

Philo's BARNUM – Audition Pack



BARNUM

P.T. Barnum, the Greatest Showman on Earth, combines razzle-dazzle with charm and brass to sell “humbug” to cheering crowds. A joyful and moving musical portrait of the nineteenth century’s greatest show-biz legend, BARNUM is a colorful, dynamic spectacle with heart. Cy Coleman and Michael Stewart’s rousing score includes “There’s a Sucker Born Every Minute,” “Join the Circus,” “The Colors of My Life,” and “Come Follow The Band.”

Philo’s production of *BARNUM* will be performed at Erindale Theatre in August/September 2018.

Creative Team

Director – Anita Davenport

Choreographer – Jodi Hammond

Music Director – Rhys Madigan

From the Director

Roll Up, Roll Up, Roll Up!!!

I'm delighted that you're interested in auditioning for Barnum the musical. This show is all about spectacle, wonder and trickery – with the obligatory heart touching love story of course! We will be building a world of wonder that will transport people from the everyday and bring colour to their lives.

Barnum's life would easily give material for several shows, with his wide-ranging career and adventurous spirit. The show premiered in the 1980's, with recent revivals proving that the themes are still resonating with audiences today. The most recent version of Barnum's story was portrayed by Hugh Jackman in the film "The Greatest Showman". While the film differs greatly in the musical styles and story arc, the spirit of Barnum and the magic he created are in similar in both.

In true circus spirit we plan on welcoming all people, with racially diverse/colour-blind casting in place for all roles.

Circus Within the Musical

Circus forms a big part of the spectacle of 'Barnum' but at its heart this is a musical. We want to see you give your best performance, whether this is as a singer, actor, dancer or circus performer (or any combination of these!). There is a wide variety of roles within the show to cater for a range of skill levels in different areas, so unleash your inner showman and captivate us with whatever your talent is!

For those of you with no circus skills – don't despair, we will need a range of singers, actors and dancers for this to be a well-rounded performance.

For those of you with circus skills but no musical or dance experience – don't despair either! Just like any big top show we can play to your strengths and help you to expand your talents in new areas.

The actor cast as Barnum will need to be open to learning some of these skills but does not have to possess them already – after all he is the master of humbug!!!

I look forward to seeing you audition!

Anita Davenport
Director

Character Details

Lead Roles

Character	Requirements	Gender / Age	Description
Phineas Taylor Barnum	Baritone, Strong Actor, Singer and Dancer. Ability to do any magic tricks, balance on high wire etc would be an advantage.	Male, Adult 30yrs+	Our lead character, the real showman. Charismatic, talks to audience. Part Owner of Barnum and Bailey Circus.
Charity ("Chairy") Barnum	Mezzo Soprano, Good Actor and Dancer.	Female, 30+	Phineas Barnum's plain and loyal wife. A strong, independent, caring woman.
Joice Heth	Alto, Good Mover. African American if possible but not essential.	Female, 40+	Oldest woman alive.
Tom Thumb	Tenor, Strong Singer & Dancer. Acrobatics if possible.	Male, 20+	The smallest man in the world - a huge success in Barnum's show.
Jenny Lind	Soprano	Female, 25+	A beautiful, glamorous Swedish Operatic Soprano.
Blues Singer	Alto, Good Mover. African American if possible but not essential.	Female, 18+	Smooth Blues Singer (has one song in Act 2). Will also be in Ensemble. May be same actor as Joice Heth.
James A. Bailey	Baritone, Good Mover	Male, 30+	Circus Ringmaster who eventually becomes Barnum's Partner in the Barnum and Bailey Circus.

Supporting Roles

Character	Requirements	Gender / Age	Description
Amos Scudder	Act only*	Male, Aged 30+	Owner of American Museum and Barnum's first Partner + Ensemble
Julius Goldschmidt	Act Only	Male, 30+	Jenny Lind's Manager
Chester Lyman	Act Only	Male, 30+	Joice Heth's Manager
Sherwood Stratton	Act Only	Male, 40+	Tom Thumb's Father
Mrs Stratton	Act Only	Female, 40+	Tom Thumb's Mother
Wilton	Act Only	Male, 20+	Barnum's Assistant
Edgar Templeton	Act Only	Male, 20 +	Political Party Boss
Humbert Morrissey	Act Only	Male, 20 +	Political Party Boss

Notes:

- **Act Only:** This is the minimum requirement for the role. All auditionees will still be required to complete the singing and dancing components.
- **Age:** These are preferred stage ages only – we will consider younger/older auditionees for all roles.

- Aside from Charity, Barnum and Jenny Lind, we are open to other roles being played by actors of the opposite gender.

Ensemble

There are numerous minor roles that will be chosen from the ensemble once auditions have been completed. These include; Tumblers, Jugglers, Clowns, Aerialists, Acrobats, Gymnasts, Bricklayers, Passersby, Museum Patrons, Strong Men, Beefeaters, The "Mob" in General, The Bridgeport Pageant Choir, and Bands of Every Size, Shape and Description.

Further reference

- A film of the 1980s production starring Michael Crawford is available on YouTube:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ixb8x5mu5do>

Audition Details

Your audition session will include a singing component, a group dance component, an acting component (depending on role) and optionally a circus skills component. Please allow one hour and arrive 10 minutes prior to the session start time.

Four sessions are available to choose when you book:

- Thursday April 19, evening (from 7 pm), venue TBC
- Friday April 20, evening (from 7 pm), 18 Collie St, Fyshwick
- Sunday April 22, morning (from 10 am), 18 Collie St, Fyshwick
- Sunday April 22, afternoon (from 1 pm), 18 Collie St, Fyshwick

Depending on numbers, we may schedule you earlier or later within these sessions. If you have a preference, please note this when you book.

You will be assessed by a panel consisting of the production team and a member of the Philo committee.

Bookings

All audition bookings are via our website: <http://philo.org.au/auditions>. Auditions are via prior appointment only. We encourage you to book in quickly to secure your preferred time and to help us schedule any additional capacity if needed.

Notes:

- For lead roles, acting script audition material for lead roles will be emailed to you after you book an audition.
- You should receive a confirmation email once you have booked in online (check your spam folder).
- We will also follow up to confirm a specific time and to send you an audition form to fill in and bring along on the day.. If you do not hear from us within a few days, please send us an email.

To request a change your time, please email auditions@philo.org.au. If you cannot make the available times, please email through your details (preferably the form of a theatrical CV) and we will decide whether we would like to hear your audition at another time.

Eligibility

All auditionees must be at least 16 years of age.

At this stage, we are considering casting a small number (1-3) youth performers (aged 10-15) for specialist acting roles or with circus skills. If you are interested, please submit a theatrical CV to auditions@philo.org.au (do not book an audition). We will consider your CV and make a decision after the casting from the main round of auditions has been completed.

Audition Requirements

Singing Component

Please prepare one song of your own choice. The song **must not** be from BARNUM.

Consider the following when selecting a song:

- Choose a song that shows off your voice and that you know well.
- It should be a song that allows you to *perform*. While we're not looking for costumes, props or dance moves in singing auditions, we do want to see how you can sell your song.
- It should showcase your talent in a short time (1-2 minutes). We advise removing extended instrumental breaks or introductions from your backing track or sheet music so that your audition time is used to full capacity.
- The song should preferably be in the style of the show (classic Broadway and/or jazz), however, if you know another song from a different period that you think you can perform better, then choose that song. We want to see strong voices and performances foremost.

If you are auditioning for a principal role:

- Please prepare a second song in a contrasting style. We may not need to hear this song.
- Although we do not want you to sing the songs for your role from BARNUM, we expect you to be familiar with the vocal and character requirements (please consult cast recordings). Ideally, your audition song should be aligned to these. E.g. if you are auditioning for Jenny Lind, a classical soprano style.

If you are auditioning for ensemble:

- All vocal ranges will be considered. If you don't know your vocal range, that's also fine! The musical director may ask you to sing some simple scales to assess on the day.
- We do understand that if you're "not a singer", this can be intimidating. But you are auditioning for a musical where everyone will be (or at least need to appear to be!) singing on stage, and we do need to see effort towards this.

You must sing with accompaniment. You can either bring:

- A backing track on your phone or iPod (we will have an iPhone 7 connector)
- Sheet music for the accompanist (in the correct key, with any cuts indicated, and pages in the right order, etc.).
 - We recommend having a run through with your own accompanist or singing teacher before the audition to check that the sheet music is in the correct key!
 - On the day, please feel free to take a few moments to talk to the accompanist about the overall tempo, direction, and cuts or changes, before starting your song.

We appreciate the effort you put towards preparing your song and we endeavour to hear as much as we can. However, due to time limitations, if the Audition Panel feels they have heard enough to determine your vocal quality, they may stop you mid song. This should not be taken as any indicator of whether you will or will not be cast.

Acting Component

For lead roles, you will be required to read a small excerpt from the show. There is no expectation that you will know this reading or be able to recite it to the panel without reading. You are welcome to hold the written words. We will be looking for your use of expression, ability to project and take direction. You may be asked to read the excerpt using a particular character style. You should also be prepared to move outside what may be considered the standard character for the role.

Dancing Component

All auditionees will be required to participate in a dance/movement audition. Those auditioning for ensemble will learn and perform a short choreographed routine as a group. Auditionees for particular principal roles will be taught an extended sequence.

Please wear clothes that you feel comfortable dancing and moving in. Do not wear dresses, skirts, or high heels.

Circus Skills (optional)

Please provide details of any circus skills you may have on your audition form – detailing training and experience. If you don't have any formal training, please let us know anything you can do (or would be willing to learn!) E.g. acrobatics, gymnastics, stilt walking, juggling, high wire skills, magic tricks, etc.

If you are auditioning on the basis of your strength as a circus performer (e.g. not necessarily a strong singer, dancer, actor), we will need to see a demonstration of your ability. Please let us know if you plan to do this we will need to schedule time accordingly (including setup).

Please feel free to contact our auditions coordinator and talk over the phone to discuss what is practical, safe, etc. If you would like to audition with a partner, or helper, that is also fine, but let us know.

We understand that if you are coming from a circus background (rather than musical theatre), that you may not be as confident with the singing or dancing components. However, we do need to see what you can do. I.e., **all auditionees** are required to complete the singing and dancing sections.

Callbacks and Notifications

Callbacks, if required, will be held on Monday April 23.

If you are required for a call back, the Production Team will invite you directly by phone or email, to provide you with a call back time, and a specified song and reading to practice and

perform at your call back. Please ensure you **write your contact information clearly** on your audition form, and include an email address and phone number.

We will make every effort to make final casting decisions quickly, as we appreciate that no-one likes waiting for the casting announcement. We expect to notify auditionees on Wednesday April 25 – if there is any delay to the process, we will advise via email.

If you are successful in your audition, we will attempt to contact you by phone to offer you the role. If unsuccessful, we will notify you via email.

Important Notes for all Auditionees

- Audition time is strictly limited so use your time to show the panel what you can do. No extra time will be available. The panel will be looking for vocal quality, range and pitch as well as dramatic and movement ability.
- Audition pieces should be well prepared. Remember, it is in your own interests to present yourself well.
- All auditions are private and may only be attended by the panel and auditionees.
- Please don't apologise to the panel for the state of your health or your voice. We have heard (and tried!) all these excuses before!
- And most of all, enjoy it!! This is your moment to shine!

Please note that Canberra Philharmonic Society reserves the right to not cast any role from these auditions if, in the opinion of the Audition Panel, the right person for the role is not found. In this event the Society may pursue other means to fill a vacant role.

Performance and Rehearsal Dates

Performances

13 shows from 23 August to 8 Sep.

Rehearsals

Rehearsals commence Monday May 7 and will be held on:

- **Monday** and **Wednesday** evenings 7 -10 pm and
- **Sundays** 10 am – 5 pm

Not all cast will be called to all rehearsals initially.

If you are intending on auditioning for other shows or know of any time that you need to have off during the rehearsal period (e.g. concerts, work, study, dance/singing/acting lessons, sport, holidays etc.), could you please write this on your audition form. It will not necessarily impact your casting. It will however ensure the Production Team allocates rehearsals appropriately. If you audition well and we want to include you in the show, this enables us to work around your commitments when drawing up the rehearsal schedule.