

Northwest Children's Theater and School Presents

ANNIE

book by Thomas Meehan, music by Charles Strouse, lyrics by Martin Charnin

**NORTHWEST
CHILDRENS
THEATER and
SCHOOL**

NW Neighborhood
Cultural Center
1819 NW Everett Street
Suite 216
Portland, OR 97209-2189

phone: 503-222-4480
fax: 503-222-4130
www.nwcts.org

*Our mission—to educate,
entertain and enrich the lives
of young audiences*

Managing Director
Judy Kafoury

Artistic Director
Sarah Jane Hardy

Education Director
Carolyn Newsom

Volunteer Director
Diane Carlsen

**FOR IMMEDIATE
RELEASE**

Release Date
October 19, 2010
Kill Date
January 2, 2011

Media Contact
To set up interviews
or discuss other
possibilities for feature
stories, please contact:

Marri-Beth Serritella
Sucha Production, Inc.
503-528-1370
mb@suchaproduction.com

Leapin' lizards! Everyone's favorite redhead is here to introduce a whole new generation to America's most beloved musical. Boasting an award-winning Broadway score, including "It's the Hard-Knock Life," "Easy Street" and the iconic "Tomorrow", you can bet your bottom dollar on this holiday crowd pleaser for the whole family!

'Little Orphan Annie' was first popularized as a daily comic strip in the Chicago Tribune, premiering August of 1924 and running for 86 years until June of 2010. The musical featuring the plucky heroine opened to rave reviews on Broadway in April 1977, and enjoyed a six-year stint that earned the production seven Tony Awards. A much-celebrated movie version directed by John Huston was released in 1982, and since then national tours and regional productions have kept *Annie* in the hearts of audiences for over thirty years.

NWCT's decision to mount the Broadway classic is 18 years in the making. "We've been asked repeatedly, 'When are you going to do *Annie*?'" says NWCT Artistic Director Sarah Jane Hardy, who also directs. "It has been on my personal list for years, because it's one of the few Broadway shows that is a children's musical first and foremost. Other titles are equally popular and appealing, but for our audiences there's something really special about a show that stars a child."

And finding that child wasn't easy. NWCT auditioned over 400 young people during season auditions in June. Of those, over 100 little girls were seen specifically for the role of Annie, with the part ultimately going to Annabel Cantor, whose NWCT credits include *Alice in Wonderland*.

"Auditions were awesome," says Melody Bridges, who plays Miss Hannigan. "Hearing 'Tomorrow' almost brought me to tears. I am such a sap." Bridges, who is also the company's Development and Marketing Director, has loved the musical since she was nine, when the movie was released. "My mom bought me the two-record LP set, and I would make my sisters act out the story for hours." One of Portland's most talented comedienne, the young Bridges would always insist on playing Hannigan. "This was the age when I was discovering I was

funny, and when I watched Carol Burnett, I knew I was watching a genius. It is absolutely a childhood dream come true to play this role."

Cantor and Bridges have both appeared on the NWCT stage, but never together, though Cantor has studied acting with Bridges for several seasons. In addition to Cantor, Marilyn Blakewood, Annika Cutler, Sophie Keller, Amber Mitchell, Madison Thompson, Meredith Waggoner and Ashlee Waldbauer are the hard-knock orphans who suffer at the hands of Miss Hannigan.

The adult cast of *Annie* stars NWCT regulars Erik James as Daddy Warbucks, and Genevieve Andersen as Grace Farrell. NWCT Artist in Residence John Ellingson plays Rooster, and former NWCT student performers Elizabeth Gibbs and Joel Walker play Lily St. Regis and Drake the Butler, respectively. Franklin Delano Roosevelt is played by Blaine Palmer.

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WHEN

Dec. 10, 2010 - Jan. 2, 2011
Fri. & Sat. 7 pm, Sat & Sun at 2 pm
Special holiday matinee show times
Dec. 16, 17, 21, 23, 24, 28, 29, 30, 31.
Also Jan. 2 at 2 & 7 pm

WHERE

NW Neighborhood Cultural Center
1819 NW Everett Street, Portland

TICKETS

503-222-4480 or NWCTS.ORG

AGE RANGE

Most enjoyed by ages 6 and up

PRICES

\$18-22 adults
\$13-18 youth (14 & under)

INFO

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An ensemble of performers including Connor Delaplaine, Margaret Driscoll, Peter Elgee, Alyssa Haning, Olivia Noelle, Mariah Maglalang, Lydia Moynihan, Andrew Norlen, Nathaniel Nuckolls and Conner Reed portray a city of characters, including citizens of New York and Hooverville, radio personalities and the Warbucks mansion staff.

The music direction for *Annie* is by Ezra Weiss. The production includes a set by Jeff Seats, sound design by Rodolfo Ortega, costumes by Shana Targosz, lights by Jeff Forbes, props by kollodi and scenic painting by John Ellingson.

Set during the Great Depression, the themes in *Annie* at the time the musical was first produced were very relevant, in an America that had just come through an oil crisis and a crippling recession. Songs like "Hooverville" and "A New Deal for Christmas" echo the origins of both the comic strip and the musical. And while recent financial woes have invoked comparisons between today and the America of the 1930s, as the past thirty years have proven, *Annie's* message transcends current politics. "In hard times or even in good, sometimes it's easy to be cynical. It's important to be reminded of the power of optimism," says Hardy. "And Annie is just the gal to do it."

Annie is produced in part through the support of the Collins Foundation, Regional Arts and Culture Council and Work for Art, the NWCT Producers Guild, and NWCT Donor Circle Members. Over 5,000 school children will sing with Annie through eight student matinee performances.

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PHOTOS

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**Please email Marri-Beth Serritella at:
mb@suchaproduction.com
if you did not receive high-resolution photos
via email.**

1 and 2

(Annie) Annabel Cantor and (Miss Hannigan)
Melody Bridges in NWCT's *Annie*.

3

(Annie) Annabel Cantor and (Molly)
Annika Cutler in NWCT's *Annie*.

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