

**MAMMA MIA!, 2019**

**THE HARTFORD PLAYERS – AUDITION INFORMATION**

Hi!

First – sorry for the delay in getting this out. Too many irons in too little fire...

Welcome to the fun! Here’s a list of stuff you want to know. It’s not nearly as funny in print as it would be if I were saying it live, but don’t let that weird you out. Most of you are well aware that I’m not nearly as funny when I’m not actually there...

Read on, Macduff....

**FULL DISCLOSURE STUFF:**

**“WHERE THE BUCK STOPS” DISCLAIMER:** Casting decisions will be made with input from the production staff but, with the family exceptions noted below, the final decisions are all mine – so please don’t toilet paper their houses....

**PRODUCTION STAFF DISCLAIMER:** If a production staff member also wants to be on stage, I find a place in the chorus for them as a “thank you” for all their hard work, but only in addition to everyone else that we would have cast anyway.

- If a production staff member is interested in auditioning for a name role, they do not participate in the casting input for that role or any role directly related to it. (i.e. – if they try out for Harold Hill, they don’t participate in choosing Marion the Librarian...)
- Production staff members promise to fulfill their production staff duties regardless of the audition results.

**NEPOTISM DISCLAIMER:** I have kids who are likely to try out. If they try out for a name role, the production staff will make the decision regarding that role and any role directly related to it. Given the amount of slave labor they will be forced to do for the show under any circumstances, I will also find a spot for them in the chorus, but not to the exclusion of anyone else who would otherwise have been cast.

**ETHICAL DISCLAIMER:** There will be people that I know who try out. Some that I have done shows with, others from the Board of Directors. Some may be relatives or friends. My promise to you, as the director, as a guy who was here on Day One of this group, is that I will do everything I can to make casting decisions that are fair, honorable and in the best interests of the show. As a lawyer, I take this crazy ethical thing really seriously. I hope that I have earned the trust of those of you who know me, and I pledge to earn the trust and confidence of those who are new to the fold. I have been in shows where, for instance, the music director gave the lead to himself after

auditioning people who were perfectly qualified (more so than I) – so I know how it feels when things are ethically murky. That is not an atmosphere that I would ever want for a Hartford Players production. Our drama will be onstage only – and, out there, it will be comedy and romance...so there's no drama at all...which is kind of funny, when you think about it...which is what comedy should be when it's onstage – funny - and that's dramatically different than drama, which won't be onstage or offstage at all....and romance should be, um, romantic... Got it? Good.

**SPEED TRAP DISCLAIMER:** *Highway 60, particularly down near the river (east of Main Street and Grand Avenue) is a strictly enforced gold mine for the City of Hartford. The speed limit is 25. Don't push it....*

**MEMBERSHIP DISCLAIMER:** If you're in the show, you have to join the Hartford Players. You have to pay nominal dues and follow the rules. There are embarrassing hazing rituals for newbies...oh, wait, no – we don't do that... ..usually... JUST KIDDING!

- The Hartford Players is a family. We work together as a family and we celebrate our successes as a family. Those members of our family who are under 21 are expected to behave appropriately at our celebrations. Those over 21 are expected to behave responsibly at our celebrations. Be smart, be safe. Always. No exceptions.
- Oh, ya, and it's nice to make donations to help build the organization...we all do it...it's a cult kinda thing...

**GRUNT WORK DISCLAIMER:** If you're in the show, you have to help with the grunt work that goes into making this happen. Set painting, set building, tech stuff. You WILL be willingly selling your soul to mydevil. If you do not pull the required number of hours of indentured servitude (outside of rehearsal) you will not set foot on the stage. **Strike is mandatory.**

**LIABILITY DISCLAIMER:** everybody pretty much tacitly understands this, but it bears repeating. When people are building things with tools with which they are not familiar, with great big set pieces that are not permanent structures, with people running around in the dark moving things are making entrances, etc., the fact is that the theater is a bit dangerous and people can get hurt. We do what we can to minimize those dangers, and we always encourage safety to the greatest extent possible. Still, injuries can happen. By accepting a role in our production, you are indicating that you understand that these things can happen and are willingly accepting that risk.

**CALENDAR DISCLAIMER:** There will be a tentative production calendar at auditions, but that will be subject to change as we accommodate actor conflicts. There will be a web page with a fully up to date calendar and other materials. Access that page early and access it often – just like voting in Chicago.

- You will NOT be asked to waste time sitting around at any rehearsal. If you're there, you will be working – I promise. If, at any time, I miss something, please bring it to my attention so I can fix it.
- We all have too many irons in too little fire, and punctuality can be a challenge. We all need to make the effort. In on time, out on time – I promise.

**EXPECTATION OF QUALITY DISCLAIMER:** We do professional theater – we just don't get paid for it. **MM!** will blow the crowd away! This show needs to make a bundle. **To carry that level of coolness into the future, everyone in the cast will recruit 10 audience members for opening night.** Please get those tickets sold as early as possible so that the buzz of a sellout guarantees a successful run! Report your sales to the producer. I will be reviewing the names and taking attendance. Thanks so much for your help.

We want to have the rehearsal process be “fast, furious and fun”, short & sweet, so actors will be **expected** to do a lot on their own.

- **SILVER PLATTER DISCLAIMER:** Some performers expect that a show will be handed to them on a silver platter – that costumes will just appear, that every song will be taught by a personal assistant, that every prop will be delivered by their valet. That ain't how it works here. Experience has taught that the best actors are those who make every aspect of their performance their own personal responsibility, enhancing the support provided by the production staff. That “see a job, do the job”, “what can I do to help next”, “next step logic”, “big picture” kind of attitude is the kind of “team player” outlook that I look for in an actor.

**REHEARSALS:** Monday through Thursday, typically 7 to 10. Some weekend rehearsals. Then, we will hit July with the final push in the usual tech and dress rehearsal format. Again, if we all bring our “A Game” and hit the ground running, fueled with personal preparation, this will work great!

**SHOWS:** July 12, 13, 18, 19 and 20 at 7:30 PM, plus a matinee on the 14<sup>th</sup> at 2 PM. There is a show on the Thursday between weekends. We **WILL** do a pickup on Wednesday night, the 17<sup>th</sup>. We will strike on Sunday, the 21<sup>st</sup>. **Strike is mandatory** (for you and for everybody who ever loved you – ever). People who accept a role and later tell me, “Gosh, something came up and I can't be at strike...” might as well agree now not to ever do a show with me again - ever.... AND I may just decide to take over their role in THIS show... There have been years when I missed half of my family vacation to be here for our show, so don't look to me for sympathy.

*And now, without further adieu...*

## **AUDITION INFORMATION**

### Audition Dates:

- Live: Monday and Tuesday, May 20 and 21, 7 to 10 PM.
  - It is not necessary to attend both sessions, but it never hurts to let a director see as much of you as possible. If you do come to both, please understand that we'll be giving right of way to those who are new that night before blending in returning victims.
  - There will NOT be callbacks. I firmly believe that a director who is paying attention should be able to make these decisions based on 6 hours of observation, particularly with the input of such an able-bodied production staff.
- Video: We understand that some actors – college students, for instance – might not be able to get to our audition dates. For that reason, we're accepting video auditions starting immediately. Of course, it's always better to let a director see you in person, but we will do what we can to make it fair to everybody.
  - The video should show you singing and reading from the listed selections. It would also show us something of your dance ability, but that isn't required. **FILM IN LANDSCAPE ORIENTATION (LIKE A TV SCREEN).**
  - Please submit your materials so that they are received by May 21st. Submit to Jerry Becker, Box 410, Hubertus, WI 53033, or [JerryBecker@Charter.net](mailto:JerryBecker@Charter.net). (DropBox or similar links are acceptable.)
- What you need to submit (both live and video):
  - The Audition Form. Both pages. Please come to the live auditions with it prepared in advance. (Video auditions: provide in pdf format.) PLEASE: HONESTLY LIST YOUR CONFLICTS.
  - A full-length picture of you printed on an 8.5" x 11" piece of paper. (Video auditions: provide in pdf format.)
  - Feel free to also submit a resume detailing your theatrical experience and your usual headshot (in addition to the full-length picture). (Video auditions: provide in pdf format.)
  - Large piles of cash in small bills.... *(Yes, that was a joke, too...)*
- What I'm looking for:

- I am not looking for a “perfect” audition. I am looking for *sparkle*, energy, effort, vocal talent, acting ability, ability to move.
- My mind works in strange and mysterious ways. (My kids would say, “just stop at ‘strange’, Dad...”.) You may be interested in one role, but I read you for something else in a “gang reading” - don’t panic. If I have a guy read for “Donna”, that reading can tell a director a LOT about acting ability, personality and temperament. Just play along...smile and nod a lot (which is also the secret to a successful marriage...)
- **Honesty** is a good thing – and, yes, I really mean it. Be honest on your audition form. If you’re auditioning for Donna and that’s the only thing you’d be willing to do in the show, be honest. It’s “challenging” (euphemism for “infuriating”) for a director to call somebody who said they’d take something else only to have them refuse it. It’s unfair to fellow actors, and forces the whole staff to reshuffle casting. It also wastes everyone’s time at the audition. Honesty will not count against you.
  - **Be honest about conflicts.** I can usually work around conflicts that are honestly disclosed, but having to redo a rehearsal schedule because somebody suddenly “discovered” that they’ll be gone for two weeks in late June may make me do unspeakable things to voodoo dolls... **Honesty will NOT count against you.** Vacations are not a deal-breaker.

**YOUNG CHILDREN:** There really aren’t any roles for young performers in the show...

- **FOR THAT REASON,** we will not be auditioning children under the age of 14.

Thanks for understanding.

**Final casting decisions will be made at a meeting following auditions on Tuesday night. Notifications will start going out by email on Wednesday morning. Check your email FREQUENTLY that day. We need your responses immediately so we can move on to other actors who will be waiting for news.**

Thanks for your interest in MAMMA MIA!. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me.

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