Measure for Measure

Thank you for making the time to prepare for and participate in this casting process with us! We are so grateful.

I am looking for kind, collaborative, curious humans who are ready to put the text to work and also to walk towards the things that are scary. I am looking for actors who are prepared to take the risk of vulnerability and connection in a consent-based, scaffolded process to tell a story that is, by turns, funny, rude, frightening, unjust, and terribly sad.

Content disclosure —

The play explores themes and contains depictions of abuse of power, sexual violence, wrongful incarceration, carceral childbirth, and profound injustice. Religion is weaponized by one or more of the characters. There is an implication of a summary execution in the text.

- Angelo first propositions, and then assaults Isabel.
- Claudio is made to prepare for his own execution.
- Juliet has her baby while in the prison.
- Pompey, Froth, and Elbow have some funny physical business together when they are brought before Angelo.

Description of characters —

The role of the Duke will be played by MFA student Chris Thorn.

The role of Escalus will be played by David Lee Painter.

All other roles are available. Several actors will play more than one part, as has been true with Shakespeare’s texts since the King’s Men first performed these plays 400 years ago.

If there are any roles that you are specifically interested in, I would like to know that.

If there are any roles that you are specifically not interested in, I want to know that, too.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Vincentio, Duke of Ferrara</th>
<th>Duke leaves Ferrara in Angelo’s charge, but immediately disguises himself as a Friar so he can keep an eye on things. Is he a good guy or a bad guy? Tune in to find out.</th>
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<td>Angelo</td>
<td>“A man whose urine is congealed ice,” Angelo seems to be very strict, pious, abstinent, rigorous, and remote. He discovers that his morals are not as strong as he thinks they are when he finds himself attracted to Isabel. He was once engaged to Marianna, but ditched her when her fortune was shipwrecked along with her brother. He insinuated that her honor was devalued at the time, which was not remotely true.</td>
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<td><strong>Lord Escalus</strong></td>
<td>Has served the Duke with loyalty for many, many years; works to advise Angelo towards more mercy.</td>
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| **Isabel** | Isabel is about to take vows as a novice in the convent of St. Clare; she finds their strict policies on poverty, chastity, obedience and communication with the outside world not severe enough for her tastes.  
“I speak not as desiring more,  
But rather wishing a more strict restraint  
Upon the sisterhood, the votarists of Saint Clare.”  
She is very smart, committed to God, and works to find her voice to plead for her brother's life. |
| **Claudio** | Isabel's brother, who has made love to his fiancé, Juliet, before they were able to get married. Now finds himself facing execution for fornication, a law that has been on the books for a long time, but rarely enforced. He is terrified to die. |
| **Pompey** | Pompey is a sex-worker in the employment of Mistress Overdone. He probably also tends bar and does some marketing work for their business. Street smart. |
| **Provost** | The moral compass at the center of the play. Some folks miss how fantastic and complex this role is. But the Provost sees what is going on, strives for justice in an unjust world to the best of their ability. |
| **Juliet / Marianna / Barnardine** | Juliet loves Claudio and is due to deliver their baby imminently; she finds herself marched off to jail for fornication, a law that has been on the books for a long time, but rarely enforced. She gives birth while incarcerated.  
**Marianna loved Angelo; he dropped her like a hot potato when her brother and his fortune were lost at sea.**  
**Barnardine** has been incarcerated for a long time, is under a death sentence, but has found ways to make himself as comfortable as a person can be in difficult circumstances. |
| **Lucio** | Lucio loves a party and a good pun. He is more interested in being clever and the life of the party than he is in truth or justice. He has known Claudio a long time; he becomes an unlikely guide to Isabel as she pleads for her brother’s life. |
| **Francesca, a nun / Friar Peter / Elbo** | Francesca is a nun in the strict order of St. Clare, in charge of instructing Isabel as she begins her novitiate.  
**Friar Peter** is a monk who helps the Duke in his complex deception, teaching him how to play the role of a friar convincingly. He initially suspects the Duke of having an illicit romance.  
**Elbow** is a constable who arrests people for misconduct. He is probably not the sharpest tool in the shed. |
| **Mistress Overdone** | A madam, her brothel is shut down by Angelo's order. Overdone is resilient as hell, has a lot of initiative, is always looking for the next opportunity, feels hard done by. |
| **Froth / Abhorson** | Froth spends a lot of time in taverns and brothels, has more money than sense.  
**Abhorson** is the executioner. He is a kind of foil character to Angelo, also very strict, judgmental, and humorless in his pursuit of his duty; his name is a combination of ‘abhor’ and ‘whore-son’. |

**Rehearsal Times and Locations** —

1st rehearsal: March 20, 2023
Schedule: We will rehearse M-Th evenings and Sunday afternoons (1-6).

I ask that everyone in the ensemble arrive to that first rehearsal in March having already scanned and also paraphrased their text. If you don’t know what that means yet, that’s okay; we’re going to have a workshop in early November to help you get started, and then, once the cast is assembled, I will give you the tools you need.

Performance dates: April 28 through May 7th.

Stage Director SDC | Prison Theatre Practitioner | MA, Shakespeare | MFA, Directing + Social Justice
(she / her / hag)

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“All that you touch you change All that you change changes you. The only lasting truth is change.”— Octavia Butler

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