

# St Luke's Players

## “The Chalk Garden”

Performances: October 14 - 17 and 21 - 24 at 8.00 pm and October 17 at 2.00 pm

St Luke's Players open its 61st Season of community theatre with “The Chalk Garden” by Enid Bagnold.

Described as a psychological drama, the play is about relationships and our basic need for love, attention and control. It concerns a dysfunctional upper middle class family where Mrs St Maugham, the lonely, ageing grandmother, is looking after her wild, uncontrollable and excitable teenage grandchild Laurel, a dying butler and an unresponsive garden. With assistance only from an inexperienced but willing manservant, Miss Madrigal is engaged without references as governess for Laurel, but she seems to have an instinctive understanding of both her mixed-up charge and how to make flowers grow in the garden. Murky pasts and intrigue abound as two other visitors bring their own revelations and problems. There is Laurels' mother who is re-married, re-located, estranged from her own mother and between whom tensions run high, and an old gentleman friend of the lady of the house, the judge. The wistful, yet witty, story unfolds of a chaotic household surrounded by failing relationships and an unforgiving chalk garden.

Enid Bagnold is probably best known for writing “National Velvet” - subsequently made into a movie that launched the film career of Elizabeth Taylor. She was inspired to write “The Chalk Garden” based largely on her own experiences when she advertised for a “nanny” to look after her young granddaughter. At the time she was living near the ocean, in Sussex, England and the play took its title from her garden that comprised mostly chalky soil.

When “The Chalk Garden” was first performed in New York in 1955, Gladys Cooper appeared as the grandmother Mrs St. Maugham and Cecil Beaton designed the original costumes and set. The play ran concurrently in London, where the production starred Dame Edith Evans, Dame Peggy Ashcroft and was directed by Sir John Gielgud. A subsequent movie was made in 1964, with Dame Edith Evans, Deborah Kerr, Hayley Mills and John Mills in the lead roles

The St Luke's Players production features Wendy Cornock as the governess, Miss Madrigal; Rosalind Coleman as Mrs St. Maugham; Mitch Barnes as the manservant, Maitland; and Kate Boutilier as the rebellious Laurel. Other cast members are Jo Barnes as Laurel's mother, Olivia; Alan Ormerod as the judge; Deb Taylor and Elaine Lewis.

As the governess Miss Madrigal comments to her employer: “You have not a green thumb, Mrs St Maugham, with a plant or a girl. This is a house where nothing good can be made of her. Why even your garden is demented!”

QuickTime™ and a  
TIFF (Uncompressed) decompressor  
are needed to see this picture.

### Maitland (Mitch Barnes) and Laurel (Kate Boutilier)

Theatre is a passion for Kate Boutilier and this is her first leading part with St Luke’s Players. She was introduced to acting at the age of 10 by Masques Theatre’s production of “Alice in Wonderland - the Panto”, in which she played a number of roles, her favourite being the caterpillar! Since then Kate has been in a number of pantos with St Luke’s Players. She has also appeared on the stage with the Victoria Theatre Guild at Langham Court as Rebecca Gibbs in “Our Town”, in “The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie” with her sister Hannah, and as the fairy Cobweb in “ A Midsummer Night’s Dream”. Currently in Grade 11 at Esquimalt High School, Kate acts and helps out as crew on school productions. Her role as Laurel in “The Chalk Garden” provides two new challenges: the smallest cast and the most lines that she has worked with so far!

Performances of “The Chalk Garden” take place at St Luke’s Hall, 3821 Cedar Hill X Road in Saanich. They run from October 14 to 17 and 21 to 24 at 8.00 pm with a matinee at 2.00 pm on Saturday October 17.

Tickets are available at Ivy’s Books in Oak Bay Village, Petals Plus Florist at 3749 Shelbourne Street, from members of the cast or crew and at the door. For further information please call 250 884 5484.

September 20, 2009