**Auditions for *Fools* by Neil Simon**

***When & Where:***

January 20 & 21; 5-7pm. Callbacks January 22 if needed.

Guthrie Theatre Auditorium.

***Auditioners should prepare:***

- One of the provided monologues, and be prepared to read one of the scenes.

- Audition form with list of possible rehearsal conflicts (this form will be provided when you arrive.)

***Story:***

A comic fable set long ago in the Ukraine. The town of Kulyenchikov (kool – YEN – chi – Kov) has been cursed with stupidity. Leon, a young schoolmaster, has 24 hours to teach the sweet Sophia something, which will break the curse. If he fails, he will also fall prey to the curse and become stupid. No pressure.

***Characters:***

**Leon Tolchinsky** (toll – CHIN – skee) – male 20-30

a schoolteacher who is brought to Kulyenchikov to educate Sophia; falls in love with her, and vows to break the curse so that she will not have to marry Count Gregor; very intelligent but also stubborn.

**Sophia Zubritsky** (zoo – BRIT – skee) – female 19

the beautiful and kind daughter of the town's doctor; Leon falls in love with her; she is the one who can break the curse, as she is the descendant of the original Sophia who caused the curse; the curse can only be broken if she is educated, or if she marries a Yousekevitch; a simple soul, but much smarter than everyone gives her credit for; craves knowledge and love, and is often just as stubborn as Leon.

**Dr. Nikolai Zubritsky** (KNEE – ko – lie zoo – BRIT – skee) – male 40-50

the town doctor; husband of Lenya and father of Sophia; a true fool through and through, who acts as an unofficial leader of the town; has a tendency to belittle his wife and daughter.

**Lenya Zubritsky** (LANE – ya zoo – BRIT – skee) – female 40-50

Nikolai's wife and Sophia's mother; much like her husband, she tends to belittle others but, like her daughter, is smarter than the others give her credit for.

**Snetsky** - male or female 18-30

the local shepherd/shepherdess who can't remember their own name and spends much of the play looking for their lost sheep.

**Magistrate** – male or female 79

the very old town official; performs important town duties, like ringing the bell and officiating weddings.

**Mishkin –** male or female 30-40

the postman/woman who knows facts about the curse.

**Slovitch –** male or female, 30-50

the butcher who, even by Kulyenchikov standards, is very, very stupid.

**Yenchna –** female 60-70

a local vendor.

**Count Gregor Youskevitch** (USE – kev – Itch) – male 20-30

the descendant of the family that put the curse of stupidity on Kulyenchikov; attempts to break the curse by marrying Sophia; believes himself to be much smarter than the others--indeed, believes himself to be smarter than he actually is; strikes fear in the hearts of the other villagers, making them tremble.

***Additional Materials:***

**Monologues -- Choose ONE of these monologues to prepare.**

**LEON TOLCHINSKY** - Kulyenchikov. I like it. It's exactly as I pictured...a quiet pleasant village, not too large, the perfect place for a new schoolteacher to begin his career. Well, to be honest, I did spend mornings for two years in a small children’s school in Moscow teaching tiny tots rudimentary spelling and numbers. But this...this is my first bona-fide professional appointment as a full-time schoolmaster. Actually, I had never even heard of Kulyenchikov until I read an advertisement by a Dr. Zubritsky placed in the college journal. Although the position was in a remote village in the Ukraine, I jumped at the chance, but I don’t mind telling you that my heart is pounding with excitement. You see I have this passion for teaching... Greek, Latin, Astronomy, Classic Literature... I get goosebumps just thinking about it.

**LEON TOLCHINSKY** -- Did you hear what you just said? It was a decision. You decided to help your daughter because you thought about it. You are capable of thought. You think. (*Lenya disagrees)* Yes! Out of your head where your brain is lodged. The center of thoughts. And if it's possible to have even one tiny infinitesimal insignificant thought, then it's possible to expand those thoughts to ideas--and ideas into comprehension--comprehension into creativity--and finally, supreme *intelligence!!* Patience. We will break this curse, I promise you! By the simple, everyday, painstaking work of education.

**LEON TOLCHINSKY** - Sophia, that is the most beautiful wish I have ever heard. *(To Sophia’s parents*) Don't you see what her wish means? To fly like a bird means to sever the bonds that chain her to ignorance. She wants to soar, to grow, she wants knowledge! And with every fiber of my being, from the very depths of my soul. I shall gather all my strength and patience and dedication, and I make this promise that I, Leon Steponovitch Tolchinsky, shall make Sophia Zubritsky's wish come true. She touches me so. Your daughter has such a sweet soul and such a pure heart. We must begin as soon as possible. Not another moment must be lost. I shall return in the morning at eight o'clock sharp. What subject shall we begin our studies with, Sophia? Languages! Of course! Even I should have thought of that. Languages it shall be, my dear, sweet Sophia. . . And what language shall we begin with first?

**DR. ZUBRITSKY** -- One moment! I -- I think i know. I think I know the answer. To the purpose of man's existence, it's true! The first time I heard it I didn't undersand. But now, suddenly somthing came to me. I know my limitations, but still, I think I really know the answer...Oh my god, what if I'm right? I think-- it's twelve. It's wrong; I can tell by your face. Fourteen? It's less than a hundred, I know that. Even *I'm* not that stupid. Eighty-three...forty-six. Oh perhaps I should have left well enough alone...but what if I were right? I could have sold the answer. We could have made a fortune.

**SOPHIA ZUBRITSKY** – A wish is something you hope for that doesn’t come true. I would wish that I could fly like a bird… to soar over buildings and trees… to float on the wind and be carried far away… over mountains and lakes… to meet people in other villages… to see what the world was like… to know all the things that I shall never know because I must always remain here in this place. If you could make my wish come true, schoolmaster, I would be in your debt forever.

**GREGOR YOUSEKEVITCH** - Was he just talking about me? You like him, don’t you? Better than me, right? Admit it… I would give up all my wealth and powers if I could be the hero. I wouldn’t have to wear this dumb outfit… people would applaud when I come on. You’re not even listening to me, are you? All you care about is getting those two kids together… I hope it’s raining when you leave here.

**Scenes -- You may be asked to read one of these scenes with another actor.**

Man + Woman:

**LENYA ZUBRITSKY and DR. ZUBRITSKY**

LENYA: Nikolai! Nikolai! He’s here. He’s come! He arrived not two minutes ago. He’s young. He looks strong, determined. Maybe he’ll be the one, Nikolai. Maybe this one will finally be our salvation.

DR: Calm yourself, Lenya. Who’s come? Who’ll be our salvation?

LENY: The new—er—the new—what do you call them? They come and they—er—the ones who—we had one once but no more.

DR: Oh, God. I know. I know who you mean.

LENYA: They have a place, and then you go to the place— /

DR: And they point to you and they say—er—they ask you if you—er—

LENYA: And if you don’t, they say, “Why didn’t you? Next time I’ll make you.”

DR: And he’s outside?

LENYA: He’s just down the street.

DR: Well, show him in, Lenya. Show him in. And pray God this is the one who will deliver us and all of Kulyenchikov from this dreadful—er—this—er—Oh, God, what is it we have again?

LENYA: I know. I know what you mean. It sounds like nurse…

DR: Nurse.

LENYA: Or hearse…

DR: Hearse.

LENYA: Something like that.

DR: Or something like that. (there is a knock) Or is it a knock?

LENYA: We have a knock? /

DR: Yes, yes. Open the knock.

Man + Woman

**LEON TOLCHINSKY and SOPHIA ZUBRITSKY**

SOPHIA: Schoolmaster!

LEON: Sophia!

SOPHIA: I had to see you once more.

LEON: Without a wrap? In the cold night air, you’ll come down with a cold.

SOPHIA: Oh, I never catch colds.

LEON: You don’t.

SOPHIA: I’ve tried. I’ve just never learned how to do it.

LEON: Be grateful… Some things are not worth knowing.

SOPHIA: I know that something has happened a long time ago that prevents me from knowing what happened a long time ago. If only you knew me the way I might have been instead of the way I am.

LEON: But if you were not the way you are, then I would not have come here to help you to become the way you might have been. (aside) Careful! You’re beginning to think like her.

SOPHIA: Could you—could you ever care for someone who never became the way I might have been?

LEON: Could I ever care for someone who never became—I see what you mean. I see what you’re getting at. Yes. Yes, I could. I would. I shall. I will. I have. I do.

SOPHIA: Is that rabbit you’re speaking? It’s hard to follow.

LEON: If it sounds like gibberish it’s because you do that to me, Sophia. When thoughts come from the heart they sometimes trip over the tongue.

SOPHIA: Then I must watch where I walk when you speak. Would you like to kiss me?

LEON: With all my heart.

SOPHIA: No. I meant with your lips.

LEON: An even better suggestion.

SOPHIA: Hurry. Hurry.

2 Men

**DR ZUBRITSKY and MAGISTRATE**

MAG: (*reading eye chart, covering one eye*) K…E…5…L…A…R…V… Is that right?

DR: I don’t know. It sounds good to me. (Listening to the Magistraates hear) Yes… Yes… Very interesting.

MAG: Then I’m in good health?

DR: The best. The best o health. You’ll live to be eighty.

MAG. I’m 79 now.

DR. Well, you’ve got a wonderful year ahead of you.

MAG.: Good I must keep up my strength. I’m a magistrate. Law anw order must be preserved.

DR.: Did you want a prescription?

MAG.: For what?

DR.: I don’t know. Some people like prescriptions. Here, take this to the druggist. Pick out something you like and take it three times a day with a little water. Goodbye, sir.

MAG.: How much do I own you Doctor?

DR.: Oh, forget it Forget it. If I ever go to medical school, you can send me a little something.

MAG.: Oh, thank you. Goodbye.

2 Actors (Either gender)

**SLOVITCH and MISHKIN**

SLOV: Good morning, postman.

MISH: Good morning, butcher.

SLOV: A beautiful, sunny day, isn’t it?

MISH: Is it? I haven’t looked up yet. (looks up) Oh, yes. Lovely. Very nice.

SLOV: Do I have any mail?

MISH: No. I’m sorry. I’m the postman. I have all the mail.

SLOV: My sister in Odessa hasn’t been feeling well. I was hoping I would hear from her.

MISH: It’s very hard to hear all the way from Odessa. Perhaps she wrote a letter. I’ll look. (looks) I don’t have any letters from your sister, Slovitch. But I have a nice letter from the shoemaker’s cousin. Would you like that?

SLOV: Is she sick? I hate reading bad news.

MISH: No, no. In perfect health. Take it. You’ll enjoy it.

SLOV: And can you believe my daughter hasn’t written to me in over a year?

MISH: Doesn’t your daughter live with you?

SLOV: It’s a good thing. Otherwise I’d never hear from her.

2 Actors (Either Gender)

**SNETSKY** **and** **LEON TOLCHINSKY**

SNETSKY: Elenya! Lebidoff! Marushka! Olga! Where are you?

LEON: Good morning.

SNETSKY: Good morning. Did you happen to see two dozen sheep?

LEON: Two dozen sheep?

SNETSKY: Yes. There were fourteen of them

LEON: No. I’m sorry.

SNETSKY: Well if you see them, would you give them a message?

LEON: A message for the sheep?

SNETSKY: Yes, tell them the shepherd is looking for them and they should tell you where they are and I’ll come get them. Thank you.

LEON: Wait, wait. Excuse me – what is your name, please?

SNETSKY: Snetsky.

LEON: And your first name?

SNETSKY: How soon do you need it?

LEON: Never mind. Forget your first name.

SNETSKY: I did.

2 Actors (Either gender)

**YENCHNA and LEON**

YENCH: Fish! Fresh fish! Nice fresh flounder and halibut! A good piece of carp for lunch! *(She has no fish, but bunches of flowers).* How about a nice piece of haddock? Is that a beautiful fish?

LEON: How do you do? What do you mean fish? Those are flowers.

YENCH: They didn’t catch anything today. Why should I suffer because the fisherman had a bad day? Try the carp, it smells gorgeous.

LEON: I was just talking to a shepherdess named Snetsky. She was pleasant enough, although, and I hope I don’t seem unkind, somewhat deficient in her mental alertness.

YENCH: That’s Snetsky alright. She was kicked in the head by a horse.

LEON: Oh well, what a pity. When was that?

YENCH: Tuesday, Wednesday, twice on Friday, and all day Saturday.

LEON: (*Looking at Yenchna’s flowers*) What lovely and fragrant wares you have for sale, madame. Perhaps I might buy some for my new employer. How much are they, please?

YENCH: The flounder is two kopecks and the halibut is three.

LEON: I beg your pardon?

YENCH: *(Holds up a white flower)* If it’s too much, I have a nice whitefish for two and a half. *(She wraps it in a newspaper and hands it to him. He pays.)*

LEON: Perhaps the dialect is a little different in this part of the country.