



Murder in the Mansion Celebrates its 10th Year at Stan Hywet

By Clara Sullivan
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One murder, ten suspects. That was the case for guests to solve as they gathered for Stan Hywet Hall & Gardens' **Murder in the Mansion** presented by the Stan Hywet Historic Players this past October. In this year's production, *Dead Air*, guests stepped into a time warp back to the 1920's as they entered the Manor House and were greeted by various cast members of the "Seiberling Radio Hour." Little did they know, one of the members wouldn't make it through the radio show alive. As it became apparent that the death of script writer Betsy Tesla (under the pseudonym Edison Marconi) was indeed suspicious, the sinister motives of the remaining cast members lead them to be accused as suspects. But of course, the audience wasn't left to solve this murder all alone. Daphne the Delightful Detective led the guests in the investigation and allowed them to interrogate each of the suspects, before solving the case in the grand finale.

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the Murder in the Mansion series here at Stan Hywet Hall & Gardens. Started in 2008 by a volunteer group at the estate, the series has included past interactive mysteries: *Death of a Patron* (2011), *A Thorny Situation* (2012) and *An Opera to Die For* (2016).

For volunteer and veteran cast member Dianne Kauffman (Daphne the Delightful Detective), her roles have changed over the past 6 years that she's been involved. "The first year I was a "caboose," and then I was a leader, and then I'd just take little bits and pieces of parts. This year I have a much larger piece which is rather scary," she shares.

The sold-out series took place in the evening for six nights in October, with guests coming to celebrate all sort of occasions. Tia Stan of Akron, decided **Murder in the Mansion** was the perfect way to celebrate her 40th birthday. Although she's been visiting Stan Hywet for years, this was her first time at the murder mystery. "It's always fun to be in the mansion. You always see something different every time you come," she explains. "I love looking around. It's just fun!"

Through Murder in the Mansion, guests have the opportunity to explore the Manor House after hours all while interrogating murder suspects in various rooms. Consisting of three acts, each show lasts about two and a half hours. The event has become a guest favorite with all selling out each year. Plans are already in the works for next year's event, with thoughts of scripts and plots flowing through the cast members' heads ever since the final bow of the last show.

For information on the Stan Hywet Historic Players, and how to become involved, please email Emma Rainear Volunteer Coordinator, at erainear@stanhywet.org. To attend visit stanhywet.org in 2019 for information about tickets and next year's production.



Audiences enjoy the first act in the Manor House Music Room, observing the characters' interactions during the "Seiberling Radio Hour."

Daphne the Delightful Detective (Dianne Kauffman) calls out her suspects — just minutes after the murder of Betsy Tesla (Brandi Eaton) has taken place.



Suspects Roxie Daley (Valerie Snock) and her husband Jim St. James (Scott Davis) are interrogated by guests on the West Porch for their suspicious behavior.



Guests enjoy refreshments and interact with the cast in the Manor House gymnasium while Daphne the Delightful Detective (Dianne Kauffman) solves the case in the final act.