

*The Helen Keller Birthplace Foundation
presents*

*the 63rd Annual Production of
William Gibson's*

THE MIRACLE WORKER

STARRING

ANNA BOND KELLEY LILLIE MEYER
JONATHAN MOORE STEPHANIE CROTHERS
TYLER HUDSON ELIZABETH RAGSDALE
KYL A ROBINSON DARREN J. BUTLER JACK BUTLER
KALIA ROBINSON DESTINY RUTLEDGE WILLIAM FREEMAN
MARTHA CAROLINE POWELL EVIE ROSA BUTLER
MARY JOHN ALEXANDER COCO BUTLER ABIGAIL JOHNSON
HUGO RAGSDALE ADLEY REA BURCHELL LILY BURLESON ZOE GREEN LYLA GRACE GREGORY
KENSINGTON ANN GRIGSBY KINSLEY SIMONS NORA SPARKS WAKEFIELD SELF NEIL SELF

SCENIC DESIGN BY
DAVID K. RUEBHAUSEN

COSTUMES BY
BETH HENDERSON
VICTORIA MCCOY
ROSE HILL WORKSHOP

LANDSCAPES BY
SHOALS MASTER GARDENERS
(LISA MAPLES, PROJECT CHAIR)

CREW
GRACIE MESTAS CECILIA GOOCH
PAULA MESTAS AMBER ANGLIN

STAGE MANAGER
WILLIAM FREEMAN

ASSISTANT TECHNICAL DIRECTOR
CODY WOODFIN

TECHNICAL DIRECTION BY
ANDREW MAPLES

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
LAURA CONNOLLY

DIRECTED BY
CAROLINE SELF

*"The Miracle Worker" is presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals on behalf of
Samuel French, Inc. www.concordtheatricals.com*



Anna Bond
Kelley



Lillie
Meyer



Jonathan
Moore



Stephanie
Crothers



Tyler
Hudson



Elizabeth &
Hugo Ragsdale



Kyla
Robinson



Darren J.
Butler



William
Freeman



Kalia
Robinson



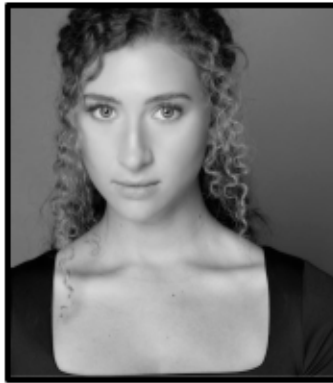
Destiny
Rutledge



Jack
Butler



Martha Caroline
Powell



Evie Rosa
Butler



Mary John
Alexander



Coco
Butler



Abigail
Johnson



Adley
Burchell



Lily
Burleson



Zoe
Green



Lyla Grace
Gregory



Kensington Ann
Grigsby



Kinsley
Simons



Nora
Sparks

THE CAST

(in order of appearance)

A Doctor.....	WILLIAM FREEMAN
Kate Keller.....	STEPHANIE CROTHERS
Capt. Arthur Keller.....	JONATHAN MOORE
Helen Keller.....	LILLIE MEYER
Martha	DESTINY RUTLEDGE
Percy.....	KALIA ROBINSON
Aunt Ev.....	ELIZABETH RAGSDALE
James Keller.....	TYLER HUDSON
	JACK BUTLER <i>(at certain performances)</i>
Anagnos.....	DARREN J. BUTLER
Annie Sullivan.....	ANNA BOND KELLEY
Viney.....	KYLA ROBINSON
Blind Children at Perkins School.....	MARY JOHN ALEXANDER
	ADLEY REA BURCHELL
	LILY BURLESON
	COCO BUTLER
	ZOE GREEN
	LYLA GRACE GREGORY
	KENSINGTON ANN GRIGSBY
	KINSLEY SIMONS
	NORA SPARKS
Jimmie Sullivan.....	WAKEFIELD SELF
Dr. Samuel Gridley Howe.....	NEIL SELF
Belle.....	HUGO RAGSDALE
Visual Storytellers (6/28-6/29 Only).....	RHONDA NESMITH
	SANDRA SCHMIDT

UNDERSTUDIES

For Annie Sullivan - MARTHA CAROLINE POWELL, EVIE ROSA BUTLER; for Helen Keller - MARY JOHN ALEXANDER, COCO BUTLER; for Captain Keller - DARREN BUTLER; for Kate Keller and Aunt Ev - ABIGAIL JOHNSON; for James Keller - JACK BUTLER

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

ACT 1

Time: 1882; 1886; 1887

The Keller homestead, Tuscumbia, Alabama; the Perkins Institution for the Blind, Boston, Massachusetts; the Tuscumbia Depot

ACT 2

Time: March 1887

The Keller homestead; the garden house

ACT 3

Time: April 5, 1887

The garden house; the homestead

THERE WILL BE TWO 10-MINUTE INTERMISSIONS

THE CREATIVE TEAM AND CREW

Director.....CAROLINE SELF
Assistant Director..... LAURA CONNOLLY
Technical Director..... ANDREW MAPLES
Scenic Designer.....DR. DAVID K. RUEBHAUSEN
Stage Manager.....WILLIAM FREEMAN
Assistant Technical Director.....CODY WOODFIN
Costumes by.....BETH HENDERSON, VICTORIA MCCOY,
ROSE HILL WORKSHOP
Stage Crew.....PAULA MESTAS
AMBER ANGLIN
Tech Crew.....CECILIA GOOCH
GRACIE MESTAS
Set Construction.....GENE MCDUGAL
Landscapes by.....SHOALS MASTER GARDENERS
PAULA KELLY, MICHAEL WILSON, LISA MAPLES, SALLY MCGUIRE
DWIGHT JAMES, PENNY TOWNSEND, JINA BRADFORD, LINDA BREWER
Master Gardeners Project Chair.....LISA MAPLES
Web Design.....MILNER CROSSLEY MEDIA SOLUTIONS/ J CROSSLEY MOORE

THE VIDEOTAPING OR MAKING OF ELECTRONIC OR OTHER AUDIO AND/OR VISUAL RECORDINGS OF THIS PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTING RECORDINGS OR STREAMS IN ANY MEDIUM, INCLUDING THE INTERNET, IS STRICTLY PROHIBITED, A VIOLATION OF THE AUTHOR'S RIGHTS AND ACTIONABLE UNDER UNITED STATES COPYRIGHT LAW. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE VISIT: <https://concordtheatricals.com/resources/protecting-artists>



"The most important day I remember in all my life is the one on which my teacher, Anne Mansfield Sullivan, came to me. I am filled with wonder when I consider the immeasurable contrasts between the two lives which it connects. It was the third of March, 1887, three months before I was seven years old."

- Helen Keller, "The Story of My Life"

facebook.com/themiracleworkerativygreen
themiracleworker.info

THE CAST AND CREW

ANNA BOND KELLEY (*Annie Sullivan*) returns to *The Miracle Worker* for her third season and is thrilled to portray Annie Sullivan in this year's production. Other theatrical credits include: Kate Keller in *The Miracle Worker*, Annie in *Annie*, Babette in *Beauty and the Beast*, Lucy Grant in *Bright Star*, and Denise in *Smoke on the Mountain*. Anna will soon graduate from Athens State University with a degree in Elementary Education. She gives glory to God, and thanks her husband and family for their continuous love and support.

LILLIE MEYER (*Helen Keller*) is enrolled in Florence City Schools. She has taken dance classes since age 3 and thrived in competitive dance for the past 6 years. Lillie is excited to return for her third year portraying Helen Keller in *The Miracle Worker*. She always has been inspired by Helen's story and is grateful for the honor of bringing it to life on stage. Lillie would like to thank the cast and crew for their ongoing guidance and love. A special thank you to Caroline Self and Laura Connolly for trusting her to represent the courage of Helen Keller.

JONATHAN MOORE (*Captain Arthur Keller*) returns to *The Miracle Worker* at Ivy Green for his 12th season and is thrilled to play the role of Captain in this year's production. Past credits include: *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, and *Radium Girls*. Musical theatre credits include: *Bright Star*, *The Christmas Shoes*, *Camel Lot*, *The Loaned Manger*, and *Opal*. Jonathan serves as Worship Pastor at First Baptist Church of Colbert Heights in Tusculumbia, AL. He holds a B.S in music from the University of North Alabama. Jonathan would like to dedicate this season's performance to his wife, Gina, his son, Grey, and twin daughters, Madelyn & Ellyn. "Love you to the moon and back!" Soli Deo gloria! Facebook, Twitter, Instagram: jcrossleymoore

STEPHANIE CROTHERS (*Kate Keller*) is appearing on the Ivy Green stage for the first time, and she is so excited to be taking on the role of Kate Keller. Stephanie began performing as a dancer at the age of 5 and later studied acting in her hometown of Los Angeles at the University of Southern California. Theatrical credits include: Lt. Commander Joanne Galloway in *A Few Good Men* at the Shoals Theater; Mrs. Daldry in Sarah Ruhl's Tony Award winning play *In The Next Room, Or The Vibrator Play*; Judy in *The Solder Dreams*; Gossamer Beynon & Mrs. Cherry Owens in Dylan Thomas's *Under Milkwood*, and Beatrice in Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing*. She has also appeared in commercials for brands like Toyota, DirectTV and AT&T. When not on stage, Stephanie is a professional mural and scenic painter and teaches ballroom dance at Florence's local ballroom dance studio, Dare 2 Dance.

TYLER HUDSON (*James Keller*) has been performing since he was a child. Recent credits include leading roles in *Seussical*, *Shrek the Musical*, *A Christmas*

Story, *Radium Girls*, *Dial M for Murder*, *Next To Normal*, and *Rabbit Hole*. He has been a supporting actor in many theatrical productions as well as serving as actor and producer for several independent films. He served as music director for *A Closer Walk With Patsy Cline* and *The Little Mermaid*, and has performed as a professional vocalist in over 1000 concerts both nationally and internationally. Tyler currently serves as the front man for the local rock cover band, *Roadside Mattress*. He is excited to take the stage as Jimmie for the second season, after 3 consecutive years as Doctor/Mr. Anagnos. Tyler would like to thank his wife and children for allowing him the chance to continue to pursue his passion of performing.

ELIZABETH RAGSDALE (*Aunt Ev*) played Annie Sullivan here at Ivy Green many years ago and is returning for her fourth season as Aunt Ev. Elizabeth has performed in many local productions. *The Miracle Worker* has such a special place in her heart, and she feels so blessed to be a part of this exceptional cast and crew, led by their amazing director, Caroline Self. Elizabeth feels immense gratitude for being a part of *The Miracle Worker* legacy and will consider Ivy Green "home" forever and ever.

KYLA ROBINSON (*Viney*) is 17 years old and will attend The University of Alabama this fall. Kyla first appeared in *The Miracle Worker* in 2022 as Percy, and this is her second season to portray Viney. Kyla is grateful to Caroline and Laura for the opportunity to play this role once again. Kyla would also like to thank Debra Staggs for getting her on stage. She is also thankful that her parents support her love for acting, and she hopes to continue acting in the future.

DARREN J. BUTLER (*Mr. Anagnos, u/s Captain Arthur Keller*) is thrilled to return to Ivy Green where he served as the director for twenty-one years and stage manager for one season. Darren is a writer for stage and screen as well as a director and producer. On the stage, Darren originated the role of Frank in the *Poor Mama* murder mystery series. A few of his other favorite roles have been Ebenezer Scrooge in *A Christmas Carol* and Mr. Dussel in *The Diary of Anne Frank*. Darren is represented by Prestige Management in NYC. www.darrenjbutler.com

KALIA ROBINSON (*Percy*) is 13 years old and goes to Florence City Schools. This is Kalia's third season to perform in *The Miracle Worker*. Kalia enjoys the performing arts, has participated in dance, and currently plays the clarinet. She wants to thank Caroline Self and Laura Connolly for this wonderful opportunity. She is very honored to appear in *The Miracle Worker* along with her sister Kyla (Viney).

DESTINY RUTLEDGE (*Martha*) is thrilled to return to *The Miracle Worker* for her second season. Destiny is the daughter of Burnis and Renita Rutledge. Destiny is a member of Christworldwide Ministries where she dances and serves under the leadership of Apostle Theron and Pastor Tracy Brown. Destiny

THE CAST AND CREW

would like to dedicate this season's performance to her parents and her siblings, Kobe, Sierra and Nevaeh.

WILLIAM FREEMAN (*A Doctor, Stage Manager*) is a native of Florence and has been active in community theatre for over 30 years as an actor and director. William is a professional puppeteer and voice actor, where you can currently watch him working the puppets and providing the voices on the nationwide PBS show, "Steve Trash Science". He has volunteered with the Zodiac Players of Shoals Theatre Inc. since 2011 and with the Official Alabama Renaissance Faire since 1990. William also volunteers with Magnolia Church of Christ. He believes this show can bring you a message of hope and perseverance, and is excited to help bring this story to life.

JACK BUTLER (*James Keller alternate*) is a rising senior at Gulf Shores High School. He is excited to return to Ivy Green, where he has appeared as a Blind Child, Young Jimmy Sullivan, and James Keller. Jack has been in several productions of *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever* as Charlie and as Leroy Herdman. One of his favorite roles was Dill in *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Jack has also appeared in *The Music Man*, *Murder in the Bayou*, and *The Murder Mystery That Went Wrong*. He is represented by Barefoot Models & Talent (Mobile) and Prestige Management (NYC).

MARTHA CAROLINE POWELL (*u/s Annie Sullivan*) is honored to be in this year's production of *The Miracle Worker*. Past credits include: *Almost, Maine*; *Romeo and Juliet*; *Absolutely Murder*; and *The Wizard of Oz*. Past musical credits include: *The Drowsy Chaperone*; *Into the Woods*; *Beauty and the Beast*; *Newsies*; and *Bye Bye, Birdie*. Martha Caroline is a graduate of Florence High School and a proud alumna of the Florence Academy of Fine Arts. She will attend Emory University in the fall.

EVIE ROSA BUTLER (*u/s Annie Sullivan*) is excited to return to Ivy Green where she has portrayed Helen Keller and a Blind Child. In the fall, Evie Rosa will begin her second year as a BFA acting major at California Institute of the Arts (CalArts). Past credits include: Scout in *To Kill A Mockingbird*, Hannah in *The Last Mile* for which she won a Best Actress award at the Alabama Thespian Festival, Sully in *The Gravedigger*, Emily in *Our Town*, Smee in *Peter and the Starcatcher*, Templeton in *Charlotte's Web*, Beth in *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever*, Amanda in *Murder at Mama's* and *Murder in the Bayou*, and roles in *Opal* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Most recently, she appeared as Mai in *Tide* at CalArts. At the Walter Trumbauer Festival, Evie Rosa won first place in Contemporary Female Monologue two years in a row. A fun fact about Evie Rosa is that her birthdate of April 5th is the date Helen Keller experienced the miracle at the pump. She is represented by Prestige Management (NYC).

MARY JOHN ALEXANDER (*Blind Child, u/s Helen Keller*) is a 5th grade student at Kilby Laboratory

School in Florence. Mary John is a member of the Kilby Robotics team and enjoys horseback riding. She attends Cross Point Church of Christ. She is the daughter of Ben and Sarah Beth Alexander and sister to Ward. This is Mary John's second year as a Blind Child and first year to understudy the role of Helen Keller.

COCO BUTLER (*Blind Child, u/s Helen Keller*) is a rising sixth grader at Gulf Shores Middle School. She started acting in *The Miracle Worker* at Ivy Green as a Blind Child. She has also enjoyed roles in *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever*; *Frozen, Jr.* (Young Elsa); *The Sound of Music* (Marta); *Murder in the Bayou*; *The Murder Mystery That Went Wrong*; and *The Little Mermaid*. Most recently, she played Nemo in *Finding Nemo, Jr.* for Gulf Shores Elementary School's Dolphin Sound program. When Coco isn't acting, she loves gymnastics, piano, singing, art, and playing with her friends.

ABIGAIL JOHNSON (*u/s Kate Keller, u/s Aunt Ev*) is thrilled to return to Ivy Green. She is a sophomore at Auburn University earning her BFA in musical theatre, as well as a degree in Public Relations. She has been involved with many shows over her lifetime, but this has been one of her favorites. From playing a blind child and young Anne Sullivan to now understudying Kate Keller, she could not be more thankful for this opportunity. This place and this story truly mean so much to her, and she is so excited to be able to help tell it this year.



(Photo Credit: Mary Carton)

THE CAST AND CREW

ADLEY REA BURCHELL (*Blind Child*) is ten years old and from Florence, AL. Her parents are Adam and Ashley Burchell. She has a love for singing, performing and studying history. More specifically, she enjoys learning about women who have changed the world. Adley just completed the fourth grade at Kilby Laboratory School where she has appeared in the school's productions of *The Wizard of Oz* and *Mary Poppins, Jr.* This is her first appearance in *The Miracle Worker*. She would like to wish the entire cast a successful summer and a special best of luck to her friend Mary John Alexander.

LILY BURLESON (*Blind Child*) is excited to return to Ivy Green for her second season as a Blind Child. Lily is an honor student and peer helper at her school. She loves to play piano, sing, go to church, and hang out with her friends. Her family is so proud of her!

LYLA GRACE GREGORY (*Blind Child*) is 11 years old and will attend Muscle Shoals Middle School this fall. *Stuart Little* was the first play she auditioned for, and she was chosen for the lead role of Stuart Little. This will be her second year as a Blind Child. She has also appeared in *Alice in Wonderland* and *A Christmas Story*. She absolutely loves being on stage. She attended theatre camp last year and is looking forward to returning this year.

ZOE GREEN (*Blind Child*) is thrilled to be making her first appearance in *The Miracle Worker* at Ivy Green. Zoe has two younger brothers and has played various roles in her school plays. Zoe loves art and drawing in her spare time.

KENSINGTON ANN GRIGSBY (*Blind Child*) is thrilled to be joining the cast of *The Miracle Worker* for the second year in a row! A born performer, Kensie is looking forward to many more wonderful roles in the future! She enjoys singing, acting, dancing and all things related to "the stage"!!

KINSLEY SIMONS (*Blind Child*) is thrilled to be making her first appearance at Ivy Green as a blind child. Kinsley's family moved to Killen from South Carolina last October as part of the Remote Shoals program and she loves calling Alabama home! She has always been fascinated by Helen's story and is honored to have been welcomed into *The Miracle Worker* family. Kinsley is 13 years old and a member of the Homeschool Co-op of the Shoals. She loves to crochet and perform in plays and musicals.

NORA SPARKS (*Blind Child*) is excited for her second year in *The Miracle Worker*. Nora is the daughter of Rodney and Cassie Sparks. She lives in Leighton with her parents and five siblings. She is eight years old and home schools. Nora enjoys exploring nature, playing with her pets, painting, and sewing.

HUGO RAGSDALE (*Belle*) will be taking the stage at Ivy Green for his very first production. Hugo is two years old and is delighted to join *The Miracle Worker* Family. As early as 1885, French Bulldogs were arriving in America. The social elite instantly fell

in love with the new breed. French Bulldogs had stolen the hearts of Americans.

AMBER ANGLIN (*Stage Crew*) has had a great love for theatre her entire life, and has recently been involved with community theatre here in the Shoals area. Her most recent credits include *Alice in Wonderland* and *Hippopotamus for Christmas* at the Ritz theatre. Previously, she was co-chair of an alternate history convention, "AnachroCon" in Atlanta GA, from 2017-2020 after volunteering since 2012. She is a cosplayer, and crafter. She loves lending her skills wherever she can help.

PAULA MESTAS (*Stage Crew*) is a junior at Colbert Heights High School, where she is captain of her school majorette line. She has participated in school theatre since her 6th-grade year and community theatre for three years. This is her third season doing stage crew and her 16th theatrical production. Some of her recent shows include: *Alice in Wonderland*, *Seussical*, and *Cinderella*. This show is very special to her as it was her first community theatre production, and she looks forward to participating each year.

CECILIA GOOCH (*Tech Crew*) is returning for her 6th season, and her summer would not be complete without spending it at Ivy Green. She has played a Blind Child, Helen Keller, and has worked as the "Helen Coach" for two years. A student at Florence High School, Cici has been involved in show choir, All-State Chorus, theatre, and TV production through Florence Academy of Fine Arts. She recently played Shelby in the Falcon Theatre production of *Steel Magnolias* and has been involved in numerous productions through the Shoals Theatre's Gingerbread Players. She would like to thank her family for their continued support of her love of theatre.

GRACIE MESTAS (*Tech Crew*) has recently graduated high school and has been in theatre for several years. Some of her HS credits include: *Deadline*; *Cinderella*; *Once on This Island*; *Radium Girls*; *Noises Off*; and *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown*. She has also recently started participating in community theatre. She has played a technical role in *Alice in Wonderland* at the Ritz Theatre, *Seussical* and upcoming *Willy Wonka* at the Shoals Theater, and this is her second year participating in *The Miracle Worker*.

CODY WOODFIN (*Tech Crew*) has been in theater for years. He has been in *The Little Mermaid*, *Sound of Music*, and many more, and this is his second year working with *The Miracle Worker*. Cody is a student at Troy University, pursuing a degree in Technical Theater.

THE CREATIVE TEAM

CAROLINE SELF (*Director*) is returning for her fifth year as director, but *The Miracle Worker* at Ivy Green has been an important part of her life since childhood. She appeared as a Blind Child, Helen Keller (3 seasons), Annie Sullivan (4 seasons), and Kate Keller (2 seasons). Caroline also directed *The Miracle Worker* at Harvard-Radcliffe College, the alma mater she shares with Helen Keller, and she first directed the play at both the Long Beach Playhouse and the Sierra Madre Playhouse in California. Caroline is a television producer and editor. Her executive producer credits include: "The Real Housewives of New Jersey", "Blood Sweat & Heels", "Manzo'd with Children", and "Buying Beverly Hills". Other credits include: "Project Runway", "Big Brother", and "Hell's Kitchen".

LAURA CONNOLLY (*Assistant Director*) is grateful to return for her 25th season with *The Miracle Worker*. In 1976 she played a Blind Child and has since played the roles of Aunt Ev and a crone. She has also worked backstage, in the box office, and as Stage Manager. She currently works as a Hostess at Ivy Green. Laura has worked on over 160 local theatre productions. She earned her degree in Theatre at University of North Alabama. She has co-directed 32 shows with Andrew Maples. Laura wants to thank her mom Arah Ringnell for taking her to see plays as a child and her 2 daughters, Christie and Jamie, for their support and understanding.

ANDREW MAPLES (*Technical Director*) has been involved with technical theatre since college when he stumbled in to help on a production. He went on to receive his degree in theatre and radio television and film from UNA. Since college he has been a tech director of many shows in the Shoals area. He enjoys all aspects of theatre. He and Laura Connolly have directed a total of 32 shows involving both young and adult actors.

DR. DAVID K. RUEBHAUSEN (*Scenic Design*) began his theatrical career in the Kansas City area working as the Student Technical Director for William Jewell College theatre while acting in such productions as *Marat/Sade*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *Romeo and Juliet* and *The Insect Comedy*. While completing graduate work in Minneapolis, Dr. Ruebhausen served as Theatre instructor and Managing Director for the University of Minnesota Theatre and Minnesota Centennial Showboat. While in the Twin Cities, he directed and/or designed for productions such as *Children of a Lesser God*, *The Bourgeois Gentleman*, *Ghosts*, *Arms and the Man* and *Beyond Therapy*. He also served as the senior faculty member for UNA Theatre, teaching courses in design, directing, voice, acting, history, dramatic literature and arts management. Dr. Ruebhausen has directed and/ or designed for UNA productions of *The Man of La Mancha*, *Dracula*, *Noises Off*, *The Tempest*, *Guys and Dolls*, *Playboy of the Western World*, *Lysistrata*, *Candida*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and *Once Upon*

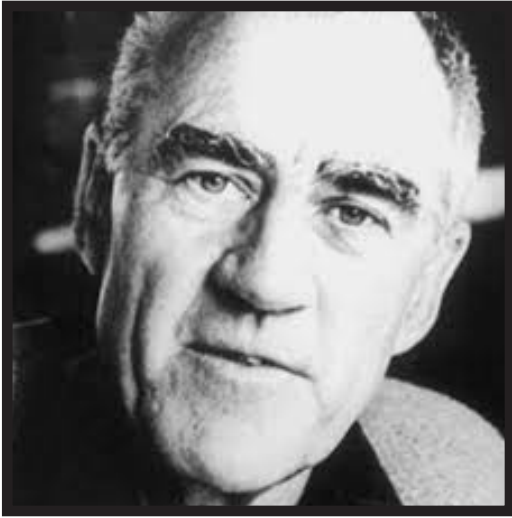
A Mattress. He has also worked with several Shoals community theatre productions as well as with the theatre departments at Orange Beach High School and the Florence Academy of Fine Arts (FAFA). For FAFA, he has designed sets for *Our Town*, *Peter and the Starcatcher*, *Take My Seat*, and *The Music Man*.



(Photo Credit: Mary Carton)

THE PLAYWRIGHT

WILLIAM GIBSON (*Playwright*) Born in the Bronx of New York City on November 13, 1914, William "Bill" Gibson was the son of George and Dore Gibson. Gibson spent his childhood in New York City and later attended college there. When he graduated from City College, he moved to Kansas, where he met the lady who would become his wife, Margaret Brenman. They were married on September 6, 1940. They had two sons, Thomas and David.



Some of his early plays were produced in Topeka, Kansas, but his critical and popular success came when *Two For the Seesaw* opened on Broadway in 1958. Just a year later, *The Miracle Worker* opened on Broadway starring Patty Duke and Anne Bancroft. A few years later, he adapted the play for the screen where Patty Duke and Anne Bancroft reprised their roles as "Helen" and "Annie."

Other credits include: *A Cry of Players*, *Golda's Balcony*, *The Butterfingers Angel*, *Monday After the Miracle*, *Goodly Creatures*, and *Handy Dandy*. Book credits include: "The Seesaw Log", "A Mass for the Dead", "Shakespeare's Game", and a book of poetry called, "Winter Crook". In 2004, *Golda's Balcony* brought Gibson back to the New York Stage. William Gibson died at his home in Stockbridge, Massachusetts on November 25, 2008. He was 94 years old.

Gibson visited Ivy Green several times before his death, and he provided counsel and support to our production here. He always said that the production at the Birthplace needed to be "the best production of this play anywhere in the world." That is the bar we strive to meet each year.

THE STORY OF THE MIRACLE WORKER

On February 7, 1957, CBS aired a teleplay of William Gibson's *The Miracle Worker* on its series Playhouse 90. The teleplay, directed by Arthur Penn, was a hit, but the story of *The Miracle Worker* was just beginning. The next morning, Gibson met Anne Bancroft, who Gibson called "Annie", for the first time, and on October 19, 1959, Annie Bancroft opened on Broadway as Annie Sullivan, "the miracle worker".

The original Broadway production of Gibson's *The Miracle Worker*, directed by Arthur Penn, also starred Patty Duke as Helen Keller, Patricia Neal as Kate Keller, and Torin Thatcher as Captain Arthur Keller. It ran on Broadway for 719 performances and won 4 Tony Awards including Best Play, Best Actress for Bancroft, and Best Director for Penn.

In 1962, Gibson, Penn, Bancroft, Duke, and producer Fred Coe teamed up again for the film adaptation of *The Miracle Worker*. Both Bancroft and Duke won Oscars for their portrayals of Annie Sullivan and Helen Keller. Duke later played Annie Sullivan in a 1979 television movie of *The Miracle Worker* that starred Melissa Gilbert as Helen.



63 YEARS OF MIRACLES AT IVY GREEN

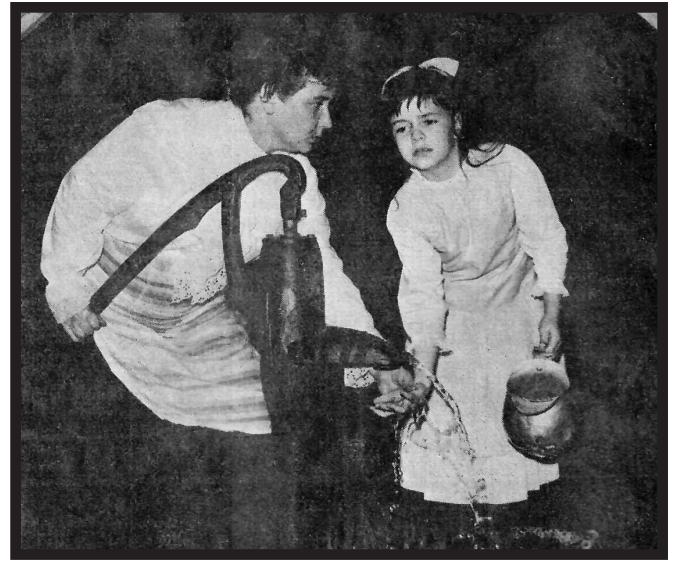
In 2024, we celebrate the 63rd Annual Production of William Gibson's *The Miracle Worker* outdoors at Ivy Green, the Birthplace of Helen Keller. Every year since 1962, this moving story of the triumph of the human spirit has been told on the grounds where Annie Sullivan taught Helen Keller the meaning of language. Today, the production brings people from all over the world and is the Official Outdoor Drama for the State of Alabama.

Not long after the Broadway run, Patty Duke visited Tuscumbia to experience Ivy Green. While in Tuscumbia, she was interviewed by Lyn Wagnon, who, along with Ward Wagnon, ran the Starmaker Community Playhouse in Tuscumbia. The idea for producing *The Miracle Worker* on the grounds of Ivy Green was born.



Patty Duke at Ivy Green in the early 1960s

The Miracle Worker opened at Ivy Green on June 29, 1962 to a capacity crowd. It was a hit, and a yearly tradition began. A month later, the Academy Award winning film of *The Miracle Worker*, produced by Fred Coe, directed by Arthur Penn, and starring Anne Bancroft and Patty Duke, was released.



Ann Cash and Teresa Conley in the 1962 production of *The Miracle Worker* at Ivy Green

Ten years after the first performance at Ivy Green, on April 8, 1972, a tragic fire struck Ivy Green and many of the props for *The Miracle Worker* that were stored in the attic of the Keller Shrine were destroyed. In only a few months, a new stage would need to be built on the other side of the lawn, a new lighting system would be needed, and the seating would need to be changed. *The Miracle Worker* faced closure, but after much deliberation, the decision was made. "The show must go on."



Patty Duke with Patty Chambers Hughes, who portrayed Annie in the 1980 production of *The Miracle Worker* at Ivy Green

63 YEARS OF MIRACLES AT IVY GREEN

In the 1970s, the play was performed behind the house, using the real pump for the "miracle" scene. Seating was much more limited than it is today. With Helen Keller's 100th birthday approaching on June 27, 1980, the decision was made to build an amphitheatre in time for the 1980 production so thousands more people could experience "the miracle" every summer. That amphitheatre was built on the site where the play is produced today. Patty Duke, who won an Emmy for her portrayal of Annie Sullivan in 1979, was in attendance for *The Miracle Worker* at Ivy Green during that 1980 season.



Patty Duke at Ivy Green in 2006

Duke returned to Ivy Green a few times before her death in 2016. On one of her later visits, Patty Duke remarked that "finally, my spirit has come home."



The set built in 2003



Rehearsing the 2020 Production

The set that was built in 1980 remained standing until 2003 when the set was rebuilt and the lighting/sound equipment modernized. The current set was built in 2015 with major improvements made for the 2020 production.

In 2020, the coronavirus pandemic shut down Ivy Green to tours for the first time since it opened as a museum in 1954. Without revenue from tours and with gathering restrictions in place, *The Miracle Worker* once again faced cancellation, but again, the decision was made that "the show must go on". You are watching a play that has been performed on these grounds every summer since 1962. Now, more than ever, we are committed to keeping the miracle alive for generations to come.



Anna Bond Kelley and Lillie Meyer