Character Breakdown

Willy Wonka / Candy Man

Willy Wonka is an enigmatic character; at once mysterious and mischievous but also charismatic. There are a number of directions to take with Wonka, ranging from Gene Wilder's version in the original film, Willy Wonka and The Chocolate Factory, to Johnny Depp's portrayal in the recent film, Charlie and the Chocolate Factory, and everything in between. Pick a young man (or a young woman) who is charismatic, engaging and has a great voice (in the case of a young man, preferably a changed voice). The actor should be able to be funny and serious and change between the two on a dime. It is preferred that Wonka double as the Candy Man, as it helps reinforce that Wonka has staged the Golden Ticket competition and is somewhat controlling this contest along the way.

Gender: Male

Candy Man

The Candy Man goes from neighborhood to neighborhood selling candy, much like an ice cream truck. He should be pleasant, charismatic, and friendly. The Candy Man sings the song "The Candy Man" and has some scene work with Charlie. It's possible for a girl to play this role, but she should play the role as male, otherwise the title of the song may not make sense.

Gender: Male

Charlie Bucket

The role of Charlie Bucket is the emotional heart and soul of the musical. The actor performing Charlie should have an unchanged voice and lots of pluck and enthusiasm. Think a male "Annie." Charlie is in nearly every scene, so make sure you select an actor who can handle the demands of a sizable role.

Gender: Male

Grandpa Joe

Grandpa Joe is the grandfather we all wish we had when we were Charlie's age. He is caring, patient, sweet and always reminds Charlie to remain cheerful. Cast an actor who can be kind and funny.

Gender: Male

Mr. Bucket

These are great roles for young people who have nice voices, and are natural nurturers. Both sing solos; Mr. Bucket performs the number "Think Positive" with Charlie and Mrs. Bucket sings "Cheer Up, Charlie" with Mr. Bucket and Grandpa Joe. Mr. and Mrs. Bucket can double as Oompa-Loompas in the second half of the show.

Gender: Male
Mrs. Bucket

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Gender: Female

Phineous Trout

Phineous is the reporter who announces the winners of the Golden Ticket contest throughout the show. The role requires some singing, and can be played by either a boy or a girl. If played by a girl, be sure to change the pronouns appropriately.
Gender: Both

Oompa-Loompa Chorus

The Oompa-Loompa Chorus can be as small as a handful of performers or as large as your stage and theater can accommodate. Consider casting your youngest performers as Oompa-Loompas and augment them with a handful of older students who can take the lead and serve as Oompa-Loompa wranglers.
Gender: Both

Augustus Gloop

Augustus is the overachieving eater who represents the evils of eating too much. Be extremely sensitive in casting this role as it is tempting to cast an overweight young person and that can be scarring-especially if the child struggles with this issue. Consider casting a thin child and creating the illusion of size via the costume. Either a boy or a girl acting like a boy can play Augustus.
Gender: Male

Mrs. Gloop

Mrs. Gloop is Augustus' mother who has overindulged her son with food. She accompanies Augustus on the tour of the factory, and sings "I Eat More!" which is one of the more difficult songs in the score for young people. The role requires a character actress who isn't afraid to take positive risks both in her acting and her singing.
Gender: Female

Mike Teavee

For this adaptation Mike is not just a TV junky. He is also addicted to video games, the Internet and any other mindnumbing technological device. Mike is bratty, loud and obnoxious. He does not know the word "no." Mike and Ms. Teavee sing "I See It All On TV" so he should be a reasonable singer, but does not need to be phenomenal. Mike could also be portrayed by a girl playing a boy, but generally works best with a male actor.
Gender: Male
Ms. Teavee
Ms. Teavee is a take on all television moms of the distant past. Think June Cleaver (Leave it to Beaver) or Marion Cunningham (Happy Days) or Carol Brady (The Brady Bunch). She's perfectly put together and a bit vacant.
Gender: Female

Violet Beauregarde
Gum chewer extraordinaire, Violet hails from Snellville, Georgia, so it's nice if she has a Southern American accent, but not necessary. Violet should stand in stark contrast to Veruca Salt. Veruca is a wealthy refined brat; Violet is more of a bluecollar, middle class brat. She sings "Chew It" along with Willy Wonka. The song is a tour-de-force for the right voice, so cast a young lady with strong voice.
Gender: Female

Veruca Salt
Veruca is the wealthy, class-conscious, spoiled brat. She is often portrayed with a high British accent that is by no means required (brats come in all nationalities). Veruca's solo number "I Want It Now" is deceptively tricky and comes late in the show, so select a young woman with a strong voice. Veruca should contrast sharply with Violet Beauregarde in terms of look and physical type.
Gender: Female

Grandma Josephina
Charlie's three grandparents are mainly non-singing character roles. Cast performers that are innately interesting, who have good comic timing and are solid actors. These actors can double as Oompa-Loompas in the second half of the show.
Gender: Female

Grandma Georgina
Charlie's three grandparents are mainly non-singing character roles. Cast performers that are innately interesting, who have good comic timing and are solid actors. These actors can double as Oompa-Loompas in the second half of the show.
Gender: Female

Grandpa George
Charlie's three grandparents are mainly non-singing character roles. Cast performers that are innately interesting, who have good comic timing and are solid actors. These actors can double as Oompa-Loompas in the second half of the show.
Gender: Male

James
James is Charlie's friend from school. He has a few lines and sings the introduction of "The Candy Man" along with Matilda and Charlie. Gender: Male
Matilda
Matilda is also a schoolmate of Charlie's, but she's a bit of a bully. Matilda has a few lines and sings the introduction of "The Candy Man" along with James and Charlie.
Gender: Female

The Candy Man Kids
Sophie, Danny, Alfie, Billie and additional kids as needed are The Candy Man Kids-. These kids sing "The Candy Man" and their numbers may be expanded as you see fit and your program will allow. The names of the characters have been drawn from other Roald Dahl books. Feel free to assign additional names to match the number of performers you cast. All students like to go home and exclaim "I'm playing Alfie" versus "I'm just Kid 2 in "The Candy Man.'" You may also cast a single class (say the sixth grade chorus) to perform these roles, as they appear only in this number unless you choose to double them as Cooks and Oompa-Loompas.
Gender: Both

Mrs. Beauregarde
Mrs. Beauregard is a teacher of geography and has invested a great deal of hard-earned money on therapy for her orally fixated daughter, with less than stellar results. The role is virtually non-singing. Her accent should match Violet's.
Gender: Female

Mr. Salt
Mr. Salt's solution to most problems is to buy his way out. He is upper class, and usually portrayed with a high British accent. (But this accent is not necessary-just make sure Veruca and Mr. Salt sound like they hail from the same place.) He sings very little. A female actress playing male may also play the role.
Gender: Male

Squirrels
The squirrels are non-speaking, non-singing roles and you can cast as many as necessary. This is a great part for beginning actors.
Gender: Both

Chorus Of Cooks
Please note this is an optional chorus. The Cooks appear during "I Eat More!" presenting Augustus with a smorgasbord of food choices. (Check out the Director's Guide note in the song for more information.) Double the Candy Man Kids Chorus and Oompa-Loompa Chorus or cast a single class of kids to perform this section. (For example, Mrs. Ripley's third grade class.)
Gender: Both