Bye Bye Birdie
Character Descriptions

Albert Peterson: (30-40 Tenor) He’s our story’s central character. He’s the nervous and high-strung president of Almalou Records. The actor who seeks to fill this role must be a strong vocalist, but he also serves to carry the show’s main action. As such, he must be spot-on in comedic timing and show the core of this man in audition.

Rose Alvarez (25-35 Alto): Rose is Al’s secretary but dreams of the day when she can adjust his title from “employer” to “hubby.” That was always their plan, but time seems to have slipped away. Despite his oft selfish and callous treatment of Rose, she continues to support him, biding her time. Well, for a while anyway. Every woman has her breaking point. The role of Rose requires a woman who can display a truly strong spirit and a spicy inner being who can’t wait to escape. The role of Rose will be secured by the one in audition who can sell the character’s spirit, both via dialog delivery AND vocals.

Conrad Birdie (18-29 Baritone): The character doesn’t have much in terms of dialog, but he does command a heavy swath of vocals. During audition you must sell the vocals. We also need to see, very clearly, the physicality of Birdie. The show was loosely based on Elvis’ entrance into the army. Give us a few king-like indications of the guy, but don’t go full-blown Elvis. The physicality is very important though. We need to see the performer fluidly at-work during the vocal auditions. We want to see the actual, no frills man during the acting auditions.

Kim MacAfee (15-24 Soprano): Well, she’s the president of Sweet Apple’s Conrad Birdie Fan Club. Through random chance, she is selected to deliver Conrad Birdie his final kiss goodbye before leaving to join the army. Seems simple enough, and her political status in the town certainly indicates valid credentials to fulfill the duty. Unfortunately, her boyfriend Hugo has a few reservations. Kim needs to come across as a typical all-American teenage girl of the 1950’s. She’s convinced that she’s already reached adulthood, and enjoys all the marvelous perks that come along with being a woman. Of course, the jolt of news about Birdie’s imminent arrival and her role in seeing him off is enough to send her reeling back down the ladder rungs into pure childhood bliss. If you seek to fill this role, you need to be solid on the vocals. You also need to communicate the black and white line that defines Kim at the crossroads of development where she finds herself.

Mrs. Mae Peterson (50-69 Alto): Wonderful character role, Ma Peterson is sold via the read in acting auditions. We’ve heard of the stereotypical “Jewish Mother” before, yes? Well, we’ve not reason to believe the Petetsons are Jewish, but Mrs. Peterson does fit the bill for the stereotype popularized in American films and television. Every scene in which she appears presents Mae unabashedly working to guilt trip her poor son. Again, this is a character role, Go a little crazy with it, but be careful to find your own take. We don’t want to see an early leader in audition set the end-all, be-all pattern of reads for everyone else. Find your own take on Mrs. Paterson. Take some risks. She’s a wonderful character who commands volumes of laughter in the audience.

Mr. Harry MacAfee (40-59 Tenor): He’s not the star male vocalist in the show, but he does need to be able to sing a little. He’s also a great source of comedy in the production. Yeah, we aren’t given a
ton of opportunities to see old shtick. However, he does have a couple of really great scenes in which he has the potential to leave the house rolling. Show us your understanding of the potential behind this guy. Give us some really character gusto in the acting reads. And show us you can in fact handle the vocals that come with this role as well. “Parliament has been dissolved; the Magna Carta is revoked, and Nero is back in town!”

Mrs. Doris MacAfee (40-59 Alto): She’s on the back-half of female leads roles, but she is on the list! Mrs. MacAfee is a solid role. She has a wonderful scene early on in the show in which she is mortified with her daughter’s abrupt assertion of adult status. I don’t have a ton to offer you in developing this role for the audition process.

Hugo Peabody (15-24 Speaking Role): If you’re not the strongest vocalist, Hugo may be the role for you. Hugo is Kim’s understandably frustrated boyfriend. Well, come on, how would you feel? You’ve just pinned the girl you’re completely in love with, and the next thing you know she’s all onboard to deliver the official send-off kiss to the teen rock idol of the decade. Anyway, Hugo is a great role for the right actor. He has solid stage time and enjoys command of a couple of humorous moments. Give us the prototypical teenage boy, circa 1950’s. Research? Watch a few films that reflect the era.

Ursula Merkle (15-24 Mezzo): If Kim registers an excitement level of six on a scale of ten, Ursula hits twelve. Yeah, she’s a pretty excitable kid. She is a supporting character, but she has some wonderful moments. She’s Kim’s number-one confidant. Always looking out for her best friend’s interests, Ursula offers wise council to Kim in times of need. Well, as wise of council as a kid like Ursula can provide. Anyway, she’s a little quirky, high-energy, and busting with vitality. Show us the inner-tempo that pushes Ursula through life.

Randolph MacAfee (10-12 Tenor): Kim’s younger brother, Randolph is almost like the MacAfee family’s equivalent to the Griffin family’s Meg. He’s overlooked a bit, and when he is acknowledged, he really isn’t given much respect at all. It’s not a huge role, but it is a visible one. Randolph shouldn’t be played shy, but he is certainly the subordinate within the family. I will say this, Randolph’s delivery of dialog is either going to be spot-on, or miss completely. Show me your ability to deliver spot-on.

Mayor (40-69 Adult Chorus, variable range): He’s the mayor of the good town of Sweet Apple, Ohio. There’s some sense that he fits the bill of a big fish in a small town.

Edna (40-69 Adult Chorus, variable range): The mayor’s wife. Smaller role, but she does have a funny bit in the show as Conrad begins to sing during Sweet Apple’s welcoming ceremony for the auspicious guest.

Alice (15-24 Teenage Chorus, Mezzo): The mayor’s daughter.

Harvey Johnson (15-24 Teenage Chorus, Tenor): Howard’s son, he’s just an average teenage kid in our fair town.
Ed Sullivan (50-64 spoken role): This is wonderful, albeit little, challenge. Technically, Ed’s supposed to be an offstage spoken part. I think we may put Ed Sullivan onstage in our production. As such, do a little research. We’ll be testing reads for our Ed Sullivan, so have something prepared.

Charles F. Maude (30-70 Adult Chorus, Tenor): He’s the hearty proprietor of Maude’s Roadside Retreat.

Maude’s Dishwasher (25-60 Adult Chorus, Tenor): He washes dishes for a living, but he’s also a member of our male quartet!

Maude’s First Customer (22-80 Adult Chorus, Baritone): Also a member of the male quartet.

Maude’s Second Customer (22-80 Adult Chorus, Tenor): Also a member of the male quartet.

Gloria Rasputin (25-39 Soprano): She’s Mrs. Peterson’s choice to replace Rosie. Not exactly what one might expect as the embodiment of the ideal administrative assistant, Gloria is a forceful, broad woman with true gusto. This role will be given to someone who can eloquently command a character performance.

Mrs. Merkle (39-50 Soprano): She’s Ursala’s mother.

Mr. Johnson (39-50 Adult Chorus, variable ranges)

Margie (15-24 Teenage Chorus, Mezzo): A teenage girl from Sweet Apple and friend to Kim.
Nancy (15-24 Teenage Chorus, variable range)
Helen (15-24 Teenage Chorus, variable ranges)
Penelope Ann (15-24 Teenage Chorus, variable ranges): She is a teenage girl. She has a couple of lines.
Deborah Sue (15-24 Teenage Chorus, variable range)
Fred (15-24 Teenage Chorus, variable range)
Suzie (15-24 Teenage Chorus, variable range)
Margie (15-24 Teenage Chorus, Mezzo)

1st Reporter (25-55 speaking role)
2nd Reporter (25-55 nonspeaking role)
3rd Reporter (25-55 speaking role)

TV Show Crew, Stage Manager (20-80 nonspeaking role): He works for the Ed Sullivan Show.
TV Show Crew, x4 Stagehands (20-80 nonspeaking role)
TV Show Crew, x2-3 Wardrobe (20-80 nonspeaking role)

Carl (15-24 Teenage Chorus, variable ranges): He’s a teenage boy from Sweet Apple.
Policeman (25-50 variable range)
Girl 1 (14-19 Teenage Chorus)
Another Parent (39-50 speaking role)
Traveler 1 (25-50 speaking role)
Traveler 2 (25-50 speaking role)
Train Conductor (25-70 speaking role, variable ranges)
Lee (25-55 Adult Chorus, speaking role)
Sad Girl 1 (15-24 nonspeaking all dancing role)
Additional Sad Girls (7-15 8 nonspeaking all dancing role)
Happy Boy 1 (7-15 nonspeaking all dancers)
Additional Happy Boys (7-15 8 nonspeaking all dancers)
Sweet Apple Shriners (18-50 nonspeaking some dancing)
Doctor (50-80 nonspeaking role)