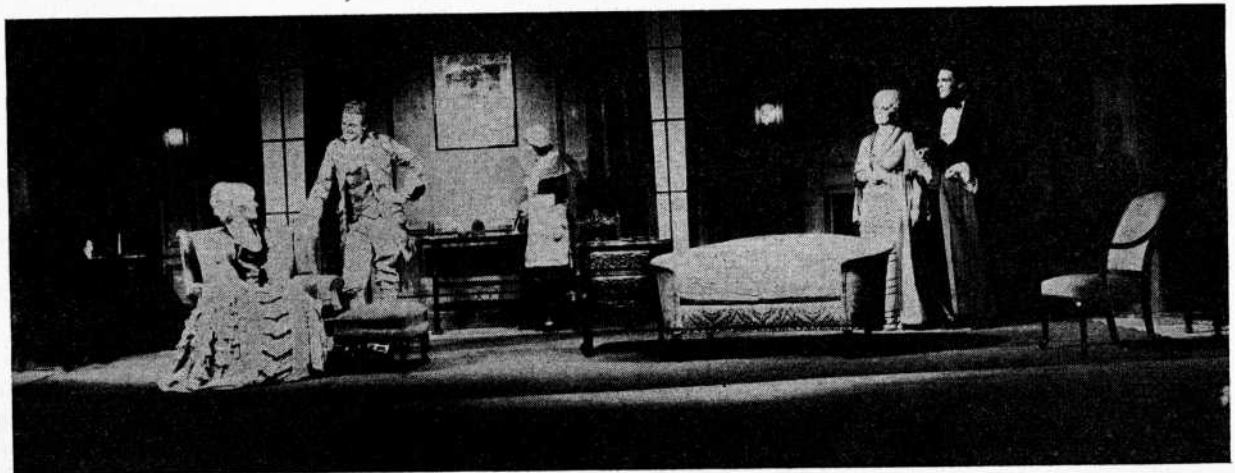




Miss Ida Z. Kirk is senior member of the faculty of the school of dramatic art and has produced for eleven seasons plays which owe much to her discrimination and force as a director. Miss Kirk's latest production was «Berkeley Square» which was the Playhouse offering for December

Right: Maxine Lillard and Van Heflin in an intense moment in the production of «Berkeley Square.» Below: the dance scene in the play which will be remembered as one of the most brilliant and finished scenes ever to be seen on the stage of the Playhouse



# Drama's debt to Miss Ida Kirk

BY BETTY KIRK, '29

**S**TUDENTS from the University's school of dramatic art here have entered with success into the theatrical activities of our nation, in capacities both professional and amateur. Though no one has yet attained the stature of a Barrymore or Lunt each has made that difficult first entry into stagemod and many will go far.

The credit for this increasing success of university players may go in a large part to Miss Ida Z. Kirk who has spent eleven years of service in the university and is the senior member in her department. Miss Kirk came to Norman when the school of dramatic art was young and has remained to see it become one of the most successful and appreciated departments on the campus.

She was the co-director of the first play written by Lynn Riggs, now famous as one of the most important of the nation's dramatists. This play was titled *Cuckoo* and was a one act farce-comedy. Thelma Wildrose, who carried the lead in the show, became a teacher of dramatic art in an exclusive girls' school in New York City, after leaving the university.

Ernest Sharpe, who was president of the Playhouse organization and acted frequently under the direction of Miss Kirk, has spent the past five years in New York City, acting in the theatre and preparing for further theatrical work. He has appeared in *A Most Immoral Lady* with Alice Brady and *The Second Little Show* which had a very successful run both on Broadway and on tour. For the past six months he has been singing over the radio.

Harriette Russell is the only graduate of the school who has returned to play at the University with a nationally known group. She played Ophelia in *Hamlet* and Jessica in *The Merchant of Venice* when the Fritz Leiber Players appeared here two years ago. She has since been studying and working in New York City.

Bill Miley, the most recent of the University players to attempt to crash Broadway, has recently succeeded for he has been cast to appear in a musical show which will be produced this spring. Miley will be remembered as the hero in several of the plays produced by Miss Kirk in recent years.

Cedric Marks, who was first a student and later an instructor in the school of

dramatic art, has had a varied theatrical experience since leaving Norman. He first journeyed to New York, then to California where he worked for a time with the Fox studios, and is now back in New York City beginning the difficult business of learning the workings of the professional theatre.

Van Heflin, who recently gave a distinguished performance in *Berkeley Square* under Miss Kirk's direction, is now a student but has already had professional experience. In the summer of 1928 he appeared in Channing Pollock's *Mr Monneypenny* under the direction of Richard Boleslavsky. He played for the run of the show but refused other parts in order to return to the University and obtain his degree. Heflin will complete his college work at the end of the first semester and will then go to New York to try out for further theatrical parts.

Don Murray, who played in many Playhouse productions as a student, is now in California. He recently played one of the roles in the production of *The Apple Cart* by George Bernard Shaw and is now connected with one of the motion picture companies of Hollywood.

Activities of dramatic art department students have not been confined to the professional stage however. Many who were trained in the University have gone out from here to the cities and towns of the state and of the southwest to share their training and their talents with others and to contribute to the constantly growing appreciation of the drama in our smaller communities.

It would be impossible to comment upon all of the students who have taken parts in Little Theatre or Civic Theatre productions, who have contributed to the artistic life of their localities by the generous devotion of their gifts to entertaining others.

Mildred Maxey has recently been honored singularly for an amateur performer. Her sympathetic interpretations of parts which she has played with the Tulsa Little Theatre attracted the attention of Lynn Riggs and he selected her to play the lead in his *Rancour* which was recently produced by the Santa Fe Players.

Alice Mæ Kistler is another of Miss Kirk's students who has been active in Tulsa Little Theatre productions, while

the Oklahoma City Civic Theatre has profited by the cooperation in its productions of Laverna Stealey Boyles, Janet Thompson and Rollin Boyles.

It is the drama of human conflict or aspiration which is of greatest interest to Miss Kirk, preferably a drama of smoothness and wit, rather than the mechanical pieces of the experimental stage. Though her work is almost entirely with amateurs there is nevertheless a feeling of maturity, of finish, to her productions for she brings to her direction a roundness of conception and a subtlety of interpretation which make an evening's attendance at any of her productions an experience of pleasure and enjoyment.

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## NORMAN THOMAS

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cialist leader declared that patriotism almost always took the form of hate against other nations rather than efforts to combat the evils at home.

"It is possible and quite common to teach a type of patriotism that is immoral and vicious," he said. "The absolutism of the state is a dangerous doctrine. Under such a theory the nation can draft all of its children into killers, it can pit worker against worker in deadly and useless wars.

"The nationalists have made the state a sort of God. If you lose your money in Wall Street it is just too bad. But the whole United States army will protect your investments in other countries—particularly in marine-sized nations that need civilization anyway!"

An American Fascism, dominated by big business, is the greatest danger of the United States, Mr Thomas said. Communism he regards as hopeless, because never in history has armed revolution been so hopeless as today. Street barricades have no chance against aircraft, he pointed out, contending that any change must come slowly and legally through existing democratic institutions.

Instructors, students and many an out-of-town visitor listened to Mr Thomas outline the program of his party at a Faculty club luncheon. Lower tariffs, hunger relief funds to be raised from income and inheritance taxes, national control of major utilities, and a national house-building program were among the prime aims cited for American Socialists.

"It is hopeless to deal with economic problems piecemeal," Mr Thomas said. "Neither state regulation nor private enterprise can ever solve the desperate conditions in the coal industry, because it is impossible to limit overproduction by such means. Federal control is the only feasible solution.

"No question remains today as to whether we will have a system of individualism or collectivism. The question was decided when the world went in for

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