

# Little Theatre Guild, With Interesting History, Re-Organizes

## Backed By Over 400 Members Plans Major Performance For April

Dormant since 1941, owing to conditions created during wartime, the Little Theatre Guild of Charlottetown has been successfully re-organized, and is now planning the production of a new Broadway success, "I Like It Here" to be given in April.

In addition to this major production, the new executive is working on the production of a radio play in the near future, as well as a Studio Night Performance for Guild members only, to be staged within the next month or so.

"I Like It Here" by A. B. Shiffert is a modern, appealing and highly entertaining comedy concerning a refugee from Middle Europe, who "likes it here" and struggles with surprising, amusing and, from the audience standpoint, highly satisfying results.

"I Like It Here" was first produced at the John Golden Theatre in New York on March 22nd, 1946 with Oscar Karlowitz and Bert Lottell in the leading roles. Of this play, the "New York Mirror" states, "... a delightful evening in the theatre. It should keep the John Golden (Theatre) rocking with laughter for quite a spell."

Amateur stage plays have long been produced in Charlottetown for entertainment, when the best in local talent has been enlisted to take part. The Little Theatre Guild, in its public performance, may use the best talent available, but the real object of it and development of talent through direction, instruction and experience, together with the furthering of dramatic art as a whole in the community, as well as providing entertainment to its members and to the public.

Discovery and development of talent is usually done by means of studio performances, in which as many members as possible, who wish to demonstrate their talents are used. At the same time, a good deal of experimenting is done in the use of various types of plays. The Little Theatre is and is intended to be an important factor in adult education. Probably this is why the Little Theatre movement has received the universal support which it has enjoyed since its inception.

It is significant that the Charlottetown Guild has been honored by the patronage of successive Lieutenant Governors of this Province who have been pleased to act as Honorary Presidents of the Guild. Moreover, successive Governors General have been enthusiastic patrons of Dominion drama festivals. The trophy, for which the winning plays from the various regions, throughout Canada compete at the Dominion Drama Festival yearly, is known as the Bessborough Trophy and was donated by one of our recent Governors General, Lord Bessborough.

Address those participating in the Dominion Drama Festival

held in London, Ontario in 1939, the Late Lord Tweedsmuir, noted scholar and author, stated, "The work which Lord Bessborough so brilliantly inaugurated has become not only a great cultured force in Canada, but a vital element in the integration of our Country. I shall most gladly do anything in my power to further it."

It is difficult to say whether the idea of a Little Theatre Guild in Charlottetown originated with any one person. It is reasonable to suppose that a number of interested citizens had the same idea

### Origin of Charlottetown Guild

During the season, an enlarged programme was undertaken and the Guild was able to rent what is known as the Lyceum Theatre for a play-house for performances and rehearsals. This was a distinct advantage, as in a theatre of their own, members of the Guild were able to rehearse on a stage, make their own scenery and lighting fixtures and do some experimenting with stage settings and stage lighting. In these latter activities, the Guild was greatly assisted by the willingness and talents of Harry Gomez, who also created and conducted the Little Theatre Orchestra.

### Managing-Director

J. A. LAWSON

for a society of some kind for the furthering of dramatic art in this community. At any rate, early in 1935, following some ground work by Mr. Eo. Corbett of the School of Drama in Banff, who spoke to a public meeting on the Little Theatre movement in relation to adult education, two one-act plays were produced and staged in St. Joseph's Sodality Hall by a group of dramatic enthusiasts, well known to Charlottetown theatre-goers. These plays were "The Wedding" and "The Valiant".

Among those responsible for the production were Mrs. Frances Trainor, Miss Gwen Fry (now Mrs. Bert Patterson), Miss Margaret Collings, Miss Betty Rogers (now Mrs. Robt. Large), Mr. and Mrs. Austin Trainor, Miss Marjorie Hicks (now Mrs. J. G. Patterson), George Hart, Bill Trainor, Stuart Dickson, Arthur Cooper, Ian Smith, Ralph Morton, Charles Jenkins and others. At this performance, the creation of a Little Theatre Guild was advocated and from subsequent meetings the Little Theatre Guild of Charlottetown came into being. Later in the season, a play was selected to compete in the N. B.-P. E. I. Regional Drama Festival, where it was awarded second place.

a New Brunswick entry having been chosen first.

### Season of 1936-37

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### Season of 1938-39

In this year, the Arthur H. Cooper Trophy was presented to Charles Bentley, director of the "Message" and medals for best interpretations went to Miss Margaret Stearns, (now Mrs. George Peake) and the late Mr. A. P. C. Rees, Miss Mary Moran and Charles Bentley received honourable mention. The Sub-Regional Drama Festival was again conducted by the Charlottetown Guild with Ivan Reddy as managing director of the festival, conducted in the Prince Edward Theatre. Four plays took part in the competition, namely: "Season of Celebration," dramatized by Harry E. Foster and directed by Charles Jenkins, C. D. A., entered by the Brighton Players; "The Scoop," directed by H. I. Fleming, C. S. S. R., entered by the Ligonian Players; "The House with the Twisted Windows" directed by Kathleen Cameron and Florence Wells, entered by the Summerside Little Theatre Guild; and "It's Autumn Now," directed by J. A. Lawson and entered by the Charlottetown Little Theatre Guild.

### Season of 1937-38

In this season, what had become the usual programme of five performances, each consisting of three one-act plays and one major performance of one three-act play was carried through. "The Drift Drum" directed by Mrs. A. P. C. Rees was judged the best play of the year and medals for best interpretations went to Miss Esther Rattenbury (now Mrs. Herbert Petch) and A. M. Douglas with Miss Mary Moran and Judge H. L. Palmer receiving honourable mention. This play was directed by Charles Jenkins and the cast included Mrs. Ruth Simpson, Miss Esther Rattenbury (now Mrs. Herbert Petch), Ivan Reddy, Harry Foster and George Hart.

the Charlottetown Guild plays, entered, namely "The Queen of Hearts," was written by Mr. Harry E. Foster.

### Season of 1933-34

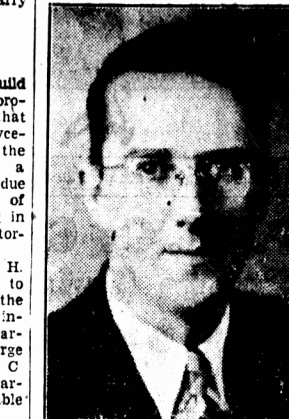
During this season, the Guild carried through the usual programme, in spite of the fact that it was obliged to give up the "Lyceum" as a play-house, owing to the building being condemned as a place for public entertainment, due to fire hazards. The balance of the performances were produced in Prince of Wales College Auditorium.

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As a consequence, this play went to London, Ontario, to compete in the Dominion Drama Festival. The cast of the play included Mrs. Arthur Henry, Mrs. Frances Trainor, Miss Lena MacLure, Miss Ephemie Arsenault, R. Burleigh Taylor and Ivan I. Reddin, who unfortunately was unable to accompany the cast to London and whose part was taken, there, by the director. While this play did not place first or second, the only places declared at the Dominion Drama Festival it apparently was favourably received.

### President



FREDERIC A. LARGE

In spite of the fact that war had been declared, and the Guild was rapidly losing members to the Armed Services, it was decided to proceed with the usual programme during this season and the Guild was able to produce four Studio Night Performances for Members and one major public performance for the Red Cross Society. Studio performances were staged in St. Peter's Church Hall and Holy Redeemer Hall. The public performance, "A Murder Has Been Arranged" directed by Stuart Dickson, was produced in the Prince Edward Theatre.

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to function as such, although a number of its former members were able to produce, early in 1941, a public performance consisting of two one-act plays in the Prince Edward Theatre in aid of the Red Cross Society. Many Guild members were also able to render some service in the Carry On Canada Club Concerts and other entertainments for and for the benefit of members of the Armed Services. Until forced to cease its activities owing to conditions beyond its control, the Little Theatre Guild continually progressed and enjoyed considerable success. Much of this success was due to the capable direction of the various executive bodies under the successive presidents, Arthur H. Cooper, Dr. T. E. E. Robbins, J. A. Lawson and A. L. Wright (acting president).

### Canadian Drama Awards

No history of the amateur theatre in Charlottetown would be complete without some mention of the C. D. A.'s in this City. The Canadian Drama Award is a Degree conferred upon selected persons who have been particularly active in furthering the dramatic art in their communities. This Degree is conferred by the Department of Education of British Columbia on the recommendation of local authorities on the Drama and entitles the person receiving it, to carry the letters, C. D. A. after his or her name. For their work in furthering drama in Charlottetown, the following have received C. D. A.'s: Mrs. Arthur Roper, Mrs. Ruby Houle, Messrs. Austin Trainor, Charles Jenkins and J. H. Richards and Miss Bernadette Gaudet, (now Mrs. G. A. Huxford of Plymouth, Devonshire, England).

The practice of conferring the degree, each year, was discontinued during wartime, but it is understood was instituted again, recently. It is interesting to note that all of the above C. D. A.'s in addition to other dramatic activities, are or have been actively connected with the Little Theatre Guild of Charlottetown and have been valuable factors in the success of the Guild.

### Drama Festivals

The Dominion Drama Festival was established in 1933 and operated under a Royal Charter. It is conducted by a Board of Governors, including as Patron, the Governor General of Canada, and among its officers some of the foremost men and women in Canada.

Operations of the Dominion Drama Festival have been suspended during recent years, the last Festival having taken place in London, Ontario, in 1939. Activities are being renewed this year, however and Regional and Dominion Festivals are being held, the Dominion Festival taking place, again in London, early in May.

For the purpose of selecting plays to compete in the Dominion Festival, Canada is divided into eleven Regions, of which New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island was declared a Sub-Region, holding its own Festival separately from New Brunswick with the entries, however, being judged in competition with the New Brunswick plays. A Festival for the entire N. B.-P. E. I. Region is being held in St. John's this year, but to date, no entry has been made from Prince Edward Island.

The recently organized Little Theatre Guild by Charlottetown does not feel that it could do sufficient justice to a Festival entry this year and no doubt, other Groups on Prince Edward Island feel the same way. It is hoped, however, that sufficient entries may be made next year, to warrant a Sub-Regional Festival being held, probably in Charlottetown. The Sub-Regional Committee, here include Judge H. L. Palmer as chairman and Morton Dew as Secretary-Treasurer.

From the foregoing, it can be realized, that the Amateur Theatre is very definitely, recognized as an important factor in the cultural life of this Dominion. It is to be hoped, therefore, that the Little Theatre Movement, as well as other, independent, dramatic Groups may thrive and continue to grow in the various Communities throughout Canada.

### New Executive

Following are the new executive officers of the Little Theatre Guild of Charlottetown:

Honorary President, Hon. J. A. Bernard, Lieutenant Governor.  
President: Hon. Frederic A. Large, K. C.  
Vice President, Rev. Kenneth MacMillan.

Secretary, Miss Lill an Duchemin  
Treasurer, Morton Dew.  
Managing director, J. A. Lawson.

Stage manager: Frank G. O'Neill  
Executive: Mrs. Frances Trainor  
Mrs. Arthur Roper, Miss Hilda Jenkins, Mrs. Robert Large, Miss Dorothea Stewart, Miss Callaghan, Charles Bentley, Barry Bugden, George Burnett.

The Guild is at present conducting a campaign for members, who are being asked to pay a nominal fee for the balance of this season. Beginning next Fall, it is hoped that members joining now will renew their membership for the season of 1947-48 at the regular yearly fee.

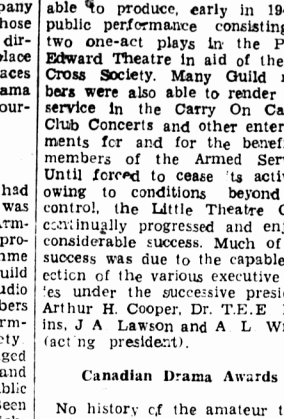
The executive is planning to carry through, during that season, the former programme of four or five Studio performances for members only, and at least one major public performance.

### Winners N. B.-P. E. I. Regional Festival 1939



"It's Autumn Now," a comedy in one act produced by the local Guild gained favorable mention at the Dominion Drama Festival held in London, Ont. Left to right, front row—J. Arsenault, Lena MacLure, Mrs. Francis Trainor, Mrs. Ari Henry. Back row—D. Reddin (stage manager), J. A. Lawson (Director), Mrs. (Dr.) Hogg, nee Dorothy Dumont (make-up), R. Burleigh Taylor, Ivan Reddin, Mrs. H. J. A. Brown, nee Nellie Brenton (Script).

### Honorary President



LIEUT.-GOV. J. A. BERNARD

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# LITTLE THEATRE GUILD

## OF CHARLOTTETOWN

1. Is a Community Enterprise of which citizens may be proud.
2. Is recognized throughout Canada.
3. Is well re-organized with more than 400 members enrolled to date.
4. Is prepared to carry through an interesting program for members.
5. Is still enrolling members.
6. Is going to improve and succeed according to the support it receives from citizens.

Membership Cards covering the balance of this season may be obtained, on request from Miss Hilda Jenkins, Chairman of the Membership Committee, or at the Abegweit Gift Court, 72 Grafton Street.

This advertisement inserted in the interest of The Little Theatre Guild by: — Moore & McLeod Ltd.---S. A. McDonald---Prowse Bros.