

Synopsis

TITANIC begins as Thomas Andrews, the architect of the great ship, pores over the blueprints of his design. The curtain then rises to reveal the Ocean Dock in Southampton, England, where people are gathering to wonder at and to board the ship on sailing day: first the owner, the architect and the captain, then the Third and Second Class passengers, and finally the First Class passengers. Now fully boarded, the ship pulls out as the company sings a prayerful farewell.

One by one, the dreams and aspirations of key characters are presented: Barrett, the Frederick Barrett who wanted to get away from the coal mines; Murdoch, the ship's officer contemplating the responsibility of command; Kate McGowan and the Third Class passengers who yearn for a better life in America; Chief Steward Etches and the millionaires he serves who exult in the wonders of their world.

Barrett finds his way to the Telegraph Room where he dictates a proposal of marriage to his sweetheart back home in a telegram transmitted by Harold Bride, a young telegraph operator smitten with the possibilities of the new radio technology.

The next day, April 14, after Sunday morning church service, the First Class attends the shipboard band's spirited out-of-doors dance-concert, an exclusive event crashed by Second Class passenger Alice Beane, a hardware store owner's wife who wants more out of life. That evening, as Fleet the lookout scans the horizon and bandsman Hartley regales the First Class Smoking Room with a new song, the ship sails inexorably towards her collision, which ends Act One.

Act Two opens as the suddenly awakened First and Second Class passengers are assembled in the Grand Salon for life-belt instruction by Chief Steward Etches, before being sent up to the Boat Deck to board the lifeboats. In the Telegraph Room, Captain Smith, Mr. Andrews and Mr. Ismay, the owner, argue over who is responsible for the disaster while Mr. Bride tirelessly sends out the S.O.S.. Up on the Boat Deck, the male passengers are separated from their families and all express hopes of being reunited as the final boat is lowered. Isidor Straus (the owner of Macy's) and his wife Ida remain behind together, as she refuses to leave his side after 40 years of marriage and Mr. Etches utters a prayer. In the abandoned Smoking Room, Thomas Andrews desperately redesigns his ship to correct its fatal flaws until the futility of his actions leads him to predict, in horrifying detail, the end of Titanic just as she begins her now-inevitable descent.

In an Epilogue, the survivors picked up by the Carpathia numbly retell what had once been Mr. Andrews' dream. The living are joined by their lost loved-ones in a tableau recapturing the optimistic spirit of the Ocean Dock on sailing day.

A little about the social classes

FIRST CLASS

First class included every important American multimillionaire, except two (who booked passage but missed the sailing.) As a group they are the social elite, accustomed to lavish opulence and leisure, and they have a fascination with the newest, biggest, fastest, and most expensive. Their primary motivations are to ACQUIRE and perhaps more interestingly, to PROTECT; protect their family names, their fortunes, their way of life, their children's marriage prospects, etc. In order to protect, they must keep the commoners in their place, showboat to demonstrate their status and keep up appearances, and conceal any personal truths that are painful, ugly, or scandalous.

Second Class

Second class was made up of merchants, professionals, and tourists. As a group they were largely socially ambitious, trying to brush up against the 1st class in the hopes that the golden magic would rub off. They are the most similar to most of us in America today: fascinated with fame, eager to acquire a little for themselves, hoping for the most and the best that they could achieve. Their primary motivation is to ASPIRE - whether to a better job, a better social standing, a better house, or a better new suit. However much they aspire though, they still know their place, and remain deferential to the 1st class. With the exception of Alice, they don't outwardly fawn, they try to remain calm and collected on the surface, while inside they are brimming with excitement at the proximity of such celebrity.

Third Class

Third class or "steerage" was made up of European emigrants leaving the old world for the new, fleeing poverty and hopelessness in search of the opportunity for a better life. As a group their primary motivation is to BETTER themselves - but not just for the sake of feeling important or accomplished like the 2nd class, but to ensure the SURVIVAL of their families, their children, and themselves. They dream big and are extremely brave (or desperate) to leave a whole life behind in search of a new one in a foreign land. They are deferential to crew and to both classes above them, and are used to being told what to do. For many, this is the first time they have ever been idle for several days straight, and the accommodations and food on board are extremely high quality compared to what they are used to. In the show they represent dreams, and largely the sadness of dreams that will never come to fruition: lost potential.

Characters

We will be casting around 40 people in the company and most characters will play multiple parts. Please note, vocal range is not specified of all parts.

Mr Thomas Andrews

39, was in charge of the plans for Titanic at Harland & Wolff Shipbuilders. He sailed to observe how well she did on her maiden voyage, constantly noting problems and ways to further perfect her functioning and comfort for passengers and crew alike. Strong yet quiet, and full of integrity, he is the moral compass and intellectual barometer of the show. In his deep desire to successfully balance the strength & safety necessary to navigate rough seas, with the beauty necessary to surpass wealthy expectations of opulence, he made several compromises in Titanic's construction that could have saved her. His recognition of those missteps is extraordinarily painful.

Playing Age: Late 30s

Vocal Range: Tenor (A2-G4)

The Astors

Returning to America to give birth to their first child after a honeymoon in Egypt, where they had been waiting out the gossip that followed their scandalous marriage. She is very much a naïve child still, while he is fiercely protective of social mores (i.e. arrogant.) Whether he is proud of her or embarrassed will be interesting for you to explore. J.J. came from one of the wealthiest families in the U.S.; his body was recovered from the sea with over \$2440 cash in his pockets (more than \$50,000today.) He was rumoured to have opened the Titanic's kennels to give the dogs a fighting chance.

Playing Age: John - Late 40s Madeline - Late Teens

Frederick Barrett

is based on 2 stokers on the Titanic who shared the same name and were close in age: one 28, and the other 33. He is strappingly strong, keenly intelligent, and capable. He questions the motivations of the powers-that-be to speed up, struggles with the monotony of his occupation, and takes the giant step of sending a marriage proposal back to his girl on shore via the newfangled wireless. When the ship sinks he gives up a place steering one of the lifeboats, and sings a powerful goodbye to his lost love.

Playing Age: Mis 20s

Vocal Range: Tenor (A2-G4)

Edgar Beane

Is goodhearted, often exasperated, has a dry wit, and is not worried about impressing anyone. Returning from a vacation on the Titanic. Edgar owns a hardware store in the Midwest. His wife, Alice, is a homemaker who wishes she was a socialite. Their love is clear but he is often exasperated by his wife who makes him feel as though the life he has worked hard to build is not enough.

These two characters are loosely based on Edward & Ethel Beane, Second class passengers on the Titanic.

Playing Age: Late 30s Vocal Range: Bari/Bass (G2-D4)

Alice Beane

Comedy wrapped in truth. It requires an actress who can make us laugh by revealing the depths of Alice's heart, rather than by playing her for comedy. She is like a child playing dress-up; the reality seems absurd but the fantasy is earnest. Also her litany of 1st class gossip in the opening number is a singer's challenge.

Playing Age: Early 30s Vocal Range: Mezzo (G2-D4)

Harold Bride

22, was one of two wireless operators on the Titanic who received ice warnings and relayed the SOS call, but in the show he is the only operator. A shy and socially awkward young man, he obviously yearns for connection, but stumbles in relationships with other people. He has found in his telegraph machine a fascinating and thoroughly engaging way to connect to people the world over - much like the awkward souls of today find the web an easier place to connect than real life.

Playing Age: Mid 20s Vocal Range: Baritone (C3-G4)

Officer Boxall

Fourth Officer, 28, served on the White Star Line's Oceanic & Arabic before Titanic. As a junior officer he aids in navigation, keeps watch, and assists passengers and crew as needed. He was the one who tried in vain to signal the SS Californian by Morse code and flares.

Playing Age: Mid -late 20s Vocal Range: Baritone (C3-G4)

Joseph Bell

Chief Engineer, 50. A small speaking role, he has a slight argument with Barrett over executing orders to speed up.

Playing Age: Early 20s

Vocal Range: Tenor

Charlotte Drake Cardeza

58, booked Titanic's most expensive suite, and traveled with 14 trunks full of designer clothes, jewels, and 91 pairs of gloves, yet possessed an indomitable free spirit that is belied by those seemingly superficial trappings. A big game hunter, a yachtswoman who circumnavigated the world twice, a patron of the arts, and an independent woman who divorced her husband when she learned of his infidelity, Charlotte didn't let anything stop her! Her unconventional ideas cause a near-clash with some of the 1st class men when she tries to bend the gendered traditions onboard, but her charm and charisma wins them over. Actress must be able to captivate a room with her infectious good spirits and joyful approach to life, while remaining classy and graceful.

Playing Age: Late 40s

Vocal Range:

Henry Etches

Senior Steward, 41, was an experienced steward to first class passengers (something like a butler) who had served many of the same glitterati on the Olympic before reestablishing care for them aboard the Titanic. He sings the lead in Remarkable Age and has several scenes that underscore the smooth discretion he must exhibit, and the great pride he takes in his work, always remembering the likes, dislikes, and needs of his "people." Some might call him stuffy, but he just really cares.

Playing Age: 40s

Vocal Range: Tenor (B2-G4)

Edith Corse Evans

a single woman, was returning to America alone on the Titanic from a family funeral in England. She was offered a spot on one of the remaining lifeboats but convinced a new friend to take it, because the friend had children. Interested in geneology and other such studies, she had recently visited a fortune teller who told her to beware of the water.

Playing Age: 20s

Vocal Range:

Jim Farrell

Is the love interest of Kate McGowen, and can't help but be amused by (and eventually fall for) this confident and self-assured beauty. He's not a pushover, he's just charmed and knows a good thing when he sees it! He has a pleasant boyish charm of his own that turns manly when circumstances demand it. In real life Jim saved several 3rd class women, by shaming a crewman who was keeping them locked below decks, and eventually breaking down the gate.

Playing Age: Mid 20s

Vocal Range: Baritone (B2-F#4)

Frederick Fleet

24, was one of two lookouts in the crow's nest when the iceberg was sighted, but far too late due to poor visibility and missing binoculars. In the show he is the only lookout. He completes the main trio of young crew in the opening number, sings the soaring solo lead in No Moon, and calls out the fateful warning, "Iceberg, right ahead!"

Playing Age: Early 20s

Vocal Range: Tenor (C3-G4)

Benjamin Guggenheim and Madam Aubart

Benjamin was an American mining and smelting tycoon, was a regular cross-Atlantic traveler, with a home (and mistress) in Paris. The mistress, Mme. Aubart, accompanied him on the Titanic. He reveals some guilt for his lifestyle, and an ability to be deeply self-reflective after the lifeboats have left the 1st class men on the ship

Playing Age: Mr -Late 40s Mdme - 20s

Vocal Range

Wallace Hartley

Wallace was the band leader, the Titanic's orchestra has gone down in history for playing on the boat deck till the very end, to keep the other passengers calm. In the show, all three members sing the one lively dance number in the show, Doing the Latest Rag. Hartley also sings the haunting Autumn in the 1st class smoke room at the end of act 1, and he in particular must be a confident showman who can hold a crowd in the palm of his hand.

Playing Age: 30s

Vocal Range: Tenor

Edward Harris (bellboy)

16, takes care of passenger needs, announces meals, and generally helps out the other serving staff. He has a poignant moment with the Captain (Edward Smith) as the ship is sinking, wherein the captain sees a younger self in this namesake.

Playing Age: Late teens

Vocal Range:

Robert Hitchens

Quartermaster, 29, was responsible for steering the ship, and carrying out the helm orders. He was at the wheel on that fateful night and obeyed the famous order "hard a' starboard". It is said that the next 37 seconds ruined his life. Although we won't see this in the show, he was in charge of lifeboat #6 that carried "the Unsinkable" Molly Brown, who threatened to throw him overboard when he refused to row back and save others.

Playing Age: Early 20s

Vocal Range:

Mr J. Bruce Ismay

49, was chairman and owner of the White Star Line. Savaged by the press for escaping in a lifeboat when so many others perished, it's hard to know how much of the blame he actually deserved but he plays the role of misguided villain in the show. The line's success & reputation matters more to him than anything else, including being liked, and he pushes the captain for more speed in order to make headlines with an early arrival in New York. High-brow, aloof, easily frustrated when disregarded, carries the burden and anxiety that goes with leadership.

Playing Age: Late 40s

Vocal Range: Baritone (A2-G4)

Kate McGowan

Although there was a Kate McGowan who perished on the Titanic, this Kate's story is based instead on Kate Gilnagh, who did actually know Mullins, Murphey, and Farrell, and who survived. 17 years old, Kate is escaping a big mistake made in Ireland by boarding the Titanic for America. Single, she is pregnant (although not yet showing) with the child of a married man. Not one to expend much energy on shame or despair, she is simply driven: this is a predicament she must solve - she needs a husband, and fast! She spots Jim Farrell at the dock and manages to secure an engagement in less than 4 days - a testament to her charm, her positive spirit, and her forthright, assertive approach! Kate is an indomitable spirit who knows what she wants and how to get it.

Playing Age: Early 20s

Vocal Range: Soprano/Mezzo (A3-F#5)

The Major

More than one Major sailed on the Titanic, but this one appears to be fictional. He frequently regales 1st class with his dramatic adventures abroad, providing comic relief in otherwise tense and controlled dining conversations through his tales of "crazed, godless savages."

Playing Age: 50s

Vocal Range:

William Murdoch

First Officer, 39, was an experienced officer who really should have been a captain by now, but wasn't sure he was up to it. He was Captain Smith's right hand, and was at the bridge in Smith's place when the iceberg was sighted. Murdoch made the decisions and gave the orders that sealed Titanic's fate. He wrestles with horrific guilt at the end; in wanting to prove to himself that he was capable of flying solo, he instead played a part in the death of 1517 souls.

Playing Age: Late 30s

Vocal Range: Baritone (C3-F#4)

Kate Mullins

21, was a young Irish lass (one of 8 children) traveling on the Titanic to a new life in America where she intended to live with her sister and become a maid. In the show she is the most frightened of the Kates, overwhelmed by the scope of everything she sees, and grateful for the comfort and care of her traveling companions.

Playing Age: Early 20s

Vocal Range: Alto

Kate Murphey

18, was one of thirteen children in Ireland. With a sickly mother she was forced to grow up early, and dealt with a forceful and overbearing older brother. She was secretly running away from his rule by boarding the Titanic! Although we do not hear the details of her story in the show, it underlies her tough, no-nonsense character. She wants to be self-sufficient and has always been independent.

Playing Age: Mid 20s

Vocal Range: Alto

The Neville/Clarkes

The Clarkes are not actually married (yet) but are travelling as a married couple on the Titanic to save money (plus, it's fun to be secretly naughty!) Caroline is classy and kind - actually born to first class, but eloping to America with her love; she wants nothing more than to be with him, and is more than willing to sacrifice status for love. Charles aspires to be a journalist in New York City, and has every reason to believe he can succeed. They are happily in love, with bright futures ahead. Their near-operatic parting is the dramatic climax of *To the Lifeboats* and never fails to rip out the hearts of audience members.

Playing Age: Early 30s

Vocal Range:

Herbert Pitman

Third Officer, 33, served faithfully aboard the Titanic, helped uncover the lifeboats, and was placed in command of lifeboat #5, in which he survived. In the show he has the lion's share of the solos in the opening number (loading the ship with cargo and introducing passengers).

Playing Age: Early 30s

Vocal Range:

J.H Rogers

a gambler and card shark whose real name was Jay Yates. Smooth, unassuming, very comfortable in social situations. Before the sinking he writes a note to his sister to let her know he died on the ship, since he was registered under an assumed name in order to escape police detection.

Playing Age: 30s

Vocal Range:

Captain E.J Smith

62, was lured out of an intended retirement to take command of one last maiden voyage. Unfortunately it was his last, as he went down with the ship. A fatherly figure, he commands with deep care for his passengers and encouragement toward his younger officers. He takes his responsibility for all the souls aboard very seriously, and struggles over conflict with Ismay on how best to proceed, complying too often.

Playing Age: Late 50s

Vocal Range: Baritone (B-flat 2 to F4)

Ida Straus

The Straus' were returning from a trip to Europe on the Titanic. Perhaps one of the most poignant and enduring Titanic stories is that of Ida's refusal to leave Isador on the ship, with the phrase "Where you go, I go." They share an incredibly touching scene on the boat deck in act two after the decision is made and there's no turning back, re-affirming their love through the soaring song Still.

Playing Age: Late 60s

Vocal Range: Alto (G3-D5)

Isidor Straus

67, owned Macy's Department Store. Returning from a trip to Europe on the Titanic. Perhaps one of the most poignant and enduring Titanic stories is that of Ida's refusal to leave Isidor on the ship, with the phrase "Where you go, I go." They share an incredibly touching scene on the boat deck in act two after the decision is made and there's no turning back, re-affirming their love through the soaring song Still.

Playing Age: Late 60s

Vocal Range: Bass/Baritone (F2-F4)

The Thayer Family

Returning from a European trip on the Titanic to their home in Haverford, PA. Their parting when the lifeboats are boarded is one of the most heart-wrenching moments in the show, as John tries to stifle fear and calmly assures Marion and Pauline that he and Jack will be just fine. He did not survive, but Jack did, after quite an adventure in the water including a close call with one of the giant funnels falling near him.

Playing Age: Jack -9 Marion/John Early 40s

The Wideners

George Widener and Eleanor Widener are heirs to the largest fortune in Philadelphia, and spent their time on the ship in leisure.

Playing Age: Mid 30s/40s

Vocal Range: