

Comic Potential – Audition pack

“Comic Potential” is a comedy play by Alan Ayckbourn, written and first performed in 1998, but set in the foreseeable future in a world in which television actors have been replaced by androids (called “actoids”). It is a satire on the television industry, with interesting things to say about getting TV projects off the ground and getting them approved, as well as the pursuit of ratings at all costs! It also creates nostalgia for the golden age of comedy, with musings about the comic stylings of Buster Keaton and Oliver Hardy. It has its own share of slapstick, outrageous (and slightly naughty) farce, and compromising situations. It has excitement, as characters face real danger. And at heart it is a very tender, heart rending love story, as naïve young writer Adam Trainsmith falls hopelessly in love with young nurse actoid JCF31-333, renamed Jacie Tripplethree. As she sees the potential to make her a star of her own series, she develops self-awareness, and, eventually, a burgeoning love of her own.

I’m looking for a talented team of actors who can bring this excellent play to life. Although there are 20 characters in the play, I shall ideally be looking for 10 actors – five to play single roles, and the others to double and triple the remaining varied roles of the characters encountered by Jacie and Adam on their relationship journey – a challenge for all involved as each actor will be required to demonstrate their talents for versatility, in the same manner as the “chorus” cast members of “The 39 Steps”.

There are also a number of scene changes in the second half, as the action shifts from hotel lobby, to dress shop, to restaurant, to (two separate) hotel bedrooms, and I’ll be looking for all actors to be involved, like androids themselves, in the scene changes, replacing scene backings, tables, chairs and beds, as part of a “well oiled machine operation”. ☺

If you are still interested, I can confirm that the following:

Performance Dates:

Tuesday 21 – Saturday 25 May 2019

Six performances inclusive of Saturday matinee at the Chapter Arts Centre theatre. Performances every evening from 7.30pm (2:30pm matinee). Rehearsals will commence as from early March 2019. Rehearsal days: Tuesday and Thursday evenings (7:30 to 10:00 pm), and Sunday afternoons (2:30 to 6:00 pm).

Characters

Adam Trainsmith – casting age 20-35 (male) – Young and naïve, Adam has only found his way into the TV studio through his family connections. He is wide eyed, innocent, and enthralled by the TV studio atmosphere and opportunities to become a part of it all. He is a film geek, and is never happier than when he is describing the antics of his silent comedy heroes, and is a huge fan of one time comedy movie director Chandler Tate (see below). His fascination with actoid Jacie Tripplethree leads to overwhelming enthusiasm to make her a star... and then to burgeoning love. He is nervous, shy but impulsive, anxious to do the right thing, and goes on a roller coaster of an emotional journey in this play. Incorporating wild enthusiasm, apprehension, tenderness, and moments of deep sorrow. And some lengthy monologues about the nature of comedy, and his plans for Jacie's stardom.

Chandler Tate – casting age 40-60 (male) – Embittered ex-director of movie comedies, now reduced to working on a hospital soap opera, Chandler – who prefers the name Chance – is caustic, sarcastic, world weary and occasionally belligerent, generating occasional hostility and outrage from his colleagues. He is quick to anger, but also quick to defuse, he at first resents Adam's presence, but that soon becomes grudging tolerance... and eventually he involves himself in Adam's project, despite the hostility of upper management. Grizzled but with a heart of gold! Some great caustic one-liners and putdowns, and again with some major speeches, as he discusses, and occasionally physically demonstrates, the art of comic timing.

Jacie Tripplethree – casting age 20-30 (female) – Irresistible young nurse "actoid", Jacie is an eternal 19-year-old, wide eyed and innocent, but like a magpie, learning and copying human behaviour with amazing speed, and drawing upon a back catalogue of all her previous acting characters. A part that requires excellent comic timing and versatility, as Jacie expounds her extensive dialogue in an array of accents and styles. Some delivery subtle and exquisitely tender, and some deliberately "huge". She needs to be able to switch between these extravagant accents and emotions, and turn them on and off, in a snap second. Movement very slightly "mechanical" but with a poise and grace, also dancing ability. Think a young female version of Data from "Star Trek: The Next Generation", as she begins a quest to become more "human". Jacie goes on a huge emotional journey in this play, innocence, enthusiasm, frustration, horror and deep sorrow, especially during the poignant final scenes. Great one-liners and some lengthy and difficult speeches, full of non-sequiturs and outlandish stories, so a real, but rewarding, acting challenge.

Prim Spring – casting age 25-40 (female) – dependable and efficient TV programmer, Prim is aware of her rights and demands respect, which she doesn't always get from Chandler, leading to friction and occasional threats of actions for harassment. She mans the tech board and is in frequent conflict with Chandler, and is able to offer sage advice and caution to Adam as he steps into this new world. Fortright and with some lengthier speeches of her own, Prim gets pulled into the schemes of Chandler and Adam, even dressing up and masquerading as Jacie at one point. Sections of fast paced dialogue as she and Chandler talk over and interrupt each other. In a relationship with Trudi Floote (see below).

Carla Pepperbloom – casting age 35-55 (female) – the tyrannical department head, Carla is the villain of the piece, sexually voracious (with Adam in her sights), elegant but intensely jealous and vindictive, dictatorial and demanding. She rides roughshod over others' opinions, and takes an intense dislike to Jacie, demanding that her memories be "wiped" and returned to factory settings. She has a major monologue about the issues involved about getting a TV production idea off the ground. Moments of true "villainy" stopping just short of pantomime. And whoever takes on this role must be prepared to endure the indignity of a pie in the face every night!

Trudi Floote – Girl in Dress Shop – casting age 20-30 (female) – two parts to be played possibly (though not essentially) by the same actor. Trudi is the harassed TV studio technician and runner (also camera operator) and partner of Prim Spring. She bears the brunt of Chandler's anger and frustration, but is nonetheless efficient and anxious to get things right, less combative than Prim but able to answer back wittily when required. A physical role, as Trudi rushes around trying to keep things running – also proficiency with camera equipment would be an advantage, as it is possible that she will be recording the "soap" scenes for display on screen. Doubling role, **Girl in Dress Shop**, is a nice change of pace, a spoilt, demanding and high-maintenance trophy girlfriend of a wealthy male partner, never satisfied and expressing amazement at Jacie's antics both in the boutique and the restaurant – and with a killer one-liner to finish the scene.

Doctor – Farmer – Man in dress shop – Turkey – casting age 30-50 (male) – four parts played ideally by the same actor. A versatility challenge, as these roles cannot be more different. The **Doctor** is actually soap opera actoid LM05623, opening the play by delivering his bad news in very "soap opera" style, before a glitch causes him to mix up his vowels... and sets in motion the whole sequence of subsequent events. It's actoid LM05623 who also plays the concerned **Farmer**, supporting actor in Adam's dream project for Jacie – who rescues Jacie from the snow, and alongside his "wife" and is concerned for her "recovery". Suggest strong regional accent for this role. Like Jacie, this actor needs to be able to "switch on and off" instantaneously on the instructions of the "human" characters. In the second half of the play, **Man in dress shop** is the rich but exasperated customer waiting for his high-maintenance girlfriend... and then **Turkey** is the seedy, aggressive and violent but ultimately cowardly pimp who threatens Jacie and Adam in their hotel room, before being vanquished by the immensely strong and resourceful Jacie.

Mother – Farmer's Wife – Dress Shop assistant – Prostitute – casting age 35-50 (female) – again four roles to be played ideally by the same actor. Mother is actually soap opera actoid CW77502, who sits weeping while the Doctor gives the tragic news about her son. Great comic opportunities offered by the fact that Chandler orders her emotional levels switched up and up on the central console, until she is drowning out everyone else with her hysterical wailing. CW77502 also goes on to be the concerned **Farmer's wife**, part of Adam's new project for Jacie, helping to rescue the abandoned Jacie from the cold. As with the farmer, a regional accent required for this scene. Like Jacie, this actor needs to be able to "switch on and off" instantaneously on the instructions of the "human" characters. In the second half of the play, the intensely snooty **Dress shop assistant** is amazed by Jacie's antics, and then later on the sleazy **Prostitute** threatens Jacie in her hotel room, thinking that Jacie is "muscling in" on her "patch".

Lester Trainsmith – Hotel Desk Clerk – Hotel waiter 1 – casting age 40-60 (male) – three roles ideally played by the same actor. Lester is Adam’s uncle, the svengali head of the studio, wheelchair bound and wheeled about by his obsequious assistant Marmion, who does all his speaking for him. We believe for most of the play that Lester is mute, but he does reveal eventually he is capable of talking for himself, just choosing not to – and at this point demonstrates a steel and purpose, a man used to getting what he wants. The **Hotel guest clerk** checks in Adam and Jacie following their beleaguered escape from the studio, and **Hotel waiter 1** is efficient in preparing table and drinks in the restaurant, revealing a nasty and bigoted side when he realises that Jacie is not human.

Son – Marmion – Hotel waiter 2 – Technician – casting age 20-35 (male) – four roles played ideally by the same actor. The **Son** is actually soap opera actoid LJM 54823, taking part in the initial “play within a play”, reacting with true “soap opera style” stiff upper lip dignity to the bad news of his foot having to be amputated. Like the other “actoids”, able to turn “on and off” at the direction of the “human” actors. **Marmion** is the aged Lester’s assistant and translator, speaking for Lester by means of a futuristic earpiece – fastidious, and slightly camp, capable though of being flustered as others confuse whether he is speaking for himself or for Lester. Possible American accent? **Hotel waiter 2** takes part in the smooth arrangement of tables and drinks in the restaurant scene, and **Technician** leads Jacie to her apparent destruction in the very poignant end of the play.

Auditions

Before auditioning, please take a moment to consider the necessary level of commitment. Take careful note of the rehearsal period and be honest about your availability within it. Although the rehearsal process takes place over a number of weeks, consistent and punctual attendance is essential; a high level of unavailability and/or no-show will regrettably result in your being asked to leave the production.

Auditions will comprise small group sessions in 60 minute slots. They will be held in the Chapter Everyman club room, on:

Friday 18 January

Slot 1 6.30-7:30

Slot 2 7:45-8:45

Slot 3 9:00-10:00

Saturday 19 January

Slot 1 10-11.00

Slot 2 11.30-12:30

Slot 3 1:30-2.30

Slot 4 2:45-3:45

Slot 5 4:00-5:00

Monday 21 January

Slot 1 6.30-7:30

Slot 2 7:45-8:45

Slot 3 9:00-10:00

Any recalls will be held over the week following (on dates to be determined).

If you would like to audition but cannot attend on any of these days, please let me know as soon as possible. Please state which days / times of the above you are **unable** to make; as we need up to five auditionees in each slot, you may be asked to attend a particular slot.

Please arrive 15 minutes before your audition slot and bring with you your completed audition form. Spare audition forms will be available on the day.

Not being recalled does not necessarily mean you are not being considered for a role.

To reserve your place at the audition, please email robert.gairey1967@btinternet.com and let me know which part or parts you are interested in. I shall then arrange to send relevant audition pieces to you.

We look forward to seeing you!

Everyman Theatre

Audition Form for “Comic Potential” [2019]

To book your audition time please contact email robert.gairey1967@btinternet.com

Please write clearly and don't forget to bring this form to your audition!

Name.....

Address.....

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Postcode.....

email address.....

Tel.no [home].....

[work/mobile]

Date of birth if under 16 on 31 January 2019

Please state any and all commitments [family/work/holidays/other shows etc] that may conflict with the rehearsal period.

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Is there a particular role in which you are interested?

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If not cast in a that role, would you be prepared to join the cast in another role –

yes / no

Are you already a member of Everyman? yes / no

PLEASE NOTE – everyone cast must become an Everyman member.