

Schoolcraft College Theatre  
**AUDITION INFORMATION**

***THE REAL INSPECTOR HOUND***

By Tom Stoppard  
Directed by Paul Beer

**Audition Dates: September 15 & 16, 7 pm, LA 400 (James R. Hartman Theatre)**

The Play

Prolific British playwright and screenwriter Tom Stoppard (*Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, and *Shakespeare in Love*, among many others) penned this play relatively early in his career. A farcical spoof of British-country-house-whodunits, *The Real Inspector Hound* features theatre critics Moon and Birdboot, as they watch a new play, and offer a running commentary, before they are pulled into the action themselves. The play is farce, comedy, absurdist, playful, and funny!

The Production

The play is set in “the present” in a London theatre, with the play-within-the-play set in the Essex countryside outside of London. We will perform in received pronunciation British accents (reflective of class more than region), and auditioners will be expected to attempt the RP accent.

The play proceeds without intermission, and lasts under two hours. There is no objectionable language, and only implied mention of sex. And no violence (apart from several shootings, of course – it’s a murder mystery, after all).

The Characters

**MOON** – a second-rate theatre critic at a London paper; written as a man but could be male or female

**BIRDBOOT** – a top critic from London paper, a little older than Moon; an adulterous husband

**MRS. DRUDGE** – the maid; mature and properly stationed to fit in at Muldoon Manor (could be Mr. Drudge, a butler)

**SIMON** – Handsome young man who has had a brief affair with one woman in the cast and is in love with another. Confident and attractive.

**FELICITY** – Pretty young woman, a neighbor and friend of Lady Cynthia Muldoon

**CYNTHIA** – Lady Muldoon; older than Felicity and Simon; her husband has been missing for ten years; (Cynthia kisses Simon and Birdboot)

**MAGNUS** – Older gentleman who is confined to a wheelchair

**INSPECTOR HOUND** – Middle aged police detective

### The Rehearsal Plan

We will begin rehearsals the week following auditions, and rehearse Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday evening from 7-10 pm or two of those three and Saturday afternoons, depending on cast availability.

### Key Dates

- Auditions: September 15 & 16, 7 pm (come one night only; about two hours)
- Cast list posted by Friday, September 18, latest
- Rehearsals begin September 22, as described above
- Tech rehearsal: Saturday, October 31, 11-4 pm (actors probably will arrive at noon or 1 – To be confirmed)
- Dress Rehearsals: November 3-5, 6-10 pm
- Performances: November 6 & 7 – Evening performances at 7:30 (6 pm call); Saturday matinee at 2 pm (1230 call)

### Audition Information

Please prepare a one-minute comedic monologue. I will ask you to perform in your own voice, and in RP, so spend some time working on that (there are many instructional videos on YouTube for RP British English).

### Note:

- You do not *have* to be memorized, but being memorized will show me that you CAN
- The best monologues will have a sense of pace – the story of the monologue should move along, but be delivered in a crisp, clear voice
- I will probably ask you to repeat your monologue with some additional direction from me; this is to demonstrate your ability to follow direction, NOT to suggest you did something wrong in your performance

You will also be asked to read with a partner from the attached sides. We'll make those assignments at the audition, but please familiarize yourself with the sides.

## Side 1, Page 1 of 2

BIRDBOOT, a married man, has just defended himself against a reputation as an adulterous womanizer (which he is, by the way). He continues to try to defend his reputation to his colleague, MOON.

BIRDBOOT So that's what they say about me, is it?

MOON What?

BIRDBOOT Oh, I know what goes on behind my back—sniggers—slanders—hole-in-corner innuendo. What have you heard?

MOON Nothing.

BIRDBOOT (*urbanely*) Tittle-tattle. Tittle, my dear fellow, tattle. I take no notice of it—the sly envy of scandalmongers—I can afford to ignore them, I'm a respectable married man...

MOON Incidentally...

BIRDBOOT Water off a duck's back, I assure you.

MOON Who was that lady I saw you with last night?

BIRDBOOT (*unexpectedly stung in quietly*) How dare you! Don't y insinuations! My wife Myrtle that a man of my critical star to mingle with the world of t of keeping *au fait* with the la

MOON I'm sorry.

BIRDBOOT That a critic of my sc vilified and pilloried in the st

MOON Ssssh!

BIRDBOOT I have nothing to hid the ears of my beloved Myrtle

MOON Can I have a chocolate?

BIRDBOOT What? Oh. (*Mollified*) let's have a chocolate. No point a chocolate into his mouth an fancy? Cherry? Strawberry? C

MOON I'll have montelimar.

*The chewing stops.*

BIRDBOOT Ah. Sorry. (*Meaning*

MOON Gooseberry fondue?

BIRDBOOT No.

MOON Pistacchio fudge? Nectarine Chateau Neuf du Pape fifty-fiv

BIRDBOOT I'm afraid not. Caram

MOON Yes, all right.

BIRDBOOT Thanks very much. (*He g a pause*) Incidentally, old chap mention—I mean, you know he get about...



L INSPECTOR HOUND

and dismay) Essex!

by Inspector Hound have received a  
as been seen in the desolate marshes  
for.

fearful gasp.

darkish suit with a lightish shirt. He  
d build and youngish. Anyone seeing  
s description and acting suspiciously,  
e nearest police station.

description has appeared behind  
ting suspiciously. He creeps in.  
EDGE does not see him. He does

olice message.

f the radio and resumes her  
e the body. Quite fortuitously,  
always blocked, and when it  
it. However, she is dusting and  
ds it.

ey say about me, is it?

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innuendo. What have you heard?

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I'm a respectable married man...

back, I assure you.

w you with last night?

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**BIRDBOOT** (*unexpectedly stung into fury*) How dare you! (*More quietly*) How dare you! Don't you come here with your slimy insinuations! My wife Myrtle understands perfectly well that a man of my critical standing is obliged occasionally to mingle with the world of the footlights, simply by way of keeping *au fait* with the latest...

**MOON** I'm sorry.

**BIRDBOOT** That a critic of my scrupulous integrity should be vilified and pilloried in the stocks of common gossip...

**MOON** Ssssh!

**BIRDBOOT** I have nothing to hide! Why, if this should reach the ears of my beloved Myrtle...

**MOON** Can I have a chocolate?

**BIRDBOOT** What? Oh. (*Mollified*) Oh, yes—my dear fellow—yes, let's have a chocolate. No point in—yes, good show. (*He pops a chocolate into his mouth and chews*) Which one do you fancy? Cherry? Strawberry? Coffee cream? Turkish delight?

**MOON** I'll have montelimar.

*The chewing stops.*

**BIRDBOOT** Ah. Sorry. (*Meaning "You just missed that one"*)

**MOON** Gooseberry fondue?

**BIRDBOOT** No.

**MOON** Pistacchio fudge? Nectarine cluster? Hickory nut praline? Chateau Neuf du Pape fifty-five cracknell?

**BIRDBOOT** I'm afraid not. Caramel?

**MOON** Yes, all right.

**BIRDBOOT** Thanks very much. (*He gives MOON a chocolate. After a pause*) Incidentally, old chap, I'd be grateful if you didn't mention—I mean, you know how these misunderstandings get about...



FELICITY and SIMON have had a brief (and very recent) affair. She unexpectedly seems him at Muldoon manner, as she enters after playing tennis with Lady Muldoon.

*FELICITY You!*

SIMON (*nervously*) Er, yes—hello again.

FELICITY What are you doing here?

~~SIMON Well, I...~~

~~MOON She's...~~

BIRDBOOT Sssh!

SIMON No doubt you're surprised to see me.

FELICITY Honestly, darling, you really are extraordinary.

SIMON Yes, well, here I am.

FELICITY You must have been desperate to see me—I mean, I'm flattered, but couldn't it wait till I got back?

SIMON (*barely*) There is something you don't know.

FELICITY What is it?

SIMON Look, about the things I said—it may be that I got carried away a little—we both did...

FELICITY (*stiffly*) What are you trying to say?

SIMON I love another!

FELICITY I see.

SIMON I didn't make any promises—I merely...

FELICITY You don't have to say any more.

SIMON Oh, I didn't want to hurt you...

FELICITY Of all the nerve!

SIMON Well, I didn't exactly...

FELICITY You philandering coward! (*She crosses below him to left*)

SIMON Let me explain...

FELICITY This is hardly the time and place—you think you can barge in anywhere, whatever I happen to be doing...

SIMON But I want you to know that my admiration for you is sincere—I don't want you to think that I didn't mean those things I said.

MRS DRUDGE *enters left.*

FELICITY I'll kill you for this, Simon Gascoyne!

FELICITY *bursts into tears and exits left, passing MRS DRUDGE.*

MOON It was her.

BIRDBOOT I told you—straight to the top.

MOON No, no...

BIRDBOOT Sssh!

SIMON *(to MRS DRUDGE)* Yes, what is it?

MRS DRUDGE I have come to set up the card table, sir.

SIMON I don't think I can stay.

MRS DRUDGE Oh, Lady Muldoon *will* be disappointed.

SIMON Does she know I'm here?

MRS DRUDGE Oh, yes, sir, I just told her and it put her in quite a tizzy.

SIMON Really? Well, I suppose now that I've cleared the air... Quite a tizzy, you say—really—really...

*During the following, SIMON and MRS DRUDGE put up the card table, setting out the cards and pencils. When this is finished MRS DRUDGE exits left.*

MOON Felicity! She's the one.

BIRDBOOT Nonsense—red herring.

MOON I mean, it was *her*!

BIRDBOOT *(exasperated)* What was?

MOON That lady I saw you with last night!

BIRDBOOT *(inhales with fury)* Are of my scrupulous integrity would of potage? Simply because in the happen to have struck up an acquaintance a warm regard, if you like, for a few of greasepaint—I find it simply and villoried—

MOON I never implied...

BIRDBOOT —to find myself the object of the petty slanders of little men—

MOON I'm sorry...

BIRDBOOT —to suggest that my go unimpeachable integrity at the disposal of who gives me what I want...

MOON Sssssh...

BIRDBOOT A ladies' man! Why, Myrtle now for—*Christ!* —who is that?

LADY CYNTHIA MULDOON *enters from the windows. She is a beautiful woman. She wears a cocktail dress, is fashionable, carries a tennis racket. Her effect is impressive. He half rises and she is a dramatic freeze between her*

MOON Lady Muldoon.

BIRDBOOT No, I mean—who *is* she?

SIMON *(coming forward)* Cynthia!

CYNTHIA Don't say anything for a

SIMON *seizes her and glues his lips to hers. While their lips are glued...*

BIRDBOOT She's beautiful—a vision

MOON I think she's got her mouth



INSPECTOR HOUND arrives unexpectedly, thinking he's been called to Muldoon Manor, when in fact no one there called him. Some confusion between him and CYNTHIA about why he is there.

as the end of the police message.

as off the radio nervously.

(pause) Where's Simon?

Have you seen him?

... Magnus?

... something foreboding in the air, it is as

... the house is locked up tight—no-one  
the police are practically on the doorstep.

... now—it's just a feeling.

... the fog.

... I'll never get through on a day like this.

... (at him) Fog!

... the Inspector.

... ting a dog?

... know of.

... through the swamps. Yes, I'm afraid the  
w his hand in safety now.

... ng hooting is heard in the distance,

CYNTHIA Ssssh!

*They listen. The noise is repeated, nearer.*

FELICITY There it is again!

CYNTHIA It's coming this way—it's right outside the house!

MRS DRUDGE enters.

MRS DRUDGE (announcing) Inspector Hound!

CYNTHIA A police dog?

*Inspector HOUND enters right. On his head he wears a sort of miner's helmet with a flashing light. On his feet are his swamp boots. These are two inflatable—and inflated—pontoons with flat bottoms about two feet across. He carries a foghorn.*

HOUND (crossing quickly centre) Lady Muldoon?

CYNTHIA Yes.

HOUND I came as soon as I could. Where shall I put my foghorn and my swamp boots?

CYNTHIA Mrs Drudge will take them out. "Be Prepared" as the force's motto has it, eh, Inspector? How very resourceful.

HOUND (divesting himself of hat, boots and foghorn) It takes more than a bit of weather to keep a policeman from his duty.

MRS DRUDGE exits right with the chattels.

*There is a pause.*

CYNTHIA Oh—er, Inspector Hound—Felicity Cunningham, Major Magnus Muldoon.

HOUND Good evening.

HOUND and CYNTHIA continue to look expectantly at each other.

CYNTHIA }  
HOUND } Well? Sorry... (*Speaking together*)

CYNTHIA No, do go on.

HOUND Thank you. Well, tell me about it in your own words—take your time, begin at the beginning and don't leave anything out.

CYNTHIA I beg your pardon?

HOUND Fear nothing. You are in safe hands now. I hope you haven't touched anything.

CYNTHIA I'm afraid I don't understand.

HOUND I'm Inspector Hound.

CYNTHIA Yes.

HOUND Well, what's it all about?

CYNTHIA I really have no idea.

HOUND How did it begin?

CYNTHIA What?

HOUND The—thing.

CYNTHIA What thing?

HOUND (*rapidly losing confidence but exasperated*) The trouble!

CYNTHIA There hasn't *been* any trouble!

HOUND Didn't you phone the police?

CYNTHIA No.

~~FELICITY I didn't~~

~~MAGNUS What for?~~

HOUND I see. (*A pause*) This puts me  
(*A steady pause*) Well, I'll be getting  
towards the entrance right)

CYNTHIA I'm terribly sorry.

HOUND (*stiffly*) That's perfectly all

CYNTHIA (*following him*) Thank you

HOUND Not at all. You never know  
serious matter.

CYNTHIA Drink?

HOUND More serious than that, even

CYNTHIA (*correcting*) Drink before

HOUND No, thank you.

HOUND *exits right.*

CYNTHIA (*through the door*) I do hope

HOUND *reappears at once.*

HOUND Find who, madam? Out with

CYNTHIA I thought you were looking

HOUND And what do you know about

CYNTHIA It was on the radio.

HOUND Was it, indeed? Well, that's  
I didn't want to mention it because  
you knew. No point in causing  
a murderer in our midst!

FELICITY Murderer, did you say?

HOUND Ah—so that was not on the

CYNTHIA Whom has he murdered?

HOUND Perhaps no-one—yet. Let

MAGNUS You believe he is in our



E REAL INSPECTOR HOUND

ning.

CYNTHIA *continue to look expectantly at*

Sorry... *(Speaking together)*

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*(confidence but exasperated)* The trouble!

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one the police?

THE REAL INSPECTOR HOUND

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HOUND I see. *(A pause)* This puts me in a very difficult position.  
*(A steady pause)* Well, I'll be getting along, then. *(He moves towards the entrance right)*

CYNTHIA I'm terribly sorry.

HOUND *(stiffly)* That's perfectly all right.

CYNTHIA *(following him)* Thank you so much for coming.

HOUND Not at all. You never know, there might have been a  
serious matter.

CYNTHIA Drink?

HOUND More serious than that, even.

CYNTHIA *(correcting)* Drink before you go?

HOUND No, thank you.

HOUND *exits right.*

CYNTHIA *(through the door)* I do hope you find him.

HOUND *reappears at once.*

HOUND Find who, madam? Out with it!

CYNTHIA I thought you were looking for the lunatic.

HOUND And what do you know about that?

CYNTHIA It was on the radio.

HOUND Was it, indeed? Well, that's what I'm here about, really.  
I didn't want to mention it because I didn't know how much  
you knew. No point in causing unnecessary panic, even with  
a murderer in our midst!

~~FELICITY Murderer, did you say?~~

~~HOUND Ah—so that was not on the radio?~~

~~CYNTHIA Whom has he murdered, Inspector?~~

~~HOUND Perhaps no-one—yet. Let us hope we are in time.~~

~~MAGNUS You believe he is in our midst, Inspector?~~