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An Alignment of Stars: Tennessee Williams, William Inge, and Margo Jones's "Theatre '47"

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The title of this essay reflects an extraordinary moment in the history of American drama when, in the sweltering summer of 1947 in the unlikely location of Dallas, Texas, fate brought three stars into alignment: Tennessee Williams, by then a very successful playwright who could have had his newest play, *Summer and Smoke*, premiere not in Dallas but in New York; William Inge, at the time an aspiring playwright who was also a professor at Washington University in St. Louis; and Margo Jones, an extraordinarily ambitious and energetic woman who wanted not only to be a Broadway director but also to establish a thriving professional repertory theatre in Dallas. Hindsight now affords us a far greater understanding of the significance of that summer alignment of stars nearly sixty years ago, for Williams went on to become arguably America's greatest playwright; Inge went on to become the single most successful American playwright of the 1950s; and Jones went on to establish not only a successful non-profit professional repertory theatre in Dallas but also a theatre that served as an inspiration and model for similar regional theatres in cities all over America, establishing a truly national theatre that does not require the exclusive-venue stamp of New York production to merit success.

¶12 Margo Jones commands our first attention, for hers is the most unfamiliar name in this alignment of stars.¹ Born in the tiny East Texas town of Livingston in 1911 (the same year as Williams's birth), Margo Jones learned to love the theatre during her formative years spent there, a love sustained during her college days (1927-32) at Texas Woman's University in Denton. Although the school did not offer a drama major, Jones was as active as possible in extracurricular campus theatre productions. She majored in speech and minored in education, though she had no intention whatsoever of pursuing either field because she wanted to be a director (Sheehy 14).

¶13 Denton is not far from Dallas and Fort Worth, and Jones often attended performances in those cities. Though very young, she perceived the stranglehold New York commercial theatre had, dictating what work would be performed not only in New York but in traveling companies mounting productions of works that had already been more or less "certified" by prior successful—that is to say, lucrative—production in New York's theatres. There were few venues for new plays by aspiring playwrights, few training grounds for young performers, directors, and theatre technicians. As Jones biographer Helen Sheehy puts it, "Although Broadway boomed in the 1920s, mounting plays by Eugene O'Neill, Elmer Rice, Maxwell Anderson, Philip Barry, George S. Kaufman, Ben Hecht, and Charles MacArthur, anyone living west of the Hudson River rarely had an opportunity to see the best new plays" (15).

¶14 Probably the only Texas Woman's University student who avidly read each new and back issue of *Theatre Arts* magazine, Jones learned about the Old Vic in England, the Abbey Theatre in Dublin, and the highly influential Moscow Art Theatre. She also studied the formation of influential Off-Broadway theatre groups such as the Washington Square and Provincetown Players. She saw, especially in the work of the Provincetown group, the possibilities for smaller theatres, sometimes called "art theatres," or "little theatres," in breaking

Broadway's lock on drama and opening up opportunities in theatre nationwide. The world of the smaller theatre, she came to believe, was one in which she could work—or at least begin her work.

¶15 It isn't as though Jones was determined wholly to avoid the New York theatre world; after all New York carried the cachet of ultimate success in the world of theatre. What Jones dreamed of was nothing less than success on her terms in little theatre *and* on Broadway, but Dallas was also instrumental in forming her career. Sheehy relates an incident near the end of Jones's college years when a Dallas playwright and drama critic, John William Rogers, visited the campus to speak about dramatic criticism. During a discussion after his talk, Rogers asked Jones what her plans were for after graduation. "I'm going to be a director," she replied with a certitude he would long remember (Sheehy 16). She also cultivated what would become a longtime friendship with *Dallas Morning News* theatre critic John Rosenfeld. And within days of her graduation in 1932, she entered the Southwestern School of Theatre in Dallas, where she was offered a scholarship. A year later she enrolled in California's Pasadena Playhouse summer school, eager to study under founder and director Gilmore Brown, whose amateur community theatre had received national attention in 1928 by staging Eugene O'Neill's surrealistic *Lazarus Laughed*, a play deemed too risky by Broadway producers. Brown's total dedication to his theatre as well as his crafty ability to attract nearby young Hollywood talent eager for the experience and exposure inspired Jones (Sheehy 16–19).

¶16 By 1935, Jones had made her first trip to New York City, where she saw the Group Theatre's staging of Clifford Odets's rhetorical pro-labor play, *Waiting for Lefty*. She was thrilled at the prospects offered by the Federal Theatre Project, funded by the Works Projects Administration. By 1936 she had traveled to Russia to attend the Moscow Art Theatre Festival. There she met *New York Times* theatre critic Brooks Atkinson (and cultivated this relationship), playwright Lillian Hellman, and theatrical cartoonist Al Hirschfeld.

¶17 Back from Russia, she set about developing a Federal Theatre Project theatre in Houston, where she had taken a job with the Houston Recreation Department, teaching playground directors how to mount children's plays. The result was the Houston Community Players, a group Jones forged almost by sheer force of will, with little financial support. Jones's promotional skill drew audiences: when everyone else was tired from rehearsals, Jones herself would be scheming to get the mayor to proclaim "Theatre Week" in Houston or holding jitterbug contests with the prize being a part in the next production.² *Houston Post* drama critic Hubert Roussel wrote that Jones was a "dynamo," a noun that would often be used in reference to her (Sheehy 29–39) and one that anticipated the nickname Tennessee Williams would later give her: "The Texas Tornado." By 1939, *Stage* magazine named her one of twelve outstanding little theatre directors outside New York City, and she was the only woman among those named (40).

¶18 Jones demonstrated resourcefulness in turning a handicap (limited theatre space) into an advantage by innovative staging adaptations of theatre-in-the-round. Eventually, Jones's Dallas theatre would become the first professional arena theatre in America, but Jones would always be modest about that fact. According to Sheehy, when Jones was asked if she invented theatre-in-the-round, she replied, "No, honey, the Greeks did" (42). Jones capitalized on her growing reputation by making trips to New York to see plays and look for new scripts, never neglecting to see Brooks Atkinson while she was there. She also sought opportunities to direct plays in the New York area when the Houston Community Theatre season was concluded. While in New York in 1942 to direct a play at a summer theatre on Long Island, Jones met theatre agent Audrey Wood, who liked Jones's optimism and ambition. Jones asked Wood about interesting new scripts, and Wood handed her a version of *Battle of*

Angels, the first play by one of Wood's clients, who had taken the self-promotional *nom de plume* of "Tennessee" Williams (46). Thus the second star moves into alignment.

¶9 Jones read Williams's script on the train back to Texas and could not put it down. When the train stopped briefly in St. Louis, she called Wood, back in New York. "Who is this boy?" she asked. She read *Battle of Angels* twelve times, discovering "more beauty, theatre, and guts" than any script she had ever read (Sheehy 46). The promise of Williams's work helped persuade Jones that it was time to end her association with the Houston Community Theatre, with its dependence on amateur actors and its constantly inadequate rehearsal time. She clearly longed to create a professional theatre. However, she had an opportunity to teach drama at the University of Texas in Austin, and decided to take it, beginning in the fall of 1942. Before that year ended, she made it a point to meet Williams, who was only nine months older than she, and whose talent she believed in without reservation.

¶10 Williams was a disappointed man at the time, for *Battle of Angels* had met with disastrous results in tryouts on the road in Boston, and the sponsoring Theatre Guild had decided not to bring it to New York after all. Audrey Wood later wrote that *Battle of Angels* "was a strong drama, far ahead of its time. . . . Very strong stuff for 1940," and particularly strong for Boston, "an ironbound bastion of purity in the arts and letters" (Wood 135–36). Wood had no doubt about Williams's talent, but the playwright had struggled for a long time, and he welcomed a new voice of encouragement. Jones told Williams that his unpleasant experience with *Battle of Angels* aside, it was going to be only a matter of time before everyone knew he was a great playwright. They talked for hours, and it was the beginning of an enduring friendship. They had their Southern roots in common, and both could joke about their puritanical parents. Williams must have let go with one of his famous cackles when Jones told him about how she had to sneak outside to smoke whenever she visited her mother back in Livingston. She became a Williams confidante and saw to it that she had copies of his latest plays and poetry as well. One of those plays was *The Gentleman Caller*, later to be retitled *The Glass Menagerie* (Sheehy 54).

¶11 Jones's belief in Williams's talent was unshakeable. She spent the summer of 1943 at the Pasadena Playhouse, where she planned to direct *You Touched Me*, a play Williams had written with his friend Donald Windham. Sheehy describes how Jones overwhelmed Williams with her ideas for the production:

He listened in amazement as she outlined her plans with a lawyer's logic and an evangelist's fervor. She would cast it with the best Hollywood actors, important producers would come to see it, would fall in love with it, and in no time at all they'd be on Broadway. She had supreme confidence and verbal witchcraft, Tennessee thought. There was no telling what she might get away with. . . . He christened her the "Texas Tornado." (55)

Horton Foote, who would eventually achieve significance in American theatre and film, was another young playwright in Pasadena that summer, and though Jones encouraged him, he said that he felt like a "poor relation" in the company of Williams and Jones (Sheehy 55–56). And Jones acted tirelessly as Williams's uncompensated promoter, letting all her theatre contacts know about his gifts, an effort that made easier the work of his paid promoter, Audrey Wood.

¶12 When the summer ended, Jones secured a leave of absence from the University of Texas to direct *You Touched Me* in Cleveland. While there, she was constantly promoting what she called the "decentralization" of the American theatre. Her belief that the vitality of the theatre depended upon producing new scripts had become her article of faith. Where else, after all, would Broadway get new plays? Her vision was to help

establish a network of fully professional resident theatres in American cities outside of New York; while these theatres would present established plays to help build revenue, they would also present new plays, focusing less on profits and more on providing work for theatre artists and technicians. Avoiding long runs, eschewing the star system, they would be intensely creative “art” theatres in the truest sense of the term (Sheehy 63).

¶13

Soon obliged to return to teaching in Austin, Jones shared her dream of establishing a permanent resident art theatre with her old friend John Rosenfeld, the theatre critic for the *Dallas Morning News*. “Why don’t you do it here?” Rosenfeld asked her. Dallas prided itself on its appreciation of the arts, even if that appreciation was largely driven by the wives of men who had made fortunes in the first four decades of the twentieth century. Jones, by now thirty-two years old and eager to realize her dreams, agreed. Rosenfeld helped Jones secure a Rockefeller Foundation grant to study the possibilities for a Dallas theatre. She wrote to James Laughlin, founder of New Directions, a publisher willing to take commercial risks for art’s sake, and told him that she hoped her work for theatre would match his for literature. Tennessee Williams wrote to Jones that “Right after the war . . . there is bound to be a terrific resurgence of the arts. . . . Many, many boys will come out of this war with a desperate thirst for creation instead of destruction. There is your chance, Margo!—I believe that you are a woman of destiny!” (Sheehy 62–67).

¶14

As for Williams, *The Glass Menagerie* was his own play of destiny. When Eddie Dowling, an established New York actor and producer, optioned *The Glass Menagerie* with the plan to direct and star in it, Williams became fretful, partly because he was desperate for success after the debacle of *Battle of Angels*, and partly because he was convinced that the fifty-year-old Dowling was far too old to play Tom Wingfield. Moreover, Dowling wanted to cast the veteran actress Laurette Taylor as Amanda, but she was widely seen as a has-been and a problem drinker. As *The Glass Menagerie* moved toward production, Williams wrote to Jones: “I need you with me.” He convinced Dowling to take Jones on as his assistant director. Jones, who had left the University of Texas and was developing support for her theatre among Dallas’s art-and-money community, persuaded her Rockefeller supervisors and John Rosenfeld that her working as an assistant director on a play bound for Broadway could only benefit the Dallas theatre project in the long run. Few women at the time could claim similar opportunities: Sheehy reports that of the eighty-seven productions that opened during the 1944–45 Broadway season, only four were directed by women (73).

¶15

At this point, the third star comes into alignment. As rehearsals for *The Glass Menagerie*’s road opening in Chicago wound down, Williams went to St. Louis for a few days to visit his mother. While there, he got a phone call from the drama critic for the *St. Louis Star-Times*, a man named William Inge. Inge, a Kansan who had long before abandoned dreams of acting for more earthbound employment, had grown weary of teaching as well, compounded by the rigors of concealing his drinking and his homosexuality. Inge had taken the job at the *Star-Times* when a friend, the staff critic, had been drafted into the war. Inge wanted to interview Williams for a kind of “hometown boy has new play” piece, and Williams agreed to do the interview. Thus Williams and Inge met—and although Inge later went to Chicago to see the opening of *The Glass Menagerie*, Donald Spoto’s report that “the two men had an impromptu and intense sexual affair, never resumed in their later friendship” (Spoto 112) has never been verified. Spoto, never famous for getting everything right, also characterized Jones as “quite openly lesbian” (Spoto 101), a claim for which Sheehy has accumulated ample evidence to the contrary. Spoto unquestionably got at least one thing correct: the meeting of Williams and Inge was momentous in the history of American drama. After seeing *The Glass Menagerie*, Inge confessed his own playwriting ambitions to

Williams, who encouraged and promised to help him. That assistance included an introduction to Audrey Wood, who would become Inge's agent; and to Margo Jones, who would eventually produce and direct Inge's first play.

¶16 The road to Inge's first production was not smooth. For one thing, Jones's efforts to establish her professional repertory little theatre in Dallas, though characteristically enthusiastic, met with difficulties. Fundraising for the arts during wartime was somewhat quixotic—and Jones's willingness to join the Broadway production of *The Glass Menagerie* caused some potential supporters to question her commitment to Dallas. Then there was the matter of finding suitable theatre space. John Rosenfeld found himself cheerleading in the *Dallas Morning News* for a local theatre that might never materialize. Rosenfeld believed in Jones and her dream of an important theatre in Dallas, but getting others to share this belief was a challenge, especially when Jones was not in town. The fledgling theatre organization had been launched with start-up funds donated by well-to-do Dallas citizens, and Jones had named the organization Theatre '45, with the idea that the name would change with the onset of each new theatre season in Dallas. Ambitious though the name was, there would be no actual 1945 season for Theatre '45.

¶17 Meanwhile, the producer of *The Glass Menagerie*, Louis Singer, had never produced a play before, and he was increasingly nervous about his investment—a fact that understandably made Tennessee quite nervous as well. He needed his own promoter, and Jones was an obvious choice. Worried about budgets, expenses, and projected receipts, Singer called a meeting with Eddie Dowling, Jones, and Williams to lobby for a happy ending to the play. He believed that Laura Wingfield should marry Jim O'Connor. According to Sheehy, "Margo waited for the men to talk," but neither man said a word, so she spoke: "Tennessee," Jones began quietly, "don't you change that ending. It's perfect." Jones then

looked up at Louis Singer, her cat's eyes narrowing. Making her hand into a fist, she said in a menacing tone, "Mr. Singer, if you make Tennessee change the play the way you want it, so help me I'll go around to every critic in town and tell them about the kind of wire-pulling that's going on here." Singer stared at the fierce young woman who was making her commercial directing debut with *The Glass Menagerie*. She had no clout other than her convictions. The original ending remained (81).

¶18 When *The Glass Menagerie* premiered to critical acclaim in Chicago, Tennessee Williams introduced Jones to William Inge. Though she was on her way to New York with Williams's play, she told Inge all about her theatre plans for Dallas and encouraged him not only to write plays but also to send her his first play. Inge soon produced his first script, *Farther Off from Heaven*, a play that, like Williams's *Menagerie*, was a portrait of the playwright's family. When Audrey Wood declined to shop Inge's first play in New York, he sent it to Jones, who told him she liked it but did not know when she might have her Dallas theatre up and running. Disappointed, anxious, and nearly distraught after having to resume the teaching career he deplored, Inge was to struggle for two more years before Jones finally produced *Farther Off from Heaven*.^[3]

¶19 When *The Glass Menagerie* moved to New York, Eddie Dowling's age did not seem to matter to approving audiences, and Laurette Taylor rose to the final triumph of her career. The success of *The Glass Menagerie* meant that Jones had a strong Broadway directing credit, and—to Inge's dismay—it also meant that she would not be immediately free to return to Dallas and work on Theatre '45. She did, however, return long enough to meet with those who had made financial commitments and others who had expressed interest in helping. Her

vision of a permanent, professional resident theatre that could serve as a model for theatres elsewhere, a prototype of what she called “a national theatre for America” (Sheehy 88), was very persuasive, and significant donations ensued. When *The Glass Menagerie* settled in for a long run, Jones returned to residence in Dallas, with an eye toward mounting a fall season of plays for Theatre ’45. The Globe Theatre (on the grounds of the Texas State Fair Park) became available, but it required extensive remodeling. Still, enthusiasm was high: the war was over, and Tennessee Williams, now a Broadway success story, was determined to honor his promise of giving Jones an original play to premier in Dallas. All this, however, was before the Globe Theatre was unexpectedly condemned as a fire hazard on October 8, 1945 (Sheehy 99).

¶20 Temporarily stymied in Dallas, Jones accepted the chance to direct Maxine Wood’s play, *On Whitman Avenue*, in New York. The play opened in May of 1946 after some delays and became a modest success. Jones’s signing to direct yet another New York play, Maxwell Anderson’s *Joan of Lorraine*, caused her long-suffering Dallas assistant, June Moll, to quit—and exacerbated tensions with those local reporters who, not altogether unreasonably, had expected Jones to remain in residence. The Theatre ’46 board nonetheless agreed to Jones’s continued leave of absence from Dallas (Sheehy 111). Though she was in New York, Jones missed no chances to promote her Dallas theatre, especially among theatre writers like Brooks Atkinson. She also had to encourage the perpetually anxious Inge, who had written her, wondering if her work on *Joan of Lorraine* meant she was abandoning her plans for the Dallas theatre. “My plans have not changed in the slightest,” she wrote back, but calculated that there was not “a chance in the world” for *Farther Off from Heaven*’s production until 1947. “I love the play, as you know,” she concluded, but she would understand if Inge took the production elsewhere (“Dear Margo, Dear Bill” 45).

¶21 Then Maxwell Anderson intervened. His latest play, *Truckline Café*, had been a flop, and with rehearsals for *Joan of Lorraine* under way, its star, Ingrid Bergman, was uncomfortable with Jones’s directorial style. Anxious about his new play and its star, Anderson decided he didn’t like Jones’s direction either. Soon, he insisted that she be relieved. Though she was given official credit for directing *Joan of Lorraine*, Jones was soon on the train back to Dallas, ready to shake off her own New York disappointment and move forward, more determined than ever. She went right to work on Theatre ’46, even though she still lacked a theatre site in Dallas. Jones had a new script from Williams: *A Chart of Anatomy* (later, *Summer and Smoke*). Furthermore, she was positive that Williams’s next New York play, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, was going to be a hit. She had been visiting Williams on Cape Cod when Marlon Brando arrived to read for the part of Stanley Kowalski. According to Audrey Wood, Jones listened to Brando for “not more than ten minutes” before leaping up and crying, “This is the greatest reading I’ve ever heard—in or out of Texas!” (Wood 91). Williams’s reputation, she felt sure, would only be enhanced by the time her Dallas theatre opened. And she still had William Inge’s *Farther off from Heaven*, which she liked immensely.

¶22 Inge, meanwhile, remained in St. Louis, frustrated by his intense battles with alcoholism, his ambivalence about his sexuality, and his deep dissatisfaction with teaching. Eager to receive good news from Jones, he took heart from Jones’s steadfast encouragement and unwavering faith that she *would* have a theatre in Dallas and that she *would* produce his first play. Jones’s letters to Inge from this period contain sentences like “My enthusiasm mounts each day for your script,” and “We are still enchanted with your play and I feel if you can be patient that it will be worth a lot to you in the long run” (“Dear Margo, Dear Bill” 41). It was not long before

Inge sent her yet another script, one he called *Front Porch*, later revised into the Pulitzer Prize-winning *Picnic* in 1953.

¶23 Margo decided that Theatre '47 was going to present plays, with or without a permanent theatre home. She had all her local theatre supporters helping her search for a site. Jones determined that she would put her first season on in the summer, in the air conditioned ballroom of Dallas's poshest downtown hotel, the Adolphus. And that is precisely what she did. The season opened with Inge's *Farther Off from Heaven*, which would become *The Dark at the Top of the Stairs*, his 1957 Broadway success. That same summer, in the same ballroom, she presented Williams's *Summer and Smoke*. Brooks Atkinson came all the way from New York to cover the plays in Dallas, and he wrote glowing reviews that appeared in the *Times*.

¶24 Later, after the Theatre '47 season, Jones directed *Summer and Smoke* on Broadway, where it unfortunately suffered in comparison with Williams's other Broadway play that had already been running for some time—the one she had rightly been so sure of—*A Streetcar Named Desire*.

¶25 Williams won a Pulitzer Prize for *Streetcar* and eventually notched so many additional successes that he is now Eugene O'Neill's only serious rival as America's greatest playwright. Jones was one of the first to read Inge's first play to reach New York, *Come Back, Little Sheba*. He followed that with *Picnic*, *Bus Stop* and *The Dark at the Top of the Stairs*. He won an Academy Award for his original screenplay, *Splendor in the Grass*, before his career took its downward turn. Jones's Dallas theatre, which finally found a permanent theatre building at Dallas's Fair Park, also presented the early work of Joseph Hayes, who wrote *The Desperate Hours*; as well as the premier of Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee's brilliant play, *Inherit the Wind*. Renal failure cut her life short in a bizarre way: in July of 1955, she had spent a long night sitting on her apartment floor, reading scripts, and her body absorbed cleaning solvent from the carpet (Sheehy 261–64). Jones's Dallas theatre was the first non-profit professional repertory theatre in the country, and as a significant result of her vision, professional repertory art and little theatres now thrive in major cities throughout the country. The League of Resident Theatres (LORT) currently lists over 70 such theatres, and these and other regional theatres have for many years now encouraged the development of new plays by such writers as August Wilson, David Mamet, Beth Henley, Tony Kushner, Ntozake Shange, Paula Vogel, and many more.

¶26 From this distance in time, speculation about what might have happened had these three stars not come into alignment in Dallas in 1947 affords a significantly different history of American theatre. Jones's sheer determination as an impresario may have overshadowed her talent, and Williams may have come to question some of her judgments (chiefly her eagerness to bring *Summer and Smoke* to New York while *Streetcar* was still running), but he never lost faith in her as a force. From Rome on February 18, 1948, he wrote to his friend Paul Bigelow about Jones: "Margo is bound and determined to put on 'summer and smoke' though I am most apprehensive about it, following 'streetcar'" [Williams's non-capitalization]. He went on to say, "However, I shall have to eat these words if she puts over 'summer and smoke' and when she decides to do a thing nothing that heart and soul can do is left undone! She's a pretty remarkable little woman" (Williams 169). In the same letter to Bigelow, Williams said of Jones, "I am still skeptical about Margo's gifts as a director, as I have really seen so little of her work. There is no doubt about her genius as a manager!" That managerial genius drove her efforts to establish the first non-profit professional repertory theatre, and though her career was cut short by her untimely death, it seems likely that she would have left a significant legacy even if her Theatre '47 hadn't been so luminous. Her faith and hard work were unquestionably aided by her connections to Williams, Wood, and

Inge; but her connections to Brooks Atkinson, Gilmor Brown, and many other figures of America's theatre world doubtless helped cement her success. There is also the matter of her indefatigable efforts in prying support from the moneyed patrons in Dallas. Finally, her vision was greater than she was: America needed a sophisticated regional venue outside of New York, and perhaps more than anyone else, she helped launch it.

Notes

¹ My debt here to Jones's biographer, Helen Sheehy, will be immediately apparent; Sheehy's *Margo: The Life and Theatre of Margo Jones* was until recently the only comprehensive biographical source about Jones. *Sweet Tornado: Margo Jones and the American Theatre*, a documentary film produced by Kay Cattarulla and Rob Tranchin, was released for airing on national public television stations in the spring of 2005. This film, starring Judith Ivey as Jones and Richard Thomas as Tennessee Williams, enhances the deserved reputation of this true theatre pioneer.

² One young actor with the Houston Community Players, a linotypist by day, began a long and successful entertainment career by working with Jones in Houston and later in Dallas. His name was Ray Walston, and readers may remember him as the title character in television's *My Favorite Martian*, or as Mr. Applegate, the Satanic deal-maker in the Faustian musical *Damn Yankees*.

³ I have written elsewhere about the correspondence between Jones and Inge during this time, most of which I found in the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center at the University of Texas at Austin and the William Inge Collection at Independence Community College in his hometown of Independence, Kansas. "Dear Margo, Dear Bill: Letters from the Dawn of Two Careers" examines over 60 letters, postcards, and telegrams between the two, most of them written between 1945 and 1949. Inge's pieces consistently show him as vulnerable and hyper-sensitive; Jones's show her to be just as consistently and stalwartly supportive, understanding, and patient—exactly the qualities of her relationship with Williams, whose career was finally taking off just as Inge was timidly, even fearfully, beginning his.

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