

LOOK AT WHAT WE HAVE IN STORE FOR YOU!

- ★ *The Unexpected Guest* is just the first step in an exciting theatrical journey Colonial Players has planned for you over the next 10 months. We hope you will come along for the ride for the rest of the season as we present two musicals, a drama and three comedies that will make you laugh, touch you emotionally and provide the kind of personal engagement that comes only from live theater.
- ★ Next up will be *Little Women*, a large-scale musical for the whole family packed with great songs that runs for five weeks in November and December. You can read more about it elsewhere in the program.
- ★ Two comedies from very different segments of the comedic spectrum are on tap to help you escape the winter blahs. January brings *Cinderella Waltz*, a zany version of the fairy tale with notes of King Lear and Beauty and the Beast and a heroine who opts off the princess track. Be aware that it is not intended for children. The laughs continue, but in a different vein, in February with Neil Simon's *Chapter Two*. This is a touching, laugh-filled semi-autobiographical tale of a recently widowed writer whose memories of his first wife threaten to interfere with any effort to embrace a new romance.
- ★ We will usher in the spring in March and April with the critically acclaimed musical *The Spitfire Grill*, a tale of redemption set in rural Wisconsin. This is a smaller scale musical with homespun charm and a score that blends country, bluegrass and Broadway-styled pop ballads. It will be followed in May by *Going to St. Ives*, a provocative drama about two powerful women, one the mother of a brutal African dictator and the other an English eye surgeon, who confront the nature of moral responsibility and the consequences that follow from their actions.
- ★ We wrap up our 63rd season in June with a rollicking comedy about the writing of the screenplay for *Gone with the Wind*. In *Moonlight and Magnolias*, legendary producer David O. Selznick has scrapped his screenplay and is searching desperately for a way to salvage what would turn out to be one of the greatest movies of all time. With just a week before shooting is to begin, he brings in Ben Hecht to write a new script. Hecht, however, has never read the book. The solution; Selznick and director Victor Fleming act out scenes while Hecht bangs out a script. It's a rollicking comedy that may give you a new outlook on this classic movie.

The best way to make sure you *DON'T MISS* this outstanding lineup of shows is to buy season tickets for the rest of the slate.

- ★ Visit our website, www.thecolonialplayers.org or call 410-268-7373 to subscribe. ★

Also on sale are flex passes of 10 tickets that can be used for any combination of performances for the rest of the season.



WRITTEN BY **AGATHA CHRISTIE**

SEPTEMBER 16 - OCTOBER 8, 2011
2011/2012 season



THE COLONIAL PLAYERS, INC.

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www.thecolonialplayers.org

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Many of you know this, but for those who do not, Colonial Players just completed an extensive renovation of the backstage area. I would like to extend my thanks to all those who donated time and money to this herculean effort, one which will allow us to produce ever more compelling art for you like *The Unexpected Guest*.

I am so pleased that we've started our 2011-2012 season off with a BANG! Hold on to your seat folks, because if you are anything like me, you will be on the edge of it for the better part of two hours as you attempt to uncover the truth of *The Unexpected Guest*. Have we been party to a murder or a mere accident?

Was this a case of self-defense? If not, who has the strongest motive to kill? Was this death the result of a lovers' quarrel? Momentary insanity? Jealousy? We have to ask: Is there such a thing as a "rightful" death? Has justice prevailed? Can it ever? Is this play an indictment of our legal system? What is to be done if justice is not meted out in fair measure?

The possibilities, at least in this particular tale, are endless, but I promise you that you will have a clear answer by the end of the performance ... well, I can only HOPE so. My heart races even now re-evaluating the plausible death scenarios in this thriller!

Relish the excitement of not knowing. That's life. That's theater!

~ Terry

ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT

Agatha Christie is one of a select group of people who really need no introduction. According to the *Guinness Book of World Records*, she is the best selling novelist of all times. Her novels were translated into more than 100 languages, and more than four billion copies have been sold. She is best known for her mysteries, especially those featuring Hercule Poirot and Miss Jane Marple. but she also wrote romance novels under the pen name Mary Westmacott and was a successful playwright. *The Mousetrap*, which opened in London Nov. 25, 1952, is still in production, giving it the longest run of any play in history.

PRODUCTION STAFF

Director..... Richard Atha-Nicholls
Producer..... Andrea L. Elward
Stage Manager..... Nell Codner-Jarashow
Set Design..... Doug Dawson
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Carpenters Lee Craft, Jim Robinson, Ted Yablonski
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ABOUT THE DIRECTOR

Richard Atha-Nicholls returns to Colonial Players to direct his first full length play here. He previously directed the hilarious one-act *Fingerfood* during the one-act festival *Snapshots* in 2003. Since then he has directed *An Inspector Calls* at Bowie Community Theatre and Agatha Christie's *Witness for the Prosecution* at Greenbelt Arts Center.

Though not trying to work exclusively backstage at Colonial Players, he has been seen on stage at other area theatres as well as performing at the Discworld conventions in the UK.

Colonial Players was one of the first theatres

Richard worked at when he moved here from the UK, building a set piece for *Hay Fever*. Since then he has designed sound, run tech, covered for a stage manager, maintained the website, sat on the board as production director and currently advises the operations director on ITish things.

In real life he works for a telecommunication equipment vendor and helps keep the Internet running. He would like to thank his wonderful staff, talented actors and all the Colonial Players' family for trusting him to direct this show. He'd also like to thank the incredible Amy for keeping him sane... or no less saner than normal. Love to C&A.

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

Do you trust me?

That all depends on how well you know me. For those that do, I hope that you would, though I know there are some who don't. That trust is based upon our historical knowledge of each other. But if I was a complete stranger would you trust me? Why would you, you don't know me? Yet I'm sure if you think hard enough you can recall at least one action that required you to trust a complete stranger. For example, handing over the keys of your new car to the parking valet. Our choice to trust a stranger is based on our past experiences.

We trust Agatha Christie to give us a story with twists and turns and red herrings that keep us guessing, or at least unsure, until the very end. When you came to the show tonight, you trusted the actors to know and deliver their lines as their characters, making them seem believable in everything they say. But it's by Agatha Christie, so we know that at least one of these characters cannot be trusted. But which one?

When I was selected to direct this show I made a decision that meant I had to ask the cast to trust me. Trust me as a director and trust that what I was asking them to do would help discover and create their characters. In return, I would have to trust them. I asked them not to read the end of the play. As I write this, a little over two weeks before opening, I can tell you the cast only just found out the end. As such, I believe that it has been beneficial in some of the character choices they have made. I trust them now to bring the story to life and lead you in the way only Agatha can write.

As a director, I have also had to trust my staff. Not an easy thing for me. Letting go and giving them creative choices and then trusting them implicitly to execute those choices along with my vision. And lastly, I have had to trust my [meddling] stage manager – without whom this show would not run as envisioned.

Do you trust me now?

~ Richard Atha-Nicholls

THE CAST

Mark T. Allen (*Inspector Thomas*) - Mark is delighted to be in his first show with The Colonial Players. He was seen on stage most recently in the ensemble of Laurel Mill Playhouse's production of *The American Way*. Over the last ten years, he worked both on stage and behind the scenes with the Columbia Community Players, Prince George's Little Theater, the Rockville Little Theatre, the Howard County Summer Theater, the Centennial Players, the Greenbelt Arts Center, Try-It-Out Theater, the Kitamaquundi Players and the Hampton Players. Favorite roles include Mr. Potter in *It's a Wonderful Life*, Curtis Appleby in *Night Watch* and Detective Sgt. Burchitt in *An Act of the Imagination*.

Jean Berard (*Miss Bennett*) - Jean is not new to the stage, having played leading roles in *The Odd Couple* (female version), *Lettice and Lovage*, *The Supporting Cast*, *Miss Firecracker* and *Stepping Out* to name a few. She is, however, new to The Colonial Players, and would like to thank her wonderful husband for bringing her to the Annapolis area so that she could be part of the group. Jean currently teaches Spanish at Severn School and is the chair of the Foreign Language Department.

Ethan Goldberg (*Jan Warwick*) - Ethan is very excited to be back at Colonial Players, where his roles include Mr. Wollcott in *A Christmas Doll* and the busboy in *She Loves Me*. He has appeared as Geoffrey in 2nd Star's production of *Something's Afoot*, Paul Man in Laurel Mills Playhouse's production of *Rent* and Fender in Annapolis Summer Garden Theatre's production of *Hairspray*. Ethan is a theater major at AACC, where he appeared as Old Man Strong in *Urinetown*, Lt. Brannigan in *Guys & Dolls* and Willie Conklin in *Ragtime*. He was an Irene Ryan nominee for his performances in *Ragtime* and *Guys & Dolls*. Ethan would like to thank Richard for allowing him to be in this show.

Michael Rogers (*Henry Angell*) - Michael is thrilled to be making another appearance on the Colonial Players stage and would like to thank the cast and crew for all of their support and understanding while rehearsing and performing this show. Most importantly, to his wonderfully supportive family, their never-ending encouragement and understanding make

every day of my life worth living. Thank you for putting up with me, in spite of myself!

Elizabeth McWilliams (*Mrs. Warwick*) - Elizabeth is thrilled to be cast in her first role for The Colonial Players. Locally, her most recent role was Big Mama in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* for the Twin Beach Players. She has also appeared in *The Foreigner* and *The Imaginary Invalid* for TBP. She has acted at the Montgomery Playhouse, Portside Theatre and Shakespeare Theatre in the Parque. One of her favorite roles was Eleanor of Aquitaine in *The Lion in Winter* at the Silver Spring Playhouse. Elizabeth learned her English accent whilst acting in seven plays with a British acting group in Southern Spain. She was teased for having a "Colonial" accent! Thanks to hubby, Walt, for his loving support.

Jeff Mocho (*Michael Starkwedder*) - Jeff is excited to make his maiden voyage, at Colonial Players that is. He has been acting for numerous years on stage, in film, TV and training videos. You name it, he's done it. Like most actors, he believes there really aren't too many acting jobs that are too weird to do. Recent theatrical appearances include *Glengarry Glen Ross* at Capitol Fringe Festival, *Black Coffee* at Laurel Mill Playhouse, and yes, remove that beard, put him in his lucky purple shirt and he could just be the guy in those Big Screen TV Store commercials. He would like to thank his friends and family for always being there, even when he hasn't really figured out what he wants to be when he grows up.

Shirley Panek (*Laura Warwick*) - Shirley is pleased to be back on stage with Colonial Players 2011-2012 season opening production with such a great cast and director. She was most recently seen as Miss Framer in CP's 2010-2011 closing production, *Lettice and Lovage*. Previous local roles include Grete in Dignity Player's *Sight Unseen*, Sybil Chase in *Private Lives* and Kaye in *Dog Logic*, both at Colonial Players. Favorite roles include Monica Welles in *Rehearsal for Murder* (BCT), Lucia Armory in *Black Coffee* (BCT), Lucy in *Dracula* (Riverfront Playhouse), Lois in *Cahoots* (Riverfront Playhouse) and Suzy Hendrix in *Wait Until Dark* (Tallahassee Little Theatre). Love to Drew and Emma!

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Thank you for your support. Your generous gifts help us to continue to provide educational and training programs, encouragement and entertainment to all who are interested in dramatic arts.

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THE STAFF (continued)

away? Mike, a Pennsylvania resident, returned to design lights for *The Unexpected Guest* after a long absence from Colonial Players. He has “done more shows than I can count” at CP, where he won awards for lighting and set design. His favorites were *Biloxi Blues* and *The Elephant Man* for set design and *Working* for lighting design. “A round of applause to Carol for giving me so much encouragement on sets. It is nice to make a return engagement.”

BettyAnn Leeseberg-Lange (*Dialect Coach*) - BettyAnn served as a dialect coach at many theaters in the Baltimore/DC area as well as HBO’s *The Wire*. BettyAnn retired as Associate Chair of the Drama Department at Catholic University of America. She is a founding member and former President of the Voice and Speech Trainers Association. BettyAnn is also the owner and primary speech/dialect coach of Talking Well Consulting.

Emilia O’Connor (*Special Needs Consultant*) - Emilia has a B.A. in theater, an M.A. in EDHD (focus in Transition Special Education) and has worn many theater “hats”: actor, director/assistant director, teacher, stage manager, vocal coach and techie. She studied at NYU Playwrights Horizons Studio. She is a co-founder of ArtStream, a non-profit that brings arts to under-served populations, and teaches at MCPS.

ABOUT OUR NEXT SHOW

A musical version of *Little Women*, Louisa May Alcott’s beloved novel of four young women growing up in Civil War America after their father has been called away to serve his country, will be presented in November and December as a prelude to the holiday season. This is a big, warm-hearted show filled with buoyant music about the girls’ experiences as they grow up, meet their future husbands

She recently performed with Hexagon and the British Players. She is excited to be working on her first CP show.

Linda Swann (*Costume Design*) - Linda is happy to be back with her good friends at Colonial Players. Past costuming credits here have included *The Trip to Bountiful*, *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*, and, most recently, *the shape of things*. When not costuming for theaters up and down the Baltimore-Washington corridor, she spends her time singing with a parody band called The Boogie Knights, working on her master’s degree and trying to find work as a substitute to help pay for said degree. She would like to thank God for her talents, her husband for his immense patience (I promise I’ll clean the house after the shows go up), Richard and Drea for their trust and the cast for their flexibility. God bless!

Amy Wheaton (*Rehearsal Assistant / Lobby Display*) - Amy is usually to be found drawing with fire during the day (seriously) and almost always daydreaming about dragons. She is delighted to have been involved with *The Unexpected Guest* and thinks all the cast are “absolutely delicious.” She would like to thank Richard & Drea for trusting her with the lobby display and reminding her how to draw with a pencil.

and cope with disappointment and loss. Jason Howland’s music adds a contemporary twist to period waltzes, polkas and quadrilles, Alcott’s wonderful narrative has been brought to life in this new musical that sweeps to a triumphant conclusion as Jo find a publisher for her book and love where she least expects it. *Little Women* opens Nov. 4 and closes Dec. 3.

THE CAST (continued)

John Scheeler (*Julian Farrar, Richard Warwick*) - *The Unexpected Guest* marks John’s first appearance with Colonial Players of Annapolis, and he couldn’t be more excited! TUG is a departure for John, who is more commonly associated with musical theater. He was last seen playing Prince Charming in *Cinderella* at 2nd Star Productions and Applegate in *Damn Yankees* for The Miracle Players. To date, his greatest triumph was as the titular characters in *Jekyll & Hyde* for the Pasadena Theater Company. Other favorite roles include Mr Snow (*Carousel*), Jinx (*Forever Plaid*) and Max (*Lend Me A Tenor*). John is also a founding member and musical director for the Musical/Comedy troupe

The Boogie Knights and is a member of three a cappella singing groups - Joyous Voices Carolers, Jazzapella East and the Camerata Musica.

Justin Truesdale (*Sergeant Cadwallader*) - Justin is a recent graduate of Frostburg State University, where he earned a degree in theater with a concentration in acting. Some of his favorite roles include Jacob Marley in *A Christmas Carol*, Max in *Bent* and Ken de la Maize in *The Musical Comedy Murders of 1940*. Justin is very excited to be playing Sergeant Cadwallader in *The Unexpected Guest*. He would like to thank his family and friends for their support throughout the years. Enjoy the show!

THE STAFF

Jeannie Beall (*Properties Design*) - Jeannie’s talents are usually represented on stage by the costumes she has designed for numerous shows during her many years with Colonial Players, but she got her start at CP gathering props for a show in 1969, and has undertaken the task of collecting props for an English manor house for *The Unexpected Guest*. “I haven’t done props in a while and thought it would be fun to team up with Peggy Schmeltzer to do so. It’s great to work with CP friends.”

Nell Codner-Jarashow (*Stage Manager*) - Nell has stage managed contemporary and classic (playwrights dead for >350 years) plays for 20 years. She’s delighted to make her debut at Colonial Players with the cast and crew of *The Unexpected Guest*.

Ben Cornwell (*Sound Design*) - Ben is glad to be back in the tech booth for another CP show after designing sound for the May production of *Lettice and Lovage*. He was nominated for an award last year for best sound design in the Washington Area Theatre Community Honors competition for his work on CP’s production of *Frozen*. Previous shows extend back to 2000, either designing or teching for CP.

Doug Dawson (*Set Design*) - Doug has designed sets for 20 shows during his long association with Colonial Players. His favorites include *Cabaret* and *Angel Street*, both winners of

Colonial Players set design awards, and *A Little Night Music*, a Ruby Griffith award winner. Other favorites include *Enchanted April*, *Over My Dead Body* and *Red, Hot and Cole*.

Andrea L. Elward (*Producer*) - Andrea has appeared many times on The Colonial Players stage, but has most recently returned to producing shows. Favorite past production credits include *the shape of things* and *A Christmas Carol*. Favorite past productions with onstage credits include Reno Sweeney in *Anything Goes*, La Marquise de Merteuil in *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* and Sheila in *A Chorus Line*. Additionally, Andrea had the pleasure of performing in two Ruby Griffith award winning productions: *Enter The Guardsman* with The Colonial Players and *Mame* with 2nd Star Productions. As a director and educator, she has brought the world of theater into the lives of many children with productions of *Honk! Jr.*, *Godspell Jr.* and *The Wiz*. In addition to theater, you may have seen Andrea behind the microphone of local bands such as *Joyride* and *Rival*.

Mike Gidos (*Weapons*) - Mike has provided weapons and associated training for many CP productions. His all time favorite was *Assassins*, with so many shooters and a variety of weapons.

Michael M. Harris (*Lighting Design*) - Has there ever been a designer who lives so far

Colonial Players is a proud member of ACT, the Annapolis Consortium of Theaters.

THE COLONIAL PLAYERS, INC.
presents



Written by
AGATHA CHRISTIE

Directed by
RICHARD ATHA-NICHOLLS

THE CAST

(in order of appearance)

Richard Warwick.....John Scheeler
Laura Warwick.....Shirley Panek
Michael Starkwedder.....Jeff Mocho
Miss Bennett.....Jean Berard
Jan Warwick.....Ethan Goldberg
Mrs. Warwick.....Elizabeth McWilliams
Sergeant Cadwallader.....Justin Trusedale
Inspector Thomas.....Mark T. Allen
Julian Ferrar.....John Scheeler

(At the performance on September 18, the roles of Richard Warwick and Julian Farrar will be played by Richard Atha-Nicholls.)

PLACE

The action takes place in Richard Warwick's study in South Wales near the Bristol Channel

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

ACT I

SCENE 1: Richard Warwick's study, about 11:30 p.m.

SCENE 2: The following morning about 11 a.m.

ACT II

The same day, late afternoon

THERE WILL BE ONE 10-MINUTE INTERMISSION BETWEEN ACT I AND ACT II.

Produced by special arrangement with Samuel French, Inc.

Taking photographs and using any recording devices are strictly prohibited. Smoking is prohibited throughout the building.

The Colonial Players, Inc. is funded in part by an operating grant from the Maryland State Arts Council, an agency dedicated to cultivating a vibrant cultural community where the arts thrive.