

Arlington Friends of the Drama Announces Auditions for

Gypsy

A Musical Fable

Book by Arthur Laurents

Music by Jule Styne Lyrics by Stephen Sondheim

Suggested by memoirs of Gypsy Rose Lee

May 1-17, 2020

AFD Theatre

22 Academy Street, Arlington, MA

Production Description

Set during the vaudeville era, *Gypsy* is about a relentless stage mother, Rose, who travels the country with her two daughters, June and Louise, and their manager, Herbie. While June and Louise wish their mother would settle down and marry Herbie, Rose continues to pursue dreams of stardom for her girls. When June deserts the act, Rose turns her attention to the shy Louise, whom she hopes to fashion into a star. When the act is booked into a burlesque house by mistake, Louise is forced into the spotlight and Gypsy Rose Lee is born.

The musical has been referred to as the greatest American musical by numerous critics and writers, among them Ben Brantley ("what may be the greatest of all American musicals") and Frank Rich. Rich wrote that "*Gypsy* is nothing, if not Broadway's own brassy, unlikely answer to *King Lear*."

Audition Dates

Initial Auditions:

Tuesday and Wednesday; January 7th and 8th from 6:30-10:30pm

Callbacks:

Saturday; January 11th at 1:00pm

Performance Dates

All dates are for 2020.

Friday, May 1 at 8pm
Saturday, May 2 at 8pm
Sunday, May 3 at 3pm

Friday, May 8 at 8pm
Saturday, May 9 at 2pm
Saturday, May 9 at 8pm
No show Mother's Day, May 10

Friday, May 15 at 8pm
Saturday, May 16 at 8pm
Sunday, May 17 at 3pm

Preparation

1. All actors are required to audition with one of the monologues provided. Please be prepared to read the monologue with the corresponding accent.
2. Please prepare 60-90 seconds of music in the style of the show (but not from the show) that best demonstrates your vocal ability. An accompanist will be provided, so please bring sheet music with written piano accompaniment in the key you'll be performing.
3. There will be dance audition at callbacks on Saturday, January 11th. It is strongly advised that you wear appropriate shoes and clothing you feel comfortable moving in. You may be asked to do some light movement at the initial audition as well, please come prepared for that.
4. **EVERYONE CAST MUST SUBMIT TO A CORI CHECK.** Since there a number of children in the show anyone cast in the show must submit and pass a CORI background check. This is to help ensure the safety and enjoyment of all involved in the production. If you have any questions regarding this policy please reach out to the producer.
5. **All children will be seen for their audition on Saturday, January 11th from 12-1pm.** Please e-mail Ginger Webb at gs_webb@yahoo.com to reserve your child's spot. Children auditioning for an Ensemble role will be taught a selection from the show and will be asked to prepare a monologue of their choice and may be asked to read a short side. They will also be required to participate in a short dance audition and should plan accordingly. Additionally, if they have special dance skills (pointe, tap, acro they should bring essentials to show)

Roles

ROSE – Female (ages 35-50) – Vocal range F3 to C5

The ultimate stage mother. Lives her life vicariously through her two daughters, whom she's put into show business. She is loud, brash, pushy and single-minded, but at times can be doting and charming. She is holding down demons of her own that she is afraid to face. Her voice is the ultimate powerful Broadway belt. Minimal dance but must move well. Comic timing a must.

LOUISE/GYPSY ROSE LEE – Female (ages 18-27) – Vocal range G3 to E5

The older version of Baby Louise, character must be able to transform from the mousy and awkward Louise, into the sophisticated and seductive Burlesque stripper Gypsy Rose Lee. Basic dance skills required but should be able to move well, strong acting skills needed. Must dance inside a dancing cow costume, must be comfortable with the character's profession - stripping. The character is very scantily clad but never actual appears in the nude.

JUNE – Female (ages 16-24) – Vocal range G3 to F5

The older version of Baby June. The older she gets the more frustrated with her mother's domination she becomes. A Shirley Temple type child star. Must be able to belt a song and have decent dancing skills. The ability to do splits, high kicks, tap/jazz dance, baton twirling a big plus but not required.

HERBIE – Male (ages 35+) – Vocal range C3 to D4

A candy salesman, manager for Rose's children, and Rose's boyfriend and a possible husband number 4. He has a heart of gold but also has the power to defend the people he loves with strength. Minimum dance but must move well. A Baritone, sings in one group number, two duets and trio with Rose and Louise. Strong acting role.

TULSA – Male (ages 18-25) – Vocal range C3 to G5

Boy-next-door type. Strives to break out of the troupe with an act of his own. Sings and dances "All I Need Is the Girl." Extremely strong dancer in all styles of show dance including tap. Good singer, charming, very athletic and handsome young man.

DAINTY JUNE – Female (age about 10) – Vocal range C4 to E5

A Shirley Temple-like up-and-coming vaudeville star. Her on stage demeanor is sugary sweet, cute and precocious. Strong singer and must have decent dancing skills. The ability to do splits, high kicks, tap/jazz dance, baton twirling a big plus but not required.

YOUNG LOUISE – Female (age about 12) – Vocal range C4 to E5

Rose's shy older daughter, and has always played second fiddle to her baby sister. She is awkward, a little sad and subdued; she doesn't have the confidence of her sister. Strong acting skills needed. The character always dances slightly out of step but the actress playing this part must be able to dance.

DRESSY TESSIE TURA – Female (age 30+) – Vocal range B3 to D5

Experienced and wise burlesque performer, just past her prime. Shares her dressing room with Louise. She was once a ballerina and still has some of the moves. A coarse broad who's been around the block. Very funny. Strong movement/dance required, specialty: Ballet Stripper.

MAZEPPA – Female (age 30+) – Vocal range G3 to D5

Bold and brassy trumpet playing burlesque stripper, past her prime. Tough and physically intimidating. Strong movement/dance required. Trumpet playing skills would be outstanding but not required.

ELECTRA – Female (age 30+) – Vocal range B3 to D5

Ditsy and sweet burlesque stripper, past her prime. Quieter than her counterparts but her costume is wired with lights, allowing her to "shine" without working up a sweat. Basic dance skills required.

Ensemble – Men and Women, Various ages and vocal ranges

We are looking for 3-5 males and 3-5 females to round out our ensemble. They will be playing multiple roles including; Pop, Uncle Jocko, Mr. Kringelein, Miss Cratchitt, etc. As well as back up dancers, strippers, show girls and boys, business roles, stage hands, etc. There are multiple opportunities for featured/solo singing, dance, and dialogue moments. Must be strong singers, dancers and actors. The director intends on substantially utilizing the ensemble for this production by combining the below characters into tracks for each ensemble actor

Children's Ensemble – Boys and Girls (ages 8-12) – Vocal range C4 to E5

Two or three young boys and one young girl. Baby June's back up dancers and singers. Ability of one child to play accordion, violin, clarinet or other instruments a plus. Must sing and dance.

Gypsy Audition Monologues

If there isn't a monologue listed for your character, then choose an appropriate one from below.

Rose #1

"I thought you did it for me, Momma." "I thought you did it for me, Momma..." I thought you made a no-talent ox into a star because you like doing things the hard way, Momma.

(Louder)

And you haven't any talent! – not what I call talent! Talent for the deaf dumb and blind maybe. Not an ounce of it, Miss Gypsy Rose Lee. I made you! – and you wanna know why? You wanna know why I did it?

Because I was born too soon and started too late, that's why! With what I have in me, I could've been better than ANY OF YOU! What I got in me – what I been holding down inside of me -- oh, if I ever let it out, there wouldn't be signs big enough! There wouldn't be lights bright enough!

HERE SHE IS BOYS! (Chord)

HERE SHE IS, WORLD! (Chord)

HERE'S ROSE!!

Rose #2

(Cold anger)

I'm used to people walking out. When my own mother did it, I cried for a week. Your father did it, and then the man I married after him did it, and now – Well this time, I'm not crying. This time, I'm apologizing.

(To LOUISE)

To you. I pushed you aside for her. I made everything just for her. But she says I can't make her an actress like she wants to be. The boys walked because they think the act's finished. They think we're nothing without her.

(Now beginning to build in volume and strength and passion)

She's nothing without me! I'm her mother and I made her! And I can make you now! I'm going to make it up to you for all the years I pushed you in the back. And I will, my baby, I swear I will! I'm going to make you a star!

(She is carried away now by her own determination and emotion that she does not see the look that has come over LOUISE's face. With enthusiasm:)

I'm going to build a whole new act – all around you! It's going to be better than anything we ever did before! Better than anything we even dreamed!

Louise #1

Pack up your apples, girls, and back to the trees. (THEY go)

Bon soir, messieurs et messieurs. Je m'appelle Gypsy Rose Lee et je suis dans le jardin de ma mere – Eve Minsky. And that concludes my entire performance -- in French. I've been too busy learning

(Grabs her behind) Greek.

Where were you last night? Some men accused me of being an ecdysiast. Do you know what that means? He does. He's embarrassed. Don't be embarrassed. I like men without hair.

(To upper balcony)

Don't worry fellas. I know you're up there. Up there, you know what ecdysiast means...An ecdysiast is one who -- or that which -- sheds its skin. In vulgar parlance, a stripper. But I'm not a stripper. At these prices, I'm an ecdysiast.

Louise #2

Turn it off, Mother.

I SAID TURN IT OFF! Nobody laughs at me – because I laugh first! At me! ME – from Seattle; me – with no education; me with no talent – as you’ve kept reminding me my whole life.

Well, look at me now: a star! Look how I live. Look at my friends! Look where I’m going! I’m not staying in burlesque. I’m moving – maybe up, maybe down -- but wherever it is, I’m enjoying it!

Mama, I’m having the time of my life because for the first time, it is my life! And I love it! I love every second of it and I’ll be damned if you’re going to take it away from me! I AM Gypsy Rose Lee! I love her – and if you don’t, you can clear out right now!

June #1

LOUISE

Aren’t you happy someone like Mr. T. T. Grantziger thinks you can be a star?

JUNE

Mr. Grantziger could make me one if --

Momma can do one thing: she can make herself believe anything she makes up. Like with that rhinestone finale dress you sewed for me. Momma wants publicity so she makes up a story that three nuns went blind sewing it! Now she believes it. She even believes the act is good.

It’s a terrible act and I hate it! I’ve hated it from the beginning and I hate it more now! I hate pretending I’m two years old. I hate singing those same awful songs, doing those same awful dances, wearing those same awful costumes -- I didn’t mean it about the costumes.

LOUISE

You can’t blame everything on Momma.

JUNE

You can’t maybe. I wish she’d marry Herbie and let me alone.

June #2

JUNE

Goodbye, goodbye, Caroline -- take care. Don't forget to write!... Wait! Stop the train! Stop the music! Stop everything! I can't go to Broadway with you!

LITTLE ROCK

Why not, Dainty June?

JUNE

Because everything in life that really matters is right here! What care I for tinsel or glamour when I have friendship and true love? I'm staying here with Caroline!

Herbie #1

Rose...Honey, even if we... Honey, listen. I can go back in the candy business. It's steady: 52 weeks all year every year, I'll work my fingers to the bone; I'll do twice what I did before and that was pretty fair. See, I could be a district manager and we could stay put in one place. Louise could go to school. Rose? Rose, honey, you still got Herbie. You can marry me and I promise you, you won't have one single worry the rest of your life. Don't you want that?

(Going back to ROSE, brighter:)

Honey, honey, it's going to be fine. Everything happens for the best. O.K., the act's finished. But you and me and our daughter, we're going to have a home – say, we even got a cow for the back yard! – Why, we are going to be the best damn – family that ever –

Herbie #2

PASTEY

Hey Rose Louise, where the hell's your music and light cues?

HERBIE

I'll be right with you.

PASTEY

(Snotty)

You Rose Louise?

HERBIE

Yeah, I'm Rose Louise.

PASTEY

Things're looking up. Well, I got a show to open, Rose Louise, so move your ass.

(Before PASTEY can get out, HERBIE has grabbed him, whirled him around and holds him by the back of his collar)

HERBIE

Listen, you little punk. For the next two weeks, you're gonna speak like a Sunday school teacher. You have something in this theatre you've never seen before. A lady.

(Points him toward ROSE)

That is a lady.

(Points him toward LOUISE)

That is also a lady. Every girl in this damn act is a lady, you understand?

PASTEY

Yes, sir.

Tessie #1

You're always in a bind in the flea-bitten trap. I'm a strip woman, slob. I don't do no scenes. Now screw!

(To LOUISE)

Have you ever heard of a first class strip woman playing scenes? Well, you play stock in a dump like this; you gotta expect to be insulted.

Tessie #2

TESSIE

It ain't weighted right, goddammit. It scratches hell outa me and it just don't bump when I do.

MAZEPPA

(A stripper crossing behind TESSIE)

Maybe there's something wrong with your bumper.

TESSIE

Big joke. I'm out there bumpin' my brains off with no action and she's bein' witty! Hey you with the neck! I paid 6 bucks for that G-string. Now, back where you found it!

Tulsa #1

How'd you know I was working on act? ... Louise – please –

(She signals she won't say anything)

I'm going to do most of the singing and dancing. I don't mean I'm going to hog it all but – they always look at the girl... in a dance team. Especially if she's pretty... I've got the costumes all figure out. A blue satin tux for me. I pretend I'm home getting dressed for a date. I comb my hair. I take a flower... Put it in my lapel. Then I spot the audience.

Once my clothes were shabby, tailors called me "cabbie." So I took a vow, said "This bum will be Beau Bruemmel." Now I'm smooth and snappy, snow my tailor's happy. I'm the cat's meow, my wardrobe is a wow.

KIDS

You know, everybody has somebody to thank for their success.

Usually, it's their mother; and sometimes, it's their father.

But tonight, I would like you all to join me in giving thanks to an uncle of mine -- and an uncle of yours.

The greatest Uncle of Them All: OUR – UNCLE – SAM!