddy inside; the trick is to let him out when no one can see – like singing in the shower or arguing with our boss when we're all alone. And this is why actors and patrons alike enjoy theatre. It's a much needed escape that keeps us all from screaming 'Charge!' and running off for parts unknown."

Playing Mortimer's villainous brother Jonathan is a treat for veteran actor Charles Belt: "It can be difficult to be this big of a jerk night after night, but I'd be lying if I said it also wasn't really fun."

Flex Pass patrons can begin seat selection at 7 a.m. September 9. Tickets go on sale to the general public on Thursday, September 14. Opening Night (September 21) tickets are \$20. All other performances are \$12. Performances are at 7:30 p.m. September 21-23 and 27-30. A Sunday matinee is scheduled at 2 p.m. Sunday September 24. Tickets may be purchased online at [fslt.org](http://fslt.org) or by calling 479-783-2966 (extn. 2). Join us at the Brewster's home where the one thing more deadly than poison is family!

### Seating Late Arrivals

To minimize disruption for patrons and actors, those arriving after curtain time will be seated only at a suitable break in the performance. It is also possible that you may be placed in a more accessible seat then moved to your purchased seat at intermission. Seating after a performance has begun is subject to the discretion of FSLT.

### Shout Out To J&B!

A theatre needs lights, costumes, props — and hot water! We are grateful to our generous friends at **Rich Sales** and **J&B Supply** who teamed up to provide FSLT with a new tankless hot water system. Drop by GreatHouse Fixtures (showroom of J&B Supply) and tell them THANKS for their long standing support of our theatre.



Fort Smith Little Theatre  
**SPOTLIGHT**

P.O. Box 3752, Fort Smith, AR 72913

[www.fslt.org](http://www.fslt.org)

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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## From the Top...

True love, beautiful music and a happy ending – what’s not to love about our recent production of *Cinderella*? I hope you enjoyed this delightful show as much as I did. As the clock struck midnight and *Cinderella* closed, we launched into auditions and rehearsals for *Arsenic and Old Lace*. FSLT is a great example of perpetual motion!

Our year-round format of “one show closes and the next one begins” has been our standard mode of operation for many, many years. Between auditions, rehearsals, set construction, and performances – you’ll find a beehive of activity inside our theatre at least some part of every single day. That fact is made even more amazing when you consider all that activity is provided by volunteers – people who donate their time and talents to provide quality, affordable entertainment for others.

It doesn’t really sound like a solid business plan. After all, it requires a huge number of volunteer hours, loads of talent, loyal patrons, and support from generous donors and businesses. And yet, our all-volunteer organization has been providing year-round entertainment for 76 years. Many people probably thought that could never be possible. But to quote *Cinderella*’s fairy godmother, “Fiddley dee. Impossible things are happening every day!”

Next up – *Arsenic and Old Lace*. It’s not likely that two sweet, elderly sisters commit murder, but anything is possible at FSLT.

– Joanne Peterson, *President*

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Fort Smith, AR

Permit No. 12

## AUDITIONS – Join The Fun!

Auditions for *A Christmas Carol*, co-directed by Rikkee Workman-Black and Tina Dale, will be held Monday, October 2. Callbacks Tuesday, October 3. Production dates are November 9-18. The cast calls for 10-15 males approximately 18-60+ years of age, 7 females ages 18-70+, 3-5 boys ages 7-15, and 4-6 girls ages 6-12. For more information on this wonderful holiday classic, visit [fslt.org](http://fslt.org) or find us on social media.



**Season Flex Pass patrons are urged to select seats before September 14.**