



Decatur, IL

Civic
Center

AGATHA

CHRISTIE'S

MURDER ON THE ORIENT EXPRESS

May 24, 25, 30, 31 & June 1

7:30PM FRI/SAT | 2PM SUNDAY | DECATUR CIVIC CENTER

One Murder.
A Train Full of Suspects.

A comedic retelling of the Agatha Christie thriller



"Agatha Christie's Murder on the Orient Express" is presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals on behalf of Samuel French, Inc. www.concordtheatricals.com. Adapted for the stage by Ken Ludwig.

DIRECTORS' NOTE

A mustachioed detective and a bloody murder on a train stopped in its tracks by a snowstorm trapping the killer on board – this is the heart of Agatha Christie's *Murder on the Orient Express*, a mystery so enthralling it has been presented onstage and onscreen around the world many times since first written in 1934. Playwright Ken Ludwig reworked Christie's classic story into a comedic thriller in 2015. Don't worry, you won't find any slapstick in this show about a murder, but instead moments of "cheekiness," as my co-director Jerry Johnson likes to say.

This play spotlights a moment in time when train travel was both exciting and restricting. One of the recurring themes in this show to keep an eye out for is the tension that arises from a group of strangers being trapped in a small space.

As a volunteer-run community theatre, we would not exist without our dedicated team of board members and volunteers who do everything from creating costumes appropriate for 1930s Europe to building moving train cars. A heartfelt *merci beaucoup* to Jerry for showing me the ropes in my directorial debut and to the cast for their patience, time, and talents. Thank you is not enough.

And finally, my gratitude to you. In a world where you can watch anything at any time, you chose to spend a few hours here with us today. There is something truly special about laughing together or the stillness that fills the air in a moment of collective shock. And that, *mon ami*, is the magic of live theatre.

I leave you with a final thought. Almost a century ago, this play asked a question about duty and morality that is still relevant today and is best highlighted by Detective Poroit's line (no spoilers, I promise): "*The law must be obeyed, or we become barbarians! It is 1934, Europe is changing, and there will be chaos! There will be nothing left of us, and we will have to start again!*"

- Emily Steele, Co-Director / Producer

Patricia Fryman

PHOTOGRAPHY



ACT 1

Scene 1 – Armstrong Home in New York, 1930

Scene 2 – Tokatlian Hotel in Istanbul, 1934

Scene 3 – Train Station, that evening*

Scene 4 – Dining Car of the Orient Express

Scene 5 – Sleeping Car, midnight

Scene 6 – Radio Room

Scene 7 – Observation Deck

Scene 8 – Sleeping Car, 1:15 am

Scene 9 – Sleeping Car, the next morning

Scene 10 – Dining Car, Sleeping Car

15 MINUTE INTERMISSION

ACT 2

Scene 1 – Sleeping Car

Scene 2 – Radio Room

Scene 3 – Dining Car

Scene 4 – Radio Room

Scene 5 – Dining Car, that evening

** Hungarian translation: Poirot: You are very kind. / Countess: It is simply the truth. / Poirot: It is an honor to meet you.*

Note: A gunshot sound effect is used in this show.

Please silence phones and other devices.

NO PHOTOGRAPHY OR VIDEO RECORDING ALLOWED

The videotaping or making of electronic or other audio 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)'s rights and actionable under U.S. copyright law. For more information, please visit concordtheatricals.com/resources/protecting-artists

THE AUTHOR

Born in 1890, Dame Agatha Christie became, and remains, the best-selling novelist of all time. She is best known for her 66 detective novels and 14 short story collections, as well as the world's longest-running play – *The Mousetrap*. Her books have sold over a billion copies in English and a billion in translation.

THE PLAYWRIGHT

Ken Ludwig has had six productions on Broadway and eight in London's West End. His 34 plays and musicals are staged around the world and throughout the U.S. every night of the year. His first play, *Lend Me a Tenor*, won two Tony Awards and was called "one of the classic comedies of the 20th century" by The Washington Post. *Crazy For You* is currently running on London's West End. It was previously on Broadway for five years, on the West End for three, and won the Tony and Olivier Awards for Best Musical.

In addition, he has won the Edwin Forrest Award for Contributions to the American Theatre, two Laurence Olivier Awards, two Helen Hayes Awards, the Charles MacArthur Award and the Edgar Award for Best Mystery of the Year. His other plays include *Moon Over Buffalo*, *Leading Ladies*, *Baskerville*, *Sherwood*, *Twentieth Century*, *Dear Jack*, *Dear Louise*, *A Fox on the Fairway*, *A Comedy of Tenors*, *The Game's Afoot*, *Shakespeare in Hollywood* and *Murder on the Orient Express*. They have starred, among others, Alec Baldwin, Carol Burnett, Kristen Bell, Tony Shaloub, Joan Collins and Henry Goodman.

His book *How to Teach Your Children Shakespeare*, published by Penguin Random House, won the Falstaff Award for Best Shakespeare Book of the Year, and his essays on theatre are published in the Yale Review. He gives the Annual Ken Ludwig Playwriting Scholarship at the Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival, and he served on the Board of Governors for the Folger Shakespeare Library for ten years. His first opera, *Tenor Overboard*, opened at the Glimmerglass Festival in July 2022. His most recent world premieres were *Lend Me A Soprano* and *Moriarty*, and his newest plays and musicals include *Pride and Prejudice Part 2: Napoleon at Pemberley* and *Lady Molly of Scotland Yard*. His plays include commissions from the Agatha Christie Estate, the Royal Shakespeare Company, The Old Globe Theatre, and the Bristol Old Vic. For more information visit www.kenludwig.com.

Agatha Christie's *Murder On The Orient Express* adapted by Ken Ludwig was originally staged by McCarter Theater Center, Princeton, NJ. Emily Mann, Artistic Director, Timothy J. Shields, Managing Director. The production subsequently transferred to Hartford Stage, Harford, CT. Darko Tresnjak, Artistic Director, Michael Stotts, Managing Director.

CAST

Doug Bishop.....Hercule Poirot
Rahamses Galvan.....Constantine Bouc
Emma Roark.....Helen Hubbard
Marty Deetz.....Countess Elena Andrenyi
Rick Cina.....Samuel Ratchett
Jacob Deetz.....James Arbuthnot
Jayden Zientara.....Mary Debenham
Kathy Zientara.....Princess Natayla Dragomiroff
Adam Lewandowski.....Hector MacQueen
Matt Dutton.....Waiter / Pierre Michel
Shania Hines.....Greta Ohlsson

*Audio performances: Jayson Albright, Lainie Kater,
Jerry Johnson, Emily Steele.*

PRODUCTION CREW

Director / Producer.....Jerry Johnson, Emily Steele
Costume Design.....Dina Fryman
Assistant Costumer.....Mary Wilking
Costumes.....Aggie Kopp, Cheryl Laskowski, Olivia Sword,
Penny Williams
Set Design.....Jerry Johnson
Set Construction.....Jerry Johnson, Scott Magruder, Doug Fryman
Set Painting.....Jerry Johnson, Shania Hines, Doug Bishop,
Rahamses Galvan, Adam Lewandowski, Emma Roark, Emily Steele
Set Dressing / Props.....Mary Wilking, Penny Williams
Stage Manager.....Jerry Johnson, Emily Steele
Light Design.....Kate Eiswald, Jerry Johnson
Sound Board.....David Gilpin
Backstage Crew.....Doug Fryman, Scott Magruder, Rick Cina
Lobby Display.....Cynthia Hinkle
House Manager.....Kathy Zientara
Hair Styling.....Monique Jones, Carol Tatum
Audio Recording / Editing.....Jayson Albright, Jerry Johnson
Graphics / Website.....Kate Eiswald, Emily Steele
Marketing Support.....The Martin family, Amy Steele
Language Consultant.....Monique Rivera
Weapon Consultant.....Scott Rueter

CAST BIOS

Scan the QR code to read the cast bios online at Theatre7.org/MurderonTheOrientExpress2025



Doug Bishop



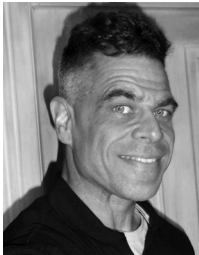
Rahamses Galvan



Emma Roark



Marty Deetz



Rick Cina



Jacob Deetz



Jayden Zientara



Kathy Zientara



**Adam
Lewandowski**



Matt Dutton



Shania Hines

GIVE US A HAND!

Theatre 7 is a volunteer-run organization. Can you sew, paint, act, sing, design graphics? We'd love your help! Scan the QR code to learn more and email us at DecTheatre7@gmail.com to get involved.



OUR SUPPORTERS

Thank you to our generous patrons! Theatre 7 is a volunteer-run 501(c)3 non-profit and patronages are tax-deductible. Interested in supporting the theatre arts in Decatur? Scan the QR code to visit theatre7.org and learn about becoming a patron.



DIRECTOR - \$500

Alan & Elizabeth Frigy
Mark & Kathy Sorensen
Paul & Verlyn Rosenberger
Dina & Doug Fryman

STAGE MANAGER - \$325

Barb & Marty Hipple

ACTOR - \$225

Julie & Ernie Marsh
Kathy Zientara
Alan Mills Scheider
Bill Frank
Sharon K Butler
Kate & Taner Eiswald

PATRON - \$150

Adib & Lyn Tashakkor
Bruce Nims
Ritchie & Sandy Barnett
Sharon Heinz
Mike & Connie Albert
Jack Albert Plumbing
- Jay & Mike Albert
Everett & Shirley Kuhn
Erin Rockafellow
Patty Barr

FRIEND - \$75

Janet Lyman



IN LOVING MEMORY OF **Jan Hooten, 1950-2025**

Jan was a cherished part of Theatre 7 for many years. She shared her talents onstage and behind the scenes as an actor and supporter of theatre. Her presence will be deeply missed.

ABOUT THEATRE 7

Now in its 61st season, Theatre 7 is a 501(c)3 non-profit, volunteer-run organization, dedicated to fostering the theatre arts in the Decatur area. Every season, the cast and crew made up entirely of volunteers produce three mainstage productions as well as several dinner theatres.

Get Involved: We need actors, builders, musicians, graphic designers, and more! Learn more by attending our membership meeting on the second Monday of the month at 7 pm at 131 N Water St in Decatur. Or, contact us at DecTheatre7@gmail.com or (217) 362-2008.

Become a Patron: Ticket sales do not cover production costs or upkeep of our aging downtown headquarters. Support Theatre 7 by becoming a patron, purchasing a program ad, making a charitable donation, being a corporate sponsor, or hosting a dinner theatre.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Tanner Eiswald, Kate Eiswald, Sunset Ziegler, Timber Ziegler, Evan Miller, Scott Magruder, Kathy Zientara.

OUR 2025-26 SEASON

**The Musical Comedy
Murders of 1940**
October 2025

**Serving Up Love:
A Romantic Cabaret**
February 2026

**Sister Act
The Musical**
May 2026

Find more information at www.theatre7.org

**YOUR
DRY
CLEANING
&
LAUNDRY
EXPERTS**



Theatre 7 thanks our supporter:

Peerless
CLEANING & RESTORATION
SERVICES