

The Final Flight of the Passenger Pigeon
by Hank Graham
Fall 2022/Spring 2023

Who?

Producer(s): Spencer Staak
Directors(s): Hank Graham
Stage Manager(s):
Preferred Contact Email: spencer.staak@yale.edu

What?

BRIEF(!) Synopsis of show: Birds. Scientists. Jungle. Chicken wings. Radio waves. Saltines. Psychedelic mushrooms. Leeches. Whales. A game of cards.

When?

Date of First Rehearsal: Some time in the first week after October Casting Cycle
Current Tech Week Dates: February 11-15
Performance Dates: February 16-18
Overall Dates (First Rehearsal to Last Performance): 10/16/22-2/19/22

Time Commitment

Weekly Estimated Time Commitments (in Hours): 5-6 hrs/week

Content Warnings

This includes text/dialogue, themes, intimacy, violence, and anything else that you think is appropriate to list here.

- Depictions of drug use (marijuana, psychedelics)
- Discussions of death including death via car accident & via suicide

Audition Expectations

For first-round auditions: Prepare one 0:45-1:00 monologue (no need for memorization) of your choosing, or prepare (no need for memorization!!) one of the provided monologues found in this packet.
For callbacks: We will provide sides from the script ahead of time to those who are called back.

Audition Location(s)

Davenport-Pierson Auditorium

THE FINAL FLIGHT OF THE PASSENGER PIGEON: AN AUDITION PACKET

Thank you so much for your interest in auditioning for *The Final Flight of the Passenger Pigeon*. This packet has information about the show, the process for our production, and what to expect at auditions. If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to producer Spencer Staak (spencer.staak@yale.edu) or director Hank Graham (hank.graham@yale.edu). If you're interested in working on our show in a technical capacity, please reach out to Spencer Staak. We're really looking forward to seeing you in auditions!

ABOUT THE SHOW

Who could fail to feel hopeful, if only for a moment, in the presence of new life? Or in the smallest chance that old life has somehow come back from the dead?

—Margaret Renkl, THE SECOND COMING OF THE LORD GOD BIRD

In an island rainforest somewhere in the tropics, a team of scientists search for the last remaining member of a species of bird that may or may not be extinct. The canopy doesn't let in much light, and the fact that the radio will only pick up the frequency of a 24/7 chicken wing advertisement does nothing to quell the team's feelings of total isolation from the outside world. *The Final Flight of the Passenger Pigeon* explores the intersection of intimacy and loneliness, and what it means to feel like you're the last living member of your species.

CHARACTER BREAKDOWN

The ASSISTANT*#- Male, late 20s. Works for the Ornithologist. A little fed up with the Ornithologist, but willing to follow his lead. Impatient. Wants to be more proactive in searching for the bird. Very dry.

The CETOLOGIST*- Female, late 20s. Out of her element in the jungle. Very clearly going a little bit stir crazy from the lack of light and the stifled interactions. Likes to make bad jokes that nobody seems to really get.

The MYCOLOGIST*+^- Male, early 30s. Doing independent research on tropical fungal colonies. Very passionate about fungus. Can't shut up about fungus. Using his research to distract himself from his own grief. Very fragile but is doing his best to delude himself into thinking that everything is great.

The ORNITHOLOGIST- Male, late 50s/early 60s. In charge of the whole birding expedition. Desperately obsessed with this bird. Getting too old to continue doing field work.

*Content Warning: onstage depiction of drug use (psychedelics, marijuana)

+Content Warning: Discussion of death via car accident

#Content Warning: Mentions of suicide

^Content Warning: Brief instance of shirtlessness onstage (non-sexual)

REHEARSAL PROCESS

The primary goal of this project is to have fun. Since this play is very ensemble-driven, it is important to spend a lot of time getting everyone involved on the same page—rhythmically, stylistically, etc. Our plan is to have standard rehearsal times— hopefully two times a week for about 2.5/3 hours each. This will allow us to have ample time to get to know each other and to start acting like a company. Rehearsals will consist of etudes, improvisations, and other rehearsal methods that get us out of the text and into our bodies. Don't expect a whole lot of table work! I wrote the play; we have no legal obligation to stick directly to the script. We are looking for people who are willing to find elements of *play* in the rehearsal process. Open-minded actors who don't mind looking or feeling silly at times are the people we want involved in this project.

PRODUCTION TIMELINE

OCTOBER 10-11- First-round auditions

OCTOBER 13-14- Callback auditions

OCTOBER 16- Casting day!

OCTOBER 17 or 18- Readthrough/set rehearsal times

OCTOBER 19-23- October Break

OCTOBER 24-DECEMBER 15- Rehearsals!

DECEMBER 21-JANUARY 16- Winter Recess

JANUARY 17-FEBRUARY 11- Rehearsals!

FEBRUARY 12-15- Tech Rehearsals

FEBRUARY 16-18- Performances!

FEBRUARY 19- Strike

AUDITION INFORMATION

ALL AUDITIONS WILL BE HELD IN THE DAVENPORT/PIERSON AUDITORIUM

First-round auditions will be held on October 10 & 11.

- For first-round auditions, we encourage you to *prepare* (memorization absolutely not necessary!) a 30-45 second monologue of your choosing, **or** one of the monologues found at the end of this packet.
- You will be notified by the end of the day on October 11 if you are being invited to a callback audition.

Group callback auditions will be held on October 13 & 14.

- For callback auditions, we will provide audition sides for each character. Some are monologues, and others consist of dialogue between two or more characters. We will put people into several combinations to read each side.
- We may also ask some actors to read different dialogue sides with other actors. These do not need to be prepared ahead of time, and will be distributed at the callback.

*IF NONE OF THE AVAILABLE TIME SLOTS WORK FOR YOU, EMAIL spencer.staak@yale.edu AND WE WILL SET UP AN ADDITIONAL TIME SLOT OR ARRANGE FOR YOU TO SEND IN AN AUDITION VIDEO INSTEAD.

POSSIBLE MONOLOGUES FOR FIRST-ROUND AUDITIONS

FROM 'DANCE NATION' BY CLARE BARRON

My Mom asked me to dance for her cancer. She saw a documentary about this woman who did a dance and it cured her cancer and so she asked me if I would do a dance for her and my Mom is not normally like that but she was feeling really emotional at the time and she kept breaking down all the time so I did this solo at the year end recital for my Mom and her cancer. And I tried to make it the best dance I had ever done. I tried to like feel things with my arms and my legs. I tried to make people feel things with my arms and my legs. ... But it was just an ordinary dance, really. A lot of people didn't know it was about my Mom's cancer at all. They thought it was about whatever our dances are usually about. Flowers. Or sailors, you know. Not cancer. I didn't make them cry. I didn't make myself cry. I don't even think I made my Mom cry. She told me that she liked it. But she didn't cry. And it didn't cure her cancer, so. Her cancer actually got worse after that, so. It was just an ordinary dance.

FROM 'THE ANTIPODES' BY ANNIE BAKER

You know what I think would be cool? If we could – I mean science must be able to – there's got to be a way to just like attach electrodes to people's brains and stimulate the parts of the brain that respond to story and like specific story elements. So you could make people feel all the things they would feel during a romance or an adventure or a happy ending and there would still be an art to it because you'd be figuring out which synapses to stimulate when and for exactly how long. But the whole thing where we have to make up some fictional world or some fictional series of events or narrative Concepts would be over. And if you wanted to do something new it would just be coming up with the new algorithm. A new sequence. Which is really what it is anyway. We all Pretend There's Something Magic about it but actually it's just algorithms.

FROM 'LITTLE WOMEN' BY GRETA GERWIG

Well. I'm not a poet, I'm just a woman. And as a woman I have no way to make money, not enough to earn a living and support my family. Even if I had my own money, which I don't, it would belong to my husband the minute we were married. If we had children they would belong to him, not me. They would be his property. So don't sit there and tell me that marriage isn't an economic proposition, because it is. It may not be for you but it most certainly is for me.