

WESTPORT COUNTRY PLAYHOUSE

NEWS RELEASE

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Westport Country Playhouse Stages Agatha Christie Murder Mystery

“Agatha Christie’s The Murder of Roger Ackroyd” is a riveting stage adaptation of the classic novel, weaving together secrets, deception, and shocking twists.

Westport Country Playhouse will stage “Agatha Christie’s The Murder of Roger Ackroyd,” a cunning and suspenseful whodunit, from July 14 through August 1. The play is adapted for the stage and directed by Mark Shanahan, Playhouse artistic director, from the novel by Agatha Christie, in association with Agatha Christie Ltd.

“I’ve loved ‘The Murder of Roger Ackroyd’ since I first read it as a teenager, and it was a joy to adapt this brilliant mystery for the stage alongside the good people at Agatha Christie Ltd.,” said Shanahan. “I’m especially excited to have a full summer production back on the Playhouse stage and thrilled that we’ve assembled a killer cast of Broadway stars and Playhouse favorites to bring Christie’s ingenious whodunit to life. Whether you come to test your ‘little grey cells’ and solve the crime or simply enjoy a great summer night at the theatre, you’re in for a bloody good time!”

A shocking murder. A house full of secrets. A mystery only the legendary detective Hercule Poirot can unravel. Set in 1926 England, “Agatha Christie’s The Murder of Roger Ackroyd” follows Poirot as he investigates the killing of a wealthy man, uncovering hidden motives and long-buried secrets among a cast of intriguing suspects. The novel has been hailed as “the greatest whodunit ever written” and cemented Christie’s reputation as the “Queen of Crime.” Dame Agatha’s iconic mystery unfolds on stage with all the elegance, cleverness, and suspense that have made it a timeless favorite.

The 12-member cast includes **Shereen Ahmed** as Flora Ackroyd (Westport Country Playhouse: Script in Hand playreading of “Theatre People”; Masterclass “Acting the Song”; Broadway/National Tour: Eliza in Lincoln Center Theater’s “My Fair Lady” - LA Critics Circle Nomination; Off-Broadway/Regional: “Nine”; Concerts: Grand Egyptian Museum Opening Ceremony; The White House; @shereen_ahme); **Anthony Cochrane** as Hercule Poirot (Broadway: “The Audience,” “War Horse,” “The Coast of Utopia,” “Cymbeline”; Off-Broadway: “Corruption,” Nikolai and the Others” at Lincoln Center Theater; PlayOn Shakespeare Festival, 12 years with the Aquila Theatre Company; UK: Royal Shakespeare Company; 2025 Lunt-Fontanne Fellow); **Joe Delafield** as Ralph Paton (Westport Country Playhouse: “A Sherlock Carol,” “The 39 Steps,” “School for Husbands,” Script in Hand playreadings; Broadway: “Tartuffe”; Off-Broadway: “Fashions for Men,” “Outward Bound,” “The Breadwinner”; TV: “The Sopranos”; BA Columbia University, MFA NYU’s Graduate Acting Program); **Allen Gilmore** as Inspector Raglan (Westport Country Playhouse: Script in Hand playreadings of “The Scream,” The Murder of Roger Ackroyd”; Other theatre: “Prince Faggot,” “Legacy of Light,” “Malvolio,” “Twelfth Night”; 3Arts Prize recipient; Lunt-Fontanne Fellow; Congo Square Theater Company member; US Army Infantry veteran).

Erin Noel Grennan as Caroline Sheppard (Westport Country Playhouse: “Theatre People” – Connecticut Critics Circle Award, Script in Hand playreadings; Regional: “The Angel Next Door,” “The Outsider” – New

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Jersey Arts Award, “Reckless,” “Incident at Our Lady of Perpetual Help”; eight seasons with Peninsula Players, three seasons with Gaiety Theatre, Ireland); **Richard Ruiz Henry** as Major Hector Blunt (Westport Country Playhouse’s “Room Service,” several Script in Hand playreadings; Off-Broadway’s “Two Gentlemen of Verona,” “Drift,” “The Streets of New York,” “Fiorello”; Regional: “Ragtime,” “Come from Away,” “Oliver”; TV: “The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel,” “Younger”); **Tom Hewitt** as Parker (Broadway: 13 shows, including “Hadestown,” “Chicago,” “The Lion King,” “Jesus Christ Superstar,” and “The Rocky Horror Show,” for which he earned Tony and Drama Desk nominations; Off-Broadway: “Another Medea,” “Treasure Island”; Regional: “The Sting,” “Private Lives”); **John Rapson** as Dr. James Sheppard (Westport Country Playhouse: “They Made It a Musical,” three Script in Hand playreadings, and his one-man show “The Hollow”; Broadway: “Sweeney Todd,” “Ragtime,” “Les Misérables; Off-Broadway: “The Play That Goes Wrong,” “Wonderful Town”; first national tour of “A Gentleman’s Guide to Love & Murder”; University of Michigan).

Nicole Shalhoub as Helen Russell (Westport Country Playhouse: Script in Hand playreading “The Pancake Club”; Broadway: “China Doll”; Off-Broadway: The Play Co., Lincoln Center, The Mint, St. Ann’s Warehouse; Regional: Yale Rep, Hartford Stage; TV/Film: “FBI,” “Goosebumps,” “Tulsa King,” “Sex and the City 2”; Instagram @nicshal); **Mark Silence** as Roger Ackroyd (Westport Country Playhouse: “The Importance of Being Earnest,” fight director and choreographer for “Dinner with Friends,” “Sing for Your Shakespeare,” “Lips Together, Teeth Apart,” “Happy Days”; adjunct professor at The University of Hartford and The Norwalk Conservatory of the Arts); **Katy Tang** as Ursula Bourne (Westport Country Playhouse: “The Importance of Being Earnest”; Regional: “A Gentleman’s Guide to Love & Murder,” “Pippin,” “Sweeney Todd,” “She Loves Me,” “Candide,” “A Little Night Music,” “Spring Awakening”; International: “Le Nozze di Figaro”; Training: UCLA, École Normale de Musique, Paris); and **Karen Ziemba** as Gertrude Ackroyd (Westport Country Playhouse: “My Fair Lady,” “The World Goes ‘Round,” several playreadings and galas; Tony, Drama Desk, and Outer Critics Circle awards for “Contact” at Lincoln Center Theater; three Tony nominations, Outer Critics Circle, Drama Desk, and Chicago’s Jeff awards; Select theatre: “Master Class,” “Curtains,” “Steel Pier,” “And The World Goes ‘Round,” “Crazy for You,” “Chicago,” “110 In The Shade”; TV: The Kennedy Center Honors, PBS’ “Great Performances”).

Director and the play’s adaptor **Mark Shanahan** directed “The 39 Steps,” as well as “Theatre People,” during the Playhouse’s 2024-25 season. For three consecutive seasons, he has directed his adaptation of the family holiday favorite, “A Sherlock Carol,” on the Playhouse stage. He is the author of “A Merry Little Christmas Carol,” “See Monsters of the Deep,” the Off-Broadway and regional hit comedy “The Dingdong,” as well as numerous radio plays as creator of the White Heron Ghost Light series, featuring Christopher Plummer, Judith Ivey, Rhonda Ross, and other notables. Shanahan has directed at stages around the country such as Alley Theatre, George Street Playhouse, Virginia Stage, Arkansas Rep, White Heron, Mile Square Theatre, Hudson Stage, Theatre Squared, Fulton Opera House, Weston Playhouse, Orlando Shakespeare Festival, Florida Rep, Penguin Rep, Merrimack Rep, The Cape Playhouse, and many more. As an actor, Shanahan has appeared on and Off-Broadway (“The 39 Steps,” “Tryst,” “The Shaugraun,” and others) and at many celebrated regional theatres. Shanahan has appeared on the Westport Country Playhouse stage in “Journey’s End” (2005), “David Copperfield,” directed by Joanne Woodward and Annie Keefe, (2005), “Sedition” (2007), “Tryst” (2008), and “Around the World in 80 Days” (2009), and numerous Script In Hand readings. He is also curator of the Playhouse’s Script in Hand playreading series, as well as the creator and curator of Westport Country Playhouse Radio Theater, in partnership with WSHU Public Radio. mark-shanahan.net.

Agatha Christie, author, was born in Torquay, England, in 1890. She is best known for her 66 detective novels and 14 short story collections, as well as the world’s longest-running play – “The Mousetrap.” Her books have sold over a billion copies in the English language and a billion in translation.

Creative team includes **Bruce Warren**, assistant director; **Charlie Corcoran**, set designer; **Jeni Schaefer**, costume designer; **Julie Duro**, lighting designer; **John Gromada**, sound designer; **Chloe Cobb**, props supervisor; **Seth Andrew Bridges**, fight choreographer; **Kevin Jinghong Zhu**, production stage manager; **Matthew Rohan**, assistant stage manager; and **Sarah Rachel Katz**, production assistant.

Performance schedule is Tuesday at 7 p.m., Wednesday at 2 and 7 p.m., Thursday at 7 p.m., Friday at 8 p.m., Saturday at 3 and 8 p.m., and Sunday at 3 p.m. (No Wed. or Sat. matinees during preview week).

Special series include Taste of Tuesdays (July 14), Pride Night (July 16), Opening Night (July 18), Sunday Symposium (July 19), Backstage Pass (July 22), Together at the Table (July 26), Open Captions (July 26), and Thursday TalkBack (July 30).

Single tickets start at \$50 with discounts for students, senior citizens, educators, military, first responders, Indigenous peoples, professional playwrights, and groups, as well as options for pay-what-you-will and library passes. Details at: www.westportplayhouse.org/visit/box-office/.

Running time is approximately two hours; one intermission. Appropriate for age 11 and up.

Production Supporters are Alison and Mark Smith. Production Patrons are Sunny and Jim Neff, and Cummings & Lockwood LLC. 2026 Programming and Season Sponsor is Barbara Streicker. 2026 Media sponsors are Moffly Media and WSHU Public Radio. 2026 Opening Night Sponsor is Hightower Signature Wealth. Westport Country Playhouse is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

For complete information, visit: <https://www.westportplayhouse.org/show/murder-of-roger-ackroyd/>

A complete schedule of Playhouse events is available at westportplayhouse.org. All play titles, artists, dates, and times are subject to change.

For Westport Country Playhouse information and tickets, visit westportplayhouse.org or call the box office at (203) 227-4177, toll-free at 1-888-927-7529. Stay connected to the Playhouse on Facebook (Westport Country Playhouse), Instagram (wcplayhouse), and YouTube (WestportPlayhouse). Westport Country Playhouse is located at 25 Powers Court, off Route 1, Westport.

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