



WEST SIDE STORY

**Information and
Audition Pack**

CONTENTS

Introduction.....	3
Synopsis.....	3
Rehearsals and fees.....	4
Performances and Key dates.....	5
Contact us.....	5
Auditions.....	6
Casting and Representation.....	9
Character descriptions and Audition Material.....	10

INTRODUCTION

West Side Story is one of musical theatre's most iconic works, combining Arthur Laurents' powerful story with Leonard Bernstein and Stephen Sondheim's unforgettable score. Inspired by Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet, it is a story of love, loyalty and belonging set against a backdrop of rivalry, prejudice and violence.

With its demanding music, dynamic choreography and emotionally complex characters, West Side Story offers an extraordinary challenge for a talented company of performers.

Executive Producer and Director - Sam Gibbs

Choreographer - Alex Fentiman

Musical Director - Kim Seagrove

Vocal Coach - Shelley Hart

Audition Date: Saturday 8th May 2027

Performance Dates: Thursday 28th October (7:30pm), Friday 29th October (7:30pm), Saturday 30th October (2:30pm & 7:30pm) and Sunday 31st October (11am & 4pm)

SYNOPSIS

On the streets of New York City, two rival gangs - the Jets and the Puerto Rican Sharks - battle for territory and identity. Amid the conflict, Tony, a former Jet, and Maria, the sister of Sharks leader Bernardo, fall unexpectedly in love.

As tensions between the two communities escalate, their relationship becomes caught in a cycle of hatred, prejudice and violence, with devastating consequences. Inspired by Romeo and Juliet, West Side Story explores whether love can overcome the divisions created by the world around us.

REHEARSALS

A rehearsal schedule is available on the website prior to Open Auditions. This is subject to change.

Rehearsals will commence **from Thursday 10th June 2027**. Rehearsals will take place once a week at Park Community School on a **Thursday evening between 7pm and 10pm**. Times may vary throughout the rehearsal process. Rehearsals will become more frequent as the show dates draw closer.

There will be a **week long rehearsal block from Monday 9th August to Friday 13th August 2027**. These rehearsals will take place from 5-10pm. All cast will be required for these dates. **You will not be considered if you are unable to make these dates.**

Show week will **commence from Monday 25th October** with rehearsals taking place every day (times will vary). A **tech rehearsal will take place on Tuesday 26th October** and a **dress rehearsal on Wednesday 27th October**. All cast will be required for show week.

Rehearsals are for learning vocals, choreography, lines and blocking scenes. They are essential for the production's creation and commitment to both rehearsal period and performances are vital.

F E E S

There are no fees to audition.

Rehearsals will cost **£10 per session**. Half day rehearsals (9th - 13th August, 24th, 26th & 27th October) cost **£20 per session** and full day rehearsals (25th October) cost **£35 per session**.

There are three options to pay for rehearsal fees:

- 1. Pay fees upfront (£345) or;*
- 2. Spread cost equally over 5 months (£69 per month – starting June)*
- 3. Pay for rehearsals monthly (cost will vary depending on the number of rehearsals (i.e. June has 3 rehearsals so this would equate to £30)*

Rehearsal fees cover the costs of room hire, staff wages and support towards production costs (e.g. set, costumes, props)

PERFORMANCES AND KEY DATES

Open Auditions	Saturday 8 th May 2027 (1-7pm)
Rehearsals commence	Thursday 10 th June 2027
Tech rehearsal	Tuesday 26 th October 2027
Dress rehearsal	Wednesday 27 th October 2027
Opening night	Thursday 28 th October 2027 (7:30pm)
Closing night	Sunday 31 st October 2027 (4pm)

CONTACT US

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Email: admin@performerstheatrecompany.com

Mobile: 07413306363

AUDITIONS

Auditions for this production are open to all - you do not have to be enrolled at Performers to take part.

Auditions will be held on Saturday 8th May 2027 at Park Community School in Havant.

It is important that you have read this pack clearly in addition to our Production and Rehearsal Policy which can be found on the audition registration page. This outlines our expectations for all.

To book an audition:

Audition registration is available via our website.

This will close on Friday 30th April 2027 at 9am.

Audition process:

You must be aged 14 or over at the time of the audition.

The audition will begin with an **intensive 90-minute dance workshop and audition**. Auditionees will be divided into two groups: **14-17** and **18+**. Each group will take part in two 30-minute workshops before coming together for a group dance audition.

West Side Story is a highly demanding dance production, so this section of the audition will allow the creative team to assess movement ability, technique, performance, stamina and the ability to learn choreography.

Following the dance audition, everyone will return to the waiting area before the individual auditions begin.

Those auditioning for **Ensemble** will be seen first, followed by those auditioning for **Lead and Supporting Roles**. Each auditionee will enter the audition room individually.

A full audition order will be displayed in the waiting area on the day, so please ensure you remain nearby and are ready when called.

Frequently Asked Questions

Will someone read on for other character's lines?

Yes, one of the audition panel will do this.

Can props be brought in?

If the auditionee feels it will benefit their audition, absolutely!

Will there be music provided?

Yes, auditionees do not need to bring bluetooth speakers etc.

Can more than one character be auditioned for?

Auditionees can audition for one character only. Auditionees can write down any other characters they are interested in through the registration form as we may feel they are suited to a different role.

How long will the audition last for?

The dance workshop will last 90 minutes. The individual audition will take no more than 10 minutes, however this may vary. How long it takes is also no indication as to whether the auditionee has been cast or not.

What if I cannot attend the audition date?

Those unable to attend the audition date are to email their audition in (admin@performerstheatrecompany.com). The audition must include all audition material for chosen character. Those auditioning for ensemble must include a solo song (of their choice), a monologue no longer than 1 minute and film themselves completing a dance routine (this will be uploaded onto our website).

Please ensure that registration is completed in the same way. Absence must be stated in the comments section of the form.

We must receive this by Friday 30th April 2027. After this, entries will not be considered.

Summary

Eligibility & Booking

- Auditions are **open to all**; you do not need to be enrolled at Performers.
- You must be **aged 14 or over at the time of the audition**.
- Auditions take place on **Saturday 8th May 2027** at Park Community School, Havant.
- Registration is available via the website and closes **Friday 30th April 2027 at 9am**.
- All auditionees must read the Audition Pack and Production & Rehearsal Policy before attending.

Audition Process

- Auditions begin with an **intensive 90-minute dance workshop and audition**.
- Auditionees will be split into **14-17 and 18+** groups.
- Each group will complete two 30-minute workshops, followed by a group dance audition.
- The creative team will **assess movement ability, technique, performance, stamina and ability to learn choreography**.
- Individual auditions follow the dance audition.
- **Ensemble auditionees are seen first**, followed by Lead and Supporting Role auditionees.
- A full audition order will be displayed in the waiting area.

Individual Auditions

- Auditionees enter the room individually.
- A member of the audition panel will read opposite you where required.
- Music will be provided.
- Props may be used if they benefit the audition.
- You may audition for **one character only**, but can state other roles you would be interested in on the registration form.
- Individual auditions will usually **last no more than 10 minutes**; audition length is not an indication of casting decisions.

If You Cannot Attend

- A recorded audition may be submitted by email.
- Lead/Supporting Role auditionees must submit **all material provided for their chosen character**.
- Ensemble submissions must include a **solo song, a monologue of no more than one minute and the specified dance routine**.
- You must still complete the online registration form and state your absence in the comments.
- Recorded auditions must be received by **Friday 30th April 2027**. Late submissions will not be considered.

CASTING AND REPRESENTATION

West Side Story is a story in which **race, ethnicity, prejudice and cultural identity are fundamental to the narrative**. The conflict between the Jets and the Sharks is not simply a rivalry between two gangs: the Jets are written as a white working-class gang, while the Sharks and their community are Puerto Rican/Latin. We therefore have a responsibility to approach the casting of this production with care, sensitivity and respect.

Prior to applying for the rights to produce West Side Story, Performers Theatre Company sought guidance directly from **Music Theatre International (MTI)** regarding ethnicity and casting. MTI advised us that it is essential to consider the specified ethnic backgrounds of the Jets and Sharks and to follow the character descriptions within the script faithfully and sensitively.

Our auditions are **open to all performers aged 14+**, regardless of ethnicity or background. However, in recognition of the identities represented within the piece, we particularly **encourage performers of Puerto Rican, Latin American and wider Latino heritage to audition**.

Casting decisions will consider not only vocal, acting and dance ability, but also the requirements of the characters and our responsibility to represent the cultural identities and themes of the work appropriately. There may therefore be circumstances where suitability for a role extends beyond performance ability alone.

We will not use makeup, artificial tanning or other methods to alter a performer's skin colour or attempt to visually manufacture an ethnicity. Cultural identity will not be approached through caricature or stereotype.

Importantly, this production is dependent upon the outcome of our open auditions. If we do not receive an audition pool that enables us to cast West Side Story in a way that we believe is faithful, sensitive and appropriate to the work, **the production will not go ahead.**

We recognise that this is an unusual condition to place upon a production before auditions. However, we believe that West Side Story should only be produced if we can do justice both to the extraordinary piece of theatre it is and to the communities, experiences and issues it represents.

CHARACTER DESCRIPTIONS AND AUDITION MATERIAL

Playing Ages

*Playing ages are listed as **Open** throughout this pack. We do not want to unnecessarily restrict who may audition for a role based on age. The creative team will consider suitability, character relationships and the overall balance of the company when casting.*

Please do not rule yourself out of a role because you feel you may be too young or too old to play it. If you meet the audition eligibility of 14+, we encourage you to audition for the role you are interested in.

Riff	
Description	A spritely, quick-tempered leader. He seeks to eliminate the Sharks and establish his own gang's dominance. Tony's best friend, he is eventually murdered by Bernardo.
Gender	Male
Playing age	Open
Character Identity	White American
Vocal type	Bb2-G4
Skills	Requires a strong singer, actor and dancer, natural leadership on stage and considerable physical energy.
Audition song	See website from 1 st December
Dialogue	See website from 1 st December

Maria	
Description	Maria is Bernardo's younger sister, newly arrived in New York and full of optimism for her new life. She is initially youthful and innocent but possesses considerable inner strength. Her relationship with Tony places her at the centre of the conflict between the Jets and Sharks, and she undergoes an enormous emotional journey throughout the production.
Gender	Female
Playing age	Open
Character Identity	Puerto Rican/Latin <i>Casting note: In accordance with the themes of the work and guidance received from MTI, performers of Puerto Rican, Latin American and wider Latino heritage are particularly encouraged to audition.</i>
Vocal type	Bb3-C6
Skills	Requires an exceptional soprano, a highly capable actor and a performer able to portray vulnerability, joy, determination and ultimately profound grief.
Audition song	See website from 1 st December
Dialogue	See website from 1 st December

Tony	
Description	A former leader of the Jets and Riff's closest friend. Tony has begun to move beyond gang life and believes that something better is waiting for him. Meeting Maria changes everything.
Gender	Male
Playing age	Open
Character Identity	White American
Vocal type	Bb2-Bb4
Skills	Tony requires a very strong tenor, an emotionally intelligent actor and a performer capable of carrying some of the score's most demanding and recognisable material. His relationship and chemistry with Maria will be crucial.
Audition song	See website from 1 st December
Dialogue	See website from 1 st December

Anita	
Description	Bernardo's girlfriend and Maria's closest confidante. Anita is confident, fiery, intelligent and fiercely protective of those she loves. She is one of the production's most dynamic characters, balancing humour and strength with an extraordinarily difficult emotional journey.
Gender	Female
Playing age	Open
Character Identity	Puerto Rican/Latin <i>Casting note: In accordance with the themes of the work and guidance received from MTI, performers of Puerto Rican, Latin American and wider Latino heritage are particularly encouraged to audition.</i>
Vocal type	F3-D5
Skills	Requires a powerful singer, actor and dancer with commanding stage presence.
Audition song	See website from 1 st December
Dialogue	See website from 1 st December

Bernardo	
Description	Leader of the Sharks, Maria's older brother and Anita's boyfriend. Bernardo is proud, confident and fiercely protective of his family and community. He feels a strong responsibility towards the Sharks and their place in New York.
Gender	Male
Playing age	Open
Character Identity	Puerto Rican/Latin
Vocal type	Bb2-Eb4
Skills	Requires an excellent actor and highly accomplished dancer with considerable presence and authority. Strong singing ability is also required.
Audition song	See website from 1 st December
Dialogue	See website from 1 st December

Chino	
Description	A member of the Sharks, Bernardo's friend and Maria's intended suitor. Initially earnest and somewhat naive, Chino's journey becomes considerably darker as the violence between the gangs escalates.
Gender	Male
Playing age	Open
Character Identity	Puerto Rican/Latin <i>Casting note: In accordance with the themes of the work and guidance received from MTI, performers of Puerto Rican, Latin American and wider Latino heritage are particularly encouraged to audition.</i>
Vocal type	Primarily acting role
Skills	Requires a strong dramatic actor capable of handling a significant emotional transformation.
Audition song	See website from 1 st December
Dialogue	See website from 1 st December

Anybodys	
Description	Energetic, determined and desperate to be accepted as a member of the Jets. Anybodys is repeatedly dismissed by the gang but remains persistent, courageous and loyal.
Gender	Female
Playing age	Open
Character Identity	Associated with the Jets
Vocal type	Primarily acting/ensemble singing
Skills	Requires a characterful actor and strong physical performer with excellent energy.
Audition song	See website from 1 st December
Dialogue	See website from 1 st December

Doc	
Description	Owner of the drugstore where Tony works and the Jets gather. Doc provides an older and more compassionate perspective on the hatred surrounding the young people and attempts to steer them away from violence.
Gender	Male
Playing age	Open
Vocal type	Non-singing/ensemble as required
Skills	Requires a strong character actor capable of bringing warmth, authority and emotional weight to the role.
Audition song	See website from 1 st December
Dialogue	See website from 1 st December

Detective Shrank	
Description	A police detective attempting to control the escalating conflict between the Jets and Sharks. Shrank is authoritative and abrasive, and his behaviour exposes some of the prejudice at the heart of the story.
Gender	Male
Playing age	Open
Vocal type	Non-singing
Skills	Requires a confident character actor comfortable portraying deliberately challenging attitudes.
Audition song	See website from 1 st December
Dialogue	See website from 1 st December

Officer Krupke	
Description	The local beat officer who regularly encounters the gangs and becomes the subject of the Jets' mockery.
Gender	Male
Playing age	Open
Vocal type	Non-singing/ensemble as required
Skills	A strong character role requiring good comic timing and confident stage presence.
Audition song	See website from 1 st December
Dialogue	See website from 1 st December

The Jets & Jet Girls	
Description	The Jets form one half of the central conflict and feature extensively throughout the production. Ensemble members require exceptional energy, characterisation and commitment, with dance playing a particularly significant role.
Character Identity	White American
Playing age	Open
Vocal type	Strong ensemble singers
Skills	Dance: Strong/advanced dancers required Individual featured roles within the Jets and Jet Girls will be allocated during the casting/rehearsal process.
Audition song	See website from 1 st December
Dialogue	See website from 1 st December

The Sharks & Shark Girls	
Description	The Sharks and their community form the other half of the story's central conflict. These performers feature extensively in some of the production's most iconic musical and dance sequences.
Character Identity	Puerto Rican/Latin <i>Casting note: In accordance with the themes of the work and guidance received from MTI, performers of Puerto Rican, Latin American and wider Latino heritage are particularly encouraged to audition.</i>
Playing age	Open
Vocal type	Strong ensemble singers
Skills	Dance: Strong/advanced dancers required Individual featured roles within the Sharks and Shark Girls will be allocated during the casting/rehearsal process.
Audition song	See website from 1 st December
Dialogue	See website from 1 st December