

MURDER ON THE ORIENT EXPRESS
Audition Packet for Rockville Little Theatre

Audition Dates

Sunday, February 18 from 1-4 p.m.

Monday, February 19 from 7-10 p.m.

You should only attend one night of auditions.

There are potential callbacks on Wednesday, February 21 from 7-10 p.m.

All our shows use Open Casting, with no roles pre-selected. RLT is committed to diversity, open to non-traditional casting, and actors of all ethnicities are encouraged to audition. All roles are unpaid.

Audition Location

The Pump House, 401 S. Horners Ln., Rockville, MD 20850. (Street parking only.)

Rehearsal Dates

February 22 – May 2, 2024

Rehearsals are generally held Monday through Thursday evenings, with additional Sunday afternoon rehearsals as needed.

Performance Dates

May 3 – May 12 (Mother's Day), 2024

Fridays & Saturdays at 8:00 pm and Sundays at 2:00 pm.

Six (6) shows total during a two-week run.

What to Prepare

This audition packet includes everything you need for your audition. Please choose TWO of the short monologues from this packet to prepare for your auditions. Please choose two different characters. You must be at least 18 years old to audition. Auditions will also consist of cold readings from the script.

What to Bring

Those who audition must submit a "Murder on the Orient Express" Audition Form on the night of your audition. Forms can be downloaded from the RLT website: www.rlt-online.org. Please come with your Audition Form already filled out. This form has important calendar and schedule information that is necessary for the casting process.

Seeking the Following Roles

Female Identifying* -

Male Identifying** -

Hercule Poirot** (Belgian, 40's - 60's) World famous detective, meticulous, witty, oddly charismatic in his own way, slightly pompous, passionately driven to find the answers, strong moral compass, very aware of his ability and his well-deserved reputation.

Monsieur Bouc** (Belgian, 30's - 50's) Director of Wagon-Lit, the train company that owns the Orient Express, a good humored man, playful, generous, proud, an excellent host with a love of luxury and grandeur.

Mary Debenham* (British, 20's - 40's) A governess, capable yet romantic, anxious about her journey on the Orient Express, there is a sadness around her eyes, clearly has a secret and an unknown relationship to Colonel Arbuthnot.

Hector MacQueen** (American, 20's - 50's) Secretary and assistant to Samuel Ratchett, tightly wound, edgy and nervous, always seems to be on the verge of falling apart.

Michel the Conductor** (French, 30's - 50's) Polite, hard-working, happy to have a good position on the Orient Express, eager to please.

Princess Dragomiroff* (Russian, 40's - 70's) Royalty, a sweeping, impressive presence, intimidating, impatient, everyone knows when she enters the room.

Greta Ohlsson* (Swedish, 20's - 40's) Missionary, inherently odd, very strict and religiously devout, plain with a sheepish, almost frightened quality. Princess Dragomiroff is paying her way in exchange for helping her on her journey.

Countess Andrenyi* (Hungarian, 20's - 40's) Beautifully and exquisitely dressed, like something out of a fairy tale, with a warmth that wins over everyone she meets. Intelligent, her delicacy belies a steely edge; she is no wilting flower.

Helen Hubbard* (American, 40's - 70's) Eccentric, bold and outspoken with a touch of flamboyance, from the American Midwest, jovial, deliciously nosy and brash, often flirtatious. She can talk to anyone, even if they don't want to listen.

Colonel Arbuthnot** (Scottish, 20's - 40's) Handsome, very matter of fact, clearly has a secret and an unknown connection to Mary Debenham. He enjoys the sense of adventure that the Orient Express provides; takes charge when he needs to.

Samuel Ratchett** (American, 40's - 60's) American businessman with a gangster's edge, evil at heart and frightening, unforgiving, stern demeanor, pushy, domineering.

Head Waiter** (Turkish, 20's - 50's) Snooty and smooth, a (phony) name dropper.

About The Show

From the playwright who brought us "Baskerville" comes another murderously fun ride! One of Agatha Christie's greatest novels springs to life in this thrilling new stage adaptation. Just after midnight, a snowdrift stops the Orient Express in its tracks. By morning, an American tycoon lies

dead in his compartment, stabbed eight times and with his door locked from the inside. Was it the Colonel, the Countess, the American Traveler or the Russian Princess? Or perhaps it was the English Beauty, the American Assistant, the French Conductor or the Swedish Missionary. The eccentric collection of passengers become suspects and the world-famous detective Hercule Poirot must identify the murderer before he or she decides to strike again! This production will be directed by Laura W. Andruski. For questions or more information, please contact Laura at 240-242-9735 or email LWAndruski@gmail.com.

Rehearsal Information

Rehearsals are generally held Monday through Thursday evenings. Additional Sunday afternoon rehearsals are sometimes added as needed. Participating in a RLT show is a serious commitment and rehearsal attendance is very important. However, we understand that you are volunteering your time and we will do our best to accommodate your schedule. Please make sure to list all known conflicts on your audition form. You will only be called to rehearsal when you are needed.

Tech Week

April 28 – May 2, 2024.

Tech week is the final week of the rehearsal process where all of the technical elements of the show are put in place. No actor may miss a rehearsal during tech week.

Remember!

Casting is subjective and completely based on someone else's opinion. Sometimes casting decisions are based on age, looks, height, or how you look next to other cast members. You will not get cast in every role you want and sometimes you won't get cast at all. If you are not cast in this show, you should still celebrate the fact that you gave it your best shot.

For questions or more information, please contact Laura W. Andruski at 240-242-9735 or email LWAndruski@gmail.com.

Please choose TWO monologues to perform at your audition. Please choose two different characters. Memorizing your monologues is not required, but certainly recommended. Many of these characters speak with an accent. Accents are challenging, and no one is expecting you to have a perfect accent at your first audition. However, you are strongly encouraged to give it your best shot!

POIROT (Belgian / French accent) 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.

BOUC (Belgian / French accent) Monsieur Poirot! 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 are 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.

MRS. HUBBARD (American accent) Mrs. Helen Caroline Peabody-Wolfson-Van Pelt-Hubbard, if you please, from the beautiful garden state of Minnesota. Mr. Peabody, my first husband, was a very good soul but the poor man had no talent for longevity, and I shouldn't say poor because he did very nicely for himself, thank you very much. My second husband was a Mr. Wolfson who I loved dearly, but he loved a lot of women and so I traded up and got a Van Pelt, but I caught him in bed with that redhead from the Waldorf who did his nails. Then at last I found Mr. Hubbard and I call him my little white knight for saving me from a life of bridge games and watery cocktails at the Minneapolis Country Club.

RATCHETT (American accent) Mr. Poirot, I'd like to discuss that proposition I mentioned. I want you to take on a job for me because I'm talkin' big money here. I have an enemy. 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 but I'll pay you five thousand dollars. How does that sound?

GRETA (Swedish accent) I have to confess to you Princess, that I am not liking trains since I am little girl. They are feeling very tight to me, like clothing that is made wrong size. I am also not liking the strangers and the clickety-clackety. But ve vill be sitting next to each other, ja? That part is good. In Africa once I am on a train and there is noise and crying and animals. And I look up from my book and sitting there next to me, right on the seat, is a very old goat! Is true. Old goat! He is like my companion. And on this trip that we are taking together right now, I think it will not be so different, ja?

MRS. HUBBARD (American accent) There was a man in my room! He ran off! I'm sure of it! 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. One second he was there and then he was gone. He was like a phantom! And I wasn't dreaming. I know when I'm dreaming! My door was locked, but people have keys, don't they? He could have strangled me in my bed, or shot me or something!

BOUC (Belgian / French accent) Just think what a Yugoslavian police inquiry would do to my company! People would say "oh no, I cannot travel on the Orient Express, I could be murdered in my bed!" and our sales would suffer and I would lose my clients! Only you can solve this. You are a magician, I have seen you work! You listen, you look, you pester, you make yourself a pain in the backside, then suddenly poof!, the case is solved like that! The Yugoslavian Police Department? They are like the Three Stooges in the movie house. They poke each other in the eyes by accident! Please old friend, say you'll take the case and find the murderer before the police arrive.

POIROT (Belgian / French accent) A young girl named Daisy Armstrong was kidnapped from her home in Long Island, New York. The ransom was set at two hundred thousand dollars and it was paid. But Daisy was not returned to her parents. Three days later, they found the little girl - dead, murdered - in the woods not far away from her home. The police caught the man who did it but he had ties to organized crime and they got him off by changing the evidence. He would have been lynched if he had been found by the public, but he gave them the slip and disappeared. Mr. MacQueen said that Ratchett was fleeing from something in America and that he succeeded until the letters began arriving. It is clear that Samuel Ratchett's real name is Bruno Cassetti, the man who murdered little Daisy Armstrong.

PRINCESS (Russian accent) No, my dear, his name is Bruno Cassetti, and what I pray is that his soul is damned and that he burns in hell for all eternity. He murdered a little girl named Daisy Armstrong and her grandmother is my dearest friend. You know her as the actress Linda Arden. 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! And it wasn't just that sweet little girl that was taken from us. First 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 own life. There is no forgiveness in a case like this. That Mr. Cassetti should have been flogged to death and his remains cut up and thrown onto a rubbish heap!

MACQUEEN (American accent) 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. And 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 - she killed herself. Only it turned out that she was innocent. My father was shattered. He never recovered.

POIROT (Belgian / French accent) Every time I find a piece of the puzzle, there is a suspect who has an alibi. Colonel Arbuthnot? He could have a grudge against Cassetti from a business dealing - but then MacQueen gives him an alibi from 12 to 2, they are chatting on the Observation Deck! What about Miss Ohlssohn? She is strange, there is something not right about her - but she swears that she and Miss Debenham are up all night chattering in the room they are sharing. And so it goes with Mrs. Hubbard and the Princess and now Miss Debenham is shot and I am out of suspects!

MARY (British accent) I only caught a glimpse of him. He was in a kind of uniform. But I may have imagined it. I woke up this morning feeling disoriented, as though I'd been drugged or something, and I had this splitting headache. So I looked through my suitcase for some aspirin, but I didn't have any. So then I stumbled out of the room and I saw that Mrs. Hubbard's door was ajar. I called to her but she wasn't there and then - I know I shouldn't have - but I went into her room. My head was splitting open by this time and I wasn't thinking straight - so I looked for some aspirin in Mrs. Hubbard's makeup bag. And there was this knife and it was covered with blood! I was frightened when I saw the knife and I must have backed into Mr. Ratchett's room, and then I turned and saw the body on the bed with all the blood and the wounds, and I - I screamed, and then I saw the man and the gun and that's all I remember!

ARBUTHNOT (Scottish accent) I'm married! All right?! I'm in the process of getting a divorce - which I deserve because my wife is seeing another man - but I'll lose my case in court if it's known that I'm seeing a woman socially. When the divorce is behind us we can stop hiding, which is why we've been trying to keep things private, no thanks to you! Some of us have emotions, Poirot! I'm sure you'd sacrifice your own mother if it led you to one of your damn solutions, and I don't think you know what the hell you're doing.

COUNTESS (Hungarian accent) But I didn't kill him! I should have but I didn't! I didn't even know who he was until you discovered it. But then I realized that if you knew who I was, you would think that I killed him because he was a blackmailer. And a swine! And the murderer of a darling, sweet, innocent, child who deserved to live! It's the truth, I swear to God! But I'll tell you this; if I had known who he was - that he was Bruno Cassetti - the man who stole two of the people I loved most in this world - I would have pushed the dagger through his chest myself, and believe me, no other would have been necessary!