



DIFFERENT STAGES PRESENTS

Agatha Christie
SPIDER'S WEB

JULY 2 - JULY 24, 2010
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This project is funded and supported in part by the City of Austin through the Cultural Arts Division.

DIFFERENT
STAGES

Different Stages presents

Spider's Web

by Agatha Christie

Director Jeannette Bellemeur and TJ Moreno
Stage Manager Amy Lewis
Set Design Ann Marie Gordon
Light Design..... Patrick Anthony
Costume Design Emily Cavaser
Produced by Norman Blumensaadt

CHARACTERS AND CAST

(in order of appearance)

Sir Rowland Delahaye Craig Kanne
Hugo Birch TJ Jolley
Jeremy Warrender Tyler Jones
Clarissa Hailsham-Brown Nikki Zook
Pippa Hailsham-Brown, Clarissa's young step-daughter..... Angela Loftus
Mildred Peake Bobbie Oliver
Elgin, the butler Sam Damon
Oliver Costello David Young
Henry Hailsham-Brown, Clarissa's husband Larry Oliver
Inspector Lord Julie Winston-Thomas
Constable Jones Trey Deason



The action of the play passes in the drawing room of Coplestone Court, the Hailsham-Brown's home in Kent. Time is the late 1950s.

Act I: An evening in March
Act II: *Scene 1* - A quarter of an hour later
Scene 2 - Ten minutes later
Act III: A few minutes later



Produced by special arrangement with Samuel French, Inc. New York City
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ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT

Dame Agatha Christie DBE (September 15, 1890 – January 12, 1976) was an English crime writer of novels, short stories and plays. She also wrote romances under the name Mary Westmacott, but is remembered for her 80 detective novels and her successful West End theatre plays. Her works, particularly those featuring detectives Hercule Poirot and Miss Jane Marple, have given her the title the “Queen of Crime” and made her an important writer in the development of the genre.

Christie has been referred to by the Guinness Book of World Records as the best-selling writer of books of all time and the best-selling writer of any kind, along with William Shakespeare. Only the Bible is known to have outsold her collected sales of roughly four billion copies of novels. UNESCO states that she is currently the most translated individual author in the world with only the collective corporate works of Walt Disney Productions surpassing her. Christie's books have been translated into at least 103 languages.

Her stage play *The Mousetrap* holds the record for the longest initial run in the world: it opened at the Ambassadors Theatre in London on November 25, 1952 and as of 2010 is still running after more than 23,000 performances. In 1955, Christie was the first recipient of the Mystery Writers of America's highest honour, the Grand Master Award, and in the same year, *Witness for the Prosecution* was given an Edgar Award by the MWA, for Best Play. Most of her books and short stories have been filmed, some many times over.

Almost all of Agatha Christie's books are whodunits, focusing on the English middle and upper classes. Usually, the detective either stumbles across the murder or is called upon by an old acquaintance, who is somehow involved. Gradually, the detective interrogates each suspect, examines the scene of the crime and makes a note of each clue, so readers can analyze it and be allowed a fair chance of solving the mystery themselves. Then, about halfway through, or sometimes even during the final act, one of the suspects usually dies, often because they have inadvertently deduced the killer's identity and need silencing. In a few of her novels, including *Death Comes as the End* and *And Then There Were None*, there are multiple victims. Finally, the detective organizes a meeting of all the suspects and slowly denounces the guilty party, exposing several unrelated secrets along the way, sometimes over the course of thirty or so pages. The murders are often extremely ingenious, involving some convoluted piece of deception. Christie's stories are also known for their taut atmosphere and strong psychological suspense, developed from the deliberately slow pace of her prose.

Agatha Christie was revered as a master of suspense, plotting, and characterization by most of her contemporaries and, even today, her stories have received glowing reviews in most literary circles. Fellow crime writer Anthony Berkeley Cox was an admitted fan of her work, once saying that nobody can write an Agatha Christie novel but the authoress herself.

Spider's Web is the fifth play by Dame Agatha that Different Stages has produced. Previous titles are: *Black Coffee*, *The Unexpected Guest*, *Appointments with Death*, and *The Hollow*.

- Wikipedia

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CAST BIOGRAPHIES

SAM DAMON (Elgin, the butler) now in his third incarnation (as an actor) has appeared in one other Different Stages production as Arthur Birling in *An Inspector Calls*. Since then Mr. Damon has played as Maurice in *Social Security*, in *Voices of Ireland* at Pebble Wadsworth's Art Cottage, a sprinkling of film work, and the radio plays, *The Pussycat and the Expert Plumber Who Was a Man* (his first feline role) and *Panic in Salem*. Back when, while still educable, Mr. Damon attended The University of Texas at Austin and appeared as Moses

in *School for Scandal* and Pozzo in *Waiting for Godot*. Also around that time, Mr. Damon played Olin Potts in *The Last Meeting of the Knights of the White Magnolia* and Bill Driscoll in *Ransom of Red Chief*. He also played Huckabee in the *Fantasticks* (with John Carradine playing the Old Actor.) In between, Mr. Damon acted in various productions too numerous or obscure to delve into in Dallas, Ft. Worth, Pasadena, CA and Las Cruces, NM. **THE BUTLER DIDN'T DO IT OR DID HE?.....**

TREY DEASON (Constable Jones) holds a BFA in theatre from Southwestern University. This marks his third production with Different Stages, having appeared in *The Goat, or Who is Sylvia?* and *An Inspector Calls*. Recent acting credits include *69 Love Scenes* (Gnap Theatre Company), *The Secret Lives of the Inbetweeners* (Vortex Rep, BIP Nomination-Best Supporting Actor), *Romeo and Juliet* (Sam Bass Theatre), *Much Ado About Nothing* (Austin Shakespeare), *Little Murders* (Loaded Gun Theory) and *Ruddigore* (G&S Society of Austin). He can be seen next in *Hamlet* at the Scottish Rite Theatre. Also a BIP nominated playwright, his one-act *Cardigan* will premiere at FronteraFest Long Fringe early next year.

TJ JOLLEY (Hugo Birch) is new to the Austin theater scene, having moved to Austin in 2009 from the Texas Gulf Coast. Before Austin, TJ studied, worked & volunteered with Brazosport College Drama Department and with the local community theater, Brazosport Center Stages.

TYLER JONES (Jeremy Warrender) is in his fifth appearance with Different Stages after having appeared in *The Beard of Avon*, *The Hollow*, *Mrs. Bob Cratchit's Wild Christmas Binge*, and *Getting Married*. Other Austin credits include *Beauty and the Beast*, *The Music Man* (Zilker Hillside), *Hay Fever* (NxNW, Payne nomination), *Peter and the Wolf*, *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown* (Second Youth Theater, Payne nomination), *The Lonesome West* (Hyde Park Theater, Payne nomination), *How the Other Half Loves*, *The Boys Next Door*, *Songs for a New World*, *Death of a Salesman* (City Theater, Payne winner for Outstanding Featured Actor in a Drama). Thanks to all involved for a jolly good time!

CRAIG KANNE (Sir Rowland Delahaye) has recently appeared in *Waiting for Godot*, *Laughter on the 23rd Floor*, and *Sordid Lives* in Austin and Round Rock. His last show for Different Stages was *Getting Married* in 2008 at the Vortex. Until the end of 2008, he worked for the City of Austin water department performing the "Dowser Dan" program at area elementary schools.

ANGELA LOFTUS (Pippa Hailsham-Brown) is a high school student and theater enthusiast. She first appeared on the Vortex stage as "The Fool" in Summer Youth's *Wyrd Sisters*. Last October, she received a B. Iden Payne award for her multiple roles in *Good Things*. She attends Lake Travis High School and actively participates both in choir and the debate team. She is excited for her first production with Different Stages and would like to thank her family and her boyfriend for their support.

BOBBIE OLIVER (Mildred Peake) has been active in Austin area theater for over 20 years. This is her 7th Different Stages production, having appeared most recently as Mrs. Antrobus in *The Skin of Our Teeth*. Bobbie has trained in New York City and London and is a three time nominee for the Austin Circle of Theaters' B. Iden Payne Award. In 2005 she received the Best Actress in a Drama award for her role as Bessie in *Marvin's Room*.

LARRY OLIVER (Henry Hailsham-Brown) has been involved in Austin-area theater both on and off-stage for the last 10 years. He has appeared in *Summer and Smoke* for Different Stages, *Little Murders* (Loaded Gun Theory), *Twilight of the Golds* (Georgetown Polo Barn Theatre), *Let Them Eat Cake* (Austin), *The Last Act is a Solo*, *How He Lied to Her Husband* (Second Act Troupe), *Season's Greetings* (Wimberley Players), and, his favorite, *Sylvia* (Lockhart Gaslight Theatre). Larry has also appeared in numerous Austin Lyric Opera productions, as well as working lighting, sound and sets on many Austin theatre productions.

JULIE WINSTON-THOMAS (Inspector Lord) is an actress, director and occasional playwright who earned a BA in Theatre at UT. She is a Co-Artistic Director and the Business Manager for Loaded Gun Theory, for whom she most recently wrote in *Slapdash 6*. Julie's enjoying being back with Different Stages for the fifth time; she was also seen in *Appointment with Death*, *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *Betty's Summer Vacation*, and *Fuddy Meers*. Other (relatively) recent productions include Gnap!'s *69 Love Scenes*, Vestige Group's *Marisol* and *Anton in Show Business*, and Loaded Gun Theory's *Little Murders*. Thanks to Tim, Stella and Etta for all your love and support!

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DAVID YOUNG (Oliver Costello) is excited to be acting in Austin again for the first time in quite a while. In the past he has played the likes of Stanley from *A Street Car Named Desire* and Patrick Bronte in an adaptation called *Do Something with Yourself*. David spends most of his free time staring into the eye of the beholder and channeling characters for his stories. And, oh yes, David really, really hates the Lakers!

NIKKI ZOOK (Clarissa Hailsham-Brown) is thrilled to be in her second Agatha Christie play with Different Stages. "Dr. Sarah King", in Ms. Christie's *Appointment with Death*, was one of Nikki's favorite roles. Other favorites include "Trisha" in NxNW's production of *Five Women Wearing the Same Dress*, "Feste" in ONSTAGE's *Twelfth Night*, and "Tiny Tim" in Different Stages' *Mrs. Bob Cratchit's Wild Christmas Binge*. Nikki would like to thank her parents for their extraordinary support this past year, and TJ and Jeannette for this opportunity. She sends hugs and kisses to her guys, Richard and Levi! Nikki would like to remind you to please take a probiotic anytime you take an antibiotic. :-)

DIRECTION AND DESIGN BIOGRAPHIES

JEANNETTE BELLEMEUR (Director), fan and proud member of the Different Stages community, holds a BA in Theatre Arts from the University of Texas at El Paso. Her theatre experiences include: teaching both acting and technical theatre, working with local IATSE stagehand unions in both El Paso and Austin, sewing and dressing for the Austin Lyric Opera. Her work with different stages spans 10 years and includes in brief: *Roosters* (props), *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *An Ideal Husband*, *Pericles*, *Prince of Tyre* (costume design and construction) and *The Goat or Who is Sylvia* (Assistant Director). She wishes to thank Norman for supporting and encouraging her creative growth!

TJ MORENO (Director) has been working with Different Stages since he joined the cast of *The Rise and Rise of Daniel Rocket* in 2000. Since then, he has had wonderful time acting in shows like Agatha Christie's *Appointment with Death* and *The Hollow*, stage managing productions including *An Ideal Husband*, *The Misses Overbeck* and *The Goat or Who Is Sylvia?*, and most recently serving as assistant director for *A Number*. He thanks Norman for the opportunity to work with such a talented group and Jeanette for being an absolutely amazing partner throughout it all!

AMY LEWIS (Stage Manager) is a graduate of McMurry University with a BFA in Theatre. She is very active in the Austin theatre community as both an

actor and a lighting designer. Amy's Austin area acting credits include, *Sordid Lives*, *Human Sketches*, *Picasso at the Lapin Agile*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Shakespeare in Hollywood*, *Time Flies*, *Babels in Arms*, and *All in the Timing* at Sam Bass Community Theatre, *Dracula* at the Bastrop Opera House, *The Laramie Project* at City Theatre, *Bitten! A Zombie Rock Odyssey*, *The Automat*, *Bride of Slapdash*, *Slapdash Cinco de Flimflam*, *Slapdash Live Six Show* with Loaded Gun Theory, of which she is also a member and resident lighting designer. Past productions with Different Stages include, *The Skin of Our Teeth*, *An Inspector Calls*, *What I Want Right Now*, *Mrs. Bob Crachit's Wild Christmas Binge*, *The Hollow*, and *Playboy of the Western World*.

EMILY CAVASAR (Costume Design) received her BFA in Technical Theatre Design and Acting from Abilene Christian University. She recently completed her eighth season with Ballet Austin as Wardrobe Assistant and Shoe Manager. She recently designed and constructed costumes for Ballet Austin's *Truth and Beauty*; *the Back Project* and *Peter and the Wolf*. Her Different Stages credits include *Getting Married*, *An Inspector Calls*, and *The Skin of Our Teeth*.

ANN MARIE GORDON (Scenic Design) is pleased to be working again with Different Stages. Her recent work with Different Stages include *Getting Married*, *The Skin of Our Teeth*, and *A Number*, which was nominated for a Critics Table Award. She is a member of the Vortex Repertory Company where she designed the sets for *Oceanna*, for *The Inbetweeners*, and *The Dragonfly Queen*, all premier works recently presented by the Vortex.

PATRICK ANTHONY (Light Design) is a recent graduate of Loyola: New Orleans. He is a member of the Vortex Repertory company and has worked in several other theatres around the city. This is his second show with Different Stages and he would like to thank his directors, his design team and his beautiful Helena.

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PRODUCTION STAFF

Set Construction.....Ann Marie Gordon, Elaine Jacobs, Andy Agne, Sal Meza
PropertiesNorman Blumensaadt
Sound Crew Jeannette Bellemeur, TJ Moreno
Web Master Martina Olhauser
Costume Construction.....Emily Cavasar
Graphic DesignMatthew Ing
PhotographyBret Brookshire
Program DesignEmily Erington
Publicity Carol Ginn, Norman Blumensaadt, Martina Olhauser

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for additional production support

ABOUT DIFFERENT STAGES

Different Stages, Inc. has been a community-based organization since its inception in 1981 and incorporation in 1984. It produces works by playwrights whom we believe to be defining forces in theatre. We seek to entertain with performances that reveal life in all its comedy, tragedy and intensity; and we hope to educate by choosing plays that provide exceptional insight into the human condition. By challenging ourselves as artists, and our audiences as participants, we endeavor to provide the community with vigorous and exciting live theatre.

Producing Artistic Director

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1981: August Strindberg's *Creditors and The Stronger*. **1982:** William Shakespeare's *The Tempest* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. **1983:** George Bernard Shaw's *Candida*; Anton Chekhov's *The Brute*, *Swan Song*, and *Celebration*. **1984:** Luigi Pirandello's *Right You Are (If You Think You Are)*; Jane Martin's *Talking With...* **1985:** Caryl Churchill's *Cloud 9*; William Shakespeare's *As You Like It*; Carl Sternheim's *The Underpants*; Michael Weller's *Moonchildren*. **1986:** Amlin Gray's *How I Got That Story*; William Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale*; Eugene O'Neill's *Beyond the Horizon*. **1987:** Michael Weller's *Loose Ends*; Aristophanes' *The Wasps*; Larry Kramer's *The Normal Heart*; Arthur Schnitzler's *Anatol*. **1988:** Wallace Shawn's *Aunt Dan and Lemon*; Dylan Thomas' *Under Milk Wood*; Moss Hart's *Light Up the Sky*; Jean Racine's *Phaedra*; Jean-Baptiste Molière's *The Misanthrope*. **1989:** Caryl Churchill's *Fen*; Charles Ludlam's *The Artificial Jungle*; William Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*. **1990:** Eric Overmeyer's *On the Verge*; Eugene O'Neill's *Long Day's Journey Into Night*; Milan Kundera's *Jacques and His Master*; Tom White's *The Trouble with Tofu*; William Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*. **1991:** George Kelly's *The Show-Off*; George Bernard Shaw's *Mrs. Warren's Profession*; Keith Reddin's *Life and Limb*; Mozart/Lorenzo da Ponte's *Così fan Tutte*; Jean-Baptiste Molière's *The Learned Ladies*. **1992:** Alan Ayckbourn's *Woman in Mind*; Carlo Gozzi's *The Raven*; Henrik Ibsen's *The Wild Duck*; Charles MacArthur's *Johnny on a Spot*; George Farquhar's *The Recruiting Officer*. **1993:** Timberlake Wertenbaker's *Our Country's Good*; Charles Ludlam's *The Secret Lives of the Sexists*; Tennessee Williams' *Orpheus Descending*. **1994:** Constance Congdon's *Tales of the Lost Formicans*; William Shakespeare's *Cymbeline*; George M. Cohan's *The Tavern*; Marlayne Meyer's *Etta Jenks*. **1995:** Pierre Marivaux's *The Triumph of Love*; Tom Stoppard's *Travesties*; Larry Kramer's *The Destiny of Me*; Alexander Ostrovsky's *The Diary of a Scoundrel*. **1996:** Caryl Churchill's *Mad Forest*; Agatha Christie's *Black Coffee*; William Congreve's *The Way of the World*. **1997:** Terrence McNally's *A Perfect Ganesh*; Dorothy Parker's *Here We Are*; Alan Ayckbourn's *Drinking Companion*; Terrence McNally's *Noon*; George M. Cohan's *Seven Keys to Baldpate*; Sean O'Casey's *Juno and the Paycock*. **1998:** Tom Stoppard's *Arcadia*; Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*; Giles Havergal's *Travels with my Aunt*; Arthur Miller's *All My Sons*. **1999:** Edit Villareal's *My Visits with MGM*; Jean-Baptiste Molière's *The Hypochondriac* (tr. Martin Sorrel); Edward Percy and Reginald Denham's *Ladies in Retirement*; Anton Chekhov's *Uncle Vanya*. **2000:** Peter Parnell's *The Rise and Rise of Daniel Rocket*; Ann Ciccolella's *Fruits and Vegetables*; George S. Kaufman and Marc Connelly's *Merton of the Movies*; Martin McDonagh's *The Cripple of Inishmaan*. **2001:** Milcha Sanchez-Scott's *Roosters*; George Bernard Shaw's *The Devil's Disciple*; J. B. Priestley's *Dangerous Corner*; Tennessee Williams' *Summer and Smoke*. **2002:** Ann Ciccolella's *Madame X*; David Lindsay-Abaire's *Fuddy Meers*; Agatha Christie's *The Unexpected Guest*; Federico Garcia Lorca's *The House of Bernarda Alba*. **2003:** Christopher Durang's *Betty's Summer Vacation*; Horton Foote's *The Traveling Lady*; William Shakespeare's *Two Gentlemen of Verona*; Oscar Wilde's *An Ideal Husband*. **2004:** John Patrick's *The Hasty Heart*; Tom White's *The Misses Overbeck*; Brian Friel's *Molly Sweeney*; George Bernard Shaw's *Arms and the Man*. **2005:** William Shakespeare's *Pericles, Prince of Tyre*; Edit Villareal's *Marriage is Forever*; Agatha Christie's *Appointment with Death*; John Millington Synge's *The Playboy of the Western World*. **2006:** *Two into War (The Gifts of War and The Retreating World)*; Amy Freed's *The Beard of Avon*; Agatha Christie's *The Hollow*; Christopher Durang's *Mrs. Bob Cratchit's Wild Christmas Binge*. **2007:** Edward Albee's *The Goat or Who is Sylvia?*; Peter Shaffer's *Lettice and Lovage*; W. Somerset Maugham's *The Constant Wife*. **2008:** Tennessee Williams' *Garden District: Something Unspoken & Suddenly Last Summer*; Diana Son's *Stop Kiss*; Tom White's *What I Want Right Now*; George Bernard Shaw's *Getting Married*. **2009:** Christopher Durang's *Miss Witherspoon*; Caryl Churchill's *A Number*; J.B. Priestley's *An Inspector Calls*; Thornton Wilder's *The Skin of Our Teeth*; **2010:** Sarah Ruhl's *Eurydice*; Horton Foote's *The Carpetbagger's Children*