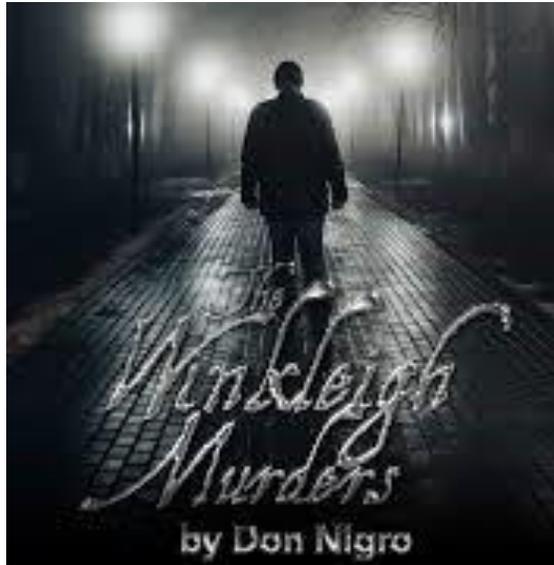


The Winkleigh Murders

Audition Information



Written by: Don Nigro
Directed by Todd Thomas

**Video Audition Submissions:
Due by 7:00pm on September 21st**

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1_EieBlsp4kUDsxJJ0P9wvFLP2iFVbBVq?usp=sharing

Audition form Required

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdl1LO0kgkburgNL7aqwHRIEWqI9VyrgTDqOGgnw-E05TxfeQ/viewform>

**Pit & Balcony Theatre, 805 N. Hamilton Street
Saginaw, MI 48602**

The Winkleigh Murders

Virtual Performances November 13-15, 2020

Performance taping between November 6 and 11. Exact date TBD.

Thank you for your interest in auditioning for the Pit & Balcony production of “The Winkleigh Murders.”

On the Winkleigh estate, in Devon, overlooking Dartmoor, early in the twentieth century, Bronwyn, the young and beautiful orphaned heiress of Winkleigh, and her companion Imogen, the orphaned ward of Bronwyn’s late parents, are entertaining their house guests, two very different friends of Bronwyn’s dead brother Edward, by taking photographs and flirting, while Willy, the gardener’s bastard son, looks on, lusting after the women and dreaming of murdering the men. Bronwyn’s father was somewhat demented, her mother hung herself in the windmill and had terrible dreams about Zeppelins, and the seat of their primitive automobile is rather hard on Cedric’s wonkies. Repressed desires, brutal violence, and a labyrinth of increasingly disturbing family secrets make this extremely funny and sardonic mystery rather like an Edward Gorey drawing come to life. Cedric likes to kill things. Charles likes to look at things. Bronwyn likes to drive men insane. Imogen is lost. Willy is filled with lust. And the Zeppelins are about to attack the gazebo. Inspired by an old Edwardian photograph sent to the playwright by a girl in a boxcar, a dark comedy that turns out to be about the end of Western civilization.

This is truly an ensemble play and due to the nature of this production, this ensemble coordination will be even more important than usual. Please familiarize yourself with the story of the play prior to auditioning. A great summary is provided at the playwright’s website: <https://donnigro.com/2018/10/24/the-winkleigh-murders/>

Willy: (plays 20-25) the gardener’s bastard son. Willy knows his place but yearns for Imogene who barely sees him. He knows what is what and is very aware of the perception others have of him. He can play the role of estate idiot when he wants, but he’s not as stupid as people think. Cedric’s threats, Charles’s ramblings and Bronwyn’s loose sexuality are all seen and detested.

Imogene: (plays 20-30) the orphaned ward of Bronwyn’s late parents. Imogene was a favorite of the deceased Edward, older brother of Bronwyn. She is the voice of reason and quite innocent...perhaps. Imogene’s innate sexuality may be the survival tool with which she is most familiar although it does not create enjoyment as much as conflict.

Bronwyn: (plays 20-30) The young heiress of Winkleigh. Bronwyn believes she is of upper society although the Winkleigh estate represented perhaps a middle rung of society. She is observant and comments on everything. Bronwyn stirs the pot for her own enjoyment although there is still much for her to learn. Bronwyn's sexuality is a tool for her manipulations of all of the men, although not as effective with some as others.

Charles: (plays 25-35) a school friend of Bronwyn's late brother Edward. A photographer, Charles likes to read important books and use important words. He has no interest in the typical society pursuits like hunting, but does have an insatiable interest in Bronwyn. While he would love nothing more than to have a photography session with Bronwyn, his patience with her teasing has eventual limits.

Cedric : (plays 30-35) Another friend of the late Edward. Cedric is a man's man. He knows what he wants. And if he can't have what he wants, he will ensure that nobody else can either. After Charles finally goes hunting with Cedric, only to push him in the mud to save a pregnant rabbit, Charles shows his potentially murderous side. His unrequited love for Imogene makes him more determined to shape the world as he wants it.

A Note from the Director

To direct and perform in a show during this time of pandemic is a daunting task. For cast, crew, designers and all involved, this show will require flexibility, creativity and commitment. Rehearsals will be planned and executed with safety in mind. We will wear masks in close quarters and I will block the show with distance in mind. Safety guidelines will also be rigid because no show is worth the health of anybody on the production team.

Having said that, I have a vision for the show that allows for this spacing and attention to safety. We will have occasional table work virtually and while nobody likes to go through blocking twice because everybody is not there, we may do this if there are times where it feels the cluster of people in attendance is too large. You'll need to answer screening questions at the beginning and we will consistently ask for input from you along the way.

I say all of this because I want you to be aware that we are not being cavalier about your health during the preparation and performance of this show. It is a unique story, written in a unique manner and uniquely presented as a live recorded show. I encourage you to join us in this effort to share a full production with our audience and look forward to working with you soon.

Todd

Taping your audition

As long as you can be seen and heard, please do not become obsessed with perfection in the production of your video. I would like to see your full body as you audition and fully expect you to be using the side...you do **not** have to memorize the side for your taping. Focus on being seen and being heard and don't worry about the rest.

Please only choose one reading, but do it two times. This show is full of nuance and the characters are quite complex. The two readings should be different, either interpreting the character in an entirely different manner, or focusing on some nuance of the character differently from first reading to second.

Don't edit, just perform. If you have to turn on your camera and then walk to your space to begin, that is perfectly fine. If you need to pause the camera between the two readings, no problem. The preference is to receive a single video file with both versions of your reading on it.

Upload videos to this Google Drive folder:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1_EieBIsp4kUDsxJJ0P9wvFLP2iFVbBVq?usp=sharing

Label your audition video with your first and last name.

Please respect the other auditionees. The folder is public but the videos and submissions in it are not intended for public consumption. Do not view, move, edit, or otherwise alter the content of this folder except to upload your own submission. Remember, Google tracks all activities in a shared folder.

Charles

The red light facilitates certain chemical processes which are necessary for development. Yet it troubles me because it fills my head with pictures of that terrible woman who... and also later, of Edward in his room, the clock is ticking, the gun sits on the desk, beside a photograph... One of my better ones... Of Bronwyn and Imogen, laughing in the gazebo. There is a theatre ticket beside the gun. *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*. The scarlet stain on the carpet. No. Mustn't think of that now. Think of Bronwyn. She lingers at the window by honeysuckle. Desired by all, she opens up to none, although what she does it night when the rain beats on the slates and runs mad down the gutters of her ancestral monstrosity is the subject of much speculation among the inhabitants of her father's ancient house. In my dream, struggling through the brambles on the forsaken hillside, tormented by the thought of her. Thorns tear my flesh. And yet have I not been spared much agony by these rejections and humiliations? London, the fragment of ruined wall, her face and rain wet gas light. She is eating clotted cream. A bit of it remains upon her upper lip, where one can just make out the faint trace of a scar. Some minor childhood tragedy, no doubt. But why does it make her even more beautiful? We love most desperately the imperfections of the beloved, because we feel that only we can love these blemishes. It is how we own a person, to love what mars their perfection. Once when we were drinking in that other place of red light Edward mentioned to me something about that scar. His dead eyes, staring. The blood on the carpet. The pathetic streaks of that poor lost woman. It is all a great conundrum, a baffling collection of interrelated fragments.

Imogen

Being interested in everything is a great handicap when one is attempting to concentrate upon any one thing, although it is quite useful when one is trying not to concentrate on something. You feel threatened by my intellectual voracity. That's what I was going for. You really have a wonderful profile. Your nose is shaped like Cornwall. I'm babbling. I'll never be able to hold a decent conversation if I don't learn to shut up, but I never shut up, at least, not when you're around. Of course, some people may find it actually rather endearing when I can't shut up, but you're not one of those people, are you? Don't answer. The truth is, you make me nervous, Charles. One can be immensely intelligent and yet profoundly stupid. So you are desperately, hopelessly in love with Bronwyn, are you? It's quite understandable. Everybody is. Especially the men, although not exclusively. My intelligence tends to frighten men away. And yet I do so love making them uncomfortable. I'm all at cross purposes with myself. On the one hand, I am a brilliant young woman with an independent spirit. On the other hand, I should secretly not mind at all being worshiped like a goddess in some absurd Rider Haggard novel. Men do worship Bronwyn as a goddess, but she hates it. Well, she pretends to hate it. I suppose she's bored with it, as if one had plum pudding every day. And yet, if they should ever stop, she'd be utterly lost. I fear for her old age. Sometimes I fear for her sanity. It can't be healthy for a person, being worshiped for absolutely no good reason except that one has wonderful cheekbones and is relatively symmetrical. Which is not to say she doesn't have many fine qualities which are entirely unrelated to physical beauty, but nobody really cares about those. If you're desperately in love with her, I can quite sympathize. You must understand that Bronwyn could never be satisfied with a person like you because she's never satisfied with anything. The minute she's got something, she doesn't want it any more. And she's already got you. Or knows she could have you just by wiggling her finger. So of course her attention strays to other things. More interesting and dangerous things.

Cedric

Winkleigh has always been like that. Both parents were quite mad. I want you to know, I hold no grudge about the rabbit and the mudhole. You and I will have a good laugh over it at the club one day. You'll chide me about the rabbit and the mudhole, and I'll chide you for being such a ridiculous old woman with your artsy fartsy photographs and such. We shall chortle over our brandy and go out whoring after. And I'm pleased that you appear to hold no grudge that I'm to marry Bronwyn. Best man won, and all that. Always suspected the little minx secretly fancied me. Knew I'd have her one day. All that playful bantering, to put up a smokescreen, don't you know? A man can always tell when a woman wants him. I've always had that knack. My first was at the circus. We had a summer house at Maidenhead. The circus would come to town. I was always there. One boy shouted at me, Hey, there, circus boy, why don't you go hose down your elephant? I beat him senseless with a cricket bat. But I could've been a circus boy. Mrs. Muckenfuss told me. Sold fish and chips at the freak show. She had a mustache and smelled like a goatherd, but her daughter was a hot one, developed early, incredible boobies. I had her behind the monkey wagon. The daughter, I mean. Tried to scream, but she wanted it. Women are like that. Pay no attention to what they say.

I come from a long line of Saxon hog barons. Father blackmailed his way into Oxford. His hobbies included assaulting chambermaids and torturing wild boar. He was President of the Society For The Return Of Bearbaiting, and a great crony of Edward's father. Like two pigs in a pod. Poor Edward. Tried so hard to be like his father, but just didn't have it in him. Although he had his moments.

Willy

Look at them on that monstrosity, her with butter melting in her mouth, him like a smug turd with a mustache, there in the muddy Lane by the hedgerow, like the King and Queen of Winkleigh, on his stupid automobile. When I close my eyes I can see her naked. Except perhaps for that ridiculous hat. And that jackass Charles with his stupid camera. What does he think a photograph is going to do? Make him happy? If they could hear what I'm thinking, they had me taken out and bludgeoned to death with a shovel. God, what I wouldn't give to undo them big old buttons of hers. And wouldn't I love to knock that mustache right off his face. Her hands are so perfect, her pretty little dimpled fingers, and her mouth, her full lips, so tender on mine. Just a slip of a girl. He kissed her under the Japanese lanterns. I saw the son of a bitch. He put his hand on her left one. Cedric, she says, you grow too bold. I swear it was an accident, he says. I was reaching for your elbow. Elbow my arse. Better yet, her arse. Her trim little bare buttocks. I wish I had my two hands full of them now. Look at the nasty brute, undressing her with his eyes. I know what that filthy lecturer is thinking. I'd like to see that gas tank explode and incinerate his pickle. I wonder if she ever thinks of me?

And that other one, Bronwyn. I've seen that one at midnight, sleepwalking naked on the Turkish carpet. If the vicar could see it, he'd burst a head vein.

Bronwyn

Plenty of time for that horny pants. We used to play, you know, we four, Edward, Imogen, the gardener's bastard son and myself. I was the Red Queen, of course. I rode on a great dappled rocking horse, and Willy was all the Calabands. If you had known me then, you'd be dead by now. I am very hard on men, it seems. Charles, if you value your sanity, you should leave this place at once and never come back. But you love me, therefore you obviously do not value your sanity. You will come again to the Wildwood. You will never escape. And you will grieve always. Because Nut Brown Meg lived all in the dark until her Willy came.

I don't wish to sleep. I've been dreaming of unspeakable things, such destruction, the villages laid waste, heads in mud puddles, picked up by rats. Father used to beat Edward when he had bad dreams. He was rather disappointed in Edward, I fear. But then, Father was disappointed in everybody. Except me. I of course was perfect. I often think of Father, beating his horse, riding his tricycle around and around the harmonium after the chambermaid. Father did have some good qualities. A robust, no-nonsense ability to get things done. A clear eye to see through a catechism. A dark sense of humor. Dark as the space between stars. He loved art. Well, he had pictures of ducks. He collected animal heads and obscene topiary. I suppose he was actually quite stupid. Do you know how I got the scar on my lip? I was attacked by dogs as a child. Father was drunk and using me as the fox.

I think I should go out to the potting shed now and get Cedric's mustache for my scrapbook. It will be a great comfort to me in my old age, when all else is lost.