

Wizard of Oz Role Descriptions

Dorothy

Female, sings many solos, has many lines

A young girl from Kansas who dreams of a place more colorful than her home. While she is in Oz, Dorothy is amazed, amused, frightened, delighted, and sometimes outraged by the characters she meets along the way.

The actress playing Dorothy must take her time with her reactions and be very direct and sincere when speaking. She should speak clearly in her natural voice, and be an excellent “active listener” on stage.

Scarecrow/Hunk:

Male or Female, sings many solos, has many lines.

Stuffed with straw with a head full of cotton, the Scarecrow believes that (s)he does not have a brain, though (s)he always seems to know what to do when a problem comes up. The Scarecrow is a fiercely loyal and honest friend, and part of the comic trio made up by Scarecrow, Tin Man, and Lion. At the beginning and end of the show, the actor or actress playing the Scarecrow appears as “Hank,” a farmhand in Kansas.

The actor or actress playing the Scarecrow must be a very strong physical performer, able to convey with their movement that the Scarecrow is made up of soft materials and has no bones. This role can be played using the actor or actress’ natural voice, or a “character voice.”

Tinman/Hickory:

Male or Female, sings many solos, has many lines

Made of stiff, jointed tin, the Tin Man believes that (s)he does not have a heart, though (s)he is often kind or moved to tears by emotion. The Tin Man is very dramatic (sometimes melodramatic) and is part of the comic trio made up by the Scarecrow, Tin Man, and Lion. At the beginning and end of the show, the actor or actress playing the Scarecrow appears as “Hunk,” a farmhand in Kansas.

The actor or actress playing the Scarecrow must be a very strong physical performer, able to convey with their movement that the Tin Man is made of stiff tin that can move only at the joints. This role can be played using the actor or actress’ natural voice, or a “character voice.”

Lion/Zeke:

Male or Female, sings many solos, has many lines

Born and raised as a jungle animal, the Lion does not fit in with his more aggressive friends and family as (s)he is a scardey-cat. However, when it’s important the Lion finds a way to do what (s)he needs to do, even when (s)he is scared. The Lion is part of the comedic trio made up by the Scarecrow, Tin Man, and Lion. At the beginning and end of the show, the actor or actress playing the Lion appears as “Zeke,” a farmhand in Kansas.

The actor or actress playing the Lion must be a very strong physical performer, able to convey with their movement that the Lion is an animal who moves with very exaggerated comic movements. This role should be played using a cartoony “character voice,” different from the actor’s natural speaking voice.

The Wicked Witch/Miss Gultch

Female, does not sing, has many lines

The Wicked Witch is a mean, nasty old woman who does everything she can to destroy anything that threatens or irritates her. She is extremely powerful, and very frustrated by anything that does not behave the way she wishes it to. The actress who plays the Wicked Witch appears as the equally evil “Miss Gultch” in Kansas.

The actress playing the Witch must be a very strong physical performer who can communicate the Witch’s extreme evil power in the way she moves. . This role should be played using a cartoony “character voice,” different from the actress’ natural speaking voice.

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Glinda the Good Witch of the North

Female, sings solo, has many lines

Glinda the Good Witch is the kind and magical protector of the Munchkins. She is a bubbly fairy who sparkles with love and good humor, but is also very powerful.

This role should be played using a cartoony “character voice,” different from the actress’ natural speaking voice.

Wizard of Oz/Professor Marvel

Male, does not sing, has many lines

The Wizard of Oz is an old showman who has traveled the world and learned many impressive tricks to fool people in to believing (s)he is more powerful than (s)he really is. The actor or actress who plays the Wizard appears as the fortune teller “Professor Marvel” in Kansas.

The actor or actress playing this role needs to create two characters—the booming voice of the “All Powerful Oz,” and the bashful but earnest showman that is the “Man behind the Curtain.”

Auntie Em

Female, does not sing, has lines

Auntie Em is a down-to-earth farmer in her early 50’s. She is old but not feeble—in fact, she is a strong, ethical prairie woman with a lot of pride in herself and her family. She loves Dorothy very much and works hard to teach her skills that will help her make her way in life. The actress who plays this role will also double in other ensemble roles in the show.

The actress playing Auntie Em must be able to speak clearly and with strong emotion. This role can be played using the actor or actress’ natural voice, or a “character voice.”

Uncle Henry

Male, does not sing, has lines

Uncle Henry is an old prairie farmer with a dry sense of humor. He enjoys taunting the mean Miss Gultch, but when danger threatens he is all business.

The actor playing Uncle Henry must be able to speak clearly and with strong emotion. This role can be played using the actor or actress’ natural voice, or a “character voice.”

Toto

Male or Female, does not sing or have lines

Toto is Dorothy’s dog and best friend. Though (s)he does not speak, (s)he communicates as a dog would, with barking, whines, sniffs and growls, as well as with his or her body language. This role will be played on all fours using kneepads and gloves.

The actor or actress playing this role must be an excellent physical performer and improviser. He or she must be able to emulate the body language and sounds of a real dog, and think creatively about the ways in which a real dog communicates with the humans (s)he encounters.

Emerald City Guard

Male or Female, does not sing, has lines

The Guard at the Emerald City Gates is a goofy, sentimental character torn between doing his or her job and wanting to help a little girl get home. (S)He is a comedic character that appears frequently throughout the Emerald City sequence.

The actor or actress playing this role must have an excellent sense of comedic timing and the ability to speak loud enough to silence an excited crowd. This role can be played using the actor or actress’ natural voice, or a “character voice.”

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Nikko, Captain of the Winged Monkeys

Male or Female, does not sing or have lines

Nikko is the Wicked Witch's confidant and the captain of her flock of Winged Monkeys. Though Nikko does not speak, (s)he communicates as a monkey would, with shrieks, whooping, and other monkey sounds as well as with his or her body language.

The actor or actress playing this role must be an excellent physical performer. He or she must be able to emulate the body language and sounds of a real monkey, and think creatively about the ways in which a real monkey communicates with the humans (s)he encounters.

Winkie General

Male or Female, sings a capella, has lines

The Winkie General leads the Winkies and speaks on their behalf to the Witch.

The actor or actress in this role must have a loud, clear speaking and singing voice. This role can be played using the actor or actress' natural voice, or a "character voice."

FEATURED ENSEMBLES and ADDITIONAL ROLES

Trees (3-6 performers)

Male or Female, sing as a small group, featured dancers, have lines

The Trees are a group of living apple trees that first fight with Dorothy, provide comic commentary on the Tin Man's story, and sing and dance with the Tin Man during "If I Only Had a Heart."

The actors and actresses playing the trees must be strong actors, singers, and dancers. These roles can be played using the actors or actresses' natural voices, or "character voices."

Crows (3-6 performers)

Male or Female, sing as a small group, featured dancers, have lines

The Crows are a group of sassy birds that harass the Scarecrow, provide comic commentary through the Scarecrow's scene, and sing and dance with the Scarecrow during "If I Only Had a Brain."

The actors and actresses playing the scarecrows must be strong actors, singers, and dancers. These roles can be played using the actors or actresses' natural voices, or "character voices."

Munchkins

Male and Female, sing as an ensemble with many small solos and featured groups, many have lines

The Munchkins are the small people Dorothy encounters when she first reaches Oz. They are curious, friendly, and full of colorful characters. Some featured Munchkin roles are:

Munchkin Mayor (*Male or Female, sings solo, has lines*) The leader of the Munchkins must be very pompous and full of him or herself. He or she must also have very good musical timing.

Munchkin Barrister (*Male or Female, sings solo*) The Barrister steps forward from the Munchkin crowd to legally verify if the Wicked Witch is dead. He or she must be able to sing in a character voice and have very good musical timing.

Munchkin Coroner (*Male or Female, sings solo*) The Coroner makes the legal pronouncement that the Wicked Witch is dead. The Coroner must have a good sense of pitch and be able to sing in a funny "character voice."

Lullabye League (*Female, featured dancers, sing as a small group*) The Lullabye League are a group of sweet ballerinas who perform a pretty dance to welcome Dorothy to Oz. These performers must sing loudly with a good sense of pitch, and have some dance experience.

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Lollipop Guild (*Male and Female, featured dancers, sing as a small group*) The Lollipop Guild is a group of tough young men and women who perform a quirky dance to welcome Dorothy to Oz. These performers must be able to sing loudly in a “character voice” and must be able to create physically strong characters.

All performers who play Munchkins must be strong physical performers capable of creating interesting characters with unique singing and speaking voices. Many other lines and small solos will be cast from among the munchkins.

Height may be a factor when casting Munchkins.

Winged Monkeys

Male and Female, Movement Feature

The Winged Monkeys fly forth at the Wicked Witch’s command to capture Dorothy and Toto and fight her friends.

The actors who play Winged Monkeys must be strong physical performers be able to emulate the body language and sounds of real monkeys. The Winged Monkeys must also be very disciplined performers with excellent self-control, as they will have to learn and perform Stage Combat moves.

Girl’s Chorus

Female, Featured singers

The Girls Chorus sing as part of the musical introductions to the show and to Munchkinland.

The Girl’s Chorus must be excellent singers with great support and a very good sense of pitch.

Cyclone Dancers

Female, Featured dancers

The Cyclone Dancers represent the cyclone that carries Dorothy away.

Cyclone Dancers must be strong dancers with movement experience.

Winkies

Male and Female, Featured singers/actors

The Winkies are the guards who protect the Witch’s castle and sing the “Oooh-eee-ooohh” chant as they march.

The Winkies must be disciplined physical performers with very strong singing voices.

Poppies/Snow/Optimistic Voices

Female, Featured singers and dancers

The Poppy Field sequence is portrayed as a Busby Berkeley style showgirl routine with fabulous costumes and swirling skirts.

Both Poppies and Snow must be strong dancers who can sing on key with good breath support. Actresses playing Snow will also perform the Optimistic Voices song at the beginning of Act II.

Emerald Citizens

Male and Female, Featured singers and actors

The Citizens of the Emerald City sing a song and perform short scenes with Dorothy, the Tin Man, the Scarecrow, and the Lion.

Actors and Actresses playing Emerald Citizens must be strong singers and actors. Many lines and small solos will be cast from the Emerald Citizens ensemble.