

Hairspray Character Descriptions

Tracy Turnblad - A pleasantly plump teenager with a big heart who has dreams of being a dancing star ... as soon as she's out of detention for her big hair. Tracy isn't afraid to be herself and stand up for what she believes in. She must be friendly, relentless, and goodhearted with a vibrant, lovable personality and love to sing and dance. Tracy is on stage for a LOT of the show so she must have stamina and talent – she performs in 10+ numbers including “Good Morning Baltimore,” “I Can Hear The Bells,” and many more! It is truly a BIG role! Mezzo-Belt Stage Age: 16-19

Edna Turnblad - Tracy's kind, plus-sized mother; runs a laundry business out of her home but hasn't been out in a while. Played by Harvey Fierstein on Broadway, and John Travolta in the movie, this drag role requires a strong comic male performer who is ready for his inner woman to take the spotlight Edna is not a man pretending to be a woman, she is all woman! Just, you know, with a distinctive voice. Performs in 5+ numbers including “You're Timeless To Me.” Tenor. Stage Age: 40+

Wilbur Turnblad - Tracy's goofy father, who owns the Har-De-Har Hut joke shop and is still madly in love with his wife, Edna. He encourages Tracy to follow her dreams. Performs in 2+ numbers including “You're Timeless To Me.” Baritone. Stage Age: 40+

Corny Collins - the exciting, confident dancing and singing host of his own TV dance show (think American Bandstand at its inception). Corny is in favor of Tracy and racial integration. Performs in 4+ numbers including “Nicest Kids In Town” and “Hairspray.” Tenor. Stage Age: 25+

Penny Pingleton - Tracy's slightly dorky, but lovable best friend who is often by her side (when not grounded for life by her mother, Prudy). Falls head over heels for Seaweed. Performs in 4+ numbers including “Mama, I'm A Big Girl Now” and “Without Love.” Belt. Stage Age: 16-19

Amber von Tussle - bratty, selfish resident princess of The Corny Collins Show. Her mother's daughter through and through, she is willing to do anything to win the Miss Teenage Hairspray pageant. Council Member. Performs in 7+ numbers including “Cooties.” Belt. Stage Age: 16-19

Velma von Tussle – Amber's slim and attractive but overbearing mother who pushes her daughter to seek stardom. Velma is the scheming producer of The Corny Collins Show who tries to steer it in the “white” direction. Her sensitivities are offended at the very sight of Tracy. A great villainess role. Performs in 4+ numbers including “Miss Baltimore Crabs”. Belt. Stage Age: 40+

Link Larkin - Teenage heartthrob, aspiring young Elvis, and male lead dancer on The Corny Collins Show. Falls in love with Tracy (Amber is sooooo jealous!). Council Member. Performs in 7+ numbers including "It Takes Two." Crooning Baritone. Stage Age: 16-21

Seaweed J. Stubbs - Motormouth Maybelle's son and a talented dancer on The Corny Collins Show, but only allowed on "Negro Day." Ends up in detention with Tracy. Falls in love with Penny. Performs in 4+ numbers including "Run And Tell That." Tenor. Stage Age: 16-19

Motormouth Maybelle - the sassy Corny Collins "Negro Day" DJ. Owner of a record store and mother to Seaweed and Little Inez. Plus-sized, she helps Edna find pride in herself. Performs in 3+ numbers including "Big, Blonde & Beautiful" and "I Know Where I've Been." Soulful Alto. Stage age 40+

Little Inez – Seaweed's little sister and just as talented a dancer. Tries to audition for The Corny Collins Show but is turned away because she is black by Velma. Performs in 3+ numbers including "Run And Tell That." Belt. Stage Age: 13-15

The Dynamites - Judine, Kamilah, and Shayna – Talented black vocal trio a la The Supremes. Featured in many numbers together and usually in tight harmony. May double for other ensemble roles like 'Cindy Watkins,' etc. Stage Age: 25+

Council Members - Tammy, Brad, Fender, Brenda, Sketch, Shelley, IQ, Lou Ann – Dancers and singers on The Corny Collins Show. Perform in 5+ numbers including "Nicest Kids In Town" and "You Can't Stop The Beat." Stage Age: 16-19

Other Students - Gilbert, Duane, Lorraine, Stooie, Thad – Kids we find in detention, and most in Motormouth Maybelle's record shop. Perform in 4+ numbers including "Welcome to the 60's" and "You Can't Stop The Beat." Stage Age: 16-19

Female Authority Figure – The roles of Prudy Pingleton (Penny's uptight mother), the sadistic gym teacher, and the prison matron are often played by one cameo performer. Stage Age: 40+

Male Authority Figure – The roles of Harriman F. Spritzer (President of Ultra Clutch cosmetics, Corny Collins show sponsor), the high-blood pressure principal, and Mr. Pinky (owner of a plus-sized dress shop) are often played by one cameo performer. Stage Age: 40+

A few other Ensemble roles may also be available. TBD

All information is subject to change!

Hairspray and Ethnicity and Body Types

In general, you have to physically “look the part” to play a theatrical role. A strong component of the Hairspray story revolves around race in the 1960's, as well as specific body types and ages. It is our goal to have the following characteristics appear on the Flynn stage to forward the story:

- Black/African-American
- White/Caucasian
- Plus-sized (Pleasantly plump!)
- Notably slimmer than plus-sized

“Appear” means you naturally look the part – we will not be using make-up to modify ethnicity or costuming to dramatically alter body type (except for Edna's brassiere!).

Several roles in the play do not call for a specific ethnicity or body type.

Lyric Theatre is an Equal Opportunity organization and encourages every one of all races and sizes to audition for age appropriate roles. Hairspray is fairly unique in its specificity for ethnicity and body type. Most Lyric productions are totally non-specific!

Characters that appear white:

Tracy and Edna Turnblad
Penny Pingleton
Velma and Amber von Tussle
Corny Collins
Council Members
Male and Female Authority Figures

Characters that appear black:

Seaweed J. Stubbs
Motormouth Maybelle
Little Inez
The Dynamites (Judine, Kamila, Shayna)
Gilbert
Cindy Watkins
Duane
Lorraine

Characters that must be plus-sized:

Tracy and Edna Turnblad
Motormouth Maybelle

Characters that must be notably thinner than plus-sized:

Velma and Amber von Tussle
Council Members

Teen Note: “Student” or “Council Member” roles are intended for stage age 16-19 years old. Stage age is the age you look on stage. That means you must look like you are a Junior or Senior in high school when you are on the Flynn stage.

You must be at least 15 years old as of the first day of auditions (born on or before April 25, 1996) to audition for these roles. Little Inez is the only exception. You must be at least 11 years old as of the first day of auditions (born on or before April 25, 2000) to audition for Little Inez.