Certain lines telegraph exactly what sort of play one is seeing, and "Don't look in the closet!" a request frequently heard in The Musical Comedy Murders of 1940 is one of them. From the opening of the first secret passageway to the last unmasking of an assumed identity, John Bishop's script calls forth every cliche not only of the standard country house murder mystery, but also of farces that satirize said country house murder mysteries. Twice removed from the laws of humans, nature, and theatrical representation, Bishop's loose approach to logic serves The Musical Comedy Murders of 1940 well. If John Bishop's endlessly hokey comedy had been written in the year of its setting, it would be easier to forgive the jokes seen coming several beats before they arrive, and the Abbott and Costello-style mystery would be acceptable. But Bishop's two-act semifarce arrived on Broadway in 1987, and it's hard to imagine how it got there without adding anything new to a tired plot. Instead, the company, bolstered by two moderately enjoyable performances, gamely stumbles through the plot, assisted a touch by a set design that ably accomplishes its goals. Join Backstage to access work from home jobs you can apply to right now! Start by marking The Musical Comedy Murders of 1940 as Want to Read: Want to Read saving… Want to Read. The creative team responsible for a recent Broadway flop (in which three chorus girls were murdered by the mysterious "Stage Door Slasher") assemble for a backer's audition of their new show at the Westchester estate of a wealthy "angel." The house is replete with sliding panels, secret passageways and a German maid who is apparently four different people—all of which figu...