

Audition Information --The Misanthrope

Character Information –

Alceste – thirty or late twenties. In love with Célimène. The misanthrope of the title. Fiercely scornful of all the hypocrites & flatterers who surround him. Infantile, prone to temper tantrums, but able to remain articulate at the same time. Conflicted regarding Célimène, and even regarding his chief passion. Wealthy member of high society, but an outsider at heart.

Philinte – thirty. Alceste’s friend and confidant. Voice of moderation and compromise. In love with Éliante. Suave, man of the world, looks on with amusement at human follies and quirks.

Oronte – thirties or older (or younger). In love with Célimène. Pretentious amateur poet. Egocentric, easily offended. Shameless flatterer when he thinks it will advance his interests. Larger physique than Alceste’s (unless a line can be cut).

Célimène – young widow of twenty. Flirtatious, attractive, intelligent, fond of attention from her suitors, but ultimately scornful of all of them. Loves gossip, especially dishing dirt, masks her real feelings in interacting with others.

Éliante – Célimène’s cousin-a year or two older. Stable, solid, reliable, but not too exciting to men. Attractive, domestic, a bit dull. Wise, selfless,

Arsinoé – Thirties. Secretly in love with Alceste. Presents a mask of virtue and upright morality to the world but is fundamentally hypocritical. A female Gov. Mark Sanders or Sen. John Ensign or (take your pick of recent Republican – or Democratic – male elected officials who’ve been caught having extramarital affairs after speaking up for family values for years). Pretends concern for Célimène in order to take her down a peg.

Acaste – Twenties or thirties. Suitor to Célimène. Short, well-off, member of high society. Complacent, self-satisfied, sure of his importance. Irritating twit, and enjoys exasperating others, especially rivals in love.

Clitandre – Twenties or thirties. Suitor to Célimène. More insecure than Acaste, but pals around with him thinking he knows something he himself doesn’t. Has an annoying laugh and falsetto for expressing excitement.

Basque – Can be male or female. Thirties? Célimène’s servant. Can play her/him as bored or always anxious, frazzled or hos-

tile and menacing, sullen, harried, or -?

A Guard – Policeman, officer of the law courts. Guardlike. Stolid, no-nonsense type. Not threatening, but no sense of humor
Either.

Dubois – Alceste’s manservant. Twenties. Dim-witted, inept, a bit paranoid at the moment. Afraid he and Alceste are in trouble. Should be good at physical comedy. Appears in a disguise and must be constantly looking around to see if he’s been followed.

What I’m looking for –

Ability to handle rhyming verse dialogue. Ability to learn lines EX-
ACTLY as written. Sensitivity to language. Understanding of the mentality of a poseur, ability to project insincerity while trying to convince others of your sincerity.

For Alceste – ferocity an absolute must, commitment to character’s rage must be convincing. Comedy will come from playing him with deadly seriousness.

For Célimène – wit, charm, charisma, and air of sophistication. She is actually well suited to Alceste, given her scorn for all her suitors. They are surprisingly similar on many levels, despite being profoundly different in other crucial ways.

Others – see character descriptions above. The world of the play is a world of sophistication and cynical manipulation, “spin,” pretense, constant efforts to impress others with one’s wealth, importance, etc., while deep down one fears being found out for the fraud he or she is.