

# *Pass the Butler* by Eric Idle

## **“Statement of Intent” by Director**

Pass the Butler is a simply & cheaply set comedy. It relies heavily on timing and cue-biting, with most roles being underplayed for best effect. It was originally set in the 1980s, and cannot really be brought forward in time (technological advances such as videos and mobile phones would make some of the situations depicted in the play a little strange).

Auditions will be held as an open, public audition, using elements of the play dictated by the presence of potential cast members. We will read segments of the play 6-10 pages in length, depending on the appearance of certain characters. We will then change over or introduce other potential cast members and read these pieces again. I will try to arrange it so that a person will read first once only. If you REALLY feel the need to audition privately, this can be arranged after the public reading (in which I hope you will still participate).

Decisions will be made AFTER the auditions, probably not until Tuesday of the following week, all things being well.

## **Tips to auditionees:**

Some of the best sight-readers make horrible actors, and some of the worst sight-readers make excellent actors. Try to just go with the flow. Try to get an accent and character straight off. Feel completely free to ask the director what might or might not be appropriate. It's best to not pause on errors, and please limit your reaction to them when made by other actors – despite the hilarity!

The idea is to “cue-bite”, that means come in at exactly the right time after the previous speaker has concluded their line. This might mean coming in straight away, or maybe pausing for effect before delivering your line. Whatever you do, maintain a happy medium. Timing is critical.

It's also important to be aware that the character him/her self does not think that they are funny. You need to really believe in your character (no matter how flawed it may be), and deliver the funniest lines in the most serious of tones. To summarise you are herby instructed to not play for laughs. Let the language of the play do that, and they will come naturally. This is what we should be aiming to achieve.

One of the things a director is listening for is how certain actors play off against other actors in different roles. It may surprise you to learn that the director wants you in a completely different role to that which you had foreseen. Don't be surprised at this, and trust the director's judgment, because he may have in mind other people for other roles, and finds the blend appropriate.

## **General Remarks**

I'd really like to see if we can run three weeks with this play, however this is to be a consensus decision. If we run three weeks, we will open on November 1. If the play is to run for 2 weeks, we get an extra week of rehearsals. It is also possible to do performances on Sundays at 2pm, however, I don't want to exhaust the cast by running the play too many times over a weekend. Please indicate on your audition info form whether you prefer to run 2 or 3 weeks.

- Peter Deane (02) 4324-3807