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## **Pinkertons: a David Lynch-inspired musical?**

[Jennie Kim](#)

 October 22nd, 2004 by Jennie Kim

“Pinkertons,” Stanford’s first full-length student-written musical in over 15 years, could be even stranger than “Mulholland Drive.”

The auditions will be held on Monday and Tuesday at Cubberly Auditorium from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m.

“Pinkertons” is being billed as an old-fashioned and experimental musical that will “test the bounds of an audience’s perceptual limits while still conveying the narrative,” according to producer Rebecca Liao, a sophomore.

There are 14 to 16 dramatic roles to be cast, along with numerous opportunities for musicians, composers, technicians, set and costume designers, and other artists who want to contribute.

The show’s playwright, senior Mike Solomon, wrote his first musical when he was in sixth grade. More recently, he penned “Gaieties” for Stanford in 2002 and 2003.

Solomon dreamed up the show’s premise — a tale of codependency between two Pinkerton detectives — three years ago before successfully pitching the script to Ram’s Head Theatrical Society for financial backing in the winter of 2002. Ram’s Head and Friends of Music at Stanford are co-sponsoring the \$10,000 production, which is set to run during Parent’s Week, beginning Feb. 23, 2005.

“I really see this as a unique opportunity in Stanford theatre because it invests a lot in actors to create from scratch their own interpretations of the characters,” Solomon said.

He said the three-act musical will incorporate computer-generated music, unique costumes and sets and an experimental script that challenges the audience to make its own judgments of the actions onstage, while remaining accessible to a broad community.

“The show also incorporates a traditional narrative — a lot of the time, people shirk away from the experimental because it winds up being too idiosyncratic and esoteric to relate to,” Solomon added.

Liao said she hoped the show’s inventiveness would be intellectually stimulating for audience members.

“We’re hoping that, because it is experimental, people will walk out of the theatre thinking about something.”

Solomon cited Stephen Sondheim’s first experimental college production, “The Frogs,” as an example of the potential for students involved in experimental shows like “Pinkertons.” Sondheim, David Lynch and

Shirley Jackson's "The Lottery" all inspired the Solomon's vision for the musical.

"Pinkertons" organizers are also mindful of setting a precedent for future student productions. "Hopefully, other students will be inspired," Liao said.

In addition to opening up new prospects in student theatre, Solomon stressed collaboration within Stanford's art community as a major goal of the production.

"The Stanford art community has been growing for years," he said. "With collective strength, you can get an even greater message across."

"This could be a great next step for the art community to not only be portrayed alongside each other, but also to collaborate with each other across disciplines," he added.



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