

GSOV - The Yeomen of the Guard - 2021
Audition Notes

Auditionees should read all the character descriptions and prepare the speech for the particular role they are seeking. It is not necessary for either the dialogue or the songs to be memorised. *Articulation is particularly important.* The Vocal Score and Libretto can be downloaded from the Gilbert and Sullivan Archive – gsarchive.net

Character	Dialogue	Music
Phoebe Meryll: <i>Mezzo.</i> A star-struck 17 year-old, infatuated with the ‘young and handsome’ Colonel Fairfax, a prisoner in the Tower. A little minx, she has Wilfred Shadbolt on a string, but all the while hoping that someone more eligible will come along. Strong-willed and courageous.	Act 1: Scene with Wilfred “Wilfred and alone . . . oh, how I would love you”.	Act 1 #1 (Solo) When Maiden Loves
Wilfred Shadbolt: <i>Bass-baritone.</i> Aged mid-20s. He is the lugubrious head jailer; an assistant tormentor of unprepossessing appearance, who loves his job and carries out his duties conscientiously. Has been pursuing Phoebe in the hope that she will eventually accept him as a husband, and is jealous of anyone who shows an interest in her. He has some of the best comic scenes in the show.	Opening scene Act 1: “Mistress Meryll . . . organisation of the human interior”.	Act 2 #3 (Duet) Hereupon we’re both agreed.
Sgt. Meryll: <i>Bass.</i> Age 40 – 60, Phoebe’s father. Experienced and trusted old soldier in charge of a body of Yeomen. Has a great deal of sympathy for Colonel Fairfax, who twice saved his life. Hatches a plot to set him free. If discovered, it would lead to his own execution.	Act 1: “Leonard my brave boy . . .” to end of scene.	Act 1 #4 (Trio) Alas! I waver to and fro
Colonel Fairfax: <i>Tenor.</i> Early 30’s. A military hero. Falsely imprisoned on a charge of sorcery levelled by his influential kinsman and is to be executed this day. Needs to marry before he dies so that his kinsman does not inherit the estate. A hasty marriage is arranged, with a blindfolded Elsie Maynard as his bride. He escapes from his cell through a plot organised by Sgt Meryll, and impersonates Leonard Meryll, the Sgt’s son. As ‘Leonard’ he woos Elsie and she falls in love with him, while still trying to remain faithful to the vows she made to ‘Fairfax’.	Act 2: Scene with Elsie “So my mysterious bride . . . I spoke but to test you”.	Act 1 #5 (Solo) Is life a boon
Dame Carruthers: <i>Contralto.</i> Over 40. A middle-aged spinster, God-fearing and superstitious, in charge of running the household of the Tower. Seems to have absorbed some of the tower’s granite-like qualities. Would very much like to hook up with Sgt Meryll, who tries to avoid her whenever possible.	Act 1: “A good day to you . . . as dear to me as my own right hand”	Act 1 #3 (Solo with Chorus) When our gallant Norman foes
Leonard Meryll: <i>Tenor.</i> Mid 20’s. A celebrated military hero – the medieval Tom Cruise of ‘Mission Impossible’. Is due to take up an appointment in the Yeomen of the Guard, but joins in the plot to free Fairfax then to stay out of sight until Fairfax’s reprieve arrives.	Act 1: “Father! . . .” to end of scene.	Act 1 #4 (Trio) Alas! I waver to and fro

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<p>Sir Richard Cholmondeley (Cholmeley): <i>Baritone or Bass-baritone</i>. Lieutenant of the Tower – commanding figure – Mid 40’s. (Actual historic age was 60). He is a strict disciplinarian, and is determined to see Fairfax executed, even though he is sympathetic towards Fairfax’s plight. He has the power of life and death over the inhabitants of the Tower.</p>	<p>Act 1: Scene with Elsie & Point “What is this pother? . . .” to end of scene.</p>	<p>Act 1 #8 (Trio) How say you, maiden, will you wed</p>
<p>Elsie Maynard: <i>Dramatic Soprano</i>. A “pretty maid of 17” who arrives at the Tower with Jack Point to entertain so that they can earn money to purchase medicine for Elsie’s ill mother. She agrees to be blindfolded and marry a prisoner in return for a vast sum of money, having been assured of his immediate execution. Jack Point’s clumsy attempts to woo her are ignored. A strong sense of duty.</p>	<p>Act 2: Scene with Fairfax “Master Leonard . . . Oh, shame on you! Shame on you”.</p>	<p>Act 1 #10 (Solo) “Tis done! I am a bride</p>
<p>Jack Point: <i>Light Baritone</i>. Aged 30-40. A jester by profession, who had once been in the employ of the Archbishop of Canterbury. He was dismissed After making a jest that wasn’t appreciated, and has not been able to get a wealthy sponsor since, so he is now making a poor living by busking in the towns. He is in love with Elsie, and considers her his ‘bride to be’, but lacks the ability to express his love, so he confides in his folly stick “Jack”, and expresses his feelings by means of jests. Elsie is not in love with him, and when at last he realises that she is lost to him, he dies of a broken heart.</p>	<p>Act 2: “The Merrie Jestes of Hugh Ambrose . . .” to end of scene.</p>	<p>Act 1 #9 (Solo) I’ve jibe and joke Act 2 #2 (Solo) Oh! A private buffoon</p>
<p>Kate: <i>Lyric Soprano</i>. (mid-20’s). Dame Carruthers’ niece. Has been kept under her aunt’s thumb. Most important attribute is to hold the line in the quartet.</p>		<p>Act 2 #5 (Quartet) Strange adventure</p>
<p>2nd Yeoman: <i>Baritone</i> – upright soldier. Supporting act to Sgt Meryll. Has a couple of lines of dialogue and a solo in Act 1.</p>		<p>Act 1 #2 This the Autumn</p>