



Character Notes for auditions

In general these are 'grown up' roles and unless there are exceptional circumstances will be played by cast members over 16 years. They are not listed in order of appearance or importance. This is a British pantomime, so there's no need to talk in an American style, though do feel free to use any accent to make a character more effective if you wish.

Glinda (female)

Glinda is a traditional panto fairy. She is our story teller in the prologue and often on hand to deliver important information. She's there to explain everything to Dorothy when she first arrives in Oz and reveal the magic of the silver shoes at the end! As such, she must be able to communicate effectively and captivate the younger audience members. She'll need to be able to say dialogue over music and co-ordinate that with special effects happening at the same time. In the movie, Glinda was a wise, older lady; a motherly figure. She could still be; but fairies are immortal and can be played by persons of any age. However, she will still need to bring a calm air of authority and wisdom – and be a good foil to the Wicked Witch Of The West! And potentially have a strong singing voice too.

Wicked Witch Of The West (female)

She is perhaps one of the most terrifying creations in all movie history. But here this is a traditional panto villain role, meaning she is more comedic and less threatening. A good panto baddie should be able to engage the audience in their evil ways, without ever being so scary as to frighten the kids or stop them booing. This is helped by having Meeko as her comic side-kick. She's after revenge or more importantly the silver shoes - now worn by Dorothy - that once belonged to her sister, the Wicked Witch of the East. She needs to be a strong comic, a good communicator, prepared to go through the inconvenience of heavy make-up and be a strong singer. There's a solo song for her which is an audition piece.

Meeko (male/female)

Meeko is a Winged Monkey and the Wicked Witch's evil assistant. Meeko is the comic sidekick who always manages to spoil an evil plan by saying or doing something silly. Meeko doesn't want to be a baddie – they try but they're not very good at it - and they're delighted when the Witch is finally destroyed and they can be a goodie at the end. Meeko and the Wicked Witch work as a double act, with Meeko's silliness regularly stopping the Witch coming across as too scary. They may also be the 'It's Behind You' character in the bench scene. So Meeko needs strong comedy skills, to interact with the audiences and to be the children's favourite!

Dorothy (female)

Dorothy is our leading character. Unlike the book or the movie, Dorothy is young but not played as a child. The panto Dorothy is stronger than the movie version with more spirit

and empowerment; after all, she leads a gang of friends who all lack confidence, on a journey to the Emerald City and then to do battle with a Wicked Witch. She needs to be warm, engaging and to appeal to the audience. She must also be able to interact convincingly with all characters she comes across – and that includes cut-out trees, voices offstage and a puppet dog!

Auntie Em (male)

Aunty Em is a 'Man In A Frock' style Panto Dame. She is in the house with Dorothy when the tornado blows it to Munchkinland. Therefore she travels with Dorothy and her friends on their journey. It's a smaller role that doesn't contribute much to the story so she might quite often disappear, leaving room for the other characters to shine. She has raised Dorothy on her own, as Uncle Henry disappeared many years ago. There's a happy ending though, as she and the long-lost Henry are reunited and crowned King and Queen Of Oz.

Scarecrow (male/female)

Scarecrow is a traditional linkman panto role. They are the first we meet of Dorothy's Oz friends and subsequently spends more time on stage than the other 3. Quite famously, they don't have a brain - even though they do say some quite clever things at times. It calls for strong comedy skills and broad, physical acting to be a floppy, flappy scarecrow! They'll sing lead in several gang songs and need to be comfortable chatting to the audience with song sheets, hellos etc. They're Dorothy's best friend – and the audiences' too!

Tin Man (male/female)

Tin Man is Dorothy's 2nd friend discovered along the road to Oz. Tin Man doesn't have a heart but it doesn't mean they're heartless; in fact they're the kindest and most thoughtful of the gang. It does mean that sometimes they take things quite literally – with comedic results! They also sing lead in several gang songs. Strong characterisation and physical performance is needed to overcome the restrictions of a 'tin' costume and heavy make-up.

Lion (male/female)

The last of Dorothy's friends we meet, so the one who has to work hardest to impress. Lion has two distinct sides to his character; the gruff strong bully and the wimpy cry-baby coward. It is perhaps the broadest comedy role and regularly steals the scene with plenty of one-liners and humour. Like the others, they're involved in several musical numbers. It's a comic role that needs to be over-the-top even through the heavy Lion costume and make up.

Oz (male)

A pivotal character who, after all the anticipation, finally makes his appearance in the all important finale to the story. We first hear Oz in Act 2 as the strong, imposing, offstage voice of a mighty Wizard. This may or may not include a projected head, depending on FX development at this time. But the finale reveals him to be a mild mannered human after all, pretending to be this mighty wizard. He also turns out to be Uncle Henry, Aunty Em's long lost husband. He needs a range of acting skills too; in contrast to the thunderous voice of Oz, Uncle Henry should be sincere and convincing when he gives Scarecrow, Tin Man and Lion the gifts they have sought all through the show.

Toto (male/female)

Dorothy's terrier dog is a rod puppet. Toto's operator will be in full view and their facial expressions and physical movement will enhance those of the Toto puppet. Although he has no lines, he is a typical terrier and shows a lot of character in the way he behaves. We haven't established yet whether any barking should be pre-recorded or made 'live' by the Toto operator. The audition will therefore be different, not word driven but geared around how Toto might act and react in various different scenarios.

Queen of the Mice (male/female)

The Queen of the Mice is one of a number of smaller cameo roles that can also double with the chorus. These roles need to have a strong character to quickly make their mark! The Queen is disturbed by our heroes as they get trapped in the poppy field. They initially laugh at her offer to help rescue Lion, but they soon learn she is not to be sneered at! She leads an army of mice who pull our heroes to safety and maybe potentially play a lead in the finale song to end Act One. It's a Queen role but we're saying male/female as depending on casting, it could be a King instead!

Ensemble: Munchkins, Crows, Trees, Citizens, Gate Keeper (male/female)

These are the other additional characters that appear throughout the story, to be played by people also in the chorus. You do not have to prepare this to be in the chorus but if you would like to be considered, it would help us with our decisions. They are cameos roles; it is important that they establish themselves quickly with lots of character! There's a specific audition for the Queen of the Mice; there are two pieces of the script that will make up a 'general' audition, that will help us cast the other roles.



There's no place like Panto!