



Audio Description Notes for *The Mousetrap*

WELCOME

Welcome to the Guthrie Theater's production of *The Mousetrap*. The play was written by Agatha Christie. This production is directed by Tracy Brigden.

My name is Laura Wiebers, and I will be your audio describer for this performance, which is approximately 2 hours and 20 minutes, including one 20-minute intermission.

- Scenic Designer: Walt Spangler
- Costume Designer: Susan Tsu
- Lighting Designer: Rui Rita
- Sound Designer/Composer: John Gromada
- Dramaturg: Lynde Rosario
- Vocal Coach: Keely Wolter
- Weapons Consultant: Aaron Preusse

This production contains mature themes, loud noises, haze, fog, the use of a prop gun, mentions of child abuse and the sound of someone being strangled.

SYNOPSIS

During a heavy snowstorm, newlyweds Mollie and Giles Ralston prepare to open Monkswell Manor for their first guests: the nitpicky Mrs. Boyle; the cagey Miss Casewell visiting from abroad; the young architect Christopher Wren; the good-natured Major Metcalf; and the roguish, unexpected guest Mr. Paravicini. As the snow proves impassable, Detective Sergeant Trotter arrives on skis with news that connects the manor to a mysterious murder in London. When the phone lines are cut and a guest turns up dead, everyone becomes a suspect. Will the killer be discovered in time? Discover for yourself why this Agatha Christie classic is the longest-running play in the world.

STAGING AND PROPS

This play is performed on the Guthrie's McGuire Proscenium Stage. The audience sits on one side of the stage (unlike the thrust stage, where the audience sits on three sides of the stage). The play takes place in the Great Hall of Monkswell Manor, a country house in Berkshire, England, that has been repurposed as a guest house. *The Mousetrap* was written in 1947 and takes place in 1952, just after the end of World War II.

The manor has seen better days, but it still retains some of its stately grandeur. The walls are painted a rich, deep blue, and they're decorated with animal antlers and a mounted elk head above the fireplace on the left wall, antlers above the tall French windows along the back wall, and three large oil paintings above the tall bookcases on the right wall. Heavy wooden beams

STAGING AND PROPS (continued)

frame the ceiling. The light in the room comes from two round lights on the left and right walls and two large matching crystal chandeliers suspended over the center of the room.

On the left wall of the room, closest to the audience, is a swinging door. Past the door, there is a fireplace with a glowing fire that casts a reddish light inside the fireplace. On the left side of the fireplace is a metal firewood rack containing several logs, and on the right side is a heavy metal poker. The fireplace mantle has several items on it, such as vases and a statue of a horse. To the right of the fireplace is a trunk with a blanket draped over it. Three steps lead up to a doorway; characters walk up these steps to go off into the kitchen or to exit outside. Visible outside the doorway is a large wooden chest with a tapestry hung on the wall above it.

Furthest from the audience is the back wall of the room. In the middle of the wall are three tall leaded windows with opened curtains draped on either side. Outside, a low wall draped with ivy and a tall evergreen tree are visible through the windows. In front of the windows, there is a wooden stand holding a globe and a table with a tea service on it flanked by two wooden chairs.

To the right of the windows is a staircase framed by an archway. The steps lead up to a landing, make a right turn and then continue upstairs, out of sight of the audience. The wall along the staircase is covered with forest green patterned wallpaper.

On the right wall of the room is a stand holding a tall vase and a doorway leading off to the library. In the center of the wall is a tall built-in bookcase stacked with books. In front of the bookcase is a large writing desk and chair. Positioned on the desk are framed photographs, a telephone and a radio. To the right of the desk, closer to the audience, is another swinging door leading off to the drawing room. To the right of the door, closest to the audience, is a small table that holds several cocktail glasses and decanters of booze.

Several pieces of furniture are located in the center of the Great Hall. At the left, closest to the fireplace (and thus one of the most desirable pieces of furniture in the room), is a wooden framed upholstered chair with an upholstered footstool in front of it. A low stool upholstered in deep blue fabric is located nearby. In the center of the room is a large sofa upholstered in the same fabric as the nearby footstool. It has small decorative pillows at either end.

Just to the left of the sofa is a large magazine rack with several magazines in it. Just to the right of the sofa is a round table with a small statue and a small table lamp. Some of the furniture is supported by heavy wooden legs, and some of the furniture has thinner, spindled decorative wooden legs.

The chair by the fireplace, the sofa and the writing desk are all placed on top of patterned rugs.

At the start of the play, a large wooden sign with gold lettering is propped up against the sofa. The lettering reads "Monkwell Manor," with the name of the manor misspelled.



CAST, CHARACTERS AND COSTUMES

Owners: Mollie and Giles Ralston are the owners of the manor where the play takes place.

Mollie Ralston, played by **Monette Magrath**, is a tall young woman with shoulder-length blonde hair. She wears a red dress with a floral pattern and dark medium-heeled shoes.

Giles Ralston, Molly's husband, played by **Peter Christian Hansen**, is a tall man with closely cropped brown hair. He wears a brown suitcoat over a shirt, tie and vest, and dark trousers and shoes.

Guests: Each time a new guest arrives, that guest is briefly bathed in a white spotlight and a brief chord of noirish music plays.

Christopher Wren, played by **Greg Cuellar**, is a young man with a medium build. He wears a plaid suit coat over a shirt and tie, a vest with a pattern that clashes with his coat, dark trousers and shoes. He wears dark-rimmed glasses, and his asymmetrical hair style is wildly curly on one side. His unruly hair is the subject of several comments from the other guests.

Mrs. Boyle, played by **Mo Perry**, is an older woman with gray hair. She wears dark-rimmed glasses, a string of pearls around her neck, a dark jacket and skirt, and dark sensible shoes. She often has a stern or disapproving expression on her face.

Major Metcalf, played by **Pearce Bunting**, is a tall middle-aged man. He has gray hair and mutton chops, and he wears a brown plaid suit over a shirt and tie. He has a large belly that sticks out when he stands and causes him to spread his legs when he sits.

Miss Casewell, played by **Emjoy Gavino**, is a petite young woman. She has dark hair styled in waves and dark-rimmed glasses with decorative white tips at the outer edges of the frames. She wears a scarf draped fashionably over a dark jacket, black leather pants and high-heeled boots, and several large decorative rings on her fingers.

Mr. Paravicini, played by **Matthew Saldívar**, is an older man with gray streaks in his hair and a graying moustache and goatee. He wears a scarf around his neck and a dark suit, and he walks with the aid of a walking stick.

Detective Sergeant Trotter, played by **Matthew Amendt**, is a man with dark slicked-back hair. He wears a brown patterned sweater, tan pants and dark boots. He has a flashlight tucked in his belt and a notebook in his pants pocket, which he frequently writes notes in.



THINGS TO KNOW

- *The Mousetrap* began as a 30-minute radio play for the BBC in 1947 called *Three Blind Mice*. Queen Mary had just turned 80 and requested something by Agatha Christie for a commemorative broadcast.
- The stage play opened in Nottingham, England, on October 6, 1952, and toured the country before settling in on the West End where it continues performances today, making it the longest-running play in the world.
- Guthrie Senior Artistic Producer Tracy Brigden previously directed Frederick Knott's *Dial M for Murder* in our 2023–2024 Season, which featured similar edge-of-your-seat suspense and dramatic revelations.