

## **Puzzles about in 'When the Rain Stops Falling'**

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Trying to figure out what's happening in "When the Rain Stops Falling" is a bit like trying to put a jigsaw puzzle together when there's no picture to guide you.

Presented by Dragon Theatre, this 2008 drama by Andrew Bovell spans four generations from 1959 to 2039 and shifts between London and Australia.

The seven-member cast is skillfully directed by Kimberly Mohne Hill. Some characters are seen as their younger and older selves. Two actors portray two characters.

Act 1 is especially difficult to track, but by Act 2, things come into focus. One can see how events in the past affect later ones.

In some scenes, mainly in Act 2, older characters observe their younger selves in pivotal, usually painful events.

The ensemble cast features Felix Abidor as Gabriel, a young man who goes to Australia to discover what happened to his long-gone father. Maria Giere Marquis plays Younger Gabrielle, the Australian woman with whom he falls in love, while Sheila Ellam plays Older Gabrielle.

John Baldwin plays Joe Ryan, who becomes Gabrielle's husband. Judith Miller plays Older Elizabeth, mother of Gabriel, while Lauren Hayes plays Younger Elizabeth.

Evan Sokol plays Henry Law, Gabriel's father, as well as Gabriel York, Gabriel's son with an adult son of his own.

See — it's complicated. A family tree in the program sheds some light, as does the director's note. In a general sense, this is the story of sons seeking to know more about their fathers.

The title refers to a prediction by Henry Law in 1959. He said that "fish will fall from the sky, heralding a great flood which will end life on earth as we know it," according to a press release.

Thus the play opens with a red fish falling to the feet of Gabriel York, so he decides to make fish soup for a lunch with his long-estranged son.

Fish soup seems to be the main course for the preceding generations, including those who occupy what appears to be the same dingy London flat over the years. There are other common threads, too, such as abandonment and death.

The single set by Daniel Stahlnecker keeps things simple. Scenic projections of the location and date help, too.

It's not easy to take it all in on first viewing. Seeing it a second time might provide more clarity. In the meantime, the play and this production command one's attention. It runs about two hours with one intermission.

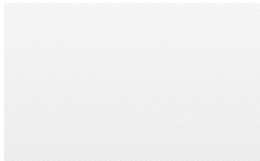
“When the Rain Stops Falling” will run through May 28 at Dragon Theatre, 2120 Broadway St., Redwood City. For tickets and information, call (650) 493-2006 or visit [www.dragonproductions.net](http://www.dragonproductions.net).

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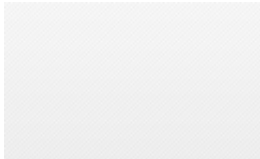
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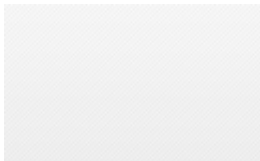
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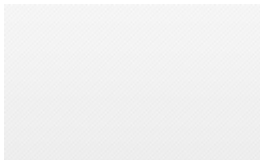
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