

A COMPLICATED MAN

Francis Biddle was a man of contradictions (as are most of us), but Biddle's were far more dramatic owing to his background and his prominence. He was born to an aristocratic Philadelphia family which traced its lineage to early American colonists and moneyed landowners. Biddle was educated in Ivy League institutions such as Groton School and Harvard and worked almost 30 years as a lawyer in Philadelphia before leaving his lucrative practice to join the administration of President Franklin Roosevelt. He became an ardent proponent of New Deal policies that were enacted to address both the causes and consequences of the Great Depression. In his role as the first chairman of the National Labor Relations Board, he advocated for the unimpeded right of workers to organize labor unions. He was of the opinion that economic and social balance was in the best interest of the country. Perhaps he felt this on a deeply personal level, possibly reflected in his statement that government service results:

...in some deep sense of giving and sharing, far below any surface pleasure of work well done, but rooted in the relief of escaping the loneliness and boredom of oneself, and the unreality of personal ambition. The satisfaction derived from sinking individual effort into the community itself, the common goal and the common end. This is no escape from self; it is the realization of self.

Biddle went on to serve as a U.S. appeals court judge, U.S. solicitor general, and U.S. attorney general. Japan bombed Pearl Harbor during his first year as attorney general. The immediate security concerns were enemy aliens as well as the thousands of native-born Americans of Japanese descent. To his credit, Judge Biddle strongly opposed the Army's proposal to forcibly relocate Japanese American citizens to internment camps at interior locations in desolate areas of the western United States. He presented President Franklin D. Roosevelt with cogent humanitarian and constitutional reasons for his opposition. When Roosevelt proposed to sign Executive Order 9066 that led to the internment, Biddle insisted that the president delegate all authority to the War Department, thus removing the Justice Department from any further involvement. Despite his principled opposition to this internment, Biddle later expressed profound regret over the entire affair.

When Harry Truman became president upon Roosevelt's death, he brought in Tom Clark of Texas as his attorney general, a replacement about as far as was possible from the eastern establishment. Biddle reacted sharply when a presidential secretary notified him of his involuntary "resignation." He was mollified only when, upon hearing of this faux pas, Truman personally advised him that his services were no longer needed.

The change was not personal with Truman, and just a year later he appointed Biddle as principal American judge at the Nuremberg War Crimes Trials. Judge Biddle and his associates convicted such infamous Nazi officials as Herman Goering, Albert Speer and Rudolph Hess. His service at the war crimes trials was a great source of satisfaction for Biddle, as can be seen in the play in his conversations with his secretary. Of course, he often reverts to his snobbish patrician persona when demeaning Sarah's Canadian prairie upbringing and lack of Ivy League credentials. Biddle likewise betrays a disdain for ordinary civil servants working in their offices, seeming to forget his earlier praise for public service. We are left to wonder just who the real Francis Biddle was – a snob or a man of the people? Maybe he was a bit of both – a complicated man.

JIM ROBINSON, *Dramaturg*





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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

You say "potato," and I say "potahto"...You say "tomato," and I say "tomahto". Difference -- whether in speech, dress, age, education, gender, upbringing -- this is what colors and beautifies the world. Without contrast, we would drown in a sea of sameness; endless shades of gray. What, you don't agree? If this were not true, a feeble, feckless, modern girl like Sarah Schorr from Saskatchewan and Judge Biddle, an elderly, cerebral Harvard graduate and former U.S. attorney general, could not possibly learn to appreciate one another as they do through the course of our play.

Though Sarah says she reads "voraciously," and Judge Biddle bristles, insisting "one eats voraciously but reads voluminously," their fifty year age difference gradually shrinks as they grapple with words to express themselves. Through their battle to understand each other, they discover it is not the words that matter, but the intention. Life is more than semantics.

If we are to live fully, we must step across the gulf of our differences. It takes more than simply spine to accept another's otherness. We need empathy. That is the operative word. It is empathy that reforms us and enriches our lives. And through it we find grace, trust, hope, and finally love.

- TERRY AVERILL

Biddle Photographs from:

Katherine Biddle Papers: Box 57,
Folders 2 and 3; Box 58, Folder
6, Georgetown University Library
Special Collections Research Center,
Washington, D.C.

Biddle Degrees and Law

Certificate from:

Francis B. Biddle Papers: Box 13,
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ABOUT THE DIRECTOR



Trying is the fourth production **DARICE CLEWELL** has directed for The Colonial Players. In 2006, she brought *Copenhagen* to our stage, and prior to that she directed *Isn't It Romantic?* and the musical *Is There Life After High School?* She has appeared in numerous productions here, playing Lotty in *Lettice and Lovage*, Lottie in *Enchanted April*, and M'Lynn in *Steel Magnolias*. She also appeared in *The Last Night of Ballyhoo*, *Splendour*, *Rumors*, *Social Security*, and *The Road to Mecca*. Choreographic endeavors were for *A Little Night Music* (the Ruby Griffith winner for All Round Production Excellence), *She Loves Me*, *Cabaret*, *Fiorello!*, *Is There Life After High School?*, *Red*

Hot and Cole, *Working*, and *A Christmas Carol*. Darice has acted, directed, and choreographed for The Colonial Players for over 25 years and has served on our board of directors several times. She holds a degree in Theatre Arts/Drama from the University of Wisconsin. Directing efforts at other local theaters include *Stones in His Pockets* and *The Shadow Box* at Dignity Players. Acting credits outside of CP include Elizabeth Proctor in *The Crucible*, Amanda Wingfield in *The Glass Menagerie*, Latrelle Williamson in *Sordid Lives*, and several roles in *The Vagina Monologues*. "As always, thanks to my partner in life's journey, the ever-Trying Jim. And a heartfelt 'thank you' to Mike and Karen, my partners in this theater journey; I'm grateful for your trust and indebted to you for your labors."

ABOUT OUR NEXT SHOW

1776, a musical retelling of events surrounding the writing of the Declaration of Independence, will rekindle your patriotism and give you a new understanding of the remarkable men who gathered 237 years ago to give birth to a new nation. John Adams, Ben Franklin, and Thomas Jefferson alternately woo their fellow delegates and rage over their indecision as the Continental Congress session drags on through a hot Philadelphia summer. This seminal event

in American history blazes to life in the glorious melodies and witty lyrics of Peter Stone and a surprisingly historically accurate book by Sherman Edwards. 1776 opens March 22 and runs through April 20. Come join us for this historical musical tour that will enthrall you from the opening number through to the gripping ending as bells peal while members of Congress solemnly risk their lives and fortunes to sign one of history's most amazing documents.

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

At a time when our national leaders seem to be unable or unwilling to work together for the good of the country, *Trying* takes us all back to an era when leaders of different opinions, parties, and backgrounds put their nation first. Francis Biddle was one of those leaders. Scion of Philadelphia's moneyed Main Line, Harvard Law graduate, personal secretary to Chief Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr., Biddle served his country, and his presidents, well: he was U.S. attorney general under President Franklin Roosevelt and was appointed by President Harry Truman as the chief American judge for the International Military Tribunal at Nuremburg. He strove to uphold justice, especially for the working people on the lower ends of the economic and social structure. As a young lawyer in Philadelphia, he fought to improve the working conditions of Pennsylvania coal miners, and as chairman of the National Labor Relations Board, he prosecuted unfair labor practices.

Trying is about none of this, and all of this. It is about the final year of Biddle's life, as he works with a young new secretary to get his papers and memoirs in order before he dies. That secretary later penned this beautiful story.

The playwright, Joanna McClelland Glass, revealed that she wasn't able to approach the writing of *Trying* as a full-length play until she could see it through the eyes of an older, more mature woman (she was in her 60's when she wrote *Trying*). She was then able to see the role Biddle had played as a mentor to her, and her own experiences had equipped her to better understand the pains and difficulties of aging and dying.

Richard Brody, the *New Yorker's* cinema critic, once noted that "the effective work of memory is the very definition of art." This play, rather than being based on the playwright's experience as Judge Biddle's secretary, is inspired by the time she worked with him. As we delved into the script, we discovered numerous "enhancements" that reveal the superb artistry of Joanna McClelland Glass as a dramatist. While she uses the memory of their conversations and the lessons learned

from this man of once-towering intellect, she elegantly shifts dates and details to present a more dramatically rewarding version of their time together. In truth, Biddle passed away on October 4, 1968, while in this play, his death occurs in the second week of June. The artist is at work in this choice: by placing his death in the springtime, the darkness of winter fades as his life comes to an end, and Sarah is on the brink of her own fresh horizons even as spring is in full bloom in Washington.

In the first act, Biddle remarks that "abeyance is a woman's plight," and that has certainly been my experience with this play! I've wanted to bring *Trying* to an Annapolis stage since being introduced to it seven years ago. So I am grateful for the opportunity to tell this story of two cultures colliding and then collaborating, of age and youth at odds with one another, of chill turning to warmth, and of winter yielding to spring. It is a story, ultimately, of understanding. It is funny and touching, and reminds us all that no matter how accomplished we are, how rich or poor, we belong to each other.

Because of our proximity to Georgetown, I and my research team have been able to avail ourselves of Biddle's private papers, and we scouted the house where the Biddles lived. I have thumbed through the judge's personal datebooks, poured over Katherine Biddle's countless newspaper clippings, and held the typed (presumably by Glass herself) address list from his desk; one of the entries is the telephone number and address listing for Mrs. Joanna Glass. These excursions have revealed other ways in which Glass "fiddled" with the facts, but in every instance, the dramatic arc of the story is enhanced, and the characters spring to life in a far more compelling manner because she allowed her memories to become art. What fun it has been to do this live-action research of such a prominent citizen!

In the play, Sarah describes the true measure of one's worth as "the measure of one's journey." I have enjoyed the collaboration of many CPers whose friendships I cherish, and whose talents have been invaluable on this journey. Many of

DIRECTOR'S NOTES (continued)

these collaborators have traveled with me time and again, a few are recent acquaintances, and I am grateful that even when we collide--as we do!--we ultimately collaborate. For, like Sarah and Biddle, we belong to each other. I ask you to take a moment to read their names and honor their contributions to this production.

Special thanks to Jim Robinson for leading the history research, and to Kurt Dornheim for aiding in the creation of audience forums to help all of us understand the remarkable contributions that Judge Francis Biddle made to our nation and to the world. My deepest

gratitude to Heather Quinn and Laurie Nolan, who have been with me from the beginning of this adventure, traveling to the Biddle house in Georgetown, working with the Georgetown University Library staff to secure permission to review and photograph Biddle's actual papers, designing and painting our set and furniture, replicating the "genuine articles" of the judge's diplomas ... the list goes on, and a simple name in a program does not do their talent, work, and creativity justice. No pun intended!

- DARICE CLEWELL



THE CAST



MICHAEL N. DUNLOP

(Judge Francis Biddle)

Michael is very happy and excited to be returning to The Colonial Players stage. Previous performances here include two seasons of *A Christmas Carol*, *Something's Afoot*, *Sly Fox*, and *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* and several one-act productions over the years. He was recently seen in Compass Rose Studio Theater's *To Kill a Mockingbird* and Prince George's Little Theatre's productions of *Deathtrap* and *Don't Dress for Dinner*. He also has been active with Bowie Community Theatre in *Daddy's Girl*, *Dearly Departed*, and *Dearly Beloved*, among other shows over the years. Michael worked closely with Spike Parish's Maryland Traveling Repertory Theater as a cast member in several productions, including *The Odd Couple*, *California Suite*, *Not Now Darling*, *The Owl and the Pussycat*, and *The Foreigner*. He went on to serve on the Board of Directors for The Chesapeake Bay Floating Theater. Michael has been a SAG-AFTRA member since 1988 and has acted in film, television, and commercial video productions in the Baltimore/Washington market with a recent role in *Veep* on HBO. For the past three years, Michael has been working as a standardized patient for the Uniform

Services University, the University of Maryland Medical School, and The Johns Hopkins Medical School. This involves role playing various medical cases to train medical students. Other role playing assignments include witnesses for mock trials and diplomats from fictitious countries for attache' training. He is the owner and operator of Dove Video Productions in Annapolis. This company supports producers with a variety of video services.



KAREN GRIM

(Sarah Schorr)

Karen holds a BFA in Performance Theatre from High Point University in North Carolina. She has performed professionally in Scranton, PA, for Northeast Theatre Co. and in Los Angeles for The Menander Theatre Co. in addition to her performances here at Colonial Players. While you may have seen her most recently as Percy Talbott in *The Spitfire Grill* and Amy March in *Little Women*, Karen is happy to be back on stage in a non-singing role. Some of her favorite roles are Evelyn in *the shape of things*, Henriette in *The Learned Ladies* (KCACTF Nomination), JoJo in *Seussical* (KCACTF Nomination), Abigail in *The Crucible*, and Peter in *Peter Pan* (KCACTF Nomination). When Karen is not on stage, she

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Mother Magee, and she is thrilled to be working with Colonial Players again! A big thank you to the cast and crew for all their hard work!



SHIRLEY PANEK
(Lighting Designer)

Shirley has appeared many times on stage at The Colonial Players, and *Trying* marks her third foray into lighting design.

The first two design experiences were *Chapter Two* and *Moonlight and Magnolias*, both at CP. On stage, audiences have seen her most recently in *A Christmas Carol* (Colonial Players) and Prince George's Little Theatre's *Unnecessary Farce* (Karen Brown). Favorite shows include *Almost Maine* (at Dignity Players) and, at Colonial Players, *The Unexpected Guest* (Laura Warwick), *Lettice and Lovage* (Ms. Framer), *Private Lives* (Sybil Chase), and *Dog Logic* (Kaye). Shirley would like to thank Darice for giving her the opportunity to stretch her lighting design wings with two such hardworking and amazing actors, as well as the rest of the production staff and crew. Love to Drew, Emma, and Jeff - the lights that make my life brighter.



HEATHER QUINN
(Co-Set Designer)

Heather is happy to be working on another set with Laurie Nolan (previous work together includes *The Lion in Winter*)

and on another production with Darice Clewell. Heather notes that the set research was particularly interesting because of local resources. "We were able to review Francis and Katherine Biddle's papers, which are in the Georgetown University Library Special Collections Research Center. The special collections staff was wonderful. We greatly appreciate their help in securing rights from the Biddle estate for select reproductions, which we have used in our show. In addition, we were able to walk by the former Biddle house in Georgetown. We found there is no garage-office today."



CHARLOTTE ROBINSON
(Producer)

Charlotte has worked behind the scenes with Colonial Players for 25 plus years, most recently as assistant stage Manager for

A Christmas Carol, crew for *Spitfire Grill* and props mistress for *Cinderella Waltz*. Many patrons may recognize her as one of the closing night ushers. On occasion, she branched out and worked with Dignity Players (*Sordid Lives*), Annapolis Summer Garden Theatre (*Evita*), and Chesapeake Arts Center (*Amelia's Journey*). Charlotte thanks all the patrons who make the hard work worthwhile, her CP mentors, and especially all the dedicated, hard-working people who have put together this wonderful production of *Trying*.



JOE THOMPSON
(Sound Designer)

Joe's association with Colonial Players dates to 1969 when, as a high school student, he appeared as a chorus member in *Carousel*. During the intervening years, he has acted, directed, and worked on many CP shows. Earlier this season, he designed sound for *Sunlight*. During the 2011-2012 season, he appeared in *The Diviners* and directed *Company*. A soundtrack of original songs for Bowie Community Theatre's production of *Dearly Departed* won him a WATCH award for sound design. For Children's Theatre of Annapolis, he directed *Beauty and the Beast*, which was first runner up for best musical in the British Players Ruby Griffith Award competition. Colonial Players has produced three of his short plays as well as six years of *Cabaret for Kids*, a revue of Joe's original songs, skits, and poems.



THE CAST (continued)

enjoys reading, painting, writing The Colonial Players blog, and photography (mostly taking pictures of her adorable dog, Elvis). She works as the distribution coordinator for Producers, the premier production company in Baltimore, and is thrilled to finally have found a "day job" that allows her to continue to learn all about her passion: film and theater. "I'd like to thank my family and friends for their support and for allowing me to not hold my love of theater in abeyance. These include, but are not limited to, my best friend and editor, Laurel, for inspiring the writer in me by knowing the writer in

you; my dear friend Kaelynn for convincing me to audition for this show - I hope I make you proud!; Darice and Mike for a wonderful learning experience both on stage and off; Jim for the endless hours of HGTV I forced you to watch so I could work on my Canadian accent and for always being awesome. You really are the best. And last, but never least, to my mother (Happy 50th Birthday!), I dedicate this performance to you. We West Virginia "girls are known for our grit," so thank you for teaching me what having "spine" really means.



THE STAFF



HERB ELKIN
(Stage Manager)

Herb's most recent CP stage managing credits include: *Going to St. Ives* (2012), *The Diviners* (2011), *Dog Logic* (2010), *The Lion in Winter* (2010), *Over My Dead Body* (2009), *Two Rooms* (2009), and *Enchanted April* (2008). Prior to becoming active behind the scenes, he appeared on stage in several CP and other area productions. Herb serves on CP's Finance Committee and by day works at the U.S. Naval Academy.



JOANN GIDOS
(Properties Designer)

JoAnn has had a busy theater season, having worked on *Bell, Book and Candle*, *A Christmas Carol* and *Shipwrecked!* at Colonial Players; *The Foursome* and *Master Harold* and *The Boys* at Bay Theatre, and *To Kill a Mockingbird* at Compass Rose Studio Theater. *Trying* represents something special because her husband, researcher, and "gofer," Mike, finds it one of the most compelling works he has had the pleasure of introducing to play selection at CP. So: "Lace the skates, and hit the ice, and stay the course."



LAURIE NOLAN
(Co-Set Designer)

Laurie has been working on sets at CP off and on since the late '70's. (Her introduction to sets was working on *Royal Gambit*, directed by Beth Whaley, with set construction by Dick Whaley.) Recently, she did the sets for Dignity Players' *Almost Maine*, *Stones in his Pockets*, and *Crimes of the Heart*. Laurie is very happy to be working again with Heather Quinn, after "building a castle" with her for CP's *The Lion in Winter*. By day, Laurie owns Art Things in West Annapolis.



MEGHAN O'BEIRNE
(Costume Designer)

Meghan graduated from Marist College with a degree in fashion design in 2010. She has been pursuing a career in costume design ever since and has interned and designed for other area theaters such as Compass Rose Studio Theater and Annapolis Summer Garden Theatre. Her most recent production was HCC's production of *A Christmas Carol*, for which she designed the classical costumes. She previously assisted in Colonial Players' production of *Cinderella Waltz* by constructing the dress for

THE COLONIAL PLAYERS, INC.
presents



Written by
JOANNA MCCLELLAND GLASS

Directed by
DARICE CLEWELL

THE CAST

Judge Francis Biddle.....Michael N. Dunlop
Sarah Schorr.....Karen Grim

PLACE

Judge Francis Biddle's office, atop his garage
in Georgetown, Washington

TIME

ACT I

SCENE 1: A Monday in mid-November, 1967
SCENE 2: The next day
SCENE 3: Two weeks later

ACT II

SCENE 1: Early January 1968
SCENE 2: A Friday in mid-April
SCENE 3: The third week of June

Originally produced at Victory Gardens Theater, Chicago, Dennis Zacek, Artistic Director, Sandy Shinner, Production Director, March 29, 2004.
Originally produced on the New York Stage by Michael Leavitt, Maidstone Productions, Libby Adler Mages, Mari Stuart,
Tony D'Angelo, Steve Dahl, Maria Cozzi, Sandy Shinner, Production Director, October 14, 2004.

THERE WILL BE ONE INTERMISSION BETWEEN ACT I AND ACT II.

Produced by special arrangement with Samuel French.

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