

ACT

AMELIA COMMUNITY THEATRE PRESENTS

Agatha Christie's

MURDER ON THE ORIENT EXPRESS

Adapted by Ken Ludwig



June 13–28, 2025

Production Sponsors
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209 Cedar Street, Fernandina Beach, Florida 32034
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ACT was chartered by the State of Florida in 1981 as a not-for-profit corporation.
Auditions and memberships are open to all.

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

"To enhance the quality of life of our local (and extended) community by providing excellent, innovative theatrical and artistic experiences through presentation and education."

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

Agatha Christie's Murder on the Orient Express, adapted by Ken Ludwig, was originally staged by McCarter Theatre Center, Princeton, New Jersey (Emily Mann, Artistic Director; Timothy J. Shields, Managing Director). The production subsequently transferred to Hartford Stage, Hartford, Connecticut (Darko Tresnjak, Artistic Director; Michael Stotts, Managing Director).

The video or audio recording of this performance by any means is strictly prohibited.



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Notes From The Director..

“The law is not always the same as justice.” - Hercule Poirot

When audiences hear the name Agatha Christie, it conjures not only a vast library of clever mysteries, but an entire world where human nature, in all its complexity, is laid bare. With only Shakespeare’s works and the Bible having reached more readers, Christie’s work has transcended generations. She didn’t just entertain; she shaped how we think about crime, morality, and justice. *Murder on the Orient Express*, one of her most iconic works, invites us into a glittering, enclosed world hurtling through a frozen wilderness, a place where truth and consequence collide in ways that still feel achingly relevant.

Christie’s work endures because she understood something essential. That true mysteries are not just about clever crimes and plot twists, but what it means to be human. That human life is infinitely valuable, but human decisions are rarely simple. In a time like ours, when the lines between right and wrong can feel increasingly blurred, and we are challenged daily to define and defend the value of human life, her work feels more poignant than ever. Ken Ludwig’s masterful adaptation carries forward that spirit, inviting us into a world where truth and justice wrestle in the cold light of conscience. *Murder on the Orient Express* implores us to remain vigilant: to care fiercely, listen carefully, and never lose our reverence for the lives around us.

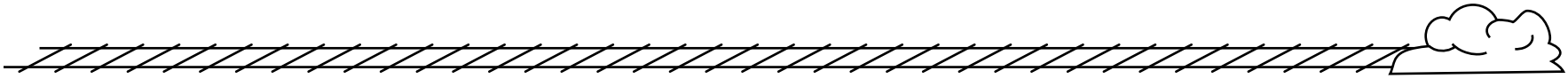
Bringing this production to life has been a labor of love in every sense. From the gorgeous period costumes, the meticulously and brilliantly crafted set, to every beat of each powerful and nuanced performance, every component was crafted with an immense passion for the spirit of Christie’s world, and with the goal of honoring the brilliance of her storytelling. I am endlessly grateful to this cast and crew, who gave their whole hearts to bringing this journey to the stage, and I could not be more proud to share it with you.

Thank you for traveling with us. In the world of Christie, nothing is ever simple, and that, perhaps, is the greatest truth of all.

Daniel Starling, *Director*

Cast of Characters

Hercule Poirot.....	Joe Zaccaro
Monsieur Bouc	Carlos Semidei
Mary Debenham.....	Tiffany James
Hector MacQueen.....	Christopher Doody
Michel the Conductor / Head Waitstaff.....	Caro Marks
Princess Dragomiroff.....	Catherine West
Greta Ohlsson.....	Terri Witkosky
Countess Andrenyi	CallieAnn Maggart
Helen Hubbard	Lisa Knapp
Colonel Arbuthnot / Samuel Ratchett.....	Patrick van de Watering



Production Team

Director.....	Daniel Starling
Assistant Director	Heather Starling
Technical Director	Brandon Hester
Stage Managers.....	Linda Godek, Jennifer Jaress
Set Construction Crew	Conner Bishop, Scott Bobeck, Bill Bowler, Gary Broom, Gary Brunt, Anne Foos, Austin Henry, Bob Knapp, Jamie Morrill, Nikki Richards, Mia Sadler, Ed Spang, Daniel Starling, Jim Tipton, Patrick van de Watering, Elizabeth Wilson, Joe Zaccaro
Painting Crew	Cindy Brunt, Anne Foos, Austin Henry, Jennifer Jaress, Jayne Jeney, Lisa Knapp, Renée LaCroix, Caro Marks, Grace Snead, Heather Starling, Peggy Strickland, Missy Tremblay, Jennifer Webber, Terri Witkosky
Board Operators	Scott Bobeck, Anne Foos
Costume Leads	Heather Starling, Missy Tremblay
Costume Crew	Isabelle Bournigault, Vicki Gibson, Peter Sawyer, Missy Tremblay, Emily Vander Weide
Props Leads.....	Linda Godek, Jennifer Jaress
Stage Crew	Alexa Mauch, Nicole Perrella, Jason Taylor, Jayme Taylor
Production Support	Nicole Perrella, Joe Zaccaro
Photography	Karen Bowden, Solaris Foto

Cast Bios



Christopher Doody (*Hector MacQueen*)

Chris is very excited for his debut at ACT. He is very grateful for every chance to perform and show the world what he can do. Chris recently performed in another of Agatha Christie's works, *The Mousetrap* as Detective Sergeant Trotter. Other noteworthy roles include: Mr. Darcy (*Pride & Prejudice*), Cogsworth (*Beauty and the Beast*), Malvolio (*Twelfth Night*), Billy Bibbit (*One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*), and Paul Bratter (*Barefoot in the Park*).



Tiffany James (*Mary Debenham*)

Tiffany is excited to be back at ACT and working with such a talented group of artists. Previous shows at ACT include *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike*, and *Proof*. Tiffany has been on stage and in film for many years but this is her first Agatha Christie role and she is excited to bring Mary to life at ACT!



Lisa Knapp (*Helen Hubbard*)

Lisa is making her Amelia Island stage debut and is grateful for the opportunity to work with this accomplished cast and crew. Having recently retired as store manager of lori+lulu, she now has the time to pursue her interest in theater and other community organizations. Lisa's biggest fan is her husband, Bob, and she looks forward to their retirement years both here and at their mountain home in Brevard, N.C.

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CallieAnn Maggart (*Countess Andrenyi*)

CallieAnn greatly admires Agatha Christie, and loves that the role of Countess Andrenyi is challenging because of her personality and accent. CallieAnn is grateful for her husband (best friend/biggest fan) for taking care of things at home; her brother-in-law for rekindling her passion for the stage; and her children. By day, the accounts payable and HR manager for Sonshine Christian Academy, CallieAnn is a lifetime student of learning, specifically theology and the “strange and unexplained”.



Caro Marks (*Michel the Conductor / Head Waitstaff*)

Caro is delighted to be cast in their first show with ACT. They were previously in several small ensemble roles with the UNF Music Theatre Club. These productions included *Into the Woods* and *The Sound of Music*. Caro would like to extend a great deal of thanks to their parents, Grandad and Diane, and their *Dungeons and Dragons* group for their encouragement to audition and all of the support thereafter.



Carlos Semidei (*Monsieur Bouc*)

Carlos Julian Semidei is a U.S. Naval Submarine Veteran and a journeyman actor with a love of international characters. On the Orient Express, he is proud to serve alongside an exceptional cast, crew, and director for his debut in the Amelia Community Theatre. Local audiences remember him onstage as Mr. Midnight, the lovable Senior Playboy in *Sunset Village*. And off the stage, he enjoys playing chess, Salsa dancing, and spoiling his new great-granddaughter.





Patrick van de Watering (*Colonel Arbuthnot / Samuel Ratchett*)

Originally from the Netherlands, Patrick, his wife Jessica, and their 2 children moved to the U.S. in 2016. Patrick owns a personal training business at the Amelia National Golf and Country Club. He is excited to make his ACT debut, portraying two characters. Patrick gives a shout out to all family, friends, and Amelia National members for their support, and to the fantastic cast and crew for an amazing experience!



Catherine West (*Princess Dragomiroff*)

Catherine has appeared in 13 roles at ACT, including Abby Binder in *Ripcord*, Sister Aloysius in *Doubt*, and Vivian Bearing in *Wit*. After a nearly seven-year hiatus (since 2019 Catherine and her husband, Charles, live part-time in North Carolina), she is delighted to be returning to the ACT stage with such a talented cast and crew. A former resident of Communist Poland, she shares the princess's dislike of the Bolsheviks.



Terri Witkosky (*Greta Ohlsson*)

This is Terri's fourth performance with ACT, most recently portraying Winifred in *Into the Breeches!* and Claire Ganz in Neil Simon's *Rumors*. Terri fills her days as a volunteer with several local organizations where she can donate her time and utilize her passions. Most often you will find Terri in her kitchen cooking for loved ones, on the golf course with her husband Jim, or bike riding around town!



Joe Zaccaro (*Hercule Poirot*)

Joe is thrilled to return to the ACT stage, where he appeared last season as Dad in *Billy Elliott: The Musical*. Before that, he'd last performed back in the 20th century at Connecticut Repertory Theatre, where his favorite roles included Bernard in *Arcadia*, Claudius in *Hamlet*, Cartwright in *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* and Marc in *Art*. Joe thanks his family for their loving support, especially his wife Shea, without whose encouragement he'd not have become part of this wonderful theatre.

All great performances start with a story.



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Production Staff Bios



Daniel Starling (*Director*)

Daniel is a Jacksonville-based director, actor, and designer. Recent directing credits include *Cry-Baby* (OPCT), *Young Frankenstein* (Saltwater PAC). Favorite roles include Harold McClam (*Fly by Night*, Limelight Theatre), Seymour Krelborn (*Little Shop of Horrors*, OPCT), and Vanya (*Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike*, ACT). He's honored to bring this beloved story to the stage with his incredible cast and crew. He thanks Toot Bus, 15ML, his Wife & AD Heather, and the 4 B's. Love you all!



Linda Godek (*Stage Manager*)

Linda returns to ACT as one of the stage managers following a 3-year absence to travel the world. She has been involved in over 30 productions at ACT since 2004 and has missed working backstage. The challenges of producing this show lured her back and she is thrilled to be working with such a talented cast and crew. Linda's favorite shows she has stage managed are *Noises Off* with a revolving set and *The Addams Family Musical*.



Jennifer Jaress (*Stage Manager*)

Jennifer is excited to be a part of another ACT production. She has been a part of the theatre community, in various theatres, for over 30 years. This is the 4th production here at ACT, and she is thrilled to be co-stage managing alongside an incredibly talented cast and crew. Big shout out to her husband and daughters for their unconditional love and support!





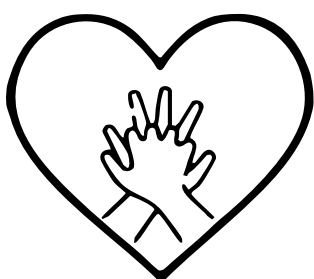
Heather Starling (*Assistant Director*)

Heather Starling is so excited to be working as Assistant Director on this iconic show. From her first show at ACT, playing Judy Bernly in *9 to 5: The Musical*, Heather has been a supportive volunteer. Some of her favorite roles on Amelia Island have been Lucy in *Jekyll and Hyde*, Mary in *Jesus Christ Superstar*, Pickles in *Great American Trailer Park*, and Columbia in *Rocky Horror Picture Show*. Heather would like to thank all her ACT friends for shining like the sun up there and her husband, Daniel (Director), for always loving and supporting her every day.



Brandon Hester (*Technical Director*)

Most recently seen on the ACT stage as Glenn Cooper in *Rumors*, Brandon has gone backstage to take on the role of Technical Director for this production. Leading the crews for set construction, set painting, lights and sound, has been fun, but has kept him incredibly busy. By day, Brandon teaches music at Amelia Music Studio and is starting to perform original music around town. We hope you get a chance to hear the songs he's written!



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Volunteer of the Year, 2024–25

Bruce Gruber



Bruce Gruber is a loyal, hardworking, and dedicated volunteer who is involved in many aspects of our theatre. He knows ACT from every view: acting, leadership roles, recruiting new volunteers, rewriting our by-laws, play reading for new season selection, long range planning, ushering, and even parking cars.

Bruce has very high standards for himself and the work he produces for our theatre. He is a mature and sage voice of reason whom other volunteers look up to, listen to, and respect. The role of mentor comes naturally to Bruce, and he has given guidance and served as a role model to many in a variety of roles.

Bruce worked tirelessly on our volunteer recruitment program. Originally, he was handed a large and rambling mass of names on an ancient mailing list and he never felt overwhelmed or defeated by the massive project. He recently handed over a well-thought-out, developed, and finished volunteer recruitment and tracking program. Bruce also calls prospective volunteers who have expressed an interest in our theatre. His enthusiasm, warmth, and graciousness has turned many potential volunteers into new members of our volunteer family.

Bruce promotes ACT in our community including the Men's Newcomer Club, the Council on Aging, and various bridge groups where his persuasive, fun personality has single-handedly sold many tickets to our performances — especially shows he's in! You may have seen him onstage in the past year with roles in *Billy Elliot: The Musical* and *Into the Breeches!*.

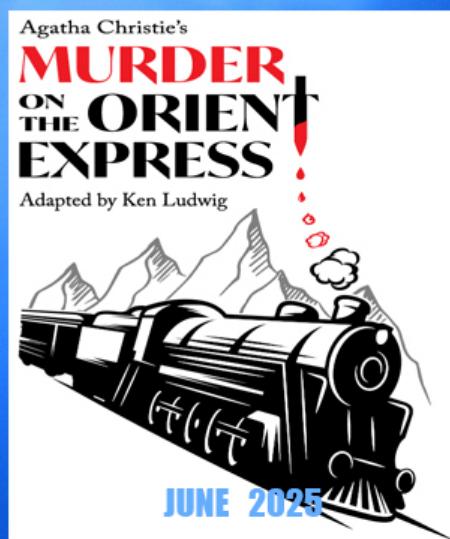
The epitome of a dependable volunteer, Bruce consistently produces excellent results drawing on his life experience in business and his long-time love for community theatre. As secretary to the ACT board, he works to insure the continued smooth running of board business. He also oversees the implementation of our long-range plan, and chaired the momentous task of by-laws revision to create our current by-laws that now reflect ACT's purpose and operations.

Bruce's wisdom, kindness, ethical standards, and stalwart stewardship helped ACT thrive during our 43rd season. Each and every day, he remains easy going and kind to all who volunteer alongside him. We think Bruce is the gold standard bearer for these traits in a volunteer, and we are all enriched by his presence at ACT. We are proud to honor Bruce Gruber as ACT Volunteer of the Year!

Amelia Community Theatre

Proudly presents

2024/2025 SEASON 44



Amelia Island is Your Theatre Destination. Our premier, community theatre brings people together to share fun and moving stories we know you will enjoy. It's a warm and welcoming environment where you can be a part of a dynamic and friendly community. Our mission is to bring the world of theatre to this beautiful location with unique, high-quality productions that are simply outstanding. We believe this season we have something for everyone, from big Broadway musicals, to hysterical comedies, to the classic murder mystery. It's a dynamic season you won't want to miss.

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