

Character Breakdown  
**BOSWELL'S DREAMS**  
By Marie Kohler

7-9 actors (5-6M, 2-3W). Diversity welcome

The play calls for an ensemble of actors playing multiple roles. The role of BOSWELL should be played by one actor with no doubling. The roles of JOHNSON and JOAN could potentially be doubled. In the premiere production, there were 9 actors: 6 men and 3 women. The following is a breakdown of the first casting:

Actor I – James Boswell

Actor 2 – Samuel Johnson; Voice of Bundy, Prisoner (in shadows)

Actor 3 - Joan Weinstein

Actor 4 – David Garrick, Hamlet, Hamish Cunningham

Actor 5 - Ghost, Boswell's Father, Doctor, Lord Auchinleck

Actor 6 - Horatio, Joshua Reynolds, Pilot's Voice, Eric Appley

Actor 7 – Oliver Goldsmith, Prof. Sydney Arrant

Actor 8 – Airport Announcer, Tavern Woman, Louisa Littons, Prostitute II, Annabelle Tweedale

Actor 9 - Prostitute I, Boswell's Mother, Mrs. Thrale, Lady Auchinleck

Descriptions of Central Characters:

1760s

JAMES BOSWELL: Male, 20s – Young Scottish nobleman come to London to make his fortune; great enthusiasm, little discipline, fondness for sex and fame; charming.

SAMUEL JOHNSON: Male, 50s-70s – Literary “Colossus” of 18th-century England. Editor of first English Dictionary. Monumental wit and stature.

JOSHUA REYNOLDS: Male, 30s-50s – Most successful portrait painter his day; member of Johnson's literary group, The Beefsteak Club. Amiable.

OLIVER GOLDSMITH: Male, 40s-50s – Writer/wit; member of Johnson's Beefsteak Club. Curmudgeonly.

DAVID GARRICK: Male, 30s-50s – Most famous actor/producer of his day; member of Johnson's Beefsteak Club. Vain.

BOSWELL'S FATHER: Male, 50s-70s – Domineering High Magistrate of Scottish Court.

1950

JOAN WEINSTEIN: Female, 20s – Gifted young American graduate student at Ivy League university; Johnson scholar. Super-achiever despite odds, at times brittle, with undiscovered passions.

PROF. SYDNEY ARRANT: Male, 40s-50s – American professor at an Ivy League university; Johnson scholar; Joan's advisor. Ambitious, accomplished, charming when he chooses.

LORD AUCHINLECK: Male, 50s-60s – Descendent of James Boswell; Lord of Auchinleck House, the family estate in Scotland.

LADY AUCHINLECK: Female, 40s-50s – LORD AUCHINLECK'S wife.

HAMISH CUNNINGHAM: Male, 30s-50s – Rare books man, University of Edinburgh.