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She Lends Many Talents To Corn Stock



DRAMATIST AT WORK

... Juliette Whittaker sketches theatrical make-up demonstration

"Give Juliette an idea or a reason and she'll write a play."

THAT'S WHAT the friends of versatile Juliette Whittaker say about the young director of "Blithe Spirit." Corn Stock's opening play which starts next Tuesday, for eight nights, at the tent theater in Bradley Park.

A native of Houston, Texas, Miss Whittaker has a degree in dramatic arts from the University of Iowa, where she majored in playwriting.

In Peoria, Juliette repeatedly has proved her talent, the past eight years, with scores of plays which she has written, directed and produced at Carver Center, where she is dramatic director.

SHE SET UP the Carver Children's theater in 1949, and since then has inaugurated Junior Theater, Marionette Theater, Youth Theater Guild for teenagers, and the Footlight Players at the Center.

In all she has more than 130 children and adults enrolled in her classes and clubs at the N. Sheridan Rd. center. She has also written and produced plays for several local radio stations.

A charter member of Corn Stock Theater, Juliette directed "My Name Is Legion," earlier this year as a joint project of Corn Stock and the Peoria Mental Hygiene society.

Last season she was stage manager and set designer for "Finian's Rainbow." Her huge cypress tree of papier mache in the set was an outstanding piece of work, which will be long remembered by Peoria audiences.

During the past winter she taught stage production at Corn Stock school of drama.

HER SET designing carries out a secret ambition to be an interior decorator, a desire she utilizes widely in renovating and redecorating furniture and props for her plays.

Juliette feels very sensitive about her work with children in the theater. "Dramatic arts offers an outlet for precocious children who have no interest in athletic outlets," she explained.

"Drama offers them a chance to take a spotlight for what they can do, perhaps better than sports. Our program attracts many children to the center who otherwise might never come for recreational activities."

Carver Center is one of the few recreational agencies in the country with a full-time dramatic director.

AS FOR THE theater itself, Juliette sticks closely to the classical tradition, and deplores the hopelessness depicted in much of current drama.

She likes to see, read, direct (and write) plays that interpret life and teach the audience as well as tell a story. She often sets her own plays in authentic historical backgrounds to add an educational element to the entertainment of the play.

For "Blithe Spirit," Miss Whittaker is designing both the

sets and the costumes. To better understand the spiritualist aspect of the play, she has steeped herself in readings of the Psychical Research society, which explains ghosts and their "reality" to the modern world.

Her hobbies, too, are many and varied — cooking exotic foods (poached eggs in mushroom soup is a favorite), playing the bongo drums, collecting rare books and old records, as well as chess, dancing, and pastel painting. Maxwell Anderson and Somerset Maugham are her favorite authors.