



Lex-Ham Community Theater
presents

First Lady

by Katharine Dayton and
George S. Kaufman

7:30 p.m., September 28, 29, October 4, 5, 6
2:00 p.m., Sunday, September 30

Wellstone Center Auditorium
179 Robie Street E, Saint Paul

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First Lady is presented by special arrangement with Dramatists Play Service, Inc., New York.

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Cast Members

| Character | Actor |
|--------------------------|---------------------|
| Louise | Gina Rice |
| Sophy Prescott | Laura Hoover |
| Emmy Paige | Dani Pazurek |
| Lucy Chase Wayne | Lois Estell |
| Stephen Wayne | Stuart Alger |
| Belle Hardwick | Denise Remak |
| Mrs. Ives | Robin Gilmer |
| Ann Forrester | Antonia Gbai |
| A Congressman's Wife | Dorothy Pamer Sinha |
| Her Friend | Mary Beth Redmond |
| Ms. Pavitch | Astrida Pukite |
| The Baroness | Jennifer Madden |
| Señor Ortega | Ashok Bokde |
| Madame Chang | Wen Bu |
| Protopopescu | Richard Daly |
| A General | Mickey Foley |
| Mrs. Louella May Creevey | Michelle Storm |
| Senator Gordon Keane | Colin Koll Healey |
| Senator Tom Hardwick | Brian Johnson |
| Irene Hibbard | Megan Rowe |
| Bleecker | James Satter |
| Judge Carter Hibbard | David F. Dubin |
| George Mason | John Gottskalkson |
| Ellsworth T. Ganning | Rick Lamers |
| Jason Fleming | Elliot Drolet |
| Herbert Sedgwick | Toby Madden |

Production and Design Team

| | |
|----------------------------|--------------------|
| Mary Cutler | Director |
| Amanda Oporto | Stage Manager |
| Tim Payton | Set Designer |
| Michelle Gawboy | Costume Designer |
| Lisa Diesslin | Costume Seamstress |
| Jake Otto | Lighting Designer |
| Maureen L. Bourgeois | Prop Designer |
| Dustin Bailey, Katie Shook | Tech crew |
| Urban Landreman | Producer |



After the Sunday, September 30 performance there will be a conversation with Minnesota State Auditor, Rebecca Otto, and former Minnesota State Representative, Betty Folliard, about the role of women in politics.



Act 1 - Living room in the Secretary of State's home, Washington, D.C., December
There will be a 10-minute intermission

Act 2, scene 1 - Judge Carter Hibbard's Study, January
Act 2, scene 2 - Secretary of State's home, February
There will be a 5-minute intermission

Act 3 - Secretary of State's home, March

Note: No tobacco products are used in this production



*Do not text or take photos or videos during the performance.
Please turn off or silence cell phones.*

Director's Note

George S. Kaufman, tonight's playwright—along with Katherine Dayton, a D.C. society journalist,—collaborated on the play before us tonight. We recognize the Kaufman name, because it is inscribed atop many plays (and even some films) written in the midst of the 20th Century, such as: *The Royal Family*, *Dinner at Eight*, *Stage Door*, *The Solid Gold Cadillac*, *Once in a Lifetime*, *Merrily We Roll Along*, *The Man Who Came to Dinner*, and 1937 Pulitzer Prize winner-*You Can't Take It with You*. *First Lady*, although an unknown comedy, seems to stress a theme of contemporary concern. The perceived theme encourages Americans to be diligent in the selection of our best and brightest to serve as our leaders of this democracy. In our own era, celebrity and wealth can be seen as pre-reqs to choose our leaders, whereas Kaufman and Dayton illuminate that the qualities of integrity, candor, warmth, intelligence, and hard work are more desirable traits for leadership and will overcome un-American values, such as: "exclusion, avarice, and stupidity" (<http://www.georgeskaufman.com:80/index.html>). Not only that, but the playwrights seem to be informing their 1935 audience that women are assuredly not the "second sex," but that women hold many of the aforementioned qualities, and, therefore, can lead the country quite effectively. As The New York Times stated of Kaufman: "For four decades, George S. Kaufman helped to entertain America and to make it laugh at its own foibles." Surely, the country's disregard of women as potential leaders is one of those foibles!

No amount of accolades can sufficiently laud Mr. Kaufman. "No American playwright has been more respected for the kind of solid craftsmanship and economy that Kaufman brought to his works. His plays have served as models of comic construction for the stage, films, and television. In addition, his expert use of the wisecrack—the sly, sharp line that bolstered the speaker's ego or deflated his opponent's—has earned him a reputation as an American wit and it has become a staple of popular comedy in every medium. His comedies have three particular characteristics: outstanding parts for talented actors, tremendous physical and verbal energy, and a keen satirical outlook on timeless American preoccupations and institutions. In a paradoxical contrast to Kaufman's remark about satire, ["Satire is what closes on Saturday night"] there has not been a Saturday night since 1925 when a George S. Kaufman comedy hasn't been playing somewhere in America." (<http://www.georgeskaufman.com:80/index.html>).

Mary Cutler

The Kaufman-Dayton Collaboration

In the review of the premiere of *First Lady* in December 1935, New York Times critic Brooks Atkinson said "Collaborating with Miss Dayton, one of the many scribes who look upon Washington with a sense of humor, Mr. Kaufman still lays his petards against pious doors, but with a certain artistic discrimination."

Katharine Dayton had written many humorous and sharp columns about politics in Washington for the Saturday Evening Post since the 1920s. Her father, James Dayton, was the publisher of the New York Evening Journal, so Ms. Dayton was well acquainted with the link between the media and politics.

The germ of the idea for *First Lady* grew out of a lunch Dayton had with Kaufman. Kaufman was concerned about the tenor of American politics, so a play with Dayton's insight in Washington was attractive. The two of them met soon afterwards and worked out the general idea for a play.

Cast and Design Team Members



Stuart Alger (Stephen Wayne) has performed in several Lex Ham Community Theater productions, including *Bullets and Beauties*, *State of the Union*, *First Man*, *The Front Page*, *Assorted Spirits*, and *Antony and Cleopatra*. He has performed in several trial re-enactments at the Saint Paul Landmark Center, and he and his son Jack performed together in the St. Luke's musical *Beauty and the Beast*. He thanks his wife Patricia for all her enthusiastic support, and the talented cast and crew of *First Lady* for making this a wonderful show.



Ashok Bokde (Señor Ortega) is delighted to return to the Lex-Ham community. He has previously appeared in *Antony & Cleopatra*, *Our Rotten Town*, and *If WWI Were a Bar Fight*, a co-production between Lex-Ham and the Minnesota Historical Society. Thanks to his wonderful family for their encouragement!



Maureen L. Bourgeois (Prop Designer) is excited to be working with Lex Ham Community Theater. Maureen's work as a Properties Designer was most recently seen in the 2016 Theatre in the Round production of *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, and she is also currently designing props for the three plays that will be part of Mixed Blood Theatre Company's "Prescient Harbingers". In addition to designing, Maureen is also involved in Theatre as an actor, playwright, director, and stage manager. Maureen is passionate about the arts, and in addition to performance and design, she enjoys photography, singing, sketching, and working with young performers.



Wen Bu (Madame Chang) is excited to be performing in her first play since moving to the Twin Cities two years ago. By day, she's a PhD student in Social Psychology at the University of Minnesota.



Mary Cutler (Director) is proud to direct her third Lex-Ham production, having previously staged *First Man* (O'Neill) and *Assorted Spirits* (Fitzgerald). During her time in the Twin Cities, she has directed for SoarArts, Phipps Theatre, Buffalo Community Theatre, Off-Broadway Musical Theatre, Theatre Unbound, Bloomington Civic, The Park Theater, Brazen Theatre, and Eden Prairie Players. Currently, Cutler teaches acting for Lex-Ham Community Theater and Minneapolis Community education, and acts as often as cast. Before relocating to the Twin Cities, Dr. Cutler taught Theatre and directed at the University of North Dakota, 1990-2009.



Richard Daly (Protopopescu) is in his sixth show at Lex-Ham. He has also done five at Theatre in the Round, three at the Music Loft, three at Lakeshore Players, and two dozen others. He wishes to thank his family and friends for their support, especially the wonderful Sarah.



Elliot Drolet (Jason Fleming) is appearing in his second production with Lex-Ham Community Theater. He has previously performed with Theatre in the Round, Theatre Pro Rata, Classical Actors Ensemble, Wildwood Theater, Cromulent Shakespeare Company, Maggie's Farm Theater, and Arts Garden. He graduated from the College of Saint Benedict/Saint John's University with a bachelor's degree in theater.



David F. Dubin (Judge Carter Hibbard) is in his first appearance with The Lex-Ham Community Theater. He was recently seen at Theatre in the Round in *And Then There Were None* among other various productions over the past few years. He has also been in productions with Chameleon Theatre, Artistry, and Fridley Community Theatre.



Lois Estell (Lucy Chase Wayne) moved to the twin cities from Orange City, Iowa where she was actively involved in the local theatre community. Having graduated from Northwestern College in Orange City with a double major in Music Ministry and Theatre, Lois was given numerous opportunities to direct, act and design for shows in and around Orange City. Her favorite show to direct was *Mary Poppins* and her favorite roles have been: Jo March in *Little Women*, Lucy in *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown*, Jean in *Dead Man's Cell Phone*, and now Lucy in *First Lady*.



Mickey Foley (The General) is a writer, comic essay presenter and occasional stand-up comedian. He has written and directed shows in the Minnesota Fringe Festival, including *A People's History of Love*, *The Ivory Tower* and his one-man show *The Big City*. He often performs in The Encyclopedia Show at Kieran's in downtown Minneapolis.



Antonia Gbai (Ann Forrester) is a recent graduate of Minneapolis Community and Technical College. This is Antonia's first production with Lex-Ham. Her previous shows were *The Middle Keeps Moving* (Minnesota Fringe) and *Jar the Floor* (MCTC). Antonia will like to thank everyone for coming to see the show.



Robin Gilmer (Mrs. Ives) is having her first experience with Lex-Ham Community Theater. She has done theatre in Texas, Iowa, Minnesota, and Taiwan. She recently moved back to Minnesota after being gone for over 40 years and is getting her theatre feet wet here in the Twin Cities. Kaufman is a favorite author of her family so this has been an honor to be involved in this production.



John Gottskalkson (George Mason) has been doing character roles in various theaters around the Twin Cities and upper midwest for over 35 years and is happy to be appearing in his fourth production with Lex-Ham. He would like to thank Mary Cutler for the opportunity to bring this character to life.



Colin Koll Healey (Senator Gordon Keane) made his first appearance with Lex-Ham in 2014 with *The First Man*. His credits include roles with Theater in the Round, Gallery Players in Bloomington, Theater on the Park, Westminster Community Theater, Cromulet Theater, and Theater As You Like It. Colin has a degree in Psychology, English and Theater from Lewis and Clark College in Portland, Oregon.



Laura Hoover (Sophy Prescott) is working with Lex-Ham Community Theater for the first time on *First Lady*. She has worked with numerous theater companies in the Twin Cities, including Shakespeare & Company, The Chameleon Theater Circle, Theatre in the Round, Merrill Arts, and Bulldog Community Theater. When she isn't on stage she works as a fourth grade teacher in Saint Paul.



Brian Johnson (Senator Tom Hardwick) is delighted to be back on stage with Lex-Ham surrounded by so much talent. He was last seen as Murphy in *The Front Page*. He would like to thank his wife Kari for her love and support.



Rick Lamers (Ellsworth T. Ganning) is making his debut with Lex-Ham Community Theater. Most recently he could be seen in Theatre in the Round productions of *Metromaniacs*, *And Then There Were None*, and *Private Lives*. Rick has also been active in Woodbury Community Theater and Lakeshore Players. He would like to thank Mia for staying up to greet him each night when he comes home from rehearsals.



Urban Landreman (Producer) is happy to be involved with another Lex-Ham Community Theater production. His main role is finding lots of talented people for on- and off-stage, ensuring that everyone is on the same page for the vision for the show, giving them the resources needed to bring that vision to life, and then getting out of their way.



Jennifer Madden (The Baroness) is thrilled to be back on stage after a long hiatus. She performed with IHM-St. Luke's Community Theater for years with her favorite role being Mrs. Potts in *Beauty and the Beast*. Off stage, she is known as Madame Jenny to her French students at Parkway Montessori Middle School in St. Paul.



Toby Madden (Herbert Sedgwick) is a professional speaker, author and Economist. He is a member of the National Speakers Association and often pulls out his crystal ball to predict what will happen in the economy. Spoiler Alert - he knows who will be the next First Lady.



Amanda E. Oporto (Stage Manager/Mrs. Davenport) stumbled into stage managing a few years ago where she discovered her assertive (i.e. bossy), detail-oriented (i.e. persnickety) personality came in handy. She most recently stage managed *The Metromaniacs* at Theatre in the Round. While she has acted in several Lex-Ham productions, including last year's *Our Rotten Town* and *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*, *First Lady* marks her first time in the role of stage manager with Lex-Ham Community Theater. She hopes that you enjoy the show and don't forget to vote!



Jake Otto (Lighting Designer) is excited to be returning to work with Lex-Ham Community Theatre. Some of Jake's notable designs include: *Anthony and Cleopatra*, *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*, *Dead Man's Cell Phone* (Lex-Ham Theatre), *Batboy: The Musical*, *The Pillowman*, *The Seagull* (Hamline University), *Willy Wonka*, *Children of Eden* (Masquers Theatre Co.), *The Voyage Inheritance* (Mosaic Productions), *Twisted Deaths* (Uprising Theatre), *Goldilocks and the Three Pigs* (Phipps Center for the Arts), *Minnesota's Coldest Case: The Unsolved Murder of John Hays* (Landmark Center).



Tim Payton (Set Designer) is in his second Lex-Ham production, but his first as Set Designer. Tim has been building and designing for over twenty years. He is currently the Technical Director for Saint Paul Central High School. Tim is a graduate of Concordia University-Saint Paul with a Theater Arts Degree.



Dani Pazurek (Emmy Paige) received her BA in Theatre Arts from the University of Minnesota- Twin Cities. You may have seen her in the many shows she has done with Theatre in the Round Players, beginning with *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* in 2015. When she's not onstage, Dani enjoys writing, listening to podcasts, and meeting with her newly established feminist theater group.



Astrida Pukite (Ms. Pavitch) is originally from Latvia and came to the US thru Germany in 1949. Studied nursing at Marquette. Astrida has lived in Columbia Heights since 1962. She has played in a Latvian play, *Mother-in-Law*.



Mary Beth Redmond (Friend of Congressman's Wife) has performed in other Lex-Ham productions (*Lex-Ham Follies*, *Divas and Dining*, *Quilters*, *Steppin' Out with Lex-Ham*, *Pizzazz*, *Our American Cousin*) and enjoyed every minute. With the Lex-Ham Council celebrating 50 years, she is especially grateful for the ongoing support of so many dear friends and neighbors.



Denise Remak (Belle Hardwick) as always enjoyed watching watching the magic of theater from from the audience. Since retiring from 37 years of teaching American History and Psychology at Apple Valley High School, she has now experienced a taste of the performing side in the Lex-Ham productions of *First Man* and *Assorted Spirits*. She is beyond thrilled to have another opportunity to work along side such talented people. Thanks to daughters Ingrid and Beret and husband Bruce for their excitement and encouragement.



Gina Rice (Louise) was previously in Lex-Ham's production of *Antony and Cleopatra* directed by John Townsend as the battered messenger, which also featured the familiar faces Stuart Alger, Elliot Drolet, John Gottskalkson, Ashok Bokde, and Amanda Oporto.



Megan Rowe (Irene Hibbard) is pleased to appear in her third Lex-Ham production, having previous appeared in *The Front Page* and *Assorted Spirits*. She has also performed with various other local theaters, including Eden Prairie Players, and The Phipps. She dedicates this performance to Johnny, Chuck, and Bob. Thanks for supporting local theater!



James Satter (Bleecker) is a Twin Cities actor. This is his third show with Lex-Ham Community Theater.



Dorothy Pamer Sinha (A Congressman's Wife) started her acting career at the Coach House Theater in Akron, Ohio. After a lengthy hiatus, she began taking classes at the Guthrie and performed in customer service videos and simulations at the VA Medical Center. She recently appeared in Mollywood Production's *Saree-ously Speaking: Uff Da* in the 2018 Minnesota Fringe Festival.



Michelle Storm (Mrs. Louella May Creevey) makes her Lex-Ham debut with *First Lady*. She has previously performed with area theaters, including Lakeshore Players, Lyric Arts Main Street Stage, Phipps Center, MN Fringe Festival, Public Dreams, Black Dirt, Expressions, Intergenerational, Eagan Community, and St. Croix Festival, among others. Michelle also serves as audio describer at Stages Theatre, Hopkins. She is a graduate of Hamline University, with a B.A. in Theater and Elementary Education. Michelle lives with her family in Woodbury. She works as a reading intervention teacher at St. Paul City School, a Frogtown neighborhood charter.

The Kaufman-Dayton Collaboration (continued)

Kaufman then flew off for five months to work on *Merrily We Roll Along* with Moss Hart. Kaufman returned and they re-did the play, but Kaufman kept wondering 'if they had a play' and Dayton kept repeating her mantra "It must be so much fun to work with George Kaufman".

Kaufman sent drafts of the play to some friends, i.e., the who's who of Broadway playwrights, while he once again flew off to Hollywood to work on *A Night at the Opera* with the Marx Brothers. The friends made suggestions, characters were added and dropped, warmth was added to Lucy, and Act III was totally changed. The resulting play, starring Jane Cowl and Lily Cahill, ran to both critical and public acclaim on Broadway.

Lex-Ham Community Theater

Since its start in 1995, the Lex-Ham Community Theater has striven to achieve its mission of producing quality theatrical experiences by and for the residents of the Lexington-Hamline and surrounding neighborhoods in St. Paul. The company has enhanced the local theatrical scene by

- Selecting lesser-known works by noted playwrights, such as *Soul Gone Home* by Langston Hughes, *The Vegetable* by F. Scott Fitzgerald; and *Motomorphosis* by Václav Havel.
- Giving the regional and world premieres of works by local authors, such as *There's Talk in Town* by John Solensten and *Bullets and Beauties* by Urban Landreman;
- Reviving wonderful classics such as *The Women* by Clare Boothe Luce, *Under the Gaslight* by Augustin Daly, and *The Front Page* by Ben Hecht and Charles MacArthur

The theater offers many opportunities for people to get involved at any level or time commitment. Opportunities range from attending an evening reading of a play written by Shakespeare or which won the Pulitzer Prize in Drama to enrolling in a beginning or advanced acting class.

To get involved contact theater@LexHamArts.org or www.LexHamArts.org/theater

Upcoming events:

Monthly informal play reading of:

Lost in Yonkers by Neil Simon – October 12, 2018

Othello by William Shakespeare – November 9, 2018

Acting classes for Fall 2018 offered jointly with Saint Paul Community Education

American Classic Drama for Absolute Beginners

Register on-line at www.commed.spps.org

2019 Season

God of Carnage by Yasmina Reza - May 2019

Witness for the Prosecution by Agatha Christie - October 2019

**Producing a play is possible only with the help and assistance of many people and organizations.
Here are a few that we would like to acknowledge and thank.**

Chase Printing
Concordia University-St Paul, Anna Hill
Green Mill Pizza
Guthrie Theater
Jehovah Lutheran Church
Midway Smoke Shop
Soderberg's Floral & Gift
Stogie's on Grand
Theater in the Round Players, Carolann Winther
University of St Thomas Libraries
The staff at the Wellstone Center

John Armstrong
Pat Armstrong
David Ashcraft
Cindy Forsgren
Dutton Foster
Andrew Gawboy
Keith Horst
Judy Larsen
Helen Patrikus
Anita Urvina-Davis
Mary Vanderwert