



Chiasso, Cinema EXCELSIOR

18.15

Friday, 15<sup>th</sup> February 2019**MURDER ON THE ORIENT EXPRESS****2017**

114 minutes

Directed by **Kenneth Branagh**

Starring: Kenneth Branagh, Johnny Depp, Penelope Cruz, Michelle Pfeiffer

In 1934, the famous Belgian detective Hercule Poirot after, solving a theft at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, wants to rest in Istanbul, but he must return to London for another case travelling on the Orient Express train. Unscrupulous businessman Edward Ratchett offers to hire Poirot as his bodyguard during the three-day journey, having received threatening letters from an unknown party, but Poirot refuses. That night, Poirot hears strange noises coming from Ratchett's compartment, and later sees someone in a red kimono running down the hallway. An avalanche derails the train's engine, stranding the passengers. The next morning, Poirot discovers Ratchett was murdered during the night after having been stabbed a dozen times. Poirot investigates the other passengers as repairs begin. Evidence indicates that Ratchett was murdered by one person, and Caroline Hubbard, a fellow passenger, claims that a man had been in her compartment during the night. Poirot discovers a partially burned note connecting Ratchett to the kidnapping of Daisy Armstrong, a child who was kidnapped from her bedroom and held for ransom. Although the family paid the ransom, Daisy was murdered nonetheless. Ratchett's true identity is revealed: he was John Cassetti, Daisy's kidnapper and murderer. The shock of her death caused her mother Sonia to die after giving premature birth to a stillborn baby; her father, Colonel John Armstrong, then committed suicide. The family's nursemaid Susanne was wrongly suspected of complicity, leading to her being arrested and subsequent suicide in police custody, only to be found innocent afterward.

More evidence is found, including a blood stained handkerchief, and, in Mrs. Hubbard's compartment, the button of a conductor's uniform. The uniform is later found, as is the red kimono — in Poirot's own suitcase. Hubbard is suddenly stabbed in the back; she survives but cannot identify who did it. Poirot discovers many of the passengers have direct connections to the Armstrong family and uncovers their hidden pasts. While interviewing governess Mary Debenham, Poirot is shot in the shoulder by Doctor John Arbuthnot, who claims responsibility for the murder, but Bouc stops him from killing Poirot. Poirot realizes that Arbuthnot — a medical doctor and former army sniper — never meant to kill him.

Poirot confronts the suspects outside the train, offering two theories of how Cassetti died. The first is simple but does not meet all of the facts. The second is more complex! .....

### Critics' comments

The whole idea of remaking a murder mystery, especially one of the most popular murder mysteries ever made, is inherently fraught with peril. After all, a lot of people in the audience already know "whodunit", either because they've read it, seen it, or heard about it through good old-fashioned cultural osmosis. (*William Bibbiani – November 9, 2017*)

So it was exceptionally smart to get Kenneth Branagh to remake Murder on the Orient Express. The director of *Henry V*, *Much Ado About Nothing* and *Hamlet* has built his whole reputation on re-staging classic tales that had already been re-staged thousands of times. He knows that the trick to making another Murder on the Orient Express isn't to keep us guessing. Agatha Christie's impeccable story does all of that heavy lifting for him. The trick is to film the hell out of an ensemble cast of incredible actors, each of them putting their own spin on a timeless classic, and to have a grand old time doing it. (*www.IGM.com - November 10. 2017*)