

Barnum - How To Be Involved

This information should hopefully answer any questions you may have about our current show Barnum which we are delighted to be performing at The Halifax Playhouse on the **30th of October until the 2nd of November 2019**. Performances will be nightly and we will also be having a Saturday matinee.

About Barnum:

The Circus Musical tells the story of the Prince of Humbug, Phineas Taylor Barnum. Despite the objections of his wife, Charity (“Chairy”), Barnum attempts to create a show in which the main attractions are freaks of society. Included in this mix of characters are: the oldest women alive, Joice Heth; the smallest man in the world, Tom Thumb; and to top it all off, a glamorous Swedish opera singer, Jenny Lind. Eventually, to appease Charity, Barnum agrees to give up the show and start a normal life. In the end, after Charity dies, Barnum returns to the circus business in grand fashion by forming a partnership with James A. Bailey. Thus, the two men form The Greatest Show on Earth.

Barnum is a very fun and inclusive ensemble show with performers required to be on stage for the majority of the show. There are many big numbers, choreographed scene changes and a number of cameo roles that appear throughout the show. Energy and stamina is going to be the key for this show!

The production team for Barnum are:

Ashley Davies - Director

Graham Robbins and Beth Smith – Musical Directors

Laura Hopkinson – Choreographer

How do we get involved?

Anyone aged between 8 and 18 can audition to be part of Barnum. You don’t need to have had any previous experience or training. We are looking for young people who are committed, enthusiastic and willing.

We are looking to cast 35 young people to be part of the show. This means depending of the numbers of interest there may be some of you that are disappointed this time.

Commitment:

If you are successful in gaining a place in Barnum don't underestimate the commitment that will be required of you. Rehearsals will begin early June and will take place on a Wednesday 6-9pm, Friday 6-9pm and Sunday 11am-2pm up until the show. You need those times free to attend rehearsals.

Initially the company will not be required on a Friday as this will be allocated to named cast singing and setting, however from September you will be required. Named cast will be needed at all rehearsals from the start. A rehearsal schedule will be issued so you know exactly when and for how long you will be needed each week. If you can't make a rehearsal for any reason such as illness you must notify Jane, the secretary or a member of the production team. If no notification is provided there is a '3 strikes and out' rule, which means you will be asked to leave the production.

You will also be expected to learn words and practice in your own time in order for us to move forward quickly. It is expected that you try not to take off any time during October.

For the week of the show you will be required to keep free the Sunday before (Sunday 27th October) as there will be various calls at the theatre that day, Monday for the technical rehearsal, Tuesday for the dress rehearsal and then all of the show calls. If you cannot make any of those calls in the theatre you are unable to participate in the show due to health and safety reasons.

Being part of a show is fun and very rewarding but like we've said, it is also lots of hard work!

Cost:

You need to be a member of the society in order to be in the show for insurance purposes.

There are lots of costs incurred when putting on a musical, including the rights to put it on, the hire of the theatre, costumes, sound and lights to name a few. There is a production fee to be part of the show to contribute to some of these cost, for Barnum this is £80.

We know this can sound lot all in one go but it works out at £3.81 per week for 21 weeks of rehearsals. For that you will be getting 2 or 3 rehearsals a week in preparation for the show. This payment will be required by the 30th September and can be paid in instalments or all in one go, whatever is easiest for you.

How do I get a chance to audition for Barnum?

If you would like to take part in Barnum then you need to complete an expression of interest form and pass it to our Secretary Jane Marescaux. You can email it to

jane.marescaux@sky.com or drop it in at the Wellington Rooms at one of the drop in sessions.

Jane needs to have received this by **Sunday 12th of May by 9pm** in order for you to be able to audition.

Everyone needs to audition to be in the show due to us only being able to accept a cast of 35. There will be a workshop on Wednesday 15th May 6pm – 7pm that everyone will need to attend and then individual auditions for principal roles will take place on Friday 17th May 6pm onwards.

What if I can't make the audition day?

Unfortunately if you are unable to make the audition day you will not be considered in the initial round of casting. However if you still submit your expression of interest form and we are unable to cast the full company you may be considered.

What do I need to prepare?

When you send in your expression of interest form we will send you some audition material and an audition time if you require an individual audition. The sooner you send in your form the sooner you will receive this and the longer you will have to practice.

We know that not everyone has access to a pianist so we have some drop in sessions to help you. These will take place on Wednesday 8th May 6pm – 8pm, Sunday 12th May 11am – 1pm at the Wellington Rooms.

You can pop down during these times and have a go at doing your song with a pianist and also to speak with members of the production team if you or your parent/carers have any questions.

Please be aware if the drop in sessions are busy you will need to be patient and wait your turn.

What happens on the audition day?

The Workshop:

Everyone who would like to be considered to take part in Barnum needs to attend the workshop on **Wednesday 15th May**. You will need to start arriving from 5:30pm to register that you are there and to get a name sticker and be placed in group.

If we have not received your expression of interest form before Sunday 12th May you will not be able to attend the workshop – you are not able to just turn up without completing this and will be sent home.

At 6:00pm we will begin to sing through a number from the show that we have chosen for the workshop this will be part of Join The Circus. You will get this music when you hand in your expression of interest form or if you are at any of the drop in sessions. It will be useful if you have learnt the words to this before the workshop so you can perform this better later in the workshop when movement is added.

After we have had a sing through you will be taught some movement. You will then be required to perform this in small groups. Barnum is a very energetic show and all cast will need to be able to sing and move well together.

After everyone has performed there will be time at the end to showcase any specialist circus/acrobat skills that you may have – juggling, hoola hooping etc.... If you need any equipment to show us this then please bring it along.

You will be finished at the workshop by 7pm. Parents/carers are not allowed to attend the workshop with you. After you are registered they will need to wait outside or leave and come back to collect you at 7pm.

Individual Auditions:

Individual auditions will then take place on **Friday 17th May** from 6pm. Individual auditions are for anyone who would like to be considered for any of the principal roles other than ensemble. You will have an individual time slot of 5-10 minutes to come and perform the audition piece for your chosen character. We will expect that you are familiar with the audition piece you have chosen to perform.

You can only audition for one character but can put down on your expression of interest form if you would also like to be considered for any others. There will be just you, the audition panel and the pianist in the room for your individual audition.

Who are the audition panel?

The people on the audition panel are the people that will be there throughout the workshop and individual auditions watching you and making notes about how they think you have got on. After individual auditions on Friday the panel will discuss everyone they have seen and make the difficult decision of casting the show. Auditions can be scary and people can get very nervous, don't worry; the audition panel understand this and many of them have been in the same position as you on a number of occasions. They will try and support you and try to help put you at ease.

The audition panel for Barnum will be:

Ashley Davies - Director

Graham Robbins – Musical Director

Laura Hopkinson – Choreographer

Beth Smith– Musical Director and HATY Committee Member

Yvonne White – HATY Committee Member

Jane Marescaux will be there to meet and greet you and sign you in on the day. Also there will be a pianist who will be playing the piano for us.

What are the panel looking for?

As mentioned earlier Barnum is a very energetic show, there are a lots of big numbers and the company are going to be kept very busy. As this musical is based on a story about a circus we will also be looking for candidates to share their acrobatic and circus skills.

All performers are going to need to be very entertaining and engaging. We will be looking for big smiles, fun and energy. There are a lot of big numbers to learn so we need some strong vocalists with good stamina to get these across.

We want a cast who work hard, try their best, practise and really want to work with us.

We are looking for people who can tell a story through song. We need people to perform when singing not just stand and sing nicely, we need to see character. In individual auditions try and give yourself something to do during the dialogue and the song - what would your character be doing as they are speaking/singing?

When will I find out if I was successful?

The audition panel will make their decision about casting at the end of the audition day. On Saturday 18th May emails will be sent to all those who have auditioned to inform them of the outcome.

If for any reason the audition panel are unable to cast a specific part they hold the right to ask others outside of the audition day to take this role.

Character Synopsis

Character	Gender	Description
Ensemble	Any	Involvement throughout the show, making it all happen. Lots of movement and large company numbers requiring strong vocals. All need to bring energy and fun to the production. A number of spoken and song lines available that will be distributed throughout the ensemble, including Julius Goldshmidt, Chester Lyman, Sherwood Stratton, Mrs. Startton, Wilton, Edgar Templeton, Humbert Morrissey
PT Barnum	M	Plays ages 25-60, baritone, legendary showman who created "The Greatest Show on Earth", charming, idealistic dreamer who tends to exaggerate. Needs to be a good all round performer. Special skills involve juggling at least three balls (ideally clubs), tight rope walking and other magic tricks throughout the show.
Chairy Barnum	F	Plays 30-60, mezzo, practical minded, women's suffragist, grounded in reality with a strong disposition but with a sweet teasing sense of humour. Not afraid to roll up her sleeves and get down to work. Strong acting and singing needed. Ability to juggle is a plus.
Jenny Lind	F	Coloratura soprano, known as the Swedish nightingale (even sings/speaks in Swedish), beautiful and flirtatious. Underneath her pretty demeanour is a strong willed woman who manipulates the people around her to get what she wants. Requires strong soprano voice and Swedish accent.
Joice Heth	F	Blues singer, plays 30-160, alto belt, traditionally African American (but not required) character actress/singer who moves well, ability to play piano a plus but is not required. Has a featured scene and number, will be involved in the ensemble for the rest of the show.
Blues Singer	F	Singing role, with featured song in Act 2, will be involved in the ensemble for the rest of the show. Often doubles with Joice Heth but will be auditioned as a separate role.
Ringmaster/ Bailey	M	Making appearances throughout the show, a baritone, singer who has various variety act abilities (juggling, unicycle, and stilt walking, basic acrobatics). Any of circus skills would be a bonus.
Tom Thumb	M	Tenor, acrobatic athletic dancer with a small physical frame. Has a featured scene and number, will be involved in the ensemble for the rest of the show.
Amos Scudder	M	Spoken role, Scudder partners with Barnum to build the American Museum and is required to deliver the news of the tragic fire. Will be involved in the ensemble at other times in the show.