

Wonderful Town

Split Britches

THE TWO HIGH PRIESTESSES OF lesbian theater, long-time lovers Peggy Shaw and Lois Weaver, are back in New York with a revival of the Obie-winning production of *Dress Suits to Hire*. Holly Hughes's erotic fantasy features two women who live in a costume rental shop and play out various identities inspired by the clothing. It runs through September 21 at One Dream, 232 West Broadway, and is a Split Britches production.

Weaver and Shaw recently appeared in *Belle Reprieve* at La MaMa with Bette Bourne and Precious Pearl, of England's Bloodlips. They tour the West Coast with that show next month.

The Split Britches theater company was formed in 1981 by Weaver and Shaw, along with Deb Margolin, a

heterosexual woman who often writes their material. The name of the company came from its first piece, presented in 1980. It was written around stories about Weaver's two great aunts and one great-great aunt.

The three eccentric women lived in a house together in the '30s and '40s in the Blue Ridge mountains of Virginia. "My mother used to tell me these women wore a garment called split britches, which was an undergarment that enabled them to pee standing up in the fields," Weaver says. The striking image evoked laughter as well as respect for those strong and independent women.

"We like to do humor. We like to split britches," Weaver adds with a smile.—Gerard Raymond □



Peggy Shaw and Lois Weaver in *Dress Suits To Hire*.