

Seussical Character Descriptions and Casting Requirements

All performers will need to demonstrate basic competent movement ability. The most skilled dancer/movers are The Cat, Mayzie, The Bird Girls, The Wickershams, Vlad, and the Jungle Animals. A number of performers play several characters (circus performers or creatures etc.)

The descriptions below are based on the primary characters and do not address the multiple roles. Please check the Cast of Characters for a list of the other roles.

All children's voice ranges are considered as soprano/alto. All character ages are "stage ages"- the age the actor appears on stage. These character descriptions reflect initial thoughts and are not set in stone. When the show is cast, further character work will be developed with the actor's input.

THE CAT IN THE HAT (age 16-30)

Vocal range: tenor/baritone

The Cat playfully provokes change in the lives of those around him by creating obstacles and rites of passage. As in Dr Seuss's books, the Cat's intentions, although mischievous, are benevolent. The Cat's main objective is to have fun stirring things up, using some risky tactics, but always to a good end. Physical attributes and movement abilities: Loose-limbed, fluid mover with some vaudeville skills, and comedic and athletic propensities. (Ability to balance on a ball while juggling two books, a cake, and a rake, while holding a fan in his tail is not necessary, but certainly a plus.)

Special note for those *auditioning for the role of the Cat*:

Seussical begins and ends with the Cat. As the host and emcee, he is the conduit between performers and audience and continually pops up here and there with many exits and entrances and numerous props to manage. The person playing the Cat must be extremely responsible and able to piece together his own uniquely complicated show map.

THE JUNGLE WORLD CHARACTERS

HORTON (age 20-35)

Vocal range: tenor/baritone

Horton's main objective throughout the show is to protect the defenseless charges in his care – Mayzie's abandoned egg and the invisible planet of Who. His secondary objective is to become connected with another being that values and cares for him. Horton, as an elephant, is a slow-moving, gentle giant – a contemplative thinker in a world of agile, fleet-footed, quick and opinionated jungle animals. Physically and socially different than the other animals, Horton is an easy scapegoat. But Horton's bulk is matched by his solid, steadfast integrity and deeply-grounded beliefs.

Horton is never sure if he is up to the tasks that have fallen to him, but he would rather die than let down someone he has vowed to help. He is honest and faithful and kind. His experience as an outcast empathically connects him to those in need and he is so preoccupied with their troubles that he is oblivious to Gertrude's romantic interests. In

the end, Horton awakens to Gertrude's affection and discovers his ability to receive love as well as to give it.

Physical attributes and movement attributes: Horton is a being of bulk and weight. He moves slowly even at his fastest pace. His cumbersome physique restricts many physical activities, but somehow he finds a way to sit on an egg, in a nest, in a tree.

GERTRUDE (age 18-30)

Vocal range: soprano

Gertrude's main objective is to win Horton's attention and affection. She is determined to do whatever it takes to make that happen. Gertrude is a wallflower who is more comfortable observing others than being the center of attention. This is a difficult personality trait for her when she wants to be noticed by the elephant whose kind heart she has come to love. Gertrude doesn't quite fit in with the other jungle animals, feels unsure of herself socially, and the physical flaws she perceives in herself give support to her insecurities. Feeling unworthy and too unattractive to capture Horton's affection, Gertrude is swayed by Mayzie's tips on self-beautification and the promise of grandiose results. Gertrude embellishes her tail in an attempt to fit the norm. When her change goes unnoticed by Horton, and then becomes a calamitous hindrance, Gertrude realizes the benefits of function over fashion and finds her power when she abandons the need to conform. She refocuses on what is most important to her, and her approach to winning Horton's love matures. Knowing the depth of his commitments, Gertrude dedicates herself to helping him in his pursuits. She is erociously diligent, endures many perils and sacrifices, but is ultimately triumphant. In the end, the normity of her efforts and accomplishments captures Horton's admiration and affection, and Gertrude inally sees her own value and beauty reflected through Horton's love.

Physical attributes and movement abilities: Gertrude's quirky personality is rooted in her unusual physicality. She feels mismatched with her very large feet, scrawny tail, and out-of-tune squawk. She is a bird of great spirit, but little grace. Socially and physically awkward, she is a little off-beat, but delightfully so.

MAYZIE (age 25-35)

Vocal range: soprano/alto

Mayzie's objective is to have a good time while leading life to the fullest. She finds great pleasure in her sexuality and enjoys being admired, adored, sought after and serviced, whether by her Bird Girls, groupies, or by the paramours she meets on her adventures. Many have a hard time keeping up with her, as she is areal powerhouse, with great intelligence, beauty, and style. She has real star power and enjoys nothing ore than being in the spotlight. When her sexual escapades leave her saddled with an egg, she realizes hat she is not qualified for the job and is relieved and grateful when she finds in Horton a better caregiver han herself. She is also relieved that her exciting lifestyle will not have to be interrupted.

Physical attributes and movement abilities: Mayzie is an amazingly hot tropical dancer. She has salsa in her ones and could easily be a Las Vegas headliner. She flaunts her beauty, making men weak-kneed and women envious.

THE SOUR KANGAROO (age 25-40) and ROO (age 6)

Vocal range: soprano/alto

The Sour Kangaroo is the diva queen of the jungle. She is a tyrannical marsupial with attitude! She has style and flair, but she is also hard-hearted and sour. She has worked her way to the top and commands power and respect, but her rise to power did not come easily and she knows how hard life can be. Having been around the block a few times, she does not suffer fools gladly. She believes nonsense leaves people out in the cold, without food or home, and survival is the key instinct to coping in the jungle. To her, reality is not open to interpretation, and Horton's claims are seemingly impossible, and therefore disturbing. As she sees it, Horton's fantasies attempt to alter the reality she depends on and undermine her security and sanity. His crazy assertions endanger the normalcy of the Jungle of Nool and she, wanting to protect the jungle from harm, believes he needs to be stopped, if needed, by a Kangaroo Court. She is a mother who does not tolerate silliness. Roo is raised to be tough and fierce, not a dreamer. The Sour Kangaroo holds onto her power by rewarding those who cater to her opinions and punishing those who do not. She is General Genghis Khan Schmitz's parallel in the jungle world. Both are driven, rigid thinkers. Sour Kangaroo does have a change of heart. When she realizes she is wrong, she is quick to acknowledge it and correct her mistakes. Her maternal instincts come to bear when pledging to care for the Whos.

Physical attributes and movement abilities: The Sour Kangaroo has a commanding physical presence. She is strongly rooted to the earth. Her strong haunches give her a deep sense of power and control. She expresses herself through her fierce, soulful vocalizing and her passionate, deliberate movements. Roo is a baby Sour Kangaroo. Determinedly imitating his/her mother, Roo has guts and gumption and a similar defiant attitude. Roo is a hopper with a smooth bounce who appears through a costume pouch in the Sour Kangaroo's dress.

BIRD GIRLS (Age 19-30)

Vocal range: mixed ranges

The three Bird Girls are a flamboyant "girl group." Individually, each is a gorgeous, tropically decked-out, hot jungle bird. As a trio, they live to sing, dance and perform. They love to tell stories, embellished by their melodious voices and expressive physiques. The Bird Girls are visceral, sensuous beings who respond to the stimulus around them. Whenever there is music, they are "on." They live in the moment, embodying the mood and feel of their environment at any given time. Because they have a heightened awareness of the external world and themselves in it, they are less internally aware and are not introspective or contemplative. On the whole, they reflect the world around them, enjoy a good time and do not have a strong moral compass. Because of this, they are swayed by the crowd and by those in power, and easily adopt the prevailing belief. The Bird Girls serve as back-up performers to the exquisite talents of Mayzie La Bird, and through their affiliation with her are lifted to the upper echelons of the jungle hierarchy. They enjoy being appreciated for their beauty and performing talents and flirt with the powerful Wickersham Brothers.

Physical attributes and movement abilities: The Bird Girls are sensual, powerhouse movers who love to dance in tight synchronicity with each other. Their styles are Latin,

nightclub and Motown. They are a physically expressive Greek chorus who, along with the Cat, tell the show's story. Additionally, they are the main locomotors for Horton's Tree.

WICKERSHAMS (age 17-35)

Vocal range: mixed ranges

The Wickersham Brothers live to impress the world with their strength and prowess. They want to be seen as virile, dominant, alpha males. They are impulsive bad boys who like to monkey around, creating havoc for fun. They pride themselves on their agility, speed, and cunning, and feed off of each other, seeking out vulnerable prey to subordinate. In order to feel a sense of superiority, they intimidate, bully and harass those they consider to be weaker. However, their bravado has its roots in insecurity, not evil. The Wickershams' macho posturing increases when around the beautiful Bird Girls. They are henchmen for the powerful Sour Kangaroo, acting as her aggressive arms of law. But they are not sociopaths – just attention-seeking daredevils who live for thrills and status as the bad biker boys of the jungle. The Wickershams feel their power in making Horton cower. They enjoy feeling his fear and dislike him for his insecurity and tenderness – attributes they are uncomfortable with. They value speed, he is slow; they love agility, he can't move well. They see his contemplation as slowness/stupidity and his talking to the speck as insanity, which frightens and disturbs their world.

Physical attributes and movement abilities: The Wickershams are athletic, primo movers. They swagger, leap, roll, squat, turn on a dime and possibly swing in on vines.

YERTLE, THE TURTLE (age 20-40)

Vocal range: baritone/base

Yertle believes he has been endowed with some superior gifts not shared by the other animals and deserves a higher stature. He has a sense of entitlement and has a need for order. He likes to be the one who is looked to for decision-making and setting things right.

Physical attributes and movement abilities: He has a solid physique, does not need to be a great mover.

VLAD VLADIKOFF (age 19-35)

Vocal range: any range

Vlad Vladikoff does the Wickershams' dirty work. In his full glory, with his large imposing wing spread, he is scary and formidable.

Physical attributes and movement abilities: His movement is powerful and precise and needs to be executed carefully. Two characters come together to create Vlad Vladikoff: the eagle, Vlad, and the eaglet. The actors playing Vlad Vladikoff cannot be afraid of heights.

JUNGLE ANIMALS (age 10-40)

Vocal ranges: mixed ranges.

The Jungle animals are "street-smart" creatures who live by the laws of the jungle. They are motivated by basic survival urges and live to be a part of the herd. They follow the

pack, needing to fit in, conform to group dynamics and not be ostracized. They know their place in the jungle kingdom hierarchy; they follow the powerful Kangaroo without question and do not cross the Wickershams. They reside instinctively in their bodies and are alert and agile while grazing, lazing in the sun, or being on a chase. They are easily excited into mob frenzy and will enthusiastically join in a hunt or a Kangaroo Court. All the animals have individual movement and character traits that distinguish them from one another. The jungle animals are the jewels of the jungle, brightly anointed with Seussian colors.

Physical attributes and movement abilities: strong, expressive dancers.

- The Eagle is a precise and fierce mover with a piercing gaze and powerful upper torso.
- The Eaglet is a hatchling who is a flapper and leaper.
- The Zebra is a proud equine with a lifted carriage and precise footing.
- The Gazelle is a graceful balletic mover who is fleet of foot and who uses leaps and turns to travel.
- The Lizard is a languid, sensual mover who sometimes slithers on the floor.
- The Leopard is a lithe, supple mover who travels with a watchful deliberateness.
- The Tamarin monkey is a young, frisky, leaper who lopes and scampers across the ground.
- The Poison Dart Frog is a small aquatic animal who hops and squats and jumps.

WHOVILLE CHARACTERS

JOJO (age 8-12)

Vocal range: soprano/alto

JoJo wants to be valued and loved for himself. He lives in a society that doesn't seem to notice or care about any of the things he holds dear to his heart. He feels unseen and unappreciated by his family and community and begins to doubt his own worth. He longs for a friend with whom to share his thoughts, a soul mate who can understand his experience. JoJo stands out in a world that values conformity. When he expresses the wondrous thoughts in his head, instead of inspiring awe and emulation, he is met with disdain and disapproval. JoJo's travails increase when he is sent to the military for training. His parents and the General hope that his extravagant individual expression will be suppressed by military regimentation and that he will become an obedient soldier who follows orders unquestioningly – a non-thinking cog in an efficient machine. But his marvelous fantasies can not be contained nor can he stop thinking or questioning. His felicitous connection and subsequent friendship with Horton helps boost his self-esteem, and as he witnesses the mindless conformity of the cadets and General Schmitz's nonsensical pursuit of the Butter Side Downers, he comes to believe more deeply in himself. His courage to speak his own mind, in the face of oppression, and to follow his intuition, in the midst of danger, finally leads to a triumphant recognition of his heroic visionary strengths.

Physical attributes and movement abilities: JoJo is physically expressive, but lives more in his head than his body. He is seen in contrast to the cadets who have had rigorous physical training and are naturally athletic.

MR. MAYOR (age 30-50)**Vocal range: tenor/baritone.**

Mr. Mayor wants to be a good leader and father. He is a recently-elected official who is proud of his new role and eager to prove his abilities. He feels he must embody the high standards he hopes his citizens will live up to. Mr. Mayor has taken a leadership role at a difficult time. Not only is the planet rudderless, and open to dangers from without, but there are internal problems as well. War is brewing on his home front, and, in his own home, he is disturbed by the troubling antics of his dreamer son, JoJo. As a public official, Mr. Mayor expects his son to exhibit upright behavior, not the surprising, unruly, disruptive behaviors that have him sent home from school. Mr. Mayor likes his world to be tidy and predictable. JoJo's active imagination creates messy and unpredictable results. These results confound, bewilder and embarrass his father. Although beginning to worry about his ability to rule his community and household, Mr. Mayor is able to seek external help. He calls out for assistance and his cries reach Horton's ears. He enlists the help of General Genghis Khan Schmitz to bring JoJo into conformity. He is dedicated to making his world better, and does what he knows to make changes happen, but he learns something about his values in the process. After meeting General Genghis Khan Schmitz, Mr. Mayor wonders if the harsh military training is really what JoJo needs. After receiving word of JoJo's death, Mr. Mayor deeply regrets his decision to send JoJo off to war. After JoJo returns home, Mr. Mayor is so grateful to have his son back that he unconditionally accepts him, wild thoughts and all. Coming to learn that JoJo found his way home by himself by using his thoughts/hunches, Mr. Mayor comes to value JoJo's thinking abilities, and eventually depends on JoJo to use his imaginative powers to help save the planet.

Physical attributes and movement abilities: See Whos, below.

MRS. MAYOR (age 25-45)**Vocal range: soprano**

Mrs. Mayor wants, above all else, to be a good wife and mother. She is married to a recently-elected politician who takes great pleasure in representing the community he loves. She is proud to be his wife and wishes to uphold the values they share and she strives to present their family as an exemplary, well-put-together unit. But this is not an easy time in Mrs. Mayor's life. The planet they live on has only just nearly been rescued from peril. And although temporarily safe from that danger, she worries about the war that looms on the horizon and she has concerns closer to home. Her son JoJo's "thinks" "have been causing all sorts of consternation at home and at school. JoJo's behavior shames her family's public face and while Mrs. Mayor strives to keep their world tidy, neat, and free from unexpected occurrence, JoJo's imagination is disruptive and creates turmoil and mess. The society she lives in frowns on such spontaneous outbursts and Mrs. Mayor is at her wits' end with JoJo. She wants what is best for him and sees that he is naturally inclined to be a dreamer, but she fears his imaginative tendencies will only continue to get him in greater trouble. Mrs. Mayor shares her husband's worry about not knowing how to best care for their "different" child, and, together, they decide to send him away for military training, with the hope that it will cure him of his errant thoughts and help him conform more to societal norms.

Physical attributes and movement abilities: See Whos, below.

GENERAL GENGHIS KHAN SCHMITZ (age 30-60)

Vocal range: baritone

General Genghis Khan Schmitz sees the world in simple contrasts: good and evil, weak and strong, boy and man. He believes in values of militaristic regimentation: conformity, rigorous and disciplined physical training, and following orders without questions. There is no place on the battlefield for dreaming. General Genghis Khan Schmitz believes in what is familiar to him, and aberrations from that frighten and confound him. He champions fighting wars but does not think deeply about the core conflict. He is zealous in his belief that Butter Side Downers oppose what he knows to be right, whether the issue is trivial or not. His objective is to curtail thinking and behavior that is different from the norm. His main two enemies are unruly children and the Butter Side Downers. General Genghis Khan Schmitz does have a change of heart and ends up questioning his mission. In the end, he supports and celebrates imaginative power.

Physical attributes and movement abilities: General Genghis Khan Schmitz is an Old World soldier who is past his prime. He has an authoritative bearing and commands with a loud voice and intimidating presence.

THE GRINCH (age 25-45)

Vocal range: baritone/bass

The Grinch is a green beastie who lives in Whoville. He is a happy member of the Who community, but this wasn't always the case. He once lived angrily apart and wished to disrupt the pleasantries of the Whos. His story and change of heart are all part of Who culture now, and happily retold every Christmas.

Physical attributes and movement abilities: Being green and hairy, a fun mover with a distinctive physique.

WHOS CITIZENS (all ages)

Vocal range: mixed ranges

The Citizens of Who are innocent, slightly quirky people who value conformity and clean living. For the most part, they are happy, hard-working, earnest citizens who enjoy their lives and one another. The Whos do not examine their lives deeply. They live simply from day to day and depend on those in charge to lead them. Like white, middle class Americans in the 1950s, they live in a bubble of pleasant uniformity. Their thinking is restricted to what is known and familiar to them; any deviations from the norm are viewed with confusion and suspicion. The Whos' main objective is to keep the status quo: to keep their planet safe, their bread butter side up, and their lives tidy and predictable. Their enemies are those that disrupt their steady, accustomed way of life (Butter Side Downers and kids with overly extravagant imaginations).

The children in Whoville learned young that thinking outside the box was not okay. Trained to value fitting in and keeping up, they try to please their families and community by living by the rules. Most can manage it - in fact Cindy Lou and Cindy Too are the "perfect little ladies" their parents expect them to be. But others have a harder time wiping out their opinions and strong feelings, and those kids are the unlucky ones who often end up under General G.K.S.'s rule in the military. The harsh preparations for war drum out any remaining shreds of individuality, and the cadets now live, eat, march, and think as one. It's not that they're brainwashed - it's just that it's easier to go along

with your peers and your elders than to think for yourself and risk the disapproval of everyone in your world. Some of the cadets believe strongly in the wisdom of their parents and community, and have determinately tried to fit themselves into the mold. Others harbor residual opinions and ideas, but keep them tightly under wraps. Only Jojo is willing to risk punishment, disapproval, and ostracism to stand by his own beliefs.

Physical attributes and movement abilities: The Whos' straight and proper carriage is interspersed with whimsical, off-center, and quirky movement that distinguishes them from human beings. Cadets must be able to learn and execute unison movement. All Whos have prosthetic noses, which also contribute to an other-world distinction.

**RCCT casts age appropriately. These ages are approximate. Actors should be able to play these ages. Some ages may be altered, based on the actors who audition, at the discretion of the director.*

For further information on RCCT's *Seussical*, please call 909-477-2775.

For tickets, please call the Lewis Family Playhouse Box Office at 909-477-2752 or order online at www.lewisfamilyplayhouse.com (Additional service fees apply for online ordering).