Spring Awakening: Character Descriptions & Boundary Disclosure

Spring Awakening explores themes of adolescence, sexuality, personal identity, discovery, and emotional vulnerability. Due to the staging, choreography, and dramatic nature of this production, clear boundaries, transparent consent, and actor comfort are vital to creating a safe, professional, and supportive creative environment.

These character descriptions will help you understand what each opportunity may be during this process. Following the description is a Boundary Disclosure form that will allow you to share which roles you are interested in auditioning.

ALL of the characters in *Spring Awakening* experience or witness heightened moments. There is a lot of variety in the way each moment can be staged. The team will be collaborating with you directly to figure out what works best for you, if cast. If you do not feel confident or comfortable navigating the content for a specific character, please check **NO** on the Boundary Disclosure form.

Principal Characters

Wendla

- **Description:** An innocent and sheltered young woman who grows increasingly curious about her changing body, the world, and her burgeoning maturity. Both vulnerable and inquisitive, she embarks on a tragic journey with Melchior.
- **Vocal Range:** Mezzo-Soprano (E3 – E5)
- Navigates adolescent development, societal expectations, and themes of bodily autonomy.
- Engages in a passionate, consensual physical encounter in the hayloft involving simulated intimacy with Melchior.
- Asks Melchior to strike her which he does in an escalating manner, firmly with a switch during a moment of heightened emotional and physical intensity.
- Navigates an unplanned adolescent pregnancy, societal concealment, and a tragic medical/abortion sequence offstage.

Melchior Gabor

- **Description:** A smart, headstrong, and radical student who refuses to submit to society's strict, conservative rules. He struggles deeply with his intellectual nature and his intense emotional awakening regarding Wendla.
- **Vocal Range:** Tenor/Baritenor (G2 – B4, using mix and falsetto)
- Navigates strict academic and social pressures.
- Engages in a passionate, consensual physical encounter in the hayloft involving simulated intimacy with Wendla.
- Is asked by Wendla to strike her, which he does in an escalating and firm manner, with a switch during a moment of heightened emotional and physical intensity.
- Undergoes violent bullying during a scene in a reform school setting.

Moritz Stiefel

- **Description:** Melchior's anxious, troubled best friend. He desperately tries to please his cold father, constantly fears failure, and is tormented by academic pressure and intense stress that lead to severe mental health struggles.
- **Vocal Range:** Rock Tenor (C3 – A4, relying heavily on gritty chest voice)
- Navigates strict academic and social pressures.
- Portrays theatrical suicide and navigates themes of severe adolescent mental health struggles and despair.

Martha Bessel

- **Description:** An intelligent, kind, and sensitive schoolgirl who harbors a secret crush on Moritz and deals with a deeply oppressive and abusive home life.
- **Vocal Range:** Mezzo-Soprano (E3 – E5)
- Navigates adolescent development, societal expectations, and themes of bodily autonomy and parental abuse.

Ilse Neumann

- **Description:** Martha's former friend and a runaway who lives a bohemian, non-conformist life among an artists' colony. She represents the path of survival outside of a repressive society and becomes Moritz's last hope.
- **Vocal Range:** Mezzo-Soprano/Belter (A3 – E5)
- Navigates adolescent development, societal expectations, and themes of bodily autonomy and intimate violence.

Supporting & Ensemble Characters

- **Thea:** Wendla's best friend; a schoolgirl trying hard to maintain strict purity and adherence to a rigid culture.
    - Navigates adolescent development, societal expectations, and themes of bodily autonomy.
- **Anna:** Martha's loyal friend who struggles to fully comprehend the heavy trials and difficulties Martha is hiding.
    - Navigates adolescent development, societal expectations, and themes of bodily autonomy.
- **Hanschen Rilow:** A smart, handsome, and narcissistic schoolmate comfortable with his own identity who manipulates others.
    - Navigates strict academic and social pressures.
    - Engages in a romantic, consensual, intimate scene involving kissing and physical touch with Ernst.
- **Ernst Röbel:** A naive, timid, and easily swayed schoolmate of Melchior and Hanschen.
    - Navigates strict academic and social pressures.
    - Engages in a romantic, consensual, intimate scene involving kissing and physical touch Hanschen.
- **Georg Zissie:** A nervous student who is completely distracted and overwhelmed by his intense feelings for his piano teacher.
    - Navigates strict academic and social pressures.
    - Engages in vivid fantasies about his piano teacher.
- **Otto Lammert:** A schoolboy troubled and distracted by the anxieties of adolescence.
    - Navigates strict academic and social pressures.
- **Ensemble:** Will play schoolgirls and schoolboys and will be featured in multiple numbers throughout the show.
    - Navigate strict academic and social pressures.
    - Navigate adolescent development, societal expectations, and themes of bodily autonomy.
    - May be involved in cruel and violent bullying during the reformatory scene with the character of Melchior.
- **Adult Men & Women:** Portray all authority figures—including teachers, headmasters, mothers, fathers, and figures of societal oppression—highlighting the generational disconnect.
    - Portray authority figures holding traditional, conservative societal views.
    - May engage in a fantasy scene with the character of Georg.

Production Notes & Context

- **Vocal Demands vs. Contemporary Pop-Rock Style:** The vocal ranges for principal roles (especially Melchior and Moritz) require a classical musical theater foundation blended heavily with contemporary belt, mix, and rock grit. Moritz requires a high rock tenor chest voice (up to A4) while carrying intense emotional and vocal strain during songs like "Don't Do Sadness" and "The Mirror-Blue Night."
    - About the style: The score of Spring Awakening has a very distinctive sound. It is rooted in indie pop-rock and folk-rock/ alternative pop-rock, rather than traditional or conventional musical theater. Emotionally driven melodies with pop energy.
        - The following suggestions are only a reference for style. Always choose a song that shows off your voice and feels true to you. Be YOU!
        - Musicals with similar styles include: Alice By Heart, Once, American Idiot, Heathers, Next To Normal, American Psycho
        - Non-musical female artists:
            - Regina Specktor, Jewel, Lizzie McAlpine, Sarah McLachlan, Fiona Apple, Florence + The Machine
        - Non-musical male artists:
            - Noah Kahan, Jeff Buckley, Duncan Sheik (Daylight/album), Damien Rice, Green Day
- **Thematic Parallelism in the Ensemble:** Supporting students (Hanschen, Ernst, Georg, and Otto) are categorized under "strict academic and social pressures," mirroring Melchior and Moritz's external struggles. Meanwhile, the young women (Wendla, Martha, Ilse, Thea, Anna) are grouped around "adolescent development, societal expectations, and bodily autonomy." This highlights how 19th-century systems suppress genders differently—boys through intellectual/corporal conformity, and girls through enforced ignorance/purity.
- **Adult Authority Doubling:** Adult Men and Adult Women roles are almost exclusively double-cast with just two actors playing every teacher, headmaster, mother, and father, reinforcing the generational disconnect.
- **Casting:** Depending on the number of auditionees, principal roles may be double-cast with a single ensemble OR roles may be single cast. There may be more than one “Adult Man” and “Adult Woman” in the production.

Performer Boundary & Consent Disclosure Form

Please consider your personal boundaries (willingness or unwillingness to portray) and select one answer for each item. Signing this form just lets us know that you have seen both the character descriptions and the below form. Your responses will just help us identify how to proceed.

- **YES** – Yes, I am willing to portray this identity or action.
- **NO** – No, I am not willing to portray this identity or action.
- **NEED MORE INFO** – I need more information before determining.

#	Description	Response Options
1	Wendla, Martha, Ilse, and Thea are characters who identify as female (F) and navigate adolescent development, societal expectations, and themes of bodily autonomy.	[ ] YES [ ] NO [ ] NEED MORE INFO
2	Melchior, Moritz, Hanschen, Ernst, Georg, and Otto are characters who identify as male (M) and navigate strict academic and social pressures.	[ ] YES [ ] NO [ ] NEED MORE INFO
3	The Adult Women and Adult Men characters portray authority figures (teachers, parents, clergy) holding traditional, conservative societal views.	[ ] YES [ ] NO [ ] NEED MORE INFO
4	Wendla (F) and Melchior (M) engage in a passionate, consensual physical encounter in the hayloft involving simulated intimacy.	[ ] YES [ ] NO [ ] NEED MORE INFO

#	Description	Response Options
5	Hanschen (M) and Ernst (M) engage in a romantic, consensual, intimate scene involving kissing and physical touch.	[ ] YES [ ] NO [ ] NEED MORE INFO
6	Wendla (F) asks Melchior (M) to strike her playfully/firmly with a switch during a moment of heightened emotional and physical intensity.	[ ] YES [ ] NO [ ] NEED MORE INFO
7	Moritz (M) and other characters portray themes of severe adolescent mental health struggles, despair, and death by suicide.	[ ] YES [ ] NO [ ] NEED MORE INFO
8	Melchior (M) undergoes violent bullying during a scene in a reform school setting.	[ ] YES [ ] NO [ ] NEED MORE INFO
9	Wendla (F) navigates an unplanned adolescent pregnancy, societal concealment, and a tragic medical/abortion sequence offstage.	[ ] YES [ ] NO [ ] NEED MORE INFO

- **Performer's Signature: _____**
- **Guardian's Signature: _____** *(if under 18)*

Thank you, artist. The Spring Awakening team wishes you the best of luck!