

Sedos Audition Notice

HAPGOOD

A spy-thriller by Tom Stoppard



16th – 20th November 2010
Bridewell Theatre

Director: Matt Gould

Workshops: Tuesday 13th and Wednesday 28th July, 7pm

Note change of date of first workshop

Auditions: Friday 30th and Saturday 31st July 2010

Recalls: Sunday 1st August 2010

To book an audition slot, please e-mail: hapgoodauditions@gmail.com

"We choose to examine a phenomenon which is impossible, *absolutely* impossible, to explain in any classical way, and which has in it the heart of quantum mechanics. In reality it contains the *only* mystery... Any other situation in quantum mechanics, it turns out, can always be explained by saying. "You remember the case of the experiment with the two holes? It's the same thing."

Richard P. Feynman: "Lectures on Physics"

Someone in female spymaster Hapgood's agency is leaking Kerner's secret research to Moscow. Hapgood is under pressure to expose the culprit. Hapgood suspects that one of her agents, Ridley, is double-crossing her. American CIA Agent, Wates, suspects Hapgood. Hapgood's boss (Blair) suspects Kerner (who is also the father of Hapgood's son). Kerner is a double agent. But is he a triple? Will Hapgood's elaborate scheme to expose the traitor be a success or is there more to it than meets the eye? Hapgood is the person to find out – and maybe it will need two of her....

Written in 1988 and originally starring Felicity Kendal (Hapgood), Nigel Hawthorne (Blair) and Roger Rees (Kerner), Stoppard's brilliant spy-thriller exploring the dual natures of light and people has been described as "*Ingenious*" (Spectator) and "*Dazzling*" (Independent). Reviewing the play's most recent professional outing in 2008 starring Josie Lawrence, The Guardian wrote: "*Tom Stoppard's most cunning play – a dazzling double game of physics and espionage – remarkable*".

Dates:

Workshops: Tuesday 13th and Wednesday 28th July, 7pm

[Note change of date of first workshop]

Auditions: Friday 30th July at 7pm, and Saturday 31st July 11am & 2pm

Recalls: Sunday 1st August, 11am.

Workshops:

The workshops will be an opportunity to learn more about the play, the roles and the audition process, as well as read extracts from the script. No preparation is required, and both workshops will follow the same format, so there is no need to attend both, or indeed either!

Auditions / Recalls:

Individual auditions will be held on Friday 30th July at 7pm, and in two slots on Saturday 31st July at 11am and 2pm. Audition extracts will be made available prior to the auditions. Recalls will take place as required on Sunday 1st August. If you are unable to attend the auditions, please let us know. If possible, we will arrange additional auditions for anyone who can't attend the formal auditions on the evenings of the workshops.

To arrange an audition slot, please e-mail:

hapgoodauditions@gmail.com

Please specify your preferred audition date/time slot.

Notification

We will aim to inform you as quickly as possible after the auditions whether you have been shortlisted/cast. Whilst we would prefer to phone everyone individually we may notify you by e-mail. In any event if you are unsuccessful, we will be very willing to provide feedback when time permits.

Rehearsals:

Rehearsals will commence w/c 6th September.

Rehearsals will be on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and alternating Friday evenings/Saturday (or Sunday) daytimes. TBC.

Venue:

Workshops, Auditions, Recalls and Rehearsals will take place at:

Ocean House

10 Little Trinity Lane

London

EC4V 2AR

Nearest tube: Mansion House

Characters:

Note, the characters of Maggs and Merryweather are written male, however I am intending to cast as female and make any necessary minor adjustments.

- Hapgood (f): Spymaster who runs her own “Spooks” division within MI5/6. She will become “M” in a few years time! Mid 30’s. This is a tour de force role. Hapgood is elegant, sophisticated, charming, perceptive and brilliantly clever. She is also ruthless and will do whatever it takes to achieve her goals. Blair, Kerner and Ridley are in love with her. Not only is she at the centre of the play but Hapgood also has to consummately and convincingly play her own “twin”.
- Blair (m): Hapgood’s boss. Suave and sophisticated, the ultimate foreign office mandarin. (40’s). He is not a fan of the Americans who have come to London to stir things up on his patch. He has no knowledge or interest in science – in particular physics.
- Kerner (m): A brilliant Russian scientist. Formerly Hapgood’s lover and father of her son. The emotion of the piece centres around him. He is working both as a “Joe” (a foreign double agent for the British) and as a “sleeper” (an undercover spy) for the Russians. He was put into Britain by the Russians as a spy but was “turned” by Hapgood and the pair fell in love.
- Wates (m): American CIA agent, working with his counterparts in London. Typical US agent. Dry sense of humour. He is constantly frustrated by Hapgood and her disregard for the rules.
- Maggs (f): Hapgood’s trusted PA – effectively runs her life. I’m thinking Samantha Bond but could also be Dolores Landingham (*West Wing*). The relationship between Maggs and Hapgood is very strong, and Maggs provides the bridge between Hapgood and her son, with whom she has an excellent relationship.
- Merryweather (f): Junior member of Hapgood’s team. Very enthusiastic, and excited about being a spy, but not yet very good at it.... Hapgood plays on this naïve enthusiasm.
- Ridley (m): An experienced spy – worked with Hapgood very closely on a previous foreign assignment. Think Matthew MacFayden or Toby Stephens. He is careful, controlled and cool. He is cocky and streetwise, and works on precise impulse with a penchant for self preservation at the cost of others; he shot an agent in Athens prior to the action in the play and “thought it was sexy”. He lusts after Hapgood, which she plays on in order to frame him....

Joe (m): Hapgood's 11 year old son. A prep-school boy, with the stereotypical clipped accent! *This is a speaking role, so if you know anyone who might be interested or might have a son that is interested, please let me know. Separate auditions will be arranged.*

Russian (m): Non-speaking role. Effects the "drop" in the swimming pool at the start of the show. Must look like a professional swimmer.... *This role might be ideal for someone who is also interested in taking on a back-stage role, eg Assistant Director/Assistant Producer/ASM. If you are interested in combining the acting role and a back-stage role, please let me know; alternative casting arrangements will apply.*

Synopsis:

The play is set in London in 1988 during the Cold War.

American CIA agent Wates has come from Washington to help Hapgood's team of spooks detect a traitor within their ranks who has been leaking information to the Russians. Wates suspects Ridley and former KGB agent, Kerner, who has come to the West to pursue his experiments in particle physics. Wates and Hapgood engineer a briefcase swap during a "drop" in a swimming bath to try and trap the traitor using a bug and an identical pair of briefcases.

Every month Kerner swaps mis-information from Hapgood with Giorgi, a Russian, to make Russia think that he is still working for them; every month Ridley helps Kerner to pack this briefcase. Hapgood and Wates use this regular situation to try and track the traitor but they don't know who intercepts the swap. What's more, Georgi didn't arrive to make the swap as usual; instead a famous pair of Russian spy twins turn up – and Merryweather loses the trail.

Hapgood has set up the scenario to demonstrate Kerner's allegiance to London/Washington and prove him innocent, whilst revealing the real traitor but after the bugged case goes missing, Wates is convinced of Kerner's guilt. and wants to withdraw him. Hapgood (who has had a child and long term affair with Kerner) is sure Kerner is innocent and suspects Ridley but as she talks Wates round he begins to suspect she and Ridley are in it together. Blair suspects Hapgood but again she manages to talk him round until he also suspects Ridley.

The plot thickens as it is revealed that the bleep from the bugged case has been detected in Hapgood's office (they had lost the beep while it was underwater in the pool for ten hours). Blair suspends Ridley and Hapgood from duty and takes charge of operations himself. Wates has Hapgood followed, but Hapgood is always one step ahead of him.

Blair produces photographs of Kerner's work (the leaked information) from Moscow, pointing the finger at Kerner as the traitor.

Hapgood, Blair and Kerner plan a coup to prove Hapgood's innocence, and at the same time to prove that Ridley is the traitor. They set up a scam that the Russians have found out about Hapgood and Kerner's son, Joe, and engineer a situation to make the others believe that he has been kidnapped – Merryweather is sent to Joe's school, to find him missing....

In order to recover Joe, Ridley needs the help of Hapgood's "twin".... Ridley is persuaded to help Hapgood because he is in love with her. Blair, her boss and Kerner are also in love with her. Perhaps this is how she managed to convince them all of her innocence. Ridley, it transpires, is a twin – hence how he was able to get away with passing secrets for so long.....

Sedos: Audition, participation and membership fees

Sedos is one of London's pre-eminent amateur theatre societies, with the aim of producing quality amateur shows to the best artistic quality possible.

Please note that performers are not paid - not even expenses. To perform in *Hapgood* you must be a member of Sedos (membership is currently £30 per year) and pay a participation fee of £30. There is a £5 audition fee for non-Sedos members. If you are cast in the show, your audition fee will be deducted from your participation fee.

To book an audition slot, obtain a copy of the script or for further information, please contact:

hapgoodauditions@gmail.com

Alternatively, please contact me directly at:

matt@mjgould.co.uk

I look forward to seeing you at the auditions!

Matt