

Different Stages presents

Miss Witherspoon

by Christopher Durang

Director Karen M. Jam bon
Stage Manager Jonathan Urso
Scenic Design Laura Sandberg
Light Design Bill Peeler
Sound Design Jeff Miller
Costume Design MarannFaget and Paula Gilbert

CAST

Veronica (Miss Witherspoon) Jennifer Underwood
Maryamma Suzanne Balling
Mother 1 & 2, Chicken Camille Latour
Father 1 & 2, Sleazy Man, Gandalf, Dog Owner Derek Jones
Teacher, Woman in a Hat Patricia Robinson

Time: Recent Past, Forseeable Future (1998, 2005, and beyond)
Place: Earth, and not Earth

PRODUCTION STAFF

Running Crew Martina Olhauser, Tiffany James,
..... Amy Lewis and Carol Ginn
Web MasterjEmail Administration Martina Olhauser
Graphic Design Sarah Seaton
Photographer Bret Brookshire
Program Design Emily Erington

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND SPECIAL THANKS

Binita Lamsal
Bonnie Cullum & The Vortex
Cedar Stevens

**NOTE: There will be brief use of a strobe light
and cigarette smoking during the performance.**

Produced by special arrangement with Samuel French, Inc.

ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT

Christopher Durang

Bio provided by Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia.

Durang was born in Montclair, New Jersey, the son of Patricia Elizabeth, a secretary, and architect Francis Ferdinand Durang, Jr. He grew up in Berkeley Heights. He attended Catholic schools as a child, including the Our Lady of Peace School in New Providence, New Jersey. He received a B.A. in English from Harvard and an M.F.A. in playwriting from Yale School of Drama. He lives in Bucks County with his partner, John Augustine; they have been together for 20 years.

His work often deals critically with issues of child abuse, Roman Catholic dogma and culture, and homosexuality.

His plays have been performed nationwide, including on Broadway and Off-Broadway. His works include *Sister Mary Ignatius Explains It All for You*, *Beyond Therapy*, *Baby With the Bathwater*, *The Nature and Purpose of the Universe*, *Titanic*, *A History of the American Film*, *The Idiots Karamazov*, *The Marriage of Bette and Boo*, *Laughing Wild*, *'Dentity Crisis*, *The Actor's Nightmare*, *The Vietnamization of New Jersey*, *Betty's Summer Vacation*, *Adrift in Macao*, *Mrs. Bob Cratchit's Wild Christmas Binge*, *Miss Witherspoon*, and a collection of one-act parodies meant to be performed in one evening entitled Durangj Durang that includes *Mrs. Sorken*, *For Whom The Southern Belle Tolls* (a parody of *The Glass Menagerie* by Tennessee Williams), *A Styx Of the Eye*, *Nina in the Morning*, *Wanda's Visit*, and *Business Lunch at the Russian Tea Room*.

Durang has performed as an actor for both stage and screen. He first came to prominence in his Off-Broadway satirical review *Das Lusitania Songspiel*, which he performed with friend and fellow Yale alumna, Sigourney Weaver. Later he co-starred in one of his own plays as Matt in *The Marriage of Bette and Boo*.

Durang has denounced the Robert Altman 1987 film adaptation of *Beyond Therapy*, calling it "horrific" and accusing Altman of totally rewriting the script "so that all psychology is thrown out the window, and the characters dash around acting crazy but with literally no behavioral logic underneath."

Durang has appeared as an actor in the 1987 comedy *The Secret of My Success* and 1989's *Penn & Teller Get Killed*.

He has also written a number of unproduced screenplays, including *The Nun Who Shot Liberty Valence*, *The House of Husbands* (which

he co-authored with Wendy Wasserstein), and *The Adventures of Lola*.

He received Obie Awards for *Sister Mary Ignatius Explains It All For You*, *The Marriage of Bette and Boo* and *Betty's Summer Vacation*. He received a nomination for a Tony Award for Best Book of a Musical for *A History of the American Film*.

Durang has been awarded numerous fellowships and high profile grants including a Guggenheim, a Rockefeller, the CBS Playwriting Fellowship, the Lecomte du Nouy Foundation grant, and the Kenyon Festival Theatre Playwriting Prize.

He is a member of the Dramatists Guild Council, and is co-chair of the playwriting program at Juilliard. He was also a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in Drama in 2006 for *Miss Witherspoon*.

CAST

JENNIFER UNDERWOOD (Miss Witherspoon) last appeared with Different Stages as Mrs. Venable in their production of *Suddenly Last Summer*. Other Different Stages productions include Lotte Shoen in *Lettice and Lovage*, Queen Elizabeth I in *The Beard of Avon*, Catherin Petkoff in *Arms and the Man*, Mrs. Siezmagraff in *Betty's Summer Vacation* for which she won the B. Iden Payne Award as Outstanding Actress in a Comedy, the title role in *The House of Bernarda Alba*, Gertie in *Fuddy Meers*, Mrs. Dudgeon in *The Devil's Disciple*, Kate in *The Cripple of Inishmann*, Kate in *All My Sons* and Norma in *The Misses Overbeck*. Other Austin area productions include The Duchess in *The Casket of Passing Fancy*, Mag in *The Beauty Queen of Leenane*, for which the B. Iden Payne was awarded for The Best Outstanding Cast, Kate in *Dancing at Lughnasa*, Vera in *Auntie Mame*, Sis in *Queen of Bingo*, Big Mama in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, Melissa in *Love Letters*, Bessie in *Marvin's Room*, Elizabeth in *The Petition*, Betty in *The Effect of Gamma Rays on Man-in-the-Moon-Mari-golds*, and Evie in *The Gingerbread Lady*.

DEREK JONES (Father 1 & 2, Sleazy Man, Gandalf, Dog Owner) is grateful for the opportunity to work with Different Stages and this amazingly talented cast and company. Recent roles include Eddie in *Musical Comedy Murders of 1940* at The Palace Theatre in Georgetown, Doc Porter in *Crimes of the Heart* at City Theatre, and Axel in NxNW Theatre's inaugural production of *The Nerd*. Other favorites are Cesar Rodney in *1776*, Bernard in Tom Stoppard's *Arcadia*, and Colonel Nathan Jessup in *A Few Good Men*. He has been involved in the performing arts for almost 30 years in a wide

variety of capacities and roles, including acting, producing, directing and writing. Older Austinites might remember him from such productions as *Deathtrap* and *Butterflies Are Free* with Sam Bass in Round Rock, and *What the Butler Saw* at Zach Scott Theater. His true enjoyment, however, comes from spending time with his two incredible children, Katrina and Benjamin.

SUZANNE BALLING (Maryamma) was last seen as Olivia in the Scottish Rite Theatre's production of *Twelfth Night*. Before moving to Austin, Suzanne performed in numerous productions in New York, Houston, and her home town of Galveston, including the world premiere of Richard Foreman and Phillip Johnston's jazz opera *Young Goodman Brown*. She would like to thank Jamie, Sadie, and Jones for giving her time off for rehearsals.

CAMILLE LATOUR (Mother 1 & 2, Chicken) is absolutely delighted to be working with the talented artists at Different Stages. You may have seen her last summer in Tongue and Groove Theater's *The Red Balloon*, directed by David Yeakle. Camille enjoys both stage and commercial acting, as well as opera singing. Her training includes Bennington College, San Francisco's Acting Conservatory Theater, CBS studios, and Austin Lyric Opera (2008 Masterclass). Camille has been an avid Christopher Durang fan ever since she played Charlotte in Durang's *Beyond Therapy*, directed by Guy Roberts. Other favorite roles include Polly Peachum in *The Three Penny Opera*, Sybil in *Private Lives*, Elvira in *Blithe Spirit*, Dynamene in *A Phoenix Too Frequent* directed by Shelby Brammer, and Heather McNamara in Yellow Tape Construction Co.'s original show: *I Love My Dead Gay Son*, *The Musical*, directed by Jonathon Morgan. Camille would like to thank Karen Jambon, Norman Blumensaadt, and the cast and crew for the opportunity and pleasure of such an enjoyable artistic collaboration. Thanks also goes to Erin Franklin at Agence Talent, as well as Liz Cass and Melinda Brou at Austin Lyric Opera for artistic guidance and opportunities. Camille dedicates her performances to the girls (Michele, Sam, Emily, Hilary, Erica, Jennie and Miss Molly) and the "boyz" (Matt, Jorge, and Edward) for their love, friendship, and support.

PATRICIA ROBINSON (Teacher, Woman in a Hat) has trained with many of Austin's top acting coaches, both privately and through the State Theatre, such as Step Rowe, Van Brooks, Ben Taylor, Peyton Hayslip and Patricia Percy. Some of her credits include Cleopatra in *Antony And Cleopatra*, The Nurse in *Romeo And Juliet* with The Velvet Rut Theatre, The Bride in *Death and The King's Horseman*

with Mary Moody Theatre, various roles in *The Dragonfly Princess* with The Vortex Theatre, as well as various roles in Pollyanna Theatre Group's *The Monologue Project*. She's very excited about working with Different Stages on this production and would like to thank Karen and Norman for giving her this opportunity. She would also like to thank the real God, her family and friends for their blessings and support.

DIRECTION AND DESIGN

NORMAN BLUMENSAADT (Producer) is the Producing Artistic Director for Different Stages. As an actor he has worked in Shakespeare Festivals in Odessa, Tx, Madison, New Jersey and Dallas, Tx. For Different Stages he has recently appeared in *The Miser*, *Arms and the Man* and *The Playboy of the Western World*. Among the numerous shows that he has directed are *The House of Bernarda Alba*, *An Ideal Husband*, *The Beard of Avon*, *The Hollow* and *The Constant Wife*. In celebration of his long and outstanding work in the Austin theater scene, the Austin Circle of Theaters bestowed upon Norman the 1998 Deacon Crain/John Bustin Award. His production of *The Goat or Who is Sylvia* won the 2006-2007 ACOT Award for Best Production of a Drama. This season he directs George Bernard Shaw's *Getting Married* and J. B. Priestley's thriller *An Inspector Calls*.

KAREN M. JAMBON (Director) This is the third Christopher Durang play that Karen has directed for Different Stages, having previously directed *Mrs Bob Cratchit's Wild Christmas Binge* and *Betty's Summer Vacation*. Karen has most recently directed *Third* for Paradox Players, *Stop Kiss* for Different Stages, *Five Women Wearing the Same Dress* for North By Northwest and *Little Murders* for Loaded Gun Theory. As always, thanks to the incredibly talented and committed cast and crew for their dedication to the creative process.

LAURA J. SANDBERG (Scenic Designer) has spent most of her life doing theatre work, on stage, back stage, where her insanity was most needed. From playing a ducking to making Sea Witch masks or rabbit puppets or pop-up swans, she has been willing to do all sorts of madness around the Austin theatre scene for the past twenty years. Favorite design credits include: *The Snow Queen*, *Bremen Town Musicians*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *The Dragon King*, *Gary Grinkles' Battles with Wrinkles* (Second Youth Family Theatre), *Mad Forest*, *Mrs. Bob*

Cratchit's Wild Christmas Binge, *Etta Jenks*, (Different Stages), *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, *The Fantasticks* (St Andrews Upper School).

BILL PEELER (Lighting Design) is a faculty member with the Texas State University Department of Theatre and Dance. He has over 25 years experience as a lighting designer, holding both national and international credits, including *Uncle Vanya* with the National Theatre Company of Costa Rica, a four-year stint lighting the International Bluegrass Music Awards Show, in addition to *Trying* and *Men of Tortuga* for the Asolo Rep in Sarasota, Florida. Among his Austin area credits are the world premier productions of *Sonny's Last Shot* at the State Theatre, Austin, Texas, *A Ride With Bob* featuring Grammy award winning Ray Benson and Asleep at the Wheel, culminating in a run at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., and six previous shows for Different Stages. For the last five summers, Bill's design work, involving both conventional and automated lighting, has been seen in San Jose, Costa Rica, while serving as a director and faculty member with the Institute for Digital-Performing Arts.

MARANN FAGET (Costume Design) is the resident Costume Designer for the Rochester Civic Theatre in Rochester, Minnesota. Austin Credits include: Pro-Arts Collective, Austin Lyric Opera, Sam Bass Theater, Storie Productions, Refraction Arts' critically acclaimed *Philomel Project*, One World Theatre: *Groucho* (starring Gabe Kaplan), Zachary Scott Theater, and Oracle Theater. Regional Credits include: Colorado: Windsor Community Playhouse: *A Delicate Balance*, *Ten Little Indians*, *Relatively Speaking*. Bas Bleu Theatre: *The Caretaker*, *Trifles*. Minnesota: Resident Costume Designer (1989-1995) at Rochester Community College: *Spoon River Anthology*, *Veronica's Room*, *Lunacy*, *Tobacco Road*, *Luv*. Rochester Civic Theater: *A Shayna Maidel*. Rochester Repertory Theatre: *Lone Star*, *Laundry and Bourbon*, *Agnes of God*, *Private Wars*. Feast and Footlights Theater: *Steel Magnolias*. International Credits include: Greece: Chios Civic Theater: *Kidnapping of the Pope*, *Arsenic and Old Lace*. Marann has four children and one grand-daughter, and loves to play poker.

ACORN DESIGNS, LLC (Sound Design) is a Sound Design and Consulting firm with over 30 years of experience in theatre sound design and concert sound and has recently moved into retail sales. Acorn Designs was founded by Sound Designer Jeff Miller to provide an affordable sound alternative for the non-profit arts. Jeff served as Sound Engineer on the Broadway & National Tours of: *A Chorus Line*, *Zorba*, *South Pacific*, *Singin' in the Rain*, and *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*. He has also done sound for numerous films, videos,

national commercials, and industrial shows. Jeff's regional credits for Sound Design include: Zachary Scott Theatre's *Little Shop of Horrors*, *Master Class*, *Circumference of a Squirrel*, *Evita*, *Blues in the Night*, *The Taffetas*, *Forever Plaid*, *The Piano Lesson*, *Jack and Jill*, *Rockin' Christmas Party*, *Sylvia*, *All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten*, *Born Yesterday*, *Sisters Rosensweig*, *Shear Madness*, *Keely and Du*, and *Buddy: The Buddy Holly Story*, for Capitol City Playhouse's *Always ... Patsy Cline*, Austin Theatre for Youth's *The Hardy Boys and the Mystery of the Haunted House* and *The Velveteen Rabbit*, Summer Stock Austin's *West Side Story*, Second Youth Family Theatre's *Wiley and the Hairy Man* and Theatre at the J's *A My Name Is Alice*, *Cabaret*, *Joseph And The Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, *You're A Good Man Charlie Brown*, *Frog And Toad*, *Suessical*, and *Singin' In The Rain*. Jeff has also worked as a sound engineer for *Forever Plaid*, *Beehive*, *Soul Sisters*. Jeff has degrees in electrical engineering and computer science. He is an accomplished musician who plays the tuba and string bass.

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

Norman Blumensaadt

Board of Directors

Karen Jambon, T.J. Moreno, Norman Blumensaadt

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Norman Blumensaadt, Sarah Seaton,
Royce Gehrels, and Paula Ruth Gilbert