

## The Yeomen of the Guard 2019 – Character Breakdown

### Sir Richard Cholmondeley

Middle-aged. In total charge of the Tower; what he says *goes*. Self-confident; exercises his authority naturally, with no need to strut or bluster. Stern but not heartless. Strong voice, both speaking and singing; needs to cut through crowd noise. Bass or baritone, low A to E flat above middle C.

### Colonel Fairfax

Young adult. A war hero, now a gentleman and amateur scientist. Brave in battle, philosophical about his impending death; but once saved, begins to show some less than admirable qualities. Toys with both Elsie's and Phoebe's affections. Needs to find the balance between nice guy and cad. Tenor, low D to high A flat.

### Sergeant Meryll

Middle-aged. An old soldier enjoying his semi-retirement as a ceremonial Tower guard. A widower with two grown children whom he loves dearly. Warm, genial, well-liked by his fellow Yeomen; adroit at sidestepping Dame Carruthers' advances – until now. Bass or baritone, low G to E flat above middle C.

### Leonard Meryll

Young adult. The Sergeant's son, just back from the wars. Appears briefly at the beginning and end of the show. In between he is in hiding, with the option of singing in the chorus disguised as a hooded monk. Tenor, low D to high A flat.

### Jack Point

Young adult. An itinerant jester. Travels with Elsie; in love with her, though the depth of his love is uncertain and he's not very good at expressing it. We first see him in his professional element, where he talks a good game; he becomes increasingly distraught during the show as his fortunes fade. Must dance or at least move well; must be able to collapse suddenly and believably (not comically). Light baritone, with excellent diction and good sense of rhythm and pitch; low A to F above middle C.

### Wilfred Shadbolt

Young adult. A jailer/torturer who seems ambivalent about his work. Fancies himself a wit; aspires to be a jester. Infatuated with Phoebe; insanely jealous of everything in sight. Somewhat loutish, but not excessively so. Some dance and physical comedy required. Bass or baritone, low G to E above middle C.

### Yeomen 1, 2, 3, 4

Tower guards with brief solo and small-ensemble work. Will be cast from the chorus. Yeoman #2 (baritone) has a longer solo and may be auditioned for if desired.

### Citizens 1 & 2

Rowdy townfolk, with brief spoken lines in one scene. Must be male for dramatic reasons. Will be cast from the chorus.

### The Headsman

A solidly built man who stands impressively upstage center in one scene. Can be a non-singing walk-on, or can dress and sing as a Yeoman in the other ensemble scenes.

### Elsie Maynard

Teen / young adult. An itinerant singer. Travels with Jack Point; it's never made clear how she feels about him. Street smart, can defend herself from molesters, but inexperienced in love. We need to see her vitality and vulnerability. Must move well. Lyric soprano, D above middle C to high B flat above the treble clef.

### Phoebe Meryll

Teen / young adult. The Sergeant's daughter. Spunky, flirtatious; wears her heart on her sleeve. Infatuated with Fairfax, whom she's seen only from afar. Repulsed by Wilfred, though she may have toyed with him before he became a jailer. Some physical comedy required. Light, easy mezzo, A flat below middle C to high F.

### Dame Carruthers

Middle-aged. In charge of the housekeeping staff, whom she rules with an iron fist. Identifies strongly with the Tower, despite (or perhaps because of) its bloody history. Never married; has her eye on the recently widowed Sergeant Meryll. Contralto, G below middle C to high F.

### Kate

Teen / young adult. Dame Carruthers' niece. Her primary function is to take the top line in one quartet; traditionally acts as the Dame's secretary (and stool-pigeon?). Ability to hold pitch is essential. Soprano, F sharp above middle C to high G.