

## **Yerma: Information for those planning to audition v1.0**

*Auditions will take place with the Director and another member of the Production Team.*

*The full translation of the play will not be available before your audition.*

*First look at the casting breakdown to help you decide which part you would like to play – we strongly recommend that you check any available translation of the play to help you understand more about the parts, and especially how large the part is.*

*Do not be put off that some of the parts have no first names. That does not mean that they are not very important and significant parts for this play. Federico García Lorca did this deliberately in the manner of Greek Drama to emphasise that these parts collectively represent the culture and values of the pueblo.*

### **1: The Casting Breakdown**

YERMA: wife of JUAN, artistic, restless, free-spirited, eager for knowledge, discontented, sharp-tongued, childless yet desperate for a son to love, frustrated by JUAN, increasingly assertive, doesn't care about her reputation, obedient to the wishes of her father and always upholds the honour of her family, has an emotional connection to nature and its wildness, resists fate with tragic consequences, female, age 20-30

JUAN: husband of YERMA, hard-working, down-to-earth, eager for material success, troubled by his wife's discontent, protective to the point of jealousy, somewhat controlling in an attempt to prevent gossip about their relationship, worries about his reputation, upholds the honour of his family, lives off the land and views nature as a way to extract a living, through all the frustrations of their relationship he never ceases loving YERMA but it is a memory of what they once were that he loves, accepting of fate, male, age 20-30

MARIA: newly pregnant wife, later on a young mother, a friend of YERMA but more like a sister, anxious about becoming a mother, poetic, loving, considerate, contented, deeply religious, often concerned about YERMA's volatile state of mind, at times she is something like a mediator between YERMA and the culture of the pueblo, accepting of fate, female, age 20-30

VICTOR: a shepherd, a singer, romantic, carefree, happy, sometimes lonely, few responsibilities, lives with his father and brothers, obedient to the wishes of his father, well-liked by the pueblo, has known YERMA since they were children and has an emotional connection with her, accepting of fate, male, age 20-30

OLDER PAGAN WOMAN: wife, mother of several children, earthy, experienced, knowledgeable, wise, sardonic, funny, sceptical of religion, engages with YERMA based on an ulterior motive, something like a wicked queen in a fairy tale, accepting of fate, female, age 30-50

DOLORES: wife, mother, a faith-healer particularly for women who want to conceive, spiritual, caring, something of an outsider in the pueblo, wants to resist fate, female, age 30-50

*Note: The actor playing the OLDER PAGAN WOMAN is also likely to play the smaller part of DOLORES*

*The cast will also have a versatile ensemble of actors who sing, dance and play multiple roles as follows:*

FIVE WASHERWOMEN/WOMEN: wives, mothers, gossipy, funny, scathing, sensual, singers, dancers, during their dance something like the witches in Macbeth, loyal to the shared values of the pueblo, accepting of fate, females, ages 20-40

*Note: Each of the WASHERWOMEN will also play smaller speaking roles of WOMEN in other later parts of the performance*

TWO SISTERS OF JUAN: unmarried, quiet, they behave like they are actors in a silent film, religious, sometimes comical, other times they are poignantly sad, loyal to JUAN, accepting of fate, females, ages 20-30

TWO GIRLS: young wives, one has a baby, the other does not, the latter is the daughter of DOLORES, she is rebellious, free-spirited, questioning, wants to resist fate, females, ages 20-30

*Note: The actors playing the TWO SISTERS will also play the TWO GIRLS*

## **2. Audition pieces for the part of YERMA**

*There will be two audition pieces for the part of YERMA. You do not need to memorise the pieces. First you will read the poem below from Act 2, Scene 2 of the translated play -*

### **ACT 2      SCENE 2 (excerpt)**

**YERMA:** *(As though dreaming.)*

Ay, what a meadow of sorrow!

Ay, what a door shut to beauty!

I ask for a son to suffer and the air

offers me dahlias of the sleeping moon.

These two springs that I have, springs of warm milk,

So deep in my flesh, two pulses of galloping mare,

making the branch of my anguish throb so.

Ay, blinded breasts under my dress!

Ay, doves with no eyes nor whiteness!

Ay, what pain of imprisoned blood

like wasps knifing the back of the neck!

But you have to come, my love, my child,

for the sea offers salt, the earth fruit,

and our womb bears tender children

as the cloud carries sweet rain.

*Secondly you will read the scene below from Act 3, Scene 2. A member of the Production Team will read the part of the OLDER PAGAN WOMAN.*

**ACT 3      SCENE 2 (excerpt)**

**OLDER PAGAN WOMAN:** When I saw you at the pilgrimage my heart leapt.

Women come here to know men and then the Saint performs the miracle. My son is waiting for you there behind the Ermita. My house has need of a woman. If you go to him we three will live together. My son is made of blood. As am I. Inside my home, there still lingers the musk of the cradle. The ashes of your bed will become as bread and salt for the children. Come. Your people are not important. And when it comes to your husband, if he so much as crosses the street, we have the heart and we have the weapons.

**YERMA:** Enough, enough I tell you. You have no idea. Never would I do it. It's not possible for me to even look. You imagine that I could know another man? What would become of my honour? The water would flow uphill and the full moon come out at noon. You go to him. I follow my own path. Do you seriously think that I could bend myself to another man? That I would go down on bended knee like a slave for that which is mine by right. Take heed, for I will never speak of such things again. I'm not looking.

**OLDER PAGAN WOMAN:** When you have thirst, you should be grateful of water.

**YERMA:** I am as a barren field wide enough for a thousand pair of oxen to plow, and you bring to me a little glass of water from the well. The pain that I possess is not that of the flesh.

*And lastly you should prepare for a relaxed informal conversation with the Director and another member of the Production Team about your acting interests, training and experience.*

### **3. Audition pieces for any other part**

*All the acting parts in the original Spanish version of this play by Federico Garcia Lorca are beautifully written and a richly rewarding creative experience. We will aim to help guide you towards the part that is right for you.*

*Anyone auditioning for a part in the Casting Breakdown other than YERMA should:*

*1. Read a poem entirely of your own choosing that has been written in English or translated into English. The poem should be no longer than one side page of A4 with approximately the spacing and font of this document. You do not need to memorise the poem.*

*2. Prepare for a relaxed informal conversation with the Director and another member of the Production Team about your acting interests, training and experience.*

**We look forward to all of your auditions! Good luck!**

**Yerma Production Team**