

Richmond Shakespeare Society  
**AUDITION NOTICE**

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## **Miss Julie**

by August Strindberg in a version by Howard Brenton

**Director: John Buckingham**  
[johnonbike@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:johnonbike@blueyonder.co.uk)

- Reading:** Monday, 16<sup>th</sup> May at 7.45p.m. at the Mary Wallace Theatre
- Auditions:** Monday, 6<sup>th</sup> June at 7.45p.m. at the Theatre
- Playing dates:** Saturday 17th - Saturday, 24<sup>th</sup> September, 2022 (Excluding Wednesday, 21<sup>st</sup>)
- Rehearsals:** Officially from Tuesday August 9<sup>th</sup>  
(and from then on, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday evenings & Sunday afternoons)  
Rehearsals usually take place close to the vicinity of the theatre

**AUDITIONS ARE OPEN TO ALL. The RSS actively encourages diversity in casting and casting decisions will *not* be constrained by the perceived gender or ethnicity of the roles being auditioned**

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Midsummer's Eve, Sweden. A night when the sun doesn't really set. A night of drinking and dancing. A night to break the rules. When Julie, alone on her father's estate, gate-crashes the servants' party, she finds herself in a dangerous tryst with her father's manservant, Jean. A flirtatious game descends into a savage fight for survival.

Strindberg's 1888 play was a landmark in theatrical naturalism and is today an acknowledged masterpiece. It was banned at its first performance and its controversial treatment of sex and class retain the power to shock, even today.

The three principal roles, Julie, Jean and Kristin have, for over a century, provided a showcase for the world's finest actors. There is an additional opportunity for 6-8 actors (more than mere extras!) to appear as servants in one brief but crucial scene.

### **Characters**

#### **MISS JULIE**

The tragic protagonist of the play and the twenty-five-year-old daughter of the Earl who owns the estate in which it is set. Raised by her late mother "to learn everything boys learn, to prove women are every bit as good as men" she is a confused individual - headstrong and imperious due to her social status, but longing to fall to a lower level. Her inner conflicts lead her to break off of the engagement with her fiancé and behave shamelessly at the Midsummer Eve servants' party. She is sexually drawn to Jean, her father's valet, and flirts dangerously with him, triggering the events that lead to her downfall.

#### **JEAN**

The thirty-year-old valet of the Earl's estate. He is intelligent, shrewd and ambitious, and has been learning how to advance himself by observing his social superiors. When he becomes the subject of Miss Julie's advances after her failed engagement, he claims to have loved her since childhood. He later denies the truth of this, although there is evidence both for and against its veracity. Jean suffers from a profound envy regarding his position in the class system and as a result has a great capacity for cruelty. While initially presenting himself as courteous, he soon reveals his inner sadism. Like Miss Julie, he is somewhat dualistic and simultaneously degrades her while envying her social position. His masculine arrogance towards her is undermined by the class conditioning that ultimately renders him terrified of her father, the Earl.

## KRISTIN

The thirty-five-year-old cook of the Earl's estate and Jean's apparent fiancé. She shares in Jean's gossip about Miss Julie's scandalous behaviour. Despite her own common status, she is extremely religious and an ardent believer in the class system, offering a stark contrast to the views of Jean.

**Candidates should be aware that the play requires moments of physical intimacy between all three characters.**

## SUPPORTING ACTORS

The play takes place in the kitchen of the Earl's manor house on Midsummer's Eve. It is a night of carnival, when there is given licence to overturn social and sexual taboos. A servants' party is taking place offstage and, about half-way through, the servants invade the stage. They wear animal masks and the traditional flower head-dresses of the Swedish *Midsommer*.

Aware that Jean and Julie are together upstairs, the servants indulge in a wild and sinister gathering - part riot, part ritual. Collectively this will involve a song, a bawdy chant, and some dancing, plus some personalised individual action to be developed through improvisation.

I hope to involve between 6-8 actors to play these characters. These might include:

- A gang leader, who has initiated the entry into the house, and controls the action.
- The gamekeeper, who like Jean, has been dancing with Miss Julie. He is drunk and perhaps jealous.
- Drunks looking for food and/or an old manservant who is after Jean's secret stash of posh wine.
- A couple who are all over each other.
- A group of giggly drunken maids or farm girls, either shocked, excited (or both) by the goings on.

Because there are no lines to learn apart from a song/chant, the rehearsal time commitment for this scene will be comparatively small. I hope, besides newcomers, some experienced RSS members might be interested in turning in a brief cameo appearance!

Besides working with me, the company will also be working with our **composer/musical director, James Bedbrook**, on the music for this sequence. I am also looking for a **choreographer** for the dancing.

We will be using the published text version by Howard Brenton (Nick Hern Books).

Anyone interested in auditioning, joining the creative team, or if you have any questions, **please contact me via the email below.**

## Audition Pieces

I will get in touch personally with details of **audition speeches** for the Principal Actors, and outline how we might audition for the Supporting Actors.

**JOHN BUCKINGHAM** [johnonbike@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:johnonbike@blueyonder.co.uk)

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**You do not have to be an RSS member to audition but, if cast, you will be required to become a member before the first rehearsal.**

**Membership Application** forms are available in the theatre - or contact the Membership Secretary on (020) 8898 4397 or at - [membership@rss-mwt.org.uk](mailto:membership@rss-mwt.org.uk)

**Audition Application** forms are available in the theatre, or can be downloaded via the GET INVOLVED and ACTING pages of [www.richmondshakespeare.org.uk](http://www.richmondshakespeare.org.uk) Please return your form to the Hon. Secretary at the theatre, or by e-mail to - [secretary@rss-mwt.org.uk](mailto:secretary@rss-mwt.org.uk)

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Richmond Shakespeare Society at the Mary Wallace Theatre, the Embankment, TWICKENHAM, TW1 3DU