

MASKERADE by TERRY PRATCHETT, adapted by Stephen Briggs

Rehearsal information pack

Key roles

- **Granny Weatherwax** (a witch) Large Role (18 scenes) – Proud, and self-reliant. Widely held, especially by herself, to be the most powerful witch on the Disc. – *F, older*.
- **Nanny Ogg** (a witch) Large Role (19 scenes) – The ultimate people person. Everyone's grandmother. Widely held to be a disgusting old baggage. Probably more powerful than Granny but wise enough to never let it be known. – *F, older*.
- **Agnes Nitt/Perdita X Dream** (an aspiring opera singer, very definitely not a witch) Large Role (13 scenes) – In two minds about everything, cursed with a wonderful personality and ability to cope under pressure. – *F, younger – singing voice useful but not necessary*.
- **Walter Plinge** (a very odd-job man) (13 scenes) – Moves as a puppet with the strings cut until he finds his confidence. Only person who can knock four times with absolutely no discernable rhythm. – *M, younger/middle-aged*
- **Mr. Salzella** (Director of music) Large Role (11 scenes) – Lives and breathes opera. It is in his very soul and not in a good way (the baddie). Crazy but hides it until the end. – *no gender or age preference*.
- **Seldom Bucket** (opera owner) (11 scenes) – A self-made man & proud of it. Big in cheeses & bought the opera to further himself socially. Finding out the hard way that money makes opera, not the other way around. – *no gender preference or age preference*.
- **Christine** (opera *star*) (8 scenes) – Talks in exclamations! Bubble headed blonde with no musical ability but with charisma for days and an uncanny ability to faint in a decorative manner. – *F, younger*.
- **Mrs. Plinge** (Walter's mum) (7 scenes) – Diffident, cares for her son & will do anything to protect him. – *F, older*.
- **Andre** (a pianist) (7 scenes) – A secret policeman because sometimes there are secret crimes. – *no gender or age preference*.

- **Senor Basilica/Henry Slugg** (opera singer) (6 scenes) – The archetypal opera singer. Easy to care for: just feed him & let him sing. Misses being plain old Henry. – *M, no age preference.*
- **Basilica's Manager** (4 scenes) – a sort of satellite being to Henry's majesty. – *no gender or age preference.*
- **Dr. Underschaft** (Chorus master) (3 scenes) – A true opera lover. – *no gender or age preference.*
- **Greebo** – (A cat in human form) (3 scenes) – An arrogant bully, looks like a New Romantic pirate. Very, very male, undeniably so, oh yes indeed, oh my. – *M, no age preference.*
- **Sgt. Detritus** (city watch, a troll) (2 scenes) – Intelligent for a troll but that's not saying much in the big city. Patient and unimaginative. – *M, no age preference.*
- **Cpl. Nobbs** (city watch) (2 scenes) – long-term policeman & petty criminal. Can trust him with your life but not your wallet. Has a chitty to prove he's human. – *No gender or age preference.*
- **Mr. Pounder** (ratcatcher) (2 scenes) – old school, seen & caught it all – *no gender or age preference.*
- **Mr. Goatberger** (a publisher) (1 scene) – Full of himself, doesn't see why authors should be paid. – *no gender or age preference.*

Other assorted roles

- **Hron** (a stagehand) (4 scenes) – *no gender or age preference.*
- **Kevin** (a stagehand) (4 scenes) – *no gender or age preference.*
- **Colette** (dancer) (3 scenes) – *no gender or age preference.*
- **Solange** (dancer) (3 scenes) – *no gender or age preference.*
- **Giselle** (dancer) (3 scenes) – *no gender or age preference.*
- **Mr. Arno** (stage manager) (2 scenes) – *no gender or age preference.*
- **Coachman** (2 scenes) – *no gender or age preference.*
- **Tommy Cripps** (scenery painter) (1 scene) – *no gender or age preference.*
- **THE DEATH OF RATS** (The Grim Squeaker) (1 scene) – *no gender or age preference.*
- **Audience, Corps de ballet, stage crew, travellers** – the chorus, open to everyone (no singing required).

Key dates

Performances on:

- **Fri 23rd May - 19:30**
- **Sat 24th May - 14:00 & 19:30**
- **Sun 25th May - 14:00 (tbc)**

Key rehearsals including Dress:

- **Sun 9th February – First Read-Through**
- **Sun 4th May – Run Through**
- **Sat 10th May – Fit Up**
- **Sun 11th May – Tech Rehearsal**
- **Thurs 15th May – Line Run/Sticky Scenes**
- **Sat 17th May – Dry Tech**
- **Sun 18th May – Dress 1**
- **Thurs 22nd May – Dress 2**

Story Overview

The Royal Opera House in Ankh-Morpork is home to music, theatrics and a harmless masked Ghost who lurks behind the scenes. But now a set of mysterious backstage murders may just stop the show.

Agnes Nitt has left her rural home of Lancre in the hopes of launching a successful singing career in the big city. The only problem is, she doesn't quite look the part. And there are two witches who would much rather she return home to join their coven.

Granny Weatherwax and Nanny Ogg have travelled to Ankh-Morpork to convince Agnes that life as a witch is much better than one on the stage. Only now they're caught up in a murder mystery featuring masks and maniacal laughter.

And the show **MUST** go on . . .

Audition Scenes

- **Granny, Nanny, Basilica, and Manager**

Page 24-25, Act 1, Scene 9

On Board The Coach

Granny and Nanny sit on one side, Enrico Basilica and his Manager on the other

Nanny Ogg Well, here we are again then. *(Pause)* That was some good singing last night.

Manager I'm afraid Señor Basilica doesn't speak Morporkian, ma'am. But I will translate for you, if you like.

Nanny Ogg What? Then how come - ow!

Granny Weatherwax Sorry. Elbow must've slipped.

Nanny Ogg I was saying that he was OW!

Granny Weatherwax Dear me, seem to have done it again. This gentleman is just telling us that his friend doesn't speak our language, Gytha.

Nanny Ogg Eh? But... What? Oh. But... Ah. Really? Oh. All right. Oh yes, eats our pies, though, when - ow!

Granny Weatherwax 'Scuse my friend. It's her time of life. She gets confused. We did enjoy his singing. We heard him through the wall.

Manager You are most fortunate. Some people have to wait for years to hear Señor Basilica ...

Nanny Ogg Prob'ly waiting for him to finish his dinner...

Manager In fact, in Genua last month Señor Basilica made ten thousand people shed tears.

Nanny Ogg Hah, I can do that. I don't see how there's anything special

Manager Señor Basilica's fame has spread far and wide ...

Nanny Ogg A bit like Señor Basilica himself, then...

Granny Weatherwax Well, well. It's nice and warm in Genua. I expect Señor Basilica misses his home. And what do you do, young sir?

Manager I am his translator and his manager. Er, you have the advantage of me, ma'am.

Granny Weatherwax Yes, indeed. (Pause) Well, it must be very tiring, chasing around after a big opera star. In fact, I expect you could do with a short sleep right now!

The Manager falls instantly asleep

Well, now there's just you and me, Gytha. And Señor Basilica of course, who doesn't speak our language.

Enrico Basilica Ladies! Dear ladies! I beg you, for pity's sake...

Nanny Ogg Have you done anything bad, Mr Henry Slugg?

Enrico Basilica No.

Granny Weatherwax He's tellin' the truth. You don't want people to know where you're really from, do you? People only value things if they comes from a long way away. Where are you really from, Henry Slugg?

Enrico Basilica I grew up in Rookery Yard in Ankh-Morpork's Shades. It was a rough place. There were only three ways out. You could sing your way out or fight your way out.

Nanny Ogg What was the third way?

Enrico Basilica Oh, you could go down that little alleyway into Shamlegger Street and then cut down into Treacle Mine Road. But no-one amounted to anything who went that way. I made a few coppers singing in taverns and so on, but when I tried for anything better they said, "What's your name?" and I said Henry Slugg and they'd laugh. I needed to change my name, but people knew me in Ankh-Morpork so I moved to Genua. Then, when I was famous...

Granny Weatherwax You were stuck in Enrico Basilica.

Enrico Basilica The worst thing is that everywhere I go they go to special efforts to cook me pasta. In tomato sauce! With boiled squid! They think I'll enjoy it, but all I really want is a plate of roast mutton with cloutie dumplings.

Nanny Ogg Why don't you say?

Enrico Basilica Enrico Basilica eats pasta. There's not much I can do about it now. Here, *(he draws out two opera tickets)* please accept these as a token of my thanks for the pork pie.

Granny Weatherwax Why thank you. We shall be sure to go.

Enrico Basilica And now, if you will excuse me. I must catch up on my sleep.

Granny Weatherwax Don't worry, I shouldn't think it's had time to get far away.

Enrico falls asleep

- **Bucket, Salzella, Underschaft**

Page 4-5, Act 1, Scene 3

Dr Underschaft Well. Now then, Salzella. What do you think of today's batch?

Seldom Bucket enters. He is a self-made man, in his fifties

Mr Bucket. We were just considering today's batch of auditionees

Seldom Bucket Yes, Dr Underschaft. I watched most of the audition from the gods. That Christine. Marvellous stage presence, eh? Good figure, too.
(He winks at Dr Underschaft)

Dr Underschaft Yes. Very pretty. I'm still not happy about you hiring her, though. She can't sing.

Seldom Bucket What you artistic types don't seem to realize is that this is the Century of the Fruitbat. Opera is a production, not just a load of songs. The idea that a soprano should have fifteen acres of bosom and a horned helmet belongs to the past, like.

Salzella and Underschaft exchange glances

Salzella Unfortunately, the idea that a soprano should have a reasonable singing voice does not belong to the past. She has a good figure, yes. She has a certain ... sparkle. She'll look good on stage. But she can't sing

Seldom Bucket You can train her, can't you? After a few years in the chorus?

Dr Underschaft Yes, maybe after a few years, if I persevere, she will merely be very bad.

Seldom Bucket Er, gentlemen. Ahem. All right. Cards on the table, yes? I'm a simple man, me. No beating about the bush, speak as you find, call a spade a spade.

Salzella Do give us your forthright views.

Seldom Bucket I've been through the mill, I have. And I made myself what I am today

Salzella Self-raising flour?

Seldom Bucket - but I do have to, er, declare a bit of a financial interest. Her dad did in fact, er, lend me a fair whack of money to help me to buy this place. And he made a heartfelt plea on

behalf of his daughter. Um. If I remember correctly, it was "Don't make me have to break your legs". I don't expect you artistes to understand. It's a business thing.

Salzella Very well. It's your opera house, I'm sure. Now Perdita ...?

Dr Underschaft I'm sure she will prove an asset.

Seldom Bucket Yes, what a range she's got.

Salzella Yes, I saw you staring.

Seldom Bucket I meant her voice, Salzella. She will add body to the chorus

Salzella Ye-e-es. But could you ever see her in a major role?

Seldom Bucket Heck, no. Wonderful personality, though. And good hair of course. So we will keep them both on, then. Mmmm?

Salzella & Underschaft (together) Yes. Yes I suppose we will.

- **Christine, Agnes**

Page 9-10, Act 1, Scene 3

Christine ... and then I said "No!". I won't do it! This (*she describes her dress*) dress will do splendidly for the audition! But enough about me. What about you? Tell me all about yourself! You're so lucky. You have such a majestic figure for opera! Black suits you by the way!

Agnes Nitt Er- well - I'm from somewhere up in the mountains that you've probably never heard of

Christine And have you seen the mirror in my room? It's huge! Apparently it's built into the wall!

Agnes Nitt - and my father is the King of Lancre and my mother is a small tray of raspberry puddings.

Christine That's interesting. You have a lovely personality, you know.

Agnes Nitt You know, I woke up one morning realizing that I'd been saddled with "a lovely personality". No-one ever asked me if I'd prefer a lovely personality or a body that'd take a size eight in dresses. I got a reputation for being capable in a crisis. Next thing you know I'd have been making shortbread and apple pies and then there'd be no hope. So, I thought—I'd be Perdita. Use black notepaper. Be pale and mysterious. I mean, were the witches really the only alternative? I knew I had some occult talent. Sometimes I'd know that a thing was about to happen. But I've seen the way the witches live. Nanny Ogg's all right, but Granny Weatherwax? Oh yes. Finest job in the world? Being a sour old woman with no friends? No thank you! I've always liked singing. I'm good at singing. So I came here.

Christine Do you think my hair looks all right?

Agnes Nitt Oh. Yes, it ... What was that? I thought I heard someone-up there!

Christine It's probably the Ghost!! We've got one, you know.

Agnes Nitt A man with his face covered with a white mask.

Christine Oh. You've heard about him, then? They say he watches every performance, from Box Eight! They say if anyone ever sits in Box Eight, there'll be a dreadful tragedy! Isn't it romantic?

The chandelier sways slightly

- **Goatberger, Granny, Nanny**

Page 30, Act 1, Scene 12

Goatberger Ladies? Are you trying to gain entry to my publishing house?

Granny Weatherwax We've come about this book.

Nanny Ogg I'm Mrs Ogg.

Goatberger Oh yes? Can you identify yourself?

Nanny Ogg (*rootling in her capacious handbag as if looking for an ID card; then drawing out a mirror and examining herself in it*) Yes, that's me all right.

Goatberger Hah! Well, I happen to know what Gytha Ogg looks like. And she does not look like you.

Granny Weatherwax And how would you know what Gytha Ogg looks like?

Goatberger Because she sent me her picture. See? We used it on the point-of-sale display material. (*He shows the panel to Granny Weatherwax*)

Granny Weatherwax (*looking at the panel, then turning and glaring at Nanny Ogg*) Oh yes. That's Gytha Ogg all right. I remember when that artist came up to Lancre for the summer.

Nanny Ogg I wore my hair longer in those days.

Granny Weatherwax Just as well. (*To Goatberger*) That's Gytha Ogg all right. Except it's out by about sixty years and several layers of clothing. This is Gytha Ogg. Right here.

Goatberger You're telling me this came up with "Bananana Soup Surprise"?

Nanny Ogg Did you try it?

Goatberger Mr Cropper the head printer did, yes.

Granny Weatherwax Was he surprised?

Goatberger Not one half as surprised as Mrs Cropper!

Nanny Ogg It can take people like that. I think perhaps I overdo the nutmeg.

Granny Weatherwax But right now she'd like some more money. She'd like a little bit of money for every book you've sold.

Nanny Ogg I don't expect to be treated like royalty.

Goatberger And what if I refuse?

Nanny Ogg I really don't think you'd like exploring that option.

Goatberger Of course, things are very difficult at the moment. People just aren't buying books...

Granny Weatherwax Everyone I knows buys your almanack. I reckon everyone in Lancre buys your almanack. Heck, everyone in the Ramtops buys your almanack - including the dwarfs. That's a lot of half-dollars. And Gytha's book seems to be doing very well.

Goatberger Well, of course, I'm glad it's going so well, but what with distribution, paying the pedlars, wear and tear on -

Granny Weatherwax Your almanack will last a household all winter, with care. Providing no-one's ill.

Nanny Ogg My Jason buys two copies. Course, he's got a big family.

- **Andre, Agnes**

Page 51-52, Act 2, Scene 5 (Until “the show must go on you know...”)

André Hallo. You look dead tired. You've missed all the excitement. The Watch have been down here asking lots of questions.

Agnes Nitt What sort of questions?

André Well, knowing the Watch, probably: "Was it you what did it?" They're rather slow thinkers.

Agnes Nitt Oh dear. Does that mean tonight's performance is cancelled?

André (*laughing*) Oh, I don't think Mr Bucket could possibly cancel it. People have been queuing for tickets!

Agnes Nitt Why? Because of Dr Underschaft, you mean? That's disgusting!

André Human nature, I'm afraid. Of course some will be coming to see Señor Basilica. And, of course, Christine is popular too ... oh, sorry.

Agnes Nitt I don't mind, honestly. Um... how long have you worked here, André?

André Er... only a few months. I used to teach music to the Seriph's children in Klatch.

Agnes Nitt And what do you think about the Ghost? Do you know if he sings?

André I heard he sends little critiques to the manager. Some of the girls say they've heard singing in the night. But they're always saying silly things I mean, they say there are secret passages. They're always saying they've seen the Ghost-sometimes in two places at once! (*He produces some old theatre programmes*) Look, I've got you some old programmes; you might find the notes useful, as you're new to opera. We've got to put all this past us- the show must go on, you know.

- **Detritus, Nobby**

Page 74, Act 2, Scene 12

Corporal Nobbs and Sergeant Detritus are left on stage

Sergeant Detritus Commander Vimes isn't going to like this. You know he hates it when prisoners disappear.

Corporal Nobbs "The suspect was beaten to death by the crowd and thrown into the Ankh before me and Sergeant Detritus could intervene."

Sergeant Detritus Shouldn't there be some blood? 'Cos if humans is hit hard enough, they leaks all over the place.

Corporal Nobbs No, look, that's just what we'll put in the report. Most important thing now is to get ourselves outside a big drink. Come on.

- **Mrs. Plinge, Mr. Pounder**

Page 26-27, Act 1, Scene 10 (From “Walter, Walter” until “Could be gold”)

Mrs Plinge enters

Mrs Plinge Walter! Walter? (*She crosses to the onstage broom*) Hm. Now where are you, Walter? It's not like you to miss a part of your routine, my lad... I'd better make a start for the lad, or he'll get himself in trouble. (*She starts to sweep*)

We hear Mr Pounder whistling a tune off stage

Who is that?

Mr Pounder enters along the balcony

Mr Pounder? You should know better! It's terrible bad luck to whistle on stage.

Mr Pounder Bad luck? I'm whistling 'cos of good luck, see.

Mrs Plinge And it's bad luck to keep talking about the Ghost, Mr Pounder. He doesn't like it, you know.

Mr Pounder If you knew what I know, you'd be a happy man, too. O'course, in your case you'd be a happy woman, on account of you being a woman. Ah, some of the things I've seen, Mrs Plinge.

Mrs Plinge Found gold on your travels round the theatre, Mr Pounder?

Mr Pounder (*as he exits*) Could be. Could be gold, Mrs Plinge.

- **Walter, Agnes/Perdita**

Page 56-57, Act 2, Scene 8

Agnes Nitt enters, carrying a candle. We hear her thoughts as Perdita over the speakers

Agnes Nitt What am I doing down here? All right, so there's a secret passage with an entrance between Christine's room and mine. So what?

Perdita (*voice-over*) So what? It's romantic, that's what. It's...thrilling. Be Perdita - forget Agnes. Perdita gets things done.

Agnes Nitt Look, whatever's down there is probably best left where it is

Perdita (*voice-over*) Say it. You mean the Ghost. He'll have a vast cave somewhere under the Opera House. There'll be hundreds of candles, a dinner table shining with crystal glass and silverware. And of course he'll have a huge organ
..

Agnes Nitt reacts

-on which, that is to say, he will play in a virtuoso style many opera classics!

Agnes Nitt It'll be damp. There'll be rats.

There is a noise, off

Er, hallo...? Um, anyone...?

Walter Plinge enters, carrying a sack and a lantern. Greebo, in cat form, is supposedly with him, but the audience does not see him

Walter Plinge Hallo, Miss Nitt. What are you doing down here with all the rats, miss?

Agnes Nitt Walter! (*She looks off*) Is that Greebo with you?

Walter Plinge Yes. I got to do poor Mr Pounder's job now he's passed away. No peace for the wicked. Lucky Greebo's bin helping me, haven't you? Come for an explore, have you? These ole tunnels go all the way down to the river.

Agnes Nitt Er, yes. I got lost. Sorry. You have to catch rats as well?

Walter Plinge I am a person of all jobs!

Agnes Nitt Have you ever seen the Ghost, Walter?

Walter Plinge I-er-I saw him in the big room in the ballet school.

Agnes Nitt Really? That's that room with the mirror walls, isn't it. What did he do?

Walter Plinge He ran off! Look, you can't stay here on your own. I'll see you back to your room, OK?

Agnes Nitt Yes. Thank you, Walter. Come on, Greebo.

They exit

- **Chorus (Kevin, Colette, Giselle, Arno, Solange) + Nanny Ogg**

Pages 42-43, Act 2, Scene 1

In the dark, there is a scream

The Lights come up

Chaos greets us. People mill around. On stage is the body of Dr Underschaft with a sheet beside it. Nanny Ogg saunters on

Nanny Ogg Evenin'. What's goin' on? Excuse me, let me through, I'm a nosy person. (*She elbows her way through the throng around the body*) Oh dear. Poor man. What happened?

Kevin When we let the backdrop go up at the end of the scene, Dr Underschaft came down. He'd been attached to the counterweight! Mr Bucket says he must have got caught up in the ...

Colette He didn't get caught in anything! It was the Ghost! He could still be up there!

Giselle Mr Salzella's sent some stage hands up there to flush him out!

Nanny Ogg Have they got flaming torches? Got to have flaming torches when you're tracking down evil monsters. Well-known fact.

Kevin That's true.

Colette She's right, you know.

Nanny Ogg Well-known fact, dear. Did they have flaming torches?

Kevin Don't think so. Just ordinary lanterns.

Nanny Ogg Oh, that's no good. That's for smugglers, lanterns. For evil monsters ...

Arno Excuse me, boys and girls. Now, I'm sure you're all familiar with the phrase, "the show must go on".

There are groans

Now, we don't actually know what happened...

Giselle Really? Shall we guess?

Arno ...but we have men up in the fly loft now, and Mr Bucket has authorized me to say that there will be an additional two dollars bonus in recognition of your bravely agreeing to continue with the show

Hron Money? After a shock like this? Money? He thinks he can offer us a couple of dollars and we'll agree to stay on this cursed stage!

Colette Shame!

Giselle Heartless!

Kevin Unthinkable!

Solange Should be at least four!

Crowd Right! Right!

Arno For shame, my friends! To talk about a few dollars when a dead man is lying there. Have you no respect for his memory?

Solange He's right. (Pause) A few dollars is disrespectful. Five dollars or nothing!

Arno Five dollars?

There is general agreement

Right. Come on, then. The show must go on.

Everyone drifts off except Dr Underschaft, Walter Plinge and Nanny Ogg