



Lex-Ham Community Theater

Witness for the Prosecution

by Agatha Christie

Directed by Brian P. Joyce

Wellstone Center Auditorium - 179 Robie St E, St Paul - October 4-12, 2019

7:30 p.m., October 4, 5, 10, 11, 12
2:00 p.m., Sunday, October 6

Wellstone Center Auditorium
179 Robie Street E, Saint Paul

Witness for the Prosecution is presented by special arrangement with Samuel French, Inc.

Lex-Ham Community Theater

presents

Witness for the Prosecution

by

Agatha Christie

Cast Members

Character	Actor
Inspector Hearne	Stuart Alger
Mr. Justice Wainwright	Jeff Altier
Romaine	Alison Anderson
Carter	James Patrick "J.P." Barone
Clerk/Usher	Maureen L. Bourgeois
Juror	Wen Bu
Greta	Lois Estell
Janet Mackenzie	Deborah Frethem
Jury Foreman	Daniel Hildebrand
Leonard Vole	Nate Johnson
Dr. Wyatt	Janelle Jones
Mr. Myers, Q.C.	Ryan D. Maddux
Policeman/Warder	Andrew Nawrocki
Sir Wilfred Robarts, Q.C.	Thom Pinault
Miss Clegg	Piper Quinn
Girl	Gina Rice
Mr. Mayhew	Charles Shoemaker

Production and Design Team

Brian P. Joyce	Director
Amanda Oporto	Stage Manager
Tim Payton	Set Designer
Shane Cooley, Dutton Foster, Steve Hermansen	Construction Crew
Catelyn Czywczynski	Costume Designer
Jake Otto	Lighting Designer
Ducky Bailey, Katie Shook	Tech crew
Joel Raney	Dialect Coach
Urban Landreman	Producer

After the Sunday, October 6 performance there will be a conversation with
Ramsey County District Court Judge Mark Ireland;
Asst County Attorney Sarah Cory, Assistant Director - Criminal Division, Ramsey County Attorney's Office; and
Jack Rice - criminal defense attorney

Act 1 -The chambers of Sir Wilfred Robarts, Q.C. Afternoon

There will be a 10-minute intermission

Act 2 - The Central Criminal Court, London, better known as the Old Bailey
Six weeks later. Morning

There will be a 10-minute intermission

Act 3, Scene 1 - The chambers of Sir Wilfred Robarts, Q.C. The same evening
Act 3, Scene 2 - The Old Bailey. The next morning



*Do not text or take photos or videos during the performance.
Please turn off or silence cell phones.*

Director's Note

Witness for the Prosecution is one of the many plays and novels written by Agatha Christie. Her genre of choice was mystery and she is considered the greatest in her field. *Witness for the Prosecution* followed *The Mousetrap* which has been in continuous production in London since 1952.

Witness for the Prosecution is the story of murder, deception, misrepresentations, betrayal, and a woman's wrath. Thank you for joining us and enjoy the show.

Brian P. Joyce

May - September Romance

One of the key points in *Witness for the Prosecution* is the age difference between Emily French and Leonard Vole. Two other people involved in May-September relationships are referenced in the story - that of Baroness Angela Burdett-Coutts and Benjamin Disraeli.



Angela Burdett-Coutts was born in 1814 to a wealthy English family and eventually inherited a vast wealth. She used her wealth to purchase artwork, but also to fund many philanthropic causes including a safe home for former prostitutes, many churches, and efforts to stop cruelty to children and to animals. When she was 67, after scorning many suitors throughout her life, she married her 29-year old American secretary, William Bartlett.

Benjamin Disraeli served as the British Prime Minister twice in the last half of the 19th century. Disraeli was a dominant force in Conservative politics and is often cited for his philosophical battles over many years with the leader of the Liberals, William Gladstone. When Disraeli was 35 and in the early years of his political life, he married Mary Ann Lewis - a widow who was 12 years his senior.



Cast and Design Team Members



Stuart Alger (Inspector Hearne) has performed in several Lex-Ham Community Theater productions, including *Bullets and Beauties*, *State of the Union*, *The First Man*, *Front Page*, *Assorted Spirits*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, and *First Lady*. He has performed in several trial re-enactments at the St. Paul Landmark Center, and he and his son Jack performed together in the St. Luke's musical *Beauty and the Beast*. He thanks his wife Patricia for all her enthusiastic support, and the talented cast and crew of *Witness for the Prosecution* for making this a wonderful show.



Jeff Altier (Mr. Justice Wainwright) is in his first show with Lex-Ham. He has previously appeared on-stage at Shakespeare & Company, TRP, Lakeshore Players. He has now appeared in the big three by Christie-- *And Then There Were None*, *Mousetrap*, and now *Witness For the Prosecution*.



Allison Anderson (Romaine) is returning to Lex-Ham Community Theater after appearing in *The First Man* in 2014. She has appeared in various shows with local theaters including Theatre in the Round, Guthrie Theater, Cromulent Shakespeare Company, Freshwater Theatre, Shakespeare and Company, Lyric Arts, Theater Terra Firma, Stages Theater, the Minnesota Fringe Festival and others. She is a company member of both Fearless Comedy Productions and Smartmouth Comedy Company.



James Patrick "J.P." Barone (Carter) recently retired after 32 years as a Minnesota Assistant Attorney General. He has appeared in dozens of community theater productions and historical re-enactments. J.P. is happy to finally have a chance to be directed by Brian Joyce. He thanks his wife, Victoria Reinhardt, for her support.



Maureen L. Bourgeois (Clerk/Usher) is in her second year with Lex Ham Community Theater, having previously worked on the 2018 production of *First Lady* as Properties Assistant. Maureen has been seen onstage in *Pope Joan: The First Transgender Pope*, Theatre in the Round's *Murder on the Nile* and *Fahrenheit 451*, and as an extra in the one of the recent seasons of the web series *Theater People*. Maureen's other recent prop design work was seen in Theatre in the Round's production of *The Birds* and Mixed Blood Theatre's Prescient Harbingers trilogy (*Gloria*, *Hooded*, and *Hypeman*). In addition to performance and design, Maureen also enjoys writing plays and working with young performers.



Wen Bu (Juror) is a PhD student in social psychology at the University of Minnesota. This show is her yearly attempt to get back into theatre.



Catelyn Czywczynski (Costume Designer) began her costume career her freshman year at Concordia Academy in their production of *Beauty and the Beast*. She went on to work in costumes for five more shows, taking a break her junior year to appear in *Bye Bye Birdie*. Catelyn also won the highest award in costume management from the Spotlight Education program through the Hennepin Theatre Trust her senior year for her work in *Oklahoma*. Ms. Czywczynski currently works at Lakeshore Players Theatre in the box office and thanks you for supporting your local community theatre.



Lois Estell (Greta) received her BA in Theatre from Northwestern College in Orange City, Iowa where she had the opportunity to direct and act in numerous productions. Lois moved to the Twin Cities in the Fall of 2017 and has since performed with a variety of local theatre companies including Theatre in the Round, Lyric Arts, Lakeshore Players Theatre, Lex-Ham Community Theater, Woodbury Community Theatre and as a supernumerary with the Minnesota Opera.



Deborah Frethem (Janet Mackenzie) is originally from the Twin Cities, and has performed at several local theatres many years ago, including appearing in *The Dining Room* at Lex-Ham. After living in Florida for several years, she now spends half the year in Minnesota. Not quite retired, she is the author of three books published by History Press and works as a tour guide at the Wabasha Street Caves.



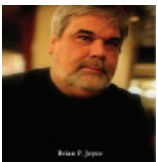
Dan Hildebrand (Jury Foreman) One of the most enjoyable aspects of performing arts for Dan is the community that is created by the interaction of the audience, the cast of performers, and the crew as a performance unfolds, and a singular piece of art is created and experienced exclusively by the people that came together to take part. He thanks you for joining us, supporting community theater, and becoming part of my community tonight.



Nate Johnson (Leonard Vole) is in his fourth Lex-Ham production. He is thrilled to be back working with such a talented group. Away from the stage, Nate is an attorney, a film and commercial actor, and founder of the nonprofit organization FreeWriters MN. He is grateful to his beautiful lady, Mela, for her love, support and patience these past several weeks.



Janelle Jones (Dr. Wyatt) is originally from New Jersey and has braved three Minnesota winters and two state fairs. Since moving to Minnesota, Janelle has played the roles of Juror #12 in *Twelve Angry Men*, Motormouth Maybelle in the musical *Hair Spray* and is excited about her current role as Dr. Wyatt in *Witness for the Prosecution*. Janelle is a psychiatric nurse practitioner and engages in the arts as a form of self-care. Janelle lives in Minneapolis with her energetic Maltipoo furbaby, Paisley Saint Paul.



Brian P. Joyce (Director) is excited to be directing his first production for Lex-Ham Community Theater. Brian is an actor and director in the Twin Cities. He made his stage debut at the age of four with Theatre Saint Paul. He received his BA in Theater from Bethel College. He has worked with Park Square, Theatre in the Round, Redeye, Gremlin, Lakeshore Players, New Native Theatre, Turtle Theater Collective and Shakespeare and Company. Brian has also worked in film, commercials and voice overs.



Urban Landreman (Producer) is happy to be involved with another Lex-Ham Community Theater production. His main role is finding lots of talented people for on- and off-stage, ensuring that everyone is on the same page for the vision for the show, giving them the resources needed to bring that vision to life, and then getting out of their way.



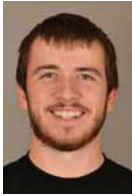
Ryan P. Maddux (Mr. Myers Q.C.) is excited to be working with Lex-Ham for the first time. He has numerous Twin Cities stage credits - seen most recently in *First Comes Love* for Minnesota Fringe Festival and as Watson in Lakeshore Players' production of *Baskerville: A Sherlock Holmes Mystery*. Ryan also enjoys working on local films and commercials. He holds a MA degree in theater arts from Humboldt State University (HSU). In addition to his acting experience, Ryan has directed and stage managed several productions. His teaching credits include acting courses in higher education and for several theatre companies. For fun, Ryan enjoys a variety of amateur seasonal activities like: hiking, kayaking, paddle-boarding.



Andrew Nawrocki (Policeman/Warder) has only recently returned to the theater (after a ten year hiatus) playing Mishkin in Neil Simon's *Fools* with Fridley Community Theater and Attie Van Leer in *Southern Fried Nuptials* at Northern Starz Theater. He lives in South Minneapolis with his husband and too many books to ever read and spends his free time doing yard work and being exhausted.



Amanda E. Oporto (Stage Manager) is delighted to return to Lex-Ham after stage managing last Fall's production of *First Lady*. Previously she was stage manager for *Red, Hot & Cole* and *The Metromanics* at Theatre in the Round, *Line of Sight* with Uprising Theatre Co., *Katie Versus the Devils* with Scared Hare Productions. This is Amanda's sixth production and second time stage managing with Lex-Ham Community Theater.



Jake Otto (Lighting Designer) is excited to be returning to work with Lex-Ham Community Theatre for this exciting mystery! He has been lucky to design with a variety of theaters and organizations including: Hamline University, Normandale Community College, Masquers Theatre, CB Productions, Uprising Theatre, Mosaic Productions, Phipps Center for the Arts, The Landmark Center, Sabes Jewish Community Theatre, Theatre Elision, Midwest Youth Dance Theatre, and Waconia Center for Dance Arts. Other areas that Jake enjoys working in are sound and lighting for live music, video design, sound design, fine woodworking, remodeling, and technical design/management of various events. Jake is also a photographer, focusing mostly on concert photos and portraits. See more at www.jakeotto.com.



Tim Payton (Set Designer) is involved with his fourth Lex-Ham production, and his third as Set Designer. Tim is a freelance Set Designer working primarily in and around Saint Paul. He has been building and designing set for over twenty years. Tim is currently the Technical Director for Saint Paul Central High School. Tim is a graduate of Concordia University with a Theater Arts Degree.



Thom Pinault (Sir Wilfred Roberts Q.C.) a Twin Cities actor since 1981, Thom has performed in such exotic places as Japan, before the now emperor, and New Jersey. Though most often seen at Theatre in the Round, he has worked with Lex-Ham twice before, once before the permanent Czech ambassador to the UN. Other Twin Cities venues worked at include Park Square, Theater Unbound, Latte Da, Lakeshore Players, and the greatly missed Chimera Theater and Punchinello players.



Piper Quinn (Miss Clegg) is thrilled to be back in the world of mystery and melodrama in their Lex-Ham debut. A receptionist and youth worker by day, she's been seen on many local stages including *Mixed Blood*, Bryant Lake Bowl, Theatre in the Round, and the Fringe Festival! When they're not acting, Piper enjoys karaoke, making impulse purchases, bedazzling household objects, and exploring the great outdoors.



Gina Rice (Girl) returns to Lex-Ham Community Theater for her third show with the troupe. She was previously in Lex-Ham's productions of *First Lady* and *Antony and Cleopatra*. Outside of theater, Gina is a legal assistant and rugby referee.



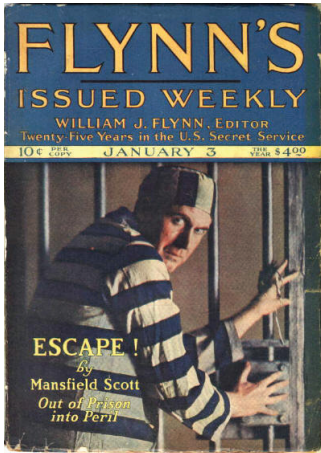
Charles Shoemaker (Mr. Mayhew) is a native of Texas. Charlie received his M.F.A. from the Professional Actor Training Program at the University of Washington in Seattle. He spent 29 seasons at the California Theatre Center before recently moving to the Twin Cities. While at CTC he was an actor, director, stage manager, administrator, Production Manager, and teacher ending his tenure there as Producing Director. As an actor Charlie has toured extensively around the U.S. and internationally. Some of his favorite roles include Bottom in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Arthur Kipps in *The Woman in Black*, Jake in *Stones in His Pockets*, and Inspector Rough in *Angel Street*. *Witness for the Prosecution* is Charlie's first show at Lex-Ham Community Theater and he is excited to be a part of the Twin Cities theatre community.

Agatha Christie and Witness for the Prosecution

In January 1925, Agatha Christie was 35 years old when her short story, *Traitor Hands* - which was later adapted for the stage under the title *Witness for the Prosecution* - was published in Flynn's Weekly which published detective stories. She had been a published author since 1920 with her first book, *The Mysterious Affair at Styles* - which introduced the detective Hercule Poirot to the world.



Photo credit: Angus McBean



At this point in her life, life had developed a comfortable pattern. She had grown up in a well-to-do family in Torquay, Devon. Agatha had traveled widely growing up - first to Paris for schooling and then to Egypt with her mother. She married her first husband, Archibald Christie - an army officer - in December 1914. Their daughter, Rosalind, was born in 1919. During this period, Agatha worked outside the home as a volunteer nurse and an apothecaries' assistant for the World War I effort, and inside the home writing and taking care of Rosalind.

Agatha had been writing for many years, but had trouble getting her works published. She kept at it and had several other detective novels published in the early 1920s including *The Secret Adversary* with Tommy and Tuppance and *Murder on the Links* with Hercule Poirot.

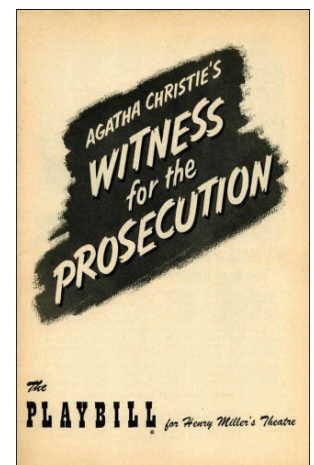
The story made its next appearance in 1933 when Agatha published a series of short stories in England. This time, the story was titled *Witness for the Prosecution*. The collection of stories became available in the United States in 1948. So after, the BBC made a film adaptation of it starring Derek Elphinstone, Mary Kerridge, and Dale Rogers. At that point, Agatha's friend, Peter Saunders - who had already produced several theater adaptations of her works - pressed her to make a play version of the story.

Agatha was extremely hesitant, but Peter persisted and finally won her over. Since the original short story had no courtroom scene, Agatha spent a lot of time researching how a trial would actually work and how to present the evidence of the crime in a convincing way.

The play had its premier in 1953 in London. The cast included Derek Blomfield as Leonard Vole, Patricia Jessel as Romaine, and David Horne as Sir Wilfred Roberts. The play was an instant hit. Philip Hope-Wallace, from the *Guardian* newspaper, in his review, said that the opening night was "a great success" and stated that the play presented a "well-made, humorous, exciting case".

The play had its US premiere on Broadway a year later at the Henry Miller Theatre. Patricia Jessel - who one reviewer described as "cold-blooded" and "a clear-cut image of hatred releasing itself" starred in that production, too along with Gene Lyons as Vole and Francis L. Sullivan as Sir Wilfred. The reviewer for the *New York Herald Tribune* called the play a "walloping success".

A few years later, in 1958, Hollywood made its first adaptation of the story with a film - directed by Billy Wilder - starring Marlene Dietrich, Tyrone Power, and Charles Laughton. The film was nominated for six Oscars - including Best Picture - but did not win any.



Lex-Ham Community Theater

Since its start in 1995, the Lex-Ham Community Theater has striven to achieve its mission of producing quality theatrical experiences by and for the residents of the Lexington-Hamline and surrounding neighborhoods in St. Paul. The company has enhanced the local theatrical scene by

- Selecting lesser-known works by noted playwrights, such as *Soul Gone Home* by Langston Hughes, *The Vegetable* by F. Scott Fitzgerald; and *Motomorphosis* by Václav Havel.
- Giving the regional and world premieres of works by local authors, such as *There's Talk in Town* by John Solensten and *Bullets and Beauties* by Urban Landreman;
- Reviving wonderful classics such as *The Women* by Clare Boothe Luce, *Under the Gaslight* by Augustin Daly, and *The Front Page* by Ben Hecht and Charles MacArthur

The theater offers many opportunities for people to get involved at any level or time commitment. Opportunities range from attending an evening reading of a play written by Shakespeare or which won the Pulitzer Prize in Drama to enrolling in a beginning or advanced acting class.

To get involved contact theater@LexHamArts.org or www.LexHamArts.org/theater

Upcoming events:

Monthly informal play reading of:

Vanya And Sonia And Masha And Spike By Christopher Durang – October 18, 2019

Henry VI, part 1 by William Shakespeare – November 8, 2019

Acting classes for Fall 2019 offered jointly with Saint Paul Community Education

Shakespeare's Comedy for Absolute Beginners

Register on-line at www.commed.spps.org

2020 and 2021 Seasons

Watch for our announcements on upcoming shows.

2021 will be Lex-Ham Community Theater's 25th anniversary season

**Producing a play is possible only with the help and assistance of many people and organizations.
Here are a few that we would like to acknowledge and thank.**

Chase Printing
Guthrie Theater
Jehovah Lutheran Church
Landmark Center
Lula Vintage Wear
Midway Smoke Shop
The Specialists, Ltd
University of St Thomas Libraries
The staff at the Wellstone Center