



FOLLIES

Audition Pack

October 20-24th 2026

Robinson Brickhouse Theatre

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Hiroshi Sugimoto, *Abandoned Theaters* series

About the Show

Synopsis

New York, 1971. There's a party on the stage of the Weismann Theatre. Tomorrow, the iconic building will be demolished. Thirty years after their final performance, the Follies girls gather to have a few drinks, sing a few songs and lie about themselves. Featuring the classic songs "Broadway Baby," "Losing My Mind" and "I'm Still Here," the New York Times describes *Follies* as "among our musical theater's very finest achievements."

Stephen Sondheim and James Goldman's Tony-award winning musical re-opens the Robinson Brickhouse Theatre ahead of the college's 50th anniversary celebrations. With an incredibly large cast, a full orchestra and stunning design, this will mark the first Cambridge production of the musical masterpiece since 2008. This is the chance of a lifetime to get involved in an ambitious production, explore Sondheim and Goldman's web of love, loss and theatre, and be part of college theatre history.

Meet the Team

Hi! We're **Dhyan** (Director) and **Joseph** (Producer), a duo that you may know from recently putting on *Spider's Web* and *Medea* at the ADC Theatre, as well as sitting on the current CUADC committee.

Dhyan (he/him) is a first-year English student at Robinson College. He is a writer and director, with previous writing experience at the National Theatre in London, as well as directing experience at the ADC and beyond.

Joseph (he/him) is a first-year HSPS student at Downing College. Joseph has broad experience in leading technical and production roles in and out of theatre. Outside of shows at the ADC, he is driven to address global problems like climate change.

We are also delighted to be joined by a production team including assistant directors Kaya and Sophia, as well as our incredible musical directors Rich and Collier!

Concept, Vision and Production History

To watch *Follies* is to stare at the present while haunted by the past; in other words, to watch *Follies* is a powerful and emotional summation of what it means to create art, fall in love and be alive. This is one of the great American musicals, featuring an outstanding, moving score by Sondheim and sharp dialogue by Goldman. There are several opportunities presented by performing *Follies*, including a very large number of brilliant roles, with an extremely large cast and a wonderful blend of figures that are comedic, tragic and somewhere in-between. I'm keen to lean into a naturalistic reading of these characters, uncovering Goldman's dark sub-texts and ever-pertinent commentary on the American Dream. *Follies* is a cynical, moving, all-too-real insight into what it means to love, lose, collaborate and make art.

A note on the history of *Follies*. As Ted Chapin recalls in his excellent book *Everything was Possible*, *Follies* opened at the Winter Garden on Broadway in 1971; since then, it has enjoyed critical debate and constant reinvention, marked as one of Sondheim's greatest masterpieces and arguably one of the best works of musical theatre ever written. Most significant is Dominic Cooke's recent 2017 revival at the National Theatre, which featured Imelda Staunton and redefined the musical as a sincere - though often hilarious - exploration of show business and society. 2026 marks the 55th anniversary of the musical - and almost a decade since Cooke's iconic revival. Now, this production seeks to re-introduce the musical to Cambridge, allowing audiences to experience its iconic songs, characters and stories through fresh and radical direction.

About the Brickhouse Theatre

Brickhouse Theatre Company was founded in 1998 as the resident student theatre group at Robinson College, Cambridge. Brickhouse enjoys two very fine spaces at Robinson College - the 240-seat indoor theatre, and the outdoor Maria Bjornson Theatre - as well as supporting shows elsewhere. In recent times, much like the Weissman Theatre in *Follies*, Brickhouse has fallen into a quieter period in its history. This production is set to make history, reviving Brickhouse and - for the first time ever - opening the Robinson College Auditorium up as our very own "Brickhouse Theatre." If you're not convinced by

the brilliance of *Follies* alone, this is the chance to be involved in the biggest production in Robinson College history, making a real impact in the vibrant college theatre scene in Cambridge.

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Content Warnings

Suicidal ideation, grief, depression, mental illness, infidelity, sexual references, alcohol consumption

How to Audition

Since it's exam season, we're mainly using **self-tape auditions** for the first round. For these auditions, you are invited to pick a role, pick a song (either from the suggestions below, or of your own choosing), and then perform the song and one of three short extracts to camera. The self-tape deadline is **Wednesday 27th May**. There are also optional in-person auditions at Robinson College on **Monday 25th May** for the first round, if you would rather not do a self-tape.

Recalls for some actors will take place on **Saturday 30th and Sunday 31st May**; more information will be released about those upon submission of a tape or completion of an audition!

Submit first-round auditions here:

<https://forms.gle/j426x2ES4s73s9MH7>

If you have questions about this process, or would like an extension on these deadlines, please contact Dhyan and Joseph: dr647@cam.ac.uk and jh2626@cam.ac.uk!

Roles, Songs and Extracts

Do not stress about picking a character; just go for something that sounds fun and roughly suits your vocal range! (If you're unsure what that means, something like <https://singingcarrots.com/range-test> might help) **In your self-tape, choose one song (from these suggestions or of your own choice) and one of the extracts available at the end!**

Young Phyllis

A younger version of Phyllis, when she was an energetic and naïve Follies girl. Slightly sad and homesick. With all the drive and none of the sophistication of the adult Phyllis.

Vocal range top: E5

Vocal range bottom: B3

Song suggestions:

The Miller's Son (A Little Night Music)

Giants in the Sky (Into the Woods)

Young Buddy

A younger version of the Buddy we see today. Charismatic and lively, a man who knows how to have fun. Loves Sally blindly and wants to give her the world.

Vocal range top: G5

Vocal range bottom: C4

Song suggestions:

Agony (Into the Woods)

Being Alive (Company)

Young Ben

A not yet fully realized version of the man we see before us today, he is driven and intelligent but not quite so distinguished and not yet frightened by his success.

Vocal range top: F5

Vocal range bottom: C4

Song suggestions:

Finishing the Hat (Sunday in the Park with George)

Marry Me a Little (Company)

Carlotta Champion

The one-time movie star, who is in terrific shape for her age. The kind of woman who has seen everything and is proud to be standing where she is.

Vocal range top: B4

Vocal range bottom: E3

Song suggestions:

Cabaret (Cabaret)

Ladies Who Lunch (Company)

Stella Deems

A portly woman who surprisingly moves with a special lightness; half of a former performing duo with her husband, but they gave it up to open a general store in Miami. Loves life and has led a good one.

Vocal range top: F5

Vocal range bottom: E3

Song suggestions:

Broadway Baby (Follies)

Last Midnight (Into the Woods)

Max Deems

A portly man who surprisingly moves with a special lightness; half of a former performing duo with his wife, Stella, but they gave it up to open a general store in Miami. Loves life and has led a good one.

Song suggestions:

Franklin Shepherd Inc. (Merrily We Roll Along)

Brush Up Your Shakespeare (Kiss Me Kate)

Emily Whitman

A tiny, bright and papery woman. Married to Theodore, who together, teach dance together.

Vocal range top: D5

Vocal range bottom: B3

Song suggestions:

Send In the Clowns (A Little Night Music)

Edelweiss (Sound Of Music)

Hattie Walker

An appealingly tough, no-nonsense lady. A former knockout Follies girl from the earlier years of the shows. She has married several times and always to the same type: the bad boy.

Vocal range top: B4

Vocal range bottom: G3

Song suggestions:

Rose's Turn (Gypsy)

Last Midnight (Into the Woods)

Theodore Whitman

A tiny, bright and papery man. Married to Emily, who together, teach dance together.

Vocal range top: D4

Vocal range bottom: B2

Song suggestions:

Do You Love Me (Fiddler on the Roof)

I'm a Stranger Here Myself (One Touch of Venus)

Solange La Fitte

A French fashionista. Very much still alive and enjoying it, she is a perfume creator and seller. Has travelled the world but loves Paris more than any other place.

Vocal range top: G5

Vocal range bottom: A3

Song suggestions:

Maybe This Time (Cabaret)

Send In The Clowns (A Little Night Music)

Heidi Schiller

Tall and queenly. Viennese. Incredibly rich and well known in elite social circles, she is constantly reminiscing.

Vocal range top: G5

Vocal range bottom: D4

Song suggestions:

One More Kiss (Follies)

On The Steps of The Palace (Into the Woods)

Young Heidi

A younger version of the Heidi we see today. Already tall and queenly, but perhaps not yet rich and so well connected.

Vocal range top: A5

Vocal range bottom: E4

Song suggestions:

One More Kiss (Follies)

On The Steps of The Palace (Into the Woods)

Dimitri Weissman

An acerbic, vital, energetic man who looks fifteen years younger than he really is. Staged the Follies every year between the great wars, and made stars of any girl he wanted from the legions who threw themselves at him.

Song suggestions:

Camelot (Camelot)

Everything's Coming Up Roses (Gypsy)

Roscoe

An elderly showman with a majestic tenor voice who introduces the Follies girls as if no time has passed and they are still the beautiful young girls of years ago.

Vocal range top: A5

Vocal range bottom: D4

Song suggestions:

Camelot (Camelot)

All I Care About (Chicago)

Sally Durant Plummer

Petite. Sweet-faced. Bubbly. Still remarkably like the girl she was thirty years ago. A former Follies girl, she married a man she didn't love. Needy and delusional at times.

Vocal range top: G5

Vocal range bottom: F3

Song suggestions:

On the Steps of the Palace (Into the Woods)

No One Is Alone (Into the Woods)

Phyllis Rogers Stone

Stylish and intelligent. Her face is more beautiful now than it was thirty years ago. A woman who made her husband her life, the journey has hardened her and replaced the traces of life with cold sophistication and poise.

Vocal range top: E5

Vocal range bottom: F3

Song suggestions:

Every Day a Little Death (A Little Night Music)

Moments in the Woods (Into the Woods)

Buddy Plummer

A handsome, charismatic man with a sad face wrinkled from years of too much smiling. Stuck in a broken marriage and has had multiple affairs.

Vocal range top: F5

Vocal range bottom: C4

Song suggestions:

Agony (Into the Woods)

If Ever I Would Leave You (Camelot)

Benjamin Stone

Tall. Trim. Distinguished. Successful. Authoritative. A man bent on success from a young age who has achieved it and now realizes the toll it had on personal relationships.

Vocal range top: F5

Vocal range bottom: A3

Song suggestions:

If I Were A Rich Man (Fiddler on the Roof)

Stars (Les Mis)

Young Sally

A younger version of the adult Sally. She is perhaps the most similar to her adult counterpart of any of the foursome. Petite. Sweet-faced. Bubbly. Adventurous. Wants it all, but may not have the patience or drive to wait for it.

Vocal range top: G5

Vocal range bottom: C4

Song suggestions:

On the Steps of the Palace (Into the Woods)

No One Is Alone (Into the Woods)

Three extracts (only need to choose one, don't worry about the character!):

1) CARLOTTA. I never get to talk. I take a plane, go to a party, every guy I meet says, "Boy, oh boy, a real live movie actress; tell me all about yourself." I get as far as "I was born in Idaho" and he starts telling me the story of his life. Not just his troubles: he unloads the whole thing, ups and downs. Mostly, he just wants to talk. Sometimes, he wants a place to put his head awhile. Other times, he wants the works; some nights, he gets it. You want to hear the story of my life?

2) PHYLLIS. Bargains, Buddy. That's the way to get through. One makes bargains with one's life. That's what maturity amounts to. When we're young and every road looks clear, we take them all, ignoring Newton's laws of motion, going every way at once. Star, mother, hostess, hausfrau. So I learned to be an artist with my life. I constantly select, as if each day were a painting and I had to get the colors right. We're careful of our colors, Ben and I, and what we've made is beautiful. I had a lover once. His name was Jack, I think. He played the drums and had long hair and no command of language. He was young and crude and foolish, and we'd wash away

the afternoons with Gallo wine and one another, listening to the pop hits and the news. I have a birthmark under my left breast, just here—my only flaw. I think he loved that in me most of all. He was so tender touching it, and when he kissed me there, one found it difficult to breathe. I thought it answered everything, but these things pass, and I have thirty thousand dollars worth of Georgian silver in my dining room.

3) WEISSMAN. Welcome to our first and last reunion. For those of you whose memories may be going, I'm Dimitri Weismann. Every year, between the wars, I staged a Follies in this theater. Since then, this house has been a home to ballet, rep, movies, blue movies and now, in a final burst of glory, it's to be a parking lot. Before it goes, I felt an urge to see you one last time... a final chance to glamorize the old days, stumble through a song or two and lie about ourselves a little. I have, as you can see, spared no expense. Still there's a band, free food and drink, and the inevitable Roscoe, here as always to bring on the Weismann Girls. So take one last look at your girls. They won't be coming down these stairs again. I don't trust any music under thirty. Maestro, if you please!