

Auditions

IS HE DEAD?



by Mark Twain

Revised and updated by David Ives 2018

Who: Actors and Backstage Crew needed!
ANY ONE MAY AUDITION

What: In this French farce, Jean-Francois Millet, a young painter of genius, is in love with Marie Leroux but in debt to a villainous picture-dealer, Bastien Andre.

Andre forecloses on Millet, threatening debtor's prison unless Marie marries him. Millet realizes that the only way he can pay his debts and keep Marie from marrying Andre is to die, as it is only dead painters who achieve fame and fortune. Millet fakes his death and prospers, all while passing himself off as his own sister, the Widow Tillou. Now a rich "widow," he must find a way to get out of a dress, return to life, and marry Marie.

Where/When: Auditions are Sunday, August 25 2-4 and Monday, August 26 3:30-4:30

CALL BACKS if needed for specific roles will be on Tuesday August 27 3:30-5
The first cast meeting is Wednesday August 28 from 3:30-5:30

Rehearsals will be weekdays from 3:30-5:15 pm as well as some Sunday afternoons. Not all cast members will be called to all rehearsals. There will be a few Saturday set construction days that cast is expected to attend and help with. Tech week will run until 8pm

Performances Oct 24-27

The rehearsal calendar will be set following auditions.

Why: The show is hilarious. Seriously. Well, actually it's not serious at all. But it will make you laugh

The Characters

The cast is slightly flexible. Some characters COULD double (which is funnier) or be cast individually.)

Actors need to be comfortable changing their voices to play new characters, willing to do extreme physical comedy (tumbles, some stage combat, spit takes).

Jean-Francois Millet: The renowned realist painter. The play takes place before he has attained his fame, and facing financial ruin he fakes his death and disguises himself as his fictional twin sister, the widow Tillou. Wears a dress in disguise. Has kissing scene with his fiancée. Heels and lipstick will be required.

Agamemnon Buckner ("Chicago"): Millet's American friend, quick witted and clever, but rough around the edges. He delivers a lot of one-liners, like an old-time comedian. Hatches the plot to fake Millet's death and forms the secondary love interest with Cecile. Kissing scene with fiancée

Hans von Bismarck ("Dutchy"): A German ethnic stereotype with an over-the-top accent. The second of Millet's inner circle of friends. More down-to-earth, he tends to play the straight man of the trio.

Phelim O'Shaughnessy: An Irish ethnic stereotype with an over-the-top accent. The third of Millet's friends. Hot-tempered, he often plays the fool. If he were a Marx brother he'd be Chico, only Irish.

Papa Leroux: A down-on-his-luck widower, and father of both Marie and Cecile. Like Millet, he faces foreclosure. After "the widow Tillou" saves his family... yup, he falls in love with "her".

Marie Leroux: Millet's love interest. She is heartbroken when her true love "dies". Pretty, sweet, not the sharpest tack in the box. (Come on, she doesn't recognize her own fiancé in a wig?) Kissing scene with fiancée

Cecile Leroux: At once prudish and incessantly jealous of her love interest, Chicago, Cecile gets in on the cross-dressing act by disguising herself as a policeman to spy on him. Has a BIG temper. Kissing scene with fiance

Bastien Andre: The play's villain. Millet's and Leroux's creditor, he attempts to blackmail first Marie, and then the widow into marrying him. Needs to overact

Madames Bathilde and Caron: Millet's neighbors. Hilarious old ladies. They adore the artist, but are powerless to help him. They always appear together, often repeating the other's line or finishing the other's sentence. The actresses in these roles may also play the (non-speaking) Sultan of Turkey and Emperor of Russia.

The following parts could be played by a single male or female actor (this is preferred):

Basil Thorpe: An English ethnic stereotype with an over-the-top accent. A potential art buyer who only wants paintings by deceased artists.

Claude Riviere: A French ethnic stereotype with an over-the-top accent. A reporter for "Le Figaro".

Charlie: The widow Tillou's servingman.

The King of France: Unbelievably, they still had these after the revolution.

TECHNICAL CREW

Stage Manager: runs the show. MUST HAVE EXPERIENCE IN AT LEAST TWO SHOWS.

Set Crew: build/paint the scenery. This show has very limited scenery

Props Crew: Build/make/control props. This show has a LOT of props.

Makeup/Costume/Hair Crew: Coordinate costumes and makeup. This show has a lot of costume pieces and bad wigs

Light and Sound: coordinate and run lights and sound during the show. This show is mostly music and a spotlight

Publicity/House Crew; Design posters, tickets, programs, lobby display. Coordinate program ads. Design a lobby display. Mail press releases. Usher.

ALL participants will be asked to pay a \$100 fee to offset the costs of costumes, video recording and a cast T shirt or hoodie. If this is a hardship, talk to Dr. Erwin privately.

PLEASE NOTE: We are no longer able to provide food during the late rehearsals

HOW: Here's what you do:

1. Print an audition packet and fill it out COMPLETELY. Return the audition/crew sheet to Dr. Erwin in his office off of the commons AS soon as possible. You will be given a number. DO NOT FORGET IT! If you need to bring it the day of auditions, that's fine. You only need to come ONE day for auditions.
2. Auditions are blind. That means Dr. Erwin's back is to you. On the day you choose to audition, you will be asked to come in and say your number.
 - Choose which monologue or scene you want to do. If you are doing a duet scene, make sure you have a partner. Read it expressively. You do NOT have to have it memorized.
 - You will be evaluated on volume, expression, and ability to take direction. You will probably not read the entire scene. You may be asked to read a different scene or character.
 - You will be asked to do a short improvisation in a group for this show. Have FUN with it.
3. If you are called back, you will be asked to read specific scenes from the show when you arrive. Call backs are tough and will run late. However, it is worth it. **There may not BE call backs.**
4. If you are interested in Technical Crew ONLY there will be a short interview about why you want to work on the crew. These will be at the end of auditions. ALL CREW

MEMBERS MUST INTERVIEW WITH DR. ERWIN. Crew must be at all tech rehearsals and performances.

If you have any questions--ask Dr. Erwin at derwin@priory.org

Remember --relax and try your best! EVERYONE makes a mistake in an audition!

List ANY conflicts you have!

BREAK A LEG!!!

Audition Scenes:

SCENE 1 CHICAGO& CECILE

CHICAGO. You always act like that when I kiss you in public.

CECILE. I *don't*! I mean *you don't*!

CHICAGO. Don't what?

CECILE. Kiss me in public.

CHICAGO. Well, is *that* any of my fault?

CECILE. I wasn't saying it was anybody's fault. It's a crime, that's what it is!

CHICAGO. Dutchy, if I was a woman I bet I'd understand that.

CECILE. If you were a man, you wouldn't have to.

SCENE 2 MILLET (Disguised as the Widow)

WIDOW. *I'm* bigger than I ever dreamed. Do you know how much equipment I'm wearing under here? Enough steel to make a cannon and more whalebone than the beach at Nantucket. Did you ever try painting in a thingamajig?

(Shifts his corset.)

It's tighter than Sunday in this thing. I keep feeling like there's two of me inside here, and I'm not used to company inside my clothes. And I'm a widow. Oughtn't I to be in black?

SCENE 3 REPORTER/CHICAGO

(FRENCH REPORTER enters.)

REPORTER. *(French accent:)* Excusez-moi, messieurs.

CHICAGO. No, no, excusez-moi.

REPORTER. No, monsieur, I beg your pardon, but excusez-MOI.

CHICAGO. I'll see your moi and raise you toi.

REPORTER. I am Claude Rivière, journaliste from "Le Figaro." And you are?

CHICAGO. We are pupils of the great Jean-François Millet.

REPORTER. Could you give me a few details about this deplorable *affaire*? This *désastre*, this *tragédie*, this *catastrophe*? Ah, how it makes me smell my mortality!

SCENE 4: MMES BATHILDE and CARON

MADAME BATHILDE. Yes, and his face, too!

MADAME CARON. Why, you're almost the very image!

MADAME BATHILDE. Yours isn't quite so broad.

MADAME CARON. But wonderfully like!

MADAME BATHILDE. The hands, too, are almost exactly the same.

MADAME CARON. His were a trifle smaller.

MADAME BATHILDE. And he had that pink scar.

MADAME CARON. That pink scar just above his wrist. It was right here —

SCENE 5: MILLET (Disguised as The Widow) **THIS IS THE ONLY TRUE MONOLOGUE IN THE SHOW SO ANYONE MAY PERFORM IT FOR AUDITIONS**

Here are the fifteen thousand. I believe my brother also owed you twenty-five hundred francs. Here they are. I don't want a receipt. I want nothing that you have touched. I wish to say a word to you, then you may go. I ought to put it in strong language, but I am a lady and that privilege is denied me.

(Without thinking, the WIDOW takes one of the cigars and expertly rolls it in his fingers, sniffs it, and cuts off the end during the following.)

From these friends I know your history. You are a man without pity — a man whose lust for money has withered every kindly impulse you were born with. You found my brother and his poor artist-friends struggling honestly and manfully for their bread against hunger and misery and you have traded upon their poverty. You have bought their pictures for francs and sold them for Louis d'or, you have hidden their talents from the world, you have beguiled them into debt and robbed them in a hundred mean and pitiful ways. And yonder sits the blameless old man whom your deceptions, your inhuman-

ities, your pitiless brutalities have brought to the edge of ruin.

(Sticks the cigar in CHICAGO's mouth.)

I am a lady, and I know the limitations that are upon me, but this I will say – that from head to heel, from heart to marrow, from pallet to midriff you are a mean, cowardly, contemptible, base-begotten damned scoundrel! *Oh!*

(Kicks the couch, then sits demurely.)

You have what you want, now leave!

SCENE 6 CECILE (in disguise as a detective) and Leroux IGNORE Widow line

CECILE / LEFAUX. *(French accent:)* Madame Tillou, I am Inspector Gerard LeFaux of the Paris Police.

LEROUX. Daisy!

WIDOW. *(Wrenching hand away from LEROUX:)* Louis, that's enough!

CECILE / LEFAUX. *(Aside to audience:)* Actually, it is I, Cecile Leroux, in disguise. I come here to discover the truth about this hussy and Agamemnon – and I find my father on his knees kissing her hand!

CECILE / LEFAUX. I have some questions for you, Madame.

LEROUX. How dare you, sir! This lady and I are in the midst of a private conversation.

SCENE 7 MILLET (in disguise as Widow) and Chicago

WIDOW. What's all the ruckus out there?

CHICAGO. That ruckus is you, old boy. Your casket being carried through the streets! The nobbiest funeral Paris has seen in 50 years, bar Napoleon. What a spectacle! The whole Champs Elysées swathed in black from eaves to pavement and packed with people clear to the Arch. Infantry, cavalry, artillery, the whole French army. Say, what are you doing in this jolly rig? Aren't you going to attend?

WIDOW. No, I'm not. The idea of man attending his own funeral. I never heard of such a thing.

CHICAGO. All right, but you're going to miss some fun. It's a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity!

WIDOW. Chicago, a policeman is here.

A play takes many hours of preparation, dedication and rehearsal. Your attendance at rehearsals is crucial to be sure that we are all making effective use of our time. With this in mind we have prepared this information for you and your parents to review. Both you and your parents will need to read and sign the last page of this document before you will be eligible to participate in a show. Please bring this signed document to the audition. **You must have it signed to be able to participate!**

Before committing to this production, here is a clear idea of what it involves. Generally speaking, the participant in the production must be able to...

- Spend one hour in auditions.
- Attend the call-back, if requested.
- Attend daily rehearsals as your role requires it (Monday through Friday and some Sundays). The actual times will vary within this depending on the role assigned, but you must have this time open for rehearsal. During the week before the production it will be essential for full cast rehearsals.
- Perform the show during the day if necessary.
- Perform the show in the evenings.
- Participate in strike.

Audition Sheet (turn this in). Number_____

Name

Form _____

Address

Home Phone

Emergency Phone:

Cell Phone

Email_____ parent's email_____

Are you planning on also playing a sport?

If yes, which one?

Role you are interested in_____

Any role you are **unwilling** to play_____

Technical Crew interest_____

List ANY performance experience: (include acting, dance, and music)

You will need to attend ALL rehearsals for scenes you are in. Please look at the schedule and **list any conflicts you are aware of.**

You will be required to maintain a B average or better in all classes at all times. IN addition, inappropriate conduct or a negative attitude WILL result in your immediate removal from the show. You are expected to be the best and the brightest. We are a team.

You may be asked to provide specific costume pieces in specific colors (including shoes), or your own stage makeup items for the performance.

I agree to the above conditions and the attached guidelines.

Signed _____

I have read the above and consent. I also consent to my child receiving text messages regarding rehearsal information. I agree to help provide snacks or part of a meal before the show

Parent/Guardian Signature _____

PARENT HELPERS NEEDED DESPERATELY!!!

Parents or other adult helpers are needed to:

*Help construct set/costumes

* Plan and host an end of show cast/crew strike party

***Plan dinners/lunches for technical and dress rehearsals (THIS CAN NO LONGER BE PROVIDED BY THE THEATRE DEPARTMENT)**

*Help with ironing costumes/ applying makeup/doing hair

*Take photos and decorate the lobby display *Help with publicity

*Help type programs

*Assorted last minute/" gofer" jobs

*Coordinate parent volunteers! *Help supervise move in/construction

If you can help in ANY way, please respond below or email Dr. Erwin at derwin@pior.org

Name:

Address:

Phone:

Alternate/. Work phone:

Best time to call:

I would be willing to help with:

