

## MARY POPPINS Character descriptions for all speaking roles

MARY POPPINS – Jane and Michael’s firm and unflappable nanny who mysteriously appears to help the Banks learn how to be a family. Extraordinary and strange, kind but vain, Mary Poppins is a set of walking contradictions. Full of hope even when things look dire, she believes “anything can happen if you let it.” Practically perfect in every way! Mezzo-soprano with strong, clear top notes – must move very well.

BERT – The narrator and gentle chimneysweep, artist, and jack-of-all-trades who frequents Cherry Tree Lane. He possesses the wisdom of a much older man but the imagination of a much younger one. A longtime friend of Mary Poppins. As the charming and charismatic “painter” of the story, Bert holds a special relationship with the audience; he must be authentic and believable. Baritone and an excellent dancer, including tap. Cockney accent.

GEORGE BANKS – The Banks patriarch, who has rather lost his way in pursuit of societal norms and conventional success. His icy connection to his current children is rooted in childhood trauma, but his emotional armor conceals a sensitive soul. As a bank manager, he strives to be a good provider but often forgets how to be a good husband and father. Must be comfortable expressing physical affection with the actress playing Mrs. Banks, potentially including a staged kiss.

WINIFRED BANKS – The wife of George Banks, Winifred struggles with feeling like an imposter; she is torn between her past as an actress, her goals of a model family, and the demands of her unsympathetic husband. She is a loving but distracted mother to Jane and Michael. Must be comfortable expressing physical affection with the actor playing Mr. Banks, potentially including a staged kiss. Mezzo-soprano.

MICHAEL BANKS – Easily the most observant occupant of Number 17 Cherry Tree Lane, Michael is the youngest Banks child. He begins as a mischievous boy with a big mouth who misbehaves to get attention, and he grows to express his feelings and show compassion. He adores his father. Maximum height 56”.

JANE BANKS – The high-spirited Banks’ daughter and oldest child, Jane is occasionally inclined to snobbishness but learns to grow from a selfish and willful child to an empathetic young woman. She can be impulsive and impatient, but is also intelligent and imaginative. Maximum height 60”.

MRS. BRILL – The Banks’ family cook who rules the kitchen and Robertson Ay with an iron hand. Easily flustered and high-strung, but with a warm heart and good humor. Alto. Irish or Scottish accent desired; Cockney accent is also acceptable.

ROBERTSON AY – Clumsy but good-hearted footman of the Banks household, he has problems following directions and must be comfortable with physical humor. Tenor. Light Cockney accent.

MISS ANDREW – George Banks' austere and terrifying nanny who briefly replaces Mary Poppins. With her bottle of nasty-tasting brimstone and treacle to keep naughty children in line, she is a bully who only knows one way of doing things – her way. A psychotic diva, Miss Andrew is an entirely humorless character, so naturally, we're seeking an actress of considerable comedic skill. Soprano or well-ranged Mezzo with Alto belt.

MRS. CORRY – Mysterious and inexplicably timeless, she runs the "Talking Shop" where people buy conversations and gingerbread. She knew George Banks when he was a boy. Soprano – 50's and up. Jamaican or some other non-English "exotic" accent desired, if possible.

NELEUS(m)/AVANTHE (f) – A statue in the park that breaks free under Mary's magic. The statue has been separated from its father, Poseidon, and misses him very much. A small and lonely being, but very happy to befriend Jane and Michael. Can be either male (NELEUS) or female (AVANTHE), may be played by an actor of any age, and must be an excellent dancer.

THE BIRD WOMAN – An impoverished and haunting figure who sits in front of St. Paul's Cathedral every day, selling bags of crumbs to feed her beloved pigeons. Alto. Sings "Feed the Birds." Cockney accent.

THE PARK KEEPER – A stickler for rules and regulations, he watches over the park. Although his life is defined by rules, he secretly hankers after his childhood. Tenor. Cockney accent.

ADMIRAL BOOM – The Banks' family-friendly neighbor on Cherry Tree Lane. A former Royal Navy officer, he watches over happenings on the street and addresses every situation as if he were still aboard a ship. He has had a long-time crush on Miss Lark. Baritone.

MISS LARK – Another of the Banks' neighbors. She has a crush on Admiral Boom and goes out of her way to accidentally run into him on the street. She treats her dog, Willoughby, as a child. Willoughby must be operated as a puppet by this actress. Mezzo-Soprano.

KATIE NANNA – The last of a long line of nannies for the Banks' children, who leaves Number 17 Cherry Tree Lane after being fed up with Jane and Michael's pranks. Appears in Act 1, scene 1 only. Often doubled by an actress playing the Birdwoman.

BANK CHAIRMAN – The fussy, strict, undisputed master of the bank appears to care only about money. He is quite deaf. Miss Andrew was his former Nanny. Often doubled by an actor playing Admiral Boom.

MISS SMYTHE – The Bank Chairman's secretary, she must shout in his ear because he is quite deaf. Quietly efficient, she probably knows everything that goes on at the bank.

VALENTINE – Jane’s stuffed doll, who resembles the classic French Pierrot style doll from Victorian times, comes to life to teach the Banks children an important lesson. This actor needs to be small in stature and flexible to emerge from inside the dollhouse. French or English accent acceptable.

CONSTABLE – Police officer assigned to patrol Cherry Tree Lane and the Park. Very familiar with the high jinks of the rebellious Banks’ children.

HERR VON HUSSLER – Overbearing German businessman seeking a loan from the bank for a dubious business scheme. German accent.

MR. NORTHBRROK – Earnest English businessman seeking a loan from the bank to open a factory in his economically depressed hometown. Accent from the north of England, if possible.

ANNIE and FANNIE – Mrs. Corry’s two lively daughters, who help their mum run the Talking Shop in the park.

TELEGRAM DELIVERY BOY – delivers a telegram from the bank to Mr. Banks during “Supercalifragilistic...”. This actor has one line, but it must be timed perfectly to the music.

CHIMNEY SWEEPS – They greet and shake George Banks’ hand when leaving the house after “Step In Time”.