

The Merry Wives of Windsor Audition Pack

Performance Dates 13th March 2027 – 20th March 2027

All auditionees will be seen and heard together as a company. In the room with you will be the director Martin, and the casting committee. We will hear everyone read their desired audition piece/s within the shared space: supported, guided, and warranting applause from everyone in the room together.

Director Note:

This is a fast-paced comedy, with farcical scenes; there are no kings or nobles in "The Merry Wives", no high issues of state or lyrical flights of feeling. It is set solidly in the town of Windsor and the life of its citizens - the rich Pages and Fords from the big houses, the more or less hard-up local gentry, the town gossip, a magistrate with a finger in every pie, a couple of foreigners - good for a laugh - two young lovers (having trouble with her family), and much put-upon working folk.

The cuckoos in this domestic setting are that famous group of disreputable characters from the earlier plays, Falstaff, Mistress Quickly, Nym, Pistol and Bardolph, up to no good down at the Garter Inn.

Probably the best known comic scenes are those in which Falstaff goes a-wooing and meets his match in those two splendid women, the Merry Wives themselves, Mistress Page and Mistress Ford. However, there is plenty more mischief-making around Windsor. A jealous husband takes on a disguise and hears no good of himself. The doctor and the parson are set up, much against their will, to fight a duel. Mistress Quickly, the matchmaker, pockets money from three different suitors for the hand of "sweet Anne Page".

For this production we are setting the play in the 1960s - a decade when an energetic youth culture challenged established social norms. I would like to introduce live music, song and movement into the production. **Please make us aware of any musicianship / singing / dancing / talents you may have. You are welcome to demonstrate these!!**

Character Breakdowns:

- **Justice Shallow** - A magistrate; bluster and self importance define this character - hugely significant in setting the opening tone - attempts to further the suit of his nephew, Slender, in marriage to Mistress Ann Page.
- **Slender** - Shallow's nephew; an unwilling suitor to Ann Page.
- **Simple** - the clue's in the name! Slender's servant, much impressed by his social betters who must put up with a lot from his foolish master.
- **Sir Hugh Evans** - a Welsh parson, the butt of many jokes, another of the memorable comic cameos in the play; a broad Welsh accent is key to the success of this part.
- **Sir John Falstaff** - Comic genius required! Supremely arrogant, self- important, blindly (and baselessly) confident of his own attraction to the opposite sex, totally mercenary and disloyal in the extreme, is involved in farcical activity requiring some agility!
- **Pistol, Nym and Bardolph** - Comrades in arms, together and separately they inform the knock-about tone and serve the intrigues between the main characters - clarity and conviction will underlie these essential cameo performances; **may be doubled with John and Robert - servants responsible for handling the buck-basket scene (4.2);**

- **Robin** - Falstaff's page, but not the most faithful of servants.
- **Host of the Garter Inn** - a rather merry innkeeper who is incapable of saying anything simply and likes showing off how many words (s)he knows.
- **Mistress Quickly** - Dr. Caius's housekeeper, a foolish woman with a poor command of language, mixing up her English words and unable to identify Latin as a foreign language as opposed to dirty English.
- **Dr Caius** - a French physician, a short-tempered, easily offended man who is wooing Anne Page. A proficient duelist!! A forerunner of many 'Allo 'Allo characters, his 'Franglais' is key.
- **Jack Rugby** - Dr. Caius's servant.
- **Mistress Margaret Page** - a respectable (and respected) upper / middle class lady of Windsor, playing age 40s/50s; fond of her husband George, though she has rather different ideas about who should marry their daughter Anne.
- **Mistress Alice Ford** - also a respectable (and respected) upper middle class lady of Windsor, playing age late 30s / 40s, married to Master Frank Ford; though her husband is quick to question her fidelity, he trusts her enough to leave her in charge of the family finances – the main source of Falstaff's attraction to her.
- **George Page** - a steady, wealthy upper middle class Englishman, playing age 50s, determined to see his daughter Ann 'suitably' married off.
- **Frank Ford** - playing age late 40s, middle-class gentleman of Windsor afflicted with an almost pathological case of jealousy; adopts a second persona as Master Brook in scenes with Falstaff.
- **Ann Page** - the daughter of Master George Page and Mistress Margaret; a cameo role! She is pursued by Fenton.
- **Fenton** - a 'courtly' gentleman, a young suitor for Ann Page, thought by George Page to be above them in social station.
- **William** - Page's son, he has one schoolroom scene in which he mangles his Latin lesson; will also play one of the fairies in the last scene.
- **Fairies** - several boys and girls, involved in the last scene of the play, teasing Falstaff.

Audition Pieces:

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- Simple / Shallow / Slender / Sir Hugh Evans - Page 19 line 1 to page 21 line 68
- Falstaff / Pistol / Nym / Bardolph - Page 30 line 15 to page 32 line 100
- Simple / Jack Rugby / Mistress Quickly / Dr Caius - Page 32 line 1 to page 35 line 118
- Mistress Quickly / Fenton - Page 36 lines 128 to 157

- Margaret Page and Alice Ford – Page 37 line 1 to page 39 line 98
- Falstaff / Frank Ford (as Master Broom) – Page 48 line 150 to page 49 line 225
- Host / Page / Rugby / Slender / Shallow / Dr Caius – Page 52 line 1 to page 54 line 89
- Anne Page / Fenton – Page 67 lines 1 to 23
- Ford / Page / Alice Ford / Evans – Page 79 line 110 to page 81 line 155