

THE YEOMEN OF THE GUARD

character outline with vocal ranges

Adapted by Permission from *Only Idle Chatter* by Ralph MacPhail, Jr.

Available from Lulu.com and Amazon.com.

Sir Richard Cholmondeley (pronounced “Chumley”) is the Lieutenant of the Tower and in command. A stern taskmaster with limited sense of humor, he claims out sympathy for having saved Colonel Fairfax “from the pestilent dangers which threaten human life outside” the tower. Bass-baritone – A3-E4

Colonel Fairfax is the military hero around whom the plot swirls. Condemned to death for a crime he did not commit, he is dashing and brave, but easygoing, and ready to die – though more than willing to escape his execution. Tenor – Eb3-Ab4

Sergeant Meryll is a retired soldier with many a memory of life in battle. Staunch and true, but not the sharpest bayonet in the arsenal. He is clever and willing to risk all in helping to set Fairfax free. - Bass --baritone – G2-Eb4

Leonard Meryll is the Sergeant’s son, who appears early and late in the opera but who is then impersonated on-stage (and in his absence) by Colonel Fairfax, through most of the opera. He has a difficult tenor part in his one trio. – Tenor Gb3-Ab4

Jack Point a wand’ring jester, with a bag of old jokes that don’t work very well. He must be agile and nimble, playful, but must also exhibit pathos and sentimentality. He travels with Elsie to provide entertainment, and has formed a love for her that is unfortunately not requited. - Light baritone – A3-F4

Wilfred Shadbolt the Head Jailor and Assistant Tormentor of the Tower. Lugubrious, ugly and something of a slob and sadist. He is infatuated with Phoebe Meryll, but his affection is not reciprocated. - Bass-baritone – G2-E4

Elsie Maynard is a strolling singer and partner to Jack Point. Her mother’s illness leads her to a plot-initiating decision to marry a condemned prisoner she has never met (Colonel Fairfax). Elsie is somewhat of a vixen (for tormenting Jack Point, who genuinely loves her) but also has a strong moral compass and takes her wedding vow seriously. – Dramatic Soprano – D4-Gb6.

Phoebe Meryll is a pert little flirt, warmhearted but plucky and clever. Opens the opera with a spinning song solo. She is Sergeant Meryll’s daughter and Leonard’s sister and is smitten with a love for Fairfax from afar. – Mezzo-soprano – Ab3-F3

Dame Carruthers is the housekeeper of the Tower. Grim, born and bred “in the old keep,” stern, granite hearted (sometimes) but sympathetic. “Of a certain age.” – Contralto – G3-Eb5

Kate is Dame Carruthers’ niece. Is an important element of a 2nd Act Quartet. Must have a good ear to keep that number on pitch. – Soprano Gb4-G5.