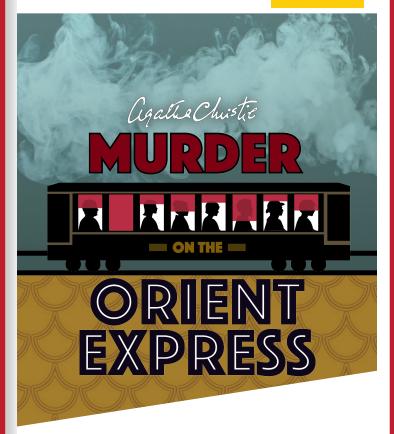
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FEB. 4 - 20, 2022



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is a dry red with light and fresh flavors. First impressions are tangy acid followed by black cherry fading to plum followed by a drying mid-palate and a long, pleasing finish. Made from Marquette, St. Croix, Petite Pearl, and Steuben grapes grown in our lowa vineyards, lowa In the Dark is a versatile wine that will pair nicely with grilled meat and spicy dishes including Asian and Mexican. Serve at room temperature.

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is a dry red that teases the palate with a fresh, lightly acidic entry transitioning to raspberry and black cherry and a medium-long finish. A versatile food pairing wine, 2019 lowa Marquette will pair nicely with grilled beef, chicken, or pasta. Serve at room temperature.

Tassel Ridge wines are sold at the Winery and over 400 retailers in Iowa (visit www.tasselridge.com/retail for a list). Winery operations are continually changing. As of September 1, 2021, Tassel Ridge

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WELCOME



David R. Kilpatrick
Executive Director

Thank you for joining us for our production of *Agatha Christie's Murder on the Orient Express* by Ken Ludwig. Mysteries are so much fun to create and experience in a theatre. Even if you know the ending (shh, don't tell!) it is exciting to see the murder and mystery presented right before your eyes. Are those clues or just red herrings? Is that an homage to Miss Christie, the most successful writer of all time, or a creative designer who captures the spirit of the production? Many of these answers are left to you, our audience, which is part of what makes theatre so special. Without an audience, we are just a group of

friends telling stories to each other. With you, we are creating a unique experience that is the best combination of yours and our imaginations! Thank you so much for playing your part.

By attending our first production in 2022 in the John Viars Theatre, after some of the challenges last year and a lot of unknowns ahead, you demonstrate that you are still committed to the arts in general and The Playhouse in particular. We are honored and humbled by your support and hope we continue to exceed your expectations as you help us meet our community's need for escape, entertainment, and creative outlets.

Thank you for choosing to spend time with us. Thank you for sharing The Playhouse experience with your friends and neighbors. The Playhouse's future is wholly dependent upon our audiences of today, so, again, thank you.



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To make a donation, please contact:

Ryan Crane

Director of Philanthropy 515.974.5370 rcrane@dmplayhouse.com

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THIS PRODUCTION IS GENEROUSLY SPONSORED BY NATIONWIDE

IN THE KATE GOLDMAN CHILDREN'S THEATRE

MARCH 4 - 20, 2022



HOUSE INFORMATION

COVID-19 UNIQUE POLICIES

- · Based on CDC and state guidelines at the time of your event, protocols may include masks required regardless of vaccination, social distancing, or more.
- Hand sanitizing stations are located throughout the lobbies for public use.
- Guests with COVID-19 symptoms such as a temperature of 100.4°F or higher or other symptoms, either before or during a performance, are asked to leave and exchange their tickets for a later performance.
- · All tickets will be refunded or exchanged without fee upon request.
 - Programs are available in print and digitally.

GENERAL PRACTICES Accessibility 🚑 🗚

The Playhouse strives to make its facility and performances accessible to all quests. Our theatres are wheelchair accessible. Service animals are welcome. Assisted listening devices are available in the John Viars Theatre. If your hearing aid has a T-coil, toggle to that setting to receive the audio signal directly without any headset or other equipment needed. ASL interpreted performances and audio description performances are available upon request. For these and other needs, please call the ticket office with specific service requests.

Cameras

The taking of photographs and the use of recording devices are not allowed during a performance and are a violation of state and federal copyright laws.

Cancellations

If a show is cancelled due to bad weather, an email will be sent to ticket holders. Cancellations will be noted on the phone system, website, and social media sites. Tickets for a cancelled performance may be exchanged for another performance. Please be sure the ticket office has your email information and current phone in the event a performance is cancelled. The Playhouse does not sell its contacts and does not sell or trade its email addresses

Concessions

A variety of beverages and candy may be available for purchase and are allowed in auditoriums. No outside drink or food are allowed. Staff reserve the right to deny alcoholic beverage service to anyone at their discretion.

Flevator

An elevator between levels is located at the east end of the building.

Emergency Exits

Please note the exit nearest your seat location. In the event of an emergency, guest services staff will provide direction.

Etiquette

Latecomers will be seated at an appropriate break in the play. Lobby chimes are sounded five minutes before curtain as well as the close of intermission. Disruptive, unruly guests, regardless of age, will be asked to leave. Cell phone ringers should be turned off.

Lost Items

Lost items will be held in the ticket office.

Free parking is available in The Playhouse lots and on streets surrounding the theatre. After 5:00 PM daily, free parking is available in the Shops at Roosevelt's east/back parking lot. Parking in the west/front Shops parking lot is always restricted to Shops customers. The Playhouse is not responsible for loss of any personal property left in vehicles.

Performance Content

The Playhouse does not rate subject matter as sensitivities vary from person to person. Questions about content, age appropriateness, or other aspects of the show such as strobe lights and other theatrical affects should be directed to the ticket office.

Performance Schedule

The regular John Viars Theatre performance schedule is 7:30 PM Wednesdays through Saturdays and 2:00 PM Sundays. The regular Kate Goldman Children's Theatre performance schedule is 7:00 PM Fridays, and 1:00 PM and 4:00 PM Saturdays and Sundays. The Family Holiday Classic performance schedule is 7:00 PM Wednesdays through Fridays, and 1:00 PM and 5:00 PM Saturdays and Sundays. All times are subject to change.

Preshow Talk

A preshow talk for each John Viars Theatre performance will begin 30 minutes prior to curtain in the west lobby.

Each audience member must occupy a seat and have a ticket, including infants.

Ticket Office Hours

The ticket office is open Noon to 5:00 PM, Tuesdays through Fridays, and 90 minutes prior to performances. Tickets are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, online. Ticketing fees are the same whether purchased online, by phone, or at the ticket office.

Des Moines Community Playhouse

831 42nd Street Des Moines, IA 50312



(f) 🛗 🕑 🕜 DMPlayhouse



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AGATHA CHRISTIE'S MURDER ON THE ORIENT EXPRESS

Katy Merriman, Playhouse Artistic Director

Murder on the Orient Express is one of the best loved Agatha Christie novels chronicling the many cases of the famed fictional detective. Hercule Poirot. (That's "hair-KYEWL pwa-ROW" for those of you at home who want to say it correctly, but don't check me against a Belgian.) The journey of the story from an idea in Christie's young and calculating mind to the version you see today begins in Christie's youth, when she was encouraged by her sister, Madge, to write her own detective story. Fascinated by Sir Arthur Conan Dovle's stories of Sherlock Holmes. Christie finished her own first mystery in 1920 titled The Mysterious Affair at Styles. Christie became a prolific and well-loved author, but in a filmed interview was once asked which was the best Poirot. novel. After responding, "Oh dear, that's a tall order!" she revealed that it was probably Murder on the Orient Express.

In addition to being her first publication, *The Mysterious Affair at Styles* was also the first story to introduce readers to Hercule Poirot. The character Colonel Hastings was the first to provide a description of the odd little detective:

Poirot was an extraordinary-looking little man. He was hardly more than five feet four inches, but carried himself with great dignity. His head was exactly the shape of an egg, and he always perched it a little on one side. His moustache was very stiff and military. The neatness of his attire was almost incredible. I believe a speck of dust would have caused him more pain than a bullet would.

Poirot is clean, calculating, and takes great care to conceal his grey hair and immaculately groom his moustache, which nearly has a following all on its own.

The world-famous fictional detective has been played by many throughout the years, most notably by Albert Finney in the 1975 film adaptation of *Murder on the Orient Express*. This film also earned Ingrid Bergman a 1974 Academy Award for her role as Greta Ohlsson. Kenneth Branagh directed and starred in the 2017 film adaptation that featured a starstudded cast including Johnny Depp as Ratchett,



David Suchet as Hercule Poirot in ITV Studio's series *Agatha Christie's Poirot*

Michelle Pfeiffer as Mrs. Hubbard, Penélope Cruz as Pilar (a Spanish version of Greta Ohlsson), Judi Dench as Princess Dragmiroff, Derek Jacobi, Leslie Odom Jr., Josh Gad, Olivia Colman, Daisy Ridley, and more.

Charles Laughton was the first actor to portray Poirot on stage, in 1928, in an adaptation of *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd* called *Alibi*. We know, of course, that *Murder on the Orient Express* has also been adapted for the stage. Ken Ludwig (author of *Lend Me a Tenor, Baskerville: A Sherlock Holmes Mystery*, and so many more) adapted Agatha Christie's story for the stage and it premiered at the McCarter Theatre in Princeton, NJ, in March 2017. It has since been produced countless times throughout the nation.

Hercule Poirot became such a well-known character that his "death" was published in *The New York Times* in 1975 in anticipation of Christie's final Poirot story, *Curtain: Poirot's Last Case.* This was the first time a fictional character was given a front-page obituary in *The New York Times.* In total, Agatha Christie wrote 33 original novels and 50 short stories featuring the famous Poirot.

Some stories and characters are lasting, and Poirot most certainly seems to fit that description. We are thrilled to bring one of Agatha Christie's mysteries to life for you, led by this beloved, quirky detective.

Sources used include agathachristie.com and Wikipedia.

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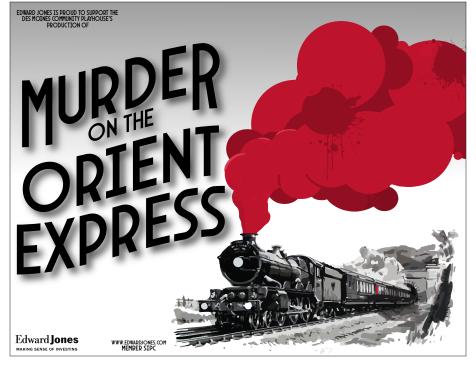
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Opening February 4, 2022 Closing February 20, 2022

Des Moines Community Playhouse Presents in the John Viars Theatre

AGATHA CHRISTIE'S MURDER ON THE ORIENT EXPRESS

Adapted for the stage by Ken Ludwig

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, Hartford, CT, Darko Tresnjak, Artistic Director, Michael Stotts, Managing Director.

Presented by Edward Jones

Director: David R. Kilpatrick

Scenic/Projection Designer: Nicholas Amundson

Costume Designer: Angela Lampe Lighting Designer: Amanda Pichler Video Designer: Mark Carski, Carski Studios Sound Designer: Michael Meacham Properties Designer: Allyson Braun

Stage Manager: Pilar Burg Intimacy Director: Stephanie Schneider Assistant Director: Jonah Kruse Assistant Stage Manager: Jonathan Garton Playhouse Artistic Director: Katy Merriman

Cast In Order of Appearance *Indicates Playhouse Debut

Hercule Poirot	Cedric Fevrier
Marcel, Head Waiter	Jonathan Garton*
Colonel Arbuthnot	Evan Schettler
Mary Debenham	Jaclyn Stiller*
Helen Hubbard	Cate Miller
Hector MacQueen	Nathan Jorgensen
Monsieur Bouc	Sean Kanuso
Princess Dragomiroff	Donna Scarfe
Greta Ohlsson	Katie Hughes

Charles Betts*	
	Samuel Ratchett Countess Andrenyi
	Voice Actors
Kersten Daubitz	Mom/Nanny
Vivian Rosalie Coleman	Daisy
Jonah Kruse	Dad
Michael Meacham	Man/Radio Belgrade
Sylvain Vroland*	Train Announcer

Place: The Orient Express as it travels from Istanbul to Western Europe

Time: 1934

Train design originally conceived by Jim Othuse, Omaha Community Playhouse

Agatha Christie's Murder on the Orient Express is presented with a 15-minute intermission.

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

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Charles Betts (Michel the Conductor) has been involved with community theatres throughout lowa, acting, directing, designing and building sets, applying make-up, selecting costumes, designing lights, selling tickets. raising funds. and serving on

boards of directors. For Great River Players in Keokuk, he directed *Ethan Frome* and *Inherit the Wind*, and played his favorite stage role, Otto Frank in *The Diary of Anne Frank*. Chuck and his wife of 53 years, Carole, enjoy spending time with their granddaughters, Vaughn and Flynn.



Vivian Rosalie Coleman (Voiceover: Daisy) is a sixth grader at Johnston's Summit Middle School who enjoys acting, singing, and dancing. Her Playhouse credits include Marta in The Sound of Music and Annie Carroll/Susan Walker in Playhouse on the

Air Presents: Miracle on 34th Street. Other stage credits include Snow White in Disney's Descendants The Musical at Des Moines Young Artists' Theatre and Small Brave Girl, a favorite role, in Peter Pan Jr. at CAP.



Kersten Daubitz (Voiceover: Mom, Nanny) was on The Playhouse stage as a youth in Pippi Longstocking and most recently was Sister Sophia in The Sound of Music. While earning her Bachelor of Music Education degree at Iowa State University, she

performed in Into the Woods (Rapunzel) and Fiddler on the Roof (Chava). Kersten is a K-5 music teacher with Waukee Community School District and earning her Master of Music Education from the University of St. Thomas.



Cedric Fevrier (Hercule Poirot)
has been active in area theatres,
appearing in The Boxcar Children,
Curtains, and more at The Playhouse;
Caucus! The Musical with Right Brain
Productions; and Disney's Beauty and
the Beast (Cogsworth) at Urbandale

Community Theatre. He has stage managed at The Playhouse and Tallgrass Theatre Company. Cedric is a chef and substitute teacher. He plays guitar and bass, is a golfer, is a Freemason, enjoys fine scotch and cigars, and collects 78 records and James Bond memorabilia.



Michael Garrison (Samuel Ratchett) counts among his Playhouse shows Billy Elliot The Musical, Meredith Willson's The Music Man (Charlie Cowell), and Sunset Boulevard. He has co-directed at Newton Community Theatre, played George Banks in Mary

Poppins at Knoxville Community Theatre, and played his

favorite role, Juror 3, in 12 Angry Men at Union Street Players (Pella). Michael is a new business representative at Athene and likes singing karaoke and playing video games.



Jonathan Garton (Marcel, Head Waiter/Assistant Stage Manager) is back at the theatre after a long hiatus. At lowa State University, he worked on the crew for shows at Fisher Theatre and had a summer internship with Des Moines Metro Opera. His favorite

theatre experience was squeezing into a TV cart and wheeling a projection around the stage for *Rosencrantz* and Guildenstern are Dead. An avid photographer, Jonathan's day job is with the lowa Department of Natural Resources. He and his husband, Nenad, have two children, Milos and Sofia.



Katie Hughes (Greta Ohlsson) is a graphic designer who also enjoys the fiber arts. While at Central College in Pella, she created a John Wayne bunny rabbit costume for Abstnercranth and appeared onstage as Penelope Pennywise in Urinetown

The Musical. As an alum, she designed posters and programs for That Day in Tuscan and was costume designer for Illusions. Katie says she's excited to share the stage with her brother-in-law, Sylvain Vroland. Even if he isn't in-person, she hears him wishing her a "safe trip" each performance.



Nathan Jorgensen (Hector MacQueen) has a long history with The Playhouse, making his stage debut while a high schooler in Tuck Everlasting and more recently in the Summer 2020 Drive-In Theatre production of Rounding Third. He has

worked on most backstage crews and directed several children's theatre shows. Nate is co-director of HOPE Drama Troupe and on the theatre's education staff. He teaches at Waukee High School and is earning his M.A. in theatre directing from Roosevelt University (Chicago).



Sean Kanuso (Monsieur Bouc) studied at the William Esper Acting Studio in New York City. His extensive credits include Repertory Theater of America's national tours of Barefoot in the Park and The Drunkard, and Last Thursday at Madison Avenue

Theater (New York City). Last season at The Playhouse, he appeared in *Weekend Comedy* and *A Love Offering*, a co-production with Pyramid Theatre Company. Sean and his wife, Amy, have two sons, Caeden and Logan. A stay-at-home dad, Sean enjoys golfing, scuba diving, and traveling.



Jonah Kruse (Voiceover: Dad/ Assistant Director), aka Silas, has been involved at The Playhouse as a student, including Second Saturday teen improvisation nights, and audience member. Wanting to get more involved. he filled out the

volunteer interest form on the theatre's website and the rest is history. At Grand View University, he directed Baggage and designed lights and sound for other shows. Jonah is an AmeriCorps VISTA member with Gateway Dance Theatre. He has a career in directing which he plans to further in films and TV and is creating a TV show with a friend.



Michael Meacham (Voiceover: Man, Radio Belgrade/Sound Designer) has 54 years of experience as a voice actor and sound designer for radio, TV, video, and live theatre, and a more than 25 years association with The Playhouse. Audiences will recognize

him from roles as varied as Mr. Van Daan in *The Diary* of *Anne Frank* (1997-98 season) to Buster in *Misery*, and Grandpa in *You Can't Take It with You* (2016 Dionysos Award recipient). Michael likes to travel, play classical trumpet, and garden, and is a photographer. He and his wife, Robbie, have two dogs and two cats and they all often spend time camping together.



Cate Miller (Helen Hubbard) is an English teacher at Des Moines Public Schools' Central Academy who likes reading, creative writing, and almost anything outdoors. She and her husband, Paul, met at The Playhouse when he played Mr. Keller to her Mrs.

Keller in *The Miracle Worker*. Later they played siblings in *Anne of Green Gables*. Cate says that while Rosalind in *As You Like It* (Drama Workshop) was a wonderful part to play, she is enjoying the comedic side of Helen Hubbard. Cate and Paul have a daughter, Taylor.



Katie Saldanha (Countess Andrenyi) studied theatre at Hope College (Holland, MI) where among her favorite roles were Titania in A Midsummer Night's Dream and the title role in Miss Julie. She has spent the last 12 years as a stay-at-home

mom to her hilarious children, Eisley, Thatcher, and Cohen. She adores writing and performing in skits and making ridiculous videos for the children's ministry at Cottage Grove Church. Her all-time favorite person is her wonderful husband, Chris, who encouraged her to try out for this show



Donna Scarfe (Princess Dragomiroff) was in the film The Miracle Worker at age 7, studied ballet on a Fulbright Fellowship in Romania, acted with the National Theatre of the Deaf and Deaf West, and is a certified sign language interpreter. At The Playhouse her

shows include Rosa Parks, The Miracle Worker, and Plaza Suite. She is a founding member of the lowa Stage Theatre Company where her shows include Crowns, God of Carnage, and King Lear. She owns Fyne Hats By Felicity which creates period and contemporary hats.



Evan Schettler (Colonel Arbuthnot) made his Playhouse debut as Herr Zeller in *The Sound of Music*. He has numerous credits at Simpson College, where he earned his bachelor's degree in music education, including The Pirate King in *The Pirates of*

Penzance, Polyphemus in Acis and Galatea, and Tartuccio in Prospera's Island. Evan's interests range from running and practicing yoga to video games and Dungeons and Dragons.



Jaclyn Stiller (Mary Debenham) is making her Playhouse debut. Her credits in college and community theatres include Belle in *Disney's Beauty and the Beast* (State Street Theater, New Ulm, MN), and at Iowa State University Theatre, Mary Todd

Lincoln in Chasing George Washington and Emily Webb in Our Town. She received a KCACTF Irene Ryan Award nomination for the latter. When not at the theatre, Jaclyn is making tape stickier as a process engineer for 3M. She enjoys baking, singing, painting, and yoga.



Sylvain Vroland is excited to make his American stage debut – thanks to sister-in-law Katie Hughes – with The Playhouse. He currently lives in Orleans, France, with his wife, Erin, and their two cats. He works as a software engineer and enjoys

cooking for his growing family and friends. Je suis touché par le fait que vous ayez pris le temps de traduire ça. Malheureusement, et j'en suis sincèrement navré pour vous, ça ne vallait pas le coup.



David R. Kilpatrick (Director) has been part of The Playhouse since May 2017. David's career has included producing artistic director of a small professional theatre, owner of a dinner theatre, production manager, director, lighting designer and

professional stage manager. David's past productions at the Playhouse include Weekend Comedy, Leaving

Iowa (co-director), Rounding Third, Disney's Newsies and Mamma Mia! Other favorite directing experiences include Titanic, The Dining Room, Boeing, Boeing and Sideways Stories from Wayside School to name a few. His education includes degrees from George Mason University, Missouri State and University of Missouri, where his dissertation was the exploration of the audience as it prepares for the show.



Nicholas Amundson (Scenic/ Projections Designer) earned his B.F.A in theatre design and technology from the University of South Dakota. Working on theatre all over town. he has designed in many different styles with StageWest Theatre

Company (Ugly Lies the Bone, Marjorie Prime), Des Moines Young Artists' Theatre (The Hobbit, James and the Giant Peach Jr.), Noce (bare: A Pop Opera), and Kata Klysmic Productions (The Rocky Horror Show, Reefer Madness). He served as scenic designer for The New Mel Brooks Musical Young Frankenstein, Roald Dahl's Willy Wonka, A Chorus Line, Choices, Disney's The Little Mermaid, Ragtime, Catch Me If You Can and many more at The Playhouse. In the 2019-20 season, he directed and designed James and the Giant Peach in the Kate Goldman Children's Theatre. His favorite thing about theatre is creating out-of-the-box ways to present a story that gives the audience something fun to experience.



Angela Lampe (Costume Designer/ Associate Artistic Director) began her tenure with The Playhouse in 1993 and has designed costumes. sets, and props for nearly 300 productions including Guys and Dolls, Meredith Willson's The Music Man, A

Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder, Ella Enchanted. The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane, Ragtime, Les Misérables, Disney's The Little Mermaid, West Side Story, Into the Woods, A Streetcar Named Desire. Sunset Boulevard, and Hairspray. She has a B.A. from Central College in Pella and a M.F.A. in theatre from the University of Nebraska. She is the recipient of four Cloris Awards for excellence in costuming and puppetry.



Amanda Pichler (Lighting Designer) designed the lights for The Playhouse productions of The Diary of Anne Frank and Catch Me If You Can. She is an actor with Des Moines improv troupe Comedy Xperiment. With an M.A.T. in theatre education from

Brenau University (Gainesville, GA), Amanda works as the Staplin Performing Arts Center manager at Valley High School. When not at the theatre, she can be found visiting national parks, backpacking, hiking, biking, and taking photographs.



Carski Studios (Video Designer) is an independent art studio founded in the heart of Beaverdale, Co-owned by Mark and Sarah Carson, Carski Studios focuses primarily on fine art, illustrations, and storytelling. They have an online shop, www.

thecarskishop.com, selling original pieces, high quality giclee prints, merchandise, commission options, and more. Mark and Sarah also recently started a Patreon page where you can get even more cool stuff: www. patreon.com/carskistudios.



Allyson Braun (Properties Designer) returned to the world of props design - an art she had done for four years at North Central College (Naperville, IL) - with The Playhouse's summer tent theatre productions of Godspell. Plaza Suite, and Polkadots: The Cool

Kids Musical. This fall, she was properties designer for Escaping the Labyrinth. Her most recent Playhouse stage role was Ella in Ella Enchanted. Allyson is COO of Merkle Retirement Planning and lives in Beaverdale with her husband, Ian, and their two cats.



Pilar Burg (Stage Manager) first got involved at The Playhouse as assistant stage manager for Elf - The Musical in 2018. Since then, she has worked on the stage management team or as followspot operator for Catch Me If You Can: Disnev's

Newsies; A Christmas Story, The Musical; Singin' in the Rain; Weekend Comedy; and The Velveteen Rabbit. She received a Playhouse 2018 Volunteer of the Year Dionysos Award. A data transfer analyst at MMC, Pilar likes beading, sewing, cross stitching, and reading in her spare time. She and her husband. Trent, have two children, Lydia and Gavin.



Stephanie Schneider (Intimacy Director) is an intimacy director and performer based in Des Moines. Her intimacy direction credits include Plaza Suite, Singin' in the Rain, and I and You at The Playhouse. The Bridges of Madison County Concert

Version at Tallgrass Theatre Company, Atlas of Mud at Theatre Midwest, and The Cake at Iowa Stage Theatre Company. She has also done intimacy coordination for local lowa films. Stephanie is passionate about bringing intimacy direction to the theatre and film community in Des Moines and hopes that it spreads across Iowa. She welcomes questions about the work and asks those interested to reach out on social media. Recent acting credits include Singin' in the Rain (Kathy) and A Christmas Story: The Musical (Miss Shields) at The Playhouse. Represented by the Peak Agency and Talent Unlimited,

she works in film, improv, and voice-over as well. When not performing, you can find her reading, nerding out on Star Wars, spending time outdoors, and playing Dungeons and Dragons.



Ken Ludwig (Playwright) has had six shows on Broadway, seven in London's West End, and many of his works have become a standard part of the American repertoire. His 28 plays and musicals have been performed in over 30 countries in

more than 20 languages and are produced throughout the United States every night of the year. 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 was on Broadway for five years and won the Tony and Olivier Awards for Best Musical. In addition, he has won the Edgar Award for Best Mystery of the Year, two Laurence Olivier Awards, two Helen Hayes Awards, and the Edwin Forrest Award for Contributions to the American Theater. His plays have starred, among others, Alec Baldwin, Carol Burnett, Tony Shaloub, Joan Collins, and Hal Holbrook, His stage version of Murder on the Orient Express was written expressly at the request of the Agatha Christie Estate. His latest play. Dear Jack. Dear Louise, won the 2020 Charles MacArthur Award for Best New Play of the Year and is optioned for Broadway. 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 are published in the Yale Review. He is a graduate of Harvard and Cambridge and is a frequent guest speaker for groups as varied as The Oxford-Cambridge Society, The Jane Austen Society of North America, The Folger Shakespeare Library, and The Baker Street Irregulars. www.kenludwig.com



Agatha Christie (Author) is the author not only of *The Mousetrap*, the longest running stage production in history, but also *Witness for the Prosecution* and *And Then There Were None*, to name but a few of her greatest stage successes. Her novels

have sold more than 2 billion copies around the world, and she is only outsold by the Bible and Shakespeare. Born in 1890 in Torquay, Devon, England, to an American father and English mother, she wrote her first play, Black Coffee, (the only play in which she chose to feature Poirot) in 1930, having been disappointed by the way The Murder of Roger Ackroyd had been adapted into Alibi in 1928. She adapted her bestselling novel And Then There Were None for stage in 1943, giving it a different ending, followed by, in quick succession, Appointment with Death (1945), Murder on the Nile (1946), and The Hollow (1951). With The Mousetrap (1952), Witness for the Prosecution (1953), and Spider's Web (1954), she became the only female playwright to have three plays

running in the West End at the same time. Later plays include Towards Zero (1956) co-adapted with Gerald Verner, Verdict (1958) possibly her most unusual play, Go Back for Murder (1960), and Rule of Three (1962) a series of three one-act plays. After a hugely successful career and a wonderful life, Ms. Christie died peacefully on 12 January 1976. You can read Agatha Christie's own account of her life in An Autobiography, which was published after her death in 1977. Agatha Christie Limited (ACL) has been managing the literary and media rights to Agatha Christie's works around the world since 1955, when the company was set up by Christie herself. ACL works with the best talents on stage, in film. television, publishing, and on digital platforms to ensure that Christie's work continues to reach new audiences in innovative ways and to the highest standard. The company is currently managed by Christie's great-grandson, James Prichard. Recent theatre collaborations include the critically acclaimed Witness for the Prosecution at County Hall in London, working with Eleanor Lloyd Productions and Rebecca Stafford Productions, and Murder on the Orient Express adapted by Ken Ludwig, with productions at McCarter Theatre in Princeton and Hartford, Connecticut, USA, ACL also works closely with international theatre companies developing in-territory stage productions.



Katy Merriman (Artistic Director) has been an active member of the local theatre community since moving to Des Moines in 2013. Her Playhouse directing credits include the recent co-production with Pyramid Theatre Company, A Love Offering (co-directed

with Tiffany Johnson), Some Enchanted Evening, Stuart Little, I and You, The Roommate, Love Letters, and Elephant & Piggie's "We Are in a Play!" Prior to becoming artistic director, Katy appeared on The Playhouse stage in shows including Into the Woods (Cinderella), Les Misérables (Cosette), Completeness (Molly), and Legally Blonde the Musical (Elle Woods) and was the musical director for The Playhouse Performance Academy from 2016 to 2018. Katy worked with Iowa Stage Theatre Company as a resident artist where her performance credits include The Glass Menagerie (Laura) and Our Town (Emily). She also directed their 2018 production of Fun Home. Prior to her time in Des Moines. Katy worked with numerous theatres as a performer, director, and administrator. She has a Bachelor of Music from Butler University in Indianapolis, IN.

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Light Board Operator/ Projections Operator: **Pilar Burg**

Set Construction: Nicholas Amundson, Jonathan Garton, Darique Rodriquez, Jason Stanbro, JP Ungs

Scenic Painter: Nicholas Amundson

Set Painting: Kathleen Baustian, Elaine Lindgren, Darlene Pullen

Hair: Lora Scrignoli Cesana, Nicholas Root

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