



Character Sketches for *The Gondoliers*

Men's Roles

Marco Palmieri - (tenor, Range: G2 - A4): A Venetian Gondolier much admired for his handsomeness. Not the brightest bulb in the box, particularly where politics are concerned, but his heart is always full of good intentions. A bit of a romantic. His time as one-half of the King of Barataria doesn't actually sit well with him, and he's relieved when it's revealed he's not actually the King.

Giuseppe Palmieri - (baritone, Range: G2 - G4): Like his brother Marco, Giuseppe is a Venetian Gondolier who is greatly sought after by the single young ladies of Venice. A bit more practical than his brother, but he can still be quite thick at times. He likewise is glad to return to his life as a Gondolier when the King's real identity is revealed.

The Duke of Plaza-Toro - (comic baritone, Range: G2 - E4): A Spanish nobleman of ancient lineage, the Duke has fallen on hard times and seen his family's fortune depleted, he has recently incorporated himself as a Limited Liability company as a source of revenue. He hopes his fortunes will be revived through his daughter Casilda's ascension to the throne as the Queen of Barataria, assuming they can ever figure out who her husband is. One of Gilbert's most savage parodies of the aristocracy, the role of the Duke also enjoys some of Gilbert's wittiest dialogue.

Luiz - (lyric baritone or tenor, Range: E3 - F4): The rightful King of Barataria, a fact unknown to everyone save his foster-mother, Inez, whom he believes to be his real mother. Employed in the service of the Duke of Plaza-Toro, he is secretly in love with the Duke's daughter Casilda; his hopes are crushed when it's revealed that she was married in infancy to the King, but all ends happily when it's revealed *he* is the King, and they've been married all along. Luiz is far cleverer than the Duke and Duchess, but savvy enough to keep his mouth shut and play the role of the good servant.

Don Alhambra Del Bolero - (bass-baritone, Range: G2 - E4): Grand Inquisitor of Spain, and the man who was responsible for the infant Prince of Barataria's being smuggled away, lest he fall sway to the influence of Methodism that had corrupted his father. Extremely clever and more than a bit of snob, Don Alhambra is greatly exasperated by the hijinks of Marco and Guiseppe, and not at all sorry to see them go when Luiz replaces them on the throne.

Antonio - (baritone, Range: D3 - D4): A Venetian Gondolier, and the most outspoken proponent for the *Contadine* to turn their attentions away from Marco and Guiseppe. Antonio is a member of the chorus.

Giorgio - (bass, Range: C3 - Bb3): Another Venetian Gondolier and a member of the chorus.

Francesco - (tenor, Range: F3 - G4): The youngest of the Venetian Gondoliers we meet and a member of the chorus

Annibale - (speaking role/chorus): The smartest of the Gondoliers, and their spokesman in legal matters; he fits in the best in the Court of Barataria. Annibale is a member of the chorus.

Chorus of Venetian Gondoliers (and Men-at-Arms, Heralds & Pages) - (tenors, Range: Bb2 - A4, basses, Range: G2 - Eb4): Working class men of Venice, they lack the social niceties that would render them suitable for life as courtiers in Barataria. They're very pleased when Marco and Guiseppe settle down and the rest of the *Contadine* turn elsewhere for love. The chorus will be composed of Antonio, Francesco, Giorgio, Annibale and at least four more men.

Women's Roles

[*Contadina* = Italian for "peasant girl" (plural: *contadine*)]

Gianetta - (soprano, Range: Bb3 - B5 (C6)): A Venetian *Contadina* who is in love with Marco Palmieri. Her getting caught by him in their game of blind man's bluff may not be accidental after all. Marco may not be the smartest guy in town, but Gianetta looks up to him all the same.

Tessa - (mezzo-soprano, Range: Bb3 - F5): Another Venetian *Contadina*, she is in love with Guiseppe Palmieri. She may have rigged the blind man's bluff game to assure she ends up marrying the man of her dreams. She flusters easily, but may be more clever than all the other *Contadine* put together.

The Duchess of Plaza-Toro - (contralto, Range: G3 - F5): The wife of the Duke of Plaza-Toro, there's no question of who wears the pants in this particular marriage. A contralto battle-axe in the classic G&S style.

Casilda - (soprano, Range: C4 - B5 (C6)): The daughter of the Duke and Duchess of Plaza-Toro, she is revealed to be the rightful Queen of Barataria, and may ascend the throne as soon as everyone involved figures out who she's actually married to. Casilda comes across as spoiled and quite arch in her dealings with those around her, but she's a genuinely caring and loving person, who would happily abandon her titles for the love of Luiz if propriety allowed it.

Inez - (contralto, Range: C4 - Db5): The foster-mother of Marco and Guiseppe, and the (presumed) actual mother of Luiz, Inez possesses the key bit of information in this story: who the actual King of Barataria is. Inez only appears in the finale but the lady cast in this role will be a member of the chorus of *contadine* until her entrance as Inez.

Fiametta - (soprano, Range: Eb4 - Bb5): One of the unofficial leaders of the *Contadine*, she suspects that Marco and Guiseppe may be not as impartial towards which specific *Contadina* they end up, but can't prove anything.

Vittoria - (mezzo-soprano, Range: B3 - E5): Another *Contadina* and Fiametta's best friend.

Giulia - (mezzo-soprano or soprano, Range: Db4 - F5): The youngest *Contadina*, she's generally willing to go along with whatever Fiametta says.

Chorus of Contadine - (sopranos, Range: C4 - A5, altos, Range: A3 - E5): Peasant women of Venice, they all dream of getting a Gondolier of their very own. The chorus will be composed of Fiametta, Vittoria, Giulia, Inez and at least four more women. The character Inez only appears in the finale so that actress will play a *contadina* until then when she will make her entrance playing Inez.