

Audition Information

Nevermore – the Imaginary Life and Mysterious Death of Edgar Allan Poe

A Musical by Jonathan Christenson; Directed by Jeff Sweeney

*...the language of Nevermore calls upon the actor for a playful approach,
a lightness of touch, a love of the sound of the words and the rhythm of the verse
– its stresses and its silences are meant to inspire the imagination and offer clues
to the intention of the speaker. – from A Note on the Text*

The opening production for Z-PAC Theatre's 2023 season will be a performance of the musical *Nevermore* by Jonathan Christenson. *Nevermore* is a full musical, running around 2 hours in total for a minimum cast of 7 people. This musical is somewhat unusual in that there is no real dialogue for the entire performance – instead interspersing a mix of spoken and sung lyrics, written predominantly in ballad meter in a style similar to Poe's original work. It may be useful to think of the entire script as an extended song rather than text interspersed with songs as you would find in a normal musical production. As such, while a reasonable singing ability is important (with prospective vocal ranges listed below), what is absolutely vital to all roles in this production is a sense of the beat and rhythm underlying every aspect of this performance. In a similar vein, while there are no real musical dance numbers, the nature and style of this production will involve a significant amount of choreographed movement of the cast – an ability to move in time to a beat is equally vital, though no formal dancing ability is necessary.

There are 7 primary roles in the production – Edgar himself, the title character of the show; and the 6 *Players*, ostensibly members of an acting troupe who act out Edgar's life story. Over the course of the production, each of the *Players* takes on various parts as Edgar's family, friends and partners; while Edgar takes on the role of his own past self in this play-within-a-play retelling of his life that forms the bulk of the production. Edgar will retain his own identity throughout the course of the performance, having only a minor costume adjustment at the opening of the first Act. For the *Players* however, each with a range of minor and major secondary roles, while there are no full 'costume changes' as such, each individual role will have minimal elements – a feather boa, and a pair of gloves, perhaps; a particular hat and shawl; a waistcoat and pocket watch; and similar items unique to each person being played which they will collect and discard as they move in and out of each role.

There is also a strong supernatural thread running throughout the performance, with the fantastical elements treated with the same normality as more mundane aspects of his history. Edgar's nightmares and dreams are explored with as much solemnity as any of the more 'realistic' events of his past. Prospective cast should feel capable of presenting the peculiar and absurd in a natural manner.

Role List

- Edgar Allan Poe: Male / Tenor
- *Players*
 - Female / Soprano (x2)
 - Female / Alto
 - Male / Tenor
 - Male / Baritenor
 - Male / Baritone

Due to the abstract nature of the work, casting will be considered outside the strict gender assignment of the script. Prospective cast are also encouraged to listen to the cast recording of the production available on Spotify: <https://open.spotify.com/album/4zBO6fjb9PiZiA06gmwRnj?si=d4496a67bc74495e>

