



CHARACTER DESCRIPTIONS/SYNOPSIS

SYNOPSIS:

Broadway's longest-running American musical, *Chicago* is a dazzling and satirical look at fame, justice, and the media machine. Set in 1920s Chicago and based on real-life murders and trials, *Chicago* follows Roxie Hart, a wannabe vaudevillian star who murders her lover and is arrested, despite her attempts to convince her pushover husband, Amos, to lie for her. In the Cook County Jail, Roxie meets her hero, the famed double-murderess and nightclub performer Velma Kelly. When both acquire the same lawyer, the greedy and lustful superstar, Billy Flynn, tensions come to a head as they vie for the spotlight-- though instead of onstage, they're mugging for the flashbulb of the newspaper reporters. With catchy, jazzy music and timeless lyrics by John Kander and Fred Ebb, and a funny, intelligent, and utterly engaging book by Kander and Bob Fosse, *Chicago* is a musical spectacular that is as addictive as gossip rags and as unforgettable as any trial of the century.

CHARACTERS:

Roxie Hart (Female/Lead/Mezzo-Soprano)-- Roxie is an aspiring vaudeville performer, who stays out late with her entertainment-business-connected lover, Fred Casely, hoping to use him to break into the business. One night, Fred tries to leave Roxie, and she kills him. When her husband Amos comes home, she convinces him to lie to protect her, which he does until Sergeant Fogarty questions him until he reveals the truth. Velma Kelly is one of Roxie's heroes, and she's thrilled to meet her when Roxie is thrown into the Cook County Jail, only to discover that her idol wants nothing to do with her. Roxie and Velma launch into a desperate bid to one-up each other at every turn. Roxie will stop at nothing to get her moment in the spotlight. Innocent and childish, yet selfish and desperate, Roxie must remain a sympathetic character to the audience despite her flaws. The actor playing Roxie must be an excellent singer, actor and dancer.

Velma Kelly (Female/Lead/Alto)-- Velma is a successful nightclub and vaudeville performer. With her sister, she performed a popular double act. That is, until one evening she caught her husband and sister together. Velma claims that she blacked out at that point, and it wasn't until she was "washing the blood off [her] hands that [she] even knew they were dead." She's now a prisoner in the Cook County Jail. Velma is used to being treated like a celebrity, and uses her fame and money to keep in the good stuff while in prison. Roxie's arrival at the jail causes Velma grief, as Roxie steals both her star lawyer and her star cache. Velma realizes she's actually alone for the first time. Sardonic, tough and funny, the actor playing Velma must be a true triple threat.

Amos Hart (Male/Lead/Baritone)-- Roxie's faithful husband, Amos is trusting to a fault. Even after he realizes that Roxie has been cheating on him, she manages to convince him to continue to support her. This includes paying lawyer Billy Flynn an exorbitant sum for her defense. Amos is easily swayed, overly trusting, and to most, completely invisible. His love for Roxie is sincere, even when she deceives him at every turn. Amos is one of the few truly "moral" characters in *Chicago*, and as such, is put through the ringer. While everyone else is caught up in jazz and razzle dazzle, Amos is purely himself -- simple and genuine. Must be a strong character actor who can sing well.

Billy Flynn (Male/Lead/Baritone)-- Billy is the female murderesses' hero in an expensive suit -- in all his years as a defense attorney, he hasn't lost a case for a woman yet. He is philandering, greedy, and selfish, charging \$5,000 for his services, no ifs, ands, or buts. In the courtroom, Billy plays the role of Common Man Fighting for Justice, but it's all a ruse to convince the jury to acquit. Billy is also a ladies' man, but although he claims that "all he cares about is love," money is Billy's true lover. He is also a master of media manipulation, and has no

problems twisting the truth to get the results he wants. His “razzle dazzle” is the key to his success. Must sing and dance well.

Mary Sunshine (Either Gender/Supporting/Countertenor): Mary Sunshine is a reporter with a soft spot for Billy Flynn. She believes that everyone has a little bit of good in them, and takes what Billy feeds her hook, line, and sinker. Like a contemporary alarmist talk show host, Mary Sunshine will follow any story with a hint of drama to the very end. This role is usually played by a male countertenor in drag but can be cast with a female. Must be an excellent comedian.

Matron Mama Morton (Female/Supporting/Alto): The matron of the women’s ward in the Cook County Jail, “Mama” believes in reciprocity above all. Not an innocent herself, Mama has no problem trading the inmates to benefit herself. She collects money from her wards, and after skimming off the top, brings them illicit goods, like liquor, cigarettes, laundry service, and even calls to lawyers. Although Mama is selfish, she has compassion for the Hunyak (i.e. Hungarian prisoner Katalin Helinszki), whom she attempts to help with her limited Hungarian when Aaron, the Hunyak’s lawyer, fails to listen to her. A strong character actor who can sing well.

Fred Casely (Male/Featured/Spoken Role): Roxie’s short-lived lover. Roxie shoots Fred dead after she learns that he has been unfaithful to her. Fred is a regular in the jazz club where Roxie is a chorus girl. He plays a “regular guy” in the first scene, and an overly dramatic version of himself in the courtroom scene. May double in the dancing ensemble.

Sergeant Fogarty (Male/Featured/Spoken Role): Sergeant Fogarty is the Chicago cop who arrives at the scene of the crime in Roxie Hart’s bedroom. He interrogates Amos, who takes responsibility for the murder, but manages to eventually get Amos to admit that Roxie was the actual killer. Smart and judicious (he’s definitely done this before), Sergeant Fogarty asks the right questions, and is able to leave the scene with Roxie, cuffed.

Kitty (Female/Featured/Mezzo-Soprano): Kitty is the newest prisoner in the Cook County Jail, where she has been accused of murder. A wealthy socialite, Kitty is accused of having murdered her husband and his three female lovers in a crime known as the “Lake Shore Drive Murders.” She is the newest hot thing, displacing Roxie, to Roxie’s chagrin. May also double as a member of the dancing ensemble.

Liz (Female/Featured/Mezzo-Soprano): Liz is a prisoner in the Cook County Jail, where she has been accused of her husband’s murder. She explains that she was irritated by her husband’s constant chewing of gum -- “no, not chewing, popping.” One day, it becomes too much, and she confesses that she fired two warning shots -- “into his head.” Excellent dancer.

Annie (Female/Featured/Mezzo-Soprano): Annie is a prisoner in the Cook County Jail, where she has been accused of her lover’s murder. She explains that after a time of dating the “perfect man,” she learned that her lover had six wives. Annie subsequently poisons him with arsenic. Must be an excellent dancer.

June (Female/Featured/Mezzo-Soprano): June is a prisoner in the Cook County Jail, where she has been accused of her husband’s murder. She explains that her husband Wilbur stormed into their kitchen while she was preparing a chicken for dinner, accusing her of “seeing the milkman.” He attacked her with these accusations over and over, and then “he ran into my knife ten times.” Excellent dancer.

Hunyak (Female/Featured/Mezzo-Soprano): Katalin Helinszki (called Hunyak, a derogatory term for a Hungarian person, by everyone around her) is a prisoner in the Cook County Jail, where she has been accused of her husband’s murder. She speaks no English, except for the phrase “not guilty.” Despite her belief that “Uncle Sam” will not convict her if she’s innocent, tHunyak cannot afford a good lawyer and loses her case. She becomes the first woman ever hanged in Cook County. Must be an excellent dancer.

Mona (Female/Featured/Mezzo-Soprano): Mona is a prisoner in the Cook County Jail, where she has been accused of her lover's murder. She explains that her lover, Al Lipschitz, was an artist. Mona found Al's free-spiritedness intriguing, and supported his urge to "go out and find himself." However, when she learns of his numerous affairs, Mona kills him. Her explanation of the murder is that it was because of "artistic differences. He saw himself as alive. And I saw him dead." Must be an excellent dancer.

Ensemble (Female and Male/Strong Singers/Strong Dancers): Also looking for several students for the ensemble. There are multiple roles with a few lines that need to be fulfilled as well as opportunities for featured solos and dancing. These students should be strong dancers and singers!