

April 2022

Hello and welcome to Commonwealth Artists Student Theatre (CAST)!

While our play, *Shakespeare in Love*, is completely cast, our musical, **Chicago**, is looking for a few more actors. **Chicago**, written by Bob Fosse, John Kander and Fred Ebb, will take place at Highlands High School in Fort Thomas, KY over two weekends with six performances on Friday, July 15th thru Sunday, July 17th and Friday, July 22nd thru Sunday, July 24th.

Chicago: In roaring twenties Chicago, chorine Roxie Hart murders a faithless lover and convinces her hapless husband, Amos, to take the rap...until he finds out he's been duped and turns on Roxie. Convicted and sent to death row, Roxie and another "Merry Murderess," Velma Kelly, vie for the spotlight and the headlines, ultimately joining forces in search of the "American Dream": fame, fortune, and acquittal. This sharp-edged satire features a dazzling score that sparked immortal staging by Bob Fosse.

We are looking for 2-3 guys and 2-3 girls to round out our ensemble for the show.

To audition, you must submit a video audition. All video auditions must be received by 11:59pm on Sunday, May 8th. Video auditions must be sent to info@caststages.org

In the video, we would like you to sing 16 to 32 measure excerpt from a Broadway show like *Chicago* that showcases your vocal talents. No *a cappella* please. We would also like you to record yourself doing a dance audition which can be found at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cOAv359EXsI>

Please make sure to fill out an audition form located at

<https://forms.gle/jGx6howEF5KqxHF68> or <https://tinyurl.com/CASTAud2022>. Please fill out the audition form completely as well as including all schedule conflicts and bring it with you as well as a resume and headshot to your audition time.

The rehearsal schedule will not be completed until we cast the show and look at everyone's conflicts. Rehearsals will be held in the evening until high schools are out of session and then they could be held during the day except for the week of the show opening then rehearsals will be in the evening.

The first rehearsal/parent meeting for *Chicago* has been set and it will be Sunday, May 15th from 6pm to 10pm at Highlands High School in Ft. Thomas, KY.

We understand that participating in this musical requires a commitment. Please consider all activities and work schedules when thinking about joining this production. Make sure that this is an activity you can commit to before auditioning and/or interviewing. Students will have two (2) unexcused absences and any more after that and students will not be allowed to continue in this production or will be removed from certain numbers, scenes, roles or positions. Also note that mandatory rehearsals will occur the week before the show opens and the production week of the show.

Thank you for your interest and we can't wait to see your video audition!!!

A Note About the Casting Process!

Thank you all for your interest in **Commonwealth Artists Student Theatre (CAST)** production of **Chicago**. We can speak for our whole team when we tell you how thrilled we are to finally be auditioning and interviewing for this production. We have been working on the show for a while now and have assembled a great creative team. Break a Leg!

As you prepare for the audition, please remember the following:

- You must be an incoming high school freshman to a graduating high school senior to audition for *Chicago*.

- Any student from any school in the tri-state area (Ohio, Indiana, and Kentucky) may audition for *Chicago* and be considered for any role.

- Every student will be required to pay an activity fee to participate in *Chicago*. The payment will be collected at the first rehearsal/parent meeting in order to participate in all activities related to CAST. The activity fee is \$100. The activity includes participation in the production(s), a t-shirt, a USB of the show, and keepsake gift. If your family has financial hardships, please contact us at amyburgess@caststages.org, we have scholarships available.

-Final casting decisions are made by the production team. Decisions are final, and the team has chosen not to offer feedback on the process, individual auditions, or deliberations. Please respect this and understand that the casting process is difficult for all those involved.

-By auditioning, you are obligating yourself to a considerable rehearsal and performance process. Please be certain that you are willing and able to make this commitment (double and triple check the time commitment).

PLEASE READ CAREFULLY AND SIGN BELOW! THANK YOU FOR AUDITIONING!!!

If I accept a role in **Commonwealth Artists Student Theatre's (CAST)** production of **Chicago**, I will make myself available, and be on time for all scheduled rehearsals and performances. I will not be absent unless I have been given prior approval by the production team. I have read the commitment schedule and listed all known conflicts on this form. I grant permission for the production team and **Commonwealth Artists Student Theatre (CAST)** to use my photograph and/or personal statements to publicize the activities of **CAST** without compensation. I understand that I rehearse and perform at my own risk.

Signature

Parent Signature (If Under 18 years-old)

Date

Parental Consent Form

Dear Parents, I wanted to address common questions regarding our summer production of *Chicago*. As the Artistic Director, I take my role very seriously and working with young actors is one of my favorite parts of the job. I want you to know that I recognize and empathize with your concerns and as with all my productions plan on creating a safe environment for the cast/crew to work in, no matter their age. Below I have listed questions and my answers to them. If you want more information or are still unclear, please feel free to contact me at any time, at jasonburgess@caststages.org or 859-545-0770.

How old does someone have to be to audition for Chicago?

You must be an incoming high school freshman to a graduating high school senior to audition.

Chicago: In roaring twenties Chicago, chorine Roxie Hart murders a faithless lover and convinces her hapless husband, Amos, to take the rap...until he finds out he's been duped and turns on Roxie. Convicted and sent to death row, Roxie and another "Merry Murderess," Velma Kelly, vie for the spotlight and the headlines, ultimately joining forces in search of the "American Dream": fame, fortune, and acquittal. This sharp-edged satire features a dazzling score that sparked immortal staging by Bob Fosse.

Is the show appropriate for my teenager to be a part of?

Only you know your child, and what is best for them. What I can tell you is that *Chicago* is a very engaging and entertaining musical that has been performed all over the world. There is some overtly sexual references and adult language.

What kind of adult supervision will there be during the rehearsal process?

The production team will be present at all rehearsals. We all have experience with children's theatre camps, teaching, and significant theatrical resumes.

Rehearsals start while school is still in session, how flexible is the rehearsal schedule?

The production teams will take all conflicts into account while creating the rehearsal schedule. We do understand your child may still be in school and that their school work is first priority, but beyond that we ask that this commitment be very serious. We are working on a very condensed rehearsal schedule. We also understand some vacation/camps have already been set in family schedules and try to accommodate to the best of our abilities.

Thank you again for your time and reading this thoroughly. In an effort to do the right thing and offer parents the whole truth about the audition/crew interviews process I felt this was necessary. I look forward to meeting you and your child at auditions/crew interviews.

Break A Leg!

-Jason Burgess, Artistic Director

Parent Signature: _____

Parent Name: _____

Synopsis of Chicago the Musical

Chicago is a musical, first performed in 1975, based on the play *Chicago* by Maurine Dallas Watkins. Its book was by Bob Fosse and Fred Ebb, music by John Kander and lyrics by Fred Ebb.

The play *Chicago* was Watkins' retelling of two very public trials for murder that occurred in Chicago in 1924, those of Beulah Annan and Belva Gaertner. Watkins had been a reporter for the Chicago Tribune and later wrote a play based on her coverage.

The show is about a failed chorus girl's, Roxie Hart, murder of her lover, nightclub regular Fred Casely. Roxie convinces her husband Amos that the victim was a burglar, and Amos cheerfully takes the blame. However, when the police mention the deceased's name, Amos belatedly puts two and two together. The truth comes out, and Roxie is arrested and sent to the women's block in Cook County Jail, inhabited by Velma Kelly and other murderesses. The block is presided over by the corrupt Matron "Mama" Morton, whose system of mutual aid perfectly suits her clientèle. Velma is not happy to see Roxie, who is stealing not only her limelight but also her lawyer, Billy Flynn. Roxie tries to convince Amos to pay for Billy Flynn to be her lawyer. Billy takes Roxie's case and re-arranges her story for consumption by sympathetic tabloid columnist Mary Sunshine, who always tries to find "A Little Bit of Good" in everyone. Roxie becomes the new toast of Chicago as Velma's fame is left in the dust. Separately, Roxie and Velma realize there's no one they can count on but themselves and the ever-resourceful Roxie decides that being pregnant in prison would put her back on the front page. A little shy on the arithmetic, Amos proudly claims paternity, and still nobody notices him. With her ego growing, Roxie has a heated argument with Billy, and fires him. She is brought back down to earth when she learns that a fellow inmate has been executed. The trial date arrives, and Billy calms her, telling her if she makes a show of it, she'll be fine. As promised, Billy gets Roxie her acquittal but, just as the verdict is given, some even more sensational crime pulls the pack of press bloodhounds away, and Roxie's fleeting celebrity life is over. Billy leaves, done with the case. Amos stays with her, glad for his wife, but she then confesses that there isn't really a baby, making Amos finally leave her. Left in the dust, Roxie pulls herself up and teams up with Velma in a new act.

Character Descriptions for Chicago

Below you will find descriptions of all characters appearing in *Chicago the Musical*.

Aaron: (Cameo) Hunyak's lawyer.

Amos Hart: (Baritone) Roxie's faithful and good-natured, but incredibly simple husband whom nobody pays attention to. He is a car mechanic who is not very bright and is easily led.

Annie: (Featured) One of the six merry murderesses of the Cook County Jail who is in for killing her Ezekiel for being a bigamist.

Announcer: (Spoken) Announces "Roxie Rocks Chicago!" in Act I and the hanging of Hunyak in Act II.

Bailiff: (Cameo) He is the bailiff of the courthouse and jail.

Billy Flynn: (Baritone) A corrupt defense lawyer who defends both Roxie and Velma, but is more interested in money than in justice. Velma and Roxie's lawyer who has a perfect track record and makes celebrities of his clients to win sympathy and sway public opinion (in his words, "Give them the old razzle-dazzle").

Billy's Girls: (Chorus) These are the female dancers in "All I Care About."

Court Clerk: (Cameo) Clerk of the court for Roxie's trial.

Doctor: (Cameo) Examines Roxie in beginning of Act II.

Foreman: (Cameo) The leader of the jury in Roxie's trial.

Fred Casely: (Spoken) A furniture salesman who is the lover of Roxie who shoots him for walking out on her.

Go-to-Hell Kitty: (Cameo) Kitty begins to overshadow Roxie's fame when she kills her boyfriend, Harry, and his two mistresses upon catching them ALL together.

Harrison: (Spoken) The senior prosecution lawyer (district attorney) who is responsible for accusing Roxie of murder in the court.

Harry: (Cameo) Go-To-Hell Kitty's Former Boyfriend.

Hunyak: (Featured) One of the six merry murderesses of the Cook County Jail who is accused of killing her husband, although we really don't know why because she speaks Hungarian.

Judge: (Spoken) The judge in Roxie's case.

June: (Featured) One of the six merry murderesses of the Cook County Jail who is in for killing her Wilbur because he thinks she's been cheating on him with the milkman.

Liz: (Featured) One of the six merry murderesses of the Cook County Jail who is in for killing her Bernie for popping gum.

"Mama" Morton: (Alto) Governess at the Cook County Jail, where both Roxie and Velma are put in the "Murderers' Row" section before their court trails. The matron of the Cook County Jail who believes that all favors she gives should be reciprocated.

Mary Sunshine: (Contra-Tenor) A lady reporter/gossip columnist for a local Chicago newspaper who follows the trials of both Roxie Hart and Velma Kelly. Originally written for a counter tenor in drag, although a woman sometimes plays it.

Master of Ceremonies: (Spoken) Introduces "acts" throughout the course of the show.

Mona: (Featured) One of the six merry murderesses of the Cook County Jail who is in for killing her Alvin because of his affairs with three women... and one man.

Reporters: (Chorus) These are the reporters in "We Both Reached For the Gun."

Roxie Hart: (Mezzo/Alto) A former chorus girl, wannabe vaudevillian and murderess who kills her ex-boyfriend, furniture salesman Fred Casely, after a spat and is sent to jail. She hires Billy Flynn to help prove her innocence as well as make a name for herself.

Roxie's Boys: (Chorus) These are the boys in "Roxie."

Sergeant Fogarty: (Spoken) The man who investigates the murder of Fred Casely and questions Amos Hart.

Tailor: (Cameo) He is making a suit for Billy Flynn during the scene between Billy & Amos.

Velma Kelly: (Alto) A singer who used to perform a double act with her sister, but killed her husband and her sister after finding them in bed together. A vaudevillian and murderess that is on trial for murder. She is also represented by Billy Flynn and competes with Roxie Hart over him.