

THE CHALK GARDEN

The Chalk Garden

by Enid Bagnold

Time: the 1950s

Place: A country house in the village of Sussex

Cast (in alphabetical order):

Laurel	Carmen Flood
Mrs. St. Maugham	Ellen Geer*
Olivia	Willow Geer*
Third Applicant	Cindy Guastafarro
Nurse	Holly Hawk
Judge	William Dennis Hunt*
Ms. Madrigal	Melora Marshall*
Maitland	Michael Nehring*
Little Lady	Annette Perrochet

Understudies: Maya Brattkus, Tim Halligan*, Nicole Knudsen

Creative Team:

Director	Susan Angelo
Assistant Director	Holly Hawk
Stage Manager	Elna Kordijan*
Assistant Stage Manager	Caitlyn Ryan
Production Assistant	Julia Wilkens, Ryan Dohner
Costume Designer	Jordan-Marc Diamond
Costume Assistant	Micayla Vermeeren
Wardrobe Supervisor	Beth Eslick
Set Designer	Rich Rose
Properties Master	Sydney Russell
Sound Designer	Israel Heller
Lighting Designer	Zachary Moore
Lighting Associate	Skylar Johnson
Stage Crew	Nathan Bohannon, Ethan Haslam, Mike Gerbi, Lucas Gust

*Member of Actors' Equity Association

Director's Notes

Enid Bagnold, born in England in 1889, was the daughter of an officer in the Royal Engineers. It was during WWI that she gained some literary recognition for publishing her journals under the title of *Diary Without Dates*. At the age of 30, she married Sir Roderick Jones, owner and managing director of Reuters News Agency. As Lady Jones, she lived in a 21-room estate in Rottingdean, England and continued to write. She is best known to American audiences for her novel, *National Velvet*, which was made into a film in 1944 that introduced the young Elizabeth Taylor.

The Chalk Garden was originally turned down by English producers, but championed to Broadway by the American producer Irene Selznick. Of that premiere in 1955, the play was hailed to be as "as whimsical

as Sir James Barrie, as poetic as Giraudoux, sometimes as zany as the Marx Brothers, yet with all the elements of a detective story.”

It is the inability to easily catalogue this play that I found most intriguing about it. On the surface, the language bubbles in the comic style of an English manner play. But submerged beneath the humor, there is mystery, jealousy, and deep longing. I found it telling that Bagnold had reportedly resisted Selznick’s desire to identify only one central theme throughout the play.

Set on the windy seaside coast of Sussex, southern England, the play takes place in the manor house of Mrs. St. Maugham, built on soil of lime and chalk. A relic of Regency England, Mrs. St. Maugham and the occupants of her house, hang on to a past that is dying. Even her dining table is “laid with fragments of forgotten ritual.” The gales of truth and perspective sweep in, loosening the feeble hold that the past has over the present. Change is vital, but comes at a cost.

Enid Bagnold, who lived to be 91 years of age, was once described to be “amused and contemplative.” I think that well describes this multi-faceted gem of a play.

-- Susan Angelo

There will be one 10-minute intermission.

