# Murder on the Orient Express

Presented by Auckland Theatre Company

## Welcome

He pou atua, he pou whenua, he pou tangata.
Ko Waitematā te moana
Ko Waikōkota te whenua.
Ko Te Pou Whakamaharatanga mō Māui Tikitiki a Tāranga te tohu o te kaha, o te kōrero, o te whakapapa o tēnei wāhi, o tēnei whare.

Nau mai e te tī, e te tā ki te whare kōrero, ki te whare whakaari o ASB ki te tahatika o te moana.

Mauri tau, mauri ora!

Pouwhakamaumāharatanga mō Māui-Tikitiki-a-Tāranga
The Memorial Post of Māui the Topknot of Tāranga
Robert Jahnke ONZM (Ngāi Taharoa, Te Whānau a Iritekura, Te Whānau a Rākairo o Ngāti Porou) 2016
Laminated tōtara and Corten steel
Proudly commissioned by Auckland Theatre Company for ASB Waterfront Theatre

## Production Information

Season: 22 April – 10 May 2025
Adapted for the Stage by: Ken Ludwig
Based on the novel by: Agatha Christie
Director: Shane Bosher
Duration: 2 hours 10 minutes, including interval
Content Advisory: References to the death of a child, suicide, and depictions of death
By arrangement with ORiGIN™ Theatrical on behalf of Samuel French Ltd, A Concord Theatricals Company.

## Cast

* Bronwyn Ensor — Greta Ohlsson
* Sophie Henderson — Countess Andrenyi
* Jennifer Ludlam — Princess Dragomiroff
* Mayen Mehta — Hector MacQueen
* Ryan O’Kane — Colonel Arbuthnot & Samuel Ratchett
* Mirabai Pease — Mary Debenham
* Cameron Rhodes — Hercule Poirot
* Jordan Selwyn — Michel & Head Waiter
* Rima Te Wiata — Helen Hubbard
* Edwin Wright — Monsieur Bouc

## Creative Team

* Writer — Agatha Christie
* Stage Adapter — Ken Ludwig
* Direction — Shane Bosher
* Set Design — John Verryt
* Lighting Design — Sean Lynch
* Costume Design — Elizabeth Whiting
* Composition & Sound Design — Paul McLaney
* Motion Design — Harley Campbell
* Accent & Dialect Coach — Kirstie O’Sullivan
* Intimacy Coordinator — Todd Emerson
* Engine Room Assistant Director — Nī Dekkers-Reihana

## Welcome from the Artistic Director

Kia ora koutou,

With over two billion copies sold, Agatha Christie’s crime novels are outsold only by the Bible and Shakespeare.
She wrote 66 detective novels, 14 short story collections and the world’s longest-running play *The Mousetrap*.
For many readers, *Murder on the Orient Express* is her ultimate achievement — a tantalising locked-room mystery of intrigue, lies, and justice.

Christie’s careful construction of clues and characters means that her stories lend themselves beautifully to stage adaptation.

This version by Ken Ludwig is loved by audiences worldwide for its blend of thrills and wit.

We're delighted to bring it to life at ASB Waterfront Theatre under the superb direction of Shane Bosher and a cast of some of Aotearoa’s finest actors.

Thank you for joining us as the great Hercule Poirot boards the Orient Express.

— Jonathan Bielski
Artistic Director & CEO, Auckland Theatre Company

## About Agatha Christie

Born in 1890, Agatha Christie is the best-selling novelist of all time.
Her works, including *Murder on the Orient Express*, have captivated audiences for decades with their deft plotting, intricate characters, and compelling mysteries.
Christie created enduring characters such as Hercule Poirot and Miss Marple and remains a towering figure in the world of crime fiction.

## About Ken Ludwig

Ken Ludwig is an internationally acclaimed playwright whose work has been performed in over 30 countries and translated into 20 languages.
His adaptation of *Murder on the Orient Express* captures the suspense and wit of Christie’s original novel, bringing it vividly to life on stage.

## Director’s Note

The stories we tell ourselves about justice are complicated.
We want the world to be fair, but the world isn't always fair.
Sometimes the guilty walk free. Sometimes the innocent suffer.
Sometimes justice and morality aren’t the same thing.

Christie’s Murder on the Orient Express presents us with a fascinating moral dilemma:
What happens when the law can't deliver the justice we crave?

It’s a privilege to direct this production with such a talented team.
We invite you to climb aboard the Orient Express, meet our suspects, and puzzle your way through a crime that may not be as straightforward as it seems.

— Shane Bosher
Director

## Synopsis

On a snowbound night in 1934, the luxurious Orient Express is halted by a landslide.
In the morning, a passenger — the shady American businessman Samuel Ratchett — is found dead in his cabin, stabbed multiple times.

With the train stranded and a murderer still on board, famed detective Hercule Poirot must uncover which of the eclectic passengers had motive, means, and opportunity.

A classic whodunnit full of twists and turns, Murder on the Orient Express is a stylish, edge-of-your-seat ride that asks what justice truly means.

## Feature Article

# Murder Most Stylish

There is a special glamour attached to the name Orient Express — an aura of luxury, intrigue, and high society travel. From its first journey in 1883, the train captured imaginations around the world. Royalty, diplomats, and celebrities all rode its polished wood and brass interiors, sipping champagne as Europe unfolded outside their windows.

Agatha Christie was fascinated by the romance of train travel and the way it threw strangers together. She travelled on the Orient Express herself in the 1920s and was once stranded by flooding — an experience that would inspire the setting of one of her greatest mysteries.

“The passengers on the train are thrown together in a kind of haphazard intimacy,” Christie once wrote. “A perfect setting for murder.”

Her 1934 novel Murder on the Orient Express quickly became one of her most acclaimed works. Readers were captivated by the snowbound train, the cosmopolitan passengers with hidden pasts, and of course, the brilliant Hercule Poirot, whose grey cells slowly unravel the complex web of lies and motives.

What makes Murder on the Orient Express endure, however, is not just its clever puzzle but its moral complexity. Christie presents a situation where justice, ethics, and the law come into uncomfortable conflict. Poirot is forced to grapple not only with the who and how, but with the why — and whether exposing the truth is the right thing to do.

Adaptations have brought new generations to the story, from Sidney Lumet’s star-studded 1974 film to Kenneth Branagh’s stylish 2017 version. But it is onstage, where the audience becomes intimate witnesses to suspicion and revelation, that the drama’s claustrophobic tension and moral ambiguity shine brightest.

For all its elegance, Murder on the Orient Express reminds us that appearances can be deceiving — and that even in the most civilised settings, darkness can lurk just beneath the surface.

## Accessibility Services

Auckland Theatre Company offers a range of accessible performances including Audio Described performances, New Zealand Sign Language Interpreted performances, and Relaxed performances.

Assistance dogs are welcome. Accessible seating is available. More information is available at atc.co.nz/access.

## Acknowledgements

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