



Agatha Christie Display, coordinated at Northshire Bookstore in Manchester, Vermont to promote Dorset Theatre Festival's world premiere of *Mrs. Christie* by Heidi Armbruster.

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# **AGATHA CHRISTIE COMES TO LIFE IN WORLD PREMIERE OF *MRS. CHRISTIE* AT DORSET THEATRE FESTIVAL**

(Dorset, Vt. – July 24, 2019) **Dorset Theatre Festival**, under the leadership of Artistic Director **Dina Janis** and Producing Director **Will Rucker**, will begin performances of *Mrs. Christie*, the second World Premiere production of the 42nd Season, on August 1, 2019. The play is written by Heidi Armbruster and has been developed in the Festival's acclaimed Women Artists Writing Group since 2016.

*Mrs. Christie* will feature **Jennifer Mudge** (Broadway's *The Philanthropist* and *Rocky*; Scorsese's upcoming film *The Irishman*) in the role of Lucy. **Mary Bacon** (Broadway's *Rock N' Roll*, Dorset's *The Scene*) returns to the Festival to star as Agatha Christie. The cast also includes **Betsy Hogg** (Broadway's *Peter and the Starcatcher*) as Charlotte/Mary, **Michael Frederic** (*The Great Divorce* National Tour, "The Blacklist") as Archibald Christie and Nigel, **Hannah Rose Caton** as Nancy Neele/Chloe, **Stephen Stocking** (*Archduke*, *Describe the Night*) as William/Collins, **Susan Greenhill** (Broadway's *Crimes of the Heart*) as Jane, and **Sevan Greene** (Lortel Award-Winning *Betrayed*) as Hercule Poirot.

Dorset's World Premiere of *Mrs. Christie* is under the direction of eight-time Festival director **Giovanna Sardelli** (*Describe The Night*; Dorset's *Intimate Apparel*). **Alexander Woodward** (*Must, Goldstein*; Dorset's *Pride and Prejudice*) returns to Dorset as the scenic designer. Costumes are by **Sarah Nietfeld** (*King of the Yees*, *An Octoroon*), lighting design is by **Stacey Derosier** (*The Climb*, *The Last Stop on Market Street*), and sound design is by Tony Award-Winner **Fitz Patton** (Broadway's *Choir Boy*, *Bernhardt/Hamlet*, Dorset's *Dig*). The Fight Director is **Thomas Schall** (Broadway's *The Ferryman*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*).

*Mrs. Christie* begins on the eve of Agatha Christie's storied disappearance in 1926. The play shifts back and forth in time, telling the parallel story of modern-day Lucy while she attends a convention of mystery aficionados at the Christie homestead. With a little help from some of

Mystery's favorite characters, Lucy puts together clues that lead her to the truth of her Patron Saint Agatha's mysterious eleven-day vanishing. Sometimes a woman needs to disappear in order to find herself.

"It means so much to us to be premiering Heidi's play," said Will Rucker, Dorset's Producing Director. "It's a new and exciting story that's written with such respect for the tradition of Agatha Christie. I think our audiences will love it, and it's written by a member of the Dorset family."

**Heidi Armbruster**, the playwright, is a founding member and co-curator of the Dorset Theatre Festival Women Artists Writing, a group dedicated to the emergence of diverse theatrical voices through supporting actresses as they explore writing. Armbruster has developed several new plays across the country including *Murder Girl*, *Every Good Girl Deserves Fun (and other misremembered things)*, and *Where the I Divides*. She also has numerous credits as an actress (Broadway's *Time Stands Still*; *Disgraced* at Lincoln Center; *Lewiston/Clarkston*).

"I have been an Agatha Christie fan for many years," explained Armbruster. "As my investigation into Christie went further, I discovered the story of her ten-day disappearance in 1926. I was excited by the dramatic possibilities of paralleling the stories of two women across time and space escaping from personal crisis."

Over the past decade, Dorset Theatre Festival has established itself as an incubator for new works. In addition to *Mrs. Christie*, this season the Festival also presented the world premiere of *Dig* by Theresa Rebeck, which was a recipient of the 2019 Edgerton Foundation New Play Award. The Festival is dedicated to supporting new works and up-and-coming artists through the Pipeline Series, the Women Artists Writing Group, and the Jean E. Miller Young Playwrights Program.

"I wish that more institutions were run the way Dina Janis leads Dorset Theatre Festival," said Armbruster. "She and her team are creating a space for women artists writing in the national theater conversation."

*Mrs. Christie* runs August 1 – 17 at the Dorset Playhouse. Subscriptions for the 2019 Summer Season and single tickets are on sale now. The box office may be reached by calling (802) 867-2223 ext. 101, Tuesday through Saturday, 12 – 6 pm. For more information, or to purchase subscriptions and tickets online, visit [www.dorsettheatrefestival.org](http://www.dorsettheatrefestival.org).

Support for the 42nd Season is provided by the Rodgers Family Foundation and by the 2019 Season Sponsors: The Dorset Inn, Barrows House Inn and Restaurant, and Dorset Bakery.

### **ABOUT DORSET THEATRE FESTIVAL**

**Dorset Theatre Festival's** mission is to create bold, innovative, and authentic theatre that engages a diverse, multi-generational community, and economically diverse region: enlightening, entertaining, and inspiring our audience through the celebration of great plays. We aim to redefine the landscape of theatre by presenting thought-provoking productions drawn from the new and classic canon, as well as through the development of new plays, new audiences, and new artists for the future of American theater. We produce theatre that matters.

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