

Character Breakdowns for *Ruddigore*

Adrienne Boris - BHT 2026

Sir Ruthven Murgatroyd AKA Robin Oakapple

A good-hearted and forthright fellow, committed to his duty, be it good (Act 1) or evil (Act 2). Disastrously inexperienced with women and often overly polite verging on meek, he is of noble bearing play-acting the part of a simple farmer while carrying a deep shame within him throughout Act 1. In Act 2, he becomes a reticent but necessarily committed villain - neurotic and constantly guilty - probably like most of us would feel. He may be skilled at "code-switching" within these various worlds, but becomes a nervous mess in front of Rose Maybud at various points in both acts. The varying moods and modes of Sir Ruthven/Robin in some ways embody the central thesis of the production - that no one is either "all good" or "all bad."

Richard Dauntless

Ruthven/Robin's foster brother, a charming and - dare we say - swashbuckling able seaman, the epitome of the confidence that might be bestowed upon a young naval officer in the face of Victorian naval frenzy. Acts mostly according to the dictates of his heart and nether regions rather than his head. Confident and assertive, besotted by Rose Maybud, but a good friend and brother when push comes to shove.

Sir Despard Murgatroyd

The slightly younger brother of Sir Ruthven who has been saddled with the duty of committing daily crimes in the supposed absence of his older brother. In Act 1, somewhat of a mustache-twirling villain who has "committed to the bit" and seems to enjoy his lot in a twisted way. But when he is released from his fate, he transforms into a tee-totaling aristocrat obsessed with propriety and the doting, if controlling, partner of Mad Margaret.

Sir Roderic Murgatroyd

The most recently deceased of the Bad Baronets who was quite the major Victorian society player in his day - the very picture (no pun intended) of an Evil Dignitarian AKA a politician (wink). He holds fast to and is proud of the tradition of evil-doing inherent to his family line and is quite strict with Ruthven/Robin about making sure his evil deeds not only get done but are also dastardly enough to count. A bit of warmth is rekindled within him upon discovering that he is a) not dead and b) that Dame Hannah still loves him - but not an undignified amount.

Old Adam Goodheart

This production would like to cast a mezzo singing the part an octave up in “pants-role” tradition AKA playing a man. The world’s most committed personal assistant in both acts, regardless of the intentions of his master. Will go the extra mile to help Sir Ruthven/Robin in whatever quest he may be dealing with that day.

Rose Maybud

An attractive, sweet, and intelligent young woman who has read one too many editions of the Victorian equivalent of Seventeen magazine. Obsessed with etiquette and various Victorian values, she loves Ruthven/Robin but feels she must wait for him to make the first move. As the plot advances, she finds herself a bit “at sea” which allows her a new kind of agency, some character growth, a coming of age, and an earned happy ending.

Mad Margaret

Ostensibly driven “mad” by her thwarted love of the Bad Baronet Sir Despard Murgatroyd, but she may also be microdosing arsenic to help with the pain. Or, she may just be putting on a show - we’ll make that choice together! A formerly respectable lady who now lives on the fringes of society but is wiser than those on the inside (think Beggar Woman from *Sweeney Todd*) with odd moments of lucid thinking here and there. When reunited with Sir Despard, she throws herself into the opposite identity of a teetotaling Christian woman, but sparks of the old “poor Peg” live on.

Dame Hannah

An upright, schoolmarm-like Victorian senior lady, aunt to Rose Maybud, an old maid by choice who believes the love of her life, Sir Roderic Murgatroyd, to be dead, and will never love another. Schools the other characters (and the audience) in the story of curse, and is understandably quite out of sorts when she is carried off in Act 2 before she is reunited with her love, which loosens her up just a tad.

Zorah and Ruth

Professional bridesmaids lying in wait for their turn to be a bride once Rose Maybud is betrothed to a suitable gentleman. Polite and proper, they would never dream of upstaging the lead... but it’s getting harder and harder to wait. There will be some contrast between these characters, but we can discover the intricacies of their identities together based on the chosen performers’ interests and strengths.