

May 2020

Dear Student/Parent,

Hello and welcome to Commonwealth Artists Student Theatre (CAST)! We are extremely excited of summer season!!! Our play is *Puffs* has already been cast and this audition is only for our musical, *Newsies*. *Newsies* will take place in the Coney Island parking lot on Kellogg Avenue over two weekends with six performances on Friday, July 17th thru Sunday, July 19th and Friday, July 24th thru Sunday, July 26th.

***Newsies*:** New York City, 1899. Jack Kelly and his ragtag team of newsboys make a meager living selling newspapers on the city streets. But when the prices of “papes” are hiked and the newsies are hung out to dry, there is nothing left to do but “open the gates and seize the day!” Led by charismatic Jack and independent, young newspaper reporter Katherine Plummer, the Newsies form a union and organize a strike against the greedy publisher of the New York World. Can a group of idealistic newsboys win against a foe as powerful as acclaimed publisher Joseph Pulitzer? Inspired by the true story of the 1899 Newsboys Strike, *Newsies* is an ebullient, joyful, and entertaining musical capturing the strength that young people have when they join together and stand up against injustice. With a funny, poignant book by Harvey Feirstein and stunning music by Alan Menken and Jack Feldman -- including the show-stopping Seize the Day, power ballad “Santa Fe” and lovely new songs like Katherine’s “Watch What Happens -- *Newsies* is a classic with the power to inspire.

We are accepting video auditions for vocal/acting and dance. Video submissions are due by Friday, May 29th by 5pm.

Audition requirements

- For *Newsies*, you need to recite a *memorized* 45 second to 1-minute monologue and sing a 32-measure excerpt from a Broadway show similar to *Newsies* that showcases your vocal talents. You will also need to learn a dance audition that will be found at <https://tinyurl.com/CASTDance20>

Please submit video auditions to our Artistic Director, Jason Burgess, at jasonburgess@caststages.org. If the files are too big, you may share them though a Google Drive link, Dropbox or other platform. If you have any questions about video submissions, please contact our Artistic Director, Jason Burgess, at jasonburgess@caststages.org.

Please make sure to fill out an audition form located at <https://tinyurl.com/CASTAudForm2020>. Please fill out the audition form completely as well as including all schedule conflicts.

The rehearsal schedule will not be completed until we cast the show and look at everyone’s conflicts. Rehearsals will be held in the evening until high schools are out of session and then they could be held during the day except for the week of the show opening then rehearsals will be in the evening.

We understand that participating in this musical requires a commitment. Please consider all activities and work schedules when thinking about joining this production. Make sure that this is an activity you can commit to before auditioning and/or interviewing. Students will have two (2)

unexcused absences and any more after that and students will not be allowed to continue in this production or will be removed from certain numbers, scenes, roles or positions. Also note that mandatory rehearsals will occur the week before the show opens and the production week of the show.

A Note About the Casting Process!

Thank you all for your interest in **Commonwealth Artists Student Theatre (CAST)** production of ***Newsies***. We can speak for our whole team when we tell you how thrilled we are to finally be auditioning and interviewing for these productions. We have been working on the shows for a while now and have assembled a great creative team. We look forward to meeting you at auditions and crew interviews. Break a Leg!

As you prepare for the audition/crew interviews, please remember the following:

- You must be an incoming high school freshman to a graduating high school senior to audition/interview for *Newsies*.
- Any student from any school in the tri-state area (Ohio, Indiana, and Kentucky) may audition for *Newsies* and be considered for any role/position.
- *Every student* will be required to pay an activity fee to participate in the production of *Newsies*. The payment will be required within the first two weeks of rehearsals/crew work days in order to participate in all activities related to CAST. The activity fee is \$65. If your family has financial hardships, please contact us at amyburgess@caststages.org, we have scholarships available.
- Anyone under the age of 18 MUST have a parent's signature on the Parental Consent Form.
- ***We reserve the right to hold callbacks for these roles. Callbacks are slated to be live and in person on Thursday, June 4th at 6pm at the Felsenhaus Warehouse located at 242 West McMicken Ave., Cincinnati, OH 45214.***
- Final casting decisions are made by the production team. Decisions are final, and the team has chosen not to offer feedback on the process, individual auditions, or deliberations. Please respect this and understand that the casting process is difficult for all those involved.
- By auditioning, you are obligating yourself to a considerable rehearsal and performance process. Please be certain that you are willing and able to make this commitment (double and triple check the time commitment).

PLEASE READ CAREFULLY AND SIGN BELOW! THANK YOU FOR AUDITIONING/INTERVIEWING FOR CREW!!!

If I accept a role in **Commonwealth Artists Student Theatre (CAST)** production of *Newsies*, I will make myself available, and be on time for all scheduled rehearsals and performances. I will not be absent unless I have been given prior approval by the production team. I have read the commitment schedule and listed all known conflicts on this form. I grant permission for the production team and **Commonwealth Artists Student Theatre (CAST)** to use my photograph and/or personal statements to publicize the activities of **CAST** without compensation. I understand that I rehearse and perform at my own risk.

Signature

Parent Signature (If Under 18 years-old)

Date

Parental Consent Form

Dear Parents, I wanted to address common questions regarding our summer productions of *Newsies*. As the Artistic Director, I take my role very seriously and working with young actors is one of my favorite parts of the job. I want you to know that I recognize and empathize with your concerns and as with all my productions plan on creating a safe environment for the cast/crew to work in, no matter their age. Below I have listed questions and my answers to them. If you want more information or are still unclear, please feel free to contact me at any time, at jasonburgess@caststages.org or 859-545-0770.

How old does someone have to be to audition for Newsies?

You must be an incoming high school freshman to a graduating high school senior to audition. Unless you are auditioning for Les, then we are looking for a boy between 8 and 12 years old.

What are the shows about?

Newsies: New York City, 1899. Jack Kelly and his ragtag team of newsboys make a meager living selling newspapers on the city streets. But when the prices of "papes" are hiked and the newsies are hung out to dry, there is nothing left to do but "open the gates and seize the day!" Led by charismatic Jack and independent, young newspaper reporter Katherine Plummer, the Newsies form a union and organize a strike against the greedy publisher of the New York World. Can a group of idealistic newsboys win against a foe as powerful as acclaimed publisher Joseph Pulitzer? Inspired by the true story of the 1899 Newsboys Strike, *Newsies* is an ebullient, joyful, and entertaining musical capturing the strength that young people have when they join together and stand up against injustice. With a funny, poignant book by Harvey Feirstein and stunning music by Alan Menken and Jack Feldman -- including the show-stopping Seize the Day, power ballad "Santa Fe" and lovely new songs like Katherine's "Watch What Happens" -- *Newsies* is a classic with the power to inspire.

Is the show appropriate for my teenager to be a part of?

Only you know your child, and what is best for them. What I can tell you is that *Newsies* is a touching and entertaining musical that has been performed all over the world with big musical numbers and lots of technical challenges.

What kind of adult supervision will there be during the rehearsal process?

The production team will be present at all rehearsals. We all have experience with children's theatre

camps, teaching, and significant theatrical resumes.

Rehearsals start while school is still in session, how flexible is the rehearsal schedule?

The production teams will take all conflicts into account while creating the rehearsal schedule. We do understand your child may still be in school and that their school work is first priority, but beyond that we ask that this commitment be very serious. We are working on a very condensed rehearsal schedule. We also understand some vacation/camps have already been set in family schedules and try to accommodate to the best of our abilities.

How are you handling safety procedures with COVID-19 at rehearsal and performances?

We, as a company, promise to put the health and safety of the students at the forefront of our daily concerns. If at any point, we believe that the health of our students is at risk, we will cease all scheduled activities (including rehearsals and performances).

We promise to adhere to the social gathering mandates as laid out by the Ohio Department of Health.

Rule sheet:

- Each person called to rehearsal will have their temperature taken. If the temperature is above 100 degrees, the student will be asked to leave and will not be permitted to return until proof of medical clearance is provided.
- Each person called to rehearsal is expected to wear a mask (self-provided) to rehearsal and during rehearsal unless otherwise directed.
- Each person is required to use hand sanitizer upon arriving at rehearsal.
- Any person using materials with another person will wear latex gloves (one pair of gloves per rehearsal).
- Any items that are being shared between students and staff will be wiped down between uses.
- All personal belongings brought to rehearsal will be kept in assigned places.
- Students are required to bring their own water bottles to rehearsal and may not share with anyone else.
- Stage Managers, Interns or a Staff Member will complete all disinfecting activities at the end of the rehearsal. No one will leave until being given clearance on the all-clean.
- Adherence to all cleanliness and safety procedures is mandatory and failure to do so will result in being asked to leave.

Very specific directions will be given in regards to each step of the production through the end of performance to keep actors, technicians, staff, and volunteers safe. These new processes and logistics will be communicated in a timely fashion as we approach each phase of the production process. These decisions will be made with the most up to date advisement of the Ohio Department of Health and local government officials.

Thank you again for your time, and reading this thoroughly. In an effort to do the right thing and offer parents the whole truth about the audition/crew interviews process I felt this was necessary. I look forward to meeting you and your child at auditions/crew interviews.

Break A Leg!

-Jason Burgess, Artistic Director

Parent Signature: _____

Parent Name: _____

SYNOPSIS OF NEWSIES

As Jack Kelly is savoring the last few moments of quiet before the sun rises, he shares with his best friend Crutchie his rooftop view of the city and his dream for a better life out West. At dawn, the newsies make their way to the distribution window for the *World*, where they pick up their daily stacks of papers to sell from Wiesel, who runs the window, and Morris and Oscar Delancey, goons who work for the *World*. Davey and Les, brothers trying to earn money for their family, meet the newsies and try to learn the ropes. Jack agrees to partner with the boys since Les's young age will help him sell more papers, although Davey is skeptical.

Meanwhile, Joseph Pulitzer, publisher of the *World*, expresses displeasure at the declining sales of his newspaper and vows to increase profits, even if it is at the expense of the newsies.

At the end of the day, it's clear that Les is a natural newsie. Before Jack and the brothers can part ways, a man appears and chases Jack. Davey and Les follow Jack's lead, running through the alleys of New York and finding safety in Medda's Theater. Jack introduces them to Medda Larkin, one of the Bowery's most famous performers. Jack explains that the man chasing them is named Snyder; he runs The Refuge, an orphanage that he keeps in squalid conditions and embezzles from. He's had it out for Jack ever since he escaped. Medda offers her theater as a safe haven.

During Medda's performance, Jack notices Katherine, a bright young reporter he had seen earlier that day. A smitten Jack makes several attempts to flirt with her, but Katherine, quick-witted and ever-professional, cleverly rebuffs him. While the Bowery Beauties perform their routine, Jack resorts to sketching a portrait of Katherine and leaves it for her to find.

The next day, as the newsies gather at the distribution window, the boys are outraged to learn that Pulitzer has increased their price for newspapers - they can barely afford to eat as it is! Prompted by Davey, the newsies decide to form a union and strike.

After a successful first day of striking, newly elected union leader Jack Kelly assigns some kids to spread the word to newsies in other boroughs. Katherine arrives, hoping that the newsies will give her an exclusive for the *Sun*. Jack tells her to be at the distribution window the next morning; not only will the newsies prevent others from selling papers, but they plan to stop the delivery carts as well. He tells her that they all have a lot riding on her reporting skills, and Katherine gets to work writing her breakout article.

The next day, Jack arrives to find that only a few kids have assembled to strike. He urges Davey to convince the small group not to back down. When scabs arrive to take the newsies' place, Jack asks them to stand in solidarity with all the city's exploited working children. The scabs throw down their papers, just in time for Katherine and her photographer to snap a victorious photo. But soon the newsies engage in a fierce fight with the Delanceys, Wiesel, and the police. Snyder scares Jack away, but not before he watches the Delanceys take down Crutchie and carry him off to The Refuge. Reaching the temporary safety of his rooftop, Jack paces, feeling guilty about leading the kids into danger. He looks out over the city and longs to escape.

Battered and bruised, the newsies lament the previous day's events at Jacobi's Deli. Amid rumors that Jack was captured, several newsies wonder where he is. Katherine arrives with a copy of the story she published in the *Sun*, complete with a front-page picture of the newsies. Ecstatically, they thank her and celebrate their - and Katherine's - fame. Meanwhile, Crutchie writes a letter to Jack from The Refuge expressing that he feels no ill will toward Jack and urging the newsies to stick together.

Davey, Les, and Katherine find Jack back at Medda's Theater and try to convince him to come back to the fight. Jack refuses, saying that they can't win against a man as powerful as Pulitzer. The three convince Jack that theirs is a fight worth fighting; Jack finally agrees, and the kids plan a rally.

Discovering Katherine's story, Pulitzer furiously resolves to take down Jack. Just then, a cocky Jack arrives to announce the newsies' rally. Pulitzer assures Jack that no paper will cover it - and if it's not in the press, it never happened. He then reveals Katherine, exposing her as his daughter, and Snyder, who emerges from the shadows. Pulitzer offers Jack a choice: get sent to The Refuge or renounce the strike and leave New York with pockets full of cash. The Delanceys escort Jack to the cellar, where an old printing press rests, to ponder his decision.

That evening, Brooklyn newsies cross the bridge with Spot Conlon, their leader, to join newsies from every borough at Medda's theater for the rally. Davey gives an inspiring speech, riling up the newsies about their progress. However, Jack appears and tells them to go back to work because they are no match for Pulitzer. Jack accepts his payoff money at the door and exits.

On his rooftop, Jack finds Katherine looking through his drawings of The Refuge's bleak conditions. He snatches them from her and they argue fiercely until she kisses him. Katherine shares her plan to have the newsies distribute an article which quotes Jack on the exploitation of working kids and calls for a citywide strike.

With the help of Katherine and her well-connected friends, Darcy and Bill, the newsies sneak into Pulitzer's cellar to print their paper. The kids distribute the pamphlet all over the city.

Pulitzer's office is flooded with angry calls from every corner of New York. Having read the *Newsies Banner*, Pulitzer is furious at the kids' attempt to thwart him. Jack, Davey, and Spot show up to personally deliver the news and say that the kids are willing to make a compromise. Pulitzer refuses to back down until Governor Roosevelt appears with Katherine and Jack's drawings of The Refuge. Alone, Jack and Pulitzer come to an agreement they can both live with - the price increase is reduced by half, and publishers will buy back any unsold papers. The strike is over!

Outside, Jack announces the end of the strike. Crutchie appears amid the jubilation, followed by a handcuffed Snyder. Despite his dreams for Santa Fe, Jack realizes that the newsies are his family and Katherine gives him something to believe in - so he's staying put for now.

Character Descriptions for Newsies

These are the roles we are still looking to fill.

Principal Characters

Les (M) - Davey's cheeky younger brother is inspired by the freedom of the newsies and loves their independent lifestyle; Les is an intuitive, precocious salesboy and a pint-sized charmer;

Featured Characters

Romeo (M) – one of the Newsies

Scab/Newsie (M/F) - one of the Newsies.

Newsie/Featured Dancer (M/F) - one of the Newsies

Oscar Delancey (M) - tough brothers who work at the distribution window for the World, taking the side of the publishers in the strike and are known to use their fists to make a point.

Darcy/Cameraman/Bowery Beauty/Nun/Woman (M/F) – upper-class kid of a publisher who sides with the newsies et al.