



2025-2026 SEASON ■ Show Synopses & Character Descriptions

COMPANY ■ November 20, 21, 22, 23, 2025

Book by George Furth ■ Music & Lyrics by Steven Sondheim

Stage & Music Direction by Rick Vale

■SYNOPSIS■

On the night of his 35th birthday, Robert struggles to think of a wish to make as he blows out his birthday candles. The lone bachelor, surrounded by “those good and crazy people” -- his married friends -- Robert is uncertain whether he should simply be happy with his lot or whether he should wish for his own romantic partner. Over a series of dinner parties, first dates, and thoughtful conversations, Robert attempts to understand the pros and cons of marriage from his diverse and frequently hilarious friends and begins to make sense of his own persistent bachelorhood. *Company*, Stephen Sondheim’s groundbreaking modern musical, is a mature, intelligent, and wildly funny look at relationships, vulnerability, and “being alive.”

■CHARACTERS (*All Cast Members Sing*)■

ROBERT: (Baritone)

35 years old. The protagonist of our story, Robert is a confirmed bachelor, living in New York City. Although he has scads of great friends, Robert is the only one who is still single. Intelligent, affable, and at ease in almost any situation, Robert is everyone’s favorite third wheel. Although he appears cheery and self-confident on the outside, it masks a painful sadness within. He remains at a safe emotional distance from everyone around him - in romantic relationships and in his friendships, as well. Robert is simultaneously terrified of marriage and terrified of being alone for the rest of his life. It’s far easier for Robert to look back with longing on relationships past than it is for him to look forward into his future. This is a tour-de-force role for an actor with charisma and depth. The actor playing Robert remains onstage through the entire musical, so he must have stamina to carry the show.

HARRY (Baritone)

30s to 40s. Harry is the husband of Sarah, and one of Robert’s close friends. Harry is an alcoholic who is attempting to stay on the wagon after two arrests for public intoxication. He’s an unenthusiastic teetotaler, but at least he’s honest about it. Harry is constantly verbally sparring with his wife, Sarah, needling her about her own vices (especially an obsession with food). Regardless, he truly does love Sarah and is honest with Robert when asked. Although there are drawbacks in marriage, Harry believes, the benefits outweigh them, saying that marriage makes you “sorry-grateful” and “regretful-happy.”

SUSAN (Soprano)

30s to 40s, Southern accent. Susan is the wife of Peter and close friend of Robert. A sweet, lovely southern belle, Susan appears to be the perfect wife. However, despite her seemingly picture-perfect relationship with her husband, Peter, she and her husband decide to get a divorce. Even so, Susan and Peter function as a married couple. This is confusing to most observers, including Robert, but it makes perfect sense to Susan and Peter. Susan is affectionate and motherly with Robert. The actor playing Susan may also appear as the Choirgirl in "Not Getting Married Today."

SARAH (Mezzo/Alto)

30s to 40s. Sarah is the wife of Harry, and close friends with Robert. Sarah is a former foodie with a penchant for overindulgence. She's currently on a highly restrictive diet, which has made her something of a food voyeur -- she watches other people eat to satisfy her own desires. Because she's always thinking about food, she's also often talking about it. Her other favorite topic of conversation is Harry, who she criticizes, constantly particularly with regard to his alcoholism. They are well-matched partners in their ability to wage verbal war with one another. Recently, Sarah has taken up karate, which ultimately turns their verbal war into a physical one. Hard as she is working at karate and proud as she is at what she's learned, karate fails to), fully distract deprived Sarah from her possessive desire for food.

PETER (Baritone)

30s to 40s. Peter is the husband of Susan and close friend of Robert. An Ivy League-grad, Peter seems to have the world at his feet. Despite seeming to have a seemingly picture-perfect relationship with his wife, the lovely southern belle Susan, however, Peter and his wife are unfulfilled in their marriage and decide to divorce. This is confusing to most observers, including Robert, but it makes perfect sense to Susan and Peter. Without Susan present, Peter asks Robert if he has ever had a homosexual experience. Both men confide that they have, but Peter takes it a few steps further, close to the edge of a come-on (though it never becomes explicit). Whether Peter would self-identify as gay is left unclear.

JENNY (Soprano)

30s to 40s. Jenny is David's wife and a close friend of Robert's. A lovely, sweet middle-class, straight-edged square. Despite her seemingly conservative, obedient appearance, Jenny can be subtly manipulative and knows how to get what she wants. Jenny understands that her husband likes to feel important, so she indulges him from time to time in the fantasy that he's in control. Ultimately, however, Jenny pulls all the strings. Jenny is playful, smart, and genuinely cares for Robert. The actor playing Jenny may also appear as the Choirgirl in "Not Getting Married Today."

DAVID (Baritone)

30s to 40s. David is Jenny's husband, and a close friend of Robert's. He's avidly middle-class, with just enough of a wild streak to keep it interesting. David is relaxed and affable, and likes to feel as if he is in control. He enjoys that his wife, Jenny, appears to defer to his judgment, but -- in fact -- is often manipulated by her. David likes being married and believes in the institution-- according to him, the benefits of marriage are far greater than the freedoms you give up.

AMY (Mezzo/Alto)

30s to 40s. Paul's fiancée and Robert's former girlfriend (now, friend.) . Amy has been living with Paul for years, and is excited that they're finally tying the knot -- or so she thinks. It is only on the morning of her wedding that Amy realizes how terrified she is of marriage. Already somewhat neurotic, and an expert in

therapy, Amy overanalyzes the situation until she's spun herself out of control. She suffers a major mental breakdown during which she calls off her wedding, just as she and Paul are taking their vows. It takes her friend and ex-boyfriend Robert impulsively offering to marry her instead to make Amy realize that she does love Paul enough to marry him. The actor playing Amy should be an exceptional comic actor with great diction-- her song "Getting Married Today" is a speedy, wordy, neurotic showstopper.

PAUL (Tenor)

30s to 40s. The fiance of Amy and a close friend of Robert's. Paul is sweet and loving-- he cares deeply for Amy and would do anything for her. Desperately in love with his fiance, Paul can attention can be mildly clingy. Yet, he is patient and generous towards his neurotic lover, and his affection for her is deeply felt. Paul believes in marriage and can't wait to take part in the institution; he urges Robert to do the same. Paul is cool under pressure and maintains his calm even when Amy is flying off the wall. He loves her more than life itself.

JOANNE (Alto)

40s to 50s. Joanne is on her third (or is it fourth?) marriage, this time to the fun-loving Larry. She's very close to Robert, and questions why they never had a relationship. To outsiders, Joanne appears acerbic, blunt, and bitter. She's always got her guard up and very rarely lets others in. Joanne is also somewhat older than Robert -- she's too old to run with the young folks, but too young to run with the old folks. Joanne's brassy, brutish front falls when she's with Larry, who loves her despite (or even because of) her quirks. The actor playing Joanne should have immense charisma and exceptional comedic timing. Her song "Ladies Who Lunch" is a showstopper that simultaneously rips apart social falsehoods and exposes her own vulnerabilities.

LARRY (Baritone)

40s to 50s. Joanne's husband. Larry is usually fairly stoic and grounded, although he freely gives in to goofy impulses, as they come. He is always the first to jump up and dance, and his lack of self-consciousness is both charming and a little embarrassing. Although he indulges Joanne in her more brutish moments, he know when to put a stop to it. He refuses to leave Joanne, even when she's acting out, because his own father left when he was a boy, and Larry does not want to make the same mistake. Larry is dependable, self-aware, and unconditionally loving.

APRIL (Mezzo)

20s to 30s. One of Robert's girlfriends. A flight attendant originally from Shaker, Ohio. April is "dumb"-- self-labeled -- and reportedly moved to New York so she could live at Radio City, which she thought was a suburb of New York City. She stayed because, according to her, she "bores herself." Despite April's self-deprecation and daffiness, she's sweet, thoughtful, and warm. April is ditzy, but earnest; unintellectual but occasionally profound; and thoroughly lacks social skills. The actor playing April should have experience with close harmonies, as she performs in the trio "You Could Drive a Person Crazy."

MARTA (Mezzo)

20s to 30s. One of Robert's girlfriends. A streetwise, magnetic young woman who is obsessed with New York. Marta has an opinion about just about everything, and won't hesitate to share it. She's hip, fashion-forward, and profoundly cool. She does not, however, know quite when to shut up. The actor playing Marta should have experience with close harmonies, as she performs in the trio "You Could Drive a Person Crazy." She should also have a strong mix and/or belt for her showstopper "Another Hundred People."

KATHY (Soprano)

20s to 30s. One of Robert's ex-girlfriends; now, a very close friend. A sweet, genuine, and kind young woman, Kathy is tired of living in the hustle and bustle of New York. Although she once loved Robert enough to want to marry him, now Kathy is engaged and planning to move back to Cape Cod to start a family. Kathy has been desperate for love and for something solid in her life and is thrilled to have finally found it. The actor playing Kathy should have experience with close harmonies, as she performs in the trio "You Could Drive a Person Crazy." The original production of *Company* featured a dance number with Kathy ("Tick Tock") although it has been removed or performed as a duet/group number in some subsequent productions.

A CHRISTMAS CAROL ■ December 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 2025

Book by Charles Dickens ■ Script, Music & Lyrics by Rick Vale
Stage Direction & Jean Rice, Music Direction by Cheryl Pasquale

■SYNOPSIS■

This adaptation of the CHARLES DICKENS classic features Dickens himself narrating his own story. We see Ebenezer Scrooge take a journey through his past, guided by the spirits of Christmases Past Present, & Future. The original script, together with the music by Rick Vale has all the characters of the story played by a smaller cast of 17, all ages, each actor playing multiple roles...the setting is the study and mind of CHARLES DICKENS himself.

■CHARACTERS (All Cast Members Sing) ■

MALE ACTOR I

Playing the roles of: **Charles Dickens**, Charity Solicitor #1, Fiddler, **Joe**,
Fred's Guest #3, Gentleman #1

MALE ACTOR II

Playing the singular role of **Ebenezer Scrooge** throughout the play

MALE ACTOR III

Playing the roles of: **Bob Cratchit**, **Fezziwig**, Fred's Guest #5

MALE ACTOR IV

Playing the Ghosts of: **Marley**, **Christmas Past**, & **Christmas Present**, **Christmas Future**

MALE ACTOR V

Playing the roles of: **Fred**, **Undertaker**

MALE ACTOR VI

Playing the roles of: Young Ebenezer, Fred's Guest #6, Young Married Man

MALE ACTOR VII

Playing the roles of : Young Marley, Gentleman #2,

MALE ACTOR VIII - YOUTH

Playing the roles of: **Tim Cratchit**, Boy with Sleigh, Urchin #1

MALE ACTOR IX - YOUTH

Playing the roles of: Boy Ebenezer, Mr. Wilkins, Peter Cratchit, Urchin #3

FEMALE ACTOR X

Playing the roles of: Charity Solicitor #2, **Belle, Abigail**

FEMALE ACTOR XI

Playing the roles of: **Mrs. Cratchit, Mrs. Fezziwig**, Fred's Guest #4

FEMALE ACTOR XII

Playing the roles of: Flora, Laundress, Young Married Woman, Fred's Guest #1

FEMALE ACTOR XIII

Playing the roles of: Martha Cratchit, Charwoman, Fred's Guest #2

FEMALE ACTOR XIV - YOUTH

Playing the roles of: Belinda Cratchit, Fan, Urchin #2

FEMALE ACTOR XV - YOUTH

Playing the roles of: Lucy Cratchit, Urchin #4

FEMALE ACTOR XVI

Playing the roles of: Maid #1, Fauna

FEMALE ACTOR XVII

Playing the roles of: Maid #2

ROSENCRANTZ & GUILDENSTERN ARE DEAD ■ January 22, 23, 24, 25, 2026

Script by Tom Stoppard

Stage Direction by Raymond Kester

■ **SYNOPSIS** ■

Prince Hamlet of Denmark sets out to avenge his father's murder, all the while trying desperately to keep his sanity in one piece. That's all very well for Hamlet – but how does the prince's erratic behavior appear to casual bystanders not clued in on Hamlet's schemes? In *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*, playwright Tom Stoppard turns one of the most famous plays of the Western world on its head by putting two minor characters, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, and presenting the madcap antics of the royals through their eyes.

Rosencrantz and Guildenstern have been summoned to Elsinore by the king, Claudius. He and Queen Gertrude, wish for Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to glean what sudden sway of madness has affected Hamlet. The duo sets out to achieve their task, meeting a ragged troupe of players along the way. Brief glimpses of

scenes from Hamlet show the trials and tribulations of the royals; our two heroes are largely left in a state of waiting. They pass the time playing games, posing questions, and tossing coins, until they gradually realize that their fates have been taken out of their own hands. They are merely characters in a larger story in which they have no say. Part Shakespearean tragedy, part Laurel and Hardy comedy routine, part Waiting for Godot absurdity, Tom Stoppard's masterful debut play calls fate, free will, art, reality, communication, and the very constructs of theatre into question, all the while leading two most honorable, adventurous, brilliant, and inept characters on their path to their unfortunate, unavoidable, infamous fate.

▪ CHARACTERS ▪

ROSENCRANTZ

To explore Rosencrantz without speaking of Guildenstern would be difficult. Playwright Tom Stoppard once described the characters as "two halves of the same personality." Their traits are complimentary; they come together to make one full human. Characters often confuse the two; even Rosencrantz and Guildenstern themselves are sometimes hard-pressed to remember who is who.

Stoppard introduces Rosencrantz and his best friend and companion, Guildenstern, as the two engage in tossing a coin. Rosencrantz guesses heads, Guildenstern tails.

Rosencrantz is kinder and more optimistic than Guildenstern. He is more social, able to pick up how affects others and how they affect him. He is open and receptive, reacting with delight when presented with the opportunity to witness a play performed by the tragedians. This masks deeper, underlying fears of his own fate and mortality.

Rosencrantz is more accepting of the world than Guildenstern. He is willing to engage in Guildenstern's philosophical musings, but is not weighed down by as much existential angst. Rosencrantz is pragmatic, choosing to find simple and effective immediate solutions to their problems. In comparison with Guildenstern, Rosencrantz believes that he is the simpler of the pair.

Although Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are the two main characters, they are spectators within the world of the play. They never drive the action of the play forward; instead, they are often waiting for the action to come to them. Between the two, Guildenstern is more of the leader, Rosencrantz more of the sidekick. Significantly, though, neither takes control of their situation and as a result, both are swept into a course of action that ultimately results in their death.

GUILDENSTERN

Stoppard introduces Guildenstern and his best friend and companion, Rosencrantz, as the two engage in tossing a coin. Guildenstern is the Thinker to Rosencrantz's Doer personality. He is more intellectual, a quasi-philosopher. Guildenstern needs to explain the chaos of their lives with reason and logic; he needs to understand why things happen. When he is unable, he reacts passionately and angrily, often lashing out at those around him. When confronted with his and Rosencrantz's approaching deaths, he violently attacks the Player in his furious state of lost hopelessness.

His frustration can also be triggered by Rosencrantz's perceived careless nature. After his outbursts, though, Guildenstern is quite caring and apologetic to his friend. Guildenstern can be, at times, somewhat egotistical, pretending that Rosencrantz is more of a burden than a companion. In reality, both depend entirely on each other and would be lost if they were separated.

Guildenstern's constant need for rationalization renders him completely inactive. He gets within his thoughts and never truly acts. His extreme rationalizations serve to detach him and at times, provide him with excuses to behave cowardly and disloyally. For example, Rosencrantz firmly opposes leading Hamlet to his death, as the three have been friends since their youth. Guildenstern, however, is willing to let events play their course,

telling Rosencrantz, “Let us keep things in proportion. Assume, if you like, that they’re going to kill him. Well, he is a man, he is mortal, death comes to us all, etcetera, and consequently he would have died anyway, sooner or later.”

THE PLAYER

The Player is the leader of a group of traveling tragedians. He is charismatic and energetic – a true showman.

He lives for an audience and, when denied one, grows upset, worried, and angry. Rosencrantz and

Guildenstern disappear right as the troupe was preparing a performance for them.

The Player has a cunning intelligence; although he and Guildenstern rarely agree, the two enjoy matching wits.

He bears an enigmatic knowledge of the play’s events that at times seems omniscient. He is the most metatheatrical of all the characters; he seems to be aware of the plot of Hamlet and where Rosencrantz and Guildenstern lie within it. He even seems to know of their pending deaths, and, as the time grows closer, regards their terrible fate with a maddening, cold indifference.

The Player is comprised of seemingly at-odds ideals. He believes passionately in the Theatre. For him, there is no line that separates reality from art. At the same time, he is willing to compromise his ideals for money.

Whereas his company of tragedians used to be held in high esteem, they now will perform whatever is requested of them, including sexual exhibitions in which the audience members may pay to take part. The Player can be charming and friendly. He can also be threatening, dogmatic, and subtly menacing. He holds no qualms about prostituting the members of his troupe. He has an obsession with death; the troupe’s entire repertoire is comprised of plays that include gruesome, spectacular death scenes. He tells Rosencrantz and Guildenstern of a tragedian who was once a member of his troupe. This tragedian committed a crime and was condemned to death. The Player met with the authorities and, instead of pleading for his employee’s life, persuaded the authorities to allow his company to kill the accused onstage, for the spectacle of it.

HAMLET

Hamlet is the Prince of Denmark. In recent months, his father was murdered by his uncle, Claudius, who then married his mother, Gertrude, and assumed the crown. One night, his father’s ghost appears to him, order his son to avenge his death. Hamlet, normally the lead in his own play, is relegated to a far smaller part in

Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead. Here, we see his story unfold in only bits in pieces.

Hamlet has been friends with Guildenstern and Rosencrantz since their youth. Once a normal young man, he has become brooding, melancholy, erratic, and cynical. In light of the recent drastic change in Hamlet’s personality, his mother and uncle/step-father ask Guildenstern and Rosencrantz to discover what is ailing the prince. Unfortunately for everyone, Hamlet is quite sharp, much more intelligent than either Guildenstern and Rosencrantz; he quickly ascertains what his friends are up to.

Though Hamlet’s reasons to be upset are numerous, his behavior appears less justified and more self-indulgent when seen through a different perspective. He is a bit self-absorbed. He expresses great happiness to see his old friends Rosencrantz and Guildenstern when they arrive at Elsinore, but immediately gets the two confused. When he discovers the letter that Rosencrantz and Guildenstern bear as the trio travel to England—a letter from Claudius ordering Hamlet’s death by the English hand—he feels no hesitation in switching the letter for one that instead condemns his old friends. In one scene, Hamlet approaches the edge of the stage and spits out at the audience, then is immediately hit with something in his own face and wipes his eye. It’s as if the character realizes that he’s no longer the lead in the story, and wants to make it clear to everyone how he feels about being relegated to a smaller role.

ALFRED

Alfred is the youngest member of the Player's troupe of traveling tragedians. Being the youngest, he is often emasculated, playing all the female characters and serving as the Player's most frequent victim. Though the company once was known for their vast repertoire of plays, they have recently fallen on hard times, and the Player is willing to trade his tragedians for any sum of money. Often, they are asked to perform highly sexualized exhibitions; the Player essentially serves as Alfred's pimp.

Alfred is downtrodden and defeated. He takes no joy in the life of a traveling tragedian. When questioned by Guildenstern, he admits that he does not enjoy acting. Guildenstern proposes that Alfred quit the troupe, but ultimately, Alfred seems to have passively accepted his lot in life.

THE TRAGEDIANS

The tragedians are a group of four men (in addition to Alfred, their youngest member) who work as part of the Player's traveling company of actors. They have a vast repertoire of plays, all extremely melodramatic and sensational, all including very violent death scenes. In recent years, however, the company has fallen on hard times. Now, they are willing to perform sexual exhibitions, even allowing the audience to participate, should the right price be offered. They are submissive and passive, following their charismatic leader without question.

CLAUDIUS

Claudius is a duplicitous, ruthless schemer. He murdered his own brother, then married his brother's widow in order to gain the throne. Once King of Denmark, he will do anything to keep his role, including having his nephew/stepson, Hamlet, murdered.

As opposed to his prominent role in Hamlet, Claudius plays less of a major part here. He summons Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to Elsinore to monitor Hamlet. He coldly uses the duo with no concern what should befall them if Hamlet figures out what's going on. Eventually, he sends Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to England with Hamlet, asking them to bear a letter to the English authorities ordering Hamlet's death.

GERTRUDE

Gertrude is Hamlet's mother and Queen of Denmark. Her first husband has recently died; within a month, she married her brother-in-law, Claudius.

As opposed to her prominent role in Hamlet, Gertrude plays less of a major part here. She is a sincere woman, genuinely hoping that Rosencrantz and Guildenstern can help her son. Although her acts can be seen as disgraceful, she does seem to feel true love and affection for her new husband. She also displays real love and concern for her son and his bereaved state of mind.

Gertrude is a bit oblivious. She is blind to her second husband's scheming. She cannot understand what is upsetting her son. She often gets Rosencrantz and Guildenstern mixed up – though, to Gertrude's credit, even Rosencrantz and Guildenstern themselves often mix themselves up.

POLONIUS

Polonius is Ophelia's father and chief political advisor to Claudius, the new king of Denmark. As opposed to his prominent role in Hamlet, Polonius plays less of a major part here. He is a pompous, long-winded older man.

However, he outsiders cannot hide the shrewd and pompous man within. He is excessively proud of having such influence with the king, as he boasts of often. He is a shifty man, unconcerned with moral implications of doing Claudius' bidding, including interrogating and spying on Hamlet.

OPHELIA

Ophelia is a young woman living at Elsinore, the royal castle of Denmark. Her father, Polonius, is one of the royal family's chief advisors. She is in love with the young prince, Hamlet. Hamlet, however, has been going through some pretty big changes lately. His father died mysteriously and his uncle married his mother before ascending to the throne. Hamlet seems to be going crazy – he is melancholy, brooding, angry, cynical, and possibly insane. Does he still love Ophelia? No one knows.

As opposed to her prominent role in Hamlet, Ophelia is a largely minor character here. She is shocked and bewildered at her beloved's extreme change in personality, and lost in pain and grief at his rejection of her.

HORATIO

Horatio is a close friend and confidante of Hamlet. As opposed to his prominent role in Hamlet, Horatio plays a very small part here. He appears only in the final scene, cradling the body of his dead friend. He wants all bodies to be brought out, so that he may tell the truthful, sad tale of his friend. His lines are directly taken from Hamlet, where he also has the last words of the play. However, his speech is cut short as music drowns his words out and the stage goes dark. Horatio may double as a member of the ensemble.

THE ENSEMBLE

The ensemble plays many roles in Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead: courtiers, soldiers, ambassadors, and servants. Ensemble size may vary by production. Featured ensemble roles include: two ambassadors of England who arrive in the final scene, one speaking and one nonspeaking; Fortinbras, the Prince of Norway, who arrives in the final scene to take the Danish throne, nonspeaking; and Laertes, Ophelia's brother, who lies dead in the final scene.

DOUBT: A PARABLE ▪ February 19, 20, 21, 22, 2026

Script by John Patrick Shanley

Stage Direction by Kevin Weston

▪SYNOPSIS▪

"What do you do when you're not sure?" So asks Father Flynn, the progressive and beloved priest at the St. Nicholas Church School in the Bronx, in his sermon. It's 1964, and things are changing, to the chagrin of rigid principal Sister Aloysius. However, when an unconscionable accusation is leveled against the Father, Sister Aloysius realizes that the only way to get justice is to create it herself. And as for the truth of the matter? As Father Flynn says, "Doubt can be a bond as powerful and sustaining as certainty." In stunning prose, John Patrick Shanley delves into the murky shadows of moral certainty, his characters always balancing on the thin line between truth and consequences. *Doubt: A Parable* is an exquisite, potent drama that will raise questions and answer none, leaving the audience to grapple with the discomfort of their uncertainties.

▪CHARACTERS▪

SISTER ALOYSIUS BEAUVIER

Sister Aloysius is in her fifties or sixties, and wears a black bonnet, a black habit, and rimless glasses. The principal of St. Nicholas Church School in the Bronx, Sister Aloysius is rigid and conservative in her vision of education, watchful over her teachers and students, and firm about the hierarchy of the church and its disciplinary methods. Before she became a nun, Sister Aloysius was married, but her husband died in World

War II. She is sharply intelligent, and often wields her intelligence as a weapon. Despite her traditional view of the church's system of justice, when she suspects Father Flynn (her superior in the hierarchy of the church) of misconduct, Sister Aloysius is willing to reach outside of the patriarchal rules and resolve the matter herself.

While her dedication to justice and protecting the students is admirable, her insistence on banishing any doubts that don't align with her narrative narrows her view considerably. She firmly believes that "when you take a step to address wrongdoing, you are taking a step away from God, but in his service."

FATHER BRENDAN FLYNN

Father Flynn is a working-class Northeasterner turned well-liked priest and teacher in his mid-to-late thirties.

His goal is "progressive education and a well-rounded church," making him popular with the students, but unpopular with the traditional principal Sister Aloysius. Sometimes, his progressive nature blurs the boundary between his position as priest and the role he plays as "friend" to some of the students. His sermons are engaging and clear, though he does use fabrications to support his points: "The truth makes for a bad sermon," he tells Sister James. "It tends to be confusing and have no clear conclusion." Father's Flynn's belief that all humans are struggling to make sense of their doubts is a comforting notion to his parishioners, but is also an easy escape from accountability for their mistakes. Note: While the actor playing Father Flynn should decide with his director the character's backstory (particularly whether or not Father Flynn indeed had an illicit relationship with his student, Donald), the playwright John Patrick Shanley is firm on the fact that for the audience, the only certainty is doubt: "I'm not going to tell them what's right and wrong. I wanted to simply make them think and feel something, rather than tell them what to think and feel."

SISTER JAMES

Sister James, in her twenties, is a young nun and teacher at the St. Nicholas Church School. Though she's at times overwhelmed by her eighth-grade students, she does her best to resolve any issues herself. Sister James is an enthusiastic teacher who loves history, though according to Sister Aloysius, her teaching methods verge a bit towards the performative. Sister James is sensitive and eager to forgive and forget, so she struggles to make sense of the conflict between Sister Aloysius and Father Flynn. Uncertainty is an uncomfortable position for Sister James, and she longs for a world where things are clear, people tell the truth, and all have good intentions.

MRS. MULLER

The mother of Donald Muller, an African-American student who recently transferred to St. Nicholas Church School. Mrs. Muller aims to make a good impression, dressed in her Sunday best to meet with Sister Aloysius. Mrs. Muller is intelligent and fully aware that her race is a factor in her treatment and the treatment of her son, and she pulls no punches. She is fiercely protective of her son, although she knows that her husband beats Donald, perhaps because he is effeminate. While she doesn't blame her son for his possible illicit relationship with the Father, Mrs. Muller truly believes that "sometimes things aren't black and white." Out of love for her son and hope for his successful future, she urges Sister Aloysius to just get him through the year, regardless of what she thinks happened.

THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR ▪ March 19, 20, 21, 22, 2026

at The Anderson Museum of Art

Script by William Shakespeare

Stage Direction by Karen Lynn Sipes

▪SYNOPSIS▪

The boozing and boorish Sir John Falstaff (from Shakespeare's Henry IV Part One and Henry IV Part Two) is in Windsor looking to have fun. But he's running out of money, and so hatches a plot to woo a wealthy wife away from her husband and get her money. But instead of sending a love letter to just one woman, he sends identical letters to two: Mrs. Page and Mrs. Ford. The women learn about Falstaff's dishonorable intentions, and set out to humiliate him appropriately. At the same time, several local men are vying for the hand of Anne Page, the proprietor of the local tavern hangout plays practical jokes on various citizens, and the children of the city join in a masque to scare Falstaff. A play full of witty characters, language and word play, and practical jokes against Falstaff, *The Merry Wives of Windsor* is a lovely romp with a delightfully happy ending.

▪CHARACTERS▪

SIR JOHN FALSTAFF

The famous knight from Shakespeare's Henry IV plays, Sir John Falstaff is a man past his prime. He imagines that he is a great lover and scholar, when in actuality he is something of a bully and encourages his followers Bardolph, Pistol, and Nym to cause mischief as well. He steals money, poaches deer, and eats and drinks to excess in other men's houses. This lifestyle is expensive and he needs money, which inspires his plan to send identical love letters to Mrs. Ford and Mrs. Page, in the hopes that he can woo them and then get their money. Falstaff--so overconfident in his lover's appeal--has no idea that the wives are out to make a fool of him. He is dumped in the Thames, and then beaten while disguised as an old woman, but still agrees to meet the women in the woods at night, dressed like a mythological figure with horns on his head. Despite the humiliations he suffers, Falstaff understands that he brought his misfortunes upon himself, and agrees to let go of any animosity towards the wives or their husbands.

MR. FORD

Mr. Ford is a wealthy gentleman of Windsor. He has a suspicious nature, and when he learns that Sir John Falstaff sent his wife a love letter, he is immediately jealous and suspects the worst. (In fact, his wife knows that Ford is prone to jealousy, and does nothing to discourage him in order to further her pranks against Falstaff.)

To investigate Falstaff's intentions, Ford disguises himself as a man named Brook, and visits the knight claiming he is in love with Mrs. Ford and wants to seduce her away. When Falstaff agrees to help "Brook," Ford fears the worst, and actively tries to catch his wife in the affair. His temper is extreme--he turns his own house upside down to find the lecherous Falstaff, and later physically beats Falstaff (disguised as an old woman) out of his house. He is also incredulous that Mr. Page is never concerned that his own wife will cheat, and the two husbands are set up as foils for each other. In the end, Ford realizes that he was foolish to mistrust his wife, and apologizes for his temper and mistrust.

MRS. FORD

Mrs. Ford, one of the titular "Merry Wives," is a fun-loving and social lady of Windsor. Even though she is married, Sir John Falstaff sends her a love letter, hoping that he can woo and win her--and her money. But he has also sent the same letter to her best friend, Mrs. Page. The women decide that they must teach Falstaff a

lesson, and so Mrs. Ford pretends to be swayed by Falstaff. She plays coy and entices him with rendezvous when her husband isn't home, but then crafts humiliations for the lecherous knight, such as dumping him in the river or burning him with candles. Her husband is jealous of those who pay attention to Mrs. Ford-- including Mrs. Page, and chides the women that they would marry each other if they could. Despite her pranks against Falstaff, the good-natured Mrs. Ford is a loyal wife and friend.

MR. PAGE

A wealthy gentleman of Windsor, Mr. Page enjoys throwing dinner parties and wining and dining his neighbors-- especially when those neighbors are interested in marrying his daughter Anne. Unlike his jealous neighbor Mr. Ford, Page is never concerned about his wife's fidelity. He relies on her implicitly, and gives her the freedom to walk around town unaccompanied, trusts her with money, and lets her associate with whomever she pleases. Page does, however, disagree with his wife on who should marry their daughter, and he sets out to make sure Slender is the groom. But when Anne elopes with Fenton, Page is understanding and forgiving. Besides his domestic affairs, Page enjoys participating in the pranks against Sir Hugh Evans and Dr. Caius, and in the end gathers everyone for a wedding feast at his house.

MRS. PAGE

One of the titular "Merry Wives," Mrs. Page is the recipient of a love letter from Sir John Falstaff. However, he sent an identical letter to her friend, Mrs. Ford, and the women realize that he does not have true love or honorable intentions. Together the best friends plot to humiliate Falstaff. While Mrs. Ford is the "bait" for the knight, Mrs. Page is the set-up woman--she announces when Mr. Ford will be home and conveys messages to people regarding their pranks. Mrs. Page is also a mother; in one scene, she takes her young son William to school and he recites a Latin lesson along the way. But she is also preoccupied with Anne, her daughter, who is now of marrying age. Mrs. Page wants Anne to marry the local physician Dr. Caius, while her husband prefers his friend Slender, and Anne herself is in love with Fenton. Mrs. Page is ultimately understanding of her daughter's choice, and forgives Falstaff. She is clever and good-natured, and enjoys the celebration at the end.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

A servant in the house of Dr. Caius, Mistress Quickly is an engaging busybody known around town for her wit and influence with Anne Page (a young woman several men want to marry). Quickly easily goes from house to house, delivering messages and--in the case of Fenton--a ring. Mrs. Ford and Mrs. Page enlist Mistress Quickly to help them humiliate Falstaff. She happily joins in the plots of the "merry wives," especially when she entices Falstaff to dress up as a mythical horned hunter and meet with the wives in the woods. Quickly jumps into the scheme and, as a fairy in the final masque, entices the costumes children to burn and pinch Falstaff. However, she is never maliciously cruel, but rather motivated by money and having a good time. Mistress Quickly's loyalties fluctuate, based on what she perceives to be her best interests.

FENTON

Fenton is a young man in love with Anne Page. Because he is a former friend of Prince Hal (known for his wild partying), Anne's father Mr. Page tries to keep the young lovers apart. Fenton gives up trying to get Mr. Page to like him, and decides that he must take action if he is to marry Anne--rather than either of the men her parents prefer. He is romantic and honorable, and recognizes Anne as more than money or property. His devotion to Anne is so strong that he is able to win over the favor of many people around him. But he knows that he could never sway Mr. Page's opinion, and so enlists the help of the Garter Inn Host to arrange a secret wedding. Because Fenton has wealth, he is able to coordinate this wedding, and pay his helpers well. After the

wedding, Fenton confronts Mr. Page and argues for Anne's happiness--a poignant moment that wins over a previously reluctant father.

ROBERT SHALLOW

Robert Shallow is an elderly country justice (he states that he has lived "fourscore years and upward"). He is a friend of several local men, and regularly reminds people of his elevated social status; while he is not a knight, he is still aristocratic, and feels comfortable confronting Falstaff (who has poached deer from his land). Shallow relies on his friendship with Mr. Page to negotiate an engagement between his cousin Slender and Page's daughter Anne, and doesn't care that Slender has no interest in getting married. Shallow's name is heavily symbolic--while he presents himself as important, well-born, and better than others, he is actually fairly shallow and rarely says anything of substance or significant.

ABRAHAM SLENDER

Slender is a young man and cousin to Justice Shallow. While Shallow is working to arrange a marriage between Slender and Anne Page, Slender has absolutely no interest in marriage and is consistently awkward and even insulting around her. He is more interested in living a bachelor's life, and is even a little resentful that he is being forced into a union, even though it is with a wealthy and desirable young woman. Slender tends to be a follower, doing whatever Shallow commands. While he is privy to several of the pranks of the play, he doesn't seem to understand the purpose of them. More than that, Slender has almost no sense of humor, and doesn't enjoy the merriment or celebrations of marriage.

ANNE PAGE

Anne Page is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Page. She is eligible for marriage, and while each parent has a different suitor in mind (specifically Dr. Caius and Slender), Anne's heart belongs to Fenton. Anne is witty and clever around her suitors, despite her patience clearly being stretched thin by the dull Slender. When she is with Fenton, Anne is loving and romantic, and her conflicted loyalties are evident. She loves Fenton, but also understands her duty to her parents. Ultimately, Anne takes charge of her future and slips away with Fenton to be married.

SIR HUGH EVANS

The local parson and schoolteacher, Sir Hugh Evans enjoys being involved with the day-to-day business in Windsor. He begins the play insulted by Falstaff's boorish behavior, but quickly forgets his animosity. He is friends with Robert Shallow and Abraham Slender, and makes it his mission to help Slender win the heart of Anne Page. But in doing so, he makes an enemy of one of Anne's other suitors: Dr. Caius. He and Caius are scheduled to duel, but each goes to a different location for the fight, and they ultimately abandon their animosity. When he realizes that the Host of the Garter Inn interfered in the duel, they join forces to prank him in return. Evans is foreign, and speaks with an accent which makes him the butt of a few jokes. But he is intelligent and quick-witted, so others enjoy his company. He begins the play insulted by Falstaff's boorish behavior, but quickly forgets his animosity.

DR. CAIUS

Dr. Caius is the French physician in Windsor who wants to marry Anne Page, and he is Anne's mother's choice for her daughter. He is suspicious by nature, and ready to rise up and defend his honor if he thinks he's been wronged. At the slightest insult, he is ready to fight to the death--when Dr. Caius discovers a strange servant in his house, he challenges Sir Hugh Evans to a duel. Only by the quick thinking and misdirection by the other characters saves both men from a fight. As a foreigner, Caius speaks with a thick accent and is often made the

butt of jokes that he doesn't understand because he is unfamiliar with English slang. Dr. Caius is also the master of Rugby, a rather dull servant, and Mistress Quickly, the local busybody who assists in pranking Falstaff.

HOST OF THE GARTER INN

The Host of the Garter Inn is the local barkeep of Windsor, ready to listen to any laments and jump into any plots that involve pranks. When he learns that Dr. Caius and Sir Hugh Evans are preparing to duel, he sends each of them to a different location, and later mocks them. When the jealous Mr. Ford wants to deceive Falstaff, the Host helps disguise the husband as a man named "Brook." When Fenton seeks his help so that he and Anne may elope, the Host agrees to arrange for a priest to perform the ceremony. The Host is loud and boisterous, and gives his patrons nicknames. He often seems to have good intentions--but he does insult and mock people behind their backs, so it is satisfying when Dr. Caius and Hugh Evans prank him.

BARDOLF

Bardolph is a follower of Sir John Falstaff. He enjoys drinking and rowdiness, but is a terrible thief and often caught, forcing Falstaff to bargain for his freedom. To earn money honestly, Bardolph becomes a bartender at the Garter Inn. He is a flat character, interested only in parties and a good time with his friends. He is largely abandoned by everyone, though, because he is too dedicated to drinking, so the Inn is the perfect place for him.

PISTOL

Pistol is a follower of Falstaff. He enjoys drinking and having a good time, but can also have a temper. He is all talk and no action--even when he threatens someone, he never follows through. He hangs around Falstaff mostly to get money and booze, and is privy to Falstaff's plan to woo the "merry wives" and get their money. Pistol does develop a conscience, however; after delivering one of Falstaff's love letters, he and his friend Nym tell Mr. Ford and Mr. Page that Falstaff is trying to seduce their wives. After that confession, he is still willing to carouse with his friends and insult anyone who walks by.

NYM

Nym is a follower of Sir John Falstaff. Like his friends, he spends his time drinking, thieving, and causing mischief. However, Nym does develop a conscience after Falstaff decides to woo the "merry wives" in order to get their money. He convinces Pistol to tell the husbands Mr. Ford and Mr. Page what Falstaff is up to. Nym's sense of honor doesn't last long, and in true barfly fashion, he continues to drink and insult his friends and even his enemies.

SIMPLE

Simple is the foolish and simple-minded servant to Abraham Slender. Like his master, Simple is fairly boring, and spends most of his time running errands and delivering messages for Slender and Shallow (Slender's cousin). He is easily threatened and tricked into giving up messages to the wrong people, complicating the plot of Slender and Anne Page.

WILLIAM PAGE

William Page is the young son of Mr. and Mrs. Page, and the little brother to Anne. He recites a Latin lesson to his mother and Hugh Evans, and while the brief scene has nothing to do with the plot, it does give a glimpse of a schoolboy's life in Windsor. Presumably, this also echoes the life and education Shakespeare himself would have had in Stratford.

ROBIN

Robin is the page to Falstaff. Mrs. Ford enlists his help to serve as a messenger for Falstaff, and he (perhaps unwittingly) helps the wives trick and humiliate Falstaff.

RUGBY

Rugby is the wearied servant of Dr. Caius. He delivers messages while desperate to avoid his master's unreasonable and quick temper. Rugby generally helps Mistress Quickly, who is also a messenger between Falstaff and the wives, as well as between Anne Page and Dr. Caius.