

# AUDITION INFORMATION



**AGATHA CHRISTIE'S**  
**MURDER ON THE ORIENT**  
**EXPRESS**

Adapted by Ken Ludwig

Directed by Melissa Findley

Audition Dates: Sept 8 & 9, 2019

Performance Dates: Oct 24 - Nov 10, 2019

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## WELCOME

Thank you for your interest in auditioning for a Theatre Tallahassee production!

If you've auditioned for us before, welcome back!

If this is your first time auditioning at Theatre Tallahassee, we're thrilled to have you! We've been around now for 70 years, and we wouldn't have lasted so long without new people, new talent, and new voices.

Whether you're a veteran performer who just moved to town or you've never been on stage before but really want to try, we'd like to encourage you to audition for shows at Theatre Tallahassee.

We're aware that auditioning can be an overwhelming experience, even if you've done it a hundred times before. We've put this information booklet together for you to help you learn a little more about the play, the characters you will be reading for, and to give you some idea of what to expect during auditions.

Please read over the character list and director's comments, and pay attention to any specific audition requirements for this show. Then review any script sides provided. We've included a printable audition form at the back of this information booklet that you can fill out and bring with you. You may also bring a headshot and/or resume, if you have one, but they are not required.

Break a leg!

## BECOME A PART OF OUR LEGACY...

We've been around for over 70 years, and produced more than 460 shows.

This season, we hope you'll become part of our Theatre Tallahassee family.



## ABOUT OUR AUDITIONS

**Theatre Tallahassee auditions are open** — we try our best to discourage directors from pre-casting roles.

**Know what you're auditioning for.** Most directors provide script sides in this packet for you to study ahead of time. Do a little research online about the play. We also keep copies of the script at the theatre, so if you would like the opportunity to read it ahead of time, you can drop by during business hours and we'll let you peruse it at Theatre Tallahassee.

**Audition requirements may vary from show to show.** Some directors like cold readings. Some might ask for monologues. For musicals, you may be asked to bring music, or wear dance clothes. Read the audition notes in this booklet to be prepared.

**Audition formats vary depending on director.** Some directors prefer closed auditions, where you will wait in another room until you are called in. Others like having everyone in one room. During closed auditions, if you bring someone to support you they may be asked to wait in the other room (unless you are a minor).

**We know that it can be disappointing not to get a part.** We always have more people audition than we have roles for, and there are many factors that directors have to weigh when casting. We encourage you to audition often. Just because you weren't right for one role, doesn't mean that you won't be perfect for another.

**We encourage you to get involved in other ways.** Helping paint or build sets, costumes or props, working backstage, or volunteering to usher are great ways to meet people, network, and become part of our theatre family.

We look forward to seeing you on stage. Break a leg!

## MAINSTAGE SEASON SHOWS

This production is part of Theatre Tallahassee's Mainstage season. If you've never performed on our Mainstage, here's a quick list of what you should know.

- Mainstage productions are performed in our main auditorium, which seats approximately 270 people.
- Rehearsals usually start about 5-6 weeks before the show opens.
- Opening night is usually held on a Thursday evening.
- Performances run for three weekends, on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays. The second Saturday is a double show day, with both a matinee and an evening performance. Sundays are matinees.

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## THE PLAY

*Just after midnight, a snowdrift stops the Orient Express in its tracks somewhere in the forests of Yugoslavia. The luxurious train is surprisingly full for the time of the year, but by the morning, it is one passenger fewer. An American lies dead in his compartment, stabbed a dozen times, his door locked from the inside. Isolated and with a killer in their midst, detective Hercule Poirot must identify the murderer – before he or she decides to strike again.*

If you're used to stodgy adaptations of Agatha Christie mysteries, with a lot of monologues and extensive exposition, this is not one of those adaptations. In a script that reads like it ought to be a film, Ken Ludwig has distilled one of Christie's most famous stories down to an exciting, fast-paced story full of memorable characters – all confined within one of the most challenging sets we've attempted in years.

Dark secrets, justice, revenge, hidden agendas, gray morality, and common purpose bring together a cast of diverse characters of wildly varying backgrounds, as Christie's most famous detective ponders the answer to the question: what is more important? What is right or what is lawful?

## ABOUT THE DIRECTOR

### MELISSA FINDLEY

Melissa grew up and attended school in central Florida before moving to Tallahassee in 2008 (after a very brief stint in Missouri). Despite her parents' best efforts to get her to do "real" work, she focused on theatre in college, with an emphasis on acting, directing and design. She's been performing, designing and directing with Theatre Tallahassee since 2010. Previous directing credits with Theatre Tallahassee include **Love, Loss, & What I Wore**; **The Underpants**; **Murder on the Nile**; **And Then There Were None**; **Steel Magnolias**, and **Arsenic & Old Lace**.

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## IMPORTANT DATES

actors must be able  
 to commit to all  
 performance dates &  
 tech/dress rehearsals.

## OTHER

### AUDITIONS ●

Sun, Sept 8 & Mon, Sept 9 at 7pm  
 please arrive 10-20 min early for sign-in

### Call Backs ○

Tues, Sept 10 at 7pm  
 By director invitation only.

### REHEARSAL PERIOD ●

Sept 11-Oct 23  
 7-10pm, Mon-Fri, some Sat  
 afternoons possible.

**No rehearsal Sept 18**

NOTE: See calendar for potential rehearsal  
 dates. Subject to change after casting.

### Tech Week ●

Oct 14-18  
 Crew integration, cue-to-cue, tech  
 rehearsals. Please try to avoid schedule  
 conflicts during this week

### Dress Rehearsals ●

Oct 21-23  
 required attendance

### PERFORMANCES ●

Oct 24-27  
 Oct 31\*-Nov 3  
 Nov 7\*-10  
 Weeknight and Saturday evening  
 performances are at 8 pm, with a 6:30 pm  
 call time.  
 Second Saturday and Sunday matinee  
 performances are at 2 pm, with a 12:30 pm  
 call time.

\*Benefit performance likely

### Pick Up Rehearsals ●

Oct 30 or 31 & Nov 6  
 Held at director & stage manager's  
 discretion. Keep dates open.

### Closing & Strike ●

Nov 10  
 Cast & Crew are required to participate in  
 show strike. Please keep this evening free  
 of conflicts.

## SEPTEMBER

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

No rehearsal Sept. 18. Sat rehearsals  
 TBD

## OCTOBER

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

## NOVEMBER

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

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## CHARACTERS

### HERCULE POIROT

*Male presenting, 40-65, Belgian accent, any ethnicity*

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

*Male presenting, 40-65, Belgian accent, any ethnicity*

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

*Female presenting, mid 20s-30s, English (standard) accent, any ethnicity*

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 Arbuthnot. Must be comfortable kissing on stage.

### COLONEL ARBUTHNOT

*Male presenting, 30s, Scottish accent, any ethnicity*

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. Must be comfortable kissing on stage.

### HECTOR MCQUEEN

*Male presenting, 23-35, American accent (any), any ethnicity*

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

*Male presenting, 40s, French accent, any ethnicity*

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.

*NOTE: This actor will double as the Head Waiter of the Tokatlian Hotel, and will also need to be able to do a Turkish accent.*

### PRINCESS DRAGOMIROFF

*Female presenting, 60s-70s, Russian accent, any ethnicity*

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.

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### **GRETA OHLSSON**

*Female presenting, 30s, Swedish\* accent, any ethnicity, ESL actresses welcome.*

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.

\*Note: As written, the character is Swedish with somewhat broken English, but we will also consider actresses who have accents other than English or Swedish (Spanish, Italian, etc.).

### **COUNTESS ANDRENYI**

*Female presenting, 25-35, Hungarian accent, any ethnicity*

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**

*Female presenting, 45-60, American accent (any, possibly Wisconsin?), any ethnicity*

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 RATCHETT**

*Male presenting, 35-50, American accent (mobster - possibly Brooklyn or Chicago style)*

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. Efforts will be made to ensure comfort.

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## AUDITION INSTRUCTIONS

Auditions will consist of readings from the script sides. Sides should NOT be memorized. Call backs are by director invitation only.

### **Regarding accents and ethnicity**

Accent/dialect work is important in this show, and we want to see your best attempt at the correct accent for each character. Perfection isn't needed, we just want to see how well you can attempt it. You may be asked to perform the scene with and without the accents, so we can judge acting ability.

Your ability to do the accent is more important than whether or not you look like a stereotypical Russian/Scotsman/Belgian, etc. Actors of all ethnicities are encouraged to attend.

Actresses who are ESL/bilingual are encouraged to audition for the role of Greta, and to use their own natural accents rather than Swedish. Unless they are, in fact, Swedish.

### **Regarding ages**

Some age flexibility is possible, with the following exceptions:

- Michel must be believably old enough to have an adult child.
- Helen Hubbard must be believably old enough to have an adult child in their mid-late 20's.

### **Note:**

Please be aware that if you are cast in this show, you will be acting in somewhat small spaces, and on platforms that are raised at least a couple of feet off the ground.

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**SIDE 1**

**POIROT** (*Belgian*)

**Pronunciation Guide:**

Tokatlian : *to-ka-ti-ahn*

Hercule : *her-kuel*  
 (rhymes with fuel)

Poirot : *Pwa-roh*

Good evening. The story you are about to witness is one of romance and tragedy, primal murder and the urge for revenge. What better way to spend a pleasant evening together?

From the beginning it was an Odyssey of deception and trickery. One minute I could see the light, like the beam of a train engine hurtling past. The next minute, all was darkness and the thread that I pulled came away in my fingers and led to nothing.

I believe it was the greatest case of my career, but who am I to say? Modesty forbids it. It was certainly the most difficult I have ever encountered, and it made me question the very deepest values that I have held since I was a young man.

It began in the exotic city of Istanbul. I planned to vacation there for several days following a trying case that was on my nerves, but things began changing the moment I stepped into the dining room of the world-famous Tokatlian Hotel, where the enormity of the prices was matched only by the self-esteem of the waiters.

My name, incidentally, is Hercule Poirot and I am a detective.

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**SIDE 2**

**MARY** (*English*)

**ARBUTHNOT**  
 (*Scottish*)

**MARY.** James! At last! Where have you been?!

**ARBUTHNOT.** Oh I'm not that late, am I?

**MARY.** Of course you are. You're always late. And I was terrified we'd miss the train. It would ruin everything!

**ARBUTHNOT.** I was just exploring a bit. I've never been to Istanbul before and I quite adore all this Eastern nonsense.

**MARY.** Well I don't. I just want to leave right now and get it over with.

*(He puts his hand on her cheek)*

**ARBUTHNOT.** I wish to hell you were out of all this. You deserve better, you know.

**MARY.** Shh! Not now! No one should see us like this. Not till it's all behind us. Besides, I think we're being observed by that funny little man over there .

*(She nods towards Poirot, who is hidden behind his newspaper.)*

**ARBUTHNOT.** What, him? He's just some damned foreigner who probably doesn't even speak English.

**MARY.** Shall we order? I'm starving.

**ARBUTHNOT.** Not here. I found a cute little place around the corner where I'm sure the food will be ten times better.

**MARY.** But we can't be late for the train! We can't miss it!

**ARBUTHNOT.** We won't be late, I promise, now stop fussing and come on, let's hurry .

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**SIDE 3**  
**RATCHETT**  
 (American)  
**POIROT**  
 (Belgian)

**RATCHETT.** Mr. Poirot, slow up! Now I'd like to discuss that proposition I mentioned.

**POIROT.** *Non non*, I'm afraid it is not a good time.

**RATCHETT.** Oh sure it is. Sit down. I'll be quick, I promise.

**POIROT.** I am afraid—

**RATCHETT.** Sit down.

**POIROT.** ... *Eh bien*. Proceed.

**RATCHETT.** Now I want you to take on a job for me.

**POIROT.** I take on few new cases.

**RATCHETT.** You'll take this one on, I guarantee it.

**POIROT.** And why is that?

**RATCHETT.** Because I'm talkin' big money here. Mr. Poirot, I have an enemy.

**POIROT.** I would guess that you have several enemies.

**RATCHETT.** Now what is that supposed to mean?

**POIROT.** You are successful, *n'est-ce pas*? Successful people have many enemies.

**RATCHETT.** Right. That's it exactly! You see I've been getting some threatening letters lately and I want an extra pair of eyes to do some snoopin' around. And that's what you do, am I right? Snoopin'? Of course I can take care of myself (*he flashes the gun under his coat*) but I'll pay you five thousand dollars. How does that sound?

**POIROT.** *Non*.

**RATCHETT.** All right, ten. For a few days' work.

**POIROT.** I am not for sale, *monsieur*. I have been very fortunate in my profession and I now take only such cases as interest me—and frankly, you do not interest me.

**RATCHETT.** You want me to grovel, is that it?

**POIROT.** I want nothing, *monsieur*, except to leave.

*(Poirot exits. Ratchett is darkly unhappy.)*

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**SIDE 4**  
**MRS. HUBBARD**  
 (American)  
**MACQUEEN**  
 (American)

*(Mrs. Hubbard calls to the Head Waiter as she rummages through her handbag for her money.)*

**MRS. HUBBARD.** Yoo hoo! Excuse me, waiter. You did a very nice job and I'm leaving you something extra because of it.

*(Noticing MacQueen)*

Excuse me, young man. Are you American?

**MACQUEEN.** Y-yes I am.

**MRS. HUBBARD.** I thought so. I can see from your passport. Us Americans have to stick together, you know. Especially in a place like this. I can't even pronounce half the things on the menu. Can you believe it? And what's a falafafafafafel? I keep seeing them on the street and they look like you could play hockey with 'em.

**MACQUEEN.** I believe they're made of fried chick peas.

**MRS. HUBBARD.** Well there ya go. Who knew. Some people will fry anything. By the way, I don't mean to snoop but I see your train ticket sitting there on the table and I wonder - do you know if they're providing a bus to the station?

**MACQUEEN.** I don't think so. I-I believe the hotel has a private car.

**MRS. HUBBARD.** Well don't you worry, I'll ask and find out. As the Bible says, "if Moses doesn't know the answer, ask the Concierge." Now I better go. I think I'm annoying that odd little man with the silly moustache.

*(sotto voce)*

And I don't think it's real.

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**SIDE 5**

**POIROT** (*Belgian*)

**BOUC** (*Belgian*)

**HEAD WAITER**  
 (*Turkish or French*)

**Pronunciation Guide:**

Poirot : *Pwa-roh*

Bouc: *Book*

Wagon-Lit: *Vagon-lee*

Lausanne: *laws-ann*

**BOUC.** I hope that the food at this humble establishment is up to your usual standards .

**POIROT.** What? What's this? ... Ah, *mon Dieu*, it is *Monsieur Bouc*!

**BOUC.** My friend! Ha haaa!

**POIROT.** *Mon ami!* But what are you doing here?

**BOUC.** What am I doing here? This is my city! I live here!

**POIROT.** Of course, I'm a fool!

**BOUC.** I run Wagon-Lit, the greatest train company in the entire world, and the central office is in this hotel. *Garçon!* This meal is on me, please charge my office.

**POIROT.** Ah *non*.

**BOUC.** Ah *oui*. It will give me pleasure, you are my guest here . So tell me, what are you doing here? You are solving a crime, eh?

**POIROT.** No no, I did that last week in Syria. It was a bad affair. An army officer, a missing check, a beautiful woman, *puh*. It did not end well. The man was guilty, that was certain. But perhaps, because I pressed the man too hard to admit his guilt ... It was unfortunate in the extreme. And yet I believe I did nothing wrong.

**BOUC.** Of course you did nothing wrong. If you break the law you must pay the price. That is what you have told me.

**POIROT.** It is what I live by.

**BOUC.** Now tell me, you are staying here at the hotel?

**POIROT.** I was hoping, eh? I was going to play the tourist, but at the desk there was a telegram from Scotland Yard, begging me to return at once, so I have asked the Concierge to get me a ticket for tonight on your famous Orient Express.

**BOUC.** There will be no problem, and the best news is, I will be joining you, for I go to Lausanne tonight on business.

**POIROT.** Ha, ha! *C'est magnifique*.

*(The Head Waiter approaches Poirot.)*

**HEAD WAITER.** Pardon, *monsieur*. The Concierge said to tell you there are no more first class tickets for the Express tonight. It is sold out.

**POIROT.** Ah *non!*

**BOUC.** *Attends*. It is my train and it is never sold out at this time of year. That is ridiculous.

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**HEAD WAITER.** It must be a party, or a convention, perhaps.

**BOUC.** Well you tell the Concierge to find a berth for *Monsieur Poirot*. He is my personal friend.

**HEAD WAITER.** But *monsieur*—

**BOUC.** The Number 7 is always available. It is held in reserve. Now go tell him!

**HEAD WAITER.** Right away, *monsieur*.

*(He exits.)*

**POIROT.** *Merci.*

**BOUC.** It is nothing. A gesture. Now you see this menu? Throw it away. Tonight we shall sit on the train together, just like old times, and we will dine like kings.

**POIROT.** The food on the train, it is edible?

**BOUC.** *Monsieur Poirot!* You stab me in the heart! I am writhing on the ground at your feet! It is not a mere train that will carry you tonight, it is a legend. It runs like no other vehicle on the earth. The fittings are from Paris, the paneling, Venice, the plates are from Rome and the taps from New York. The best food, the best beds, the best pillows, the best feathers inside the pillows. It is poetry on wheels, and Lord Byron himself could not write it better. *Monsieur*, prepare yourself. In one hour, I will meet you on the platform of the Orient Express.

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**SIDE 6**

**POIROT** (*Belgian*)

**BOUC** (*Belgian*)

**MACQUEEN**

(*American*)

Pronunciation Guide:

Arbuthnot: *Ar-booth-not*

**POIROT.** Monsieur MacQueen, please sit down.

**MACQUEEN.** Of-of-of course. Are they all right?

**POIROT.** They will be fine, I assure you. Now tell me, please, what exactly were your duties as Secretary to your employer?

**MACQUEEN.** Well I-I wrote his letters and did his errands and things.

**POIROT.** And you knew him only as Samuel Ratchett.

**MACQUEEN.** How else would I know him?

**POIROT.** His real name was Bruno Cassetti.

**MACQUEEN.** Holy God. Are you sure of that?

**BOUC.** Then you know about the Armstrong case?

**MACQUEEN.** You bet I do. My father was the District Attorney for the state of New York and he brought the case against that ... son of a bitch. I'm sorry, but you have no idea what he did to that family. And they were so kind to me!

**POIROT.** Can you tell us who was in the Armstrong household?

**MACQUEEN.** Mrs. Armstrong had a sister. She went to graduate school, but after the tragedy she moved to Europe and I think she got married. Her name was Helena. And also Mrs. Armstrong's mother would come to visit. She was an actress.

**POIROT.** Anyone else?

**MACQUEEN.** There was a governess and a baby nurse, and then poor Suzanne. She was a French housemaid—she came from Paris—and my father's office thought she might be implicated, and ... and she was so distraught from the accusations that she—

**BOUC.** Killed herself.

**MACQUEEN.** (*nods*) Only it turned out that she was innocent. My father was shattered. He never recovered.

**POIROT.** And where were you last night between midnight and two o'clock?

**MACQUEEN.** Twelve to two? I-I was with Colonel Arbuthnot on the Observation Deck.

**POIROT** And did you see anyone last night you did not recognize?

**MACQUEEN.** No. I saw Michel the conductor, and the other conductor, and Colonel Arbuthnot, and Miss Debenham—

**BOUC.** The "other conductor?"

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**POIROT.** There is a second conductor?

**MACQUEEN.** I guess so. I saw him.

**BOUC.** He was in uniform?

**MACQUEEN.** Yeah. The same one that Michel wears.

**BOUC.** And what did he look like?

**MACQUEEN.** I don't know. He had his hat pulled down. He was small-boned, you know what I mean? Sort of feminine.

**POIROT.** Did you speak with him?

**MACQUEEN.** I said hello and he just kept going.

**POIROT.** You are very helpful, thank you. You may go. And please ask Michel to come see me.

**MACQUEEN.** Sure thing. I'll see you later.

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**SIDE 7****POIROT** (*Belgian*)**MICHEL**  
(*French*)

## Pronunciation Guide:

Poirot : *Pwa-roh*Michel: *Mee-shel*

**POIROT.** I see that none of your buttons are missing, and moreover, the thread for each button is old, so nothing was sewn on recently.

**MICHEL.** That is correct, but may I ask—?

**POIROT.** Mrs. Hubbard found this button in her room this morning.

**MICHEL.** (*examining it*) It is not mine, *Monsieur*.

**POIROT.** So I see. But it matches yours exactly.

**MICHEL.** It does.

**POIROT.** Michel, are there other attendants on this train at the moment?

**MICHEL.** There is one in second class. A ticket-taker I have known for years.

**POIROT.** Is he large or small?

**MICHEL.** Quite large, I'm afraid. Shall I ask him to see you?

**POIROT.** *Non non*, that is quite all right. And what other passengers, besides the ones in this coach, are on the train?

**MICHEL.** There is hardly anyone at the moment. It is the off-season. There is a mother and child on the Belgrade carriage and that is all.

**POIROT.** And could there be a second conductor on this train wearing a uniform like yours?

**MICHEL.** Oh no, *monsieur*, there is no such thing. I had to earn this uniform with many years of service. However ....

**POIROT.** *Oui?*

**MICHEL.** Well, frankly, I am not sure I trust her word, but Miss Ohlsson says that last night she saw what she calls a second conductor on the train.

**POIROT.** (*suddenly alert*) Miss Ohlsson?

**MICHEL.** *Oui*, she told me this morning. She said he was wearing a uniform like mine and when she spoke to him he did not respond. In fact ...

**POIROT.** What? Tell me quickly!

**MICHEL.** The Princess tells me that she also saw this man last night.

**POIROT.** Oh la la, oh la la, oh la la.

**MICHEL.** What is it?

**POIROT.** It is just the kind of clue that I have been waiting for.

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**SIDE 8****POIROT** *(Belgian)***BOUC** *(Belgian)***COUNTESS***(Hungarian)*

**COUNTESS.** Excuse me, but you have asked to see me - Oh dear God.

**POIROT.** Forgive me, Countess, but I understand you were trained as a physician, so I thought perhaps you could help me with the body.

**COUNTESS.** I am happy to help.

*(Without hesitation, she strips off her jacket and rolls up her sleeves.)*

**POIROT.** I'm afraid it is not a very pleasant sight.

**COUNTESS.** I have seen worse, believe me. I volunteered in the war.

*(The Countess begins examining the body.)*

**POIROT.** *Regardes.* The left side of his face is slightly red, do you see?

**COUNTESS.** I do. It has been slapped.

**BOUC.** How do you know?

**COUNTESS.** Because I slapped it. *(beat, as she examines the body)* I count eight separate wounds.

**POIROT.** That was my count also. Can you estimate the time of death?

**COUNTESS.** I would say it is between eight and ten hours ago, which puts the time between midnight and two o'clock.

**POIROT.** I am in accord.

**COUNTESS.** It appears that the killer was wild - in a frenzy of some sort.

**POIROT.** *Regardes.* See this. Of the eight stab wounds, five appear strong and three are mere scratches. And wait, do you see, the wounds are from different directions. Do you see it? I need a pencil.

**BOUC.** Here.

**POIROT.** *Bon.* Now watch. We place the pencil inside each wound and push it gently

**BOUC.** Ugh! Is this necessary?

**COUNTESS.** Perhaps the man changed hands during the stabbing .

**BOUC.** Or there were two assailants. One right-handed and one left-handed.

**COUNTESS.** One strong, one weak.

**POIROT.** It is not impossible. But now another question presents itself: why did Mr. Ratchett not fight back when all the while he had this gun under his pillow?

*(He pulls the revolver out from under the pillow .)*

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**COUNTESS.** Oh la la.

**BOUC.** *Alors.* May I see it? *(He takes the gun.)*

**COUNTESS.** How did you find it?

**POIROT.** He showed it to me yesterday so I knew it was here somewhere.

**BOUC.** It is an automatic and I believe it is loaded. *(He waves it around.)*

**POIROT.** Attention!

**COUNTESS.** Ah!

**BOUC.** Wait! There is a safety switch, it is not on.

**POIROT** *S'il vous plait, mon ami!* Have you not heard of the fatal accident?!

*(He takes the gun from Bouc, but stops suddenly and sniffs the air.)*

Un moment.

*(He sniffs again and puts his finger up.)*

I have a very good nose.

*(He picks up Ratchett's empty wine glass and sniffs.)*

Aha. Smell the glass of wine.

**COUNTESS.** It smells of almonds. *(She pulls Ratchett's eyelids up and examines his eyes.)* He was clearly drugged, which is why ...

**POIROT and THE COUNTESS.** ... he did not fight back.

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**SIDE 9****BOUC** (*Belgian*)**MRS. HUBBARD**  
(*American*)**MRS. HUBBARD.** Help! Someone come quickly! Help!**BOUC.** (*running in*) What? What is it?!**MRS. HUBBARD.** There was a man in my room! He ran off! I'm sure of it!**BOUC.** Which way did he go?!**MRS. HUBBARD.** That way! Just this second!**BOUC.** But madam, that is where I am coming from and I saw no one.**MRS. HUBBARD.** Well ... well maybe he ducked into one of the compartments or something! I don't know. I tell you I was lying there in my bed, dead to the world, and I open my eyes and I see this man going out the door. And he's wearing a uniform.**BOUC.** But where would he come from?**MRS. HUBBARD.** I don't know. He just suddenly appeared.**BOUC.** And he looked like ... ?**MRS. HUBBARD.** I don't know! I could barely see him! One second he was there and then he was gone. He was like a phantom!**BOUC.** But how is this possible?**MRS. HUBBARD.** HOW SHOULD I KNOW!**BOUC.** Perhaps you were dreaming.**MRS. HUBBARD.** I wasn't dreaming. I know when I'm dreaming. My mouth gets dry. Does my mouth look dry to you?**BOUC.** And your door was locked - ?**MRS. HUBBARD.** Of course it was locked, but people have keys, don't they? I'll bet you have keys. Don't you own the company?**BOUC.** No, madame, I run the company. And I will look into it.**MRS. HUBBARD.** Well all right then. But hurry up about it. I don't feel safe!

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**SIDE 10****POIROT** (*Belgian*)**PRINCESS****DRAGOMIROFF***(Russian)***GRETA** (*Swedish or  
other accent*)**Pronunciation Guide:**Poirot : *Pwa-roh*Dragomiroff: *Drag-o-  
mirr-off*Bolshevik : *Bol-shiv-ik*Andrenyi: *An-dren-yi*Debenham: *Deb-en-ham*

**PRINCESS.** Monsieur Poirot, we are here out of a sense of duty, that is all. I do not like having my day disturbed.

**POIROT.** Then let us begin immediately. Now it says in your passport that you are Russian.

**PRINCESS.** That is correct. I have been in exile since the Bolshevik dogs took over.

**POIROT.** And I see that your first name is

**PRINCESS.** Natalya.

**POIROT.** And is this your handkerchief, madam?

**PRINCESS.** Of course not. It has the letter H on it. My initials are N. D. Natalya Dragomiroff.

**POIROT.** Is it yours, mademoiselle?

**GRETA.** No, no, I could not afford such a beautiful thing as this. It would be a sin.

**PRINCESS.** Oh!

**POIROT.** And may I ask each of you where you were last night between midnight and two o'clock.

**PRINCESS.** I could not sleep, so at midnight the Countess Andrenyi and I read a book together in my room. Out loud. It is the very best way to get to sleep when you are anxious.

**POIROT.** And what were you anxious about?

**PRINCESS.** The Bolsheviks.

**POIROT.** And what book did you read?

**PRINCESS.** The Tale of Two Cities, it is very comforting.

**POIROT.** And you, Miss Ohlsson? Where were you?

**GRETA.** I was in my room with Miss Debenham, who is also nice. We talked from twelve o'clock until two o'clock and then we slept. You can ask her!

**POIROT.** And have either of you ever been to America?

**PRINCESS.** Yes, many times.

**GRETA.** I have not been to America but I must go some day to raise money for my babies in Africa.

**POIROT.** You are very religious.

**GRETA.** *Ja*, since I was little girl and Jaysus came to visit me in my garden. He spoke with me, and told me I must work hard to help little babies in Africa.

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**POIROT.** And I'm sure you have done it beautifully, *mademoiselle*. Just one more question for both of you ladies. Are you aware of the identity of the man who was killed last night?

**GRETA.** His name was Ratchett (*sob*) and I pray for his soul.

**PRINCESS.** No, my dear, his name was Bruno Cassetti, the Countess told me, and what I pray is that his soul is damned and that he burns in hell for all eternity.

**GRETA.** Princess!

**PRINCESS.** He murdered a girl named Daisy Armstrong and her grandmother is my dearest friend. You would know her as the actress Linda Arden.

**BOUC.** She was very great.

**PRINCESS.** Not was, monsieur. She *is* very great. She is very much alive and remains the greatest actress of the American stage. And when her five-year old granddaughter was murdered by this monster Cassetti, it took her years to recover, indeed she has not yet recovered!

**POIROT.** There were four who died?

**PRINCESS.** No, five, monsieur! Five people died! Little Daisy, and then her mother, who was pregnant, died in childbirth, and the baby died, too. And the little girl's father, Colonel Armstrong, who could not live with what happened and ended his life! And a housemaid as well! Five human souls were extinguished. So please forgive me, Greta, if I take the view that there is no forgiveness in a case such as this and that Mr. Cassetti should have been *flogged to death and his remains cut up and thrown onto a rubbish heap!!*

**GRETA.** Ahhh!

(*Greta runs out.*)

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**SIDE 12****POIROT** (*Belgian*)**BOUC** (*Belgian*)**ARBUTHNOT***(Scottish)***MARY** (*English/British*)

## Pronunciation Guide:

Poirot : *Pwa-roh*Arbuthnot: *Ar-booth-not*Colonel : *ker-nal*Meerschaum: *meeuh-  
shawn*

**ARBUTHNOT.** Poirot! I have brought Miss Debenham as you requested, now what do you want with her?

**POIROT.** I merely wish to ask her some questions. Colonel, you may go.

**ARBUTHNOT.** I beg your pardon?

**POIROT.** You are not needed for this.

**ARBUTHNOT.** Well I'm sorry to hear it, because I'm staying.

**POIROT.** I am sorry also because you are not.

**ARBUTHNOT.** Now listen to me you little Frenchman—

**BOUC.** He is Belgian .

**ARBUTHNOT.** I don't care if he's the man in the moon, I'm not leaving her!

**MARY.** It's all right, James. Honestly. I'm sure it won 't take long.

**POIROT.** She is correct. I need a mere ten minutes.

**ARBUTHNOT.** Well I don't like it! Do you understand? And you can put that in your meerschaum pipe and smoke it!

**BOUC.** That is Sherlock Holmes.

**ARBUTHNOT.** Oh go to hell!

*(Arbuthnot stalks out.)*

**POIROT.** *Bon.* Please sit down, Miss Debenham. There is much pain?

**MARY.** Well, it's rather sore, that's all.

**POIROT.** You are very brave. Let us all be grateful that it is not worse.

**BOUC.** *(crossing himself)* Thank the Lord.

**POIROT.** Now Miss Debenham. In the hotel yesterday I heard you speaking with the Colonel and you said you were terrified you would miss the train. Can you tell me why it was so important to you?

**MARY.** It wasn't that at all. I didn't want to be late.

**POIROT.** But you said you wanted to "get it over with." Get it "all behind you." Get what behind you? You seemed quite agitated.

**MARY.** I'm afraid you're reading into it. I'm tremendously punctual, that's all.

**POIROT.** Aha. *Pardon.* It is my profession. Sometimes I am too *imaginatif.* And you and the Colonel are very close, I take it?

**MARY.** We only met a few days ago, and I suppose we rather hit it off.

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**POIROT.** And as for the murder, I assume you know that the dead man was Bruno Cassetti.

**MARY.** I heard .

**POIROT.** And what do you know of the kidnapping?

**MARY.** Not much, I'm afraid. I've never been to the States.

**POIROT.** Aha. I see. And what is it that brought you to Istanbul?

**MARY.** I lived with a family for about a year. I'm a governess.

**POIROT.** And can you tell me your whereabouts last night between midnight and two o'clock?

**MARY.** I was in my room with Miss Ohlsson. We chatted until quite late. You see she ... she talks quite a bit, especially when she's anxious, and I may have dozed off for a few minutes.

**POIROT.** I see.

**MARY.** May I go?

**POIROT.** You may. Oh wait. There is one last thing. Would you sign your name please.

**MARY.** All right. *(She does.)* It's a good thing I'm left-handed. I'd have trouble signing with my right at the moment.

**POIROT.** Merci.

**BOUC.** Please get some rest. And on behalf of the company I will have some champagne sent straight to your room.

**MARY.** Thank you so much. *(She exits.)*

**BOUC.** *(calling to her)* And if there is anything else I can do to help, please let me know. *(pleasantly)* Good bye! Good bye! *(He closes the door.)* Oh my God, can you imagine if she had died? Thank goodness she is such a lovely young woman.

**POIROT.** She is more than lovely. She is a complete liar.

## CREDITS

# **Agatha Christie's MURDER ON THE ORIENT EXPRESS**

Written by Ken Ludwig

Based on the novel by Agatha Christie

MURDER ON THE ORIENT EXPRESS is presented through special arrangement with Samuel French

Director: Melissa Findley

Stage Manager: Jessy Reaves

## THE THEATRE

Theatre Tallahassee  
1861 Thomasville Road  
Tallahassee, Florida 32303

Box Office: 850-224-8474  
Admin: 850-224-4597

**Theatre Tallahassee.org**  
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## AUDITION FORM

Please fill out this form and bring it with you to auditions. PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Auditioning for the following roles: \_\_\_\_\_

Will you accept another role if offered: \_\_\_\_\_

Preferred Pronouns:  she/her  he/him  they/them  other: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Height: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Are you willing to change your hair/facial hair? \_\_\_\_\_

I prefer to be contacted via: (check all that apply)  phone call  text message  email

Schedule Conflicts: (please list ALL schedule conflicts: vacations, weddings, school, work, etc.)

Previous Experience: (you may attach a resume instead)

Other Skills (For this show in particular, please list any and all accents/dialects you can do that are applicable)

If auditioning for Helen Hubbard: Can you sing and/or dance? \_\_\_\_\_

If not cast, would you be willing to assist backstage?  Yes  No

How did you hear about these auditions? \_\_\_\_\_