

NITROUS OXIDE

An Evening of Sketch Comedy
Directed By Mikayla Alford and Harry Minsky

AUDITION PACKET

February 6th-8th

At 7:30PM

Little Theatre,

Auditions:

10/2 and 10/3

Callbacks:

October 4th

6:00 PM-9:00PM

Please sign up for an audition slot at the callboard by Room 171.

All students who audition must fill

the [Nitrous Information Form Here](#) before your audition.

If you have any questions, contact us at nitrousd2020@gmail.com

Or Adam_Brown@newton.k12.ma.us

The Nitrous Oxide Process

Nitrous Oxide is Newton North's one and only sketch comedy troupe. What are sketches? They are short comedic scenes that focus on telling jokes based around comic situations. For example, *Saturday Night Live*, *Monty Python's Flying Circus*, *Key and Peele*, and *College Humor* are sketch comedy shows.

The troupe is cast in October and begins rehearsals shortly after casting. If you are cast, expect to have the first rehearsal as early as the week of October 7th. For the first half of the process rehearsals usually take place on Saturday as well as a couple of days during the week either in the afternoon or evening. At rehearsals, troupe members pitch sketch ideas to each other, and turn those ideas into sketches, creating a large body of work between October and December, as well as work with other cast member to make sketches in a variety of styles. Cast members also learn how to effectively self-critique their own work (an essential life skill). This process is, of course, a learning one. Cast members almost always come into the troupe without any previous writing experience, so the directors and advisor work with everyone to learn and hone their sketch writing skills. Come January we will have rehearsals for all of the sketches in the show, as well as spend time teaching cast members how to perform comedic acting, working on skills such as physicality and diversity of characters.

We are looking for cast members who are ready to work hard and efficiently throughout the entire process so that we can maximize our potential as a troupe! **The more time, work, and effort you put into your writing inside and outside of rehearsal will determine how many sketches of yours get into the final show.** Every Actor/Writer cast is expected to commit 100% to the process! THIS IS NOT A LOW COMMITMENT SHOW!

All cast members work as both actors and writers for Nitrous Oxide, but those with little acting or writing experience should not be deterred from auditioning. After all, the goal of Nitrous is to teach people those skills. Rehearsals are an entirely judgment free zone. As always, feel free to ask either Andrew and/or Mikayla for more information.

The Audition Process

READ CAREFULLY:

- 1) Fill out the sign up link above and sign up for an audition slot on the callboard by Room 171. You'll be in a half-hour section with other auditioners, but they won't be watching you perform. You'll just warm-up as a group and then go in one by one.
- 2) Fill out the audition card and questions at the end of this packet and bring it with you.
- 3) Prepare a one-to-two minute comedic monologue. You can find these online or at the library. If you're having trouble, talk to Mr. Brown or the directors for help. We've given you two monologues if you want to use them, but we **STRONGLY** encourage you to look

beyond these two pieces, and find a monologue that really highlights your skills as a comedic actor. Never go into an audition without performing for someone beforehand! A friend, a parent, a grandparent, a teacher, an astronaut, or even your dentist (while there's gauze in your mouth)! Just as long as *someone* has seen and given feedback on your audition.

4) Write and bring with you a two to three page original sketch. What might this sketch be about? Maybe it includes normal people confronting a strange world, or strange people confronting a normal world, or a normal person confronting a strange person. Or maybe it includes no people at all, just SPORKS. It's up to you! Sketch format attached. If you've never written a sketch and are unsure of where to start or would like to learn a few writing tips, come to the **sketch writing workshop Wednesday 9/18 at 6:30 pm.**

Example sketches

Polite Mugger

By: Author

MARY

MAN

LIGHTS UP

MAN: Empty your pockets, now please!!! On the ground please! Now please! ON THE GROUND!!!!

MARY gets on the ground

MAN: Good!! Now empty your pockets please!!!!!! Also: I love your shirt!!!!

MARY looks at him shocked

MARY: ...Thanks?

She starts to get up

MAN: WHOA! GET DOWN ON THE GROUND PLEASE!!!

MARY falls back down onto the ground and rubs her elbow.

MAN: IS YOUR BOO BOO OKAY?!

MARY: What?

MAN: IS YOUR BOO BOO OKAY?!

MARY: Yeah, I'm fine...

MAN: OKAY GOOD!! GIVE ME YOUR WALLET!!

He thinks.

MAN: PLEASE!

He looks through it

MAN: OKAY GREAT!! *[He takes the money from the wallet.]* CAN I SEE YOUR PURSE PLEASE? *[Mary hands him the purse]* IT'S GOT A RAD DESIGN! SORRY THAT I'VE GOT TO TAKE IT!!

MARY: You don't have to take it !! Actually I'd prefer that you didn't!!!.... *[MARY starts to get up]*

MAN: ON THE GROUND!!! REMEMBER THAT THIS IS A ROBBERY....please. *[MARY hands him the purse.]* OK! *[starts to exit]* YOU'RE A BEAUTIFUL SMART WOMAN AND I HOPE YOU FIND A MAN THAT APPRECIATES YOU AND TREATS YOU RIGHT!!

MARY: Uh thanks

Runs offstage

Runs back on

MAN: Not to say you need a man to complete you!! Because you don't and you're a strong independent woman!!!!

Runs offstage

Back onstage

MAN: Not to assume that it would be a man you want!! It could be a woman!!

Runs offstage. Runs back onstage.

MAN: Or a non gender binary person!! Really it's all perfectly acceptable!!!

He feels awkward, gives her an embarrassed half smile and a thumbs up and runs away.

Blackout.

The first thing that worked very well for this sketch is there is a really strong game. A game is the joke of the sketch. A common format for game is “it’s a normal _____ but _____.” In this sketch the game is “it’s a normal street robbery but the mugger is extremely polite” Within the first three lines of the sketch this game is established. Having a clear game early on sets up the sketch for success. Another thing this sketch does really well is escalation. You never want a sketch where it is equally funny throughout the sketch. You want your sketch to get funnier as time goes. That is why it isn’t always best to start out a sketch with its funniest joke. If it is really funny and then goes downhill, the audience will be disappointed.

Left is Right!

THOMAS

BENJAMIN

GEORGE

JOHN

MARTHA

THOMAS, BENJAMIN, GEORGE, and JOHN are standing around a table with maps, protest signs, pitchforks, and lefty scissors.

GEORGE

My left-handed brethren, thank you for meeting me. It's time to come up with a plan, we cannot sit silently by and watch these atrocities continue.

THOMAS

I agree. We need to discuss the OPPRESSION of lefties across this great nation. Just look at the english language! "Writing", more like "right-ing". Are we not supposed to write? It's so that we can't spread our "Leftist propaganda".

GEORGE

EXACTLY! Just last week, I was doing some work on a whiteboard, and anytime I tried to write, my hand erased whatever I had just written! It's not even the fault of the board, it's the whole language. "WHY do we have to write from left to right?! HOW IS THAT FAIR!?"

BENJAMIN

You know, I am a college graduate. I am working towards my PHD. You'd think I'd be respected, but alas, I'm constantly discriminated against. JUST ONCE, I want to be able to sit at a desk without it being called a "Lefty Desk". Why can't it just be a desk?

(JOHN bursts into tears)

GEORGE

What is it brother?

JOHN

I was trying to cut some paper snowflakes for Christmas, I was trying to beautify the neighborhood, and as I was reaching into my crafts drawer, I pulled out... *(Struggles to express*

this last part, as it is just too traumatic) REGULAR SCISSORS! They JUST DON'T FIT MY HANDS.

THOMAS

Friends, they want to re-right history, so we are gonna RIOT IN THE STREETS. We can re-attach the tops of desks to make EVERY desk a lefty desk, rip the spiral bindings out of notebooks, and destroy these damned righty scissors once and for all! We'll make everyone shake hands with their LEFT ONES! The others will soon follow, once we give the signal, all left-handed HELL will break loose!

GEORGE

Men, It's time! *They all pick up their pitchforks and protest signs and scissors. Start chanting* LEFT IS RIGHT! LEFT IS RIGHT!

Suddenly MARTHA bursts in

MARTHA

Oh my gosh, is this the Left-handed brotherhood? *(They nod)* I want to join the cause. I've been a lefty my whole life, and I'm SICK of it! I want to help make a difference.

GEORGE

Um, this is awkward, but there are no girls allowed. You're just too irrational. *(JOHN, BENJAMIN, and THOMAS all nod their heads)*

BLACKOUT

This sketch is a strong example of clear beats in a sketch. A beat is a joke or group of jokes in a sketch. A typical sketch has 3, but you can always have more as long as they escalate and are necessary. In this sketch each person's complaint about being a lefty is a beat. Each complaint gets more ridiculous, thus creating escalation. This sketch also has really strong cap. The cap is the final beat of a sketch. Caps are usually done in one of two ways. In this case, it is a reversal, where something completely unexpected happens that goes against the game. In this case you would expect these people to support women, but they break that expectation, thus making it a reversal. The other way to cap a sketch is with the greatest escalation possible.

Monologues

Here are some suggestions for the comedic monologue you will perform at your audition. Remember, these are options but we ***HIGHLY*** recommend that you find and prepare a monologue from another source.

We're looking for high-energy actors, who are willing to take big risks with their monologues and act outside their comfort zone. We may have you read your monologue again with a completely different intention, just to see how you can switch up your monologue.

From *Moon Over Buffalo* by Ken Ludwig (Ethel is 80)

ETHEL: No I don't. It stinks. If it wasn't named for an animal, it would have nothing going for it. I don't mind so much for myself, really, but it's quite a come-down for your mother. She played Broadway, you know, in the forties. Then your father dragged her down to this level...Revivals of tired old plays. B-movies. You should have heard him doing *Cyrano* just now at the dress rehearsal. The man is a walking ham. They should stick cloves in him and serve him with pineapple.

From *The Drowsy Chaperone* by Bob Martin and Don McKellar

MAN IN CHAIR: Percy Hyman was a wonderful performer. I like to think of him panting and sweating after a long dance routine. He's still alive, you know. I saw him on the news recently, "celebrating" his 100th birthday. To say that the passing years had taken their toll on him would be a grotesque understatement. They wheeled him out and he had that wide-eyed expression of pained confusion that God reserves for the very, very old. You know, the one that says "Who are you, who am I, and why is this cake on fire?"

Audition Card
(Please bring to audition)

Name: _____ **Pronouns:** _____

Date of Birth: ____/____/____ **Grade:** ____

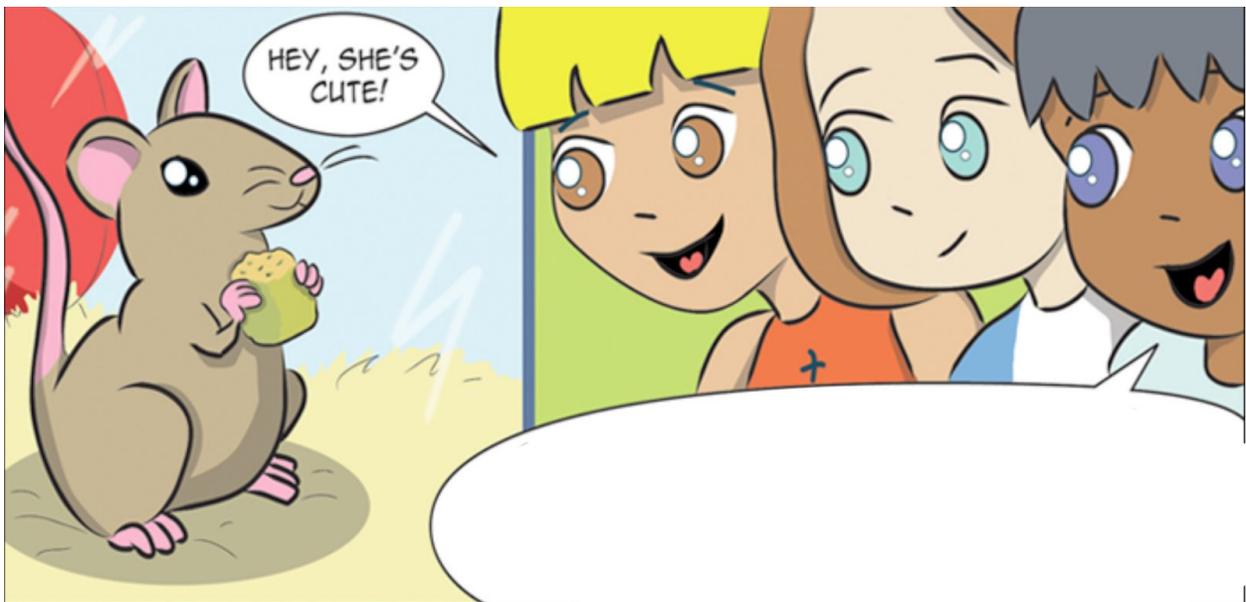
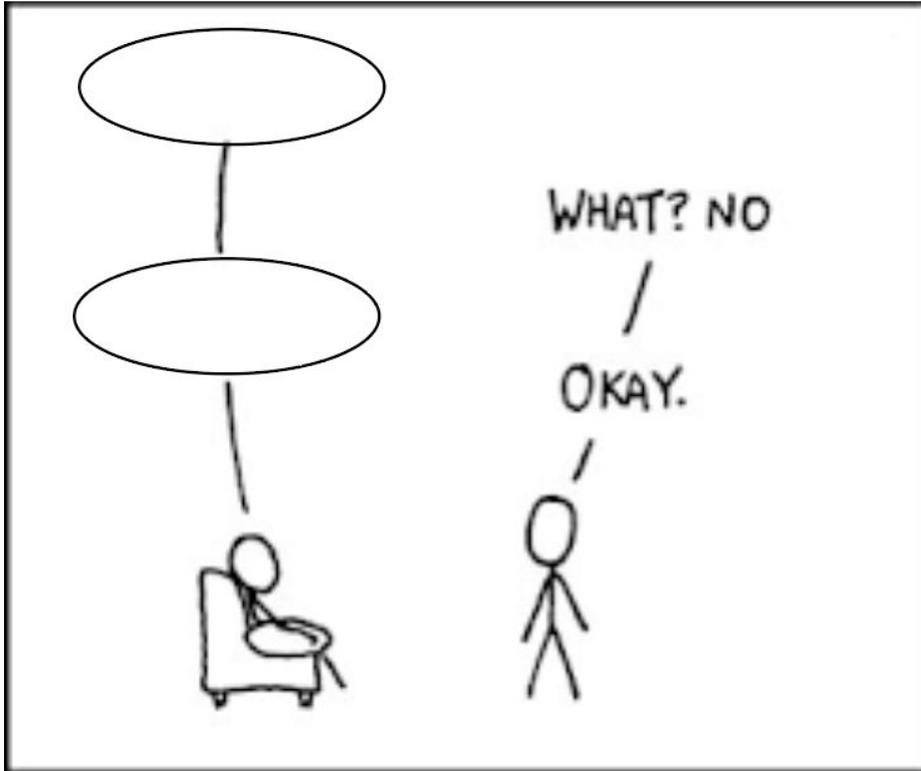
Home Phone Number: ()_____-____-____ **Cell Number:** ()_____-____

Email Address: _____

**Please list any previous theater (or writing) experience, onstage and offstage
(Feel free to attach a resume if you have one):**

Important Questions (Also bring to audition)

1) Write captions for the cartoons below.



2) What's your favorite sandwich? I **really** want details!

3) What can you bring to Nitrous Oxide? Also, do you know how to do circus tricks? That could be cool.

4) What do you see as your biggest strength and weakness in terms of sketch writing and acting? (Please don't just say what we want to hear. We want honesty.)

5) Who's your Super Smash Brothers/Mario Kart main?

6) Is the system broken? Why, or why not?