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TONIGHT

THE COUNTRY GIRL

ON
STAGE

SIMPKINS LITTLE THEATRE

November 10-11-12-13-14, 1953

MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY THEATRE
AND
MONTANA MASQUERS

present

CLIFFORD ODETS'

"The Country Girl"

LeRoy W. Hinze, Director
A. Wollock, Technical Director

CAST

Bernie Dodd: a director.....	James Webb
Larry: a stage manager.....	Alan Goddard
Phil Cook: a producer.....	Carlton Johnson
Paul Unger: an author.....	Richard Howell
Nancy Stoddard: an ingenue.....	Berta Huebl
Frank Elgin: an actor.....	Ronald Lundquist
Georgie Elgin: his wife.....	Marjorie Lovberg
Ralph: a dresser.....	Charles Parks

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

The Action Is Contemporary

ACT I

- Scene 1: The stage of a New York theatre.
- Scene 2: A furnished room, later the same day.
- Scene 3: The rehearsal stage, ten days later.
- Scene 4: The furnished room, a week later.

10-Minute Intermission

ACT II

- Scene 1: A dressing room in a Boston theatre, after midnight, a week later.
- Scene 2: The Boston dressing room, a few nights later.
- Scene 3: The Boston dressing room, the next day.
- Scene 4: A dressing room in a New York theatre, evening, some weeks later.

THE COUNTRY GIRL is produced by permission of Dramatists Play Service.

PRODUCTION STAFF

Assistant to the Director.....	Patricia Koob
Stage Manager.....	Carlton Johnson
Master Carpenter.....	Carlton Johnson
Scenery Construction.....	Marjorie Lovberg, Dee Scriven, Elaine Almos
Grips.....	Richard Howell, Charles Parks, Alan Goddard, Dee Scriven
Master Electrician.....	Gerald Wolfard, assisted by Nancy Hays
Sound.....	Gerald Wolfard
Costumes.....	Jeanene Schilling
Properties.....	Patricia Irwin, assisted by Janet Tierney
Makeup.....	EDr 75 Class
Program Cover.....	Wallace Norley
Publicity.....	Tom Roberts, David R. Brechbill
Box Office Manager.....	Donna Murray
Box Office Staff.....	Sally Stamm, Marjorie Lovberg, Inez Myers, Jeanene Schilling, Patricia Koob
Theatre Secretary.....	Marjorie Lovberg
Ushers.....	Spurs

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We wish to thank Sigma Nu Fraternity, Professor John Lester, Missoula Mercantile Co., Buttrey Foods, Inc., Mrs. Grace Maughan, and the many individuals who have loaned us costumes and properties for THE COUNTRY GIRL.

COMING ATTRACTIONS

THE PHILADELPHIA STORY.....	December 2, 3, 4, 5
Missoula Community Theatre	
THE IMAGINARY INVALID.....	February 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
Montana Masquers	
THE NIGHT OF JANUARY 16.....	Date to be announced
Missoula Community Theatre	
AMPHITRYON 38.....	April 13, 14, 15, 16, 17
Montana Masquers	
TWO BLIND MICE.....	April 27, 28, 29, 30
Missoula Community Theatre	
All School Show.....	Dates and opera to be announced
Music School and Drama Department	

Those patrons who purchased single admission tickets for THE COUNTRY GIRL may, by presenting their seat checks at the box office after the performance, apply the \$1.20 single admission price to the cost of the season. Thus \$1.20 plus your single admission seat check will purchase tickets for THE IMAGINARY INVALID and AMPHITRYON 38.

CLIFFORD ODETS AND HIS COUNTRY GIRL

About eighteen years ago Clifford Odets was a name to conjure with in the American theater, for at that time his three greatest plays (*Waiting for Lefty*, *Awake and Sing*, and *Golden Boy*) were thrilling New York audiences. To some, he was the "wonder boy"; to others, less sympathetic to what they considered leftist tendencies, he was the "bad boy." But his impact on both classes was unmistakable, trickling down to the subway gateman and the taxi driver — something like the jolt given later to those first-nighters who wept at the disintegration of Willy Loman.

Then followed an interim of a decade when this young hopeful was either silent (he spent two hateful years in Hollywood), or downright ineffective, capable of producing only flops, ending in the floppiest flop of all, *The Big Knife*, a play of pure venom, appearing just prior to *The Country Girl*. He even became the butt of a gag, "Odets, where is thy sting!" Would this wonder boy ever again awake and sing? Tonight's play is a partial answer.

As in Anderson's *Joan of Lorraine*, which the Masquers presented in 1951, the scenes of *The Country Girl* are laid chiefly in the theater, not the garish facade or the well-lighted auditorium, but the dark and barren backstage and dressing room (called by some the theater's backside), which Odets loved and in which he worked, according to his own count, some twenty-seven years, as actor, writer, and director. In fact, the New York production of this play was under his supervision. An interesting facet of the above two plays is the insight they give us into stage business. In both we hear discussions of entrance, reading, posture, timing — contributions of actor, author and director alike which often end in rancor. Just when, if ever, is improvisation (ad-libbing) admissible? One recalls W. C. Fields and wonders, despite Hamlet's counsel to his players. Should an actor act inwardly or outwardly? Another poser to which not even Stanislavsky himself can give a satisfactory answer.

But, of course, this back-stage tour is only a side road. The main highway, a well-traveled one, leads into a wood of error, the disintegration and regeneration of a human soul. And despite eight roles in the cast, we are basically concerned with only three: the director, the actor and the actor's wife, the latter being in many ways more central than her exasperating husband.

The old triangle plot may sound boring to some; the occasional hokum and cliché bother others, as may also the final scene. But the general serious intent and the rapid-fire dialogue bringing the Odets of his earlier successes back to life — these make up for much of the shoddy. Witness, for instance, Georgie's line, "Nothing is quite so mysterious and silent as a dark theater — a night without a star."

Odets defends his climax with gusto:

"The last scene is the best technical job I ever did. It could only be an opening night in New York. What woman would leave her husband then but a real positive horror of a gal? The audience wants to know about the wife and the director. Will she stay, or will she leave him? Will Frank be a hit, will he hit the bottle again, etc.? All this is covered in only nine typed pages of script."

Well, here's something to think about on your way home. Just one hint: Georgie picks up Frank's robe.

RUFUS A. COLEMAN