OUR HOUSE – THE MUSICAL

Our House is the story of Joe Casey who, on the night of his sixteenth birthday, takes Sarah, the girl of his dreams, out on their first date. In an effort to impress her with bravado, he breaks into a building site overlooking his home on Casey Street, which is owned by Mister Pressman, a high-end property developer. The police turn up, at which point Joe’s life splits into two: the Good Joe, who stays to help, and Bad Joe, who flees.

Good Joe, having stayed to help Sarah, is sent to a ‘correctional facility’ for two years. On his release, finding that his past prevents him from getting a good job, he struggles to make ends meet. Despite managing to buy himself a second-hand car, he convinces himself that he is an embarrassment to all who care about him – especially Sarah, whose new college lifestyle reading law is complicated by Callum, a fellow student. In an effort to keep up with this guy, Good Joe is beguiled by his ‘mate’ Reecey into helping stage a break-in for some easy money – is caught and this time sent down.

Meanwhile, Bad Joe has lost Sarah, but is making a success of a burgeoning career, using his breaking and entering skills to install security systems which he then instructs a lowlife ‘mate’ called Reecey how to breach. His efforts soon earn him enough money to start his own business in property development, where he attracts the attention of Mister Pressman. Now a successful businessman, he is able to swan back into Sarah’s life, literally sweeping her off her feet at her college dance.

Three years later, at 21, Bad Joe and Sarah get married in Vegas, while Good Joe is leaving prison, forced to sleep rough in the second-hand car he bought all those years ago. At this point, Good Joe and Bad Joe’s worlds start to collide. Mister Pressman has decided to ‘redevelop’ Camden by demolishing Casey Street – except Joe’s mum Kath refuses to leave. This house is special, she says, given to her family in perpetuity because their ancestors helped build Casey Street.

Good Joe vows to save the house. He calls on Sarah, now a trainee lawyer engaged to Callum, to help prove that Kath does own the deeds to 25 Casey Street. Bad Joe, meanwhile, is called on by Mister Pressman to help destroy the house in a strong arm final straw tactic to get the occupant to move out. Bad Joe does this by arranging – with Reecey’s help - for the house to be burned down while she is out celebrating her birthday. Except tragically all Kath wants to do is wait in the house for her son to come visit her on that special day. In the Good Joe story, the errant son returns, holding the property deeds, to find the house burning down but his mum safe; in the Bad Joe story the ‘successful’ son returns too late, to realise his mum was in there, waiting for him.

From the ashes of the house fire Good Joe is reborn, reunited with Sarah, whom he marries, and also with his mum. Mister Pressman and Reecey are sent down for arson. Bad Joe, having lost Sarah and his mum, is sent down as an accomplice to manslaughter. And in the final beat of the show we wind back time to where we started, the moment of decision on Joe’s sixteenth birthday: when asked what he wants to do, somehow he knows now the right decision to make. He simply says ‘Let’s go dancing!’

OUR HOUSE BY HAOS

HAOS over the years have gained an enviable reputation of producing productions of epic proportions and we guarantee this show will be no different. Our House will be performed at the Victoria Theatre Halifax from the 11th – 14th September 2013, nightly at 7.15pm. The production team for Our House will be Kevin Davies as Director, Ben Smith as Producer, Michael Gilroy as Musical Director and Sarah Buffett as Choreographer. Rehearsals will begin in June in our recently renovated rehearsal space, with main company
• Read the character synopsis carefully, audition for what you are suitable for! Take into account age-appearance ranges, specific requirements. The accent information is there for a reason so please take note.

• Get the material early and practice, practice and practice! The more well rehearsed you are the less likely nerves are going to get the better of you.

• We want an acted performance – we don’t want a nice sung song. The majority of the narrative is told through song. We need to see the development and depth of characters through the vocal. The show is very demanding character wise. Spend time considering and researching your character and this will show in your performance. Set something, what would this character actually be doing at this moment....

• Excellent diction is a must we need to hear clearly what is being told through song and speech.

CONTACT DETAILS

Laraine Cowgill  
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01422 344319/07983 462138

Ben Smith  
bysproductions@aol.com  
07766101613

Contact Details of the other Production team members will be included as appropriate on the Rehearsal Schedules.
rehearsals taking place on Thursdays and Sundays and other principal work and specific number setting occurring throughout the week.

We are looking for a committed and enthusiastic cast of approximately 40 persons to take on this challenging yet assuredly rewarding production.

**CAST MEMBERS**

Anyone wanting to be involved on stage in this production in any guise will need to complete an expression of interest form to be considered. We are thrilled that the number of members who want to be part of HAOS continues to grow but this year, at least, we are unfortunately unable to allow people to just turn up at the first rehearsal as the production and the theatre are unable to house our vast members list at the moment. However please don’t be put off as we believe that with good prior knowledge and preparation we can ensure everybody gets to be involved with this amazing project in one way or another.

**Company:** Those wanting to be in the general ensemble as a Dancer or a Mover will still need to send an expression of interest form to our Production Secretary Laraine as stated above. We intend to find around 30 talented and committed company members who will cover the vast number of cameo spoken and sung roles. All members wishing to take part in the show as a company member will need to have attended the Workshop on Thursday the 23rd of May at 7:30pm at the Wellington Rooms. Don’t panic this will be a very informal and simple process. We would appreciate it if you could send your completed EOI form back as soon as possible.

**Principal and Supporting Roles:** Any other role within the production will require an individual audition. Please see the enclosed cast list and character synopsis sheet for specific details on individual roles. Individual auditions will take place at the Wellington Rooms on Sunday 26th April. Those with extenuating circumstances who already have an outstanding day-long commitment on this day that cannot be moved (i.e. booked holidays, operations, work commitments etc. but not birthdays, planned meals, recreational events...), must inform us as soon as possible. All those interested in auditioning for a principal or supporting role will also need to complete the same expression of interest form and return it to Laraine, our Production Secretary asap. Audition material will be available to peruse prior to this by accessing our website at [www.halifaxaos.com](http://www.halifaxaos.com) or contacting Laraine at [lcowgill@ymail.com](mailto:lcowgill@ymail.com) or on 01422 344319 or 078983 462138. It is important to note at this stage that the final on-stage score will not be performed completely as writ. Cuts are already planned to a number of principal numbers and this may affect several principal roles.

**The Auditions**

Once you have completed the expression of interest form and sent it to Laraine you will be contacted with an audition time. Please remember that HAOS quite often receives a high number of auditionees, therefore bear in mind that there are only a limited number of very specific roles available, many candidates will unfortunately be disappointed.

On the day of the audition please arrive at least 5 minutes before your audition time to sign in. You will be greeted upon your arrival, and looked after, by Nuala Smith or Karen Illingsworth who are both members of the HAOS management committee. Each candidate will be allocated 10 minutes
• If a cast member’s behaviour or commitment is affecting the production process the production team is empowered to approach the management committee to request removal from the cast, at no time will decisions of this nature be made without full support of the society’s management team majority. If any cast member has an issue with how the production team is operating they must speak to any of the management committee members immediately so this can be addressed.

Our Management team are always interested in your opinion, they are:

Brian Conyers – President – no email available
Geoff Cowgill - Chairman & Business Manager – cowgigeo@aol.com
John Mullan - Treasurer – latejuly51@blueyonder.co.uk
Laraine Cowgill - Production Secretary – lcowgill@ymail.com
Alex Holroyd – Joint Acting Management Team Secretary – avholroyd@yahoo.co.uk
Cheryl Carter – Joint Acting Management Team Secretary – jncarter83@yahoo.co.uk
David Goodchild – Publicity/Business Management – davegoodchild@me.com
Richard Armstrong – Publicity/Business Management - rarmstrong1@unitedbiscuits.com
Karen Illingsworth – Tickets Secretary - Karen.illingsworth@yahoo.co.uk
Jane Marescaux – Subscription Secretary - jane.marescaux@sky.com
Nuala Smith – nualasmith@hotmail.co.uk
Rae Laycock – no email available
Norma Bateman – normabateman99@yahoo.co.uk
Allen Broadbent – no email available
Mick Porter – michaelp@dews.co.uk
Peter Brearley – peterbrearley@sky.com
Olga Conyers – no email available
Ben Smith – bysproductions@aol.com
Yvonne White – vonw83@aol.com
Paul Addy - padster30@aol.com
Jonathan Armitage - jcarmitage@hotmail.co.uk

By reading these and expressing interest through the form provided we understand that you are willing to accept the expectations detailed above and recognise that you may be asked to leave the show if you are unable to meet them. No decisions relating to exclusion of cast members, due to any reason, will be made without the full support of the majority of the Management Team.

**TIPS TO AUDITIONEES**

Auditions are always a stressful event, the casting committee and the production team wanted to give you some insight to what they are looking for to help you prepare. If you have any further questions please contact Laraine or Ben and they will do the very best they can to help you further.

To get you started;
for their audition and we will try our best to run to time during the day, and we apologise in advance if we happen to run over at all. When it is your turn you will be invited upstairs in the main space for your audition. This particular casting committee, more than ever, is fully aware of what it is like to audition and you have our full sympathy and support, we will do anything we can to make this process as painless as possible! Please just go for it and give it your all.

**Casting Committee:** The casting committees at HAOS are made up of 5 or 7 members. The seats are made up of the production team, committee members, and 1 or more external candidates. We seek to place people in this position who have extensive production experience or expertise. For Our House we are delighted to announce that the audition panel will be made up of the production team as above, Laraine Cowgill, our Production Secretary, and the infamous Neil Hurst taking the external candidate seat this time. A member of the team will be reading in along with you during your audition. Casting committee members may make notes during or straight after your audition for key points to remember in later discussions. A member of the casting committee will be elected as chair on the main day of auditions. The casting Committee will not be made aware previous to the audition day who will be attending or in what order you will be auditioning.

**Selection Process:** After auditions have taken place a discussion will commence as to the most suitable candidate for each position. No discussions will take place before this point regarding the workshop on the 23rd of April. Each part will be discussed in turn. The most suitable auditionee will need to fulfil the requirements of the role and have delivered the best performance during their audition, other members who also expressed an interest in this role will be considered in the discussion. A vote will take place after discussions to select the most appropriate candidate. Consideration will be given to suitability in terms of necessary coupling, which could include aesthetics and age appearance etc. If a family member or close personal relation of a casting committee member auditions they will be unable to take part in that discussion and will be asked to leave the room. If it is felt there is still not an appropriate applicant the part will remain uncast on the day. Please remember that the casting committee is entrusted to maintain HAOS’ high standards, which inevitably begins with strong casting.

If two candidate’s offer very similar attributes, then only at this point will previous knowledge of those persons be taken into account, this will include their involvement with and commitment to the society, attendance, rehearsal etiquette, ability to take direction etc The most supportive and committed members to recent productions in this case will be offered the role.

Discussions will continue that night until decisions have been reached about each role, this could be to offer the position to an auditionee, or if it is agreed by all the part will remain uncast. Auditionees will be notified when discussions have ended to the outcome of their audition via email, or letter if email is not the preferred method of communication.

It takes time to contact all candidates and we require that no information about casting is posted on social networking sites until a cast list has been made available by HAOS. This is out of respect for other candidates, please appreciate people may be receiving the news by communication other than email or may only be able to access email through work.

Please don’t underestimate what a challenging and stressful process this is for those involved.
actually in the show, these consist of £2 a week for all the weeks in which you are called to rehearse. Both subscriptions must be paid before show week to be able to appear on stage. Jane will be available at most full call rehearsals to collect this money. This can be paid in a single one-off payment or in instalments.

• The production team appreciate that everybody is in a stressful rehearsal period, however will strive at all time to speak to all those involved with the production in the correct manner and courtesy they deserve. This means that if any member of the production team has an issue with any single member of cast (including possible unsuitability, commitment, attitude, reliability) this will not be discussed publically, or with friends, and ESPECIALLY NOT using a social network forum of discussion such as face book etc. If this is found to be the case the position will be revoked.

• Any members of the cast found to be discussing the show, rehearsal process, production team, or fellow cast members in a negative attitude in a public forum, including all social networking sites such as Face book, will be respectfully asked to leave the production immediately. Please use all the opportunities listed below to vent your unhappiness in a way that we can act on and resolve professionally, maturely and immediately.

• The society will order tickets on your behalf to assure you and your friends/family get the premium seats you require. Tickets can be ordered from our ticket secretary Karen at rehearsals. These can be booked in advance and paid for nearer the show. If you book tickets through the society we make more money to put back into the production values of our shows. When tickets are ordered directly with the theatre they take 10% of the ticket price, and the society and its members, including you, lose out.

• If you have any problems or if there is anything you don’t like about we are doing, please talk to us. We have a pretty approachable management team who have a good presence at rehearsals and are happy to be contacted at any time. The saying “you can’t please everybody” doesn’t hold water with us and we really do want to continue to improve our processes to ensure everyone is as happy as possible. We are more than willing to make changes where we can, or try to explain why things have been done in a certain way. Please don’t remain disgruntled about anything.

• The production team will ensure that you have all the necessary information you require in good time before arriving at the theatre, including proposed call times, expectations, theatre etiquette, and management structure.

• Show week is a busy week for everyone – no doubt crossed words will be uttered with a few people at some point as people struggle to produce the best they can in a short space of time. Ultimately it’s because we all care, don’t take it personally. Fit up, band call and technical time requires long periods of time sat around as things are made to happen, thankfully we feel that most people now understand that it’s just part of the process, and that you need to be present when asked to ensure everyone is safe. As our production standards increase, so does our responsibility to our members to be even more careful with our Health and Safety procedures and an overall attitude of professionalism. You are required to be present at all show and rehearsal calls in the theatre to ensure all this happens.
What if a part isn’t cast? If a part is left uncast the casting committee will pool their knowledge of possible suitable performers who may or may not be current members of the society and a chosen person(s) will be approached. At this stage they may be invited to play the role outright or asked to attend an audition which may or may not include recalled candidates from the main audition procedure. At no point will a part be offered without consent from the full casting committee who were present on the main audition day.

Feedback to candidates: HAOS is continually striving to improve its processes and therefore relies upon you to leave feedback in situations where you believe we could develop. Similarly, if you would like to request feedback on your audition then please do so by email to Laraine who collates notes and will provide an overview of the casting committee’s thoughts to you. Please note that it is often likely that some notes will contradict as these considerations are anonymous personal opinions of all the casting committee members, and please don’t ask if you don’t want to hear the answer! We respectfully ask you not to approach individual casting committee members directly as this will not provide a rounded view and may make the particular casting committee member feel uncomfortable or caught off guard. If you are unhappy with a decision or audition process then please forward your comments to a member of the management committee to be discussed at a management meeting.

This is a difficult process to get right and we continue to try to make the process as easy and clear as possible, as stated above we genuinely value your comments as an auditionee highly and are always keen to hear any suggestions to improving the process that you may have. However it remains clear that no matter how many improvements we make this is never going to be a nice process for anyone involved.

BEING A CAST MEMBER FOR HAOS

We want to make the whole process for Our House as enjoyable as possible, so the production team thought it would be useful to make it clear what they expect and what you can expect from them to iron things out at the beginning, leaving no confusion at a later date! We appreciate that things have not always been clear in the past, and it is our responsibility to try and clean up some of the confusion. We hope that these points help.

So here goes...

- The Production team will provide a rehearsal schedule in advance and will not call people unnecessarily to rehearsals, everyone’s time is precious and we appreciate this.

- Please take into account the level of commitment required to put on a show of this complexity and enormity. Be prepared to be called to two rehearsals a week from January which will increase as we get nearer to the show for the company and possibly many more rehearsals per week for those undertaking a principal or supporting role. Carefully consider the character synopsis to look at what the role requires, contact the production team if you want more information. The principal characters need to be prepared to be attending 3(at least!)-5 rehearsals a week at times. Can you
AUDITION ACCOMPANYING INFORMATION

commit to this, if not then please do not apply; it is not fair on the production team but much more importantly neither is it to other cast members.

• The production team are aware that this is not a full-time employment position for any of us, enjoying the process, and having social time after rehearsals is a serious consideration of the production team’s rehearsal time design, i.e. please stay with us after rehearsal and enjoy a well earned drink in our newly refurbished rehearsal rooms.

• Attendance is of vital importance at rehearsals, there is a lot of difficult material to get through and not much time. The attitude of ‘I know what I’m doing so I don’t need to go’ doesn’t wash – have consideration for others in the show if you are not at rehearsals it effects others, we just ask that you think about them. The production team has the right to remove any member from a number if they are absent during setting unless this has been previously agreed or accounted for, simply because there isn’t enough time to repeat numbers for missing cast, this is tedious and frustrates the members who were present when they were asked to be. If you are missing at a rehearsal it is YOUR responsibility to try and catch up and find out what you have missed – ask to meet Sarah/Kevin early to go over what you have missed so you can slot in. We want to be able to move rehearsals along at a quick pace, keeping everybody interested and making rehearsals fun and rewarding; we need your help through reliable attendance to be able to do this. If you can’t attend a rehearsal please contact a member of the production team or Laraine personally ASAP to make them aware. Attendance records are kept and noted for future production team and casting committee use.

• The Production team will try as far as is reasonably practicable to honour people’s commitments that have been previously declared on the Expression of Interest forms when constructing rehearsal schedules.

• Please be honest on your expression of interest forms about other commitments. If we are aware of your commitments we can take this into account when completing the rehearsal schedule and make it work. We require that big commitments are not taken on once committing to Our House and if you are found to declare after rehearsals commence that you have a holiday booked the week before the show for example expect to be asked respectfully to leave the cast.

• Punctuality - The Production team will be available to effectively begin rehearsals at the stated time as per the publicised schedule at every rehearsal.

• Respectfully, rehearsals start at the time publicised on the schedule, and this means start! A member of the production team or management committee will open the rooms half an hour before each rehearsal to set up so please be ready to start on time. Rehearsals will start promptly. We appreciate that at times traffic, things happening last minute at work, etc. can mean occasional lateness but everyone wandering in at 19:40 means 15-20 minutes of time is wasted at the start of each rehearsal. The vocal/Physical warm-up, if it occurs, is not an extension of your arrival time, members arriving during the warm-up will be marked as late.

• Each member is required to pay annual membership, details of which are available through Jane our subscriptions secretary or on the website. In addition to this, weekly subs are payable if you are