

## **Agatha Christie's Murder on the Orient Express** by Ken Ludwig

Board the exotic and mysterious Orient Express as the luxurious passenger train takes off into the opulence and grandeur of the 1930s, traveling from Istanbul to Western Europe before it is stopped in its tracks...with a murder! A tycoon lies dead in a compartment, stabbed a dozen times, with the door locked from the inside. A train full of suspects, each with a motive and an alibi. It's the perfect mystery for Agatha Christie's beloved detective Hercule Poirot as his vacation is interrupted and he battles the clock to figure out "whodunit".

### **Audition Dates & Info:**

June 27 and 28 @ 7 PM, Parkersburg Art Center, 725 Market Street, Parkersburg  
(NOTE: The Guild is closed this week due to scheduled electrical work.)

Auditions will consist of prepared monologues provided in the auditions materials and readings from other selected scenes.

Production Staff:

Director – Dixie Showalter [dixshow9@gmail.com](mailto:dixshow9@gmail.com)

Assistant Directors – Pam Piggott and Nicole Raber [nicole.raber@gmail.com](mailto:nicole.raber@gmail.com)

Production Assistant – Nora Corra

Technical Director – John Gradwohl

Stage Manager – Gracie Parks

Dialect Coach – Bobby Holland

Advisor – Charlie Matthews

### **Mandatory/Performance Dates:**

**TECH WEEK:** The week of September 11<sup>th</sup>

**DRESS WEEK:** The week of September 18<sup>th</sup>

**PERFORMANCES:** September 23<sup>rd</sup> 8pm, September 24<sup>th</sup> 8pm, September 30<sup>th</sup> 8pm, October 1<sup>st</sup> 8pm, October 2<sup>nd</sup> 2:30pm, October 7<sup>th</sup> 8pm, October 8<sup>th</sup> 8pm

**STRIKE:** October 9<sup>th</sup> Time TBD

Roles:

#### **Detective Hercule Poirot**

Gender – Male

Age Range – 40-65

Accent - Belgian

Analysis: Iconic character. Agatha Christie's most famous detective. Poirot is fastidious, thorough, a touch ridiculous, and incredibly observant and intelligent. He is both arrogant and humble to fault. He is an observer of people, astute at analyzing why people behave as they do, and firmly believes that most crimes can be solved primarily by observation, psychology, and thinking them through. He values intelligence and the rule of law above all else.

#### **Monsieur Bouc**

Gender – Male

Age Range – 40-64

Accent - Belgian

Analysis: The owner of Wagon Lit, Orient Express. Bouc is a middle-aged man with a youthful vigor and attitude. Gregarious, honest and forthright, he puts his friends and customers above profit, although he is concerned about his company's image. He is not a match for Poirot in intelligence, however.

**Mary Debenham**

Gender – Female

Age Range – mid 20s-30s

Accent - English (standard)

Analysis: A governess. Anxious, but also cool and determined, Mary has a certain sadness about her, as well as many secrets. She is carrying on a secret affair with Colonel Arburthnot. May need to kiss onstage.

**Colonel Arburthnot (MAY DOUBLE as Samuel Ratchett)**

Gender – Male

Age Range – 30s

Accent - Scottish accent

Analysis: A military man of the old fashioned type, possibly old-money, and used to being obeyed without question. He is strong, charismatic, but also problematic in some of his personal views. Has a temper. May need to kiss onstage.

**Hector McQueen**

Gender – Male

Age Range – 23-35

Accent – American

Analysis: Personal assistant and secretary to Samuel Ratchett, McQueen is a nervous character with a stutter that appears when he is especially anxious. Seems rather new to his profession. Talks a bit too much.

**Michel (MAY DOUBLE as Head Waiter)**

Gender – Male

Age Range – 40s

Accent – French (Michel)

Analysis: Competent and organized, Michel is the conductor for the first-class carriages of the Orient Express. Handles himself well in a crisis, and is very good at his job.

**Princess Dragomiroff**

Gender – Female

Age Range – 60s-70s

Accent - Russian

Analysis: Displaced Russian nobility. The Princess is a battleship: determined, arrogant, and accustomed to getting her way. She travels a great deal, and holds very decided opinions.

**Greta Ohlsson**

Gender – Female

Age Range – 30s

Accent – Swedish

Analysis: A Catholic missionary and baby nurse, currently serving as a companion to Princess Dragomiroff. She would like to help small children in Africa. Deeply devout. This character may be funny, but should not be played as a caricature for laughs.

**Countess Andrenyi**

Gender – Female

Age Range – 25-35

Accent - Hungarian

Analysis: In addition to being married to a count (and thus, nobility), she also is a doctor. Beautiful, educated, charming, and intelligent enough to match wits with Poirot. Must also be able to do an American accent.

### **Helen Hubbard**

Gender – Female

Age Range – 45-60

Accent - American

Analysis: Not exactly what she seems, Hubbard comes across as a gregarious, loud, obnoxious American busybody who has been married multiple times. Must be able to sing and do a little dancing. Should also be able to pull off a cooler, more calculated version of this character with a very standard or even cultured American accent.

### **Samuel Rachett (MAY DOUBLE as Colonel Arbuthnot)**

Gender – Male

Age Range – 35-50

Accent – American (mobster – possibly Brooklyn or Chicago-style)

Analysis: A dangerous and unlikable man, full of entitlement, with a hair trigger temper. Must have a forceful personality, and come across as someone not to be trusted or crossed. As the murder victim, this actor may be required to remain on stage and still for an extended period of time.

### **Head Waiter (MAY DOUBLE as Michel)**

Gender – Male

Age Range – 40s

Accent – Turkish

Analysis: Head waiter of the Tokatilian Hotel. Competent and organized, very good at his job.

### **VOCAL RECORDING ONLY CHARACTERS**

These roles will be for vocal recording only, to be completed prior to tech week so that the recording may be used during performances. We may utilize members of the cast, crew, and staff for these roles.

- 1) **Little Girl** – Female, American - A young girl, approximately 3 years old.
- 2) **Mother** – Female, American – Mother of the Little Girl.
- 3) **Father** - Male, American – Father of the Little Girl.
- 4) **Nanny** – Female – Kind, loving woman.
- 5) **The Man** – Male – Frightening voice, commanding.

### **NOTES**

Our goal is to have the production cast no later than Wednesday, June 29<sup>th</sup>. We will discuss our casting process in more detail at auditions.

**Read Thru is scheduled for Thursday, June 30<sup>th</sup> at 6:30pm.**

This production will be seeking people to join our technical crew or to volunteer in other aspects. Contact a member of the production staff for more information.

This play is a period piece from the 1930s. The set, props, costumes, jewelry, hair and makeup must all conform to the desired 1930s style. If a cast member of the production has hair, jewelry, and/or body art that do not meet this style, the cast member will be expected to work with production staff to find solutions to meet the style requirements