

## Cast of Characters\*

SYMPATHY JONES, a secretary at The Agency. 20s or early 30s. Should have a girl-next-door vibe, but still be credible as a tough-as-nails, take-charge spy. Bright, eager, passionate, and massively overconfident. True musical theatre belt/mix to a D.

KITTY HAWK, ex-wife of Richard Oscill. 40s or early 50s. A socialite and bitter divorcee. She's self-centered and crass, but attempts to be classy and fashionable. Slightly deranged. Strong belter with musical theatre legit sound to an E.

HENRY GREENE, a spy with The Agency. 20s or 30s. Nice, intelligent, unassuming. He's shy around Sympathy and lacks confidence in his skills as an agent. He's a methodical, by-the-book kind of guy. Younger cousin of Nick Steele. Tenor, solid A.

TICK TOCK, a scientist and former employee of Oscillex. 20s or 30s probably. He's an accomplished mad scientist and Kitty's most devoted henchman. Intense, obsessed with his work. Also deranged, but with a sensitive side. Tenor.

NICK STEELE, a spy with The Agency. Late 20s or early 30s, cocky, charming. He's "James Bond" but dumber and not as good looking. He thinks that he's extremely handsome and suave, and so does everyone around him. Physically comedic baritone.

CAPRICE NOVA, a disguise designer at The Agency. 20s or 30s. Upbeat, quirky, good-natured, and passionate about her work. '60s pop voice, high mix/belt to an F.

ANN, a nightclub singer. Late 30s or 40s. Smooth, smart, and sexy. Kind, but with an edge. She doesn't say much, but seems to know more than everyone around her. Mainly a singing role. Powerful pop belter with a Shirley Bassey-type sound; must have legit soprano sound as well.

ROGER PINKERTON, the Director of The Agency. 50s or 60s. Authoritative, patrician, smart, and a little misogynistic. Kind but firm, and always in control. A real man's man. Baritone.

RICHARD OSCILL, owner of Oscillex Luxury Watches. 40s or 50s. One of the brightest minds of his generation, all-around decent guy who happens to be a billionaire. Better with clockwork than with women. Baritone.

ENSEMBLE (*Minimum 1 man, 2 women. With doubling, possible with actors playing the above characters plus 1 additional woman*): PR PERSON, PRESS, AGENCY STAFF, ROCKET SELLER, TEMPO CLUBGOERS, DELIVERY PERSON, PRESIDENT and ADVISORS, SWORDSMAN and S.C.R.A.T.C.H. AGENTS / GUARDS.

*\* It is possible to cast with 5 men and 5 women. A breakdown of the characters in each scene is included as an appendix to the script.*

## **Time**

The 1960s.

## **Place**

New York City, and a remote part of Long Island.

## **Casting Note**

Roles are open to all ethnicities. The show is set in the 1960s to the extent that it evokes the aesthetic and style of that time period, but the story does not refer to any specific political or cultural events that would indicate the characters have to be of a certain race or background.

## **Dance Requirement**

Standard musical staging/some dance. Production numbers that especially feature dance/movement are: "Time Will Tell" (I.2), "Don't Cross Kitty" (I.6), "Question Mark Stomp"(I.9), "Think Fast" (II.3), and "Finale" (II.9). In addition, there are several fight sequences (see below).

## Stage Fighting

As *Sympathy Jones* is inspired by the spy genre, there are a number of “action” sequences in the show, especially in Act II. As *Sympathy Jones* is also a comedy, there is no need to worry too much about making these sequences seem ultra-realistic. There should be an element of fun to most of the fighting, which chiefly involves people kicking and punching each other, with a couple of gun and sword showdowns thrown in for good measure. We suggest using colorful toy guns, and don’t sweat the sword fighting, as it doesn’t need to be very sophisticated. Sympathy is a student of the branch of the martial art known as Pencak Silat, so we recommend having your actress learn at least a couple simple moves (you can find video demonstrations online) to add a touch of authenticity. Please also note that there is musical underscoring to the fight scenes, to add to the tension, so you will want to consider the musical accompaniment early on during the process of rehearsing these scenes.

## School Productions

A couple of substitutions are possible to tone down the few racy moments/innuendos in the show. In “Question Mark Stomp,” the lyrics “You can show me yours / I might show you mine” could be replaced with “We could have some fun / later down the line.” In Act I, Scene 11, Pinkerton’s line “I know you’re a little out of touch these days, Nick, but there is a world outside of your bedroom” could use the substitute ending “...there is a world outside the Tempo Club.” And the brandy bit at the top of Act I, Scene 4 can be easily cut if needed.

## Scenic World

Spy stories are known for moving quickly through exotic locales. Bringing a largely cinematic genre to the stage calls for a certain inventiveness and also presents unique opportunities for theatricality. We offer the following notes to help in conceptualizing the scenic elements of *Sympathy Jones*.

### *Scenic World: Act I*

The overarching world of Act I is early 1960s New York City—the streets, a nightclub, the offices of an intelligence agency, and a penthouse apartment. Although *Sympathy Jones* is most certainly a comedy, there should be a sense of danger and mystery in the show.

In Act I, there are gunshots, chases, and shady people slipping in and out of the shadows. The various locations within this larger world can be evoked with a few well-chosen set pieces:

- The Tempo Club with a microphone for Ann, a table and chairs for Kitty and Tick Tock, a sign with the name of the club, and (in Scene 9) a large potted plant.
- Agency Reception Area with a desk and chair, coat rack, and filing cabinet.
- Pinkerton’s Office with a small table for the brandy or a desk.
- Department of Disguisement with a couple racks of clothing, a sign, and a curtained changing area.
- Kitty’s Apartment with a desk and chair, clock-shaped torture table, and a window frame that actors can climb in and out of.
- The City Streets can be created with evocative lighting and a trash can or two. In Scene 1 there is also a rope hanging from above that Nick climbs down.

Note that within The Agency, there are three main settings: Sympathy’s Reception Area, which is adjacent to Pinkerton’s Private Office, and the Department of Disguisement. We also briefly see other departments of the Agency (Cryptology, Weapons Testing, Gadgets) during the song “Super Secret Agent” in Scene 3; these can be indicated with signs and perhaps a chair or two.

It is possible, in both acts, to eliminate the need for physical doors as part of the set. Alternate solutions are a welcome option, such as cutting Henry’s kicking down a door in Scene 10. And, at the end of Scene 3, Sympathy could use a different eavesdropping device, such as a design like a stethoscope or two tin cans connected by a string, which she can mime putting against the imaginary door to Pinkerton’s office. At the very beginning of the show, Nick could enter in an alternate way if rope climbing is not possible—for example, he could enter through a trapdoor or through a cutout in a flat that looks like a brick wall, swing down a fireman’s pole, or make a flying leap from an offstage ladder.

Finally, there are a few scenes in Act I that briefly show us a character in action in another setting: Oscill at a press conference, Tick Tock and later Oscill in Oscill’s office, Tick Tock in his lab, Kitty and Tick Tock at their evil lair, the President in the Oval Office. These can be accomplished as follows:

- Oscillex Press Conference with a podium or spotlight.
- Oscill's Office with a file cabinet or desk.
- Tick Tock's Lab with a small lab station (small table with various watch-making and explosives props).
- Kitty's Lair with chairs, preferably throne-like, for Kitty and Tick Tock to sit in. Kitty's throne may have wide armrests that include control panels.
- The Oval Office with a Presidential Seal behind the president.

### *Scenic World: Act II*

The world of the show shifts in Act II, where the bulk of the action takes place at Kitty's compound in Pestilential Bay, Long Island, in an old meat factory. Much like The Agency, Pestilential Bay has three main areas where the action unfolds: the Grounds outside the compound; the Throne Room where Kitty presides and Tick Tock works to prepare the bomb and rocket for lift-off; and the Alcove of Death which is adjacent to the Throne Room. These settings may be indicated as follows:

- Pestilential Bay Grounds with a few large rocks and shrubs or trees.
- Throne Room with two chairs or thrones, a small table bearing a cage full of (stuffed) chinchillas, Tick Tock's lab station table, and a rocket poised to launch—perhaps we see just the base of the rocket but it should still be recognizable. Late in Act II a small trolley is wheeled into this room.
- Alcove of Death with a dungeon-like wall and a large on/off switch that controls the flow of toxic gas into the room. The Alcove of Death is connected to the Throne Room by an (invisible) one-way window.

One number, "Think Fast" in Scene 3, has Sympathy and Henry making their way through the vast industrial areas of the rest of the compound. This number works well in an open playing space utilizing creative props (ropes, electrical tape, signs, hula hoops, etc.) carried by squadrons of S.C.R.A.T.C.H. Guards to dramatize the experience through movement. The Agency is represented in Act II with scenes in the Reception Area and Department of Disguisement.

The final scene takes place in a Hotel Lobby in New Zealand. This may be indicated with a desk and a few chairs and perhaps a floral arrangement or potted plant.