



## CHARACTER DESCRIPTIONS AND AUDITION NOTES



The heart of Mamma Mia! is the music of ABBA and we intend to present the songbook with maximum production value. In many ways it will feel as much like a pop concert as a traditional musical and singers will frequently be expected to sing directly to the audience rather than remaining within character behind the ‘fourth wall’. An enjoyment of this kind of performing (‘fronting up a band’) will be advantageous and you are encouraged to demonstrate it if you’ve got it.

We are intending to cast a large “Chorus” who, alongside the band, will be on stage throughout the show. The Chorus will be made up of a singing ensemble and a dancing ensemble who will generally work independently of each other and you are encouraged to read the descriptions below for both.

The characters in Mamma Mia! are well-known, but we are intending to present our own version of this time-honored show and we are very open to the re-imagining of any or all them in terms of gender, weight, height, age, race or anything else... Please do not be deterred by the descriptions below or by any traditional interpretations of the roles; if you think you are right for a role, please show us what you have - we will genuinely consider it.

The character descriptions below are a guide to what we imagine will be on stage, but they are not intended to be definitive.

### ***Ensemble Roles***

One of the defining elements of Mamma Mia! is the density of production numbers in the show and the energy required to deliver them. As professional versions have consistently discovered, it is impossible for the onstage performers to deliver the required levels of singing and dancing simultaneously and all have resorted to off-stage singing (sometimes even on tape).

Our concept for the show is built on the sense of a genuine ‘full company’ and all singing will be ON STAGE, delivered by the **Singing Ensemble**, in turn allowing the **Dancing Ensemble** to devote maximum energy to the choreography without the limitations of having to sing at the same time. This choice is an artistic one. Please understand that it is not a reflection of any individual’s ability; it is a reflection of the limitations of the human body, faced with expending the colossal energy required to perform Mamma Mia!

In many ways, our Chorus is intended to be a reflection of our own society and is utterly without any restrictions of age (as long as you are at least 16), race, size, gender or anything else. What we are looking for most of all is the huge performance intensity that is required to push out these numbers, one after another, after another.

### ***Singing Ensemble***

A much larger percentage of the numbers than usual are production numbers and the Singing Ensemble will sing in over 19 numbers in total. Furthermore, it will remain on stage throughout the entire show on the multi-level super-structure that envelopes the stage (although rotated so individual performers will get breaks). The nature of the structure inhibits ‘dancing’ per se, but there will be choreographed upper body movement for nearly all the numbers. The commitment will be large.

### **Dancing Ensemble**

While everyone will sing and dance to some extent, there will be a featured corps of dancers who will be expected to dance with an energy and intensity that would make effective singing impossible. The Dancing Ensemble will be expected to sing the tunes for reasons of visual energy, but they will not be miked, thus reducing both sound and rehearsal requirements. It means the dancers can focus on the dancing, of which there is going to be A LOT. The Dancing Ensemble will feature in 14 numbers.

### **Principal Roles**

#### ***Donna Sheridan (mezzo-soprano, alto)***

The owner of the Taverna on the Greek island of Kalokairi; Sophie's mother, (around 40). She is the former lead singer of "Donna and the Dynamos. Honest, straight and hard-working, she is the most naturalistic and vulnerable of the characters. Delivers some of the biggest solos in the show. (*The Winner Takes it All, Slipping Through My Fingers, Dancing Queen, Super Trooper, Money Money Money, among others.*)

#### ***Sophie Sheridan (soprano, mezzo-soprano)***

Donna's headstrong 21-year-old daughter, Sophie is determined to have what her mother never had: a traditional family and a father to walk her down the aisle. Young, bright and energetic, she has lived all her life on the island and is ready to leave. (*I Have a Dream, Honey Honey, The Name of the Game, Lay All Your Love on Me, Under Attack, among others*)

#### ***Tanya Cresham-Leigh (mezzo-soprano, alto)***

One of Donna's oldest and best friends, Tanya (around 40) has married several millionaires and discovered a lot more about plastic surgery than love. Wild, fun-loving and a big character, she flirts mercilessly with young men, happy to play, but not to stick around. (*Chiquitita, Dancing Queen, Super Trooper, Does Your Mother Know, among others*)

#### ***Rosie Mulligan (alto)***

Donna's friend (around 40, often plus-size) a former member of the Dynamos; unmarried, free-spirited and a renowned author of cookbooks. A character who has developed a confident, funny and self-deprecating exterior which masks her inner vulnerability. Mostly comic, yet one of the most poignant moments in the show in the heart of Act 2. Dances like nobody's watching. (*Chiquitita, Dancing Queen, Super Trooper, Take a Chance on Me, among others*)

#### ***Sam Carmichael (baritone)***

One of Sophie's potential fathers and a wealthy architect (40-50). Sam has regretted leaving Donna all his life and now finds himself divorced and back in her presence. He is straight-laced, confident and composed. At times he is perhaps a little over-bearing, but he is determined not to mess up the second chance he has been given... a very true and honest character within the chaos. (*S.O.S., Thank You for the Music, Knowing Me Knowing You, among others*)

### ***Harry Bright (tenor, baritone)***

Another of Sophie's potential fathers and a respected London banker, (40-50, English). Once a head-banging, partying musician who went down the straight road - at least with his career. He is quirky, in the closet and something of a romantic nostalgic. A nice guy, determined to make up for some past regrets and full of singing. (*Thank You for the Music, Our Last Summer, among others.*)

### ***Bill Austin (baritone)***

Another of Sophie's potential fathers, a well-known travel writer, Bill has visited the far reaches of the earth, but never found what he's really looking for. A real character (40-50, often English or Australian), Bill has generally avoided the complexities of a relationship and now wonders if it's too late. Lots of comedy and a golden heart within. (*Thank You for the Music, The Name of the Game, Take a Chance on Me, among others*)

## ***Featured Roles***

### ***Sky (tenor, baritone)***

Sophie's fiancé; a former stockbroker who moved to the island in a young version of a mid-life crisis. He is older than Sophie (25-35), but smitten by her exotic charm. Perhaps he is too eager to please and has not quite found all the answers he had hoped for on the island. (*Lay All Your Love on Me, among others*)

### ***Ali & Lisa (mezzo-soprano, tenor, baritone)***

Sophie's friends who have traveled to the island for the wedding. (early 20s) A supporting double-act of bubbly, bridesmaidly excitement. Ali is not necessarily gender-defined and could be a good fit for the right male performer. (*Honey Honey, among others*)

### ***Pepper (tenor, baritone)***

A flirty waiter at the Taverna featured through his brief relationship with Tanya. (20-25, could be from anywhere). Hot, energetic and fun-loving, makes a great double-act with Eddie. Opportunity for a good mover. (*Does Your Mother Know, among others*)

### ***Eddie (tenor, baritone)***

A waiter, boatman and handyman at the Taverna. Other half of double-act with Pepper. (20-30, American). Fairly non-specific. Opportunity for a good young character actor to create something interesting. (*Full Company numbers*)

### ***The Wedding Officiator (soprano, alto, tenor, bass)***

The minister who tries to preside over Sophie's wedding. Often a heavy-weight Greek Orthodox priest, this is a potentially delightful Act 2 cameo for a good actor with some imagination. A great opportunity for a big character who doesn't want too much rehearsal commitment or too much to sing. Non gender or age defined (with religious affiliation up for discussion, too). (*Finale Numbers*)