King Lear Audition packet

Hello beautiful humans!! We are so grateful for your interest in auditioning for King Lear - we hope that the information below will help you enter your audition feeling as confident and positive as possible, as well as hopefully giving you a good idea about what kind of commitment acting in the production will be. However, if you have any questions at all (either about auditioning, or what acting in the show will look like), please feel more than free to email either of our wonderful producers, Jacquelyn (she/her) and Jenan (she/her), at jacquelyn.daigneau@yale.edu or jenan.cameranesi@yale.edu, or our director, Catherine (they/them) at catherine.alam-nist@yale.edu - we’re here to help YOU feel as happy and excited about potentially becoming a part of this production as possible :)

Meet (some of) our team!

**Director:** Catherine Alam-Nist (they/them)

Catherine is a sophomore in Grace Hopper College majoring in Theatre Studies and Humanities. They would describe themself as Bangladeshi-American-British, and are also an international student. At Yale, Catherine has worked in theatre as a performer, props designer, diction coach, playwright and director, having previously directed the online shows Dominion and Unstable Connection, and are directing Pancasila and co-directing The Rocky Horror Picture Show this fall. Besides theatre (and tbh there’s not much I do besides theatre......) they also work as Reform Chavurah student leader at Slifka, and are co-Vice President of the Yale Drama Coalition (okay, so I guess that’s also theatre-related). They are particularly passionate about promoting queer representation and Asian/Asian-American representation in our casts, production teams, and in the stories we choose to tell at Yale. This past summer they also trained as a director at the National Theatre Institute at the Eugene O’Neill Theatre Centre.

**Co-Producer:** Jenan Cameranesi (she/her)
Jenan is a junior in Morse majoring in Art History (although she is also looking at double majoring in Sociology as well). At Yale, she has worked as an producer, assistant stage manager, and costume designer, working on the shows Dominion, Agnes of God, The Importance of Being Earnest, and American Idiot: the Musical. She is very excited to be working with everyone this year!

Co-Producer: Jacquelyn Daigneau (she/her)

Jacquelyn is a junior in Berkeley majoring in Political Science and History. At Yale, she has worked as an assistant producer for Dominion, and she is currently assistant stage manager for Pancasila. Outside of theatre, she is the Vice President for The Women’s Network Yale, and works at the front desk in Bass Library. She is extremely excited to be a part of this production!
**Stage Manager:** William An (he/him)

William is a sophomore in Branford majoring in English and MCDB. He loves working with the many incredible people in the theatre community here. His entire theatre experience at Yale has been virtual until this year, so he is very excited for in-person theatre! He hopes to work with you soon :D

**What is the show about?**

*King Lear* is Shakespeare’s sweeping tragedy that starts with perhaps one of the most famous scenes in English literature: an aging king tells his three daughters that he plans to split up his kingdom based on how much they each will publicly say that they love him. What follows is an epic, sometimes darkly humourous, and consistently heart-wrenching tale that poses challenging questions about the nature of love, care, family and loyalty, and the struggle to stay true to what we hold dear amid ever-shifting circumstances. Particularly coming out of this past year, in which many of us have found ourselves in caretaker/support roles for people we love unexpectedly, we believe that this play will provide particularly rich themes and questions for us to explore as a creative ensemble, concluding in performances at the end of the Spring 2022 semester.

Our take on Shakespeare’s tragedy is going to be a collaborative, ensemble-based approach, both centring exploration of the play’s themes of memory, grief, caretaking and age, whilst also aiming to re-shift the play’s focus somewhat onto characters in the play who have often been made into archetypes or dichotomised with one another in past interpretations of the play, particularly the non-male characters. We are also highly excited to have women/non-binary people at the forefront of this production’s creative team. We especially encourage BIPOC, LGBTQ+, and first-time theatremakers to audition and get in touch about involvement on the project.

**Who are the characters in the play?**
Whilst there might be some variance in ensemble roles played in the final cut of the play (soldier, courtiers, etc.), below you can find an overview of all of the major roles in the play, as well as some of the smaller ones that we are intending to retain in our cutting of the play. Actors cast as smaller roles (Curan, Messenger, Gentleman, etc.) are also likely to be offered more than one role, both to give you more scenes to work with and to make sure our cast size doesn’t get out of hand. We plan to tell actors offered more than one role both/all of the roles we’d like them to play on casting day; however, if later on in the process we decide we need to add a character (back) into a scene, we may ask someone already in the cast to play this in addition to their primary role (which you will of course totally have the option to say no to).

*A note about gender and casting:* This production aims to be as inclusive of trans, non-binary, and gender-non-conforming artists as possible. Because this is a play with no copyright *woooo*, that means that we can basically do whatever we want to in regards to casting actors of any gender identity as characters of any gender identity, as well as potentially switching the gender of characters that is indicated in the script. However, any of these decisions will of course be made only with the consent of our auditionees/actors, starting from the beginning of the audition process and going all the way through rehearsal. We will never ask you to read for a character you don’t feel comfortable reading for, and if we’re considering switching the gender identity of any character, this will only be done in ongoing conversation with the actor and with their continued consent. We will also have a space on our audition form where you will be able to tell us any information you’d like us to know about what gender of character you feel comfortable playing, as well as anything else you’d like us to know about your experience of gender. If there is anything that we can do to make the audition space feel more welcoming and safe for you and your experience of gender, please get in touch with Catherine, our director, at catherine.alam-nist@yale.edu.

King Lear — an aging king who decides to abdicate his throne and split up his kingdom among his three daughters, Goneril, Regan and Cordelia, via a fairly distinctive plan.


Regan — Lear’s middle daughter. Passionate, unrelenting, a little bit sadistic. Married to the Duke of Cornwall.

Cordelia — Lear’s youngest daughter. A truth-teller who loves with her entire heart. Eventually marries the King of France. *** please note — this role has been pre-cast.***

King of France — Cordelia’s husband.

Duke of Cornwall — Regan’s Husband. Ruthless.

Duke of Burgundy — a prospective suitor of Cordelia who is scared away when he finds he won’t be getting her dowry with her.
Duke of Albany — Goneril’s husband. Trying very hard.

Fool — Lear’s hired clown who accompanies him far beyond the walls of the court.


Edmund — Gloucester’s son. Edgar’s half-brother. Wants everything that he feels has ever been denied to him earlier in his life, and will do anything to get it.

Edgar — Gloucester’s son. Edmund’s half-brother. Kind and good-hearted, but a little gullible.

Earl of Kent — Nobleman and servant to Lear who is banished towards the beginning of the play. Would literally follow Lear to the ends of the earth.

Cornwall’s Servant — Another truth-teller who pays the price for it.

Oswald — Goneril’s servant. Not very nice.

Doctor — Doctor who travels with Cordelia from France to tend to Lear.

Curan — Servant of Edmund.

Messenger — Supporter of Lear.

Gentleman — Servant of Albany.

What’s the audition timeline for this show going to look like?

We’re going to be casting in the Yale Drama Coalition’s November casting cycle, which means that we’ll start holding auditions from early-mid October, and the process will be wrapped up by Sunday November 7.

Here’s a general outline of what the process will look like:

Monday, October 11, 7pm in LC 103: Audition workshop!
Thursday, October 15, Friday, October 15, and Saturday, October 16: In-person first-round auditions
Now to 11:59 Saturday, October 23: First-round audition submissions via self-tape accepted (more information on this below!)
By **11:59 on Sunday, October 24**: We’ll let you know whether it would be helpful for us to see you for a callback.

**Wednesday, October 27 (afternoon) and Saturday, October 30:** Callbacks (these will be fully in-person, and we’re hoping to do these all on the 30th, but if this date doesn’t work for you, we will also be keeping a backup slot open on Wednesday, October 27)

**Saturday, October 30 to Saturday, November 6:** Unlikely that we’ll be seeing anyone in this period (as our director is sadly in tech for another show during this period), but if there’s a tough casting choice that means we really need to see a few people again, we may ask you if you could possibly come see us on one of these days!

**Sunday, November 7:** November casting day!! That means that all the shows casting in the November cycle will get together at noon and start calling actors to offer them roles.

**What’s an audition workshop? What can I expect if I attend?**

An audition workshop is a chance to meet more of the production/creative team of the show, hear more about the show, the audition process, and the rehearsal/performance schedule, all in an informal and supportive environment. You’ll also be able to hear more about what specifically we’ll be looking for during the audition process, as well as to ask us any questions you have about auditioning, rehearsals, or the show itself. This is also a chance for us to give you more information about why you should want to be a part of our show - throughout the whole casting process, we’re also auditioning for you as well, in a way! You can expect to meet the director, co-producers, stage manager, as well as members of the design team. Although this workshop will primarily be focussed on what to expect when auditioning to act in the show, feel free to also attend this workshop if you’re interested in working on the show in a production capacity, and would like to hear more about us!

**What can I expect from the different stages of auditioning?**

**First round:**

For the first round of auditions, in order to allow for as much flexibility as possible for auditionees (especially as we have October break happening in the middle of this casting cycle, meaning that we may all become dispersed for a little bit), we’re giving all auditionees the option either to submit a self-tape of them reading a monologue from the play, or to read a monologue for us in-person. You will have any time from **now until 11:59 on Friday October 22** to submit your tape by sending it to catherine.alam-nist@yale.edu. If you’d like to audition for us in-person, you can sign up for a slot via the Yale College Arts website (please note that you have to make a YCA profile in order to sign up for audition slots - if you have any issues with this, please feel free to reach out to any of us on the team and we’ll be more than happy to help you!) We’ll be holding **in-person auditions** on Thursday, October 14 from 6 to 10:30pm, Friday, October 15 from 4:30 to 7pm, Saturday, October 16 from 5:30 to 10:30pm, and Tuesday, October 19 from 1:30 to 4:30.
Please audition either via self-tape or in person — you do not need to do both! Also, the monologues definitely do not have to be memorised.

*Some info on self-tapes:* We’re really not going to be picky about how your self-tape is formatted for this show — the most important thing is that we can see and hear you clearly, so we can focus on how you’re interpreting the text and the character. Ideally, we’d like to be able to see you from the hips/waist upwards and have as little background noise as possible, but we know many people only have limited control over this, so please don’t worry too much! If you could give us your name at the start of your tape (either say it before your monologue, or edit in a bit of text), that would also be really helpful!

**Important:** Before you audition/send us your tape, please fill out this google form so that we can get to know you a bit better: [https://forms.gle/oePRLupmUgQ2AR1P9](https://forms.gle/oePRLupmUgQ2AR1P9)

**Callbacks:**

For some roles (but certainly not all!), we may want to see you for a callback after your initial audition, perhaps to see you read some different parts of the script, or to see how you work with different actors. If we’d like to see you for a callback, we will let you know by the end of the day on Sunday, October 24, and will be holding callbacks both on the afternoon of Wednesday, September 27, and throughout the day on Saturday, October 30.

We will do our absolute best to find a time that is convenient for you within this window, and if there’s any scenes or speeches we would like you to look over before you come to your callback, we will send it to you with at least a few days’ notice to give you the chance to look at it at your convenience. However, there is a good chance we might just ask you to read a piece we give you on the day, in which case we will give you some time outside of the callback room to prepare, and we will of course be taking that you had less rehearsal time into account in this scenario.

**Casting day:**

As a show casting in the November casting cycle, we will be allowed to start calling actors to offer them roles from 12pm on Sunday, November 7. Please have your phone on and nearby during this time period, because if you get a call from a random number around this time, it might be us calling you to offer you a role in the show! Ideally, after we’ve offered you a role, we’d love it if you could let us know if you’d like to accept the role within an hour, so it’s generally a good idea to think beforehand about what roles you’d consider accepting in the show so that you have a sense of what your decision will be on Sunday beforehand. However, if it isn’t possible for you to get back to us within an hour, we totally understand, and will do our best on our end to make the casting day process as non-stressful for you as possible.

**What are we looking for in auditions and callbacks?**
An excitement about the text/characters, an eagerness to collaborate with others, and most of all JOY! This may sound odd for a play that is largely tragic, but we believe that finding joy in collaborating and exploring with others, as well as in getting to know your character(s) and the world of the play (and build these together!) is even more important when we’re looking at a text that does prompt us to consider a lot of difficult questions and themes. We’re not looking for perfect recitation of Shakespearean language, or for you to totally understand what every word means right off the bat — if you’re approaching your character, yourself and your fellow actors with excitement, compassion, and honesty, this is truthfully what we most hope to see.

What’s the rehearsal timeline going to look like?

We will have a few rehearsals towards the end of the fall semester, primarily focussed on building community within our ensemble, beginning to dive into the text together, and starting to form a collective creative approach to it. Actors can therefore expect a time commitment of 4-8 hours from mid-November to mid-December.

From the start of the spring semester, we will continue ensemble-based community/character-building rehearsals, as well as tablework and blocking rehearsals. Because almost every part in the show can be considered a principal role, it would therefore be reasonable to expect between 8-12 hours of rehearsal per week for almost every character, with the slight exception of Lear, who may be called for slightly more than this, and ensemble characters/small roles, who may be called slightly less. Rehearsal hours are also likely to get somewhat longer as the semester goes on and we get closer to tech.

Our tech period will begin Sunday, April 17, at which point you will most likely be called from 6pm up until 10pm, with some days extending until 12am. We will do our best to minimise the hours each actor is called during tech as much as possible; however, due to the scope of the show, tech will be a substantial time commitment for the week and a half leading into performances.

We will be performing on Wednesday, April 27, Thursday, April 28, Friday, April 29, and Saturday, April 30, all at 7pm. We will then probably request help from the actors to strike the set/equipment from the theatre on Sunday, April 31.

What if I don’t get offered a part?

Do not despair! We on the production team really want to provide as many opportunities as possible for people to get involved if they want to, and there are a variety of ways to get involved in this show. We’re currently recruiting for:

- Props Designer
- Hair/Makeup Artist
- 1-2 Assistant Stage Managers
If you don’t end up getting cast in the show, but are still interested in the project, we strongly encourage you to reach out to either jenan.cameranesi@yale.edu or jacquelyn.daigneau@yale.edu about any of these roles that you’re interested in - it’s not a problem at all if you don’t feel like you have prior experience related to these positions, we’ll be more than happy to help mentor you throughout the process, or find you a mentor outside of the prod team who can better provide role-specific support :) All that we’re looking for is excitement, positivity and enthusiasm for this production, and for building a meaningful piece of theatre as part of a community of co-collaborators - if this sounds like you, we’d love to hear from you!

Please read one of the following monologues for your first-round audition.(Reminder: it absolutely does not have to be memorised!)

1) Goneril

By day and night, he wrongs me! Every hour
He flashes into one gross crime or other
That sets us all at odds. I'll not endure it.
His knights grow riotous, and himself upbraids us
On every trifle. When he returns from hunting,
I will not speak with him. Say I am sick.
If you come slack of former services,
You shall do well; the fault of it I'll answer.
Put on what weary negligence you please,
You and your fellows. I'd have it come to question.
If he distaste it, let him to our sister,
Whose mind and mine I know in that are one,
Not to be overrul'd. Idle old man,
That still would manage those authorities
That he hath given away! Now, by my life,
Old fools are babes again, and must be us'd
With checks as flatteries, when they are seen abus'd.
Remember what I have said.
2) Edmund

Thou, nature, art my goddess; to thy law
My services are bound. Wherefore should I
Stand in the plague of custom, and permit
The curiosity of nations to deprive me,
For that I am some twelve or fourteen moon-shines
Lag of a brother? Why bastard? wherefore base?
When my dimensions are as well compact,
My mind as generous, and my shape as true,
As honest madam’s issue? Why brand they us
With base? with baseness? bastardy? base, base?
Who, in the lusty stealth of nature, take
More composition and fierce quality
Than doth, within a dull, stale, tired bed,
Go to the creating a whole tribe of fops,
Got ’tween asleep and wake? Well, then,
Legitimate Edgar, I must have your land:
Our father’s love is to the bastard Edmund
As to the legitimate: fine word,—legitimate!
Well, my legitimate, if this letter speed,
And my invention thrive, Edmund the base
Shall top the legitimate. I grow; I prosper:
Now, gods, stand up for bastards!

3) Lear.

O, reason not the need! Our basest beggars
Are in the poorest thing superfluous.
Allow not nature more than nature needs,
Man’s life is cheap as beast’s. Thou art a lady:
If only to go warm were gorgeous,
Why, nature needs not what thou gorgeous wear’st
Which scarcely keeps thee warm. But, for true need—
You heavens, give me that patience, patience I need!
You see me here, you gods, a poor old man,
As full of grief as age; wretched in both.
If it be you that stirs these daughters’ hearts
Against their father, fool me not so much
To bear it tamely; touch me with noble anger,
And let not women's weapons, water drops,
Stain my man's cheeks! No, you unnatural hags!
I will have such revenges on you both
That all the world shall- I will do such things-
What they are yet, I know not; but they shall be
The terrors of the earth! You think I'll weep.
No, I'll not weep.
I have full cause of weeping, but this heart
Shall break into a hundred thousand flaws
Or ere I'll weep. O fool, I shall go mad!