

Behind the Scenes

You may have noticed that the stage floor at your theater here at The Colonial Players is a major element of the set design. This partly is the result of not having a large backdrop to work with that all four seating sections can see. But everyone can see - and even walk on - the stage floor.

Set design begins months before the play opens with a reading of the play and discussions with the director. The director brings the overall vision and the set designer develops a design of furniture and backdrops to support the vision and action of the play. But the floor always plays a key role in your theater. It is what you see when you walk in and what you see throughout the play. And each play's set designer comes up with a unique design for the floor.

One of the very first things that happens after one show closes is that the next show's set designer and painters (all volunteers) repaint the floor with the new design. Because time between shows is limited, the old paint is not removed; the new design goes on right over the top of the last one. After the design has been painted, a top coat of polyurethane typically is applied to protect the design for the next five or six weeks. There is some debate as to how long the current floor has been in place and how many times the floor has been repainted.

Some think the floor was replaced around 1980, which would mean roughly 300 different floor designs have come and gone. A conservative estimate of 2.5 gallons per design means that the stage floor has had about 750 gallons applied over the years. A couple of core samples taken recently reveals that the paint is, on average, 3/4 inch thick.

Many of your painters are quite adept at faux finishing. The illusion of hardwood plank flooring is quite popular, as is stone, brick, marble, and linoleum. But the floor also has seen a painted shag rug, train tracks, grass, starry skies, a life-size board game, and much more. Water can be a bit challenging, but has been done with some coordinated lighting. And if a design element is to be projected onto the floor, such as the shadows created on the floor of a jail cell by the bars on the cell's window, the designer must ensure that the floor's paint will help make the projection visible.

We hope you notice and appreciate our wonderfully ever-changing stage floor done by your very talented volunteers.

— TIM BROWN



MAY 31 TO JUNE 22 2018/2019 season



THE COLONIAL PLAYERS, INC.

108 East Street • Annapolis, MD 21401

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thecolonialplayers.org

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Hello, and welcome to the final production of our 70th season!

How have we reached the end of our season already? It seems like only yesterday that we were primping and pampering the theater for our opening production, *Rumors*. And yet, here we are – preparing to turn off the lights and begin sprucing up the theater for next season.

Often in the summer, we have a number of limited-run productions, including our Promising Playwright contest, One-Act Festival, and other special events. This year we are starting the summer off with some well-earned upgrades to the theater in July. But don't worry – we still have something special in store for you before we open our doors for the new season!

August 2, 3, and 4 we will bring you a reimagining of our Promising Playwright contest. This year, three very familiar Colonial Players names have each penned a one-act play which will be brought to life on our stage. After that, we'll be getting ready for our first production of our 71st season – the classic *Arsenic and Old Lace*; and taking a short break to party with a little end-of season celebration to recognize our 70 years serving the Annapolis community.

I hope to see you here and around town at some of the other great theaters that Annapolis has to offer.

Enjoy the show, and see you soon!

– SHIRLEY PANEK

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WHAT'S GOING ON AT CP.



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Stage Manager.....Herb Elkin
Costume Designers.....Amy Atha-Nicholls, Jean Berard
Properties Designer.....Constance Robinson
Lighting Designer.....Ernie Morton
Sound Designer.....David Cooper
Set Designers.....Mark T. Allen, Amy Atha-Nicholls, Richard Atha-Nicholls
Assistant Stage Manager.....Cat Cochran
Stage Crew.....Jane Elkin, Emma Miller, Holly Miller
Assistant Properties Designer.....Deborah Guy-Skriloff
Lighting Assistant.....Lyana Morton
Sound Assistant.....Shirley Panek
Sound/Lighting Technician.....Brittany Rankin
Floor Design.....Amy Atha-Nicholls
Floor and Set Painting.....Amy Atha-Nicholls, Richard Atha-Nicholls, Edd Miller
Set Decoration.....Constance Robinson
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Dialect Coach.....BettyAnn Leeseberg-Lange
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Play Consultant.....Darice Clewell
Hair Consultant.....Doug Dawson
Lead Carpenter.....Ted Yablonski
Carpenters.....Norm James, Jim Robinson, Bob Mumper
Poster/Program Cover Designer.....Drama Queen Graphics
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Photography.....Colburn Images
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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DIRECTOR'S NOTES

Dame Agatha is back on The Colonial Players stage for the first time since the Fall of 2011. That production of Christie's *The Unexpected Guest* is a very fond memory for me, as it also was my first foray on this stage as an actor. I am grateful and honored to be granted the opportunity to make this production my directorial debut with CP.

Why have we decided to set this production in September of 1933 when the play was first produced in 1956 and the novel was first published in 1944? The script itself leads us to the answer. There is a date referenced at one point as occurring on a specific day of the week. Looking backwards from 1956, that exact combination of date and weekday occurred only in 1950, 1944, and 1933. Another clue is provided in the opening moments of the show, when Mr. Royde mentions that he has just spent the previous seven years living in Malaya. As the only reference made to any war in the script is in the past tense -- and for the British World War II ran from 1939 through 1945 -- 1944 is easy to

eliminate. For much the same reason, 1950 is equally problematic as seven years earlier was 1943. I also feel that 1933 more realistically reflects the world these characters inhabit as shown by their attitudes and mores.

A murder mystery falls into a challenging genre both in literature and in theater. Within that genre, Agatha Christie is an icon with a unique and well-known style. She is a master of misdirection and of subtle characterization. It takes a true team effort to properly present all the red herrings she plants throughout the story, as well as the true clues to the mystery, without telegraphing anything; at the same time, we keep in mind that a not insignificant portion of the audience is familiar with the story and is watching to see how well we present Dame Agatha's misdirections. We certainly hope we've accomplished that, and that you enjoy our efforts.

— MARK T. ALLEN

ABOUT THE DIRECTOR



MARK T. ALLEN is delighted to be directing his first full-length show for The Colonial Players. His only other CP directing credit is *Foxglove*, the one-act written by CP stalwart Rick Wade. His theatrical career began at Richard Montgomery High School in Rockville, which quickly led to volunteering with the Rockville Little Theatre. For one semester he was a theater major at what was then Towson State College, but quickly realized he was not, as they say, "ready for prime time." He drifted away from theater until his daughter discovered it on her own during middle school, at which time both of them became involved with the Columbia Community Players. He worked in some capacity on almost

every production for the next eight years and served as the organization's final president. It was there he began directing with Christie's *The Mousetrap*. He has also worked with the Laurel Mill Playhouse, directing for them Christie's *A Murder is Announced* as well as *Black Coffee*, *The Hollow*, *Teahouse of the August Moon*, *45 Seconds from Broadway*, *Death Takes a Holiday*, and most recently *And Then There Were None*. When not directing, he remains active as a performer, with his most recent role being Sir Hugh Evans in CP's production this season of Shakespeare's *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. Mark enjoys spending his spare time with his daughter, his son-in-law, and their three children.

The Colonial Players gratefully acknowledges the generous bequest from Roland Riley, a longtime patron whose gift helps ensure the future economic viability of our theater.



The Colonial Players gratefully acknowledges the recent gift from the Donald M. Reed Living Trust that made possible the critical upgrade of our stage lighting control system.



THE CAST



BEN BELL
(*Nevile Strange*)

Ben is thrilled to be performing on stage again with such an amazing cast. This is his first appearance with The Colonial Players.

Previously he portrayed Petruchio in *The Taming of the Shrew*, Scapino in *Scapino*, and Wadsworth in *Clue*. He also has a long history of performing with local Improv groups such as All Puns Intended and Free Range Improv. In his free time, Ben enjoys using his acting and improv skills to play Dungeons and Dragons and is generally a huge nerd. He would like to thank his daughter, Natalie, and his girlfriend, Allison, as well as family and friends for the support they gave him during this production.



JIM BERARD
(*P.C. Benson*)

Jim is excited to be making his first appearance on The Colonial Players stage and to be working with so many friends in this talented cast and crew. He is especially pleased to be working with his real-life leading lady, Jean, who is the costumer for this show. This is Jim's second appearance in an Agatha Christie mystery under the direction of Mark T. Allen. The first was when Jim portrayed the butler, Rogers, in *And Then There Were None* at Laurel Mill Playhouse in 2016. Jim has since made several more appearances at LMP, including, in 2018, as the maitre d' in the one-act *ISO and Paul*, the father in *You Can't Take It With You*, in which he spent most of his time on stage in boxer shorts. He also appeared as the butler, John, in Prince George's Little Theater's production of *The Man Who Came To Dinner* in 2017.



LAUREN BROWN
(*Kay Strange*)

Lauren is a graduating senior at Broadneck High School and is very excited to play Mrs. Kay Strange.

This is her first production with The Colonial Players as well as her first time playing a role with a British accent. Recently Lauren has been in productions such as *Antigone* and *Little Shop of Horrors*. She thanks her parents, friends, and teachers for supporting her through this process and helping her toward graduation. Please enjoy the sandwiches on this wild ride of a whodunit!



MICHAEL N. DUNLOP
(*Mathew Treves*)

Mike is thrilled to return to The Colonial Players stage, where he appeared as a gentleman and as the undertaker in the 1987 and

1988 versions of *A Christmas Carol*. More roles followed. He was Scrooge in two productions of *A Christmas Carol*, with other favorites being *A Funny Happened on the Way to the Forum*, *Trying, Morning's at Seven*, and *Casa Valentina*. Previous performances with Prince George's Little Theatre were *Don't Dress For Dinner*, *Deathtrap*, and *The Man Who Came to Dinner*. Mike has also been seen in Bowie Community Theatre's productions of *Daddy's Girl*, *Dearly Departed*, and *Dearly Beloved* and Compass Rose's productions of *Oliver* and *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Mike has been a member of SAG-AFTRA since 1988 and acted in various film, television, and commercial video productions in the Baltimore/Washington market with a recent role in *Veep* on HBO. He works as a standardized patient role playing for medical school training of doctors and nurses. Other role playing assignments include witnesses for mock trials and diplomats from fictitious countries in attache training.



JEFFREY MILLER
(*Superintendent Battle*)

No stranger to community and dinner theater, Jeffrey is glad to be back on The Colonial Players stage after a six-year absence. He most recently appeared as

Sidney Redlitch in *Bell, Book and Candle*. Favorite roles have included the king in *The King and I*; Petruchio in *The Taming of the Shrew*; Fred in *Kiss Me, Kate*; (he never confuses the latter two. Well, hardly ever. There was that time...); Miles Gloriosus in *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* at both Montgomery Players and The Daytona Beach Playhouse; and Ned Quinn in *Hogan's Goat*. He was a guest soloist twice with the Naval Academy Band, and was a featured soloist with The Arundel Vocal Arts Society. In his other life, he is the airport security program manager in the Office of Airport Security at BWI Marshall Airport and an adjunct professor in the aviation program at the Catonsville campus of the Community Colleges of Baltimore County.



THE STAFF (continued)

Olney Theatre, and Everyman Theatre. BettyAnn was the resident dialect coach at REP Stage for over 10 years. She is especially proud of *The Judas Kiss* (winner of Helen Hayes Awards for direction and leading actor) and most recently *Twilight*, a-one woman show with 31 characters starring Danielle Drakes. Her regional credits include the Repertory Theatre of St. Louis, St. Louis Black Repertory Theatre, St. Louis' New Theatre, and Chicago's Court Theatre. BettyAnn is an Equity actress. She dialect coached the HBO Series *The Wire*, worked with NPR's *All Things Considered*, and was Howard Stern's dialect reduction coach. She reminds people that she taught Howard HOW to speak, not WHAT to say. BettyAnn served as president of the Voice and Speech Trainers Association (VASTA), the international organization for voice, diction, dialect, and text specialists. She created her accent modification business, Talking Well Consulting, LLC. BettyAnn tells internationals whose accents need more clarity: "Adjust Your Accent; Keep Your Culture; Own Your Future!"



ERNIE MORTON
(*Lighting Designer*)

Ernie is usually found lurking in the shadows waiting for the next scene change as a stage manager for a dozen shows, most recently with *A Christmas Carol* and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, but now he is bringing the light. Ernie has

been really excited to discover the interplay of light and shadow that this script makes possible. Ernie has also designed lighting for this season's *Silent Sky* and previously for *It's a Wonderful Life*.



CONSTANCE ROBINSON
(*Properties Designer/
Set Decorator*)

Since 2003, Connie has volunteered as a public relations consultant, graphic designer, box office assistant, properties designer, and set decorator for The Colonial Players. She serves on the current Marketing Committee and has collected props for over 17 productions at CP and other local theaters. She is proud to have received three WATCH nominations for Properties Designing. Connie enjoys her volunteer hours because of the terrific people she works with. Recently she completed the floor and set painting and decorating for *A New Brain* according to the vision of Set Designer Carol Youmans, who unexpectedly passed away on March 27th, before the show opened. Connie dedicated her work on that show to her friend Carol, who she will miss dearly. As she collects props for *Towards Zero*, Connie is thankful for the assistance of our new CP volunteer, Deborah Guy-Skriloff. She also thanks her husband, John, for his continued assistance fixing or creating props, and is also grateful to friends for their support.

ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT

AGATHA CHRISTIE'S place atop the pantheon of English language mystery writers is made clear by the fact that more than one billion copies of her novels have been sold in the original English and an additional billion in translation. She is the best-selling novelist of all time, and only the Bible and William Shakespeare's plays and poems exceed sales totals for her books, short stories, and plays.

Christie's reputation as "The Queen of Crime" was built upon the large number of classic motifs that she either introduced or made popular in her 66 detective novels. She developed what is now considered a classic mystery structure. A murder is committed, and there are multiple suspects. Over the course of the book or play, a detective gradually uncovers the secrets of the suspects in a plot filled with shocking and surprising developments. Her works often ended with suspects summoned to a drawing room of an upper class home, where the detective revealed the identity of the killer.

Christie conceived of two unlikely characters for her crime novels. Hercule Poirot, the funny little man with a perfectly groomed mustache and patent leather shoes, introduced in 1920, was a big hit with readers, but Christie came to despise his character, whom she once described as "an egocentric creep." She much preferred Miss Marple, the genteel old lady of St. Mary Mead who helped push bumbling police detectives towards finding the solution to the murders that kept happening in her quiet English village.



THE STAFF



AMY ATHA-NICHOLLS
(Costume Co-Designer/
Floor Designer)

Maker of stuff, nonsense, and mischief by decree. Amy has worn many hats, including puppeteer, costumer, pyrographer, designer, playwright, archer, wench (when required), and assassin on occasion (specializing in heart attacks...). Mostly she acts as Polly Filler for all the jobs that need doing. Her latest hat is Chair of the North American Discworld Convention this summer in L.A. - nadwcon2019.org. Big thanks to Mark & Jean for letting me out to play again. Love always to R & P, evermore O.



RICHARD ATHA-NICHOLLS
(Producer)

This is the first time Richard has produced at The Colonial Players. He's done it elsewhere, but not for a long time. He sound designed for the previous three shows this season and is looking forward to taking a small break over the summer. His sound designs garnered two Washington Area Theatre Community Honors nominations. Richard has appeared on area stages, and in his spare time he helps run Discworld conventions. Occasionally, he has been known to direct. Love to C, A & P. Always in my heart, O.



JEAN BERARD
(Costume Co-Designer)

Jean is delighted to be involved in another murder at The Colonial Players. She first joined this wonderful company as Miss Bennet in *The Unexpected Guest*, but this time she is a costumer instead of a suspect. The fashion of this period is absolutely delicious, and this cast fits it so well! It has been great fun finding just the right colors and styles. The best part has been working with the amazing Amy Atha-Nicholls, without whose guidance and expertise the costumes would have been just ordinary. As always, thanks to Jim Berard for putting up with life-in-production; oh wait! He's in this too! Look for him as Constable Benson, breaking his first leg on the CP stage.



CAT COCHRAN
(Assistant Stage Manager)

Towards Zero is Cat's 11th production with The Colonial Players and her first as the assistant stage manager. She usually works

in the tech booth and helps with lighting. Cat was the lighting designer at Broadneck High School since the fall of 2016, having designed over 20 shows in that time, and will be going to college for theater lighting in the fall. She's thankful to all the mentors and friends she's made while working at CP and to all the cast and crew members who welcomed her into their world! Other theaters she's worked with include Shenandoah Summer Music Theatre, Infinity Theatre Company, and, briefly, the Ballet Theatre of Maryland. Cat looks forward to working and learning with Colonial and Infinity Theatre Company one more time this summer before leaving for college!



DAVID COOPER
(Sound Designer)

After a 20-year hiatus, David has been re-engaging in the theater community and is thrilled to be involved with The Colonial Players.

He has provided behind-the-scenes support on *Sex With Strangers* and the regional community theater one-act festival and has performed during the summer pub reading series. He last provided sound design for *The Babylon Line* and will be engaged in a number of roles on a number of shows in 2019. "Thanks, and break a leg to the cast and crew of *Towards Zero*!"



HERB ELKIN
(Stage Manager)

Herb has been a CP member and active volunteer for more than 20 years. After performing onstage in several CP and other

area productions, he found his true calling working behind the scenes. As CP's immediate past vice president and treasurer, Herb continues to serve on several committees, but most enjoys stage managing. Recent credits include *Quartet* (2018), *33 Variations* (2017), *Good People* (2016), *Side Man* (2015), *Rocket Man* (2014), *Coyote on a Fence* (2014), *Trying* (2013), and *Going to St. Ives*, winner of the 2012 Washington Area Theatre Community Honors award for outstanding play. He thanks CP's many volunteers and supporters who make everything possible, worthwhile...and enjoyable!



BETTYANN LEESEBERG-LANGE
(Dialect Coach)

BettyAnn returns to The Colonial Players to again coach an Agatha Christie, one of her favorites. She

coached multiple productions at Studio Theatre,



THE CAST (continued)



NICOLE MUSHO
(Audrey Strange)

Nicole is very excited to be back in a show at The Colonial Players. Her previous performance with Colonial was in the 2015 production of *The Liar*. A Philadelphia native, Nicole has also been in a number of shows throughout college and high school, including *The Imaginary Invalid*, *Antigone*, *Footloose*, *Beauty and the Beast*, and *Our Town*. Her most recent role was as Nina in PGLT's *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike*.



ROBIN SCHWARTZ
(Mary Aldin)

Robin is thrilled to return to The Colonial Players stage, where she appeared earlier this season as Margaret Leavitt in *Silent Sky*. Other favorite credits include Dawn in *The Universal Language* (outstanding performance at the Maryland Community Theatre Festival), Thea Elvsted in *Hedda Gabler*, and Joan Dellamond in *The Babylon Line*. Robin has a degree in Theatre and Communications from Goucher College. "Special thanks to my husband, Daniel, for supporting me tirelessly and unconditionally; to my sons, Jacob and Henry, for being Mommy's cheerleaders; and to family and friends for their loving encouragement. So much gratitude to the whole CP team for the opportunity to create theater with some truly amazing people."



BOB "GUNSLINGER" SINGER
(Inspector Leach)

Bob is a systems engineer working at NASA Goddard Space Flight Center. His career in the space business is only eclipsed in length by his hobby of performance art. Since starting in 1973, he has performed on stage, screen, TV, radio, and now the internet. Bob has been in more than 46 movies and television shows, from *Year One* to *Love Different*, and from *Evil Stepmothers* to *House of Cards*. On stage, Bob has performed in more than 40 dramas, comedies, and musicals and was last seen in *Perfect Arrangement* at the Greenbelt Arts Center as Ted Sunderson. This is Bob's first production with The Colonial Players, and he hopes you enjoy the performance of the cast and crew in this Agatha Christie whodunit.



MARTIN THOMPSON
(Ted Latimer)

Martin is excited to be back on The Colonial Players stage. CP credits include roles in *The Philadelphia Story*, *The Busy Body*, and three productions of *A Christmas Carol*. Additionally for CP, he directed the one-act play *The Shepherd's Chameleon* and designed sound for various productions including *Company*. He was one of two Colonial Players Scholarship recipients in 2010. Other performance credits include Michael Wells in *Two Rooms*, Mr. Marmalade in *Mr. Marmalade*, Romeo and others in *Shakespeare's R&J*, Horace Vandergelder in *The Matchmaker*, and Matt in *Dog Sees God*. Martin graduated from the University of Maryland's theater program with a B.A. in performance in 2015.



JOANNA TOBIN
(Lady Tressilian)

Joanna is thrilled to be back on stage after a very long hiatus. She is particularly happy to be working with such a wonderful director, production team, and cast. Way, way back in the day, Joanna served her Actors' Equity apprenticeship at the New Jersey Shakespeare Festival under Paul Barry. And long, long past representative roles include Cecily in *The Importance of Being Earnest*, Lady Macbeth in *Macbeth*, Portia in *Julius Caesar*, Maggie in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, Sister Rita in *The Runner Stumbles*, and Emilia in *Othello*. "Love always to Steve, Diana, and my mother, the best cast to work with in a family comedy ever!"



AARON VONDERHAAR
(Thomas Royde)

Aaron is just excited to be here. Moonlighting from active duty, Aaron started in theater three years ago at KMC Onstage in Germany. Previous shows of note include *Avenue Q* (Nicky and Trekkie Monster), *The Addams Family Musical* (Gomez), *Peter and the Starcatcher* (Mrs. Bumbrake), and *Little Shop of Horrors* (Audrey 2). Aaron is thrilled to be involved with theater for the first time stateside, the first time at The Colonial Players, and the first time in a drama rather than a musical or comedy.

THE COLONIAL PLAYERS, INC.
presents



Written by
AGATHA CHRISTIE
and **GERALD VERNER**

Directed by
MARK T. ALLEN

THE CAST

(in order of appearance)

Thomas Royde.....Aaron Vonderhaar
Kay Strange.....Lauren Brown
Mary Aldin.....Robin Schwartz
Mathew Treves.....Michael N. Dunlop
Nevile Strange.....Ben Bell
Lady Tressilian.....Joanna Tobin
Audrey Strange.....Nicole Musho
Ted Latimer.....Martin Thompson
Superintendent Battle.....Jeffrey Miller
Inspector Leach.....Bob "Gunslinger" Singer
P.C. Benson.....Jim Berard

PLACE

The action of the play takes place in the drawing room at Gull's Point,
Lady Tressilian's house, Saltcreek, Cornwall

TIME

ACT I

Scene One: A morning in September
Scene Two: After dinner, four days later

ACT II

Scene One: Early the following morning
Scene Two: Two hours later

Act III

Scene One: The next morning
Scene Two: The same evening

There will be one intermission between Act II, Scene One and Act II, Scene Two

Produced by Special Arrangement with Samuel French Inc., New York.

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