

# Character Breakdown

(\* denotes Big 10 character, + denotes potentially a Big 10 character)

*Please note: This is a GENERAL OVERVIEW and is not guaranteed to be a complete list. Since we customize the script after auditions to give you the very best show possible, characters and what they do in the show could easily change from what is written here right now. We absolutely reserve the right to change our minds about assigning characters to the "Big 10". (The "Big 10" is a group of folks from MPJ with larger roles and larger responsibility. They rehearse Fridays, Saturdays AND Sundays. There can be more or less than 10...)*

## **Gala Program – all Gala roles rehearse on Fridays only**

**Gala Lead** (several available): This role will hold more responsibility in the Gala program. They will have vocal solos and multiple lines and be responsible for the shows continuity as well as being a part of all the production numbers. They could potentially have dance solos as well. They might be asked to attend a special Saturday rehearsal but it would be based on personal availability.

**Gala Speaking Role** (many available): This role will have a line or two in the Gala program while also being a part of all the production numbers.

**Gala Vocal Soloist** (limited availability): This role will have a vocal solo in the Gala program while also being a part of all the production numbers.

## **Mary Poppins Program – all MPJ roles rehearse Fridays and Saturdays, Big 10 roles also rehearse Sundays**

**About the accents:** Because the era and location are important to the story and context of *Mary Poppins*, all characters, unless otherwise noted, will speak with a standard British accent (a few performers perform with a Cockney accent instead. Those characters who need a Cockney accent have been noted below. If it does not mention an accent, then it is the standard British accent, with the exception of Mr Northbrook who has an Irish accent and Herbert Von Hussler who has a German accent). Actors do not need a 'perfect' British accent to be cast in any role, and we will provide direction and assistance in developing accents in rehearsal. All we need to see at auditions is each actor's best try!

There is an accent practice track for both Standard British and Cockney on the Stacey De website:

[www.staceydemusic.com](http://www.staceydemusic.com) (St Pets tab).

### **\*Bert**

The narrator of the story, Bert is a good friend to Mary Poppins and possesses his own touch of magic. An everyman, Bert is a chimney sweep and a sidewalk artist, a lamp-lighter and chimney sweep - among many other occupations. Bert speaks with a Cockney accent, which is different than the standard British most characters will use. With a twinkle in his eye and a skip in his step, Bert watches over the children and the goings-on around Cherry Tree Lane. He is a song-and-dance man with oodles of charm who is wise beyond his years. The actor who plays this role must display a relaxed charisma and charm, excellent in-character listening/reacting skills, and must be comfortable dancing solo. Oh, right – and an excellent singer to boot. Gender: Male

### **\*George Banks**

Husband to Winifred and father to Jane and Michael, George is a banker to the very fiber of his being. Demanding "precision and order" in his household, he is a pip-and-slippers man who tries to be a good provider but often forgets to be a good father. He believes that Miss Andrew, his cruel, strict childhood nanny, gave him

the perfect upbringing. George's emotional armor, however off-putting, conceals a sensitive soul. This role requires an actor who can remain grounded and connected while being comically exaggerated with their physical and vocal performance. A baritone, George may speak-sing as necessary and needs to be among the strongest male actors and singers.

Gender: Male

### **\*Winifred Banks**

George's wife and Jane and Michael's mother. A former actress, she is a loving mother who is busy trying to live up to her husband's desire to only associate with "the best people" as well as be the model wife and mother. She worries that she's not up to these tasks but she discovers that she is. Requires an actress who can portray a great warmth and depth of feeling and make strong, unique character choices both physically and vocally.

Winifred should have a pure vocal tone and be one of the strongest actors and singers.

Gender: Female

### **\*Jane Banks**

The high-spirited daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Banks, bright and precocious but she and her brother Michael often misbehave to get the attention of their parents. Jane can be willful and inclined to snobbishness. The actress who plays this role must be energetic with excellent diction and be ready to "play" on stage. Height may be a factor in the casting of this role.

Gender: Female

### **\*Michael Banks**

The cute and cheeky son of Mr. and Mrs. Banks. Excitable and naughty, he adores his father and tries to be just like him. Both he and Jane misbehave in order to get the attention of their parents. Michael should be a great actor and singer and have huge physical energy and an expressive face. Ideally, he reads onstage as younger than Jane. Height may be a factor in the casting of this role.

Gender: Male (could be cast as female playing a male role)

### **\*Mrs. Brill (could be cast as Chef Brill)**

The housekeeper (if a girl; chef only if a boy) and cook for the Banks family. Overworked and often grumpy, she/he's always complaining that the house is understaffed. Her/His intimidating exterior is a cover for the warmth underneath. He/She will speak with a Cockney accent. The actor who plays this role needs to be a strong singer and a strong actor to give a broadly comic performance with both body and voice – all singing is done "in character".

Gender: Female/Could be changed to Male

### **\*Robertson Ay**

The houseboy to the Banks family. Forgetful and clumsy, he often bungles simple tasks. He doesn't do a lot of singing, but he should be a good comedic actor. Note: his last name is pronounced like "eye."

Gender: Male (could be cast as female playing a male role)

### **\*Mary Poppins**

Jane and Michael Banks's new nanny. She is extraordinary and strange, neat and tidy, delightfully vain yet very particular, and sometimes a little frightening, but she is always exciting. The world interacts with her in a magical way – but for her it seems entirely normal. She is practically perfect in every way and always means what she says. The role calls for an excellent singer/dancer/actor who can portray a strong, confident character who takes joy in everything she does.

Gender: Female

**\*Mrs. Corry (or Mr. Corry)**

Mrs. Corry owns a magical gingerbread Talking Shop (sells letters to spell words) which has been around a long, long time. He/She is a mysterious, larger-than-life character of indeterminate age, but has plenty of spirit and is sharp as a tack. The actor or actress who plays this role has some freedom to create his/her own version of this character. We are looking for a performer who makes strong, unique character choices both physically and vocally. This role is not the same as in the film and is substantial in the books and in this show. Gender: Female (or could be changed to male)

**\*Bird Woman**

Her outward appearance is dirty and off-putting but she shows the Banks children that appearances can be deceiving. She tries to sell the crumbs to Passersby, who ignore her as if she doesn't exist. She speaks with a Cockney accent. This role requires a mature and subtle performance and the ability to sing with both strong technique and great emotional depth. This is a role that steals the show.

Gender: Female

**\*Miss Andrew**

Miss Andrew is George's overbearing and scary childhood nanny – she may even be considered the “anti-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. This role, while not in the film, is substantial in the books and in this show. The actress who plays this role must be able to deliver a powerful and intimidating performance.

Gender: Female

**+Miss Smythe**

Miss Smythe is the bank Chairman's humorless secretary. A fun role with lots of comedic potential. The actress who plays this role must be comfortable with physical comedy and have excellent timing.

Gender: Female

**+Chairman**

Chairman, the head of the bank where Mr. Banks is employed, is an Edwardian stuffed shirt. He is focused on the bottom line (meaning money) and his cold demeanor is reflected in the cold walls of the bank. This role requires a strong character performance with a booming character voice. He does not need to be a strong singer, but he should be a good actor with great stage presence.

Gender: Male (could be cast as female playing a male role))

**Herbert Von Hussler**

Herr Von Hussler is a businessman seeking a loan from the bank for a shady business deal. He speaks with a German accent. The performer in this role must be able to create a physically and vocally exaggerated, cartoonish character. This is a great character role for a fantastic actor who can command the stage with pomposity.

Gender: Male or Female (could change the role to a female or have female costumed as male)

**John Northbrook**

John Northbrook is an honest businessman seeking a loan to build a factory for his community. This is a great role for a good actor and solid singer.

Gender: Male (could be cast as female playing a male role))

**Neleus**

Neleus is the statue of a young boy in the park. Neleus was separated from his father, Poseidon, and misses him very much. A small and lonely being, who, once brought to life by Mary Poppins, is very happy to befriend Jane and Michael. This role may be played by a male or female performer, but the character will be costumed as a male.

Gender: Either (could be cast as female playing a male role)

### **Katie Nanna**

The last in a long line of similar nannies, Katie Nanna is Jane and Michael's nanny at the beginning of the show. Overwhelmed and upset, she has absolutely had her fill of the Banks children. She will speak with a Cockney accent. The character requires an exaggerated and cartoonish performance. After her exit, the actress assigned this role will join an ensemble.

Gender: Female

### **Citizens of London Ensemble**

The Citizens of London Ensemble will be comprised of Park Strollers, Vagrants, Buskers, Passerby and Kite Flyers. They will also make up the customers in Mrs. Corry's Talking Shop. They are at various times drab and dreary to bright and colorful, depending on the scene. The musical numbers in which they will be featured are: Prologue, Feed the Birds, Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious, Let's Go Fly a Kite and Anything Can Happen Finale.

Gender: Both

### **Servants/Statues Ensemble**

The Servants and Statues Ensemble will be made up of folks to play the servants in the Banks' home and the statues that come alive in the Park thanks to Mary Poppins magic. These roles require excellent dancers who can sing. The musical numbers in which they will be featured are: Prologue (as servants), Jolly Holiday (statues), Spoonful of Sugar (servants), Brimstone and Treacle (servants), Let's Go Fly a Kite (statues, and Anything Can Happen Finale (servants).

Gender: Both

### **Clerks/Sweeps Ensemble**

The Clerks, like George, are employees at the bank and the Chimney Sweeps (including Sweep 1, Sweep 2, Sweep 3, and Sweep 4 who have solo lines) are Bert's cheerful, friendly, and agile friends who keep London's chimneys in working order. These actors should be great dancers and good singers, capable of bringing life to their featured dance numbers. The musical numbers in which they will be featured are: Prologue (clerks), Precision and Order (clerks), Chim Chim Cher-ee,(sweeps), Let's Go Fly a Kite (sweeps), Step In Time (sweeps), Anything Can Happen Final (sweeps).

Gender: Both

### **Policeman and the Messenger**

The Policeman, a neighborhood patrol officer, and the Messenger, who delivers a summons to George from the bank, have small spoken parts outside of the Citizens of London Ensemble.

Gender: Both