

# **FIDDLER ON THE ROOF**

## **Musical Brief:**

The award-winning tale of Tevye the Dairyman and his family's struggles in a changing Russia is a true musical theatre tradition.

Winner of nine Tony Awards when it debuted in 1964, *Fiddler on the Roof* is the brainchild of Broadway legends, Jerome Robbins and Harold Prince; songwriters, Jerry Bock and Sheldon Harnick; and bookwriter, Joseph Stein. Touching audiences worldwide with its humor, warmth and honesty, this universal show is a staple of the musical theatre canon.

Set in the little village of Anatevka, the story centers on Tevye, a poor milkman, and his five daughters. With the help of a colorful and tight-knit Jewish community, Tevye tries to protect his daughters and instill them with traditional values in the face of changing social mores and the growing anti-Semitism of Czarist Russia. Rich in historical and ethnic detail, *Fiddler on the Roof's* universal theme of tradition cuts across barriers of race, class, nationality and religion, leaving audiences crying tears of laughter, joy and sadness.

The show features a star turn in Tevye, among the most memorable roles in musical theatre. MTI's comprehensive choreographic guide allows productions to retain original director/choreographer, Jerome Robbins', classic staging. With iconic and beloved songs such as "Sunrise, Sunset," "If I Were a Rich Man" and "Matchmaker, Matchmaker," *Fiddler on the Roof* is the perfect mix of audience pleasing humor and heart.

## **Character Descriptions:**

### **Male Roles**

#### **Motel, The Tailor**

Age Range: 18 – 30

Vocal Range: Strong Tenor (E3 - F#4)

Acting: Great character role needing someone who can show Motel's sensitive, nervous but loveable character. Must have good comic timing and the ability to show vulnerability.

Movement: move well

Songs: Miracle of Miracles (solo), Tradition, Anatevka

Motel is the meek and very poor village tailor. He seeks the hand of Tevye's eldest daughter Tzeitel. He must challenge the tradition of parents choosing a mate and in the process comes into his own by standing up for his feelings for Tzeitel.

#### **Perchik, The Student**

Age Range: 20 – 35

Vocal Range: Tenor (B2 – E4)

Acting – Strong acting skills. Actor must show intensity and an unfailing commitment to his radical beliefs. He should be able to hold his own against Tevye as he clashes with him idealistically. He is also likeable, charming and ultimately an accepted part of Tevye's family.

Movement: move well

Songs: Now I Have Everything (solo), Tradition, Sunrise, Sunset

Perchik is a visitor and outsider to Anatevka. He brings with him radical views that challenge traditions. Perchik and Hodel (Tevye's second oldest daughter) fall in love and again challenge Tevye's beliefs.

#### **Fyedka, The Russian Soldier**

Age Range: 20 – 30

Mainly speaking role but may have short solo in "To Life"

Acting: Good actor who can use a Russian accent. Gentle with Chava but stands up to Tevye

Movement: Strong dancer preferable. Dances a Russian dance in "To Life"

Fyedka is a Russian soldier who falls in love with Chava, Tevye's third oldest daughter. He and Chava elope because Tevye cannot accept this total break in Jewish tradition.

#### **Lazar Wolfe – The Butcher**

Age Range: 40-60

Vocal Range: Baritone (C3 – F#4)

Acting: Strong, feisty actor with good comic skills.

Movement: move well

Songs: Tradition, To Life, Sunrise, Sunset, Anatevka

Lazar Wolfe is the brawny and feisty butcher of Anatevka. He is the town's wealthiest citizen. He is the same age, if not older than Tevye and by the tradition of parental arranged marriages, is matched with Tzeitel, Tevye's eldest daughter. He loses Tzeitel to Motel and is very resentful.

#### **The Constable**

Age Range: 35 – 60

Non-singing Role

Acting: Strong character role

The constable is a Russian military official stationed near Anatevka. He knows the villagers well and even likes some of them, especially Tevye. These superficial relationships do not prevent him from violence against the Jewish villagers and eventually he carries out orders for a pogrom in which the Jewish citizens are forced to leave Anatevka.

### **The Rabbi**

Age Range: 50 – 70

Ensemble acting role and part of the chorus

Movement: move well

Songs: Tradition, The Dream, Anatevka

The Rabbi is the Jewish spiritual leader.

### **Mendel, The Rabbi's Son**

Age Range: 18 - 40

Ensemble: acting role and part of chorus

Movement: move well

Songs: Tradition, Sunrise, Sunset, The Rumour, Anatevka

### **Mordcha, The Innkeeper**

Age Range: 30 - 65

Ensemble acting role and part of chorus

Movement: move well

Songs: Tradition, Sunrise, Sunset, The Rumour, Anatevka

Mordcha runs the local bar and is a friend of Tevye

### **Avram, The Bookseller**

Age Range: 30 – 65

Ensemble acting role and part of chorus

Movement: move well

Songs: Tradition, Sunrise, Sunset, The Rumour, Anatevka

### **Russian Soloist in "To Life"**

Age Range: 20 – 50

Vocal Range: Tenor Very strong Russian soloist

### **Other Ensemble Roles**

**Nachum**, The Beggar; **Yussel**, The Town Hatter; **Russian Priest**;

**Sasha and Boris** – Fyedka's fellow soldiers and his friends

Movement: move well

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### **Female Roles**

#### **Golde, Tevye's Wife**

Age Range: 40 – 55

Vocal Range: Mezzo/Alto (A3 – Eb5)

Acting: Strong actor, good comic timing, exudes sarcasm

Movement: Moves well

Songs: Tradition, Sabbath Prayer, The Dream, Sunrise, Sunset, Do You Love Me ?, Anatevka

Golde is Tevye's strong-willed wife who hopes for good matches for her daughters, so they have easier lives than she and Tevye. She is the strength behind Tevye and keeps the household going.

### **Tzeitel, Eldest Daughter**

Age Range: 18 – 25

Vocal range: Soprano/Alto (B3 to D5)

Acting: Strong dramatic actor

Movement: move well, part of Chava's dance sequence

Songs: Matchmaker, Tradition, Anatevka, plus some chorus songs

Tzeitel is the first daughter to challenge tradition. She is madly in love with Motel, The Tailor and in a desperate crying scene persuades her father to let her marry Motel in spite of the fact that Tevye has made her a match with Lazar Wolfe who is old enough to be her father.

### **Hodel, 2<sup>nd</sup> Eldest Daughter**

Age Range: 18 – 25

Vocal Range: Soprano with strong chest voice (B3 – E5)

Acting: Strong dramatic actor

Movement: move well

Songs: Far From the Home I Love (solo), Matchmaker, Tradition, Sunrise, Sunset, Now I Have Everything

Hodel becomes involved with Perchik and eventually leaves Anatevka to be with him in Siberia where is imprisoned for his reform activities. She and Perchik defy tradition by not asking permission to wed, only Tevye's blessing. Hodel sings the haunting solo Far from the Home I Love as she says goodbye to her father at the train station.

### **Chava, 3<sup>rd</sup> Eldest Daughter**

Age Range: 16-21

Vocal Range: Soprano/Alto

Acting: Strong dramatic actor

Movement: Ballet and/or Lyrical Modern dance training preferred.

Songs: Matchmaker, Tradition, Sunrise, Sunset, Anatevka

Chava is Tevye's scholarly, middle daughter who loves reading. She falls in love with the Russian soldier Fyedka and elopes with him. This huge break from tradition breaks her father's heart and Chava becomes dead to him.

### **Shprintze, 4<sup>th</sup> Eldest Daughter**

Age Range: 10 - 14

Vocal Range: Soprano/Alto

Acting: few spoken lines but needs to have good stage presence and reactions

Movement: move well

Shprintze takes lessons at home from Perchik and appears in several scenes

### **Bielke, Youngest daughter**

Age Range 9– 12

Vocal Range: Soprano/Alto

Acting: few spoken lines but needs to have good stage presence and reactions

Movement: move well

Bielke takes lessons at home from Perchik and appears in several scenes

### **Yente, The Matchmaker**

Age Range: 45 – 60

Vocal Range Soprano/Alto (F3 – F5)

Acting: Strong comedic talents

Movement: move well

Songs: Tradition, Sunrise, Sunset, The Rumour, Anatevka

Yente is the village matchmaker. She is a widow and a meddling busy-body who makes it her business to know all of the town gossip.

### **Grandma Tzeitel**

Age Range: 60 – 75

Vocal range: Mezzo/Alto (C#4 – D5)

Acting: strong actor

Movement: move well

Songs: The Dream

Grandma Tzeitel is Golde's deceased grandmother who appears as a ghost in the Dream Sequence. She has a great solo in which she endorses the marriage of Tzeitel to Motel. The person who plays this role will double as chorus as well. Will probably fly! So cannot be scared of heights!

### **Fruma-Sarah**

Age Range: 35 – 55

Vocal Range: Mezzo/Alto (C4 – Eb5)

Acting: very strong

Movement: move well

Songs: The Dream

Fruma-Sarah is Lazar Wolfe's dead wife who appears as a ghost in the dream sequence to warn Tevye and Golde not to allow Tzeitel to marry her husband or dire results will befall the family. Her solo is a show stopper and the actor must carry this challenging solo.

### **Ensemble Female Roles**

Shaindel – Motel's mother

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### **The Fiddler**

Small stature, must be happy to play violin at a height of one floor

Move well

Ideally is a member of the orchestra.

### **Chorus**

**Will be made up of adults, teens and children.**

Will portray the villagers of Anatevka, as either Mamas, Papas, Sons or Daughters. Also Russian soldiers and featured dancers are required.

### **Specialty Dancers**

Also Looking for talented Russian, Bottle, Jewish/Chassidic/Hora, Ukranian Dancers.

### **Children**

We will select approximately 12 children to be part of the village family groups.

## **What you need to prepare:**

Initial Auditions: For the audition you will sign up for a 10-minute slot (on the day chosen in google form) during which we will ask you to please prepare 32 bars of a song similar in style to the show (legit). We want to see your style and what makes you excited. Alternatively, please feel free to sing 32 bars from a song from the show

If you are auditioning for a speaking part, please prepare one of the monologues below.

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## **Audition Monologues:**

TEVYE: Motel keeps talking about a sewing machine. I know you're very busy, God wars and revolutions, floods, plagues – all those little things that bring people to You couldn't You take a second away from your catastrophes and get it for him? Oh, and while you're in the neighborhood, my horse's left leg ...Am I bothering You too much? I'm sorry. As the good book says ... Why should I tell you what the good book says?

PERCHEK: Horrible things are happening all over the land ... pogroms, violence; whole villages are being emptied of their people. And it's reaching everywhere, and it will reach here. I have work to do. The greatest work a man can do. Before I go... there is a certain question I wish to discuss with you, A political question. The question of marriage. And I personally am in favour of it. Do you understand?

MOTEL: Reb Tevye, may I speak to you? I would like to speak to you about your problem. I think I can help. Reb Tevye, I hear you are arranging a match for Tzeitel. I have a match for Tzeitel. A perfect fit. Like a glove. This match was made exactly to measure. (Tevye shouts at Motel). Please, don't shout at me. Who is it, you ask? It's me– myself. As for being my own matchmaker, I know it's a little unusual. Times are changing, Reb Tevye.

FYEDKA: I've often noticed you at the booksellers. Not many girls in this village like to read...Would you like to borrow thus book? Let me tell you about myself. I'm a pleasant fellow, charming, honest, ambitious, quite bright and very modest. Go ahead, take the book. After you return it, I'll ask you how you like it, and we'll talk about it for a while. Then we'll talk about life, how we feel about things and it can all turn out quite pleasant.

LAZAR WOLF: Tevye, this is very important to me. I'm lonesome. I'm talking about your daughter Tzeitel, I see her in my butcher shop every Thursday. She's made a good impression on me. I like her. And as for me, Tevye, as you know, I'm pretty well off. I have my own house, a good store, a servant. Look Tevye, why do we have to try to impress each other? Let's shake hands and call it a match.

GOLDE: It's almost Sabbath. When will Papa be home? All day long riding on top of his wagon like a prince. Yes, I know he works hard, but his horse works harder! And you don't have to defend your Papa to me, He could drive a person crazy. Shprintza, go bring me some more potatoes. Chava, did you finish milking? Tzeitel, stop complaining about the kind of men Yente finds. A poor girl without a dowry can't be so particular. You want hair, marry a monkey.

YENTE: Well, I must prepare my poor Sabbath table, so goodbye Golde, and it was a pleasure talking our hearts out to each other. Oh! I'm losing my head. Of course, the news. It's about Lazar Wolf, the butcher. A good man, a fine man, And I don't have to tell you that he's well off. But he's lonely, the poor man. To make it short, out of the whole town, he's cast his eye on your Tzeitel.

TZEITEL: A match?? The butcher? Lazar Wolf? I know you think it is a blessing, but, Papa, I don't want to marry him. I can't marry him. I can't! Papa, if it's a matter of money, I'll do anything. I'll hire myself out as a servant. I'll dig ditches, I'll haul rocks; only don't make me marry him, Papa, please don't force me. I'll be unhappy all my days...

HODEL: Papa...Perchek has been arrested and convicted, but he did nothing wrong. He is in a settlement in Siberia. He did not ask me to go to him. I want to go. I don't want him to be alone. I want to help him in his work. It is the greatest work a man can do. Papa, I promise you, we will be married under a canopy. Goodbye, Papa, God alone knows when we shall see each other again.

CHAVA: Papa, Fyedka and I have known each other for a long time and I ... Papa, don't turn away. Look at me Papa, He has a name... Fyedka is not a creature...Fyedka is a man. Papa, the world is changing, I know you think some things will never change, but we don't feel that way. Fyedka and I want to be married...Papa, I won't be silenced...Papa don't walk away...(calling after him) Papa?