

Murder Ballad – March 24th to 26th 2022

Information for Auditionees

THE SHOW

Murder Ballad is a one act, 90 minute rock opera featuring 4 characters, two male and two female. A female narrator guides the audience through the story and introduces us to Tom, Sara and Michael. Sara and Tom are a young couple who have a somewhat rocky relationship. They split up and Sara meets Michael. They marry and have a daughter. Sara begins to feel dissatisfied with her life with Michael and meets up with Tom and they start an affair. Sara then realises that she is making a mistake and attempts to break up with Tom and go back to Michael. Tom doesn't take well to being 'dumped' and creates a situation where the affair is brought out into the open in front of Michael. With strong feelings of revenge, everyone meets in a bar and a fight ensues during which one of the characters dies. The question for the audience is who is the murderer and why.

There are no leading men or leading ladies in this production; all four roles are equivalent in size and are all vital to the story. They are all on stage pretty much throughout the 90-minute performance (which runs with no interval). Setting is the present, in New York. As this is a rock opera, there is no lib at all, the show is sung from start to finish with a live band. Each performer will need to express a wide variety of emotions during the course of the show – if you do it right you should be emotionally drained by the end and the finale song should be a huge release. Vocal ranges for all roles are similar, playing ages for Tom, Sara and Michael are all 30-45, Narrator is likely to be playing age 25-40.

THE AUDITIONS

We are looking for 4 exceptional actor/singers (there is no dance in Murder Ballad at all!). For this production to work, it needs to be 'real' so the characters need to be wholly believable and form a bond with the audience. Each character goes through a range of emotions through the course of the show, and they all have a 'journey'.

Rather than ask people to audition for specific roles, we are inviting people to audition for either a male or female role. For each audition, we have selected parts of two songs – one from each character – that demonstrate the extreme ends of the emotional spectrum. We would like each person to perform both excerpts. Rather than just sing the part, we would like to see you perform it so we can get an idea of how you convey the emotions of the song. You will not be provided with any direction in the audition, so you have completely free reign to decide how to perform these songs. To assist, and for context, please see the following:

FEMALE

Coffee's On

This occurs at a point in the story where Sara is pretty depressed. She has given up all her hopes and ambitions to start a family and be a mother. By now, her little girl is 5 and is off to school, her husband is working a lot and not home and she feels like she has no purpose – no reason to get out of bed ("How did I become so useless in this time and place"). She has totally lost her sense of self ("Who will I be from 9 to 3?").

Clubs and Diamonds

Tom has just told this character that he never loved her. She is fuelled with drink and is already very emotionally charged. She completely loses it at this point, grabs the baseball bat in the club and, as the song says, smashes her (now) ex repeatedly with the bat, killing him. She addresses the audience directly in this song, breaking the fourth wall (“You don’t know what you would do”), but also, she addresses other characters on stage as well.

For the purposes of this performance, you will need to act as though you have a “victim” in the room with you – although there will be no physical person present in the audition. You will therefore have to rely on mime to convey the performance you are wanting to present.

MALE

Little By Little (Reprise)

Michael has finally put 2 and 2 together and worked out that his other half has been having an affair with a former lover. Whilst he has been very calm and reasoned (and almost apologetic up to this point) he is now both hurt and angry – but he is trying to keep it together as his daughter is nearby, and he is out in public – so he doesn’t want to draw attention to himself or cause his daughter distress. He can’t hold it together totally though.

Please be aware that there is a bit in the middle of this number where one of the female characters joins in – you can skip that part and wait to rejoin the song at the next chorus (“Now little by little, I knew something was wrong”).

You Belong to Me

Tom has just been told that Sara is leaving him, and he has also been slapped, hard, by Sara as he tried to stop her walking out. He is not prepared to accept that and becomes almost stalker-like. He is not prepared to let her go. This number is quite sinister – Tom has become controlling and rather unpleasant.

For the purposes of this performance, you will need to act as though you have a Sara in the room with you – although there will be no physical person present in the audition. You will therefore have to rely on mime to convey the performance you are wanting to present.

The link [here](https://1drv.ms/u/s!AgE1816bxdI5qF4tZaWMu5Eb-hPR?e=tMcDMY) should take you to a folder containing (or use the following address - <https://1drv.ms/u/s!AgE1816bxdI5qF4tZaWMu5Eb-hPR?e=tMcDMY>):

- The script excerpts,
- The original US Cast recordings of the audition numbers, and
- The backing tracks that we will use for both the auditions and rehearsals. Please note that we are aware the quality of the tracks is not performance standard – hence the need for a live band!

Any issues with accessing the materials, please email mrpaulawilson@yahoo.co.uk.