



The Unexpected Guest

by Agatha Christie

by arrangement with ORiGiN Theatrical
on behalf of Samuel French Ltd

14th July - 1st September

Director's Note

I have a very vivid memory of reading my first Agatha Christie - I was eleven years old and it was *Nemesis*, a Miss Marple mystery that was on my grandmother's shelf. I remember the feelings of excited uncertainty and the sheer disbelief that the mystery could be solved, and now, twelve years later, I've caught myself feeling similar as we have made our way through the rehearsal process.

The Unexpected Guest is a rare treat, having being written by Christie herself. Many of the theatrical versions of her stories have been adapted from the original novel, however *The Unexpected Guest* shows off Christie's skills as a dramatist and offers a unique insight into the delicate crafting of suspicion, motive and quiet domesticity that the Dame was so famed for.

We have spent a great deal of time in rehearsal focusing on the relationships throughout this play; developing, cultivating and exploring the ways in which seemingly archetypal characters can become living, breathing products of their environment and relationships. I can only give my greatest thanks to the cast for their openness, dedication, and good humour. It has been so wonderful to work with such a large ensemble, and even more so with the incomparable Sandra Bass by my side. I am delighted to work with Sandra once again, having appeared on stage with her in *A Murder Is Announced* (another Agatha!) in 2017 at the Genesisian.

I have been unbelievably lucky with the talented and dedicated cast and crew that have been assembled for this production, and I hope you enjoy the show as much as I have enjoyed working with them to bring it to life.

Jess Davis
Director

Scene Synopsis

Act 1, Scene 1: Richard Warwick's study at Llangelert House, Wales. 11.30pm, November.

Act 1, Scene 2: The following day, morning.

Act 2, Scene 1: Evening.

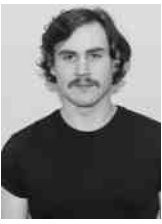
JESS DAVIS - Director Jess is a 2018 graduate of the University of New England with a Bachelor of Theatre and Performance. Whilst at university, her directing highlights included *Manhole* by Alan Locke and Assistant Director to Dr Julie Shearer on Christine Evans' *Trojan Barbie*. In Sydney, Jess has directed *Hairworm* by Emma Wright (Old 505 Theatre/Apocalypse Theatre Company, Rapid Reads 2018), *Come Die With Me* by Vicki Connerty (Short+Sweet 2018, People's Choice Finals), *The Bear* and *The Proposal* by Anton Chekhov (Genesian Theatre, workshop 2017). She is disappointed that Agatha has, once again, declined the offer to attend the staging of one of her plays at the Genesian Theatre, however understands that the Dame is otherwise engaged.

SANDRA BASS - Assistant Director Sandra is familiar to Genesian audiences as an actress, but she has also made significant contributions to the Theatre behind the scenes where her attention to detail has helped with costuming and stagecraft in period plays. She and Jess Davis acted together in *A Murder is Announced*, forging a directorial partnership to explore the basic realism of the Agatha Christie characterisations.

DEBBIE SMITH - Set Design Debbie has been a member of the Genesian Theatre for over 20 years, is a current board member and was recently awarded Life Membership. She is better known as a director at the GTC - *Journey's End*, *Frankenstein*, *Far from the Madding Crowd*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Enchanted April*, and *Cards on the Table* to name a few. As a set designer on her own shows, Debbie prefers stylized and non-realistic sets. However, she is always keen to design for an Aggy production. She has also designed *Cards on the Table* and *Intent to Murder* for the GTC. Currently she is directing *Elephant Man* (PACT Theatre) opening this August.

SUSAN CARVETH - Costume Design Susan Carveth has worked as designer and costumier for *Figaro*, *Under Milkwood*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *The Three Musketeers*, *Far from the Madding Crowd*, *Appointment with Death*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Our House*, *A Man for All Seasons*, *An Ideal Husband*, *Dead White Males*, *Crown Matrimonial*, *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll*, *By Jeeves*, *Witness for the Prosecution*, *Hay Fever*, *Murder on the Nile*, *Star Child*, *Morning Sacrifice*, *Richard III*, *Frankenstein*, *Twelfth Night*, *Forsythe Saga*, *The 39 Steps*, *Blood Wedding*, *The House of Bernarda Alba*, *Go Back for Murder*, and *Travelling North*. She has also worked for Opera Australia, ABC and BBC as costume co-ordinator and costume maker for Tall Poppeas, Ondine Productions, Opera Bites, and Blancmange Productions *Deadhouse*.

MICHAEL SCHELL - Lighting and Sound Design Michael has been a member of the Genesian Theatre for over 40 years. A professional Sound and Lighting Designer, his Genesian credits include *Great Expectations*, *St Joan*, *The 39 Steps*, *Terra Nova*, *Frankenstein*, and *Sherlock Holmes: The Final Adventure*. Other recent Genesian sound design credits include *Pride and Prejudice*, *The Mousetrap*, *Crown Matrimonial*, *Spider's Web*, *Three Sisters*, *Our House*, *Dracula*, and *Sherlock Holmes and the Speckled Band*.



HARRY TAYLOR - Michael Starkwedder Harry Taylor is making his theatrical debut at the Genesian Theatre. This will be his first time performing on Australian soil. Harry was born in Sydney then he moved with his family to Provence, France. He learnt to speak fluent French while attending school but finished his final years of education at Cheltenham College in England. Harry received a scholarship to attend the American Academy of Dramatic Arts in Los Angeles for three years. His favourite roles were Cassio in *Othello* and George McBrain in *The Comedians*. Harry would like to dedicate his performance to his Mum and Sister and other members of his family.

ALEXANDRA KELLY - Laura Warwick Alexandra is a performer and theatre maker. She has a Bachelor of Arts in Theatre and a Diploma in Classical Acting from LAMDA. This is Alexandra's first show at the Genesian. Her theatre credits include Lear in *King Lear*, Cherry in *The Beaux Stratagem*, AJ in *Whipped*, Physical Theatre Ensemble in *Word Made Flesh*, Maid in *Three Sisters* for Sport for Jove, Cara in *Voices*, Rachel in *13*, and Vera in *A Month in the Country*. Alexandra's first feature film was *Zelos* (2017). Alexandra also directs and has a passion for physical theatre and Shakespeare. Alexandra is an MEAA Member.



ANNA DESJARDINS - Miss Bennett Since her first role as the Little Mouse Deer in her Year 3 class play, Anna has been an acting aficionado. From devoted teenage re-enactments of Monty Python skits to Shakespeare at the Seymour Centre with the Sydney University Dramatic Society, she has dabbled in drama on every scale. Most recently, she has performed in *Ruddigore*, *Kiss Me Kate*, and *Cinderella* with the Eastwood Uniting Church Musical Society and *Moon Over Buffalo* with Hunters Hill Theatre. *The Unexpected Guest* now marks her first Agatha Christie and her first performance with the Genesians.

RAVEL BALKUS - Jan Warwick Ravel Balkus is a Year 11 student at Chatswood High School. Ravel began acting in his primary school's annual productions of Shakespeare, performing in five altogether throughout his junior school career. From then, Ravel has attended many different in school and out of school acting workshops, both at the McDonald College of Performing Arts and NIDA. In 2015, Ravel starred in Nanette Frew's rendition of Terence Rattigan's *The Winslow Boy* at the Genesian Theatre. In 2017, Ravel was selected into NIDA's Young Actor's Studio where he studied for a year. *The Unexpected Guest* is his second Genesian Theatre production.



TRICIA YOULDEN - Mrs Warwick Tricia has worked in theatre in various capacities since her undergraduate days in SUDS last century. More recent performances include numerous "lawyer" plays by Tony Laumberg, *Plaything* by Simon Dodd, *Postnuptials* by David Earle, *Horizons* by Roger Gimblett; *The Art of Success* by Nick Dear and *Nasty Neighbours* by Debbie Isitt for UFT Productions; *Cymbeline* for Factory Space; *Cries* by Clem Gorman; *Big Horn* and *Page 7 Bottom Left* by Paul Rogers; for the New Theatre *Pacific Union* by Alex Buzo, *Portrait of an Artist* by Alan Kelley and *King Lear*. Tricia is a proud member of MEAA.



PETER DAVID ALLISON - Henry Angell Peter David Allison graduated from Wesley Institute (now Excelsia College) with a Bachelor of Drama in 2010. Recent credits include *Orpheus in the Underworld* (2016), *Wemmicks* (2016), *Romeo and Juliet* (2016), *The Great Divorce* (2016), *Journey's End* (2017), *A Murder is Announced* (2017), *Rossum's Universal Robots* (2017), *August: Osage County* (2017), *The Woman in Black* (2017), *The Real Inspector Hound* (2017), *Dracula* (2018) and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (2018). His twin appearances in Short+Sweet 2018, in *Come Die With Me* and *The Origin of the Species* saw him nominated for Best New Talent at the Gala finals.

PATRICK GALLAGHER - Sergeant Cadwallader Patrick Gallagher is an actor, writer and director who has been involved in theatre for over a decade. His recent roles have been Harry Hope in *The Iceman Cometh*, the Earl of Gloucester in *King Lear*, the Colonel in *Journey's End*, various roles in *Our Town*, and in a wide range of student projects. These have all been with Macquarie University's theatrical society, where he has written and directed five other plays. He is excited to be working with the Genesian Theatre Company for the first time.



RICHARD COTTER - Inspector Thomas Richard's theatre credits include, for Genesian Theatre Company: *Tons of Money* and *By Jeeves*. For New Theatre: *King Lear* and *School for Scandal*; at Seymour Centre: *Breaker Morant*, *Journey's End*, and *The Art of Success*. At Depot Theatre: *The Days Are As Grass*; at Old 505: *Jack Data*; At Belvoir: *Edmond*; at PACT *King Lear* and *Gold, Golden Earrings*; at Bondi Pavilion: *Reunion* and *Dark Pony*; at Enmore Theatre: *Amadeus*; at King Street Theatre: *Nasty Neighbours* and *The Last Days of Judas Iscariot*; for BTC: *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Clan*, and *The Case of the Metaphysical Whore*.

THOMAS SOUTHWELL - Julian Farrar Thomas began an active interest in theatre with Marian Street Theatre for Young People (*The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, *Danny in the Toybox*), afterwards involving himself primarily with Macquarie University's student groups DRAMAC, MacMS, and Shakespeare MQ. Notable performance credits amongst these include *King Lear*, *Pygmalion*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Carrie: The Musical*, *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*, *The Yellow Wallpaper*, *As You Like It*, and *Dracula* (as adapted by Richard Sharpe). This is Thomas' first role in a Genesian Theatre production.



Production

Director

Jess Davis

Assistant Director

Sandra Bass

Set Design

Debbie Smith

Costume Design

Susan Carveth

Lighting and Sound Design

Michael Schell

Production Manager

Debbie Smith

Set Construction

**Emma Wright, Tom Fahy, Garry Bates,
Michael Dengler, Mark Nagle, Grant Fraser,
Eoin O'Sullivan, Debbie Smith,
Members of the Company**

Hair & Makeup

Kristen Elkin

Photography

Craig O'Regan, Emma Wright

Graphic Design

Patrick Magee, Tom Massey

Ticketing

Shane Bates

Transport

Debbie Smith

Acknowledgements

**Carlin Hurdis, Mark Nagle,
Jonty Davies-Conyngham, Paul Barbary,
Dani Brown, Steve Holland, Rob Drew,
Amy Roberts**

Crew

Stage Manager

Elizabeth Munro

Lighting and Sound Operation

Alexis Worthing

Cast

Michael Starkwedder

Harry Taylor

Laura Warwick

Alexandra Kelly

Miss Bennett

Anna Desjardins

Jan Warwick

Ravel Balkus

Mrs Warwick

Tricia Youlden

Henry Angell

Peter David Allison

Sergeant Cadwallader

Patrick Gallagher

Inspector Thomas

Richard Cotter

Julian Farrar

Thomas Southwell

About the Genesian Theatre

The Genesian Theatre Company celebrated our 70th year as a company in 2014. For over 60 years we have been operating from our home at 420 Kent St in the Sydney CBD. We boast among our alumni numerous household names in Australian theatre and film such as Angela Punch, Bryan Brown, Baz Luhrmann, Coral Lansbury, Judi Farr, John Bell, Peter Carroll, and Nick Enright. We are also just as proud of the hundreds of other talented actors, directors, stage managers, set and costume designers, lighting and sound specialists, stage and production staff who have contributed to Sydney's unique little theatre. We are particularly proud of all our members who volunteer their time to work Front of House to help you enjoy your visit to the Genesian Theatre.

Over the years the company has developed into a theatre providing a training ground for young theatre professionals and a place where those who love the theatre can meet, share, and extend their knowledge of the performing arts. The Genesian Theatre Company is one of Sydney's most active theatre companies. In addition to six main stage productions each year we run classes, workshops, and many other activities.

The building which houses the Genesian Theatre Company was originally St John's Church, and dates from 1868. It served as both a church and a poor school until 1932 when it became the Kursaal Theatre, housing the Sydney Repertory Company. In 1938 it became the first Matthew Talbot Hostel. Since 1954 it has been the home of the Genesian Theatre Company which was formed in 1944.

The Genesian Theatre Company acknowledges the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation as the traditional custodians of the land our theatre stands on.

Membership

If you're interested in acting, directing, stage management, sound, lights, publicity, admin, etc, or if you just want to experience being a member of the group, we would welcome you as a member. You don't need to be experienced, we can provide training and can cater to different levels of involvement. Please see our web site for further information.

Coming next to
the Genesisian...

The Ghost Train

By Arnold Ridley