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A Murder is Announced to be performed by Orinda Starlight Village Players

By Andrea A. Firth



The Orinda Starlight Village Players have been forced to retreat from the outdoor amphitheater to rehearse indoors due to the frequent rains in May. But the wet weather has not dampened their spirits as they prepare for the upcoming production of Agatha Christie's *A Murder is Announced*. Pictured are (from L to R) Lorelee Windsor (Miss Blacklock), Marian Simpson (Miss Marple), and Al Guaraglia (Inspector Craddock). Photo A. Firth

Players are able to put on three productions each summer. "We reuse everything, screws and screw holes," she adds with a laugh. While most of the group's funding comes from ticket and concession sales, Lorraine acknowledges that they receive donations of props and equipment as well. "Last year, we received a grant from the City that enabled us to upgrade the electrical system, which has been fabulous," she adds.

A Murder is Announced will be performed on Fridays and Saturdays from June 4th through June 26th starting at 8:30 p.m. with additional performances on Sunday, June 13th at 4:00 p.m. and Thursday, June 24th at 8:00 p.m. The outdoor theater is nestled in the hill in the corner of the Community Park next to the Orinda Library/Community Center, 26 Orinda Way, Orinda. Tickets are \$16 regular and \$8 for seniors/minors. For more information, call 925-253-1911 or email info@orsvp.org. Bring layers of clothing, a picnic dinner, camp chairs or pillows and enjoy one of Christie's best mysteries under the Orinda sky.

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Imagine reading an announcement in the local paper (not this local paper) that there will be murder committed at 6:30 tonight at your house. That's the basic premise of Agatha Christie's *A Murder is Announced*-the first play of the Orinda Starlight Village Players' 2010 season. Directed by Suzan Lorraine, a 15-year veteran of the Starlight Village Players, the production's sleuths include Christie's seasoned senior detective Miss Marple, played by Marian Simpson, and Inspector Craddock, played by Al Guaraglia.

Replete with classic Christie characters, hidden identities, and loads of suspense, the play has a lighter side as well. "There are some funny bits to this play," says Lorraine, "It's interesting to see where Christie adds humor. She's subtle."

Launching the season with a Christie mystery is a long-standing tradition for the Starlight Village Players who have been performing at the outdoor theater in the Orinda Community Park for close to thirty years. The Starlight Village Players theater group was the brainchild of Orinda resident Charlotte Meyer. Now well into her nineties, Meyer remains very active with the theater. She recently adapted the story of *The Wind in the Willows* for the stage, and the company will perform the play later in the summer. The Starlight Village Players will also perform the farce *Kindly Keep It Covered*, by David Freeman.

"This is real community theater," states Lorraine, noting that the actors support the production both on and off stage by helping to build the sets, find props, and publicize the play. "We are very resourceful," responds Lorraine, when asked how the Starlight Village