DAVID: A MUSICAL

Character Breakdown

PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS

DAVID

Lead | Male

David begins as a humble shepherd who is unexpectedly anointed by God and grows into Israel's king. His journey takes him from faith-filled courage to success, temptation, entitlement, failure, repentance, and ultimately learning what it truly means to shepherd God's people. David is courageous, humorous at times, deeply emotional, and constantly wrestling with the responsibility of his calling.

Actor needs: Strong dramatic acting, emotional range, stage presence, and strong vocal ability. The role requires significant musical and dramatic stamina.

SHEPHERD

Principal | Male

The Shepherd is symbolic character representing the presence of of God and ultimately leading to Jesus being the King Israel and the world needs. He interacts with David throughout the story. He guides, challenges, comforts, corrects, and encourages David. The Shepherd should feel different from every other character—peaceful, grounded, knowing, passionate, and present without becoming overly theatrical or "preachy."

Actor needs: Exceptional physical storytelling, subtle acting, presence, and strong emotional connection. This role requires an actor who can communicate a great deal without excessive dialogue.

SAUL

Principal | Male

The first king of Israel and David's greatest earthly antagonist. Saul begins as a powerful but increasingly unstable king who struggles with fear, jealousy, pride, and the loss of God's favor. He sees God's anointing on David and becomes consumed with the fear that David will take everything he believes belongs to him.

Actor needs: Strong dramatic presence, commanding physicality, emotional intensity, and strong vocal ability. This is one of the more psychologically demanding roles.

JONATHAN

Principal | Male

Saul's son and David's closest friend. Jonathan is courageous, loyal, spiritually grounded, and willing to recognize God's hand on David even when it threatens his own family's future. He becomes one of the clearest examples of selfless friendship and loyalty in the story.

Actor needs: Strong acting, warmth, sincerity, stage presence, and vocal ability. Requires believable chemistry with David without any romantic interpretation.

JOAB

Principal | Male

David's nephew and one of his most trusted warriors and commanders. Joab is fiercely loyal to David but is also practical, aggressive, politically aware, and willing to make decisions David may not approve of. His loyalty and motives becomes increasingly complicated as the story progresses.

Actor needs: Strong character acting, physicality, stage combat ability, and confidence. Joab has a strong presence throughout the production.

NATHAN

Principal | Male

A prophet who serves as David's spiritual messenger and eventually confronts him about his sin. Nathan is direct, courageous, wise, and unafraid to speak truth to the king. He serves as an important voice of God's correction and direction throughout David's life.

Actor needs: Strong dramatic acting and a calm, authoritative presence. Strong vocal ability is important.

ABSALOM

Principal | Male

David's son who becomes increasingly frustrated with his father's failures as king and father. Absalom believes he can do better and eventually uses that conviction to justify taking the throne for himself. He is charismatic, passionate, intelligent, and increasingly dangerous as his desire for justice becomes a desire for power.

Actor needs: Strong dramatic actor with significant emotional range and stage presence. Requires physical confidence and strong musical ability.

BATHSHEBA/NARRATOR

Principal | Female/Voice/Actor

Uriah's wife who becomes involved with David and eventually becomes his wife and the mother of Solomon. Bathsheba carries the emotional weight of the consequences surrounding David's sin while also becoming a source of encouragement and faith during David's later struggles.

She also protracts the voice of the Narrator, establishing the world of *David A Musical* at the very beginning, explaining the political and spiritual condition of Israel and introducing Saul and Goliath.

Actor needs: Strong dramatic and musical performer with emotional maturity and subtlety.

ABNER

Principal/Supporting | Male

Commander of Saul's army. Abner is pragmatic, intelligent, politically savvy, and often more realistic than the people around him. He does not blindly agree with Saul and understands the realities of war and leadership. However, his loyalty is ultimately complicated by his own ambitions and his desire to survive political change.

Actor needs: Strong character actor with commanding presence and physical confidence.

SUPPORTING CHARACTERS

SAMUEL

Supporting | Male

The prophet who anoints David and previously anointed Saul. Samuel represents God's authority and the consequences of obedience and disobedience. Although he has limited physical stage time, his words have enormous influence over Saul and David.

The script also uses Samuel's **recorded voice** later in the story.

Actor needs: Strong, authoritative presence and mature delivery.

JESSE

Supporting | Male

David's father. Jesse cares about his son but struggles to understand David's calling and initially sees him as a young shepherd rather than someone destined for leadership. His relationship with David provides an early glimpse into David's uncertainty about his own calling.

Actor needs: Strong character acting and believable father/son dynamic.

GOLIATH

Supporting/Featured | Male

The Philistine champion whose challenge terrifies Israel. Goliath is physically imposing, arrogant, intimidating, and openly blasphemous toward Israel's God. His confrontation with David becomes the defining event that launches David into national attention.

Actor needs: Exceptional physical presence, projection, confidence, and stage combat ability. The script specifically calls for Goliath to appear enormous, including the use of stilts.

MICHAL

Supporting | Female

Saul's daughter and David's wife. Michal genuinely loves David and openly supports him, even when doing so puts her in conflict with her father. But the support turns to judgment as she fears he will shame the kingdom and their household by his open worship and passion for the Lord. Her relationship with David also gives the audience another perspective on Saul's increasingly unstable behavior.

Actor needs: Strong dramatic acting, snooty, and musical ability.

URIAH

Supporting | Male

A loyal warrior serving under David and the husband of Bathsheba. Uriah is honorable, faithful, and committed to his

fellow soldiers. His loyalty ultimately becomes tragic when David's actions lead to his death.
Actor needs: Strong character actor with physical confidence and emotional sincerity.

AHITHOPHEL

Supporting/Featured | Male

An experienced royal advisor who initially pledges his loyalty to David. He is politically intelligent and understands the importance of power, alliances, and succession. Later, he becomes connected to Absalom's rebellion.
Actor needs: Strong older character presence, intelligence, authority, and subtle political calculation.

ISHBOSHETH

Supporting | Male

Saul's surviving son who becomes king over part of Israel after Saul's death. Ishbosheth never truly wants the position but feels obligated to try to hold his father's fractured kingdom together. He is insecure and easily influenced, particularly by Abner.
Actor needs: Strong character actor who can communicate insecurity and pressure without making the character one-dimensional.

TALMAI

Supporting | Male

King of Geshur and the father of Maacah. His relationship with David is largely political, as his daughter becomes one of David's wives. He represents the political alliances surrounding David's growing kingdom.
Actor needs: Commanding but relatively understated royal presence.

MAACAH

Supporting | Female

Daughter of Talmai and one of David's wives. She is primarily featured as part of the political and family structure surrounding David and is the mother of Absalom.
Actor needs: Strong stage presence, physical storytelling, and ability to create character with limited dialogue.

AMNON

Supporting | Male

David's son and crown prince. Amnon is confident and entitled, using his position as heir to excuse his behavior. His actions toward Tamar become a major catalyst for Absalom's anger and eventual rebellion.

Actor needs: Strong dramatic actor capable of portraying arrogance and moral ugliness without overplaying it.

SOLOMON

Supporting/Young Role | Male

David and Bathsheba's son. Solomon is introduced as a young child and becomes an important emotional connection for David during the rebellion of Absalom. He represents David's future and the continuation of his house.

Actor needs: Young actor with natural stage presence and emotional authenticity.

ELIAB

Supporting/Featured | Male

One of David's older brothers. Eliab initially dismisses David when he arrives at the battlefield and questions what David is doing there. He represents the skepticism David faces from those who knew him only as a shepherd.

Actor needs: Strong character actor; physical presence helpful.

MESSENGER BOY

Featured Ensemble | Young Male

A young messenger who announces David's victory to the people. He helps launch the celebration following Goliath's defeat.

Actor needs: Energetic, confident young performer with strong projection.

SERVANT

Featured Ensemble | Flexible

A servant of David who is sent to investigate Bathsheba and returns with information about her and Uriah. Though brief, the

servant plays an important role in moving the Bathsheba storyline forward.
Actor needs: Clear delivery and good comedic/timing instincts can work well here.

ASSASSIN 1

Featured Ensemble | Flexible

One of the men who murders Ishbosheth and brings his severed head to David expecting a reward. He is opportunistic and completely misunderstands David's character and values.
Actor needs: Strong character acting and ability to play arrogance.

ASSASSIN 2

Featured Ensemble | Flexible

The second assassin who assists in Ishbosheth's murder and expects David to reward them for removing his political enemy.
Actor needs: Strong character acting; can be doubled with other ensemble roles.
The two assassins provide a short but memorable scene that demonstrates David's commitment to justice.

ENSEMBLE CHARACTERS

ISRAELITES

Large Ensemble

The people of Israel appear throughout the story as soldiers, citizens, worshippers, mourners, followers of David, and witnesses to the nation's political changes.

They are on stage in:

The opening crisis
Goliath's challenge
David's victory
Celebration scenes
Battles
David's rise to the throne
The divided kingdom
Absalom's rebellion

Performance focus: Strong physical storytelling, group dances and movement, singing, battle scenes, and creating believable

reactions.

PHILISTINES

Large Ensemble

The opposing army throughout the production. They appear in battles, Goliath's challenge, and other military sequences.

Performance focus: Physicality, marching, stage combat, formations, and strong ensemble vocals.

PHILISTINE 1

Featured Ensemble

A specifically identified Philistine with a small speaking role.

PHILISTINE 2

Featured Ensemble

A second specifically identified Philistine with a small speaking role.

These can be assigned to ensemble members who also participate in the larger Philistine army.

DAVID'S MEN

Large/Featured Ensemble

David's warriors and followers who accompany him during his years as an outlaw, his military campaigns, and later his flight from Absalom.

The core group includes:

Joab

Uriah

Nathan

Additional unnamed warriors

The script specifically introduces two additional Israelites who join David's group during "You Train Our Hands for War."

Performance focus: Stage combat, physical storytelling, ensemble movement, and strong group vocals.

YOUNG WOMEN

Ensemble | Female

Women of Israel who participate in celebrations, dances, weddings, and other public scenes.

They are especially visible following David's victory over Goliath, where they dance with scarves and tambourines.

Performance focus: Dance, movement, musicality, and expressive storytelling.

ABSALOM'S FOLLOWERS

Ensemble

Israelites who are persuaded by Absalom's argument that he would be a better king. They gradually form a visible movement around him, using red scarves as a visual symbol.
This could be a great opportunity for ensemble members to have **featured movement and acting moments** rather than simply standing in the background.
Performance focus: Group movement, chanting, physical storytelling, and dramatic escalation.

ABNER'S MEN

Ensemble

Soldiers who fight under Abner during the civil conflict between David and Ishbosheth.
Performance focus: Stage combat, military formations, and ensemble movement.

CROWD / PEOPLE OF ISRAEL

Ensemble

Citizens of Israel who react to David's victories, his coronation, political conflict, and later rebellion.
They can be drawn from the larger Israelite ensemble and should feel like a living community.

WOMEN / CHILDREN / FAMILIES

Ensemble

The script uses unnamed women, children, families, and citizens in several scenes to help establish the larger world of Israel.
These roles are especially useful for younger cast members.

YOUNG ABSALOM

Featured Ensemble

Young Absalom appears during the family sequence surrounding David's growing household. He can potentially be played by the actor portraying a younger version of one of David's sons, depending on your casting approach.