



Leapin' Lizards!

Spring of 2020, the Montessori School of Anderson will present Annie, one of the world's best-loved musicals!

Based on the popular comic strip by Harold Gray, *Annie* has become a worldwide phenomenon and was the winner of seven Tony Awards, including Best Musical. The beloved book and score by Tony Award winners, Thomas Meehan, Charles Strouse and Martin Charnin, features some of the greatest musical theatre hits ever written, including "Tomorrow."

With equal measures of pluck and positivity, little orphan Annie charms everyone's hearts despite a next-to-nothing start in 1930s New York City. She is determined to find the parents who abandoned her years ago on the doorstep of a New York City Orphanage that is run by the cruel, embittered Miss Hannigan. With the help of the other girls in the Orphanage, Annie escapes to the wondrous world of NYC. In adventure after fun-filled adventure, Annie foils Miss Hannigan's evil machinations... and even befriends President Franklin Delano Roosevelt! She finds a new home and family in billionaire, Oliver Warbucks, his personal secretary, Grace Farrell, and a lovable mutt named Sandy.

Casting call is being sent out to all Upper Elementary, Middle and High School Students! There is an acting part for every Upper Elementary and Middle School student and any High School student who desires an onstage part. There are older acting roles as well as parts for younger students as orphans and many ensemble roles!

Over the Holiday Break, you may want to avail yourself of listening to the music from this Broadway musical on the online app of your choice (Spotify, Pandora, etc.). Familiarity with the music will be very helpful for audition purposes. Also, be considering which parts you would like to try out for!

Kickoff Meeting/Auditions: January 7, 3:45-5:00 we will be reading lines, looking at the music, having auditions. Emails will have vocal and speaking roles to prepare. Cast Announcement will be January 10!

Rehearsals will be after school Tuesday's, Wednesday's and Thursdays from 3:45-5:30. Cast and Ensembles will have different schedules which will be published January 7.

Play Week is March 2nd -7th with the shows March 6th and 7th!

Cast of Characters:

Annie-Annie is a complex little girl. She is a tough, streetwise urchin who is nevertheless vulnerable when she thinks she might lose what has become most important to her: a newfound "family" who loves her. She has to be motherly in scene one, independent in scene two, overwhelmed in scenes four and five, needy in scene seven, and hopeful for the future in scenes ten and eleven. The actor who plays Annie must be strong vocally and musically. She must be capable of vocal projection without strain. She also needs a good understanding of subtext so she can act appropriately during the various scenes between Warbucks and Grace, and Miss Hannigan and Grace. Although she is at times aggressive or crafty, the audience should never doubt Annie is a friendly and caring child; she will go to any extent to gain the love of a family to which she can belong.

The Orphans- Molly, Tessie, July, Duffy, Kate and Pepper. These orphans are gritty, neglected and vulnerable, yet basically honest and potentially lovable. The actors portraying them must be able to have mischievous fun with each other as well as "sibling-style" fights. Each student should be able to create and shape their own character. Children auditioning for these roles need to have vocal

strength and be visually expressive. All of their blocking and movements must appear motivated and strong. Cast these characters well and you will have won over your audience by the end of scene one.

Miss Hannigan-This woman is definitely a "has-been." Her distaste for her job and the children that are part of it should be obvious in every line she speaks, every song she sings and every move she makes. The student who plays her must have an excellent sense of comic timing. The acrid delivery of her lines and the torch-like rendition of her songs must distinguish her from the other characters in the show.

Grace Farrell-Grace is mature, calm, cool and "together." She is classy and businesslike when dealing with Miss Hannigan and Warbucks, yet maternal toward Annie. The student playing Grace can set herself apart from the other characters simply by the sophisticated way she walks. Grace should seem ready with an answer for just about anything. Each dramatic situation should seem to come "under control" the moment she glides into a scene. The student playing Grace must be able to negotiate the challenging intervals in "N.Y.C."

Rooster-Rooster and Lily are quite the team -- "team" being the operative word, as the characters play off each other constantly. You might consider casting students of contrasting heights. Rooster can even be shorter than Lily; after all, these two are not to be taken too seriously! Rooster is flashy and self-assured. His "moves" should be as smooth as a gambler's, as should be the message he sells in "Easy Street." "Easy Street" is the most challenging number in the show, in terms of vocal range. If the students playing Rooster and Lily are strong both vocally and visually, the audience will feel like joining them in "Easy Street"!

Lily-Rooster and Lily are quite the team -- "team" being the operative word, as the characters play off each other constantly. You might consider casting students of contrasting heights. Rooster can even be shorter than Lily; after all, these two are not to be taken too seriously! Lily (airhead that she is) is always distracted, although she manages to pick up on any conversation involving money. She never acts as the leader, always bringing up the rear while tripping over her own feet (it is difficult to walk and check your makeup in a compact at the same time). "Easy Street" is the most challenging number in the show, in terms of vocal range. If the students playing Rooster and Lily are strong both vocally and visually, the audience will feel like joining them in "Easy Street"!

Warbucks-This may be the most challenging role for a student in this age group. He must appear middle-aged, self-assured and confident. At first awkwardly affectionate toward Annie, he soon finds himself completely charmed by her. He begins his transformation when he views "N.Y.C." through Annie's eyes and falls in love with the city again...and with her. The student who plays Warbucks will need to be extremely focused throughout the show. His posture, walk and speech patterns are very important. You might ask your young actor to shave his head for rehearsals, if he feels comfortable doing so before the performance dates; it can really help mold his character!

Sandy-In this production, Sandy is played by a human. Sandy is Annie's canine friend and scrappy in her own right. This dog also has to sing.

Servants (Drake, Mrs. Greer and Mrs. Pugh)-From the moment these characters enter the acting area, their presence, posture and speech should suggest the most fastidious of domestic help. (Your actors will have fun perfecting the precision steps, nods and curtsies.) Their heads are always held high and they rarely show their emotions. These roles are not difficult to sing, and creative students will have many opportunities to create charming characters of various ages.

Additional Characters-The most important qualities to look for in casting the remaining roles are vocal accuracy and the ability to develop a character. Each role is self-explanatory and usually identified by the character's occupation. Help your students develop these characters in the context of the historical time period. Students that are more comfortable performing in groups (without solo singing) might be cast as servants, pedestrians, Bundles, the chauffer, Louis Howe, the apple seller and the dogcatcher. Many a career had been launched by playing an apple seller at age ten! Some students may be wonderful organizers and love to be in the middle of everything, but afraid to be onstage. They can still fill important roles in the production, as chorus members or working on a committee or on the stage crew.



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