

THE BUTCHER OF MAUTHAUSEN

Audition Packet

March 2nd-4th, 2023

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About *The Butcher of Mauthausen*

The Butcher of Mauthausen follows Dr. Friedrich Kaiser, a secretly-Jewish epidemiologist living with his family in 1941 Passau, Germany, who is approached by SS Dr. Aribert Heim, an infamous (and real) physician at the Mauthausen Concentration Camp known as “The Butcher”, to join the Nazi Party and develop biological weaponry. His involvement, although originally aimed at the protection of his family, quickly begins to threaten the livelihood of those around him — including his new colleagues — as the man becomes enthralled with the new control he finds at his fingertips. *The Butcher of Mauthausen* is a powerfully tragic examination of extremism, antisemitism, and untapped control in two acts.

The play will be performed in **The Lighten Theater** on the following dates:

Thursday, March 2nd, at 8:00

Friday, March 3rd, at 8:00

Saturday, March 4th, at 2:00

Saturday, March 4th, at 8:00

The play is a two-act tragedy with eight characters. It is set in the winter of 1941 in Passau, Germany, a populous city located one hundred kilometers from the Mauthausen Concentration Camp in Austria. At the time of the action, Jewish persecution plagued Western Europe, and thousands of Jewish prisoners suffered in camps across the Third Reich, often at the hands of vicious, fraudulent Schutzstaffel doctors. Among these doctors was SS Dr. Aribert Heim, infamously known amongst prisoners as “The Butcher of Mauthausen” as a result of his deeply sadistic scientific experiments. The play exposes the harrowing effects the regime has on each of its characters, all of whom endure individual transformations and challenges, ranging from identity crises, familial divisions, romantic blossomings, romantic fallouts, egalitarian revelations, divine frustrations, and extremist metamorphoses.

This production will be the official world premier of *The Butcher of Mauthausen*. Along with a two-story set and its intricate lighting design, the production will also premier the incidental musical composition of Atticus Margulis-Ohnuma, composed specifically to accompany *The Butcher of Mauthausen* and performed by violinist Tobias Liu. The entrancing language and beautiful accompaniment will combine for a very memorable production — and we want YOU to be a part of it!

Meet the Team

Brennan Columbia-Walsh, Playwright and Director (he/him)

Brennan Columbia-Walsh is a playwright, director, and actor from New Jersey. His play, *The Butcher of Mauthausen*, was recently produced regionally at The Theater Project and under his direction at NJ's Deetjen Theatre. Brennan's western comedy, *The Opossum*, was also produced by The Theater Project, as well as at the Jersey Shore Arts Center. He has competed in and won multiple statewide festivals, and his radio play, *Schadenfreude*, was produced in New York City. He is very excited to bring his theatrical vision to Yale. Brennan is quite different from most playwrights, in that he's living.

Marissa Blum, Producer (she/they)

Marissa is a producer, director, and actor from Los Angeles, California. She is also the sitting treasurer of the Yale Drama Coalition. She is particularly drawn to producing student works, which is what initially caught her eye about *The Butcher of Mauthausen*. She has worked on over thirteen productions in her time at Yale and is excited to apply all she has learned to the show.

Naomi Schwartzburt, Dramaturg (any pronouns)

Naomi Schwartzburt is a junior in Pauli Murray from New York City double majoring in theater & performance studies and astronomy. They are primarily a stage manager, but also sometimes a lighting designer or sound engineer and maybe producer but most importantly a UP peer mentor (shameless plug) and now a dramaturg I guess? After working as the props supervisor for her high school production of *The Sound of Music* nearly four years ago (oof that makes me feel old), Naomi has become passionate about creating thoughtful and intentional depictions of Nazi imagery, antisemitism, and the Jewish experience onstage.

Atticus Margulis-Ohnuma, Musical Composer (he/him)

Atticus Margulis-Ohnuma is a sophomore in Branford College from Westchester, NY. He has been writing music for six years, taking a special interest in film score. At Yale, he has studied under Kathryn Alexander and Konrad Kaczmarek, also working briefly with Martin Bresnick, and has composed for the Yale Undergraduate Chamber Orchestra and the Yale Daily News podcast *Attune*. He is a prospective music and psychology major, studying the violin with Wendy Sharp.

Contact Information

Please reach out to the creative team if you have any questions whatsoever, whether it be about auditions or anything else!

We also *love* production team members! Please reach out if you are interested in joining the production team in any capacity — we have a spot for you! No experience required — just passion for theatre!

Brennan Columbia-Walsh, Playwright/Director: brennan.columbia-walsh@yale.edu

Marissa Blum, Producer: marissa.blum@yale.edu

Auditions & Callbacks

For auditions, we are asking all actors to read from two monologues. The monologues and sides are attached below. Please choose two of the six to read. Auditions will be held with individual actors in twenty minute time slots.

The audition environment will be very low-pressure. The actor will come in, we will all introduce ourselves, do a brief warm-up together, and then you will read from the two monologues. We will then give you a few notes and work through the monologues again. Please note that we are not expecting any lengthy preparation or memorization at all, just that you are familiar with the sides. The audition environment should feel comfortable, and you should have fun interacting with the characters. We are looking for actors who are eager to bring these characters to life and willing to make choices.

Callbacks will be for specific characters, and they will bring multiple actors together.

Auditions will be held in **Phelps Hall, Room 310 on Monday and Room 207 on Tuesday and Wednesday**. Please sign up for one twenty minute audition slot on the Yale College Arts Website.

If you cannot make it to any of the audition slots, please email brennan.columbia-walsh@yale.edu and we will accommodate you.

In a show focusing on such a sensitive and important topic, respect, sensitivity, and inclusivity are our utmost values. We encourage everybody to audition, regardless of experience, background, religion, ethnicity, race, gender, sexuality, or identity. Religion plays a major thematic role in the play, but religious background will play absolutely no role in casting. Please pick the monologues you are most interested in, and please do not feel bound by the gender, religion, or identity of the character. We especially encourage first-time theatre-makers to audition!

The audition timeline, the character breakdown, and the audition monologues can be found below.

Audition Timeline

Date	Event	Time
Monday, October 10th	Auditions, Phelps Hall Room 310	6:00pm-9:00pm
Tuesday, October 11th	Auditions, Phelps Hall Room 207	4:30pm-7:30pm
Wednesday, October 12th	Auditions, Phelps Hall Room 207	6:00pm-9:00pm
Wednesday, October 12th	Callback List Released	Evening
Thursday, October 13th	Callbacks	6:00pm-9:00pm
Friday, October 14th	Callbacks	6:00pm-9:00pm
Sunday, October 16th	Cast List Released	Noon

Auditions will be held in **Phelps Hall Room 310 on Monday and Phelps Hall Room 207 on Tuesday and Wednesday**. Please sign up for an individual slot on the Yale College Arts Website for *The Butcher of Mauthausen*:

<https://collegearts.yale.edu/events/shows-screenings/butcher-mauthausen>

How to get to Phelps Hall Room 310 and Room 207:

Phelps Hall is the main gate of Old Campus, off College St. The entrance to the room is located in the large archway. To access the door, go into the archway and swipe into the double doors on your right (coming from Old Campus), where you will find an elevator. The elevator must be activated with your ID. Go to the third floor to reach Room 310. Go to the second floor to reach Room 207. Please pay careful attention to the room depending on what day you are auditioning. You can also go through the door on the left side in the archway, also opened with an ID, to take the stairs. We will also post signs for you to follow!

If you are having trouble finding the audition room, please email brennan.columbia-walsh@yale.edu or call (973)-747-7660.

Character Breakdown

Dr. Friedrich Kaiser: *An epidemiologist. Fifty-six, he is a very intelligent, principled man. Forced to leave everything behind eight years ago to protect his family from persecution, he now clings to every drop of control and power he can muster in life, particularly when it comes to his wife and daughter.*

Annalise Kaiser: *His wife, a seamstress. She is a woman of fifty-six years who holds a semblance of spirit that has been covered by age and stress. On the surface, she is maternal, collected, and very intelligent. But, when she needs to be, she is a powerful, tough woman whose strength and compassion rise above those around her, even when she is not appreciated for it.*

Greta Kaiser: *Their daughter. Twenty-three years old, she is an intelligent, willful, and honest girl. However, as the daughter of two headstrong parents, her virtues are often overshadowed and unrealized, and she now finds herself lacking a foreseeable future, or worse, a purpose.*

SS Dr. Aribert Heim: *A physician at the Mauthausen Concentration Camp. A man of forty-one years, Dr. Heim is a narcissistic, manipulative sadist who views himself as the preeminent scientist of the human race. Believing his antisemitic theories to be the messianic solution to humanity's greatest problems, he performs vicious experiments on his defenseless prisoners. This malevolent "work" for the Nazi party has gained him widespread notoriety, and he carries his repute with indefatigable pride.*

SS Dr. Klaus Wilkmann: *Thirty-eight years old, he is the pragmatic, conniving, vile chief assistant and henchman of Dr. Heim. Once a humble family man, his corrupt abuse of the party's status and resources drives him to ensure he's kept around at all costs, which he accomplishes through shameless sycophancy, ruthless treachery, and a willingness to do anything and everything the doctor orders.*

Leopold Wolff: *A banker. Sixty years old, he is a proper, dignified fellow who expels wisdom and wit wherever he goes. Surely he is pompous, but his affability renders his pomp charming, and beneath his pageantry lies a man who has principles and sticks to them.*

Marie Vogel: *A seamstress. She seems to be the stereotypical German housewife, aged forty-two years. She is pretentious, false, a socialite, and not much of a thinker, but who can tell under that smile?*

Isaac Lamm: *A prisoner at the Mauthausen Concentration Camp. Twenty-one years old, Isaac was once a spirited child with hope for the future. After years of hiding and a month at Mauthausen, he is now a traumatized young man and channels all the spirit he has left in him into his faith. He is beaten, starved, and shakes uncontrollably from fear, sickness, and hunger.*

Monologues

Monologue One:

LEOPOLD: *(To DR. KAISER, smoking a cigar)* You know, I almost went into work today. I had quite a bit to do, but I had a dream last night, a revelation of sorts. In this dream, believe it or not, God came to me and He said, "Goodness Leopold, you've worked all your life. Take the day off!" So I heard Him. I lay back down, and before long I wondered how my old friend was spending his day of rest. But it seems God didn't quite make it to the Kaiser household last night, 'cause here you are, gaining grey hairs by the minute. Tell me, friend, what is it with you people? Will the sun never set on Friedrich Kaiser?

Monologue Two:

MARIE: *(To ANNALISE)* The house comes with the husband. Goes with him too. Ja, I had the house once too, Annalise. Five bedrooms, ja! Clark and I would choose a new one to sleep in every night of the week. A new bed every night, imagine that! And off the biggest bedroom, there was a balcony. A balcony that went right out over the street. Do you have a balcony? Three floors, ja! Three floors down. How many floors does this house have? It's a strange thing, ya know, living in a house tall enough to kill a man. The balcony, I mean. One fall and kersplat! Oh, I'm bad for saying that. Aren't I bad? Forgive me, pumpkin. How tall is this house, huh? I'm hungry. But I shouldn't eat. No big home for me anymore. Just the ski house. In Switzerland. Clark's family is Swiss. Was Swiss. Oh, it's a great big house with seven bedrooms and three studies! Does this house have a study?

Monologue Three:

DR. HEIM: *(To DR. KAISER)* I've come to share my appreciation of you, Doctor. Of your work. I find us quite similar. We two have a... talent, of sort, a divine talent, which we must share with others. I'm sure you've heard the rumors. Of my work at Mauthausen. Of my experiments. They call me "The Butcher". Indeed, I've been known to be quite thorough in my research. But I've been placed in my position, and not that of the carpenter or the chef, because I'm relentless in what I believe. I'm a man of medicine, made to cure the world's ailments, and, being as compassionate for others as I am, I've dedicated myself to a kind of self-sacrifice, to facing peril each day in order to remedy the most dangerous ailment of all. No, Dr. Kaiser, I'm not speaking of blockages in the heart or bile in the lungs, I'm speaking of the greatest affliction facing the human race. I'm referring, of course, to the enemies of our nation.

Monologue Four:

DR. KAISER is alone.

Note: "that boy" refers to Isaac, who is imprisoned in Dr. Kaiser's study under orders from Dr. Heim.

DR. KAISER: Do I smite You, God, in my earthliness? Do I offend You with my lack of faith? I don't get it, how others are so generous with theirs. How they just submit. They say we're different, You and I, that I must follow in Your light. They say You decide. But there's a life in that boy, kept alive or extinguished on my terms, not Yours. And I'll show mercy, even if you didn't. Faith! When You forgot me, when You left me behind, and I had to claw my way back up, was I to have faith then? Nein. I control my fate. Why should I sacrifice that privilege, oh Great Warden of our time, to walk graciously in your image, when I could walk in mine?

Monologue Five:

ANNALISE: We're not from Passau. We're from Dresden. We were pretty established people. Friedrich was a practicing physician. We lived there for decades in our family home. We raised Greta there. Friedrich was poor as a child, he built himself up from nothing. We weren't rich, but everything we had, he worked for, and he worked hard for it. And when the restrictions started, when the government started deporting people, my husband, he made a choice. To leave. Well, really he was forced, for the safety of our family.

MARIE: Why are you telling me this? What does this have to do with Switzerland?

ANNALISE: Because things have changed. You see, Friedrich never got over it, what happened in Dresden. He lost everything he'd built. For years, he's worked himself to death trying to win it back, his foot in the world. And he has, much more than before. But it's still not enough. He's obsessed. And now he's let the Nazis in. He said we'd be safe, but we aren't. We have to leave Passau. And your house, your house in Switzerland—

MARIE: You want to flee to my house? Wouldn't that be dangerous?

ANNALISE: They'll kill us if we stay. But you can help us, can't you? I need you to help, Marie, because... because I can't take it anymore. I can't do this. He doesn't understand what he's doing, he can't see it. But if we leave, if we get out, we'll be far away from this mess, and he'll stop. He'll come back to normal, I know it, everything will be just how it was. Marie, I can't do it without you. I have no one else to go to. You're my only option—, I— I don't— *(She falters, unable to speak.)*

Monologue Six:

DR. WILKMANN: *(To DR. KAISER)* There are some things about Mauthausen that you're going to have to understand. Allow me to shed some light. We are not like the rest of the party. We're six hundred kilometers away from the capital. Out here, Berlin doesn't exist. Only we do. This is our jurisdiction. And within it, everything Dr. Heim speaks of is true. The divinity he offers is his gift to us all. What we do with it is our choice. I choose my liberties. And nothing is going to change that. So now, Dr. Kaiser, that I have you in private, here's what I think about you. You may be joining our team, but I am Dr. Heim's chief assistant. I hold this position because he trusts me. And I will do anything to keep his trust. So if you wish to survive in our ranks, I recommend you put your head down, do what you're told, and do not get in my way. It's taken me a long time to gain my position. I don't intend to lose it any time soon.