



# Once On This Island...

Eastwood Uniting Church Musical Society announces auditions for Australia's first amateur Musical Society production of this musical drama by Lynn Ahrens and Stephen Flaherty. Auditions will be held on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> and Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> December at Lakeside Road Uniting Church Hall, Eastwood. Call Karen for an appointment on 9877 0856.

Set on a Caribbean Island similar to Haiti, this is a reworking of Hans Christian Anderson's original "Little Mermaid" story, and is a joyous celebration of hope and sacrificial love set against a background of superstition and social inequity.

The action of the drama is framed as a folk tale, told by a group of peasant villagers to comfort a small child, frightened by a storm. The whole cast play the roles of the storytellers, but approximately 11 (with some doubling – this could stretch to 15) of the storytellers also take on the roles of distinctive characters from the tale, and can be considered as principal performers. Because the peasant storytellers "allocate" the roles to one another on stage, it is possible to be quite flexible with the age range for several characters. At various times, lines of song or dialogue are also performed by the other storytellers, briefly taking on other roles in the legend.

The principal roles are as follows:

## **The Family**

**Ti Moune:** The heroine. Young, full of restless energy and fervour, she is immature and even a little selfish in her single-minded quest for freedom. Initially her love for Daniel is little more than a focus for her dreams, but she grows in maturity, poise and genuine love later. Late teens to early 20's.

A strong dancer

Vocal range: G (below C) to E (2 above C)

Songs for audition: "Waiting for Life" and "Forever Yours"

**Young Ti Moune:** Also plays the child for whom the story is told. From about 8 to a young-looking 12, energetic, confident, and sweet with a strong speaking and singing voice.

Vocal range: E flat (above C) to D Flat (2 above C)

Song for audition: "Some Say" (excerpts) plus Dialogue in "One Small Girl"

**Tonton Julian:** Tonton is a French affectionate term for Uncle. He is Ti Moune's adoptive father, and from him she has learnt the sacrificial love she demonstrates later. Probably over 40.

Vocal range: A (2 below C) to E (above C)

Song for Audition: "Ti Moune" (Tonton's verse)

**Mama Euralie:** Ti Moune's adoptive mother, protective, superstitious, fiercely loving and strong willed, her similarities often lead to clashes with Ti Moune. Probably over 40.

Vocal range: F sharp (below C) to B (above C)

Song for audition: "Ti Moune" (Mama's verse only)



## **The Gods**

**Asaka:** (mother of the earth) Personifies the peasants' connection to the land, she is generous and good-humoured on the surface, but like all the gods feared by the islanders, her "motherly" facade is not to be trusted. Flexible, but possibly 25 or older, with a powerful singing voice.

Vocal range: A ( below C ) to E ( 2 above C )

Song for audition: "Mama Will Provide"

**Agwe:**(god of water) Given that the sea and the weather are the most unpredictable and powerful elements of the peasants' lives, they imagine Agwe as a commanding presence, but he holds himself rather aloof. Possibly quite flexible but likely to be over 25, dramatic voice.

Vocal range: B ( 2 below C ) to E ( above C )

Song for audition: "Rain"

**Erzulie:**(goddess of love) The most approachable of the gods, but ultimately no less egocentric; by love she means romance. Daniel is her choice for Ti Moune and in the end her concern is to prove her own power against that of Papa Ge. A little younger, 20's or 30's.

Vocal range: B ( below C ) to E ( 2 above C )

Song for audition: "The Human Heart"

**Papa Ge:**(god of death) Embodying the fears of all the peasants, and easy to dislike, the storytellers will "cast" an outsider in the group, probably against his will, and he will carry some of that cynicism and bitterness into his "bargain" with Ti Moune. Age is very open.

Vocal range: C sharp ( below C ) to G ( above C )

Song for audition: "Forever Yours" ( reprise )

## **The Grand Hommes**

**Daniel Beauxhomme:** Sensitive and poetic, he must be quite convincing as a romantic interest for the spirited Ti Moune. His love for her is almost genuine, fuelled by her romantic view of him, and his betrayal of her is not cruelty but thoughtlessness and weakness of character. About 20 – 25, light lyric voice.

Vocal range: B ( 2 below C ) to F Sharp ( above C )

Song for audition: "Some Girls"

**Andrea Devereaux:** Daniel's opposite – she seems cold at first, but turns out to be both humane and determined – she pities Ti Moune, but despite having little affection for Daniel, she will not allow sentiment to interfere with her well-ordered plan for marriage. Older than Ti Moune – 20's

Vocal range: B ( Below C ) to D ( 2 above C )

Song for audition: "The Ball" ( own part only )

**Monsieur Beauxhomme:** Daniel's father. For the peasants, very much part of another world, they portray him as quite callous and distant – a pantomime villain ( therefore probably doubled with **Armand** in the Tale of the Beauxhommes ). 40's or older.

Vocal range: A ( 2 below C ) to D ( above C )

Song for audition: "Pray : Reprise" ( Fathers part only )

**Note:** Other named minor roles in this group, such as Armand and Beauxhomme in the pantomime and the Gatekeeper can either be played as double roles for principals, or by other storytellers – a decision on this will be made following the auditions. Other lines will be allocated to chorus early in the rehearsal period, with special consideration for those who have auditioned for principal roles.