

ALLEY THEATRE

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Alley Theatre Announces the Cast & Creative Team of Agatha Christie's *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd*

Alley Theatre kicks off its 77th season with the beloved Summer Chills series

HOUSTON TX - The Tony Award®-winning Alley Theatre announces the cast and creative team of its 77th season kick-off production – Agatha Christie's *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd*, adapted for the stage and directed by **Mark Shanahan**. The Summer Chills production of Agatha Christie's *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd* runs **July 21 – August 27, 2023** in the Hubbard Theatre.

One of Agatha Christie's best-known novels and voted the best crime novel ever by the British Crime Writers' Association is this murder mystery. This twisty whodunit features extraordinary characters who hold secrets about blackmail and murder that only the detective Hercule Poirot can solve in the all-new adaptation.

"It is a real honor to present the world premiere of Agatha Christie's *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd*," shares Alley Artistic Director **Rob Melrose**. "What I appreciate about Mark's adaptation is that it can dramatize the innovation that Christie introduced all these years ago that shocked and surprised readers. This adaptation is pure thrills and chills. Get ready to be on the edge of your seat!"

"I have loved *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd* since I first read the book as a teenager. It contains all of the elements we look for in an Agatha Christie classic - rich characters, surprising twists, the unmistakable charm of an English country house- and, most importantly, a truly diabolical ending," shares director and adapter **Mark Shanahan**. "In writing this adaptation, it was my goal to honor the genius of the book while presenting something uniquely fun, fresh, and theatrical. Returning to the Alley Theatre for its world premiere as its director is an additional thrill. The Alley has a long history of producing Christie's work at its best. I can't wait to invite our audience to match wits with Poirot as we put this Christie masterpiece onstage for an evening of mystery, laughter, and some good old-fashioned summer chills."

The cast of Agatha Christie's *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd* includes Alley Theatre's Resident Acting Company members **Elizabeth Bunch** as Caroline Sheppard, **Dylan Godwin** as Ralph Paton, **Shawn Hamilton** as Roger Ackroyd, **Melissa Molano** as Flora Ackroyd, **Melissa Pritchett** as Miss Helen Russell, **David Rainey** as Inspector Raglan, **Christopher Salazar** as Dr. James Sheppard, and **Todd Waite** as Parker.

The Resident Acting Company will be joined by **Brandon Hearnberger** (*The Servant of Two Masters*, *Sherlock Holmes* and *The Case of The Jersey Lily*, Ken Ludwig's *Lend Me A Soprano*) as Major Hector Blunt, **Susan Koozin** (*Cowboy Bob*, Ken Ludwig's *Lend Me A Soprano*, *Clue*) as Gertrude Ackroyd, **David Sinaiko** (Agatha Christie's *Murder on The Orient Express*) as Hercule Poirot, and **Skyler Sinclair** (Ken Ludwig's *Lend Me A Soprano*) as Ursula Bourne.

The creative team of Agatha Christie's *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd* includes Scenic Designer **Klara Zieglerova**, Costume Designer **Helen Huang**, Lighting Designer **Rui Rita**, Original Music & Sound Designer **John Gromada**, Stage Manager **Rebecca R.D. Hamlin**, and Assistant Stage Manager **Emily Bohannan**.

PRESS NIGHT: Wednesday, July 26, at 7:30pm. Invitations will be sent at a later date.

SPONSORS: Alley Theatre is supported by the 2023-24 Season sponsor United Airlines, the official airline of Alley Theatre and Hampton Inn and Homewood Suites Downtown Houston, the official hotels of Alley Theatre.

TICKETS: Tickets to Agatha Christie's *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd* are now on sale and start at \$27. Discounted tickets are available for military, seniors, and any student or educator, regardless of age, with a valid student ID for designated performances. The first five performances are preview performances, and these performances allow audiences to be a part of the development process of shows. Tickets can be ordered online (alleytheatre.org) or by phone (713.220.5700).

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ABOUT THE ALLEY THEATRE:

Alley Theatre, one of America's leading nonprofit theatres, is a nationally recognized performing arts company led by Artistic Director Rob Melrose and Managing Director Dean R. Gladden. The Alley is committed to developing and producing theatre that is as diverse as the Houston community. The Alley produces up to 11 plays and nearly 400 performances each season, ranging from the best current work and classic plays to new plays by contemporary writers. Home to a full-time resident company of actors and expert artisans in all theatre crafts, the Alley engages theatre artists of every discipline – actors, directors, designers, composers, playwrights – who work on individual productions throughout each season as visiting artists.

Alley Theatre performs at the Meredith J. Long Theatre Center which is comprised of two state-of-the-art theatres: the 774-seat Hubbard Theatre and the 296-seat Neuhaus Theatre. The Alley reaches over 200,000 people each year through its performance, education, and community engagement programs.

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