

The Baker's Wife: Musical Info Synopsis

Synopsis:

The Baker's Wife unfolds in a charming French village, where the community depends on the baker and his wife for their daily bread. When the baker's wife leaves him for another man, it causes a disruption in the lives of the townspeople, leading to a shortage of bread and leaving the village without a baker. As the characters grapple with the complexities of relationships, The Baker's Wife weaves a tale of forgiveness, redemption, and the healing power of love.

Performance style:

The tone of the show encompasses both characterful comedy and genuine/truthful romance. There are touching elements of heartfelt emotion. Though many of the village characters are quite 'quirky', the comedy is generally gentle, character/driven and situational (rather than broad or farcical).

Many of the characters suit performers with character and personality who can retain truth/believability in their performances for the times when the story is genuinely heartfelt and truthful.

Song List

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| Chanson | Denise Accompaniment - Chanson |
| If It Wasn't For You | Villagers |
| Merci Madame | Aimable Genevieve Accompaniment - Merci Madame |
| Bread | Villagers |
| Gifts of Love | Genevieve (now expanded to include Aimable) Accompaniment - Gifts of Love |
| Proud Lady | Dominique Accompaniment - Proud Lady |
| If It Wasn't For Her | Villagers |
| Chanson (reprise) | Denise |
| Serenade | Dominique, Genevieve, Aimable, Philippe |
| Meadowlark | Genevieve Meadowlark Accompaniment - start at 1.02 |
| Any Day Now Day | Aimable Villagers |
| Chanson (reprise) | Denise |
| The World's Luckiest Man | Claude Men https://open.spotify.com/track/1ChZNDv1JZoiF0SCRAct2M?si=60a296e26c604476 |
| Feminine Companionship | Marquis Nieces |
| If It Wasn't For You(reprise) | Priest |
| If I Have to Live Alone | Aimable Accompaniment - If I Have To Live Alone |
| Romance | Women https://open.spotify.com/track/7cEAX0UZ6qsaLcyOq6rsnO?si=78adb6d4b6904248 |
| Where is the Warmth | Genevieve |
| Finale | Aimable, Genevieve, Denise Villagers |

Cut Songs - The show now does NOT include the following cut songs: "Plain Simple", "Look For The Woman", "Buzz A/Buzz" and "Endless Delights".

Characters (parts marked * are gender neutral)

AIMABLE CASTAGNE: (playing age late 40s+). *The Baker*. Excellent sensitive actor, good singer, with comic skills and ability to play 'drunk'. Amiable, decent, humorous and loving. Previously unmarried, he adores his young wife, Genevieve, and is devoted to her happiness and his work (in a way that initially appears somewhat naïve). This all comes crashing down when she leaves him, and we learn of his deep self-knowledge and feeling beneath the uncomplicated, likeable exterior.

DOMINIQUE: (playing age 20s) *The Marquis' handy man*. Excellent singer and actor. The love interest in the story, he is physically fit, confident and charming. With a reputation for the ladies he is, however, a decent, sensitive young man with a heart sense of humour and he genuinely (for the first time) falls in love with Genevieve. When they elope she comes to discover their relationship is based on lust rather than love and that he lacks that warmth she craves.

GENEVIEVE: (playing age 20s) *Aimable's young wife*. Excellent singer and actress. Young, and personable. Has previously been in a painful, failed relationship and never lived alone. She is able to assert herself but is somewhat confused and uncertain of herself and her feelings for her husband. Through the story she grows emotionally and learns how to accept another's love and its true meaning.

DENISE: (playing age 40+). *Claude's wife*. Excellent singer and actress. Sociable, warm and wise she is the public face of the café and a soulmate to others. Having a long marriage the shine has worn off their relationship and it is cluttered with little digs, petty criticisms and recriminations. She turns the tables and makes her husband, and the other men, see sense about the plight of the village and their relationships.

MARQUIS: (playing age 30s+) *The Mayor*. Good singer, excellent character acting with comedy / and some heartfelt moments. The most important person in the village (and he knows it), to whom others turn for advice. Charismatic and somewhat flamboyant but initially self-serving, unprincipled and flirtatious with women / he has an entourage of 'nieces'. He has little concern for convention, morality and others' opinion – until, through the baker's plight, he discovers his sincerity and community concern.

M. MARTINE: (playing age 30s +) *The Teacher*. Good singer and character actor. Along with the Marquis and Priest he makes up the leadership of the village community, to represent their views. The voice of reason and logic he can at times be somewhat pedantic and dismissive of those less intelligent. But he also more reasonable and easily sees another's perspective – turning to reassure, defend and counsel the baker in his hour of need. He learns to value the heart as much as the head.

M. LE CURE: (playing age 30s +) *The Priest*. Good singer and character actor. Along with the Marquis and Teacher he makes up the leadership of the village community, to represent their views. The voice of religion and spirituality he can at times be somewhat overbearing, disapproving and sanctimonious (leading to conflict with the M. Martine's logic, and Marquis immorality). Through the baker's plight he learns forgiveness and to balance his adherence to religious scripture with a genuine concern for the feelings and beliefs of his fellow villagers.

CLAUDE: (playing age 40s+). *The Café Owner*. Good singer and sensitive actor, with ability to deliver a punch line. Having been married to Denise for many years the shine has worn off their relationship and it is cluttered with little digs, petty criticisms and recriminations. Is in an ancient feud with Barnaby to whom he stubbornly refuses to talk. Cynical about marriage

until, through the baker's plight, he rediscovers his heart, his genuine love for her and his friendship with Barnaby.

BARNABY: (playing age 30s +) *Hortense's husband*. Sensitive actor with a little solo singing. Is in an ancient feud with Claude to whom he stubbornly refuses to talk (until the baker's plight leads to their friendship). Somewhat unreasonable and dismissive of his wife's feelings the portrayal of the character should not veer into cruelty. She eventually walks out on him – we should understand why, but have a sense that their relationship is salvageable if he can just change his ways.

***ANTOINE*:** (playing age 30s +) Character actor with comedy – minimal solo singing. Straight/talking, bordering on blunt, indiscrete and tactless at times. He manages to insult a number of people and put his foot in it (with sometimes comic, sometimes uncomfortable, results). He locates the missing Genevieve and drives the others insane with his rambling, shaggy/dog story about her location.

PIERRE: (playing age 20s +) Character actor with comedy. In a prolonged neighbour dispute with Doumergue about his tree shading his garden. Has something of a more simplistic, optimistic, less dogmatic attitude than some of the others.

DOUMERGUE: (playing age 20s +) Good singer and comic character actor. In a prolonged neighbour dispute with Pierre about wanting his tree cut down. Somewhat comically pessimistic in nature and in an unhappy relationship with his wife.

PHILLIPE: (playing age teens or 20s) *Dominique's friend*. Good singer. Ideally plays the acoustic guitar on stage to accompany 3 of the songs. Very minimal dialogue. Decent young man who helps Dominique seduce Genevieve one evening by accompanying him (with voice guitar) outside their balcony. A character in the village scene

HORTENSE: (playing age 30s). *Barnaby's wife*. Excellent sensitive actress with some singing. Likeable, warm and reasonable she is somewhat under the thumb of her husband and consistently bends to his will. The events of the story lead her to question her position and she 'cracks' and asserts herself with annoyance to rebuke the foolish actions of the village men (including her husband). By the end she chooses to leave the village and her husband – in a statement of intent with the possibility of forgiveness.

THERESE: (playing age 40+) *The confirmed 'spinster' of the village*. Good comic actress with some singing. Tendency towards being disapproving, judgmental and taking the moral high ground. She is initially offended by the teachers (fake) advances but then humorously takes him at his word.

NICOLE: (playing age 20s) *One of the Marquis' 3 'nieces'*. Ability to sing close harmony and dance. They are the entourage to this important figure/head and as a unit are flirtatious, confident and unconcerned with others' views about their dubious position. As an individual she has a tendency to gluttony and could "eat a dozen brioche".

SIMONE: (playing age 20s) *One of the Marquis' 3 'nieces'*. Ability to sing close harmony and dance. They are the entourage to this important figure/head and as a unit are flirtatious, confident and unconcerned with others' views about their dubious position. As an individual she reads, cooks and has 'deluxe' looks.

INEZ: (playing age 20s) *One of the Marquis' 3 'nieces'*. Ability to sing close harmony and dance. They are the entourage to this important figure/head and as a unit are flirtatious, confident and unconcerned with others' views about their dubious position.