

AUDITION

An Original Musical Motion Picture

By

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AUDITION is a movie musical that pays tribute to small theaters in towns and schools around the nation, where actors do it solely for their love of the craft.

Sometimes the acting and singing is great. Sometimes it's over the top. Sometimes it's just plain bad - but always from the heart. The triumphs and flaws of community theater create a wonderful setting to bring shows to life. It's in the name. Together as one, supporting each other. That's what this story is about.

An homage to all who dream that dream. Heartwarming. Quirky. Funny. Thoughtful and inclusive. Ode to the great musicals that local theaters, high schools and colleges use as their staples today.

- *John Bankhead*

CHARACTERS

ANGUS - feisty Scottish audition organizer
BRAXTON - over dramatic hipster heartthrob
AMELIA - Broadway icon mother of Grace
GRACE - Amelia's aspiring actress daughter
CALEB - "fish out of water" Wal-Mart employed cowboy
ZOE - smart but klutzy arts college boho
FRANKEE - colorful costume designer/audition pianist
SAMUEL - keenly observant church handyman

SONGS

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EXT. ADAMS, MASSACHUSETTS - DAY - LATE DECEMBER

Establish on the small New England town of Adams. A strong Nor'easter has set into the Berkshires. Heavy snowfall blankets the idyllic setting during the holidays.

Miss Adams Diner, a local favorite since the '40s.

INT. DINER - DAY

We hear the sounds of customers enjoying a familiar meal and spirited conversation. It begins low, then eventually rises to normal volume.

At the opposite end of the counter, an out-of-place bearded man with black rimmed glasses and a knit beanie reads the local paper.

Various close-ups of silver ware, cups and people eating take on a *distinct rhythmic pattern*.

Hearing what no one else hears, the man taps his finger on the counter in time with the patron's dining opus.

His POV of the newspaper reveals an *open call* at the BERKSHIRE REGIONAL THEATER. The production - "*A Play Yet To Be Named*" by Maxwell Cane. He closes the paper.

Taking a last sip of coffee, the man sets down the cup, removes his belongings from the adjacent stool and approaches the door. An upright piano sits next to it covered in knick-knacks.

The antique mirror above reveals the first full view of the man's face as he checks his cap and glasses. He drops a tip inside the jar and plays a short melody on the keys, smiles.

EXT. ADAMS, MASSACHUSETTS, STREET - DAY

The man leaves the diner. He pauses and looks up into a wonderland of falling snow.

MAN (SCOTTISH ACCENT)
Brilliant day.

OVERTURE BEGINS. (*The melody played in the diner is the opening notes to the overture*)

A choreographed scene unfolds as he walks a quaint picturesque street in the midst of the weekend's local bustle, dodging children pulling sleds as they head to their favorite hill.

He passes a light pole where the AUDITION FLYER is affixed. The flyer whips in the wind, flies off the pole and begins to "follow" the man through the snow-covered streets.

EXT. BERKSHIRE REGIONAL THEATER - DAY

The flyer comes to rest on the sidewalk. The man steps on the flyer as he approaches the front entrance to an OLD FIREHOUSE.

Removing the flyer from his shoe, he reads it to check the location. There's no sign.

The man reaches to open a large weathered door. It's jammed. After multiple attempts, he stops. Confused, he tries again. No luck.

Checking his watch, he notices a small sign to the side. "Try again. This time with conviction."

He pulls harder. The door opens. OVERTURE ENDS.

INT. BERKSHIRE REGIONAL THEATER, MAIN FLOOR - DAY

An illuminated halo of falling snow surrounds the man's silhouette as he peers into a darkened space. He stands at the door for a moment, hesitant to enter. From inside we hear..

VOICE

Shut the door, please!

The man replies -

MAN

Sorry!

The man closes the door behind him.

VOICE

Back here!

MAN

Back where?!

VOICE

Just follow my voice!

His knee smacks an unseen chair.

MAN (TO HIMSELF)

That's gonna leave a mark now,
isn't it?

The man stumbles through the dimly lit area, bumping into hard to see objects. Abruptly, he falls out of site.

Out of frame, from the floor..

MAN

Shite.

He pops back up into frame. Brushes himself off. Straightens his knit cap. *Checks his nose.*

FRANKEE

No. Over this way! Watch out for the chairs.

MAN

Seems I've found most of them.

FRANKEE

This might help.

A small wash of light appears from a desk lamp atop an upright on an elevated stage. FRANKEE, the audition pianist, sits at the keys. His appearance and demeanor reflect a person who embodies the pure essence of theater.

MAN

Most definitely.

The upright is covered in SIGNATURES OF ACTORS AND ARTISANS from the theater's myriad of productions over the years.

Frankee's eyes are closed, deep in the moment. Wearing a sequined half-mask and cape, he plays a few Phantom-esque measures and ends with -

FRANKEE

*The Frankee of the opera is there,
inside your mind!*

Frankee strikes a big chord and stops abruptly. Turning the non-masked side of his face toward the man, his eye opens wide then slowly looks down.

Sarcastic tone -

FRANKEE

You'll be wanting the house lights.

MAN

That would be great.

FRANKEE

What was that?

MAN
I said, that would be great.

FRANKEE
One more time.

MAN
Great. G. R. E. A. T. Great.

FRANKEE
I understood you the first time.
Love the accent.

MAN
Funny.

FRANKEE
Um hm.

Frankee leaves the piano and heads backstage into an unlit wing.

With the echoed pops of a several large switches, theatrical overhead lights reveal a sizable, well-used found space
COMING TO LIFE.

The ceiling rises three stories from the deck with the top housing an open former fire bell tower and FRANKEE'S LIVING QUARTERS.

A metal staircase ascends to each balconied floor area on one side of the stage, with an open freight elevator on the opposite.

The old fire pole still stands tall within.

Props, costumes and musical instruments from past productions are scattered across the various areas of the building, with main storage on the second level.

The building interior is adorned with unique architectural elements from a day when immigrant artisans took immense pride in the structures they created.

NOTE: It's a magical place. A feeling one only gets inside a working theater, presented in a FANTASTICAL way on screen. The space visually transforms from slightly run down to a vibrant, colorful interior over the course of the movie.

The out-of-place man from the diner is ANGUS MACDOUGALL.

He walks up a short set of stairs to join Frankee on stage, removes his belongings and drops them on a single banquet-style audition table.

ANGUS
Gotta be one of the worst
nor'easters in years.

Frankee returns to his upright. Sitting on the bench, he begins to play as if Angus is not there.

An awkward moment as Angus awaits Frankee's attention. Finally, he reaches out his hand.

ANGUS
Angus MacDougall.

Frankee stands, looking Angus up and down.

FRANKEE
Frankee. With two Es.

ANGUS
Two Es? That's an unusual spel..

Frankee cuts him off.

FRANKEE
Two Es.

ANGUS
Pleasure to meet you, Frankee with
two Es. I'm here to organize the
audition. Is he here?

Frankee returns to the piano and resumes playing under their conversation.

FRANKEE
Who?

ANGUS
The director. Writer as well.

FRANKEE
Haven't seen him.

ANGUS
I hear he's quite the character.

Pregnant pause of awkward silence.

Frankee removes his mask and moves toward Angus, stopping just short of face to face. Staring directly into his eyes -

FRANKEE
So Angus, what's the production?
I was just told to show up, but
no details were given.

Angus backs up. Frankee steps forward, returning to Angus' personal space.

ANGUS

"A Play Yet To Be Named" - working title. Original piece written by Mr. Cane. Fancies discovering new talent in out-of-the-way places. Doesn't give the actors any preconceived notions before the audition. A wee bit of a purest in approach.

FRANKEE

I get it. Like if the audience began watching a story without any idea of what's going to happen and we just called it "Audition".

ANGUS

Now that would be silly, wouldn't it.

Both turn to camera and smile.

FRANKEE

You're Scottish.

Frankee returns to the piano bench and begins to noodle on the keys.

ANGUS

How'd you guess?

FRANKEE

Where can I get one of those knee length plaid skirts with the pleated front and that fabulous furry tote draped over the crotch?

ANGUS

Kilt. The plaid is called tartan. And it's not a furry tote, it's a Sporran.

FRANKEE

Fine. (bad Scottish accent) *A kilt skirt for me collection.* I'd have to *Frankee* it, of course.

ANGUS

Frankee it?

Frankee stands and removes the phantom cape, handing it Angus. Angus admires the workmanship.

ANGUS

This is lovely. Where'd you get it?

FRANKEE

Get it? I made it.

ANGUS

Quite the braw cloak, Frankee with two Es.

FRANKEE

Thanks, whatever braw means.

ANGUS

Braw means nice or pleasant in Scot..

Frankee returns to the piano and again noodles on the keys, ignoring Angus' reply.

ANGUS

..tish.

Angus eyes a beaten-up plaid curtain hanging on the edge of a rolling basket. He pulls the cloth, wrapping it around his body as a kilt. Angus ties his scarf around his head and grabs a prop sword.

ANGUS

A kilt, Frankee, is not a skirt.
Many men have fought and died brave
and true on the field of battle
while wearing nothing but their
clan's tartan. In fact, I, Angus
MacDougall, happen to come from a
very long and very proud line of
MacDougalls.

Frankee's noodling progresses into the intro for Angus' number. He accompanies Angus for the song.

SONG - "MIGHTY CLAN MACDOUGALL" (Angus, Frankee)

Back in the day of total dismay

Teeth rottin' out o' yer mouth from decay

Knee deep in shite

The plunder and plight

Of MIGHTY CLAN MACDOUGALL

Time in the sun was nigh to behold

Rains every day, your pits smell of mold

Days of the bearded brazenly bold

The MIGHTY CLAN MACDOUGALL

Hills are rolled with green

Sheep and sheep and sheep for miles and miles

Scotland is a site that should be seen

With a wee dram o' scotch

Pint full o' beer

Get out your knife, the haggis is here!

Dragging your kilt through the mud and the muck

Riding a horse with no underwear sucks

Wee bonnie lasses back home we can ..

Yeah, that's right.

The MIGHTY CLAN MACDOUGALL

Hills are rolled with green

Sheep and sheep and sheep for miles and miles

Scotland is a site that should be seen

With a wee dram o' scotch

Pint full o' beer

Get out your knife, the haggis is here!

Angus holds an extended note. Frankee builds to a crescendo.

Note ends. Music stops.

ANGUS

Frankee! Have you ever had Haggis?

FRANKEE

No, I don't believe I have.

ANGUS

It's somethin' quite awful. Sheep's stomach filled with heart, liver and lungs.

FRANKEE

Eew.

ANGUS

Aye. Now break it down!

Music starts.

*We come from the highland where men are abound
The sheep, they're all scared, and no where to be found
Just wait 'til the night when they come back around
For MIGHTY - CLAN - MACDOUGALL!*

ANGUS

And that, Frankee, is that.

Frankee strikes the final chord.

Angus' phone sounds with "Scotland The Brave".

ANGUS

Excuse me while I get this.

Angus turns from Frankee and walks to the side of the stage.

ANGUS (TO HIMSELF)

Storm is holding up traffic.
Running late. An hour or so by the
look of it. Will keep you informed
of my location.

Angus types response, again, out loud.

ANGUS

OK. Safe travels.

FRANKEE

The director?

ANGUS

Issues getting..

Angus notices that Frankee has CHANGED HIS COSTUME. A 60's HIPPIE FLARE, colorful and flowing with platform knee boots to finish the ensemble. He's back at the piano noodling.

ANGUS

Weren't you just? He's having
issues getting here with the heavy
snow.

FRANKEE

I heard.

ANGUS

Are you good to stick around?

FRANKEE

I live here. Literally.

Frankee points above their heads. Angus looks up to the open former bell tower directly above where Frankee's studio is located.

Unseen by Angus and Frankee, BRAXTON HARGATE, a somewhat unaware but oddly confident, overdramatic hipster, enters wearing a lightweight winter coat with a mod vintage MEMBERS ONLY jacket beneath.

He startles Frankee, accidentally slipping off the piano bench to the floor.

BRAXTON

Sorry. Didn't mean to scare you.
I'm here for the open call.

Braxton helps Frankee up and back onto the bench.

BRAXTON

Braxton.

FRANKEE

Frankee. With two Es.

BRAXTON

Two Es, that's un..

FRANKEE

Two Es.

Braxton pauses as he takes in Frankee's outfit.

BRAXTON

Yeah. O.K. Anyway..

Braxton turns to Angus. They shake hands.

ANGUS

Angus.

BRAXTON

Braxton.

ANGUS

Welcome to the audition for..

BRAXTON
"A Play Yet To Be Named".

ANGUS
You're familiar with Mr. Cane?

BRAXTON
Maxwell Cane is why I'm here.

Braxton gives a big theatrical pause, looking off into space.

ANGUS
Right. (beat)

BRAXTON
When will Cane be here?

ANGUS
The storm has the director running late.

Both Frankee and Angus FREEZE IN PLACE. Braxton turns to camera. He steps into a single spotlight while light drops around him. *(Each character will introduce themselves to camera in this fashion - as in an audition)*

BRAXTON (TO CAMERA)
Braxton Hargate. Grew up down the road in Pittsfield. I'm a Scorpio and ex-lead singer for alternative oompah thrash band "The Well Hungarians". I've performed in community theater for 5 years now. I feel I was born for the stage. My favorite role - Lancelot. My best attribute - you're lookin' at it.

Frankee and Angus return to action.

BRAXTON
So, you're Scottish.

ANGUS
How'd you guess?

BRAXTON
My passion lies in the transformation of words from page to stage. In the theater, one must understand the subtle, and sometimes not so subtle..

Braxton looks to Frankee.

..nuance of character. I'm good with accents.

ANGUS

So it seems. See if you can guess
this one.

Angus stares at Braxton and holds without speaking. Pause.
Braxton looks confused.

ANGUS

A Scottish mute. Please sign in.
Clipboard's on the table.

As Braxton signs the clipboard..

INT. BERKSHIRE REGIONAL THEATER, SIDE WING - DAY

ZOE SUNSHINE, naturally beautiful art school grad student
wearing red rubber galoshes and a colorful thrift store
overcoat from the 70's, arrives for the audition. The
somewhat clumsy Zoe trips and falls onto a pile of costumes,
flipping her scarf over her face.

ZOE

Crap. Sorry, these boots are
slippery. *The price of fashion I*
guess.

Singing here fall, Braxton and Angus move quickly to Zoe.
They each grab an arm to lift her. Angus helps remove the
scarf, revealing Zoe's face. Surprised, Braxton recognizes
her.

BRAXTON

Zoe?

ZOE

Hi, Braxton.

INT. CATHOLIC CATHEDRAL - DAY

GRACE, teenage aspiring actress, subtly confident, filled
with hope and questions, enters the doors of an ornate
catholic cathedral. She slowly makes her way down the center
isle of long wooden pews, reaching a group of VOTIVE CANDLES
near the altar.

Vacant and peacefully quiet, the cathedral is decorated for
the holidays.

After genuflecting to the altar, she lights a candle and
kneels to pray. The squeak of old wood resonates throughout
the church.

GRACE

God, today's a big day. I know I don't come around very often, so asking for help might be a bit much. Guess I'm just looking for guidance.

Grace looks up to the statue of Mary and Jesus in front of her. She closes her eyes and continues..

Sometimes people have to do things they know are right, even if it hurts the ones they love the most. It took a while, but I finally understand why. We both do.

Grace looks up again. This time a small man, SAMUEL, stands in front of her. He wears coveralls and a handyman tool belt. Their eyes meet.

SAMUEL

Hi.

GRACE

Hi.

SAMUEL

I'm Samuel.

GRACE.

Grace. Grace Johnson.

SAMUEL

Hi, Grace Johnson. Do you mind standing for a minute?

GRACE

Sure.

SAMUEL

Can't have a squeaky kneeler in church, now can we?

Grace stands as Samuel moves around her to work on the kneeler. As he checks the screws, Samuel looks up, speaking to Grace above him.

SAMUEL

What brings you here today?

GRACE

A little reinforcement before heading to an audition at the old firehouse theater.

SAMUEL

I know that place. Same artisans
that built this cathedral.

We see various shots of the cathedral's grand interior.

SAMUEL

Like my family of carpenters, they
were skilled immigrants brought
together to create this incredible
space for others in their
community. Faith and optimism are
powerful allies when people unite
for the right reasons.

GRACE

The one thing I'm missing is faith
in myself. What if I'm not good
enough? What if I'm not what Mr.
Cane is looking for?

Samuel finishes fixing the kneeler. He stands and motions
Grace to kneel back down. Samuel has now switched positions
with Grace.

SAMUEL

How do you know what Mr. Cane is
looking for? I realized a long time
ago that accepting and celebrating
our differences makes us who we
are. My stature doesn't dictate the
size of my character, or the depth
of my good will. We all have our
challenges, Grace. It's how we
overcome the challenges that makes
us who we are. Embrace it and share
it. Especially this time of year.

Samuel begins to walk away. He stops and points to the statue
of Jesus.

SAMUEL

You know, he was a carpenter, too.
You'll do great, Grace.

GRACE

Thank you, Samuel. You've given me
faith.

SAMUEL

Faith to believe in yourself.

Samuel smiles, turns and walks away, humming notes from the
upcoming song.

SONG – "THIS TIME OF YEAR" (Grace)

Peace

Joy

Kindness

And Hope

For all who see

That we

Share the words that we bare

In company

Knowing

Showing

Love, THIS TIME OF YEAR

Love, an uncut diamond

Rough on the edges but brilliant inside

Light

Breaks

Free from the darkness

Holding our place

At the edge of the race

In a world meant for all to be free

Faith

To choose

And trust in ourselves

For us to be

A guide

Making our way down the path

Of humanity

Knowing

Showing

Love, THIS TIME OF YEAR

Love, an uncut diamond

Rough on the edges but brilliant inside

Light

Breaks

Free from the darkness

Holding our place

At the edge of the race

In a world meant for all to be free

Knowing

Showing

Love, THIS TIME OF YEAR

Knowing

Showing

Love, THIS TIME OF YEAR

Love. Love. THIS TIME OF YEAR

EXT. CATHOLIC CATHEDRAL - DAY

Grace leaves the church and gets into the passenger side of a waiting car.

INT. BERKSHIRE REGIONAL THEATER, SIDE WING - DAY

Braxton is flustered by the site of Zoe.

BRAXTON

No text. No call. I, I..

ZOE

I went to my parents'.

BRAXTON

For three months?