



# SPOTLIGHT

401 North 6th Street

May 16, 2024

www.fslt.org

**Dates:** Opening Night of *Light Up the Sky* will be Thursday, May 30. Regular performances will be May 31, June 1, 5-8. A Sunday Matinee will be offered June 2.

**Show Times:** Evening performances begin at 7:30 p.m. Patrons may be seated after 6:45 p.m. The matinee begins 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, May 18** 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 available beginning 7:00 a.m. **Thursday, May 23.** Purchase online at fslt.org or call the Box Office at 479-783-2966 (extn. 2) to purchase on the phone. Opening Night tickets \$20. All other performances \$13.

**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 a \$7 fee.)

## CLASSIC COMEDY "LIGHTS UP" FSLT

"Magic time—those few magic hours when the play belongs to the author, the director—and the actress who brings it to life." — Carlton Fitzgerald, *Light Up the Sky*



The hilarious 1948 comedy *Light Up the Sky* shares the nerves, the ambitions, the infighting, and the drama surrounding the opening of a Broadway play. The comedy by Moss Hart plays May 30 through June 8 at FSLT.

Melissa Vitale directs this timeless classic featuring veteran FSLT performers, actors new to our stage, and some who are performing for the first time. The original Broadway show was directed by playwright Moss Hart and was named as one of the best plays of the 1948-49 season. FSLT previously produced the show in 1987.

Temperamental leading actress Irene Livingston (Margaret Montgomery) is opening in an important new drama written by young truck driver turned playwright Peter Sloan (Malcolm Matlock). Surrounding her are her brusque and steadfast stage mother Stella (Kim Pierson); Ice Capades producer Sidney Black (John Hall) and his sassy wife Frances (Micki Voelkel) who have uneasily invested \$300,000 in this production; plus Owen Turner (Jim Stengel) another playwright who is visiting



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### SHOW SPONSOR APPLAUDED

We applaud AT&T for their long time support and for generously sponsoring *Light Up the Sky*.

For well over a century, AT&T has been connecting America to help people live, learn, work, and succeed. In Arkansas, AT&T invested nearly \$1.2 billion in its network infrastructure from 2019-2023 to connect more people to greater possibility. Through the AT&T Connected Learning® initiative, AT&T is working to address the digital divide through investments in internet accessibility, affordability and the safe adoption of technology.

### Director's Notes

There is nothing quite like the energy exchange that occurs between the performers and the audience in live theatre. *Light Up the Sky* is a love letter to the theatre itself, capturing the excitement, nerves, and camaraderie that come with putting on a show. *Light Up the Sky* is filled with eccentric characters and rapid-fire dialogue that will bring the audience to laughter. There are so many great lines; I'll be quoting this script for a long time. The cast is a joyful mix of familiar faces and fresh new ones – and their chemistry is palpable. The hard-working crew is ensuring that every detail – from set design, costumes, lighting, and props – creates a marvelous atmosphere for the cast and audience. I haven't sat in the Director's Chair since 2016, and it is genuinely exciting to be back – especially with this incredible show. Watching the cast and crew bring it to life has been exhilarating. The efforts of Assistant Director Eric Wells, Stage Manager Joanne Peterson, and Producer Jamie Lambdin-Bolin have truly elevated this production – it could not be done without them. Please join us all as we celebrate the magic of live theatre! I cannot wait until we *Light Up the Sky*!

-Melissa Vitale, Director



# Light Up the Sky opens May 30

just to enjoy the chaos. Other members of the entourage include ghostwriter Nan Lowell (Amber Colwell); Irene's awkward stockbroker husband Tyler (Ian Miller); and flamboyant director Carleton Fitzgerald (Kurt Marine). Scott Black, Steve Dwiggins, Brad Kidder Jr., and Gary Cameron complete the company as a masseuse, a cop, a group of Shriners, and a would-be amateur investor in the play.

Set in a hotel suite, the action follows the drama and emotion before opening night, the aftermath of the show, and the impact of theatrical reviews on this eclectic band of theatre folk. As sky-high hopes crash into fears of a flop, they move from friends, to enemies, to friends once again.

Crew members for the show include director Melissa Vitale, assistant director Eric Wells, producer Jamie Lambdin-Bolin, and stage manager Joanne Peterson. Gary Cameron is in charge of set design and building, Tina Dale is costumer, and Rikkee Black serves as props mistress. Lights and sound will be handled by Madison Smith.

Director Vitale's interest in the show began with the title: "I was watching the photos of old shows rotate on the TV screen in the FSLT lobby. There was one for *Light Up the Sky* and the title intrigued me. I obtained a script and quickly fell in love with the characters! While the dialogue is funny, the play shows us the stress experienced in putting on a show and warns us to be discerning about the company we keep."

Amber Colwell is making her theatre debut as Nan: "This was my first time to audition and I was very nervous. We were called up in groups to read different scenes together. I was literally shaking as I walked to the stage. But I went for it, and everyone was so kind! It really took my nerves away. That camaraderie has made the whole experience fun and exciting!"



A fairly new face to FSLT, Kurt Marine is playing his first leading role as Carlton: "Dramatic, flamboyant, and sometimes funny without realizing it, Carleton takes over the room with his energy and passion for his art. Carlton presents a departure from roles I've played in the past, and I'm enjoying the chance to delve into his character."

Kim Pierson makes a welcome return to the stage as Stella. She says, "I'm so excited to be playing the part of Stella, the sassy mom-of-the-star, with her quick wit and slick card skills. Although I've been doing plays at FSLT since the 1980s, it's been a while since I've had a role in a season production and I'm thrilled to be a part of this "love letter to the theater."

Another face new to FSLT is Margaret Montgomery playing the starlet, Irene Livingston: "My experience at Fort Smith Little Theatre has been very welcoming and supportive. I am already feeling so at home with everyone. I can't wait to see this show come to life and then continue working with FSLT!"

FSLT favorite Ian Miller who plays Irene's husband, sums up the rehearsals: "You definitely are in for some laughs with this show! The entire cast has been amazing to work with and the chemistry is indescribable!"

*Light Up the Sky* opens May 30 with additional 7:30 pm performances scheduled for May 31, June 1, 5-8. A matinee will be performed at 2 p.m. Sunday June 2. Tickets for the opening night performance are \$20; all other performances are \$13. For Season Flex Pass patrons, seat selection will begin at 7:00 a.m. Saturday, May 18. Tickets will go on sale to the general public beginning 7:00 a.m. Thursday, May 23. You can buy tickets and select your seats online at [fslt.org](http://fslt.org) or by calling 479-783-2966 (extn. 2).



## 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.

Thank you for your cooperation.

## In Memory of Friends

A donation has been received from June Organ in memory of her friends: Lindy Cotner, Brad Kidder, Sr., Orin Frank, and Jay Burk. Now deceased, these four were talented actors and active FSLT volunteers for many years. We are thankful for their contributions to FSLT, and to June for her memorial.

## Treasured Costumes Received

Special thanks to Bradley Kidder, Jr. and his sister Leslie who donated a large number of cocktail dresses, shoes, and vintage costumes to FSLT after the passing of their parents, Brad and Brooxine Kidder. These treasured items will be a tremendous asset to our wardrobe department!

## Gift to Endowment

We are grateful to Sandra H. Barron who has contributed to the Fort Smith Little Theatre Endowment Fund. Managed by the Arkansas Community Foundation ([arcf.org](http://arcf.org)), our endowment fund will provide support for FSLT in perpetuity. Learn more at [fslt.org/permanent-endowment](http://fslt.org/permanent-endowment).

Fort Smith Little Theatre  
**SPOTLIGHT**

P.O. Box 3752, Fort Smith, AR 72913  
www.fslt.org

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## From the Top...

I was recently interviewed for an article about FSLT for the June issue of Do South Magazine. We are excited that this local publication is interested in sharing the story of our community theatre with their readers. It made me think about the importance of media support.

The Times Record began publicizing our theatre from its inception in 1947. They publicized all of our productions over the years, and our archives are chock full of those newspaper articles! However, as you may know, that newspaper unfortunately no longer covers local activities. Luckily, the River Valley Democrat Gazette has really stepped up to cover our productions in online articles and in their printed What's Up section on Sundays. In addition, the Fort Smith Radio Group interviews our directors to help publicize our shows. We are so grateful to these members of the media!

Even with all these news stories and our social media presence, there is still one form of publicity that trumps all others – word of mouth. We truly appreciate all of you who spread the word about FSLT to your friends and co-workers, who like and share our social media posts, and leave positive reviews on Google. Now that people get their news from many fragmented sources, word of mouth is more important than ever. So, please keep spreading the word that affordable, quality entertainment can be found at 401 N. Sixth Street!

Speaking of good entertainment, I hope you were as impressed as I was by our April productions, *The Lost Boy* and *A Grand Night for Singing*. Next up, you'll have the chance to see *Light Up the Sky*. Mark your calendar for show dates May 30 through June 8 – and remember to spread the word!

- Tina Dale, *President*

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• **MURDER ON THE ORIENT EXPRESS** •  
• Adapted from Agatha Christie novel by Ken Ludwig | Director Duff Taylor •  
• **AUDITIONS: MONDAY, AUGUST 5 7 pm** •  
• 5 Males & 5 Females Accents: American, English, •  
• Scottish, Belgian, French, Russian, German, & Romanian •  
•.....

## AUDITIONS – Join The Fun!

Auditions for *Hello, Dolly!*, our upcoming summer musical, were held May 13. Production dates are July 18-August 3.

The next audition opportunity will be Monday, August 5 at 7 pm when casting will be conducted for *Murder on the Orient Express*. This production, based on Agatha Christie's most enduring novel, calls for five males ages approximately 30-65+ and five females ages approximately 25-75+. Production dates are September 12-21. It's a clever, comic mystery and sure to deliver loads of fun! Character descriptions and complete details will be posted at [fslt.org/auditions](http://fslt.org/auditions).



**Season Flex Pass patrons are urged to select seats before May 22.**