

# MALVERN THEATRE COMPANY

presents

## IN THE GARDEN - A DARWINIAN LOVE STORY

by Sara Gmitter

Directed by George Werther

"In the Garden", by Chicago based playwright Sara Gmitter, is essentially a love story with a difference. It tells of Charles Darwin's love for his wife Emma, an intelligent and spirited woman, and also a devout Christian. While Charles Darwin was making the single most significant scientific biological discovery, he agonised over the dilemma of presenting it to the world - not just because of society's strong religious mores at the time, but more critically because of his not wishing to undermine Emma's deep faith. Their grappling with these fundamental questions in the most intimate way, and with deep love and affection, provides the basis of this moving and personal struggle. The text is based on their correspondence and the historical record, providing a wonderful insight into both the mind of a genius and the emotional impact on Darwin and his family.

Not only does it provide a forum for two outstanding experienced actors to portray Charles Darwin and his wife Emma, but it also paints rich pictures of close family and colleagues, giving opportunities for fine multiple characterisations for men and women and children.

We are delighted to present the first production of this very special piece outside of its place of origin, the Looking Glass Theatre in Chicago, where it was conceived and produced in 2014.

**Auditions (strictly by appointment) will be held at**  
**Malvern Theatre Company, 29 Burke Rd, Malvern East**  
**on Sunday May 8 from 2.30-6.30 pm,**  
**Monday May 9 from 7.00pm**

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### SUMMARY OF CHARACTERS

**Charles Darwin** - Endlessly curious, socially somewhat awkward and self-doubting, but passionate about his scientific conclusions on natural selection. Deeply in love with Emma, and conscious of the tension created between them by the potential publication of the "Origin of Species". Major Role. Age 30-45 plus.

**Emma Darwin** - Deeply spiritual, highly intelligent, but not at all ambitious. Loves and strongly supports Charles in spite of her deep religious beliefs. Major role Age 30-40.

**THE FOLLOWING ADULT SUPPORTING ROLES WILL BE SHARED, REQUIRING AT LEAST TWO MALES AND ONE FEMALE, AND POSSIBLY THREE MALES AND TWO FEMALES, AS DESCRIBED BELOW.**

**Parslow** - the butler. A fairly typical English no-nonsense butler, with the appropriate degree of mild cynicism, but always at hand, one step ahead of his employers. Involved in scene changes. Age 40 plus. This actor may possibly also play Wilberforce and Darwin.

**One actor will play the following two characters:**

**Wilberforce** - A Bishop, a religious zealot, extreme anti-evolutionist. A powerful speaker. Age 50 plus

**Dr Darwin** - Charles' father, Emma's uncle. Classic stern and remote father figure. Age 55 plus

**Erasmus** - Charles' older brother, no profession, an atheist. Laissez-faire, iconoclast, cynic, opinionated. Age 40 plus. This actor may possibly also play Huxley and Dr Gully

**One actor will play the following two characters:**

**Huxley** - A famous botanist, close to Charles, His public defender. Supremely confident. Age 40 plus

**Dr Gully** - a doctor at Malvern spa who tends to Annie. A sympathetic man. Age 40 plus

**Harriett** - Worldly flamboyant socialite having an affair with Erasmus. Very intelligent writer, feminist and thrower of parties. Age 35 plus. This actor may possibly also play Bessie and Mrs Evans.

**One actor will play the following two characters:**

**Bessie** - Emma's mother, Charles' aunt. Warm-hearted but practical, of good sense. Age 50 plus

**Mrs Evans** - The housekeeper. Efficient and capable. She and Parslow keep the house running, taking everything in their stride. Involved in scene changes. Age 40 plus.

**Young Charles/Willie (Darwins' son)** - 8 years old, enquiring, engaging. Two actors will be required for this role, each playing both young Charles and Willie at alternate performances. Age 8-10

**Young Emma/Annie (Darwins' daughter)** - 9 years old, also engaging, intelligent. Two actors will be required for this role, each playing both young Emma and Annie at alternate performances. Age 9-11

English accents are expected

Rehearsals will commence in mid-June. Sundays 2-5 pm, Tuesdays and Thursdays 7.30-10.30pm

## **Production Dates**

**August 25 to September 10th. Thirteen performances  
including two matinees**

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**Please contact the Director, George Werther for further  
information and a copy of the script, or to book an audition time  
on 0402222090 or email [george.werther@rch.org.au](mailto:george.werther@rch.org.au)**