

AUDITIONS NOTICE

Chips with Everything by Arnold Wesker

NEW AUDITION DATES NOW ADDED IN JANUARY

Please read carefully all the details, in particular rehearsal dates. Please do not audition if you have significant clashes or regular unavailability within the rehearsal period, or any unavailability during the performance period. If you are unsure whether unavailability will be an issue please check first by emailing jez.pike@maddermarket.org

Production Dates: 19th-27th June (10 performances – 7.30pm Monday-Friday & Saturday plus 2.30pm on both Saturdays. No performance Sunday).

Location: Main House **Director:** Jen Dewsbury **Assistant Director:** Jan Hewitt

Rehearsal Dates: The read-through will be on a date in early to mid-April – to be agreed following casting. Rehearsals will start either the week of the 27th April or the 4th May and will consist of between 4-5 weekday evening rehearsals a week. The standard rehearsal times will be 7-10pm. The technical rehearsal for which the cast should have afternoon and evening availability will be Sunday 14th June. There will be 4 dress rehearsals, on the evenings of the 15th, 16th, 17th & 18th June.

Audition Dates: *All auditions will be held at The Maddermarket Theatre. There will be signs directing you where to go on arrival.*

1st Round:

Option A: Thurs 9th Jan (one-to-one time slots between 7 & 10pm)

Option B: Fri 10th Jan (one-to-one time slots between 7 & 10pm)

Recall: Sat 18th Jan (group session between 6pm & 9pm)

Please note that all auditionees should in principal be available for at least one of the recall audition. If you are unable to make any of the audition dates but would still like to be seen, contact the director jen.dewsbury@icloud.com and alternative arrangements may be possible, though are not guaranteed.

Format of auditions: The first round of auditions will be text focused consisting of a chat and reading of extracts with the director. Each slot will be approximately 30 minutes long. In the recall auditions, actors will be called in groups. The recalls will include both working on sections of the play with other actors and group exercises, in a 'workshopping'-style environment.

All extracts used will be provided in advance. These extracts do not need to be learnt by heart. Actors should seek to be familiar with them enough to read confidently and be able to lift their eyes off the page as much as possible. It is strongly advised that auditionees read the whole play before auditioning.

The Maddermarket is committed to making its audition process as accessible as possible. Auditionees may request that reasonable adjustments are made to the audition process in order for them to attend and participate. Please contact the Director of Productions, Jez Pike – jez.pike@maddermarket.org to enquire.

How to sign-up

Please download the Auditions Submission Form from the website. Complete and return it as an attachment to the Director of Productions at The Maddermarket Theatre, Jez Pike at jez.pike@maddermarket.org. Your information will then be processed, stored and distributed in accordance with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). The director of the production, Jen Dewsbury, will then contact you via email to arrange an audition slot.

Please note that all auditionees must complete an 'Auditions Submission Form' **prior** to auditioning, even if they have had existing contact with or made informal arrangements with the director of that production.

Obtaining Audition Extracts & the script

Scans of the audition extracts will be emailed to you when your audition form has been received. Alternatively hard copies can be picked up from the theatre office (10.30am-6pm, Mon-Fri). In addition a scan of the script may be requested by email, or alternatively a reading copy is available at the theatre office to read on-site.

About the Play

Pip - "You breed babies, and you eat chips with everything".

It's the early 1950s. A group of Air Force conscripts begin eight weeks of 'square-bashing' - basic military drill. Among them is Pip Thompson an upper class idealist, who, when conscripted for National Service, insists that he wishes to be treated as one of the men and not trained to be an officer. His socialist views have been conditioned by observing the squalor of London's East End, typified by greasy cafés, offering 'chips with everything'.

In the middle of fierce discipline and seemingly endless parade-ground drilling, Pip gradually wins over his fellow conscripts to his revolutionary thinking. So when, for example, at a Christmas party, the Wing Commander suggests that the men should sing a pop song, Pip gets his men to sing an old revolutionary folk song. The men still don't quite trust him, but Pip wins them over when he leads a successful raid on some guarded stores. Because Pip refuses to 'toe the line' by becoming an officer, his fellow conscripts are made to suffer.

Eventually, an officer persuades Pip that his motives are unworthy or even born of laziness: 'Among your own people the competition was too great, but here, among lesser men...you could be king.' Pip relents, first by accepting an order to bayonet-charge a straw dummy, then by agreeing to become an officer. One of the recruits, Smiler, is badly bullied by the NCOs for having an unfortunately smiley face, tries to escape, but is caught and beaten. When the men threaten to rebel over this, it's Pip, donning an officer's uniform, who diffuses the situation. The play ends with the men drilling immaculately to the national anthem.

About the Production

The play was written for and has always been performed by a cast of entirely male actors. HOWEVER...this production will take a radical new approach. A cast of actors identifying as female and/or gender non-conforming (GNC) will play the male characters, to discover and challenge the play's innate notions of masculinity and gender-orientated power structures.

The approach promises to create a distinct rehearsal-room camaraderie as well as offering interesting challenges to performers. At one point in the play the conscripts stage a daring SILENT night time raid to steal more coal for their fire - actors will need to get **creative & physical**.

The production team will include a drill sergeant and the rehearsal process will draw closely on the culture of military training which will enable the cast to encounter their characters and the world in which they exist in, with authenticity. It promises to be a unique rehearsal room atmosphere...both challenging and fun.

Casting Breakdown

The Maddermarket is committed ensuring its volunteer community – both onstage and off – reflects and celebrates the diversity of the world of which it is a part of. We welcome interest from actors of all backgrounds and identifications and our productions strive to approach casting with a progressive and flexible mind-set at all times.

The production is seeking 18 to 20 performers, with playing ages 18 – 60s who are willing to throw themselves into the project and enjoy the process as much as the performance.

CHARACTERS

The Conscripts

CANNIBAL (ARCHIE) Number 239 - character aged 18)

WINGATE (CHAS) Number 252 - character aged 18, Londoner, 2 girlfriends at home

THOMPSON (PIP) Number 276 – character aged 18, father is a banker, office material but seems to despise both the officers and his fellow conscripts for their class values

SEAFORD (WIFIE) Number 247 - character aged 18, sings

ANDREW MCCLURE Number 284 - character aged 19, Scottish

RICHARDSON (GINGER) Number 272 - character aged 17, small stature

COHEN (DOGER) Number 277 - character aged 17 - small stature, family owns a pram shop

SMITH (DICKY) Number 266 - character aged 19

WASHINGTON (SMILER) Number 279 – character aged 18, always looks like he's smiling which gets him into trouble

The Officers

CORPORAL HILL - stocky Northerner, a caricature of the drill sergeant, tough, unfeeling and dedicated to the single-minded purpose of turning out perfect fighting men. On the other hand, he is genuinely concerned with the welfare of the recruits assigned to him. Plays the harmonica (it is not necessary for actors to already be able to play; either a sufficient standard can be learnt during rehearsals or an alternative choice can be found).

WING COMMANDER - dedicated to two propositions: first, that the military commitment is the most important concern of contemporary society; two, that the fighting men of the line are trash and it is the duty of the upper classes to mould that trash into worthy articles to be adapted into the social apparatus.

SQUADRON LEADER - believes that the only duty of the average man is discipline and obedience and the duty of the members of the upper classes is to command that discipline and obedience.

PILOT OFFICER - 'a tall, weak thing' obsessed with cleanliness. He sees the whole world as a breeding place for bacteria that have no function but to create disease. It is his self-appointed duty to clean up that breeding ground and to make it sterile.

P. T. INSTRUCTOR, FLT SGT - sees as his duty the building of Greek gods. The average man is, to him, an anaemic creature unworthy of living in an enlightened society.

Very small roles

GUARD

NIGHT CORPORAL

FIRST CORPORAL - BULLIES SMILER

SECOND CORPORAL - BULLIES SMILER

AIRMAN

**The production would benefit from having a harmonica and or guitar/ukulele player. This could be through an existing part or alternatively an extra non-speaking role could be created. Interest from musicians with no/limited acting experience therefore welcome.*