

Operation Spotlight, The Musical - Character Breakdown

Female: (19)

Imogene Garner Hook (40s -50s) (Aunt Genie): Matriarch of Victorville, Red Cross Worker, her husband died in a car accident in 1931. She is a wealthy heiress to Barbee S Hook's fortune, though they did divorce prior to his death. Barbee's father (William S. Hook Sr.) was a streetcar magnate in the early days of LA transportation. She is Niece's aunt and is compassionate to Niece's dream to become a big band singer and for her love for Arvin. **(Principle)**

Margaret Denise "Niece" (pronounced Nee-Cee) Bayley: (18 – 22) Niece of Imogene Garner Hook and is having an extended visit with her aunt in Victorville from Colorado during the fall/winter of 1941. Niece is trying to determine her life's path and has an interest in pursuing music, but her mother disapproves. Aunt Genie encourages Niece by allowing her to sing with a local all girl's swing band (Sweet Celeste and Her Scallywag Swing Kittens) as front singer. Love interest for Arvin. **(Principle)**

Mrs. William (Dorothy) Bayley (40s): Niece's mother (Dottie) who still lives in CO and wants her to come home and help with the family farm. She is unbending and her older sister Imogene's relationship with Niece is a constant source of bickering, jealousy, and manipulation. (Non-singing role who can double as a towns person in Act 1)

Alice Marsh (40 +): Part of Imogene's committee, she works at Madeleine's Dress Shoppe in Victorville, and she is the Resident Hostess of the USO building. She is a go-getter, but can be a bit of a gossip, loyal to a fault, and sticks to Imogene's side with clipboard and pen, ready to take any marching orders she doles out.

Sweet Celeste (Campbell): (Mid to late 30s, to 40s) She is the Band Leader of Sweet Celeste and the Scallywag Swing Kittens. She's the mother hen of the band, puts out fires, helps resolve schisms, provides a listening ear, and a shoulder to cry on. She longs to be a journalist/writer and is a prolific musician, having taken violin from an early age and is the sister to Kemper and Joe. She is not married, and a solid, compassionate soul for everyone but Bossy Bernie, whom she chides incessantly. **(Featured)**

Bertha (Ma Fobus): (40s) A force to be reckoned with, Bertha is the mother-figure that is the hostess of the Zaragoza Hall. She is a local that comes from the Eva Dell side of the tracks and organizes events for the black enlisted. She is a fortune teller (not unlike Black Marie of VV fame) and is loud, proud, and full of moxie. She is initially suspicious of Niece's dealings with Arvin because she is highly protective of her "children" but overhears a conversation he has with Joe Campbell and softens her stance on the forbidden coupling. **(Featured)**

Priscilla Lane (30): Special guest host for the Opening night of the USO on Dec 20, 1941. A glamorous movie starlet of the Golden Age of movies, she danced the night away with the enlisted of VV Army Flying Field, since Tyrone Powers was otherwise engaged due to his recent enlistment. (She can double as an ensemble person)

Bernice Bass (Bossy Bernie): (20s) The last reigning Miss Apple Valley Dumpling and wears the crown to all public events, even though that was 6 years ago since Apple Valley no longer has any apples. She's the daughter of Newton Bass, so very entitled. She craves the limelight, is jealous, a gossip and manipulative, always quick to try to take charge and throw her weight around to gain leverage and power. She is the bane of Celeste's existence and a know-it-all, so takes quite a bit of ribbing from Celeste and the girls in the band. **(Featured)**

The Girls in the Band (late high school to mid 20s): 8 local girls who comprise Sweet Celeste's all-girl's band. Lois, the Piano player, gets the flu prior to the Officer's Gala so Sweet Celeste must procure the help of Arvin from the Zaragoza Hall musician pool. (2 Trumpets Fanny (Chuck's girl) & Roberta (has a crush on Frankie, Fanny's brother) - late high school age), Sax (Doris), Drums (Sadie), Clarinet (Bernice), Upright Bass (Unis), Trombone (Lynette)

Loza Sisters: Latina Sister-singer-trio (ala Andrews Sister) that goes around the high desert entertaining at small gatherings, parties, and social events. They must be good with tight harmony and should bear similar resemblance, as true sisters would. **(Featured)**

Male (12)

Henry (50s): Caretaker of the CAC, he serves as Narrator (**Non-singing role/Principle**)

Rufus (Black) and Simon (Caucasian) (14 - 16): (Non-singing) Best friends who go to Granite Hills High School and are theater tech geeks. They deliver the Spotlight and become part of the Narrator's audience for storytelling, and the onstage techie/stagehands to help maneuver set changes. (**Featured**)

Joe Campbell (17 - 20) (b. 1925 d. 1990) Youngest child of Litta Belle and Kemper Campbell Sr. His best friend is Arvin. Joe is not enlisted but lives in Victorville and works at the base as a mechanic.

Chuck Yeager: (17 - 20) Joe's buddy and fellow mechanic at the base, he is the beau of Fanny (Frankie Foster's sister).

Arvin Story (Vinnie the Keys) (18 - 21): Joe's best friend, he went to school with Joe Campbell. Joe's father (famous LA lawyer Kemper Campbell Sr.) took the school board to task to allow Arvin to attend Victor Grammar school. He was the son of Inez, a black housemaid at Verde Ranch, and Kemper Sr. appeared before the VV school board and argued they should not discriminate. "I desegregated the schools in VV, at least on a very short basis," and is said to be the first to protest racial segregation in the high desert. (**Principle**)

Kemper Campbell Jr. (b. 1918 d. 1943 at 24) **22 years old**— oldest of Litta Belle and Kemper Campbell Sr. His sweetheart is Lynette, the trombone player in Sweet Celeste's All-Girls Band. Enlisted in the military in March/1942 and died in pilot training in Colorado Springs CO, Aug 27, 1943.

Frankie Foster: (17 - 20) Enlisted at VV Airfield, Bossy Bernie's high school sweetheart, and brings the news that Kemper Campbell Jr. has been killed in a training accident in 1945. Roberta, Fanny's best friend has a crush on Frankie.

Fred Berger: (20 - 23) Doing pilot training at VV Airfield, he is dating Doris, and becomes the future first President of Victor Valley College.

Roy L. (Chuckles) Reid (50 - 60s): Local newspaperman and toastmaster of the Clubmen in the High Desert. His column (Chuckles) is contained in his own local paper called the Corraling. (**Must Sing and Tap**)

Arthur "in the Afternoon" Preston (30s): Radio Personality from San Bernardino who attends the Ribbon Cutting ceremony and does a live commentary on the parade and ceremonies that follow.

Clifford Moon (50s): Owner of the Victorville News Herald newspaper, he sponsors a local contest for kids to collect trash for cash called Scrap Soldiers. He offers them a new Schwinn bike and a job delivering papers to the youngster who raises the most cash.

Captain Howard Brown ("Howie Brown-Nose") (30s): An officer from VV Army Airfield who is assigned the task of being the base liaison for the opening of the USO club. He's a kiss up, a strictly-by-the-book killjoy, and he's a little too impressed with his own sense of self-importance. Think military Barney Fife.

Ensemble (12-16)

Zaragoza Hall citizens: 4-6 Black males (and 4-6 females) that are enlisted at VV Army Airfield and populate Zaragoza Hall as musicians and singer/dancers, volunteers, and community dwellers of the Eva Dell barrio. (Step out roles include Inez/Arvin's mother; General Grover Lewis; Lela and Nolie Murray;)

High Desert Kids and Adults: A variety of kids ages of 6 - 15-year-olds, and adults to populate town scenes, and provide environmental characters during transitions and group scenes. (Step out roles include: Ruthie- 10 years old is Lois' kid sister; Gloria Loza is 6 years old and a go-getter during the Scrap Soldier Campaign; USO Talent Scout Patricia Reardon; Litta Belle and Kemper Campbell Sr.; Colonel Donald Phillips; Benjamin Warren/photographer;)