



**Smithsonian Institution**

*National Museum of African American History and Culture*

## **Playbill for A Raisin in the Sun**

Extracted on Apr-23-2024 10:12:07

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## A Family Affair

ated. Seconding that motion is the Oscar she got playing LuLu Bains, the hussy Elmer Gantry sent hurtling into a life of rack and ruin after he deflowered her behind the pulpit. It was one of her few times out of calico.

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"I like the role," says Jones of 42nd Street's diva Dorothy Brock. "She's a real sort of bitchy gal, and I love playing those roles."  
[[/boxed]]

Broadway last saw Shirley 35 years ago (all too briefly) as Maggie Flynn. To be sure, there've been offers to return, but none interested her till now. Why now? "To be very honest? Because they asked both of us to do 42nd Street. I'm excited about this because I think that it's a good time for me, it's a good part for me--and I'm working with Patrick."

Not to put too fine a point on it, but Shirley was pregnant with Patrick when she was filming *The Music Man*. "I found out about three months into the filming so I went to the director, Morton DaCosta, and he said, 'Don't worry, Shirley. We'll do everything to help you. Don't tell anyone.' They built a corset for me and added crinoline and flounces, and no one was the wiser--until the footbridge scene, the only love scene in the film. Well, here we are, Bob Preston and I, with our arms around each other, all ready for the great big kiss--then, all of a sudden, Bob opened his eyes and stepped back and said, 'What the heck was that?'" Patrick Cassidy had made his entrance.

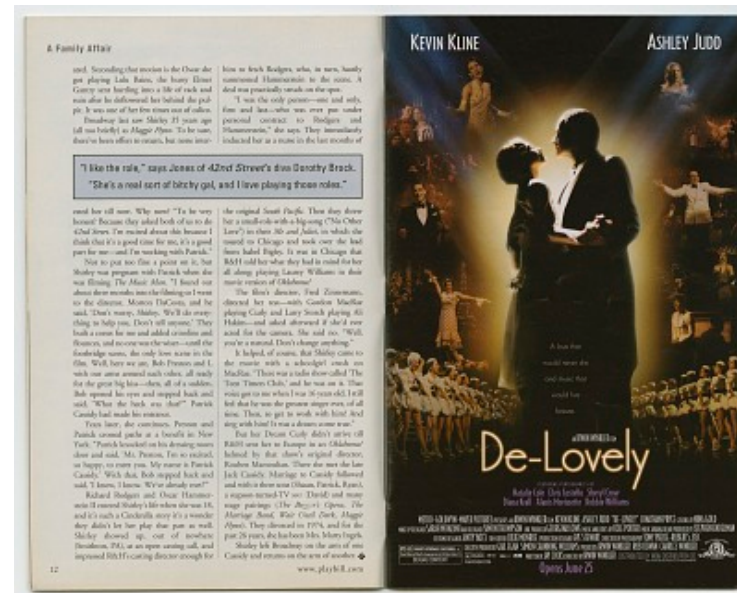
Years later, she continues, Preston and Patrick crossed paths at a benefit in New York. "Patrick knocked on his dressing room door and said, 'Mr. Preston, I'm so excited, so happy, to meet you. My name is Patrick Cassidy.' With that, Bob stepped back and said, 'I know, I know. We've already met!'"

Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II entered Shirley's life when she was 18, and it's such a Cinderella story it's a wonder they didn't let her play that part as well. Shirley showed up, out of nowhere (Smithton, PA), at an open casting call, and impressed R&H's casting director enough for him to fetch Rodgers, who, in turn, hastily summoned Hammerstein to the scene. A deal was practically struck on the spot.

"I was the only person--one and only, first and last--who was ever put under personal contract to Rodgers and Hammerstein," she says. They immediately inducted her as a nurse in the last months of the original "South Pacific. Then they threw her a small-role-with-a-big-song ("No Other Love") in their *Me and Juliet*, in which she toured to Chicago and took over the lead from Isabel Bigley. It was in Chicago that R&H told her what they had in mind for her all along: playing Laurey Williams in their movie version of *Oklahoma!*

The film's director, Fred Zinnemann, directed her test--with Gordon MacRae playing Curly and Larry Storch playing Ali Hakim--and asked afterward if she'd ever acted for the camera. She said no. "Well, you're a natural. Don't change anything."

It helped, of course, that Shirley came to the movie with a schoolgirl



crush on MacRae. "There was a radio show called "The Teen Timers Club,' and he was on it. That voice got me when I was 16 years old. I still feel that he was the greatest singer ever, of all time. Then, to get to work with him! And sing with him! It was a dream come true."

But her Dream Curly didn't arrive till R&H sent her to Europe in an Oklahoma! helmed by that show's original director, Rouben Mamoulian. There she met the late Jack Cassidy. Marriage to Cassidy followed and with it three sons (Shaun, Patrick, Ryan), a stepson-turned-TV son (David) and many stage pairings (The Beggar's Opera, The Marriage Band, Wait Until Dark, Maggie Flynn). They divorced in 1974, and for the past 26 years, she has been Mrs. Marty Ingels.

Shirley left Broadway on the arm of one Cassidy and returns on the arm of another. [[P]]

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KEVIN KLINE ASHLEY JUDD

[image - color montage of Kevin Kline, Ashley Judd, and other cast members in De-Lovely.]

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De-Lovely

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film]]

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