

Cast

- The Nightingale** Everyone is enchanted by her song, (Who's That Singing?) so she needs to be an excellent **solo singer**.
- Mechanical Nightingale** Again, must be a good **solo singer** (Zizi Cluck).
- The Emperor** Lazy, harmless but very powerful. An important part - **sings solo** in Cheer Up.
- Prime Minister** Constantly argues with the Second Minister. **Sings a big solo** in Where's That Nightingale.
- Second Minister** Argues with the Prime Minister. No solo singing.
- Musician** The Court Musician - a mean-spirited, villainous individual. **Sings solo** in Nightingale - Evil Version.
- Kitchen Maid** An intelligent servant. Lots to do.
- Cook** In charge of the servants. Mother of the Fisherman and the Poacher.
- Fisherman** Well-meaning boy, trying hard to make his fortune.
- Poacher** The Fisherman's sister - a bold, cheeky girl. A lively acting part with **solo singing** in Poacher's Song.
- Keeper** The Emperor's Gamekeeper - determined to catch the Poacher. **Solo singing** in Poacher's Song.
- Old Lady** A mysterious figure who tells fortunes; needs to be performed with a certain melodrama.
- Postman** A small but important role.
- Old Gardener** Tries in vain to get the Emperor to visit the gardens.
- Young Gardener** Does the hard work.
- Butler and Servants 1-4** The Emperor's staff, not always well-behaved.
- Guards 1-5** The somewhat relaxed palace guards. Number 5 is a particularly comic role.
- Courtiers 1-6** The foolish, fun-loving chorus who surround the Emperor.

As many **extra Servants and Courtiers** as you like.
Some Courtiers become the **Doctor** (Brief **solo** in 'Who Saved the Day') and **Entertainers** in Scenes 8, 10 and 12. See 'Cheer Up' for talents needed!

Extract from Scene 2***Scene 2: The Emperor's Visitors***

(Enter Emperor, Prime Minister, Courtiers. All sit/lie lazily around the stage.)

Emperor: Prime Minister, I'm bored!

Prime Minister: Oh dear!

Courtiers: *(To each other, whispering)* Oh no! /Bored! /He's bored! /What shall we do?/ Whatever next!/ etc.

Prime Minister: What would you like to do, Your Majesty?

Emperor: If I knew that I wouldn't be bored!

Second Minister: Quite right! How very true!

Prime Minister: Well, you deal with him, then.

Second Minister: er....

Musician: Might I suggest some music?

Prime Minister: Good idea!

Musician: Here is a little masterpiece I composed earlier.

Emperor: No, no, no. We've heard your masterpieces before.

Courtier 1: Ooh, I know! There are some visitors in the Royal Waiting Room.

Second Minister: Better idea!

Courtier 2: They might be fun.

Prime Minister: I doubt it.

Emperor: All right. Send them in.

(Enter Old Gardener, Young Gardener, Gamekeeper, and Postman. The Gardeners step forward.)

Emperor: Who is this?

Courtier 1: The Old Gardener and the Young Gardener.

Old Gardener: I have come to beg you to visit the palace garden.

Emperor: What for?

Old Gardener: Because it is so beautiful! And you never go there!

Young Gardener: It's a lot of hard work.

Old Gardener: A triumph this year, even if I do say so myself.

Young Gardener: All that weeding...

Old Gardener: You should see the trees! The flowers! The wide lawn leading -

Young Gardener: Takes a lot of mowing, that does.

Old Gardener: Leading down to the sea. And everything in bloom!

Young Gardener: That's taken some doing, with this hosepipe ban.

Emperor: I don't need to visit the garden. I can see it from the window.

(He goes and looks out of the window. The Courtiers gather round him and look out too.)

Old Gardener: It's not quite the same experience -

Emperor: Very nice. Next!

(The Gardeners make way for the Keeper.)

Emperor: Who's this?

Courtier 1: The Royal Gamekeeper.

Prime Minister: I hope he's more interesting than the last lot.

Keeper: Your Majesty, I've come to report a crime.

Prime Minister: It's not a police station!

Keeper: Sire, somebody has been shooting the animals that live in the palace garden.

Courtiers: *(Gasp in horror)*

Second Minister: What animals?

Keeper: Ducks from the royal duckponds -

Courtiers: No!!!!

Keeper: And....*(beckoning them closer)* little bunny rabbits!

Courtiers: *(Wails of distress)*

Young Gardener: Well, they do eat the lettuces.

(Pause. Everyone stares at him accusingly.)

Young Gardener: It's not me, though!

Emperor: AHM! Gamekeeper! It's your job to catch poachers. Next!

Postman: *(Stepping forward)* Oh, you're ready now, are you?

Courtier 2: The Postman.

Postman: *(Grumbling)* Just a few letters to deliver, and I've been stuck in that waiting room for hours.

Emperor: Anything interesting?

Postman: 'By hand, to the Emperor' this says.

Emperor: *(Giving letter to Second Minister)* Read it out.

Postman: I'll be on my way, then. Don't bother seeing me out.
(Exit Postman. Enter Butler and Kitchen Maid)

Second Minister: *(Reading)* From the City Musicians Society.

Musician: Oh, them! You can hardly call them musicians.

Second Minister: It says, 'Your Majesty, we are writing to congratulate you on your marvellous Nightingale.'

Emperor: My what?

Prime Minister: *(Grabs letter)* Let me see. 'The wonderful song of the Nightingale casts a spell on all who hear it.'

Emperor: But what is it?

Kitchen Maid: It's a little bird...

Musician: How ridiculous!

Second Minister: *(Grabs letter back)* 'You are surely the greatest Emperor in the world, for only your palace has this enchanting music.'

Emperor: Well, why haven't I heard it? *(Gets up)* I want it in here, singing, tomorrow, or heads will roll!
(Exit Emperor.)

Prime Minister: Oh dear. Quick - Guards! Palace Guards!

Guards: *(Offstage)* Hup, two three four!

(Enter Guards. They line up, badly.)

Guard 1: Sir!

Prime Minister: Find the Nightingale!

Guards: *(Saluting)* Yes SIR!

Prime Minister: Servants! *(Enter Servants)*

Butler: Now what?

Prime Minister: Find the Nightingale! And Courtiers -

Courtiers: Who - us?!

Prime Minister: Find the Nightingale!

(Pause)

Guard 5: But where is it?

Prime Minister: I don't know! Search the palace!

Song 2: Where's That Nightingale?
(Minister & Chorus) CD 2/17

**Search in the kitchen
Where's that nightingale?
Search in the ballroom
Where's that nightingale?
Search in the dungeons
Where's that nightingale?
Oh! Where can that birdie be?**

Etc.