

Grove Goddess Productions  
presents

# **The Portable Dorothy Parker**



November 6th - 8th

The Cabaret Room @ The Lodge at Santa Fe

Dorothy Parker was an American poet, writer, critic, and screenwriter. Famed for her biting wit, she was born Dorothy Rothschild on August 22, 1893, in Long Branch, NJ, and grew up on Manhattan's Upper West Side. She sold her first poem in 1916, which led to a job at *Vanity Fair*, where she met humorist Robert Benchley and (eventual) award-winning playwright Robert Sherwood. The three friends attended the lunch party for Alexander Woollcott in June of 1919 that began the ten-year tradition that would come to be known as the Algonquin Round Table, a group of writers, editors, and actors whose sharp-tongued banter over the lunch table was chronicled in the popular newspaper columns of the day.

She was a founding contributing editor at *The New Yorker*, which published many of her poems and short stories as well as her many Constant Reader book reviews. Her most famous story, "Big Blonde," won the O. Henry Prize in 1929.

Dorothy married Edwin Pond Parker, a Wall Street banker, in 1917. Separated for most of their marriage by the First World War, they eventually divorced in 1928.

She married Alan Campbell in 1934; the pair spent many years writing screenplays in Hollywood, including the 1937 *A Star is Born*. She and Alan divorced in 1947, and remarried in 1950. Alan died in their West Hollywood home in 1964.

A life-long activist, Mrs. Parker helped found the Screen Writers Guild as well as the Hollywood Anti-Nazi League, and was blacklisted as a suspected Communist during the McCarthy era. She died in New York on June 7, 1967, leaving her literary estate to Martin Luther King, Jr., whom she had never met but greatly admired. When Dr. King was assassinated less than a year later, the estate passed to the NAACP.

We are proud to thank the NAACP for permission  
to use Mrs. Parker's words in this play.

Thank You

To Janet Aptaker for Mrs. Parker's hair design.

To Beth Lincks for actor support & coaching.

To Kelli Lynn Harrison for excellent program note dramaturgy.

To Paul Hawkins, Phillip Bettencourt & Steve Sheridan for all their support.

To Ensemble Studio Theatre for everything they do.

To The Blank Theatre, L.A.; Susan Landau Finch; Threshold Theatre,  
Charleston, SC; Patricia Vagoda; Virginia Museum of Fine Arts; The  
Hollywood Fringe; Piccolo Spoleto; Carl Richie; Taconic Stage Co.;

University Village in Thousand Oaks, CA; Gene and Joyce Smith;

Ray Xifo at EST LA and FringeNYC.

We couldn't have done it without you.

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# The Portable Dorothy Parker

by Annie Lux  
Directed by Lee Costello  
Performed by Margot Avery

The play takes place in 1943 in a midtown residential hotel in New York City.

It will be performed without intermission.

## Who's Who in the Company

**Margot Avery** (Mrs. Parker) A third generation actress, Margot made her debut at age nine in *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* on Broadway. Since then she has worked with many companies in New York & regionally.



Margot has been to the Edinburgh Fringe Festival four times: in 1995 & 1996 in collections of Arlene Hutton's short plays, and in her *As It Is In Heaven* in 2001 (nominated for The Stage Award for Ensemble Acting Excellence) and in *David's Balls*, a one woman play by L. B. Kovetz in 2003, which Margot also produced. She has performed in many other festivals including Piccolo Spoleto in Charleston, SC; the Seattle and Philadelphia Fringe Festivals; and both the very first and the latest FringeNYC.

Highlights since 2003 include *theAtrainplays* and *theAtrain(re)plays*, *The Vagina Monologues* (three different times), the role of Barbara in the NYC premiere of *Nickel & Dime*d, Robin Rice Lichtig's *The Power of Birds*, the 10th anniversary production of *As It Is In Heaven*, and in *Going Out and Coming Back* at Ensemble Studio Theatre (member-artist.) Margot is a proud member of Actors Equity Association.

**Lee Costello** (Director) Lee has directed numerous productions in New York and in regional theatre. She is a member of Ensemble Studio Theatre and Ensemble Studio Theatre LA. While living in NY she was a member of The Circle Rep Lab, The Women's Project and Productions, and was a teaching artist for The Lincoln Center Institute. Her New York credits include *Extensions* by Murray Schisgal and *The Portable Dorothy Parker* at Ensemble

Studio Theatre, *Cowboy Girl* at New York Theatre Workshop, *Heads* at La Mama, *The Adventures of She-Man* at The Westbank Theatre Bar, and *Did I Vote For You?*, an original play with music that received a special performance grant from the Franklin Furnace. Lee wrote and directed *The NOW Show*, (a multimedia sendup of the late night talk shows) that sold out for its entire run at Dixon Place. Lee's short play *Hearts, Flowers, and Jell-O* was featured at the 10th anniversary of The 52nd Street Project at Lincoln Center.

Lee now resides in Los Angeles, where she has directed for The Ensemble Studio Theatre LA, Theatre of Note, Highways, The Second City, The Hollywood Fringe Festival, The Blank Theatre, and REDCAT at the Disney Concert Hall. Currently she produces *Sci-Fest LA*, the annual Los Angeles Science Fiction One-Act Festival, and is the Executive Director of Mob Rule, Incorporated, a nonprofit community outreach project.

**Annie Lux** (Playwright) Annie's plays include *Natural Disasters*, *Lives of Saints*, and *Grimm Reality*, which was performed at the 2006 Benchwarmers festival at the Santa Fe Playhouse. Her most recent play, *The Portable Dorothy Parker*, has been performed in New York, Los Angeles, Richmond, Virginia, at last year's Piccolo Spoleto Festival in Charleston, South Carolina, and, most recently, at FringeNYC, the New York International Fringe Festival. She holds degrees in playwriting from New York University and Columbia University. Annie has also written for publications including *New Mexico* magazine, *Jane* magazine, *New Observations*, and *SantaFe.com*. Her first book, *Historic New Mexico Churches*, was published by Gibbs Smith Publishers in 2007, and was a finalist at the New Mexico Book Awards.



Actors' Equity Association (AEA), founded in 1913, represents more than 55,000 actors and stage managers in the United States. Equity seeks to advance, promote and foster the art of live theatre as an essential component of our society. Equity negotiates wages and working conditions, providing a wide range of benefits, including health and pension plans. AEA is a member of the AFL-CIO, and is affiliated with FIA, an international organization of performing arts unions. The Equity emblem is our mark of excellence. [www.actorsequity.org](http://www.actorsequity.org)

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## Who's Who in the World of the Play

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**FRANKLIN PIERCE ADAMS** (1881-1960) was an American columnist and wit best known for his newspaper column, *The Conning Tower*, and his appearances as a panelist on radio's *Information Please*. A prolific writer of light verse, he was also a member of the Algonquin Round Table. Having one's work published in *The Conning Tower* launched entire careers. As Dottie quipped, "He raised me from a couplet." She dedicated her 1936 publication of collected poems, *Not So Deep as a Well* to F.P.A.

**THE ALGONQUIN ROUND TABLE** was a celebrated group of writers, critics, actors, and

wits. Every day from 1919 until about 1930, "The Vicious Circle"

met for lunch at the Algonquin Hotel on W. 44th Street in the Theatre District

of Manhattan. They engaged in wisecracks, wordplay, and witticisms that were relayed across the country in their own columns. In its ten years of association, the Round Table and its members acquired national reputations, both for their work and their wit. Though the Circle had disbanded by 1930, its members remained some of Dottie's most enduring and meaningful relationships.

**TALLULAH BANKHEAD** (1902-1968) was an American actress of the stage and screen. Famous plays include *The Little Foxes* and *The Skin of Our Teeth*. Her throaty deep voice, strong personality (Disney based the character of Cruella de Vil in *101 Dalmatians* on Tallulah), and rumored promiscuity with members of both sexes made her the mark of much sexual gossip among her peers. She famously remarked that she was "ambisextrous."

**ROBERT BENCHLEY** (1889-1945) was an



American humorist best known for his contributions to *The New Yorker*, where his essays influenced many modern humorists. A charter member of the Round Table, he met life-long friend Dottie when they were both on the staff of *Vanity Fair*.

**BILLIE BURKE** (1884-1970) was an American actress, primarily known to modern audiences as Glinda the Good Witch in *The Wizard of Oz*. Billie was also the wife of **FLORENZ (FLO) ZIEGFELD, JR.**, founder and producer of the infamous Ziegfeld Follies revues.

**THE BLOOMSBURY GROUP** was a group of associated intellectuals that included Virginia Woolf, John Maynard Keynes, E. M. Forster, and Lytton Strachey, who all worked and studied together near Bloomsbury, London, during the first half of the 20th century. Their works and outlook deeply influenced literature, aesthetics, criticism, and economics as well as modern attitudes towards feminism, pacifism, and sexuality.

**ALAN CAMPBELL** (1904-1963) was Dottie's writing partner and second husband. They met in 1932, married in 1934, divorced in 1947 and remarried in 1950.



A contributor of prose to *The New Yorker*, he also acted on the Broadway stage. Alan, Dottie, and their collaborator, Robert Carson, earned an Academy Award nomination for Best Adapted Screenplay for the 1937 version of *A Star Is Born*. He and Dot also

wrote additional dialogue for the film adaptation of *The Little Foxes* when Lillian Hellman was called away to work on another project. In 1942 Campbell enlisted in the army, was later commissioned an officer, and served in Europe in Army Intelligence. He died in 1963 from an overdose of barbiturates and asphyxiation.

**FRANK CASE** was an American hotelier and author. He owned and managed the **ALGONQUIN HOTEL** during the heyday of the Round Table and wrote a number of books about his experiences with the hotel and the Round Tablers.

**MARC CONNELLY** (1890-1980) was an American playwright, director, producer, performer, and lyricist. He was a charter member of the Round Table and received the Pulitzer Prize for Drama in 1930 for his play *The Green Pastures*.

**FRANK CROWINSHIELD** (1872-1947) was an American journalist and art and theatre critic best known for developing and editing the magazine *Vanity Fair* for 21 years.

**EDNA FERBER** (1885-1968) was an American writer. Her novels included the Pulitzer Prize-winning *So Big*, *Show Boat* (later adapted into the celebrated musical), *Cimarron* (made into an Academy Award-winning film), and *Giant* (also made into an





award-winning film). A member of the Round Table, Edna collaborated with fellow member George S. Kaufman on several plays, including *The Royal Family*, *Dinner At Eight*, and *Stage Door*.

**DASHIELL HAMMETT** (1894-1961) was an American author of hard-boiled detective novels and short stories, a screenplay writer, and political activist. His books and series included *The Maltese Falcon*, *The Thin Man*, and *The Dain Curse*. In 1931 he began a love affair with playwright Lillian Hellman that lasted until his death in 1961.

**LILLIAN HELLMAN** (1905-1984) was an American playwright, screenwriter, and memoirist. Work includes *The Children's Hour*, *The Little Foxes*, and *Pentimento* (a vignette from which was the basis of the film *Julia*). Called before House Un-American Activities Committee in 1952, Lilly famously testified that "I cannot and will not cut my conscience to suit this year's fashions." They did not cite her in contempt as they did most of her peers, and she served no jail time.

**THE HIPPODROME** (1905-1939) was a theater on Sixth Avenue between W. 43rd & W. 44th Streets in New York (a short block away from the **ALGONQUIN HOTEL**). It had a seating capacity of 5,300 and state-of-the-art theatrical technology, including a rising glass water tank.

**THE FALL OF THE HOUSE OF USHER** is Edgar Allan Poe's most famous work of prose; the unsettling macabre work is widely recognized as the best example of American Gothic literature.

**GEORGE S. KAUFMAN** (1889-1961) was an American playwright, theatre director and producer, humorist, and drama critic. A member of the Round Table, two of his plays won the Pulitzer Prize for Drama: *You Can't Take It With You* (with



Moss Hart), and *Of Thee I Sing* (with Morrie Ryskind and Ira Gershwin). He also won the Tony Award as a director for the musical *Guys and Dolls*.

**BEATRICE (BEA) LILLEY** (1894-1989) was an actress and comedienne, best known to modern audiences for her films after Dot's passing, *Around the World in 80 Days* and *Thoroughly Modern Millie*.

**CLARE BOOTHE LUCE** (1903-1987) was a writer with work spanning drama, fiction, and journalism. She was managing editor of *Vanity Fair* in the 1930's. Clare is best known for her 1936 hit play *The Women*. In 1942, she was

elected as a Republican to Congress. She was the wife of **HENRY LUCE**, publisher of *Time*, *Life*, and *Fortune* magazines.

**CHARLES MACARTHUR** (1895-1956) was



an American writer best known for his plays in collaboration with Ben Hecht, *Ladies and Gentlemen* (filmed as *Perfect Strangers*), *Twentieth Century*, and the still popular *The Front Page*, which was based in part

on MacArthur's experiences at the City News Bureau of Chicago. Charlie was good friends with several Round Tablers. He shared an apartment with Mr. Benchley and briefly dated Dottie. His second marriage to the actress Helen Hayes endured from 1928 until he died.

**W. SOMERSET MAUGHAM** (1874-1965) was reportedly the highest paid English writer of the early 20th century, being among the first writers to be paid significant amounts of money for film rights to his novels. His works include *Of Human Bondage* (made into the 1934 film starring Bette Davis and Leslie Howard) and *The Razor's Edge* (adapted into a film in 1946 and again in 1984 by actor Bill Murray).

**JOHN MCCLAIN** met Dottie in 1931 while a clerk in a brokerage house. Over 10 years John's senior, Dot began a tempestuous affair with him and got him a job at *The New York Sun*. An upwardly mobile lech, he broke her heart and she attempted suicide after their breakup.

**THE MERMAID TAVERN** was an Elizabethan tavern on Cheapside in London and the site of a drinking club that met on the first Friday of every month. Members included some of the era's leading literary figures: Ben Jonson, John Donne, John Fletcher and Francis Beaumont, Richard Carew, and William Strachey.

**EDNA ST. VINCENT MILLAY** (1892-1950) was an American lyrical poet and playwright. She received the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry in 1923, the third woman to do so, and was also known for her feminist activism and her many love affairs.

**GERALD AND SARA MURPHY** (1888-1964

& 1883-1975) were wealthy expatriates who moved to the French Riviera in the early 20th century and who created a vibrant social circle that included a great number of artists and writers of the Lost Generation and the Round Table. Nicole & Dick Diver of *Tender Is the Night* are thought to be based on



the Murphys, as are the main characters in the play *JB*. The Murphys can be found prominently featured in the bio-pic *De-Lovely* about Gerald's best friend, Cole Porter.

**GEORGE OPPENHEIMER** co-founded **THE VIKING PRESS** in 1925 with the creed: "To publish a strictly limited list of good nonfiction ... and distinguished fiction with some claim to permanent importance rather than ephemeral popular interest."

**EDWIN POND PARKER II** was a scion of a prominent New Haven family and Dot's first husband. They married in 1917 but were separated through most of their marriage, first by World War I when Eddie was stationed in Europe and later by Eddie's addiction problems. They divorced in 1928.

**François de LA ROCHEFOUCAULD** (1613-1680) was a noted 17th century French author. His *Maxims*, a slender volume of 504 short observations and witticisms, was a great favorite of both Oscar Wilde and Dottie, who went so far as to directly quote him in several of her works.

**HAROLD WALLACE ROSS** (1892-1951) was an American journalist who founded *The New Yorker* magazine and served as editor-in-chief until his death. Always called "Ross" (and never Harold) by his closest compatriots (including his wife, **JANE GRANT**, a writer and fellow member of the Round Table), he used his membership in the Vicious Circle to start his magazine.

**Nicola SACCO** (1891-1927) & **Bartolomeo VANZETTI** (1888-1927) were Italian-born anarchists who were convicted of a murder committed during the robbery of a shoe factory in Massachusetts. Despite overwhelming evidence that the two were not even at the factory, they were sentenced to death. Lauded stars and intellectuals of the day pleaded for a pardon to no avail. Sacco and Vanzetti were executed by the electric chair in 1927.

**ROBERT SHERWOOD** (1896-1955) was an American playwright, editor, and screenwriter. He is one of two playwrights to have won four Pulitzer Prizes and is best known for his plays *The Petrified Forest* and *Abe Lincoln in Illinois* and his screenplay *The Best Years of Our Lives*. Also a charter member of the Round Table, Sherry met Dottie in 1919 when Mr. Benchley got him a job as drama critic at *Vanity Fair*.

**NATHANAEL WEST** (1903-1940) was an American writer and satirist whose works include the book *The Day of the Locust*. His wife, **EILEEN MCKENNEY WEST** (1914-1940) was the inspiration for the stories and play *My Sister Eileen*, which was later adapted

by Leonard Bernstein into the musical *Wonderful Town*. The Wests were returning to Los Angeles from a hunting trip in Mexico for F. Scott Fitzgerald's funeral when they were both killed in a car crash. *My Sister Eileen* premiered on Broadway just four days later.

**ALEXANDER WOOLLCOTT** (1887-1943) was an American critic for *The New York Times* and *The New Yorker* and a charter member of the Round Table. He was the inspiration for the main character in *The Man Who Came to Dinner* by Kaufman & Hart, and for the columnist



Waldo Lydecker in the book/film *Laura*. A prolific drama critic, his caustic wit equally attracted and repelled readers; he was once banned by the Shuberts from reviewing shows in their theaters.

**DONALD OGDEN STEWART** (1894-1980) was an American author and screenwriter best known for his screenplay adaptation of *The Philadelphia Story*.

**DAME EDITH SITWELL** (1887-1964) was a British poet, critic, and benefactress of the arts. Her home was always open to London's poetic circle, to whom she was unfailingly generous and helpful. She published poetry continuously from 1913, some of it abstract and set to music.

**P. G. WODEHOUSE** (1881-1975) was an English humorist whose body of work includes novels, short stories, plays, poems, song lyrics, and numerous pieces of journalism. Perhaps best known for his *Jeeves and Wooster* stories, in the early 1920's he contributed voluminous pieces, including literary and stage criticisms, to *Vanity Fair* under various pseudonyms so that it did not appear that only one man was writing for the magazine.

**THOMAS WOLFE** (1900-1938) was a major American novelist of the early 20th century. Often considered a writer's writer, his career was cut short by tuberculosis yet still influenced writers such as William Faulkner, Jack Kerouac, Ray Bradbury, and Philip Roth. Best-known works include *Look Homeward, Angel* and *You Can't Go Home Again*.



