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Stellar cast to perform in *And Then There Were None*



The cast who were at Media Night is seen here. They are (from left) J.D. Shouse, who plays the part of Dr. Edward George Armstrong as he tends to Melissa Hoke as she is the character Ethel Rogers, lying on the couch; Jennifer DeLong as she plays the part of Vera Claythorne; Will Rucker, who plays the part of Capt. Philip Lombard; Wyatt Bowden, who plays the part of William Henry Blore; Lynette Six, who plays the part of Emily Brent; Michael Zubler, who plays the part of Gen. John Gordon Macarthur; Valdeen Fletcher, who plays the part of Thomas Rogers; and Brad Six, who plays the part of Sir Lawrence Wargrave. (not pictured Brandon Peters, who plays the part of Fred Naracott.)

The first performance was Friday, May 5.

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Story and Photos By Jeff M. Hardison © April 29, 2017 at 6:47 p.m.

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CHIEFLAND -- For any people who enjoy watching a live performance of a murder mystery play on stage, there is an opportunity to see a stellar cast performing *And Then There Were None* at The Chief Theater, 25 E. Park Ave., in Chiefland.

Director Diana Child, who has directed in excess of 50 plays, said this cast and this script put this it in her "Top Three" list.

The assistant directors for this play are Stephanie Crawford and Angie Acevedo. The Suwanee Valley Players is the set of performers presenting this classic murder mystery.

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The character Sir Lawrence Wargrave, a judge, played by Brad Six, is seen in the lobby of the theater shortly before a practice performance of the play occurred on Thursday (April 27). He designed the outstanding set.

Brad Six, a 57-year-old retiree who is playing the part of Sir Lawrence Wargrave, a judge, is also the man who designed the set.

He said Director Child asked him to design something distinct and clean. The story takes place in the 1920s. Six said he went with an art deco theme, with circles being a definite feature.



10 little tin soldiers sit on the mantle of the set. They go with a rhyme that is heard by the victims of murders that unfold during the play.



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A noose is seen through a window on the set.

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Logan Acevedo plays Anthony Marston -- the pompous, snooty, snobbish rich kid who gets everything he wants. Seen here, he is portraying his character.

Members of the media were invited to a sneak peek at the Suwanee Valley Player's production of "And Then There Were None" on Thursday evening (April 27).

In addition to a sneak peak, all of the actors present that night were available for interviews.

In this suspenseful drama, based on Agatha Christie's mystery tale, 10 strangers are summoned to a remote island. While they are waiting for the mysterious host, Mr. U.N. Owen to appear, a message is played on an album over the phonograph.

The narrator on the record levels serious accusations at each of the guests. Soon they start being murdered, one by one.

As the survivors try to keep their wits, they reach a disturbing conclusion: one of them must be the killer.

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All of the performers are dedicated to their roles. Here Melissa Hoke plays Ethel Rogers.



Thomas Rogers, the butler, is played by Valdeen Fletcher.

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In this scene shot on media day Will Rucker is performing the part of Capt Philip Lombard as he takes a drink and speaks with Jennifer DeLong, who plays the part of Vera Claythorne, the secretary to U.N. Owens, the host of the gathering. The hat Rucker is sporting in this scene may not be in the play.

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J.D. Shouse plays the part of Dr. Armstrong. Director Diana Child said all of the actors in this play are excellent.



William Henry Blore, played by Wyatt Bowden, is a tricky detective character.

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Det. Blore (Wyatt Bowden) approaches Thomas Rogers (Valdeen Fletcher), the butler.



In the first act, there is a time when things look relatively pleasant. And then, the story unfolds before the audience. It is captivating.

Child is thrilled with the cast's work in preparing for this play.

"This cast has delved so deep into this play," Child said, "that each of them has developed their characters from birth to death."

Every one of the 11 actors is a dedicated professional performer, even though they are volunteers and are not being paid for their awesome investment of their time, talents and other resources to make the play a hit.

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These actors are captivating in the performance of the play. The set is superb. There is even rain falling outside a window on the stage and the sound of the surf reminds the audience that this is happening on an island.

Joining the character Judge Lawrence Wargrave (Brad Six) are Vera Claythorne (Jennifer DeLong), the secretary to the hosts who are not seen (Jennifer DeLong); Capt. Philip Lombard, an adventurer (Will Rucker); Dr. Edward George Armstrong (J.D. Shouse); William Henry Blore, a detective (Wyatt Bowden); Emily Brent, she is bent on being moralistic (Lynette Six); Thomas Rogers, the butler (Valdeen Fletcher); Ethel Rogers, the cook and housekeeper (Melissa Hoke); Gen. John Gordon Macarthur (Michael Zubler); Anthony Marston, a rich, spoiled, young man (Logan Acevedo); and not present on this night but listed as a character in the play is Brandon Peters as the character Fred Naracott.

One cast member went extremely deep into her character development. Melissa Hoke, who is playing the cook and housekeeper – Ethel Rogers, even wrote pages of her character’s background, including that she grew up in the streets of London when Jack The Ripper was terrorizing that city in the early 1900s.

And there are family members in the foreground and background for various cast members and for the many support volunteers.

Not only is 17-year-old Logan Acevedo playing Anthony Marston -- the pompous, snooty, snobbish rich kid who gets everything he wants, but his other family members are involved in this play too.

Logan Acevedo, who wants to become a veterinarian tech, said he plans to enjoy acting as “a side profession. He has already performed in three plays at Chiefland Middle High School, and has now been in nine plays with the Suwannee Valley players.

This young actor, like his colleagues, has created an extensive back story for his character – which helps explain his behavior.

The audience never hears about the stories created by the characters, but those roots are something these performers take from as they are “in character.”

His father Albert Acevedo is the stage manager and Logan’s sister Laci Acevedo is helping backstage as well.

With 10 actors, there is a long list of talent and performing accomplishments. For instance, Zubler wrote the play *Jack and Grace*, which was performed in Chiefland.

Shouse, like all of the actors is “a wonderful talent,” Child said. He was the understudy for The Scarecrow in the recent production of *The Wizard of Oz*.

The play – *And Then There Were None* – is three acts. It lasts about two hours and 45 minutes, including intermission.

Show dates are May 5, 6, and 7, and May 9, 10, 11 and 12 with a special gift for ladies on Mother's Day.

For more information, or to reserve tickets, call 352-493-ARTS.