

The Day Before the Music Died

Character Breakdown

9 February 2024

Ritchie Valens:

Mexican-American male / should read 17 years old. Average height and build. Tenor / high baritone. Looking for actors who can play guitar or fake it well. Ritchie is a thinker. He conveys that he is a big talent and a smart guy.

Buddy Holly:

White male / should read 22 years old. Tall and lean. Curly, dark hair. Tenor / high baritone. Looking for actors who can play guitar or fake it well (playing piano is a plus). An early rock 'n roll pioneer, Buddy is a take-charge guy who is clearly the boss of their music tour.

Dion DiMucci:

Italian-American New Yorker, male / should read 22 years old. Average height and build. Tenor. Looking for actors who can play guitar or fake it well (playing piano is a plus). An "art for art's sake" kind of guy, Dion is a dedicated musician, but he is also self-absorbed and jealous of Ritchie Valens.

The Big Bopper (JP Richardson Jr.):

White male / should read 28 years old. Larger frame and height. Baritone. Looking for actors who can play guitar or fake it well (playing piano is a plus). A flashy stage presence, a kind of comic performer. He impresses people with his energy and colorful demeanor rather than with his vocal quality. A bit crude and with rough edges.

Sheldon Fox:

Male / 35-45 years old. Medium build. Tenor / high baritone. Looking for actors who can play guitar or fake it well (playing piano is a plus). The narrator of the play, he is delusional and thinks that he is the backup singer for Dion and the Belmonts.

He is obsessed with Dion as a musician and a celebrity, and he has meticulously put together the events of February 2, 1959 as a way to honor Dion and possibly to elevate his reputation over that of Ritchie Valens, whom he hates. As he begins the play in his interview with Ricardo Casagrande, he seems rational and focused. As the play moves on, especially in the last scene, he shows that he is unbalanced and ruthless.

Ricardo Casagrande:

Mexican-American male. 30-40 years old. Medium build. Non-singing role. A documentary filmmaker, trying to honor the memory of the rock stars who died in the fatal plane crash. Intelligent but unsuspecting.

Bob Keane:

Male / older middle age. Medium build or larger. Non-singing role. Ritchie's manager. Direct and focused. Wants Ritchie to be a star and make a lot of money for both of them.

Donna Ludwig:

White female / should read 17 years old. Medium to small build.

Non singing role. Affluent and spoiled, she defies her parents by dating Ritchie. Largely unaware of the nature of Mexican-American culture and the challenges that Ritchie faces in the white music industry.

Concepción:

Mexican-American / middle aged female. Average height and build. Ritchie's loving mother. Insightful and wise.

Abraham:

Male / person of color. Older middle age. Blues singer. Looking for actors who can play guitar and harmonica or fake it well.

He is an especially talented mentor to Ritchie.