

CALLBACK INFORMATION

Dear Students,

Please read this information carefully to prepare for your callback. Make every effort to arrive early (Central Theatre) to check in. We will start promptly at 3:00 and aim to finish by 6:00. Feel free to bring homework or something to do while you wait. We'll release you as soon as we know you are no longer needed.

Callbacks are an opportunity for directors to try out different combinations of characters to find the best fit for the show or to see more from certain actors. Being called back does not guarantee a role, and not being called back does not mean you aren't being considered for a role. It is *wonderful* that we had such a huge turnout and that so many people made strong acting choices! The reality now is that all you can do is offer your work at callbacks so that we can see if it fits the direction we are headed with the show. Keep being kind to yourself and each other and be proud of your work.

Following are some notes to help you prepare. If you have any questions, feel free to reach out. Thank you for your efforts so far! Break a leg!

Mr. Hamen (E244 advisory-2nd period; PAC office 3rd period- 4th lunch)

GENERAL CALLBACK NOTES

- HAVE FUN at callbacks! Try something totally different—new choices stand out! Be open to taking direction!
- Things will move VERY quickly. It is OK to make mistakes when you've only seen a scene for a little amount of time (that's what rehearsals are for later). There's no need to apologize or ask to redo—directors get that it's stressful. Spend your stage time making strong choices instead of worrying about mistakes.
- *What's a strong choice?* Would an audience see/hear it 40 feet away? Would they remember it the next day? The next year? Can you speak/move in a creative way?

SMALL CHOICE



STRONG CHOICE



- Be clear and honest about your conflicts as there may be adjustments to the schedule or casting decisions based on individual actors' availability. *We honor conflicts and expect you not to add to them.*
- Understudies: We aim to cast understudy actors or swings if it works out for the overall needs of the show. Understudies/swings are also considered in terms of scheduling, ability, rehearsal time, etc. If you marked it, we're considering it. If you need to make adjustments, let us know.
- In exchange for auditioning, we expect you to accept decisions with maturity and grace, even if they don't work out like you wanted, so the show can move forward. Trust that the directors know the script and the direction the show is headed so they alone can make the best decisions. How you handle disappointments says a lot about the strength of your character.
- Director's Notes/Character List: centervillehstheatre.com/cast

CALLBACK MATERIALS

Hard copies of this handout and the scenes we will be using will be available with Mr. Hamen tomorrow. Stop by to pick up copies.

Mr. Hamen (E244 advisory-2nd period; PAC office 3rd period- 4th lunch)

CALLBACK NOTES FOR THIS SHOW

- *Arsenic and Old Lace* is a classic comedy, and that means the characters are often two-dimensional. Go big with the comedy and have fun with watching all of these characters fall apart. Nothing is subtle here! The stakes are high in every moment.
- Keep the pace moving briskly. These scenes play best when there isn't any time to think.
- The cast of this show is likely to be between 12-14 actors with a matching understudy cast. Several roles in this show only appear for brief scenes (like even just a few pages). This is a big contrast to the ensemble-heavy shows CHS Theatre produced last season where cast members spent a lot of time onstage. Please keep in mind that casting decisions are always based on the needs of the show and the best fit for each role. I hope your interest in being a part of this process is not based on how much time you would spend on stage, but if that's something that could impact your participation, please let me know.
- Did I mention comedy? Have fun! When you're having fun, the audience is too.

ABBY, MARTHA

NOTES FROM MR. HAMEN: Abby and Martha are excited about their work. Keep the pace moving.

MARTHA It was right after you moved to New York.

ABBY --And it didn't seem right for that loveley room to be going to waste when there were so many people who needed it.

MARTHA --He was such a lovely old man.

ABBY All his kin were dead and it left him so forlorn and unhappy

MARTHA --We felt so sorry for him.

ABBY And then when his heart attack came--and he sat dead in that chair looking so peaceful--remember, Martha--we made up our minds then and there that if we could help other lonely old people to the same peace--we would!

MARTHA Why it was rather like old times. Your grandfather always used to have a cadaveror two around in the house. You see, Teddy had been digging in Panama and he thought Mr. Midgely was a Yellow Fever victim.

ABBY That meant he had to be buried immediately.

MARTHA So we all took him down to Panama and put him in the lock. Now that's why we told you not to worry about it because we know exactly what's to be done.

ABBY Of course, we realized we couldn't depend on that happening again. So--

MARTHA You remember those jars of poison that have been up on the shelves in Grandfather's laboratory all these years--?

ABBY You know your Aunt Martha's knack for mixing things. You've eaten enough of her chilli.

MARTHA Well, dear, for a gallon of elderberry wine, I take one teaspoonful of arsenic, then add a half teasponful of strychnine*, and then just a pinch of cyanide.

strychnine=
STRICK-nine
cyanide=
SIGH-uh-nide

ABBY One of our gentlemen found time to say "How delicious!"

MARTHA Well I have to get things started in the kitchen.

ABBY I wish you could stay for dinner.

MARTHA I'm trying out a new recipe.

MORTIMER, ELAINE

NOTES FROM MR. HAMEN: Mortimer just discovered his aunts' secret and is frantically trying to figure out what to do. Elaine is immediately trapped in the excited energy.

MORTIMER	<i>(answering the door)</i> Oh, it's you.
ELAINE	Don't be angry, darling! Father could see that I was excited--so I told him about us and that made it hard for me to get away.
MORTIMER	You run along home, Elaine, and I'll call you up tomorrow.
ELAINE	Tomorrow!
MORTIMER	<i>(irritated)</i> You know I always call you up every day or two.
ELAINE	But we're going to the theatre tonight.
MORTIMER	No--no we're not!
ELAINE	Well, why not?
MORTIMER	Elaine, something's come up. Now you run along home.
ELAINE	But I've got to know what's happened. Certainly you can tell me.
MORTIMER	No, dear, I can't.
ELAINE	But if we're going to be married--
MORTIMER	Married?
ELAINE	Have you forgotten that not fifteen minutes ago you proposed to me?
MORTIMER	<i>(vaguely)</i> I did? Oh--yes! Well, as far as I know that's sstill on. Now you run along home, Elaine, I've got something to do. <i>(Phone rings. He goes to phone, dragging Elaine with him.)</i> Hello! Oh, hello, Al. Hold on a minute, will you? All right, it's important! <i>(To Elaine)</i> Look, Elaine, you're a sweet girl and I love you. But I have something on my mind now and I want you to go home and wait until I call you.
ELAINE	<i>(exits, annoyed)</i>

JONATHAN, EINSTEIN

NOTES FROM MR. HAMEN: For the first time, we see how truly evil Jonathan is. He is excited by his new power. Einstein, the villain's sidekick, is nearly always confused, afraid, and on edge. If you have a German accent for Einstein, try it, but the character is more important at this point.

JONATHAN	Grandfather's laboratory! And just as it was. Doctor, a perfect operating room.
EINSTEIN	Too bad we can't use it.
JONATHAN	After you've finished with me--Why, we could make a fortune here. The laboratory--that large ward in the attic--ten beds, Doctor--and Brooklyn is crying for your talents. You don't know this town, Doctor. Practically everybody in Brooklyn needs a new face.
EINSTEIN	But so many of the old faces are locked up.
JONATHAN	A very small percentage--and the boys in Brooklyn are famous for paying generously to stay out of jail.
EINSTEIN	Take it easy, Chonny. Your aunts--they don't want us here.
JONATHAN	We're here for dinner, aren't we?
EINSTEIN	Yah--but after dinner?
JONATHAN	Leave it to me, Doctor. I'll handle it. Why, this house'll be our headquarters for years.
EINSTEIN	Oh, that would be beautiful, Chonny? This nice quiet house. Those aunts of yours--what sweet ladies. I love them already. I get the bags, yah?
JONATHAN	Doctor! We must wait until we're invited.
EINSTEIN	But you chust said that--
JONATHAN	We'll be invited.
EINSTEIN	And if they say no--?
JONATHAN	Doctor--two helpless old women--? It's like a beautiful dream come true.

TEDDY, ABBY, MARTHA

NOTES FROM MR. HAMEN: Abby and Martha are happy to play along with Teddy's fantasy because it makes him happy. Teddy is innocent and kind, so the layer of his personality that is "President Roosevelt" is really just an act. This conversation is fun for everyone.

TEDDY	General Goethals* was very pleased. He says the Canal is just the right size.	<i>Goethals= GO-thulz</i>
ABBY	Teddy! Teddy, three's been another Yellow Fever victim.	
TEDDY	Dear me--this will be a shock to the General	
MARTHA	Then we mustn't tell him about it.	
TEDDY	But it's his department.	
ABBY	No, we mustn't tell him, Teddy. It would just spoil his visit.	
TEDDY	I'm sorry, Aunt Abby. It's out of my hands--he'll have to be told. Army regulations, you know.	
ABBY	No, Teddy, we must keep it a secret.	
MARTHA	Yes!	
TEDDY	<i>(he loves them)</i> A state secret?	
ABBY	Yes, a state secret.	
MARTHA	Promise?	
TEDDY	<i>(what a silly request)</i> You have the word of the President of the United States. Cross my heart and hope to die. Now let's see--how are we going to keep it a secret?	
ABBY	Well, Teddy, you go back down in the cellar and when I turn out the lights--when it's all dark--you come up and take the poor man down to the Canal. Now go along, Teddy.	
MARTHA	And we'll come down later and hold services	
TEDDY	You may announce the President will say a few words. <i>(He starts, then turns back.)</i> Where is the poor devil?	
MARTHA	He's in the window seat.	
TEDDY	It seems to be spreading. We've never had a Yellow Fever victim there before. <i>(He exits.)</i>	
MARTHA	Abby, I've never seen Mr. Hoskins.	
ABBY	Oh, my goodness, that's right--you were out. Well you just come right over and see him now. <i>(They go to window seat. Abby opens the lid.)</i> He's really very nice looking--for a Methodist.	

OFFICER O'HARA, MORTIMER

NOTES FROM MR. HAMEN: At this point in the story, Mortimer is desperate to cover up what's happening, and Officer O'Hara is now getting in the way. Mortimer is distracted and anxious. O'Hara is giddy with excitement about this new opportunity. Go big with O'Hara's bold personality and Mortimer's annoyance.

O'HARA	Say, Mr. Brewster--we're in the same line of business.
MORTIMER	We are?
O'HARA	Yeah. I'm a playwright. oh, this being on the police force is just temporary.
MORTIMER	How long have you been on the force?
O'HARA	Twelve years. I'm collecting material for a play.
MORTIMER	I'll bet it's a hit.
O'HARA	Well, it ought to be. With all the drama I see being a cop. Mr. Brewster--you have no idea what goes on in Brooklyn.
MORTIMER	I think I have.
O'HARA	Say, what time you got?
MORTIMER	Ten after one.
O'HARA	Gee, I gotta clock in. <i>(He starts for the door.)</i>
MORTIMER	Wait a minute, O'Hara. On that play of yours--I may be able to help you.
O'HARA	<i>(Ecstatic.)</i> You would! Say, it was fate my walking in here tonight. Look--I'll tell you the plot!
MORTIMER	But, O'Hara--
O'HARA	No, sir, Mr. Brewster. I ain't leaving this house till I tell you the plot. <i>(a dramatic performance begins)</i> It opens in my mother's dressing room, where I was born--only I ain't born yet. Well, she's sitting there putting on her make-up--when all of a sudden through the door--a man with a black moustache walks in--turns to my mother and says--"Miss Latour, will you marry me?" He doesn't know--she's pregnant!

LIEUTENANT ROONEY, MORTIMER

NOTES FROM MR. HAMEN: Even though everything is falling apart, Rooney is in control. Mortimer is trying to get the upper hand, but Rooney is a strong, intense authority figure.

ROONEY Here I am wasting my morning when I've got serious work to do. You know, there are still *murders* to be solved in Brooklyn!

MORTIMER Captain, I'm Mortimer Brewster.

ROONEY Are you sure?

MORTIMER I'd like to talk to you about my borther Teddy--the onle who blew the bugle.

ROONEY Mr. Brewster, we ain't going to talk about that--he's got to be put away!

MORTIMER I agree with you. In fact, it's all arranged for. I had these commitment papers signed by Dr. Gilchrist*, our family physician.

Gilchrist= GILL-krist

ROONEY Where's he going?

MORTIMER Happy Dale. But I want you to know that everything that's happened around here Teddy's responsible for. Now, those thirteen bodies in the cellar--

ROONEY Yeah--yeah--those thirteen bodies in the cellar! it ain't enough that the neighbors are all afraid of him, and his disturbing the peace with that bugle--but can you imagine what would happen if that cock-eyed story about thirteen bodies in the cellar got around? And now he's starting a Yellow Fever scare. Cute, ain't it?

MORTIMER Thirteen bodies. Do you think anybody would believe that story?

ROONEY Well, you can't tell. Some people are just dumb enough.