

MURDER OF THE ORIENT EXPRESS – AUDITON CALL

Ken Ludwig's stage adaptation of *Agatha Christie's Murder on the Orient Express* is a heart-racing suspense thriller, a knee-slapping comedy and a head-scratching who done it all wrapped in one. Set in 1934 on the glamorous Orient Express, a long-distance passenger train connecting continental Europe to west Asia, the play takes place primarily in route between Istanbul and Yugoslavia, with a passenger list of dignitaries from all over the globe.

Just after midnight during a routine trip, a snowdrift stops the Orient Express in its tracks. The luxurious train is surprisingly full for the time of the year, but by the morning it is one passenger fewer. An American tycoon lies dead in his compartment, stabbed eight times, his door locked from the inside. While details of an American tycoon's brutal death come to light, detective Hercule Poirot begins unraveling the sordid circumstances of his demise. Interviewing subjects, securing alibis, and forming theories, Poirot races to unmask the killer before they can strike again. Ken Ludwig's stage adaptation of Agatha Christie's influential mystery novel is a wildly glamorous ride from start to finish, culminating in a shocking conclusion audiences won't soon forget.

We are seeking actors and understudies to play 12 main roles plus potential additional small ensemble roles. Anyone interested in auditioning for a role: please prepare two of various character monologues provided from the show.

PLEASE NOTE (THE ROLE OF HELEN HUBBARD): If you are interested in the role of Helen Hubbard, please also prepare to sing a cappella the CHORUS of "Alexander's Rag Time Band" showcasing your range and abilities with this style of musical. (Music provided). In the show you will sing with the song playing on the radio.

PLEASE NOTE: That this production will involve kissing and simulated violence. An intimacy director and a fight choreography will be employed by the department in regards to these various elements.

Rehearsals will begin in early February and will typically be M-F 6:30 – 10:30pm and usually 1 weekend day (typically 1:00 – 5:00pm). Performances are scheduled for mid-April (April 10 – 19, 2025). All conflicts communicated prior to the acceptance of the role will be considered and the staging staff will do our best to accommodate requests. However, please note that this heavy ensemble driven production will require a large time commitment if you are cast in one of the major roles.

All roles are currently open. We are considering actors of all races, ethnicities, genders and abilities for all roles.

CAST BREAKDOWN

HERCULE POIROT (French/Belgian accent)

A retired Belgian police officer. Poirot is Christie's most famous detective and is known for his short stature and long, curly moustache. A "Big" personality, authoritative, witty, charismatic and slight pompous; driven to find the answers, good or bad, with a strong moral sense. Poirot is very intelligent, extremely aware of his ability and his well-deserved reputation. Meticulous and exacting, Poirot is a keen observer of detail and an astute judge of character. Certain that the crime was committed by someone on the train, he confidently and patiently works his way to a shocking solution.

Character's Gender: Male – (Age: 55-65)

MONSIEUR BOUC (French / Belgian accent)

The director of the Compagnie Wagon Lits and formerly worked for the Belgian police force with Poirot. A Belgian man of good humor; playful, proud, generous; a predilection for grandeur; a whirlwind of energy; must be a good comedian. M. Bouc asks Poirot to take the case. M. Bouc provides comic relief in the novel, constantly frustrated with the case and confused by Poirot. Monsieur Bouc is an old friend of Poirot's. He appears removed from the crime, often acting as Poirot's sounding board, but no one on the train is above suspicion.

Character's Gender: Male – (Age: 30 – 40)

MARY DEBENHAM (British accent – potential regional accent)

A governess - Capable yet romantic; a calm, cool and unruffled lady. Mary bears a certain sadness in her eyes. When she first appears, she is very anxious. Perhaps she is harboring a terrible secret...

Character's Gender: Female – (Age: 25-35)

HECTOR MACQUEEN (Slight Irish influence)

Ratchett's personal secretary. Tightly wound, edgy; he seems to always be on the verge of falling apart or coming unwound. A nervous young American of Irish decent in his thirties with a strained, rather beleaguered face, Hector appears to be suppressing something. Perhaps he knows more than he is willing to tell.

Character's Gender: Male – (Age: 30 - 40)

MICHEL - THE CONDUCTOR (potentially might double the Head Waiter [Marcel]) - (French accent)

A good-looking Frenchman, about forty, Michel has a quiet, almost grave sense of humor. He's seen a lot in his years on the Orient Express, and he knows his way around the train, making him particularly well positioned to get away with murder.

Character's Gender: Male – (Age: 35-40)

PRINCESS DRAGOMIROFF (Russian accent)

An old Russian dowager; very formal, a sweeping, impressive presence; imperial, impatient. She tells Poirot many stories about the other passengers' identities. Described as entering her compartment "like a galleon in full sail." Expensively dressed and handsomely bejeweled, she certainly wouldn't need to kill for money. But might she have another motive?

Character's Gender: Female – (Age: 60+)

GRETA OHLSSON (Swedish accent)

Plain and modest, but inherently odd. She is a very devout Swedish woman. Greta has a frightened, sheep-like quality about her. There is something odd about this woman. Could she be harboring a deadly secret?

Character's Gender: Female – (Age: 25-30)

COUNTESS ELÉNA ANDRENYI (Hungarian accent – later American accent)

The countess is quite young, dark-haired and beautiful, like something out of a fairy tale. Impeccably put together, with warmth that wins over everyone she meets; her delicacy belies a steely edge; she is no wilting flower. But she seems too good to be true

Character's Gender: Female – (Age: 25-30)

HELEN HUBBARD (American – Midwest/Minnesotan accent)

An outspoken American in her fifties, well dressed with a touch of flamboyance. Must be a good comedian. Mrs. Hubbard is an outspoken and tough-talking broad with rough edge and a bold sense of humor from the Midwest – jovial, obnoxious, domineering, deliciously nosy and brash; unapologetic. She seems the least likely to commit murder, but is there something about her the others don't know? (**NOTE: This character does sing to radio.**) - SEE ALEXANDER'S RAGTIME BAND SHEET MUSIC ATTACHED

Character's Gender: Female – (Age: 50s)

COLONEL ARBUTHNOT (Scottish accent)

Colonel Arbuthnot Scotsman, middle aged, handsome and very matter of fact and hard-willed. He's hopelessly in love with Mary. Would he kill for her?

Character's Gender: Male – (Age: 30-40)

SAMUEL RATCHETT (American Accent – Philadelphian/New Yorker potential – Disguises Italian heritage)

Poirot describes Ratchett as a wild animal. A middle-aged American businessman, evil at heart and frightening, Ratchett is brusque and unforgiving, with a threatening demeanor and a whiplash of a voice. He's made plenty of enemies... almost everyone has wished him dead – a man with a past – who is he really?

Character's Gender: Male – (Age: 30 - 40)

HEAD WAITER (Marcel) - (potentially might double Michel the conductor) - (Turkish accent)

A Turkish waiter, snooty, smooth; must have good comic timing. Professional in demeanor, he is knowledgeable and a bit overconfident. Mystery fans know it's a cliché, but never rule out the possibility that The Butler Did It.

Character's Gender: Male – (Age: 25-30)

Additional Roles/Voice Overs Roles –

will be determined as we move forward with the design how these roles will be assigned

Little Girl (Daisy Armstrong)

The Nanny

Mother

The Man

Announcer

Radio Voice