

FINAL WEEKEND FOR CLASSIC MYSTERY

Agatha Christie's *Murder on the Orient Express*, adapted for the stage by Ken Ludwig, is currently running at the Workshop, 1431 Grove St., Burlington.

Set in 1934 on the famed passenger train running from Istanbul to Paris, the classic *Murder on the Orient Express* traces the efforts of Christie's famed detective Hercule Poirot to solve a murder before the train reaches its final destination and all the suspects scatter.

Directed by Steve Poling, assisted by Marlene Holsteen, the cast includes Jim Beres, Lee Franklin, Kaitlynn Broeg, Hayden Roberts, Tommy Caruso, Kathy Wolfskill, Kas Cox, Jenn Mena, Michelle Huppenbauer, Jim Brand, Estel Walker, and Mateo Perez.

The show opened May 2 at the Workshop; the final weekend will be May 8-11, with evening shows beginning at 7:30 p.m. and a 2:00 p.m. matinee on May 11.

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

For more information, call the Workshop at 319-753-6623, go to www.playersworkshoptheater.com, or go to the Players Workshop Facebook page.

Murder on the Orient Express is the final regular show in the Workshop's 2024-2025 season.



YOUNG ACTOR AUDITIONS SET

Players Workshop will hold open auditions for the 2025 summer Young Actor Production, *Bedtime Stories (As Told By Our Dad) (Who Messed Them Up)* by Ed Monk, a charming re-telling of some classic bedtime fairy tales, by a dad who is just a bit "fuzzy on the details." [Produced by special arrangement with Playscripts, Inc. (www.playscripts.com)].

Director Carol Hinkle, assisted by Christine Claeys and Anika Morton, is looking for 4 boys and 6 girls, plus 12 or more actors of either gender.

Hinkle stated, "We encourage young actors who will finish 3rd grade this spring through those who will finish 8th grade this spring to try out. No experience necessary and no preparation required."

Audition dates are Sunday, May 11, at 6:00 p.m. for grades 3-5; and Monday, May 12, at 6:00 p.m. for grades 6-8; (if your young actor can't make it on the date for their grade, they may come on the other day). Auditions will be held at the Workshop, 1431 Grove St., Burlington, IA

The play will run at the Workshop on June 26, 27, 28, and 29, 2025.

For more information, contact Carol Hinkle at 319-850-1394 or email pwyoungactors@gmail.com. Information will also be on the Workshop's Facebook page and at www.playersworkshoptheater.com

If you do not wish to receive this newsletter, contact Mary Weinand (mary.weinand@yahoo.com or 319-750-4651) to have your name removed from the mailing list.

(Prefer an email version? Contact pw6623@gmail.com, to have the newsletter converted to electronic format.)

REMINDER: The USPS charges PW for every returned newsletter; they also will not automatically forward your newsletter, so, if your address changes, please inform Mary Weinand (mary.weinand@yahoo.com or 319-750-4651), so changes can be made to the mailing list. It saves us money and ensures you continue to receive *The Backstage Pass*.



PLAYERS WORKSHOP ANNUAL MEETING DATE SET

Players Workshop's annual general membership business meeting and election of members to the board of directors will be held Wed., May 14, 2025, at 7:00 p.m. at the Workshop, 1431 Grove St.

Items on the agenda will include:

- A "State of the Workshop Report," covering the accomplishments of the organization in 2024-25
- Election of five people to the Board of Directors
- Election of the President
- Choosing of the winner of the Cuthbert Award
- Presentation of the Proposed 2025-26 play season

All dues-paying members are eligible to vote and are encouraged to attend.

Following the meeting, the board will sponsor a social hour with refreshments in the Workshop lobby, and they hope all who attend the meeting will stay for that.

For more information on the general meeting, contact Mary Fox at 319-750-6046 or at mfox6046@gmail.com.

NOMINEES FOR THE BOARD

Nominating Committee chair Bill Ell reports a slate of 7 candidates have indicated they would like to run for the 5 positions open on the Board of Directors. To give the membership an idea of what they would like to accomplish if elected, each nominee was asked to provide answers to the following questions: (1) Why do you want to serve on the board of directors? (2) What are some items you think Players Workshop is doing well and what do you think Players Workshop need to improve? (3) Where do you see Players Workshop in 5 years?

The list of candidates is presented in the order received from the nominations committee chair. Answers to questions may have been edited, due to space constraints.

LIBBA FLORES wants to be on the board to "be part of decision making for our future. The theater can create such happiness, escape, fantasy and excitement. I like being a part of those decisions." She feels PW does well in entertaining, with beautiful sets, dedicated and creative actors, amazing costumes, and welcoming volunteers. To do better, she feels "we need to be aware of what pleases our audience and what brings them to our plays. We need to get them in our seats for the sake of the actors and for the sake of the financial continuation of the theater." In 5

years she would like to see enough growth that PW needs a plan and fundraising for either a new building or a larger stage moved to the south side. She would like more variety of entertainment, continuation of children's plays, more reader's theater, younger people taking over technical aspects and more young directors, etc., and **nobody** saying "OH, WE CAN'T DO THAT WE'VE NEVER DONE IT THAT WAY BEFORE!"

LINDA GARWOOD did not return questionnaire.

CAROL HINKLE states, "Theatre has an important place in our community, and I would like to continue serving on the board to help keep it alive in Burlington." She says "Over the years I've worn a lot of hats at Players workshop, from directing, producing, working backstage, as well as serving on both the membership and youth committees. I'm especially proud of what we've achieved with our summer Young Actor's productions, and I'd love to see us create more opportunities for young people to get involved." She thanks the membership for considering her nomination and looks forward "to continuing to contribute to the magic of live theater."

JAYNE GOBBLE wants to "continue on the board to try to keep the theater moving in a positive direction." She feels PW is doing a good job working with the youth and getting more young people involved in the theater. She thinks "we could improve on training more people in all aspects of the theater function, such as how to set up lights and sound, how to build sets, electrical work of the stage lights. Those things that it seems as if there are only a few that have the knowledge." She states that where the theater is in 5 years "depends greatly on what plays we choose to present to the public. People want to be entertained and leave feeling good about what they have just seen. So I think it is up to us as a board to make good decisions with that in mind."

JONI BRAINERD moved to Burlington in 2018 when her husband was transferred here; she got a small role in *Wild Women of Winedale* and "was hooked." She has 10+ years experience in non-profit fundraising, and says, "cultivating individual, corporate, foundational, and planned giving donors is experience I would bring to the PW board." Regarding what she feels PW does well, PW has "amazing volunteers! To do everything you do solely via unpaid volunteers is awe-inspiring. You know your core audience and cater to their wants and expectations with entertaining programming. PW consistently puts out newsletters and is building a presence on social media. You continue to find opportunities for outreach/education with community partners/schools—endeavors necessary for attracting younger patrons and artists to your theater." As to what might be made better, she says PW "operates differently" from the non-profit organizations with which

she has worked. “My guess is there are opportunities for ‘best practices’ to be identified and made consistent—making sure that, even as roles are transferred to new volunteers or designees, things don’t fall through the cracks Being a set of ‘fresh eyes’ on some of PW’s practices is something I’m open to.” As for how she sees PW 5 years from now, she believes there is room for “increased donor relation efforts” and would like to see “an undertaking like the idea from the strategic planning committee of a larger, modern stage Hearing that is exciting.”

CHRISTA RUTHER states that, having been in several PW plays and helping produce a musical, she feels “it may be time to experience the other side of things at my favorite place! I would like to learn more about how things really happen at the PW.” Of PW she says, “It is both my favorite place and a safe space for me. I respect and admire those who keep it running for our community.” Regarding what PW does well, she states, “PW does advertising well. They have come a long way on social media. I think people are learning about it daily.” On what could be improved, “I think we need to work on ways to value newcomers to the workshop as well as those that have been here for a long time. I know there can seem to be an unbalance at times.” In 5 years she hopes to see “the theater thriving with new members as well as valuing those that have been there for many years. Finding a way to make room for all generations. I hope that the seats continue to fill and we provide the best theater experiences to our community.” She looks forward to PW continuing to move forward for all to enjoy.

JIM BRAND did not return questionnaire.

In additions to the above nominees, nominations will be accepted from the floor at the meeting.

RUNNING FOR PRESIDENT

Nominating Committee chair Bill Ell reports only one person has indicated an interest in running for the position of Players Workshop President. The candidate was asked to submit answers to the same questionnaire submitted to Board of Directors candidates.

MARY FOX, the current PW President, has announced her intention to run for re-election. On why she wishes to continue to serve in that position, she stated, “I would like to continue to serve as the PW President so that I can continue the work we’ve started. I want to continue to support the work of all the committees in bringing solutions to the board. As an example, we have seen significant improvements coming to our theater through the Strategic Planning Committee, Fundraising Committee, and House & Grounds Committee working together. Our patrons will be seeing some changes in the

near future with new flooring, and a new look to the box office. Other committees will also be implementing some future changes. I strongly believe in the benefit of a strong committee structure.

“I want to be a part of ensuring that we continue to bring quality live theater to Burlington and surrounding areas. Through my former career in manufacturing, my favorite definition of ‘quality’ is that it’s when the customer returns but the product doesn’t. Although we have no physical product, I want to make sure the customer returns by giving them the variety and quality of shows they desire and have come to expect from us.

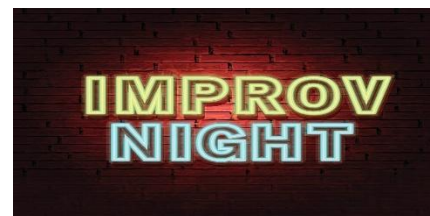
“I want to continue to support the committees in bringing new ideas to the board and helping the board determine the feasibility of these ideas.”

As for the second question, she feels the committee structure is working well and is a “very efficient way of determining the best path for the theater instead of the board as a whole muddling through a lot of details.” She feels PW needs to improve in “onboarding new board members. We are finding that we are getting more new people to serve . . . but their understanding of their role doesn’t seem clear to them. I plan to address this issue in the upcoming year.”

As for 5 years down the road, “I would like to see PW in need of either building new or adding to our facility to accommodate the increased size of our audiences. I would also like to see an expanded youth program, again, possibly adding on to the building to make a dedicated space for youth programming. Youth is the future of the theater.”

As with the nominees for Board of Directors, nominations for the PW Presidency will also be accepted from the floor at the meeting.

All dues-paid members are urged to attend the meeting and support YOUR community theater.



COMING TO PW STAGE!!!

Players Workshop will be hosting a night of improvisational theater, featuring several local stand-up comedians and actors, on Saturday, May 17, at 7:00 p.m., on the Workshop stage, 1431 Grove St. The doors will open at 6:30 p.m.

The performers for this night of impromptu comedy and hilarious skits are a combination of PW

He appeared in 18 Workshop plays, the last being in *Charing Cross Road* in 1990.

In his 20+ years at PW, he also was on the Board, served as President, directed 8 plays, assistant directed, served as stage manager, and designed and built sets. Dan owned a very small couch that, due to the size of the stage, was in great demand by set decorators. He used to joke that "My couch has been in more plays than I have!"

Thanks for the use of the couch, Dan. Rest well.

IN MEMORIAM.....

Thank you to the following for their memorial donations: LIBBA FLORES in memory of **Mary Krohlow**; DEBORAH COON, PAMELA ROTH, JULIE RAPPENECKER, DEBRA RITTERS in memory of **David Rappenecker**.

PW SUPPORTING CAST 2024-2025



Players Workshop invites you to join the Supporting Cast for 2024-2025 season.

This one-time financial donation runs for the theatrical season, contributing significantly to the financial stability of PW.

Donations may be made in one of the following categories:

Usher \$25-\$99 **Stage Crew \$100-\$249**
Supporting Actor \$250-\$499 **Star \$500-\$999**
Director \$1000-\$2499 **Producer \$2500+**

Names of all those who have joined since the last newsletter are listed in bold face type.

Director

Barbara Bonnett Carole Theesfeld

Star

Tim & Tonja Binder

BNSF Railway Foundation (matching Kevin Liles' donation)

Mary Fox Kevin Liles Lillian Rubin

Supporting Actor

Sandra Allgood David Beckman Carolyn Dorting

Bonnie Downes Eva Ann Elmer

Jon Hart Wayne & Colleen Heibner

Nathan & Stephanie Heubner Marlene Holsteen

Judith Johnson Donald Kellar

Russ Leuck Chip & Dana Readinger Tim Roberts

Fred & Martha Wetzel Kimberly Wittkamp

Stage Crew

Barb & David Acord Allan G. Allsup Joy Anderson

Cindy & Darrell Bachtell Connie Bowen

Joni Brainerd Dan & Kathleen Cahill

Jim & Sandy Carter Lois A. Close Carol Copeland
Barbara Drodz (in memory of Jim Drodz)

F & M Bank and Trust Mary & Bill Fortin

Becky Foy Roger & Lori Griswald

Dr. Amy Groeltz – Smile Shoppe Robert Haines

Carole Halicki Barbara J. Hand

Kaye Hanna & Tim Hutchins Carol Janosik

Denise Johnson Gerhardt & Carmen Lachnitt

Cynthia M. Leonard (in memory of Mark T. Leonard)

Tammy Lohmann Mary Marsh Ronald Marshall

Linda Messer Paula S. Peterson

John & Lisa Pomberg Milton & Laurie Paule

Carol J. Reed **Rheinschmidt's Flooring America**

John & Kathy Schneider Teresa, Mark, & Pat Shaffer

Sara Sink Pauline Spees & Jim Raudabaugh

Nancy StClair Wayne & Nancy Tolander

Keith Turrill Peggy & Earl Stott

Kathy Wolfskill Renee Zaiser-Razzle Travel

Usher

Ericka Anspach Judy Bartachek Russell Beniscek

Chad & Sally Bird Lynne Carter

Lois Close (in memory of Sandra Nolte)

Joyce & Paul Dennison Jaquelyn Edwards

Sharon Eisenmayer Mary Fickel Lori Fry

Russ Fry Susan Geren Lyle & Janice Gibson

Barbara Hahn Linda & Harry Hoenig

Katherine M. Hoth Dean Hurliman Cami Hudson

Maureen Hutchcraft Char M. L. James

Dee & Wayne Johnson Krystal Johnson

Dorothy Leazer Pat Mayle Mary McManis

Lucinda Milder Ryan Nagrocki Kendra Robertson

Kathleen Schier Keith Schultz, Sr.

Bev & Duane Sherbondy Brett Shollenbarger

Jyll & Paul Sly Laura Sly Anita Stapleton

David Teater Larry & Linda Turley

Henry Villareal Christine Williamson

Kay Wilson Eunice Winters

All those who join will have their names listed in each play program and newsletter, as well as on the PW website, for 2024-25. You may join the Honorary Supporting Cast by completing the form at the end of this newsletter or the form in your play program.

PLAYERS WORKSHOP thanks these additional patrons for their financial donations to Players Workshop: **Sarah Smith, Meg Rose, Laura Crawford.**

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Weinand

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Players Workshop

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HONORARY SUPPORTING CAST DONATION FORM

Join the **Honorary Supporting Cast** and make a one-time donation for the 2024-2025 season.

Six Donor Levels Available:

Usher \$25-\$99 Stage Crew \$100-\$249 Supporting Actor \$250-\$499 Star \$500-\$999
Director \$1000-\$2499 Producer \$2500 +

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ **Email** _____

Donation Amount _____

I prefer my gift remain anonymous. _____

I wish to make a donation but do not wish to be listed in the Honorary Supporting Cast. _____

Send completed form to Players Workshop, PO Box 793, Burlington, IA 52601

You may also contribute by clicking on the DONATE button at the top of the PW website
(playersworkshoptheater.com) or using the link on the PW Facebook page.

Players Workshop is a 501(c)3 organization.