

# ***Tartuffe*** by Moliere

## **Fact Sheet**

**Description:** Orgon, the head of a wealthy and respected family, is a well-intentioned and religious man who falls under the spell of a crafty, cunning conman. Tartuffe, using the disguise of a religious aesthetic, manipulates the gullible Orgon and succeeds in gaining his respect and devotion. Tartuffe then sets out to marry Orgon's daughter, seduce his wife, destroy his family and gain control of his wealth and property. Moliere uses this play to brilliantly examine the evil that hypocrites, be they secular or religious, can commit against families and society.

**Performance Dates:** September 16, 17, 18 at 7:30 p.m.

23, 24, 25, at 7:30 p.m. & 26 at 2:00 p.m.

30, Oct 1 at 7:30 p.m.; Oct 2 at 2:00 p.m. & 7:30 p.m. – 2021

**Auditions:** July 26 & 27 from 7-10 p.m. All auditionees are encouraged the first audition session, and be available for callbacks the second session.

**Tentative First Rehearsal:** Sunday, August 1, 2021, from 7-10 p.m.

**Tentative Rehearsal Schedule:** August 1-5; August 8-12; August 15-20; August 22-27; August 29-31 & September 1-3; September 7-10 All rehearsals are tentatively scheduled from 7-10pm. Tech and Dress rehearsals are scheduled September 12-15. Schedule is subject to change and will be reviewed after casting.

**Characters:** Either (7m, 4w) or (5m, 5w) or (6m, 4w). Two roles can be doubled. Character ages have some flexibility.

**Mme. Pernelle** – *Orgon's mother*, Preferred Age: 70+

The wealthy and obnoxious grandmother of Damis and Mariane is obsessed with Tartuffe, as is her son Orgon. She is incensed with Orgon's family for not obeying and honoring the "holy man" Tartuffe. She believes Tartuffe is the only hope for her family's salvation. Descriptive words: rude, opiniated, and hypocritical.

**Orgon** – *Elmire's husband*, Preferred Age: 40+

The protagonist of this great play is a complex role. Orgon was a successful and wealthy businessman with two children whom he dotes on as well as on his intelligent and faithful wife. Recently, Orgon adopted a life of piety and virtue due to his aging and fear for his salvation. Upon meeting Tartuffe, who was posing as a beggar at church, Orgon became obsessed with the man's "holiness." Orgon gives him money, invites him into his home and demands his family honor and obey Tartuffe as Orgon tries to become the epitome of piousness. However, the family forcefully rejects Tartuffe and, in response, Orgon becomes a tyrant in his own home. Descriptive words: wealthy, erratic, tyrannical, gullible and revengeful.

**Elmire** – *Orgon's wife and stepmother to Damis and Mariane*, Preferred Age: 25-30

Elmire is Orgon's second wife and has a positive and trusting relationship with her stepchildren. Damis, Mariane and the maid Dorine immediately see that Tartuffe is a dangerous conman who

can seriously damage the family. Elmire, in a brave attempt to save her family, plans a daring trap to expose Tartuffe as a fraud. Descriptive words: intelligent, virtuous, loving, faithful, and brave.

**Cleante** – *Orgon's brother-in-law*, Preferred Age: 30-40

Cleante is the play's "voice of reason." He is a rational and wise man who is devoted to his sister Elmire and her family. Cleante is not as wealthy as Orgon, but he is well-respected and has many loyal and influential friends. He has never married but he is comfortable in his own skin. His intelligence and willingness to share his thoughts can make him overbearing and tedious at times. Descriptive words: lawyerly, loyal, intelligent, articulate and talkative.

**Damis** – *Orgon's son and Elmire's stepson*, Preferred Age: 20-25

Orgon's son and heir has enough common sense to see through Tartuffe's hypocrisy, but his lack of maturity makes him impulsive and prone to violence. He speaks the truth about Tartuffe to his father but is rewarded by being tossed out of the house and disinherited. His own marital happiness is linked to his sister Mariane marrying Valere. Descriptive words: impulsive, quick to anger, emotional, and loves his family.

**Marianne** – *Orgon's daughter and Elmire's stepdaughter*, Preferred Age: 16-22

A somewhat spoiled but contented young woman who is in love with her fiancée, Valere. When her father orders her to marry Tartuffe instead, she is unable to challenge him. Her stepmother, brother and Dorine bravely support the young woman in finding her voice. Descriptive words: young (immature), obedient, submissive to her father, and dependent on Dorine.

**Valere** – *in love with Mariane*, Preferred Age: 20-28

A genuinely good and honest man, deeply in love with Mariane. With no concern for his own personal safety, he offers aid and transportation into exile when Orgon is threatened with arrest. Descriptive words: brave, loyal, faithful, intelligent and a man with important connections.

**Dorine** – *Mariane's Lady's Maid and long-time member of the family*, Preferred Age: 30-50

One of Moliere's finest comic creations, Dorine is a strong personality who is never shy about speaking her mind. Developed from the wise servant characters of the commedia dell'arte, she is superior in all battles of wit and easily perceives and challenges Tartuffe's hypocrisy. Descriptive words: intelligent, cunning, lacks fear, faithful, and a wicked sense of humor.

**Tartuffe** – *a Hypocrite, disguised as a Holy Man*, Preferred Age: 30-50

Tartuffe is a charismatic evil man, not a comic character. He is an experienced criminal who speaks in deliberate tones and appears rational and in control of every situation. He remains calm when attacked and capable of adapting to any role he is playing. Only in the presence of Elmire does Tartuffe struggle to maintain his composure as his lust for her overrides his judgement. He also is most capable of being ruthless, vindictive and will use any means possible to achieve his goal. Descriptive words: charismatic, austere, intelligent, cunning, pious, composed and a "revolving door of deceit."

**Mr. Loyal** – *a bailiff*, Preferred Age: 65+

An elderly bailiff who many years ago was employed by Orgon's father. Resenting the family's wealth and position, he sees this task as an opportunity to get a bit of revenge on the family. He

is a lackey for Tartuffe and drunk with the imagined power of his official position. Loyal is very condescending to Orgon and his family. Can be cast with a woman or man.

**Officer of the Court** – Preferred Age: 30-50

This court official's job is to render the court's judgement in the Lawsuit: Tartuffe versus Orgon. In an ironic turn of events, Tartuffe is arrested and Orgon's property and position is restored to Orgon. Can be cast with a woman or male.

Doubling the roles of Valere and Mr. Loyal or doubling of Mr. Loyal and the Officer of the Court is feasible. It also is possible to have a woman doubling Mr. Loyal and the Officer of the Court.

Decisions on doubling roles will be determined after auditions.