



Audition Notice

COSI

Written by Louis Nowra

Directed by Simon Corvan & Kathleen Yorston

Venue:	Windsor School of Arts, 381 Lutwyche Rd, Windsor
Performance dates:	Fri 14, Sat 15, Fri 21, Sat 22, Sun 23 (matinee), Fri 29, Sat 30 June
Rehearsals:	Monday & Thursday 6:30 - 9:30 pm Sunday 1:00 - 4:30 pm

Audition Details

Date:	Sunday 17 February, 10am Call back: Thursday 22 February, 6:30 to 9:30pm <i>if required</i>
Parking:	There is a small car park beside the Hall. Alternatively, street parking is available on Maygar Street and the streets that run off Maygar Street.

How to audition:

- **Check the dates.** If you cannot make any of the performance dates or critical rehearsals, do not audition.
- **Complete the Audition Registration Form** to register your interest with your name, phone number and role/s you're auditioning for. If you have a headshot and acting resume, please email this to production@growltheatre.org.au. Experience is not necessary.
- **Practice and prepare one of the script extracts.**
- Email Simon and Kathleen at production@growltheatre.org.au for more information or questions.

Membership fees:

If you are cast for a role, you will need to become a financial member of Growl Theatre which is **\$30 per calendar year**. You may need to contribute financially to the purchase of your costume, particularly with regards to shoes.

www.growltheatre.org.au

Performance Address: Windsor School of Arts, 381 Lutwyche Rd, Windsor, Qld, 4030

Mailing Address: 21 Yarraman St, Lutwyche, Qld, 4030



About Growl Theatre:

This is a group of people who are interested in getting together and putting on some plays, having some fun and providing some entertainment. The aims of the group are:

- To put on productions that are of the best quality possible; 'amateur' should not be a synonym for 'rubbish'!
- To provide opportunities for people to hone existing skills, or to build new ones.
- To provide a group which helps to foster a greater sense of community.
- To provide an opportunity to meet new people.

We are a group in which you are required to 'pitch in' and we would very much like to give you an experience that might make you interested in becoming part of our group in the long haul. We are not concerned by lack/absence of experience.

Agreeable, modest, trustworthy people, who are wanting to develop their skills and capabilities are always welcome.

ABOUT THE PLAY

Set in a psychiatric facility, *Così* is a play about friendship, romance, infidelity and difference. It's 1971 and Australia is protesting the war in Vietnam. But inside the asylum, the inmates are listening to Mozart, learning their lines and occasionally skipping their medication. It's art, it's mayhem, it's a wonderful roller coaster all the way to opening night.

The icing on the cake is that it's all based on playwright Louis Nowra's own life. In the 1970s, he himself directed a musical with inmates from Melbourne's Mont Park Asylum. The one-off performance brought joy to everyone involved.

First produced in 1992, *COSI* has become one of the most successful Australian plays produced in the last two decades. A terrific play about madness, illusion, sanity... and theatre.

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Rehearsal Schedule

This is our intended rehearsal schedule. A clear understanding of your availability allows us to make the best decisions to make good use of our schedule.

Read Through

April: Sunday 28, 1:30pm

Rehearsals:

April: Monday 29, 6:30pm;

May: Thursday 2, 6:30pm; Sunday 5, 1:30pm; Monday 6, 6:30pm; Thursday 9, 6:30pm; Sunday 12, 1:30pm; Monday 13, 6:30pm; Thursday 16, 6:30pm; Sunday 19, 1:30pm; Monday 20, 6:30pm; Thursday 23, 6:30pm; Sunday 26, 1:30pm; Monday 27, 6:30pm; Thursday 30, 6:30pm;

June: Sunday 2, 1:30pm; **Monday 3, 6:30pm; Thursday 6, 6:30pm;**

Tech Set up: Sunday 2 June, 9am

Dress/Tech Rehearsals:

June: Sunday 9, 1:30pm; Monday 10, 6:30pm, Thursday 13, 6:30pm;

Performances:

Friday 14, Saturday 15, Friday 21, Saturday 22, Sunday 23 (matinee), Friday 28, Saturday 29 June
7:30pm evening shows, 2:00pm matinee show

Bump Out:

Sunday 30 June, 10am

Performances (5:00 pm to late)

General rehearsals (6:30 to 9:30 pm weeknights, 1:00 to 4:30 pm Sundays)

Critical events (dress/tech etc) (roughly as above. Negotiated with cast)

Please understand the pressure that it creates when people either [a] commit to a role then pull out, or [b] commit to the times then become unavailable. Whilst we recognise that illness and unforeseen circumstance can occur, please ensure that you have considered birthdays, engagements, weddings, pre-existing commitments etc. Also ensure that work commitments will not clash.

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Characters (description & ages)

Lewis (Male, 20s)

The protagonist of *Così*, Lewis is a new university graduate who has agreed to direct a play with patients from a mental institution because he needs the money. At first, Lewis shares the same values as his friends Nick and Lucy, that love is unimportant due to the ongoing Vietnam War. During the time he spends with the patients however, Lewis experiences a turning point in his understanding and perception of people. By the end of the play, Lewis learns to appreciate love and friendship over war and politics.

Note: There is kissing between Lewis & Julie, and Lewis & Cherry

Roy (Male, 40s-50s)

A highly-strung patient who insists on performing Mozart's *Così Fan Tutte* even though none of the other patients can sing or speak Italian. Believing that Lewis is a poor director, Roy takes charge assigning patients to characters in the play. He is quite blunt in expressing his opinions of others. Roy has a huge emotional range in the play.

Lucy / Julie (Female, 20s) *(Note: this is a double role as Lucy is a small role.)*

Lucy: Girlfriend and roommate of Lewis. She has an affair with Nick who shares similar beliefs – that the Vietnam War protest is more important than anything else. Lucy cannot understand why Lewis is directing a play about love when thousands are dying in the war.

Julie: A patient addicted to illicit drugs. She is Lewis's love interest in the play and is a catalyst for Lewis and Lucy's deteriorating relationship. She believes that men have double standards, since females are routinely targeted for their infidelity while men are also unfaithful to their partners.

Note: There is a kiss between Lewis & Julie

Justin / Nick / Zac (Male, 20s) *(Note: this is a triple role as all three are minor parts that do not overlap)*

Nick: An experienced student director, roommate and friend of Lewis. He promises to help Lewis with *Così Fan Tutte* however, he quickly breaks this vow in order to spend time with Lucy. Lewis later discovers that Lucy and Nick are having an affair. Nick is heavily involved in the moratorium, a protest against the Vietnam War.

Zac: A patient who takes the part of musician for *Così Fan Tutte*. He prefers to play Wagner over Mozart, which sparks a dispute between himself and Roy. Zac is passionate about



music and plays the piano and the piano accordion (it is not required that the actor can actually play these).

Justin: A social worker who organised the patients from the mental institution to be a part of the theatre project. Patronising towards the patients, he represents society's view on the mentally ill.

Doug (Male, 20s-30s)

A patient who was sent to the mental institution as a result of burning his mother's cats and home. He is a pyromaniac – someone who gains satisfaction from deliberately starting fires. He appears to light fires quite frequently, once in the theatre toilets and once outside the theatre. He also supports free love and is keen on the potential violence that may transpire at the moratorium.

Cherry (Female, 20s-40s)

A patient who has an abusive personality and carries a flick knife with her. She has a violent relationship with Doug, as she is always ordering him to 'go burn a cat.' She is overprotective of Lewis, on whom she has a crush. As a form of affection, she is constantly feeding him with food in order to 'fatten' him up.

Note: *There is a kiss between Lewis & Cherry*

Ruth (Female, 30s-40s)

A patient suffering from an obsessive disorder. Throughout the play, she focuses on minor issues such as having real or fake coffee on set, and the number of steps she needs to take to reach her position on stage.

Henry (Male, 40s-50s) (*Note: this is a minor role with relatively few lines*)

A shy patient, a damaged soul, who rarely speaks and avoids eye contact with others. A former lawyer, he now suffers from a disability with his left arm. However, it is shown to be a false disability when he switches his 'bad arm' from left to right. He is subservient to others, especially Roy. Towards the end of the play however, he overcomes his timidity to defend Lewis.

Note: *Henry has a bad stutter.*



Script Extracts

LEWIS & ROY

Lewis and Roy are arguing – Roy is very excited and Lewis is trying to talk sense into him.

ROY: And, of course, the others pick themselves. Julie as Fiordiligi, Dorabella is Ruth. Doug, you'll be Ferrando and I'll be Guglielmo. Typecasting, really.

LEWIS: Roy -

ROY: We must get started on the costumes. I've told occupational therapy to stop making those baskets.

LEWIS: Roy -

ROY: And the set, my god, who'll paint the backdrops?

LEWIS: [*loudly*] Roy!

ROY: Hark! Adolf Hitler has spoken. [*Almost confidentially to those near him*] All directors are tyrants.

LEWIS: [*more softly*] Roy -

ROY: That's the name.

LEWIS: We've auditioned everyone this morning -

ROY: And you were thorough. Thorough. I was impressed -

LEWIS: And I did notice something -

ROY: Ah, already: details!

LEWIS: No one can sing.

ROY: I can carry a tune, Ruth can -

LEWIS: What I mean is Roy, no one can sing opera.

ROY: [*Pause*] We certainly got up on the wrong side of the bed this morning, didn't we?

LEWIS: Opera takes years of training.

ROY: Not in the old days. Enthusiasm, natural talent -

LEWIS: And on top of everything else, the opera is in Italian. That's an incredible burden, even for the most brilliant talent. [*Wait a beat*] Isn't it?

ROY: [*Pause*] I aim for the stars, Jerry, is that such a bad thing –

LEWIS: No, I like your enthusiasm –

ROY: Then let's aim for the stars!



LEWIS & JULIE

Lewis is reading a student newspaper. He has noticed that Julie is preoccupied and unsettled.

LEWIS: Thought you'd gone outside. You seem a bit preoccupied.

JULIE: Bit over the shop today. I had to go and see one of the shrinks. They don't know how to deal with drug users. He called it a 'crutch'. I said it was a 'rocket to the stars'. Needless to say, we didn't get on. I'm surprised to see you here. I thought you wouldn't come back.

[waits a beat] They still scare you? *[indicating the other patients offstage]*

LEWIS: It's not so bad. My grandmother went mad. I went once to the asylum to see her. In her mind she was living in the year before I was born. She thought I was Eric, my father. And he had just married mum and she was about to have me.

JULIE: You pretended to be your father about to father yourself?

[He nods. Both are amused]

Don't ever tell a psychiatrist that story, they'd have a heart attack on the symbolism of it all.

[both laugh]

In a way you're sort of testing yourself by coming here?

LEWIS: I guess so. I liked my grandmother, I knew she'd gone mad, but she was still my grandmother.

JULIE: *[changing topic]* It must be strange to be doing plays with amateurs like us?

LEWIS: All I've done is act a bit at university and did some direction. My friend, Nick, is the one who knows all about theatre, only he is more interested in politics. He says politics is the real theatre.

JULIE: He shares a house with your girlfriend, Lucy. Doug has told the whole hospital everything about you. *[noticing the newspaper]* You're a radical?

LEWIS: *[amused]* Lucy would never call me that. She and Nick edit the newspaper. It's a special edition publicising the moratorium march against the war.

JULIE: *[looking at the second page]* Lucy White...that's her?

LEWIS: Yes.

JULIE: Uses a nice shampoo in her hair. Earnest. Serious. Not many jokes?

[Lewis shakes his head, bemused]

A laugh is as good as a fuck, they say. You two are into free love?

LEWIS: Doug said that?

JULIE: Spread it all over the asylum.

LEWIS: Lucy's not into marriage.

JULIE: You are?

LEWIS: We sometimes talk about commitment -

JULIE: *[amused]* Fidelity, like in *Cosi*?



LEWIS: But it never gets far.

JULIE: She's not into it?

LEWIS: She's into politics. She hates talk about love. She thinks its icky. 'Love is the last gasp of bourgeois romanticism', she says. She hates me doing an opera about love and fidelity while thousands of Vietnamese are being killed by American troops.

ROY

Talking to Lewis about his dreams.

Sometimes a vision is destroyed. (*Waits a beat.*) I had a dream, Jerry, and it is fading. There would be music, music of the spheres, colourful costumes, joie de vivre, a world that was as far removed from this depressing asylum as possible. A world that was like my childhood: tea parties, dances in our ballroom, circus performers coming to perform just for me. My mother in Parisian gowns - she flirting with the men, waving her fan so fast, it was a blur - servants dancing on fingertips, French tutors, lullabies goodnight sung to me by my beautiful mother, summer days and lemonade brought to me by a maid as I sat on the front verandah listening to the piano inside playing Mozart. That's the world I wanted *Così fan Tutte* to capture - recapture. but it's gone, the music too.

JULIE

Talking to Lewis about her drug use.

My parents had me committed. They think it's sort of like a holiday. Those dirty white olive walls give me the heebie jeebies, they really do. *Così* gave me something to think about, something to do. (*She laughs.*) See, I'm happy coming to this burnt-out theatre. (Pause.) Doug ... It's peculiar about drugs. Doug hates them because he likes to be naturally high all the time. Zac likes them because everything passes like he's in a dream or limbo. I think I'm a naturally addictive personality. I like what they give you here, because not to be on drugs, whatever sort, is like being in limbo for me. Drugs make me feel sort of living. Complete the opposite for Doug. Especially junk. Ever had it? No, you haven't, I can tell. A bit of pot, touch of acid, right?

LEWIS: What's it like?

Junk? Like lying in a warm, cloudy river. Some people can't imagine life without love, well I can't imagine life without junk. I know it's stupid, that's why I like doing this theatre thing. Doesn't make me sit in my ward thinking, what I need right now is ... I'm really full of beans, you know? I could cut your hair in a minute flat.



CHERRY

Talking/ Flirting with Lewis

I'm not bothering you, am I? Just between you and me, I've got a flick-knife. If Doug attempts any more arson, then he's a goner. (*Cheerfully she changes to another topic.*) I was looking at the first scene, seeing I had nothing to do, which was totally unexpected after all this talk about how large my part was going to be, when I read the words that Henry says: 'Woman's constancy is like the Phoenix of Arabia. Everyone swears it exists but no one has seen it.' By the way, I think your translation is wonderful. Do you believe women are like that? That they aren't true and faithful? I am. With someone like you I could be true and faithful.

JUSTIN

Talking to Lewis about working in an asylum.

You must feel a bit queasy. I know I was when I first came to work in an asylum. The thing is, and you'll discover this, is that they are just normal people, well, not quite normal, or else they wouldn't be in here, would they? But you get my drift?

They are normal people who have done extraordinary things, thought extraordinary thoughts. You are getting a good bunch. They'll be no trouble: no carving knife against the throat. [*beat*] You might want to keep a close eye on Doug, though. I didn't know he had been released from a closed ward – being in C ward means the patient is never allowed out, day or night, until we're satisfied they won't harm others or themselves. But he should be all right if they've let him out – as long as he's taking his medication. He's a bit cheeky the way he won't take it sometimes.

The Government bought the land next to the asylum last year and this theatre was on it. Someone set fire to it, but it's safe. A bit grungy, as we say, but safe. There's some lights up there – what do you call them in the theatre? Anyway, we'll get someone on the staff to have a look at the wiring. Bit of a hole up there. Let's hope it doesn't rain on the night, eh? [*beat*] Any questions?

ZAC

ZAC enters, dripping wet, with a cardboard box. He is being questioned by four other people about his work.

ZAC: Enter the genius.

Other person: You've finished the set model? It's only white walls

ZAC: Lewis said to keep it simple



Other person: You said you were a painter: there's no garden, no seashore

ZAC: I was a house painter

Other person: Bit stark, Zac

ZAC: It's not all of it. I sit at the piano, not playing music day after day, and I think. And last night it came to me, while I was in bed, humming the Electric Prunes Mass in F minor, it came to me, a vision, a white light pouring into the ward like Annunciation light -

Other person: Christ, he's been nicking stuff from the pharmacy again

ZAC: A blinding white light of an idea, a way to solve the problem of creating the world of the garden in the last act. Voila!

Other person: I like it. You're a genius, Zac

ZAC: I know

Other person: What are you on?

ZAC: A lower dosage. It's amazing how much more bright the world seems

Other person: Are you going to use real trees?

ZAC: I can't stand real things. If I could put up with reality I wouldn't be in here.

Other person: What's this?

ZAC: My idea for the poster. Mozart in a straight-jacket

Other person: And this name? Who's this person?

ZAC: Da Ponte

Other person: Who's he? What's his name doing next to Mozart's?

ZAC: He wrote the words

Other person: What words?

ZAC: Così Fan Tutte's words. I thought you knew the opera backwards.

DOUG

Talking to Lewis about being committed for setting cats on fire.

No, no, quite recently. It was the fault of the psychiatrist. I'd been seeing him because of my pyromania - that's a person who likes lighting fires - but you probably know that, being university educated. You know the problem with pyromania? It's the only crime where you have to be at the scene of it to make it a perfect crime, to give yourself full satisfaction.

'Course, that means the chances of you getting caught are greater, especially if you're standing in front of the fire, face full of ecstasy and with a gigantic hard-on. So, the cops got me and I'm sent to a shrink. He tells me I've got an unresolved problem with my mother. I think, hello, he's not going to tell me to do something Oedipal, like fuck her or something ... but that wasn't the problem. My ego had taken a severe battering from her. He said I had better resolve it, stop her treating me like I was still a child. It made some sort of cosmic



sense. I had to stand up to her. So I thought about it and realised I had to treat it like a boxing match, get the first punch in, so to speak, to give me the upper hand in our relationship. She had five cats. One night I rounded them up, put them in a cage, doused them with petrol and put a match to them. Then I opened the cage door and let them loose. Well, boy, oh, boy, what a racket!

HENRY & NICK & LEWIS

Henry is angry at Nick for his comments about supporting communism.

HENRY: You sssssupport the ccccomunists?

NICK: Yes.

HENRY: In Vietnam?

NICK: Sure.

HENRY: You give money to North Vietnam?

NICK: For medical supplies.

HENRY: To the enemy?

NICK: Yeah.

HENRY: [*banging his chair on the floor*] Traitors! Traitors! Traitors!

NICK: [*to Lewis*] You'd better get some nurses.

But it is too late. Henry rushes at Nick and grabs him in a bear hug.

Now, hang on here!

HENRY: You're a traitor.

NICK: [*to Lewis*] Get the nurses!

HENRY: [*to Lewis*] You are a communist too?

LEWIS: No.

HENRY: But you support the Viet Cong against us?

LEWIS: Against American imperialism? Of course.

Henry throws Nick down.

HENRY: My ffffather fought in the war for you. For you and fffffor me. He was a gggggreat man. You are traitors.

LEWIS: Henry, listen –

NICK: Fuck me dead, Lewis, how do you deal with –

HENRY: Do not swear! I do not work with ttttraitors. Australia is at war against communists and you...you sssstab my father in the back.

NICK: That's it. I'm not putting up with this right-wing crap.



RUTH & LEWIS

Ruth is struggling to comprehend the reality of objects in the script.

RUTH: Where's the coffee?

LEWIS: Ruth, we might leave the coffee business for the moment –

ROY: No, no, she's put her finger on something. Props! There. [*He hands a coffee mug to Ruth*]. We're drinking coffee then.

RUTH: But there's none in here.

LEWIS: We might pretend for a moment.

RUTH: I can live with illusion as long as I know it's illusion, but this coffee is not real, is it?

LEWIS: No, they're pretending.

RUTH: The audience thinks it's real coffee?

LEWIS: If the acting is good enough, yes.

RUTH: An illusion of reality. A real illusion, in other words?

LEWIS: Yes.

RUTH: But, as I said before: I can handle something being an illusion or real but not both at the same time.

Skipping ahead slightly in the script

LEWIS: You're in a garden by the seashore.

RUTH: An illusion again. Patently, we are in a theatre.

LEWIS: An illusion, yes. And you're both gazing at miniatures of your lovers.

RUTH: Miniature what?

LEWIS: Paintings. Tiny ones.

RUTH: Not real ones?

LEWIS: We'll get real ones later.

RUTH: Another illusion. Do you want me to give an illusionary performance too?

LEWIS: What do you mean?

RUTH: We're in an illusion of a garden, carrying an illusion of tiny paintings, so shall I sit down and pretend I am acting?

LEWIS: Ruth, just pretend!

RUTH: You're doing a fine job of messing with my head.