



Metropolitan Homeschool Productions presents, *The Taming of the Shrew*
Blackbox Theatre, Metropolitan School of the Arts
June 20-23, 2019

About this Production

The Taming of the Shrew is a 75-minute edit of the play by William Shakespeare. It is his original language, with a few of the more antiquated words substituted with modern ones to gently clarify the text while retaining Shakespeare's meter and poetry. It is not a paraphrased version. *Taming* draws upon a form of Italian slapstick comedy of the 16th-18th century called Commedia del Arte, which is 'slapstick' or physical comedy. MHP's production will add music, dance, pantomime with opportunities for live, instrumental music. It will be performed by students ages 13-18. The show can be cast with up to twenty-five, seventeen of which are speaking roles. A few younger students may be *invited* to join this cast.

Students ages 10-12 will perform a lively and fun parody of *Taming* that will help the audience understand what they are about to see in the full version. We will imagine that we are a band of children in an Elizabethan acting troupe (which is historically accurate!). As well as acting the troupe may include other forms of performance such as dancing, singing and any other special skills that students might be proficient in or willing to learn such as juggling, acrobatics, telling jokes and/or stories, magic tricks, playing instruments, etc. It can be cast with as many as twenty students. This piece will be a work in progress. Roles will most likely mirror *The Taming of the Shrew* in some way.

There will be one or two dances in both productions, but the choreography won't be overly complicated. Some of those in the *Taming* ensemble (those playing the minor roles) will have opportunities to show off other skills (singing, acrobatics, etc.). We are also giving those who can play musical instruments (but don't necessarily want to sing or dance) an opportunity to participate.

Where are auditions? Where will it be rehearsed and performed?

All auditions, rehearsals and performances will take place at Metropolitan School of the Arts, 5775 Barclay Drive, Alexandria, VA 22315. The performances will be in the Black Box Theatre, a 120-seat theatre that allows for a unique, intimate experience between actor and audience.

What is the rehearsal and performance schedule?

Weekly Rehearsals:

- Tuesdays, January 8 - May 25, 2:30 - 4:30 pm (no rehearsal on Tuesday 4/16 & 5/5)
- Tuesday, June 11, 11:30 - 4:30 pm
- Fridays, May 17, 24, 31 & June 7 & 14, 12:00 – 3:00 pm.

Production and performance week:

- June 17 & 18, 9:00 am - 6:00 pm
- June 19, 9:00 am - 8:00 pm (Final Dress from 5:00 - 8:00 p.m.)
- June 20-23: 12:00 noon - 9:00 pm (Performances are at 2:00 & 7:00 pm, Th-Sat and 2:00 & 5:30 pm on Sunday, strike is after final performance and all are expected to stay)

For a full, calendar-style schedule, please go to <https://metropolitanhomeschool.org/taming-schedule>.

I noticed that you offer home school classes on Tuesdays and Fridays. Do I have to be enrolled to participate in the production?

No, no one is required to be enrolled in Tuesday classes or Friday classes. However, we do encourage enroll-





ment for those that are serious about expanding their performance skills and want to be challenged by professional acting, voice and dance teachers.

I'd love to be in a show, but I have a hard time understanding Shakespeare. How can I overcome this?

Shakespeare is not hard to understand with a little patience and the right tools. First, we will be working on fully understanding every word of the text during rehearsals. For the audition, you can find summaries of the play online and in wonderful books like *Tales from Shakespeare* by Charles and Mary Lamb or *Shakespeare's Stories* by Leon Garfield. There are also some 'okay' productions of the play on DVD, but parents need to watch these first as adult versions tend to get rather 'bawdy'. Our production will be strictly rated 'G'. All are encouraged to find a copy of a side-by-side paraphrased version (in libraries and bookstores) which will help in the immediate understanding of the play.

Who is working on the production?

Director: Barbara Schwartz

Assistant to the Director/Choreographer: Diane Spinelli Musical

Director: Maia Rodriguez

The Creative Team includes:

Production Design: Steve Schwartz

Costumes: Designed and rented from a professional costuming company, TBA

*Student Assistants in Directing, Dance and Music: TBA Parent

assistants: TBA

**Students are welcome to apply for these positions as part of our mentorship program. Please contact bschwartz@metropolitanarts.org to learn more.*

What is the cost of participating and where does the money go?

The cost per child for participating in the production is \$250. There is a \$15 audition fee. The \$250 covers all production costs (set, lights, sound, props, publicity, resources, copies, photographer, some improvements to the Black Box as needed). Most of this fee covers the rental of professional costumes. The director and musical director receive small stipends for their work, depending on the budget needs of the show. The \$15 audition fee covers administrative costs.

I've got questions. Who's got answers?

After reading these FAQ's, if you still have questions please refer to the following resources:

Prior to auditions:

- Go to <https://metropolitanhomeschool.org/2019-spring-production/>. You will find more information in links to:
 - Registration for an audition time
 - Ideas/downloads for audition material
 - The script for *The Taming of the Shrew*
 - Character descriptions and synopsis
- Contact Barbara Schwartz, bschwartz@metropolitanarts.org for questions regarding the text and anything regarding the audition process.
- Contact Diane Spinelli, dspinelli@metropolitanarts.org for questions about registration for auditions.

During auditions: Ask anyone with a nametag or someone at the front desk.





To change or cancel your audition appointment, call the studio: 703-339-0444

When are the audition dates?

- Tuesday, September 18 & 25, 2:30-4:30 pm
- Friday, September 21, 10:00 am-12:00 noon
- Callbacks will be Friday, September 28, 10:00 am-12:00 noon

Auditionees must attend the entire two-hour block of time in their chosen slot for auditions and callbacks.

Do I have to have an appointment to audition and if so, how do I register?

Yes. It helps us to be fully prepared and enables the director to gauge the best use of time. To arrange an audition, register at <https://metropolitanhomeschool.org/taming-audition> and click on the link "Audition Registration". We will confirm your appointment by email.

How old do I have to be to audition?

All performers must turn 10 prior to January 1st to be eligible to audition. Performers must be home schooled and still in high school.

What does a director look for at auditions?

UNDERSTANDING – do you know what you are saying?

VOCAL QUALITIES – expressiveness, articulation and projection.

MOVEMENT SKILLS – can you move like the character, express with your body in gesture, posture, stance?

Would the character stand straight or tall? Walk fast or slow?

CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT – *who is this person and what is he/she after? What motivates them? How would they get what they want?*

We also look at height, age, and hair color to consider what role you might fit into and how other actors might match up to you in that role. The same criterion is true for callbacks.

What role should I ask for?

We will not be asking which role/roles students prefer because most will want to be considered only for the leads. Asking which role an actor wants to play also leads to disappointment when 99% of the students will not get the leading male/female roles. We are concerned with casting all actors in roles that will *challenge them to go to their next level*. We emphasize *ensemble* and that *everyone* must work together to create a beautifully compelling and *convincing* story. "Everyone" includes leads, directors, designers, crew, parents and staff. If you wish to be part of something amazing – something much bigger than any one role - then this production is for you!

If I am cast what is the rehearsal schedule like?

Rehearsals will begin January 8th, 2:30-4:30. We will rehearse every Tuesday at that time (refer to full rehearsal schedule on the website). Not every character may be called for every rehearsal. The number of rehearsals you attend depends on your role.

What if I have conflicts with the rehearsal schedule?

Please list all known conflicts based on the rehearsal schedule given above. List conflicts even if you do not know exact dates or times yet (such as vacations, speech/debate or sporting tournaments). Please be forthright. Directors must juggle the schedules of 50+ people including tech staff when setting the rehearsal schedule and it is very difficult to adjust for conflicts after it is set. There may be an occasion where an actor must miss a





rehearsal after casting due to illness or family emergency. The directors should be told as soon possible about these types of conflicts. We will do our best to honor conflicts if they are kept to a minimum and ***IF THEY ARE LISTED*** on the audition form. Actors requiring being excused for more than four rehearsals might not be considered for lead roles. Minor absences will not affect casting in leads. Parents should let us know immediately if the family has been transferred and/or must move suddenly during the rehearsal period, causing their child to discontinue participation in the production. *Actors MUST be available for the all rehearsals and performances during production week.*

What if I am cast in another production after I am cast in yours? Can I still be in your production?

Our once-a-week rehearsal schedule makes being in other productions possible. However, before you sign on to another production after agreeing to participate in *Taming*, please make sure that director understands that you have committed to our production first and any conflicts with our schedule will need to be excused. *This includes any tech week rehearsals that conflict with our Tuesday rehearsals.* Other directors should be willing to work around our schedule, as they would want the same respect given to their schedules when a student agrees to be in their production first.

N.B.: We ask that performers pace themselves accordingly and consider carefully when auditioning for multiple shows: those who do too many productions back-to-back or simultaneously risk exhaustion and injury to body and voice which are a performing artist precious instrument. Taking proper care of oneself is the main task of great performers.

How should I prepare for my audition?

For actors/singers/dancers ages 13-18: Once you have registered for an audition you can download the script from the website and read it. Chose a one-minute monologue from the show, or any other Shakespearean comedy and memorize it, making sure that you understand the text and that you add some natural movement and gesture. A link to a very helpful website with all of Shakespeare's major monologues from his plays can be found [HERE](#).

For actors/singers/dancers ages 10-12: Once you have registered for an audition, you should become familiar with the plot via a good summary (you can read the excellent Charles and Mary Lamb version online [HERE](#)). Chose and memorize a 30-45 second monologue from any show or you many use your favorite poem.

For vocalists: A singing audition is not required for this show, but it is highly recommended as it shows versatility and opens you up to more casting possibilities. Unless you have an aversion to singing in public, please prepare for this portion of the audition. Please go to www.metropolitanhomeschool.org/taming-audition and click on the link "How to Prepare for a Singing Audition" for very helpful resources. Please note that you will need to bring in your own mp3 track of music – please, do not sing A CAPELLA (without accompaniment). You can find resources for karaoke tracks on the webpage mentioned above.

For all: When you perform your acting and vocal pieces, pick a point on the wall behind the directors as the person to whom you are speaking/singing – it is best to not look directly at the directors while performing.

Movement/dance: All actors will have a movement audition. Please come prepared by wearing the suggested clothing below, under "What do I wear to auditions?" Be prepared to move and have fun!

For musicians: We are looking for those who can play flute or recorder, guitar, percussion, trumpet and violin. We are not looking for pianists for this production. Please come prepared with a one-minute piece of music of your own choosing, and your instrument. It is possible to be a musician and a part of the ensemble, taking a





minor role.

The most important preparation you can do is to come prepared to have fun! We want to get to know you and your personality. The best way to do that is to relax and enjoy the audition process, even if you might feel nervous.

What will happen at the audition?

When you arrive at the Metropolitan School of the Arts go to the Audition Check-in Desk. You will pay the audition fee and receive an identification number to wear. If for some reason you were not able to register online, you will need to fill out the audition form. The studio will print out all registration forms that were filled out online. You may bring a resume and headshot (but they are not required). Bring a device for playing your mp3 track (required if you are singing). When you are called for your singing and/or acting audition you will enter the room where the director will be waiting (eagerly!) for you. Someone will snap a quick picture of you for identification purposes ONLY. Besides performing your acting and/or vocal piece, you may be asked to participate in improvisational games and movement exercises.

What do I wear to auditions?

Wear comfortable clothing that allows you to move/crawl/jump without risk of embarrassment and does not mask the size and shape of your body. If you are called back it is a good idea to wear the same clothing you wore on the day of your audition. Please do not wear boots, sandals, flip flops, or open toed shoes. Light sneakers or jazz shoes (if you already own them) will facilitate movement and are the best types of shoes to wear for an audition.

What is a callback and when are they?

A callback is a Director's second look at you and your skills. With the number of people that we will see at auditions, it is often important to bring *some* people back – but not everyone will be called back. They are scheduled for Friday, September 28th from 10:00 am – 12:00 noon.

How do I know if I am called back?

Everyone who auditions will receive an email with a list of those who should attend callbacks. If you do not receive an email from us by 5:00 p.m. Thursday, September 27th you should email the Director at bschwartz@metropolitanarts.org.

I didn't get called back; does that mean I'm not cast?

Just because you are not called back does not mean you were not cast! You may be perfect for a role and consequently may not need to come back. If the Director knows your skills very well (perhaps you were in a show with her previously) she may have chosen to see only people with whom she is less familiar.

When and how will you announce the cast?

The target announcement date and time is 6 pm, on Friday, October 5th. We will send an email to all those who auditioned to announce the cast. You may email bschwartz@metropolitanarts.org after 8 p.m. if you do not receive the email.

If I am cast how do I know when to rehearse?

The rehearsal schedule will be provided before the first rehearsal on January 8th. The full cast will be rehearsing together for the first two rehearsals, at least. Everyone should keep all Tuesdays from 2:30-4:30 open regardless as we need flexibility.





If I am cast, what do I need to provide?

Actors are required to provide appropriate shoes, socks, undergarments, and all make-up supplies as determined by the director. Dress or dance shoes may cost between twenty and sixty dollars. Undergarments such as leotards, camisoles, and under shirts may also be required. The production staff will do their best to help you find cost-effective options. Outer costumes and rehearsal pieces will be provided by the production.

How are parents involved?

It is the parents' responsibility to ensure their child arrives and departs in a timely fashion for all scheduled activities and will be the main contact person for the family, receiving all updates concerning the production.

In addition, we ask parents to volunteer some time to the production. These volunteers may help with ushering for performances, box office, costume fittings and alterations, publicity, installing the set and lights - just to name just a few. No parent will be asked to volunteer beyond their capacity or experience. Families may also volunteer older teens to take their place, if it is difficult for a parent to fill in.

Technical Positions for Teens

We also offer technical positions as a way of helping to train the next generation of theatre technicians. Students must have turned 14 by January 1st, 2019 to apply. Contact bschwartz@metropolitanarts.org and send your name, contact info, the position for which you are interested, and we will arrange an interview.

Available Positions:

Wardrobe / Dressers

These positions work with the Costume Mistress to maintain the costumes once they arrive. Assist with fast changes during performances and any laundry/maintenance during the run. Must be available for costume fittings, tech rehearsals and performances.

Light or Sound Board Operator

Runs the cues and board for all technical rehearsals and performances. Works very closely with the Production Designer and Director. Must be available for tech-in, all technical rehearsals and performances. These are ideal positions for a student interested in audio, video or film production.

Stage Hands

Works during tech rehearsals and performances managing scene shifts and props management. Specific duties will be determined and split among those who are interested and available. Must be available during tech in, tech rehearsals and performances.

