

Little City Players
The Wind in the Willows
Audition Information

Auditions

Monday, July 12 & Tuesday, July 13 from 7-9pm
Vergennes Opera House, 120 Main St

Little City Players is looking for 10-15 adult actors of any age for its fall production of "The Wind in the Willows" based on the classic book by Kenneth Grahame. While there are no parts specifically for children, older kids (12+) are also welcome to audition. This non-musical adaptation follows the adventures of friends Mole, Rat, Badger and Toad along the River, through the Wild Wood and beyond. The production will take place October 14-17 & 22-24 at the Vergennes Opera House.

Production Information

Rehearsals will take place Sunday, Tuesday & Wednesday evenings starting August 8 at the Vergennes Opera House. The four main characters (Rat, Mole, Badger & Toad) will need to be at the majority of the rehearsals. Scenes containing secondary characters will be mostly rehearsed on Sunday evenings.

Other required dates for cast & crew are:

Sunday, October 10 (Load-in- All Day)

Monday, October 11-Wednesday, October 13 (Dress Rehearsals: 6pm call)

Thursday, October 14-Saturday, October 16 (Productions, 6pm call)

Sunday, October 17 (Production, 12pm call)

Thursday, October 21 (Rehearsal, 7pm)

Friday, October 22-Saturday, October 23 (Productions, 6pm call)

Sunday, October 24 (Production, 12pm call & Load-Out)

Character Information

The four main characters are Rat, Mole, Badger and Toad. There are additional secondary characters who are only in a scene or two. Most characters could be played by people of either sex and of a wide range of ages.

Rat: He is a dependable, sensible but adventurous creature who's true love is the river. He is brave and loyal, a true captain.

Mole: Mole is a shy, mild-mannered small creature who has never ventured far from home. His adventures with Rat and Toad help bring out his brave side.

Badger: Badger is an older, wiser animal. He is imposing and can be gruff, but his bark is worse than his bite. He is a generous friend and wants to help in whatever way he can.

Toad: Toad is an impetuous, boisterous creature but awfully good-natured and generous. He is not so intelligent, though he thinks he is. He is always thinking of some new thing he needs to be doing, and inevitably gets in over his head.

Audition Scene 1: *We are on the Riverbank. Mole has just emerged from his home and is exploring the river for the very first time. Rat approaches him in a boat.*

Mole: Hello Rat

Rat: Don't seem to have seen you about before.

Mole: (*shyly*) I—I don't go out much, as a rule

Rat: Prefer home life? I know. Very good thing too in its way.

Mole: Yes, you see, I--- this is a river, isn't it?

Rat: *The river. Now, step lively (Rat invites Mole into the boat, but he is reluctant to get in.)*

Mole: I've never been in a boat before.

Rat: (*incredulously*) Never been in a --- You never--- Well, I--- What have you been doing then?

Mole: Is it as nice as all that?

Rat: Nice? My dear young friend, believe me, it's the *only* thing. There is nothing, absolutely nothing half so much worth doing as simply messing about in boats (*dreamily*) Simply messing, messing about in boats. It doesn't matter which, in boats, or with boats...

Mole: But what do you *do*?

Rat: Nothing. Just mess about. That's the charm of it. You're always busy, and you never do anything in particular, and when you've done it there's always something else to do... and so you've never even seen the river before? Well, well

Mole: Never. And you actually live by it. What a jolly life it sounds.

Rat: By it and with it and on it and in it. It's my world and I don't want any other.

Mole: Isn't it a bit dull at times? Just you and the river and no one else to pass a word with?

Rat: No one else to—no one—Oh well, I musn't be hard on you. You're new to it. But believe me my dear young friend, the River Bank is so crowded nowadays that many people are moving away altogether: otters, kingfishers, dab-chicks, moorhens.

Mole: I am afraid you must think me very ignorant

Rat: Not at all, not being used to it. Look here, what are you doing today?

Mole: I—I was spring cleaning.

Rat: On a day like this?

Mole: That's just it. Sometimes I seem to hear a voice within me say "Whitewash," and then another voice says "Hang whitewash!" (*slowly*) And I don't know quite which of the---I don't quite know—Oh, hang whitewash!

Rat: That's the spirit. Well, what I was about to suggest was a trifle of lunch on the bank here, and then I'd take you round and introduce you to a few of my friends. Does that appeal to you at all?

Mole: (*ecstatically*) Does it appeal to me? Does it? Oh my, oh my, oh my (*Rat exits the boat with the luncheon basket.*)

Rat: There, there, you don't want to get too excited. It's only just a trifle of lunch: cold ham, cold chicken salad, French rolls, cress sandwiches, hard-boiled eggs, tinned peaches, meringues, ginger beer, lemonade, milk chocolate, oranges. Nothing special, only just---

Mole: Stop, stop. Oh my. Oh, what a day!

Rat: That's all right. You'll feel better soon. Now just you wait here, don't go falling into the river or anything like that, and I'll be back with the blanket.

Mole: (*wiping away tears*) Oh, Mr. Rat, my generous friend. I---I---words fail me for the moment--- You---I---Oh, what a day!

Audition Scene 2: *We are at Badger's house in the Wild Wood. Rat & Mole have stopped by, and the topic of conversation quickly turns to the exploits of their friend Toad.*

Badger: Well, well, well. Rat and his friend Mole. Come along in both of you, at once. Why, you must be perished! Well, I never! Lost in the snow. And your friend that tired. Well, well. And in the Wild Wood at this time of night. *(He pats their heads paternally)* Come along in. There's a good fire here and supper and everything.

Mole: Oh, thank you!

Badger: Now what will you do first? Toast your toes a bit? Or supper now and toast your toes afterward? It's all ready. I was expecting one or two friends might drop in.

Mole: *(shyly)* I think I should like supper at once, please, Mr. Badger.

Badger: That's right, Mole. Sensible animal. And what about you, Rat?

Rat: *(who is standing comfortably with his back to the fire)* Just as you like. Fine old place, isn't it Mole.

Mole: *(already at the food)* Grand.

Badger: I've been wanting to see you fellows because I have heard very grave reports of our mutual friend Toad.

Rat: *(shaking his head)* Oh, Toad.

Mole: *(as sympathetically as he can with his mouth full)* Tut, tut.

Badger: Is his case as hopeless as one has heard

Rat: Going from bad to worse. That's all you can say about him, isn't it Mole?

Mole: *(nodding)* Mmmm hmmm

Rat: Another smash up only last week, and a bad one. You see, since he's got this motor craze he insists on driving himself and he's hopelessly incapable. If only he'd employ a decent, steady animal and leave everything to him, he'd get on all right. But no, he's convinced he's the greatest driver ever and no one can teach him anything. And so it goes on.

Mole: And so it goes on.

Badger: And so it goes on. *(after a pause)* How many has he had?

Rat: Cars or smashes? Oh well, it's the same thing with Toad. The last was the seventh.

Mole: He's been in hospital three times, and as for the fines he's had to pay---

Rat: Toad's rich, we all know, but he's not a millionaire. Killed or ruined, it will be one or the other with Toad.

Badger: Alas! I knew his father. I knew his grandfather. Alas, poor witless animal!

Rat: Oughtn't we do something? We're his friends.

Badger: Yes, you're right. The hour has come.

Mole: What hour?

Badger: Whose hour, you should say. Toad's hour. The hour of Toad.

Rat: Well done Badger. I knew you'd feel that way too.

Mole: We'll teach him to be a sensible Toad.

Badger: At any moment another new and exceptionally powerful motor car will arrive at Toad Hall for approval or return. We must be up and doing ere it is too late.

Rat: That's right Badger. We'll rescue the poor animal. We'll convert him. He'll be the most converted Toad that ever was before we've finished with him.

Badger: The first step is to get him here and reason with him. You know how it is.

Rat: Of course.

Mole: Of course.

Rat: But how to get him here, that's the problem

Badger: Let's apply our minds to it.

Audition Scene 3: Toad has made his way unexpectedly to Badger's House where Badger, Rat & Mole have just then been discussing his various misadventures and what they can do to help him learn the error of his ways.

Badger: Whoever is that? *(He opens the door and as he opens it Toad falls into his arms, panting with fear. He is dressed in full driving regalia- gloves, goggles, scarf, cap)*

Rat: *(in surprise)* Why, it's Toad!

Mole: Hello Toad. You ought to try some of this beef.

Rat: Why, what's the matter? Another accident *(Toad shakes his head.)* That's something.

Toad: *(limping to a chair with the help of Badger)* Ah Ratty, my dear old Ratty, and my good friend Mole, how badly I seemed to need your help just now. As it was, I had to do the best I could without you. Fortunately, it was enough. But as you can see, it has exhausted me somewhat.

Rat: What's happened? Wild Wooders?

Toad: An unfortunate breakdown in my car, a loose nut, some trifling mishap left me stranded at the edge of the wood. I bethought of my good friend Badger, he would put me up for the night. As I came whistling through the wood, caring not of danger, I was suddenly seized upon by a gang of rascally ferrets. *(Toad gets more and more animated as his story progresses.)* I set about them lightheartedly, at the most there were no more than a dozen of them, when suddenly they were reinforced by a posse of scoundrelly weasels. It was then, Ratty, and my dear friend Mole, that I wished I had your assistance. Twelve of the rascals, yes, but twenty-four of them is a different matter. A rear guard was forced upon me. Step by step... *(He senses a change in the attitude from his friends and goes on less confidently)* Step by step... *(He looks from one to the other, hoping for encouragement, but getting none)* Step by step...

Badger: *(solemnly)* Won't you sit down again, Toad?

Toad: *(confusedly)* Thank you.

Rat: Would you care to be nearer the fire?

Toad: No thank you.

Mole: Let me put your gloves down for you.

Toad: It's all right, thank you.

Badger: *(to Rat)* The moment has come, I think, don't you?

Rat: I think so.

Badger: *(to Mole)* You agree?

Mole: Yes. (*he sighs*)

Toad: (*uneasily*) I say, you fellows, what's all this?

Badger: Toad. I knew your father, worthy animal that he was. I knew your grandfather. The question I wish to ask you now is this. At the beginning of the breathless story of adventure to which we have just been listening, you mentioned (*pausing dramatically*) a motor car. You implied further that this motor car had suddenly lost its efficiency. Am I right in supposing that just at this moment your narrative hovered for an instant on the confines of truth?

Toad: What do you mean?

Rat: Really, Toad, he couldn't have put it more plainly.

Badger: I asked you, Toad, if it is indeed a fact that your eighth motor car is now in as fragmentary a condition as the previous seven?

Toad: (*sulkily*) I had a little accident.

Badger: Thank you. (*to Rat*) Then I think that in that case we may begin the treatment

Rat: Yes, I think so.

Toad: I say, you fellows---

Badger: Toad!

Rat: This is all for your own good, Toady old man.

Badger: Now then, first of all, take those ridiculous goggles off.

Toad: Shan't! What is the meaning of this gross outrage? I demand an instant explanation.

Badger: Take them off then, you two.

Rat: It's all for your own good, Toady old man. We've been talking it over for hours. Might as well take it quietly.

Mole: We don't like doing it, Toad, really we don't. It's only because we are so fond of you. (*They remove his goggles*)

Badger: That is better. Now then, Toad, you've disregarded all the warnings we've given you. You've gone on squandering the money your father left you and you're giving us animals a bad name by your furious driving and your smashes and your rows with the police. We have decided, my friend Ratty and Mole and I, that it is time we saved you from yourself. I am going to make one more effort to bring you to reason. You will come with me into my study and there you will hear some facts about yourself. Come!

Toad: (*meekly*) Yes, Badger. Thank you Badger. (*they go out together*)

Audition Scene 4: *Toad has been locked in a dungeon due to his misadventures with motor cars. Phoebe, the jailer's daughter, is bringing him his food and trying to help.*

Phoebe: Good morning, Toad.

Toad: Good morning, woman.

Phoebe: Slept well?

Toad: Slept well? How could I sleep well, immured in a dark and noisome dungeon like this?

Phoebe: Well, some do. See, I've brought you your breakfast.

Toad: Then you will oblige me by taking it away again.

Phoebe: What, aren't you ever going to eat any more?

Toad: You don't understand. This is the end.

Phoebe: You've said that every day for a month. The end of what?

Toad: The end of everything. At least it is the end of the career of Toad, which is the same thing. The popular and handsome Toad, the rich and hospitable Toad, the Toad so free and careless and debonair.

Phoebe: Cheer up, there's always hope.

Toad: Hope? How can I hope ever to be set at large again who have been imprisoned so justly for stealing so handsome a motor car in such an audacious manner, and for such lurid and imaginative cheek bestowed upon such a fat, red-faced policeman?

Phoebe: Well, there is that, of course.

Toad: Stupid animal that I was, now I must languish in this dungeon till people who were proud to say they knew me have forgotten the very name of Toad.

Phoebe: There's no need to languish all the time.

Toad: Oh wise old Badger. Oh, clever intelligent Rat and sensible Mole. What sound judgments, what a knowledge of men and matters you possess. Oh, unhappy and forsaken Toad!

Phoebe: *(not really listening to Toad, but rather arranging the breakfast)* Nice hot buttered toast and tea.

Toad: Oh, despairing and--- Did you say *hot* buttered?

Phoebe: Made it myself, I did. Father said, “Here’s the key of Number 87 and you can take him his breakfast. He’s the most notorious dangerous animal in the country.” Said Father, “and how we shall keep him under lock and key goodness only knows.”

Toad: Did he say that?

Phoebe: His very words. “The most notorious dangerous and reckless animal within the four walls of this here castle and you can take him a couple of old crusts for breakfast.”

Toad: *(beginning to resume his proud nature)* Well, of course, one has one’s reputation.

Phoebe: So I said, “Yes, Father,” and as soon as his back was turned I said to myself, “What a shame,” and I made this nice buttered toast. So cheer up and be a nice sensible animal.

(Toad digs into the toast and tea with a new found relish)

Phoebe: Tell me about Toad Hall.

Toad: Finest house in these parts for miles around. It is an eligible, self-contained gentleman’s residence, very unique, dating in part from the fourteenth century, but replete with every modern convenience: up-to-date sanitation, church, post office and golf links.

Phoebe: Fancy! And do your friends Mr. Badger, Mr. Rat and Mr. Mole live there with you?

Toad: *(laughing)* Oh, my dear child! Badger, Rat, Mole, excellent fellows all, but hardly, how shall I put it, hardly, well, *hardly*.

Phoebe: You’re feeling better, aren’t you?

Toad: The artistic temperament. We have our ups and downs. Any prisoners ever been known to escape from this castle of yours?

Phoebe: Never.

Toad: Oh, well I must see what I can do. I must give my mind to it one day. Excellent buttered toast this.

Phoebe: I’ve been giving my mind to it lately.

Toad: That’s the only way to make really good toast.

Phoebe: I didn’t mean to that. I meant to escaping. I think I see a way in which you might do it.

Toad: You’re going to help me?

Phoebe: Yes. I like you Toad and I’ve felt sorry for you and for your friends who want to see you again so badly. And I think it’s a shame the way you’ve been treated.

Toad: They were afraid of me, that’s what it was.

Phoebe: Now listen. I have an aunt who is a washerwoman.

Toad: (*condescendingly*) There, there. Think no more of it. I have several aunts who ought to be washerwomen.

Phoebe: Do be quiet a minute, Toad. You talk too much, that's your chief fault. Now, my aunt does the washing for all the prisoners in the castle. She brings the washing back Friday morning, that's today. Now you're very rich, at least you're always telling me so, and for a few pounds I think I could persuade her to lend you her dress and bonnet and so on, and you could escape as the castle washerwoman. You're very much alike in some ways, particularly about the figure.

Toad: (*indignantly*) We are not! I have a very elegant figure, for what I am.

Phoebe: So has my aunt, for what she is. But have it your own way you horrid, proud, ungrateful animal, when I'm trying to help you!

Toad: (*quickly*) Yes, yes, that's all right, thank you very much indeed. But I was only thinking--- You surely wouldn't have Mr. Toad of Toad Hall going about the country disguised as a washerwoman.

Phoebe: All right, then you can stop here as a Toad. I suppose you want to go off in a carriage?

Toad: No, no! Please! You are a good, kind, clever girl and I am indeed a proud and stupid Toad. Introduce me to your worthy aunt if you will be so kind. It would be a privilege to meet her.

Phoebe: That's better. With a little trouble you'd make quite a nice Toad.