

Godspell

Based on the Gospel According to St. Matthew

Music & Lyrics by Stephen Schwartz | Book by John Michael Tebelak

Directed by J. Daniel Herring

WHO MAY AUDITION?

- Auditions are open to all Fresno State students and to community members.
- Fresno State students may earn two units of credit.

HOW DO I GET AN AUDITION FORM?

- Audition forms can be found at the Theatre & Dance website (fresnostate.edu/theatrearts).
- Audition forms will be available at the Preliminary Audition, and you can fill out the form when you arrive.

WHAT SHOULD I PREPARE?

- Please prepare one minute of a song of your choice.
- There will be an accompanist provided, and you should bring your music clearly marked with the beginning and end of your selection.

WHEN AND WHERE ARE THE AUDITIONS?

PRELIMINARY AUDITIONS

Monday, September 8th | 4:00 – 8:00 p.m.
John Wright Theatre, Speech Arts Building

Tuesday, September 9th | 4:00 – 8:00 p.m.
John Wright Theatre, Speech Arts Building

Auditioners need only attend ONE preliminary audition.

CALLBACK AUDITIONS (INVITATION ONLY)

Wednesday, September 10th | 4:00 – 8:00 p.m.
John Wright Theatre, Speech Arts Building

Actors who are requested to attend callbacks will be asked to sing a song taught by the Vocal Coach and read a scene or a monologue from the script with adjustments given by the Director. You will also be taught a dance/movement sequence by the Choreographer or Director.

Performers with conflicts with the Preliminary or Callback Auditions may be able to be seen at a different time.

Contact the director:

J. Daniel Herring | jdherring@mail.fresnostate.edu

HOW WILL I KNOW IF I AM CALLED BACK?

A Callback list will be posted no later than the morning of Wednesday, September 10th on the Theatre & Dance website (fresnostate.edu/theatrearts)

HOW WILL I KNOW IF I AM CAST?

A cast list will be posted on the department website no later than Monday, September 15th.

WHEN ARE REHEARSALS?

- Rehearsals will begin Sunday, September 21st @ 5:00 p.m., John Wright Theatre
- Rehearsal times are 5:00-10:00 p.m., Sundays; 7:15-10:15 p.m., Mondays-Wednesdays
- Tech Week Rehearsals: Sunday, November 9th, 1:00-10:00 p.m.
Dress/Techs, Mon., Nov. 10th – Thurs., Nov. 13th, 6:00-10:00 p.m.
Start/End times for Tech may vary depending on production needs.
- Please be sure to be specific with conflicts on your audition form.

ONCE I AM CAST, WHAT WILL BE EXPECTED OF ME?

- Performers must provide their own makeup kits and hair products.
- Some performers may be needed for publicity appearances and/or marketing materials.

WHEN ARE PERFORMANCES:

November 14 – 15, November 18 – 22, 2025 6:30 call, 7:30 curtain; Sunday, Nov. 16th, 1:00 call, 2:00 curtain.

ARE THERE ANY OTHER TIME COMMITMENTS?

- Performers must be available for costume fittings Mon. – Fri. between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.
The costume shop staff will work to accommodate your daily schedule.

DOES GODSPELL CONFLICT WITH ANY OTHER UNIVERSITY THEATRE PRODUCTIONS?

Godspell conflicts with *A Raisin in the Sun*. It is unlikely that a student cast in *Godspell* can act in or crew *A Raisin in the Sun*. *Godspell* does not conflict with the *ETC Show*. However, it may be inadvisable for actors with major roles in *Godspell* to take on any other show commitments during our rehearsal/performance period.

ABOUT THE MUSICAL

GODSPELL was the first major musical theatre offering from three-time Grammy and Academy Award winner, Stephen Schwartz (*Wicked*, *Pippin*, *Children of Eden*), and it took the world by storm. Led by the international hit, "Day by Day," GODSPELL features a parade of beloved songs, including "Prepare Ye the Way of the Lord," "Learn Your Lessons Well," "All for the Best," "All Good Gifts," "Turn Back, O Man" and "By My Side."

A small group of people help Jesus Christ tell different parables by using a wide variety of games, storytelling techniques and hefty doses of comic timing. An eclectic blend of songs, ranging in style from pop to vaudeville, is employed as the story of Jesus' life dances across the stage. Dissolving hauntingly into the Last Supper and the Crucifixion, Jesus' messages of kindness, tolerance and love come vibrantly to life.

Boasting a score with chart topping songs, a book by a visionary playwright (John-Michael Tebelak). GODSPELL is a sensation that continues to touch audiences.

DIRECTOR'S CONCEPT

Our production of GODSPELL will have a 2025 interpretation. The world of this production will be one that is struggling with turmoil and destruction at the beginning of the play and the setting will reflect this situation. I want to focus on how important acceptance is in this crazy time we are living in right now. Where appropriate, I want to incorporate in the staging such elements as protests, rallies, gun violence, flash mobs, etc. to illustrate that these stories in GODSPELL are timeless and aren't just for a chosen few, but for everyone. This is not a typical musical theatre "dance" show. I think of it as a STOMP kind of creative/organic movement (ritual or ceremonial) type show created by the choreographer and director in collaboration with the actors.

WHAT ARE THE ROLES?

In the script, other than the characters of Jesus and John the Baptist/Judas, the characters are called by the first names of the original cast members. We will use either our cast members names or names we create.

While the original cast was broken down into 5 male and 5 female actors, the production will be open to casting differently than those gendered roles. The descriptions below provide an idea of the differences between the personalities and arcs of each character, much of each character's personality is developed by the actor and director and are based around the song each character sings. The pronouns used in the descriptions are used only to represent the gender of the original actor or actress who played the character.

All roles available, open to any age, ethnicity, or gender

Character Breakdown:

Anna Maria (Alto): A bit of a tomboy, but basically open and sweet. Perhaps the youngest of the group. She is the first of the group to commit to following Jesus in the song "Day by Day."

Celisse (Mezzo-Soprano): The female equivalent of the class clown. Goofy and a cut-up. She might play some instruments, including conga, ukulele and guitar if they can. She sings "Learn Your Lessons Well."

George (Tenor): The comedian, the class clown. The guy who can do a hundred voices and imitations. He sings "Light of the World."

Jesus (Tenor): Must be the most charismatic individual in the cast. High energy, charming, funny, gentle but with strength. He is the sort of person others instinctively follow.

John the Baptist/Judas (Baritone): Will perhaps split this role between two actors. He has attributes of both Biblical figures: He is both Jesus' lieutenant and most ardent disciple and the doubter who begins to question and rebel. Like Jesus, he is also charismatic, but in more of an overt revolutionary way. Usually played by someone handsome and masculine, with an undertone of sexuality. He is the most "serious" and intellectual of the group, though as with all the actors, he must still possess a good sense of physical comedy. He sings "Prepare Ye," "All for the Best," and "On the Willows."

Lindsay (Soprano): The confident one, the show-off. The first one to volunteer, sometimes she jumps in before she really understands what's going on. She sings "Bless the Lord."

Morgan (Alto): Sassy and slightly cynical, the most urban of the group. Also the “sexy” one, but her sexiness contains a large element of put-on, in the manner of Mae West or Madonna. She sings “Turn Back, O Man.”

Nick (Tenor): Very high energy. Impish and playful. In the original, he might play several musical instruments, including concertina, recorder or guitar if the actor has this ability. He sings “We Beseech Thee.”
Telly (Tenor): Not the brightest in the bunch, he is a little slow on the uptake. But there is a great sweetness and innocence about him. He sings “All Good Gifts.”

Uzo (Alto): The shy one. Sometimes a little slow to get things, but when she does, she commits all the way. Has an “earth mother” kind of warmth to her. She sings “By My Side.”

Three to Five Ensemble Roles will be added at director’s discretion.

WHAT IF I HAVE ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS?

Contact J. Daniel Herring (Director) | Email: jdherring@csufresno.edu