

Songs and Dialogue for Yeomen Auditions

Please note: If you are interested in a particular role(s), please become familiar with the dialogue labelled for the character(s) you want to be considered for.

Memorisation is not necessary, though you should be able to read the lines the way the character would say them; you may hold the dialogue sheets, or the score with dialogue, but you don't want to bury your face in the page as you audition!

The songs on the list for each character are suggestions for audition pieces, however you may sing another character's song as long as it is in your vocal range.

Audition for PHOEBE

PHOEBE: *(aside)* WILFRED – and alone!

WILFRED: Now what could he have wanted with her? That's what puzzles me!

PHOEBE: *(aside)* Now to get the keys from him. *(aloud)* WILFRED – has no reprieve arrived?

WILFRED: None. Thine adored FAIRFAX is to die.

PHOEBE: Nay, thou knowest that I have naught but pity for the poor condemned gentleman.

WILFRED: I know that he who is about to die is more to thee than I, who am alive and well.

PHOEBE: Why, that were out of reason, dear WILFRED. Do they not say that a live ass is better than a dead lion? No, I didn't mean that!

WILFRED: Oh, they say that, do they?

PHOEBE: It's unpardonably rude of them, but I believe they put it in that way. Not that it applies to thee, who art clever beyond all telling!

WILFRED: Oh yes, as an assistant-tormentor.

PHOEBE: Nay, as a wit, as a humorist, as a most philosophic commentator on the
vanity of human resolution.

PHOEBE slyly takes bunch of keys from WILFRED's waistband and hands them to MERYLL, who enters the Tower, unnoticed by WILFRED.

WILFRED: Truly, I have seen great resolution give way under my persuasive methods *(working a small thumbscrew)*. In the nice regulation of a thumbscrew – in the hundredth part of a single revolution lieth all the difference between stony reticence and a torrent of impulsive unbosoming that the pen can scarcely follow. Ha! ha! I am a mad wag.

PHOEBE: *(with a grimace)* Thou art a most light-hearted and delightful

companion, Master WILFRED. Thine anecdotes of the torture-chamber are the prettiest hearing.

WILFRED: I'm a pleasant fellow an I choose. I believe I am the merriest dog that barks. Ah, we might be passing happy together –

PHOEBE: Perhaps. I do not know.

WILFRED: For thou wouldst make a most tender and loving wife.

PHOEBE: Aye, to one whom I really loved. For there is a wealth of love within this little heart – saving up for – I wonder whom? Now, of all the world of men, I wonder whom? To think that he whom I am to wed is now alive and somewhere! Perhaps far away, perhaps close at hand! And I know him not! It seemeth that I am wasting time in not knowing him.

WILFRED: Now say that it is I – nay! suppose it for the nonce. Say that we are wed – suppose it only – say that thou art my very bride, and I thy cheery, joyous, bright, frolicsome husband – and that, the day's work being done, and the prisoners stored away for the night, thou and I are alone together – with a long, long evening before us!

PHOEBE: (*with a grimace*) It is a pretty picture – but I scarcely know. It cometh so unexpectedly – and yet – and yet – *were* I thy bride –

WILFRED: Aye! – wert thou my bride –?

PHOEBE: Oh, *how* I would love thee!

Audition for WILFRED

WILFRED: Mistress MERYLL!

PHOEBE: (*looking up*) Eh! Oh! It's you, is it? You may go away, if you like. Because don't want you, you know.

WILFRED: Haven't you anything to say to me?

PHOEBE: Oh yes! Are the birds all caged? The wild beasts all littered down? All the locks, chains, bolts, and bars in good order? Is the Little Ease sufficiently uncomfortable? The racks, pincers, and thumbscrews all ready for work? Ugh! you brute!

WILFRED: These allusions to my professional duties are in doubtful taste. I didn't become a head-jailer because I like head-jailing. I didn't become an assistant-tormentor because I like assistant-tormenting. We can't *all* be sorcerers, you know. (*PHOEBE is annoyed*) Ah! you brought that upon yourself.

PHOEBE: Colonel FAIRFAX is *not* a sorcerer. He's a man of science and an alchemist.

WILFRED: Well, whatever he is, he won't be one for long, for he's to be beheaded to-day for dealings with the devil. His master nearly had him last night when the fire broke out in the Beauchamp Tower.

PHOEBE: Oh! how I wish he had escaped in the confusion! But take care; there's still time for a reply to his petition for mercy.

WILFRED: Ah! I'm content to chance that. This evening at half-past seven – ah!

PHOEBE: You're a cruel monster to speak so unfeelingly of the death of a young and handsome soldier.

WILFRED: Young and handsome! How do *you* know he's young and handsome?

PHOEBE: Because I've seen him every day for weeks past taking his exercise on the Beauchamp Tower.

WILFRED: Curse him!

PHOEBE: There, I believe you're jealous of *him*, now. Jealous of a man I've never spoken to! Jealous of a poor soul who's to die in an hour!

WILFRED: I am! I'm jealous of everybody and everything. I'm jealous of the very words I speak to you – because they reach your ears – and I mustn't go near 'em!

PHOEBE: How unjust you are! Jealous of the words you speak to me! Why, you know as well as I do that I don't even like them.

WILFRED: You used to like 'em.

PHOEBE: I used to *pretend* I liked them. It was mere politeness to comparative strangers. (*Exit PHOEBE, with spinning wheel.*)

WILFRED: I don't believe you know what jealousy is! I don't believe you know how it eats into a man's heart – and disorders his digestion – and turns his interior into boiling lead. Oh, you are a heartless jade to trifle with the delicate organization of the human interior.

Audition for Sgt. MERYLL

LEONARD: Father!

MERYLL: LEONARD! my brave boy! I'm right glad to see thee, and so is PHOEBE!

PHOEBE: Aye – hast thou brought Colonel FAIRFAX's reprieve?

LEONARD: Nay, I have here a despatch for the Lieutenant, but no reprieve for the Colonel!

PHOEBE: Poor gentleman! poor gentleman!

LEONARD: Aye, I would I had brought better news. I'd give my right hand – nay, my body – my life, to save his!

MERYLL: Dost thou speak in earnest, my lad?

LEONARD: Aye, father – I'm no braggart. Did he not save thy life? and am I not his foster-brother?

MERYLL: Then hearken to me. Thou hast come to join the Yeomen of the Guard!

LEONARD: Well?

MERYLL: None has seen thee but ourselves?

LEONARD: And a sentry, who took scant notice of me.

MERYLL: Now to prove thy words. Give me the despatch and get thee hence at once! Here is money, and I'll send thee more. Lie hidden for a space, and let no one know. I'll convey a suit of Yeoman's uniform to the Colonel's cell – he shall shave off his beard, so that none shall know him, and I'll own him as my son, the brave LEONARD MERYLL, who saved his flag and cut his way through fifty foes who thirsted for his life. He will be welcomed without question by my brother Yeomen, I'll warrant that. Now, how to get access to the Colonel's cell? (To

PHOEBE.) The key is with they sour-faced admirer, WILFRED Shadbolt.

PHOEBE: (*demurely*) I think – I say, I *think* – I can get anything I want from WILFRED. I think – mind I say, I *think* – you may leave that to me.

MERYLL: Then get thee hence at once, lad – and bless thee for this sacrifice.

PHOEBE: And take my blessing, too, dear, dear LEONARD!

LEONARD:. And thine. eh? Humph! Thy love is new-born; wrap it up carefully, lest it take cold and die.

Audition for Colonel FAIRFAX

FAIRFAX: So my mysterious bride is no other than this winsome ELSIE! By my hand, 'tis no such ill plunge in Fortune's lucky bag! I might have fared worse with my eyes open! But she comes. Now to test her principles. 'Tis not every husband who has a chance of wooing his own wife!

Enter ELSIE.

FAIRFAX: Mistress ELSIE!

ELSIE: Master LEONARD!

FAIRFAX: So thou leavest us tonight?

ELSIE: Yes, Master LEONARD. I have been kindly tended, and I almost fear I am loth to go.

FAIRFAX: And this FAIRFAX. Wast thou glad when he escaped?

ELSIE: Why, truly, Master LEONARD, it is a sad thing that a young and gallant gentleman should die in the very fullness of his life.

FAIRFAX: Then when thou didst faint in my arms, it was for joy at his safety?

ELSIE: It may be so. I was highly wrought, Master LEONARD, and I am but a girl, and so, when I am highly wrought, I faint.

FAIRFAX: Now, dost thou know, I am consumed with a parlous jealousy?

ELSIE: Thou? And of whom?

FAIRFAX: Why, of this FAIRFAX, surely!

ELSIE: Of Colonel FAIRFAX?

FAIRFAX: Aye. Shall I be frank with thee? ELSIE – I love thee, ardently, passionately! (ELSIE *alarmed and surprised*.) ELSIE, I have loved thee these two days – which is a long time – and I would fain join my life to thine!

ELSIE: Master LEONARD! Thou art jesting!

FAIRFAX: Jestings? May I shrivel into raisins if I jest! I love thee with a love that is a fever – with a love that is a frenzy – with a love that eateth up my heart! What sayest thou? Thou wilt not let my heart be eaten up?

ELSIE: (*aside*) Oh, mercy! What am I to say?

FAIRFAX: Dost thou love me, or hast thou been insensible these two days?

ELSIE: I love all brave men.

FAIRFAX: Nay, there is love in excess. I thank heaven there are many brave men in England; but if thou lovest them all, I withdraw my thanks.

ELSIE: I love the bravest best. But, sir, I may not listen – I am not free – I – I am a wife!

FAIRFAX: Thou a wife? Whose? His name? His hours are numbered – nay, his grave is dug and his epitaph set up! Come, his name?

ELSIE: Oh, sir! keep my secret – it is the only barrier that Fate could set up between us. My husband is none other than Colonel FAIRFAX!

FAIRFAX: The greatest villain unhung! The most ill-favoured, ill-mannered, ill-natured, ill-omened, ill-tempered dog in Christendom!

ELSIE: It is very like. He is naught to me – for I never saw him. I was blindfolded, and he was to have died within the hour; and he did not die – and I am wedded to him, and my heart is broken!

FAIRFAX: He was to have died, and he did *not* die? The scoundrel! The perjured, traitorous villain! Thou shouldst have insisted on his dying first, to make sure. 'Tis the only way with these FAIRFAXes.

ELSIE: I now wish I had!

FAIRFAX: (*aside*) Bloodthirsty little maiden! (*aloud*) A fig for this FAIRFAX! Be mine – he will never know – he dares not show himself; and if he dare, what art thou to him? Fly with me, ELSIE – we will be married tomorrow, and thou shalt be the happiest wife in England!

ELSIE: Master LEONARD! I am amazed! Is it thus that brave soldiers speak to poor girls? Oh! for shame, for shame! I am wed – not the less because I love not my husband. I am a wife, sir, and I have a duty. and – oh, sir! – thy words terrify me – they are not honest – they are wicked

words, and unworthy thy great and brave heart! Oh, shame upon thee!
shame upon thee!

FAIRFAX: Nay, ELSIE, I did but jest. I spake but to try thee – (*Shot heard.*)

Enter SERGEANT MERYLL hastily.

MERYLL: (*recitative*) Hark! What was that, sir?

FAIRFAX: Why, an arquebus – Fired from the wharf, unless I much mistake.

MERYLL: Strange – and at such an hour! What can it mean!

Audition for Dame Carruthers:

DAME: A good day to you!

2ND YEO: Good day, Dame Carruthers. Busy today?

DAME: Busy, aye! The fire in the Beauchamp last night has given me work enough. A dozen poor prisoners – Richard Colfax, Sir Martin Byfleet, Colonel FAIRFAX, Warren the preacher-poet, and half-a-score others – all packed into one small cell, not six feet square. Poor Colonel FAIRFAX, who's to die today, is to be removed to No. 14 in the Cold Harbour that he may have his last hour alone with his confessor; and I've to see to that.

2ND YEO: Poor gentleman! He'll die bravely. I fought under him two years since, and he valued his life as it were a feather!

PHOEBE: He's the bravest, the handsomest, and the best young gentleman in England! He twice saved my father's life; and it's a cruel thing, a wicked thing, and a barbarous thing that so gallant a hero should lose his head – for it's the handsomest head in England!

DAME: For dealings with the devil. Aye! if all were beheaded who dealt with *him*, there'd be busy doings on Tower Green.

PHOEBE. You know very well that Colonel FAIRFAX is a student of alchemy – nothing more, and nothing less; but this wicked Tower, like a cruel giant in a fairy-tale, must be fed with blood, and that blood must be the best and bravest in England, or it's not good enough for the old Blunderbore. Ugh!

DAME: Silence, you silly girl; you know not what you say. I was born in the old keep, and I've grown grey in it, and, please God, I shall die and be buried in it; and there's not a stone in its walls that is not as dear to me as my right hand.

Audition for LEONARD MERYLL

LEONARD: Father!

MERYLL: LEONARD! my brave boy! I'm right glad to see thee, and so is PHOEBE!

PHOEBE: Aye – hast thou brought Colonel FAIRFAX's reprieve?

LEONARD: Nay, I have here a despatch for the Lieutenant, but no reprieve for the Colonel!

PHOEBE: Poor gentleman! poor gentleman!

LEONARD: Aye, I would I had brought better news. I'd give my right hand – nay, my body – my life, to save his!

MERYLL: Dost thou speak in earnest, my lad?

LEONARD: Aye, father – I'm no braggart. Did he not save thy life? and am I not his foster-brother?

MERYLL: Then hearken to me. Thou hast come to join the Yeomen of the Guard!

LEONARD: Well?

MERYLL: None has seen thee but ourselves?

LEONARD: And a sentry, who took scant notice of me.

MERYLL: Now to prove thy words. Give me the despatch and get thee hence at once! Here is money, and I'll send thee more. Lie hidden for a space, and let no one know. I'll convey a suit of Yeoman's uniform to the Colonel's cell – he shall shave off his beard, so that none shall know him, and I'll own him as my son, the brave LEONARD MERYLL, who saved his flag and cut his way through fifty foes who thirsted for his life. He will be welcomed without question by my brother Yeomen, I'll warrant that. Now, how to get access to the Colonel's cell? (*To PHOEBE.*) The key is with thy sour-faced admirer, WILFRED Shadbolt.

PHOEBE. (*demurely*) I think – I say, I *think* – I can get anything I want from WILFRED. I think – mind I say, I *think* – you may leave that to me.

MERYLL. Then get thee hence at once, lad – and bless thee for this sacrifice.

PHOEBE. And take my blessing, too, dear, dear LEONARD!

LEONARD. And thine. eh? Humph! Thy love is new-born; wrap it up carefully, lest it take cold and die.

Audition for Sir Richard Cholmondeley (Lieutenant)

LIEUT: What is this pother?

ELSIE: Sir, we sang to these folk, and they would have repaid us with gross courtesy, but for your honour's coming.

LIEUT: *(to Mob)* Away with ye! Clear the rabble. *(Guards push Crowd off, and go off with them)* Now, my girl, who are you, and what do you here?

ELSIE: May it please you, sir, we are two strolling players, Jack Point and I, ELSIE Maynard, at your worship's service. We go from fair to fair, singing, and dancing, and playing brief interludes; and so we make a poor living.

LIEUT: You two, eh? Are ye man and wife?

POINT: No, sir; for though I'm a fool, there is a limit to my folly. Her mother, old Bridget Maynard, travels with us (for ELSIE is a good girl), but the old woman is a-bed with fever, and we have come here to pick up some silver to buy an electuary for her.

LIEUT: Hark ye, my girl! Your mother is ill?

ELSIE: Sorely ill, sir.

LIEUT: And needs good food, and many things that thou canst not buy?

ELSIE: Alas! sir, it is too true.

LIEUT: Wouldst thou earn an hundred crowns?

ELSIE: An hundred crowns! They might save her life!

LIEUT: Then listen! A worthy but unhappy gentleman is to be beheaded in an hour on this very spot. For sufficient reasons, he desires to marry before he dies, and he hath asked me to find him a wife. Wilt thou be that wife?

ELSIE: The wife of a man I have never seen!

POINT: Why, sir, look you, I am concerned in this; for though I am not yet wedded to ELSIE Maynard, time works wonders, and there's no knowing what may be in store for us. Have we your worship's word for it that this gentleman will die today?

LIEUT: Nothing is more certain, I grieve to say.

POINT: And that the maiden will be allowed to depart the very instant the ceremony is at an end?

LIEUT: The very instant. I pledge my honour that it shall be so.

POINT: An hundred crowns?

LIEUT: An hundred crowns!

POINT: For my part, I consent. It is for ELSIE to speak.

Audition for ELSIE

ELSIE: Master LEONARD!

FAIRFAX: So thou leavest us tonight?

ELSIE: Yes, Master LEONARD. I have been kindly tended, and I almost fear I am loth to go.

FAIRFAX: And this FAIRFAX. Wast thou glad when he escaped?

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FAIRFAX: Nay, ELSIE, I did but jest. I spake but to try thee – (*Shot heard.*)

Audition for Jack Point.

POINT: (*reads*) 'The Merrie Jestes of Hugh Ambrose, No. 7863. The Poor Wit and the Rich Councillor. A certayne poor wit, being an-hungered, did meet a well-fed councillor. "Marry, fool," quoth the councillor, "whither away?" "In truth," said the poor wag, "in that I have eaten naught these two dayes, I do wither away, and that right rapidly!" The Councillor laughed hugely, and gave him a sausage.' Humph! The councillor was

easier to please than my new master the Lieutenant. I would like to take post under that councillor. Ah! 'tis but melancholy mumming when poor heart-broken, jilted Jack Point must needs turn to Hugh Ambrose for original light humour!

Enter WILFRED, also in low spirits.

WILFRED: (*sighing*) Ah, Master Point!

POINT: (*changing his manner*) Ha! friend jailer! Jailer that wast – jailer that never shalt be more! Jailer that jailed not, or that jailed, if jail he did, so unjailery that 'twas but jerry-jailing, or jailing in joke – though no joke to him who, by unjailerlike jailing, did so jeopardize his jailership. Come, take heart, smile, laugh, wink, twinkle, thou tormentor that tormentest none – thou racker that rackest not – thou pincher out of place – come, take heart, and be merry, as I am! – (*aside, dolefully*) – as I am!

WILFRED: Aye, it's well for thee to laugh. Thou hast a good post, and hast cause to be merry.

POINT: (*bitterly*) Cause? Have we not all cause? Is not the world a big butt of humour, into which all who will may drive a gimlet? See, I am a salaried wit; and is there aught in nature more ridiculous? A poor, dull, heart-broken man, who must needs be merry, or he will be whipped; who must rejoice, lest he starve; who must jest you, jibe you, quip you, crank you, wrack you, riddle you, from hour to hour, from day to day, from year to year, lest he dwindle, perish, starve, pine, and die! Why, when there's naught else to laugh at, I laugh at myself till I ache for it!

WILFRED: Yet I have often thought that a jester's calling would suit me to a hair.

POINT: Thee? Would suit *thee*, thou death's head and cross-bones?

WILFRED: Aye, I have a pretty wit – a light, airy, joysome wit, spiced with anecdotes of prison cells and the torture chamber. Oh, a very delicate wit! I have tried it on many a prisoner, and there have been some who smiled. Now it is not easy to make a prisoner smile. And it should not be difficult to be a good jester, seeing that thou are one.

POINT: Difficult? Nothing easier. Nothing easier. Attend, and I will prove it to thee!

Suggested Songs for Auditions

Phoebe Meryll: Mezzo – Act 1 #1 (Solo) When Maiden Loves

Wilfred Shadbolt: Bass-baritone - Act 2 #3 (Duet) Hereupon we're both agreed.

Sgt. Meryll: Bass. - Act 1 #4 (Trio) Alas! I waver to and fro

Colonel Fairfax: Tenor - Act 1 #5 (Solo) Is life a boon

Dame Carruthers: Alto - Act 1 #3 (Solo with Chorus) When our gallant Norman foes

Leonard Meryll: Tenor - Act 1 #4 (Trio) Alas! I waver to and fro

Sir Richard Cholmondeley (Cholmeley): Baritone - Act 1 #8 (Trio) How say you, maiden, will you wed

Elsie Maynard: Soprano - Act 1 #10 (Solo) 'Tis done! I am a bride

Jack Point: Baritone - Act 1 #9 (Solo) I've jibe and joke OR Act 2 #2 (Solo) Oh! A private buffoon

Kate: Soprano - Act 2 #5 (Quartet) Strange adventure

2nd Yeoman: Baritone - Act 1 #2 This the Autumn