

# Arts & Entertainment

## Agatha Christie's *Mousetrap* Lures Audience with Crumbs of Clues

By SUSAN MYRILL DOUGHERTY  
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

CRANFORD—A mousetrap that has captured a rodent is not exactly an appealing image. Cranford Dramatic Club's Community Theatre's production of *The Mousetrap*, however, is quite appealing.

Opening on February 10 with a first-rate cast and directed by a first-rate director, the famous mystery engages the audience from start to finish while they wait for a trap to be set for a murderer.

Monkswell Manor is a newly-opened guest home outside of London that has been cut off from the world by a snow storm. This 1950s British countryside inn where tinned corned beef appears on the menu is sorely different from the 2012 world where cell phones and the Internet prevail. In the darkened Cranford Theater, just before the curtains part, a shot, a scream and a radio announcement reveal that a murder has just been committed in London. Clues point to the Monkswell Manor as the killer's next stopping place in pursuit of two more victims.

Part of Christie's mystery asks the audience to piece together foreshadowed clues of crumbs of information that lead us, like hungry mice, to an unexpected ending.

As guests arrive in the opening scene, they shake snow from their hats and coats, not realizing the drama that will unfold in this idyllic setting. Their amiable, yet nervous young

proprietors, Mollie Ralston (Theresa Lyons) and her husband of one year Giles, (Michael Miguel) welcome the five guests. With news of their house as the locale for the next murder, the guests feel lucky that a sergeant from the county constabulary, Detective Sgt. Trotter (Ty Jacobs) has been sent on skis to protect them.

He—and we—try to detect who is lying, who has ulterior motives and who is the villain. But he is unable to prevent the next crime and the whistle of the song "Three Blind Mice" is heard as a body falls to the living room floor. Those familiar with the Agatha Christie formula will recognize the pattern of a gathering of seemingly unrelated people who, when the layers of deceit and trickery are peeled away, have a common thread. As one of the characters comments, "All the guests are unpleasant or odd."

The role of the first guest, Christopher Wren, is handsomely portrayed by David Ciampichini who has a ball doing his campy thing complete with over-the-top flourishes and undulating eyebrows. Mrs. Boyle, (Leslie Riccio) in an overly obnoxious wig, is not so easy to love. Ms. Riccio's character is a complaining, whining, nasty, judgmental person who keeps notes on what the Manor's proprietors are doing wrong. As a counter balance to her, mild-mannered Major Metcalf (Rod Hilton) is so taciturn that the audience is suspicious of him right away. Alicia Cordero's Miss

Casewell does a lot of scowling, frowning and nervous gesturing to make us wonder if she could be the number one suspect. The giggles and smiles of the mysterious Mr. Paravicini, played hilariously by Sam Rosalsky, resemble a cat that has just swallowed Tweetie Bird.

All characters seem to have motive and opportunity to commit murder. Even the guest house's proprietors—the talented duo of Mr. Miguel and Ms. Lyons—suspect each other. Mr. Jacobs, in the role of the detective, does a bang up job with twists and turns of his character's personality.

*Mousetrap* boasts an impressive set (Marc Chandler) with exceptional lighting by John Duryee. Bob Pells, who directed this same show at CDC thirty-five years ago, says in program notes that this may be his swan song. In addressing the audience on opening night, he said that he was given the opportunity to direct it again—"either because I did such a good job the first time, or because they hoped I'd get it right this time." Mr. Pells' work shows he understands pacing as well as the importance of naturally-inspired stage movement.

Agatha Christie's play might not be as simple as the childhood game of Clue where one can guess that the murderer is the professor who did it

in the library with a wrench, but it is an entertaining couple of hours.

And concerning the ending of this famous whodunit, remember, "Mum's the word."



WHO-DUN-IT...Detective Sgt. Trotter (Ty Jacobs) interrogates suspect and potential next victim Miss Casewell (Alicia Cordero) in Agatha Christie's murder mystery *The Mousetrap*, playing at CDC Community Theatre in Cranford weekends February 17-25.



Kerrie Ann Wandlass — Rainbow Cat

### Gallery to Present Paintings by Wandlass

TOTAWA - The Lena Di Gangi Gallery will present "Impressions and Expressions" an eclectic mix of paintings in acrylic and oil by Cranford artist Kerrie Ann Wandlass.

The free reception will be held Saturday, March 3, from 4 - 7 p.m.

and is open to the public. The works will be displayed through March 29. Gallery hours are Tuesday through Friday from 1:30 to 6:30 p.m., Saturdays 1 - 4, or by appointment.

The Lena Di Gangi Gallery is located at 320 Union Boulevard, Totowa, (973) 0942-7400.

### SPF Art Association to Host Marbling Workshop

FANWOOD - The Scotch Plains and Fanwood Arts Association meeting will be held on Thursday, March 15, from 7 - 9 p.m. at the Patricia M. Kuran Cultural Arts Center, Watson Road, Fanwood. A brief business meeting will be followed by a marbling monoprints workshop by Maryann Ficker.

Maryann Ficker has been studying art since high school with a focus on painting, printmaking, collage and papermaking. Her lifelong connection to the natural world and interest in how it is put together, led her to study science, math and art in college. She has studied at The University at Albany, the University of New Mexico, the Brooklyn Museum and Somerset Art Association. She has a B.S. in Mathematics and a Masters in Computer Science and used her creative energies designing software, before she turned her attention once again, to creating art.

Maryann is on the board of the Contemporary Art Group, Chairperson of the Art Committee of the First Unitarian Society of Plainfield, a member of the Center for Contemporary Art, the Monmouth Museum and the Watchung Arts Center. She has

lead workshops and classes for children and adults in drawing, painting, printmaking, collage and other media. At present, Maryann is organizing a figure painting open studio at Watchung Art Center, maintains a figure painting group in her studio, leads art workshops at the weeklong, Women's Conference at Ferry Beach, Me., runs an art group at the Unitarian Society and coordinates art exhibits in their sanctuary.

Currently, Maryann works primarily in oil and pastel, but she has always, and continues to explore and work in many other mediums, such as handmade paper, various printmaking techniques, glass mosaic, felt sculpting, collage and others. Maryann shows her work at many venues, mostly in New Jersey. Information on current exhibits and examples of her work can be seen at [www.maryannficker.com](http://www.maryannficker.com).

All meetings, demonstrations, and workshops are free and open to the public. There is ample parking at the Carriage House Pocket Park directly across the street on Watson Road. Please RSVP to Paula Pearl at (908) 322-2590 or at [paulapearl@aol.com](mailto:paulapearl@aol.com) so enough supplies can be provided.



MARBLING WORKSHOP...The Scotch Plains and Fanwood Arts Association meeting will be held on Thursday, March 15, from 7 - 9 p.m. at the Patricia M. Kuran Cultural Arts Center, Watson Road, Fanwood. A brief business meeting will be followed by a marbling monoprints workshop by Maryann Ficker.

### Mid-Day Musicales to Host Arneson, Shadel and Kern

WESTFIELD - The First Congregational Church of Westfield, 125 Elmer Street, resumes its acclaimed Mid-Day Musicales series at noon on Wednesday, February 22, with a concert by soprano Sarah Arneson, clarinetist William Shadel, and pianist George Kern. The program will include works by Marx and Schubert, and feature Schubert's famous work "Der Hirt auf dem Felsen" ("The Shepherd on the Rock") for soprano, clarinet, and piano. Admission is \$5.

Soprano Sarah Arneson debuted as Olympia at the Vienna State Opera, where she sang leading coloratura roles, including Queen of the Night. An acclaimed soprano throughout Europe, she was a regular soloist in the opera houses of Berlin Cologne, Desden, Düsseldorf, Frankfurt, Munich, and Stuttgart, singing roles including Gilda, Konstanza, Marie, Musetta, Olympia, Rosina, Titania, Violetta, and Zerbinetta. She has performed at festivals in the United States, Spain, Turkey, and Japan, and with orchestras in the United States and Europe. She is a frequent collaborator with her husband, pianist George Kern, in recitals, lectures and master classes. A former professor at the "Mozarteum" in Salzburg and the University of Illinois, she is currently Professor of Voice at Boston University.

Clarinetist William Shadel is principal clarinetist with the Westfield Symphony, Musica Morristown, the New Jersey State Opera, and Teatro Grattacielo. He was principal clarinetist of the New Jersey Symphony for thirteen years, and has performed and recorded with the New York Philharmonic and the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra. A sought-after chamber musician, he toured widely across the United States as clarinetist of the New Jersey Chamber Music Society, and was for many years the leader of the Festival Woodwinds. In reviewing his Town Hall recital in New York City, the

New York Times compared his performance to that of Kreisler and Caruso. On Broadway, Mr. Shadel has performed on clarinet, saxophones, and flute in many productions. A former member of the United States Military Academy Band at West Point, he was for many years a professor in the music department of Montclair State University, and also taught at William Paterson University.

Pianist George Kern is a senior Professor of Piano at the "Mozarteum" in Salzburg, as well as a Visiting Guest Professor at the Toho School in Tokyo. He has performed as a soloist, chamber musician, and accompanist throughout the United States, Europe, and Asia, has performed in many international festivals, made many radio and television appearances, and serves regularly as a judge in international piano competitions.

These programs have been made possible in part by the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, Department of State, a partner agency of the National Endowment of the Arts, through a grant administered by the Union County Office of Cultural and Heritage Affairs.

### Coffee With Conscience Concert February 18

WESTFIELD - The Coffee With Conscience Concert Series continues its twelfth season by presenting John Flynn in concert. The concert will take place on Saturday, February 18, at the First United Methodist Church of Westfield, 1 East Broad Street (corner of North Avenue) in Westfield.

Doors will open at 7:30 p.m. and the concert begins at 8 p.m. Admission is \$19 on line and \$23 at the door. Proceeds from this concert will benefit Habitat For Humanity, Plainfield Chapter. Tickets can be purchased online in advance by going to [johnflynn2.eventbrite.com](http://johnflynn2.eventbrite.com). For more information call (908) 412-9105.



THE USUAL SUSPECTS... Detective Sgt. Trotter (Ty Jacobs, center) reviews the details of a murder with some of the suspects at Monkswell Manor. Pictured, from left to right, are: Major Metcalf (Rod Hilton), Molly Ralston (Theresa Lyons), Miss Casewell (Alicia Cordero), Mr. Paravicini (Sam Rosalsky, seated), and Giles Ralston (Michael Miguel). Agatha Christie's murder mystery *The Mousetrap* is playing at CDC Community Theatre in Cranford weekends February 17-25.

### Watchung Stables to Offer Clinics About Horses

MOUNTAINSIDE - Wintertime clinics about horses, conducted by equine medical professionals, are being offered at Watchung Stable in Mountain Side and everyone nine years of age and older is welcome. Sponsored by the Union County Board of Chosen Freeholders and the Union County Department of Parks and Community Renewal, the clinics will be held on Wednesday, February 22, and Saturday, February 25.

Each session will last an hour and a half. The clinics will be held in the barn or the lecture area of the stable. People interested in these clinics should note that these are classes with no actual riding.

The winter clinics about horses will be offered as follows: Wednesday, February 22, 4 p.m. - 5:30 p.m. "Meet the Dentist" - Equine dentist Dr. David Foster will discuss equine

dentistry and the importance of maintaining a horse's good oral health. Maintaining a horse's good oral health. A question and answer period will be included.

Saturday, February 25, 10:30 a.m. - 12 noon "Meet the Vet" - Dr. Michael Aromando, Watchung Stable's veterinarian, will talk and answer questions about general horse care, anatomy, emergencies, lameness, and some interesting cases involving Watchung's school horses.

Space is limited and in-person pre-registration is required during regular business hours at the Watchung Stable office, located at 1160 Summit Lane in Mountain Side. The cost is \$25 per person for each clinic.

For further information, visit [www.ucnj.org/stable](http://www.ucnj.org/stable); call the Watchung Stable office at 908-789-3665, or e-mail your questions to [stablequestions@ucnj.org](mailto:stablequestions@ucnj.org).

**Downtown Westfield RESTAURANT WEEK**  
Feb. 19 - Mar. 1, 2012  
(Friday and Saturday Excluded)

2-Course Lunch \$10  
2-Course Dinner \$20  
3-Course Dinner \$30

**NEW! Participating restaurants are offering either a \$20 or \$30 dinner option.**  
Visit [www.WestfieldToday.com](http://www.WestfieldToday.com) for the dinner option each restaurant below is offering.

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<p><b>Restaurants</b></p> <p>16 Prospect Wine Bar &amp; Bistro 232.7320</p> <p>Acquaviva delle fonti 301.0700</p> <p>Ana Beall's Tea Room 264.4221</p> <p>Boulevard Bistro 264.8252</p> <p>The Brick Oven 317.9500</p> <p>Cosimo's 654.8787</p> <p>Gabi's Sushi &amp; Noodles 389.1189</p>	<p><b>Restaurants</b></p> <p>Isabella's American Bistro 233.8830</p> <p>Jeffrey's of Westfield 232.4517</p> <p>Limani Seafood Grill 233.0052</p> <p>Mojave Grille 233.7772</p> <p>Robert Treat Deli 232.0925</p> <p>Splash of Thai 232.0402</p> <p>Theresa's 233.9133</p>	<p><b>Restaurants</b></p> <p>Turning Point 264.8180</p> <p>Wild Greens 228.2783</p> <p>Xocolatz Restaurant &amp; Grill 232.3962</p> <p>CoolVines 232.5050</p> <p>The Liquor Basket 232.1900</p> <p>Westfield Wine &amp; Liquor 232.1133</p>	<p><b>Desserts</b></p> <p>Bovella's Bakery Shoppe 232.4149</p> <p>Cold Stone Creamery 518.0044</p> <p>FroYo 654.1414</p> <p>Swirl Whirl Yogurt Buffet 233.7300</p> <p>Yapple Yogurt 228.5373</p>
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Tax, gratuity and beverages not included. Call the restaurants for reservations. For more information on restaurants, wine & dessert discounts, visit [www.WestfieldToday.com](http://www.WestfieldToday.com).