

Annie People



Member



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Of Fan Clubs

The Newsletter for Annie Fans

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Artwork by Tricia Trozzi, co-editor and columnist

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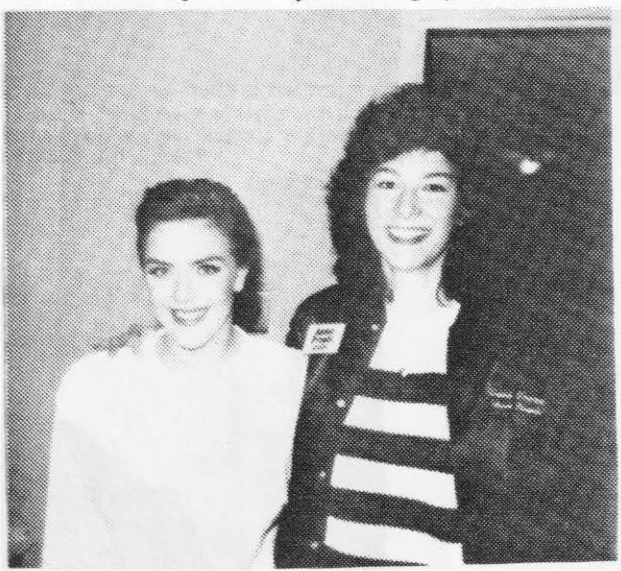
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ANDREA McARDLE ON STAGE IN ATLANTIC CITY

by Tricia Trozzi

Andrea McArdle is starring in an Atlantic City casino production of Singin' In The Rain for four months, and as in the lyrics of the title song, "what a glorious feeling, I'm happy again" to see Andrea perform on stage. The show is a 90-minute adaptation of the Broadway musical of a couple of years ago, which in turn was based on the famous 1952 movie. Andrea performs the role of Kathy Selden, a young singer whose vocal talents are needed to help a silent motion picture company make the transition to sound. As for Andrea, her own vocal talents are "required hearing" for many of us Annie People, and her singing of such famous songs as "You Were Meant For Me," "Would You," and "You Are My Lucky Star" was so wonderfully poised and mature, one could become a fan all over again. In addition to her superlative singing, Andrea demonstrated her acting ability for light comedy with a very believable characterization. The big surprise was to see Andrea dance so well in the many numbers. In the fast-paced Charleston "All I Do Is Dream Of You" Andrea was never out of step, and then appeared graceful in the smooth, jazzy "You Were Meant For Me." A real show-stopper is "Good Morning," in which Andrea and her two male co-stars must leap over furniture in the middle of an energetic tap dance. All in all, it was an excellent performance, and we hope it leads to more stage roles for Andrea.



With Andrea in Atlantic City

HAVE YOU HEARD DEBBIE GIBSON'S NEW ALBUM? IT'S ALREADY #1!!

Debbie Gibson has just scored another first in her career: Her second album on Atlantic called Electric Youth has become the nation's #1 album on Billboard's Top 200 LPs chart. Her first LP Out Of The Blue reached #7, sold more than 3 million copies, and is still on the chart after a year and a half, having spawned five hit singles.

Electric Youth was released on January 24th (see review, page 6) and took only five weeks to climb to the top of the LP chart. Even more amazing was that the week Debbie's album hit #1, "Lost In Your Eyes," the first single release from Electric Youth, was in its second week as the nation's #1 single. Debbie therefore becomes the youngest female artist in history to hold down the #1 position on the singles and album chart simultaneously.

Debbie was the first former Annie Orphan to have a hit single, a top 10 single, and a #1 single; and now she is the first to have a #1 album. 1989 certainly looks like the year for the busy 18-year-old. Debbie is now at work shooting a new video for her follow-up to "Lost In Your Eyes" which will be the title cut "Electric Youth." Congratulations, Debbie, and good luck!



Debbie with "Lost In Your Eyes" video director Jim Yukich, and Diane Gibson (Debbie's mother and manager). On location, Central Park, NYC.
Photo: DAVID SALIDOR



Debbie with her sister Michele Gibson, who did all the wardrobe and styling for the "Lost In Your Eyes" video. On location, Central Park, NYC.
Photo: DAVID SALIDOR

ANNIE'S GOT A NEW "DADDY"

by John Tonner

In what may be a first in the world of Annie, a stage "Daddy" Warbucks has become the real life father of a stage Annie. Dennis Martell, who completed a run as our favorite billionaire, married Samantha Craycraft. Sam just happened to be the mother of Kelley Craycraft, who played Annie in the same run.

The production was at the Great Lakes Dinner Playhouse in Mount Clemens, Michigan in February through April of 1988. Dennis did not know the Craycrafts until the production and actually got to know Kelley much better than her mother through the early days of the production. However, once he and Kelley's mother began dating, the writing was on the wall for an Annie story in real life.

After some months of dating Dennis and Sam decided to marry. They then set the date and were married on September 3, 1988. Not only did this give Kelley a new "Daddy," but it also gave her a new sister. Now, if you happen to call the Martell household and ask to speak to Kelley, you will have to be very specific. Kelley's new sister is also named Kelly.



Submitted by John Tonner

Kelley Craycraft at home with her parents Dennis and Sam



I just read in Premiere magazine that the Annie movie sequel will have Albert Finney back as Warbucks and Glenn Jordan directing. Sounds great! Have you heard anything else on it?

Rick Talley
La Habra, CA

According to a piece in the New York Daily News, producer Ray Stark has put the project on hold until 1990 because of the threat of a strike this summer by the Screen Actors Guild. There has been no casting yet, but Albert Finney is being thought about to reprise his role as Oliver Warbucks. The movie will reportedly be "an action film with music" (with new material being done by Martin Charnin) and the plot will take place during World War II. It will be filmed in Hungary and Yugoslavia for about \$15 million. --Ed.

★ Annie Stars Since Annie... ★

ANDREA McARDLE is having a fine run in Atlantic City in Singin' In The Rain (see separate story)....As The World Turns Emmy winner MARTHA BYRNE sang a club run at the Sanctuary in New York this past winter....SARAH JESSICA PARKER was on the ABC-TV movie The Ryan White Story in January....JULIE STEVENS sang the National Anthem and "O Canada" at a New York Rangers-Toronto Maple Leafs hockey game in NYC on February 17th....ALYSSA MILANO was featured in an article in TV Guide in February. In the course of the interview, Alyssa said about her stint as July in the 2nd National, "That year and a half was the most wonderful time of my life." Alyssa also appeared on Arsenio Hall's talk show in January....CRISTINA CONOMOS has been seen as a high school cheerleader on several episodes of As The World Turns on CBS....DEBBIE GIBSON joined Rod Stewart, Anita Baker, and Kenny Rogers in hosting the American Music Awards show on ABC on January 30th. She was nominated for Best Rock Performer, Female along with Tracy Chapman and winner Whitney Houston, and she did an especially emotional performance of "Lost In Your Eyes." Debbie was also interviewed on Good Morning America in January....MEREDITH SALENGER is starring in the new movie Dream A Little Dream....ALLISON SMITH was a co-host on Friday Night Videos in early February and played, among others, the network TV premiere of DEBBIE GIBSON's latest video. On the show Allison said that her own album will be out "before the end of the year." Allison also recently appeared as a panelist on Animal Crack-Ups on ABC for the second time....LONI ACKERMAN was among the performers in Musical Theater: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow in New York in February; the show highlighted hit songs from past, present, and future Broadway shows....LEE KRISTEN SFORZA will play in Oliver! this winter, having recently finished up a run in the title role in Annie (I'm so glad it doesn't have that silly exclamation mark). At her side was DUFFY as Sandy; Duffy, owned and trained by PAUL GOLDIE, plays in numerous metropolitan area productions, but it seems as if Annie must be his favorite, because his master saw Annie on Broadway 18 times. Paul recently acquired another dog-in-training, appropriately named Molly....STEPHANIE VINE was a guest star on Kate And Allie on March 6th. It was the first time Stephanie and ALLISON SMITH had worked together since she was Tessie with Allison on Broadway in 1982. Stephanie was the second of Allison's former fellow Broadway Orphans to guest star on K&A with her; MARTHA BYRNE did it in 1985....In our January column we neglected to mention SANDY's appearance on the Kennedy Center Honors program of last December. You may have been wondering about what happened after Rachel Graham sang "Tomorrow" and moved to the side of the stage, why Sandy barked a few times during Helen Hayes' speech causing her to stop once and ad lib. Well, MARY LEE, who was Sandy's "nanny" during Broadway, told AP it was not because Sandy forgot his training, but rather because he's so smart he remembered all of his training. As we all know, in the play on the last notes of "Tomorrow" Annie and Sandy exit so that the stage can be set for Hooverville. So, at the Kennedy Center after Rachel finished "Tomorrow," Sandy was expecting to leave the stage, not sit down again, and he found that he was still on stage after all his experience told him he and Annie should exit. So he said "Arf!" to tell BILL BERLONI that something was wrong and he shouldn't be on stage then! Two other Sandys have also been busy: ROXANNE will appear in a movie on PBS Wonderworks, and MOOSE has been doing various appearances, including a production of Annie in Rhode Island....KELSI OSBORN recently won a national talent search to be the hostess of the Showtime Cable Network Theater Family Series....SANDY FAISON is starring in the new ABC-TV sitcom Anything But Love....MARTIN CHARNIN hopes to have two musicals on Broadway before the end of the current season: Mike and Eating Raoul....Birthdays: ROXANNE DUNDISH, 16 on March 1; SHERRY DUNDISH, 16 on March 1; SUSAN LIPTON, 16 on March 4; JULIE STEVENS, 19 on March 22; SARAH JESSICA PARKER, 24 on March 25; LISA LYNNE, 16 on April 11; JENNIFER MAILLET, 18 on April 16; SHARON JORDAN, 17 on April 22; CAROL BURNETT, 55 on April 26.

Submitted by Paul Goldie



YONKERS, NY - Top row, Alanna Piazza, Meaghan McLaughlin, Sheila Dineen; middle row, Ailish Tomkins, Delia Birde, Maeve Cawley; bottom row, Susan Cremin, Lee Kristen Sforza (Annie), Julie Moyles

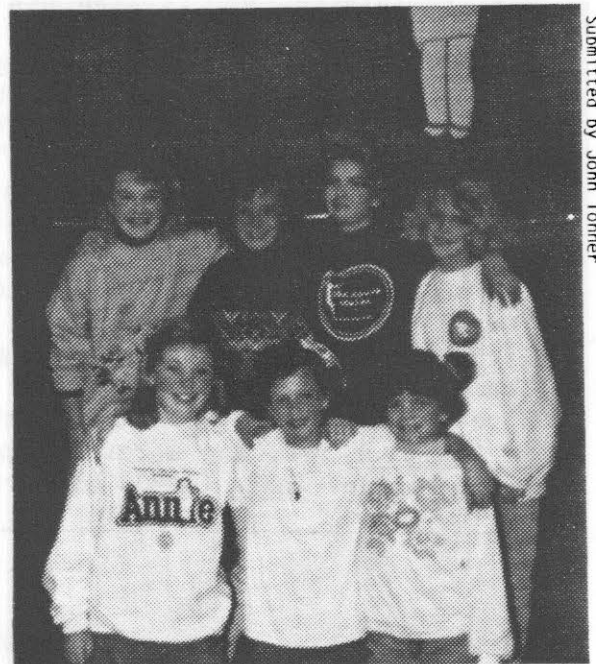


Lee Kristen Sforza and Duffy

Submitted by John Tonner



FENTON, MI - Top row, Julie Berra, Molly Hujan, Heather Durham (matinee Annie); bottom row, Holly Smith (Annie), Keri Dershem, Jennifer Freese, Angela Larson



Submitted by John Tonner

TRAVERSE CITY, MI - Top row, Suzy Hains, Kristin Fralick, Susan Brammer, Meghan Martin; bottom row, Amy Miller, Jamie Ruben (Annie), Meredith Whalen

Submitted by Cynthia Moser



AKRON, OH - David Brummel (Warbucks), Renee Glicker (Grace). David was the Apple Seller, Jimmy Johnson, and Louis Howe on Broadway in 1980.

This is Debbie Gibson's follow-up album on Atlantic to the triple-platinum-selling Out Of The Blue (see review, AP #29, p. 7). Upon hearing the new album, I, along with numerous other critics and fans, immediately sensed that this group of songs represents yet a new dimension of Debbie's growing singing and songwriting talents. Now that Debbie has established herself in the pop music market as a top-echelon star, she is attempting to widen the range of types of music we will be hearing from her in the months and years to come. Electric Youth, therefore, stands as an important step toward the future in Debbie's musical development.

The 18-year-old's record career began in the dance market, having logged the #1 top selling 12" dance single of 1987 nationally for "Only In My Dreams." Now Debbie seems to be leaving the dance style behind for more of a pop-rock style, and this is immediately evident in the selections on Electric Youth. The one notable exception on the album is the title cut, which is a superbly produced and exciting mixture of pop, rock, and dance all in one. But what is even more important about this song is the social consciousness displayed in the lyric: Says Debbie, "'Electric Youth' is about not dismissing a young person's ideas because 'he/she is just a kid'. I owe a lot to my family and teachers for helping to develop my creative side and for teaching me and many other children how to channel energy and ideas into worthwhile and creative projects." Listen to the song, older folks; we might learn something.

On the album there are many fine examples of youth-oriented love songs; among them, the big hit "Lost In Your Eyes," which is Debbie's biggest single yet (yes, that's Debbie on the piano). My personal favorite on Electric Youth is the beautiful ballad "Silence Speaks (A Thousand Words)." The instrumental background on this cut reminds me a lot of the folk-rock style of the mid-1960s, and demonstrates to me even more how much musical insight into older styles of pop music Debbie instinctively seems to have.

There are a number of potential big hit singles on Electric Youth; the title cut will be the next one after "Lost In Your Eyes" and will be out soon. Perhaps after that will be "No More Rhyme," a sensitive ballad in a style somewhat reminiscent of "Foolish Beat," which was Debbie's first single to go all the way to #1. Speaking optimistically (as all Annie fans tend to do), I would not be surprised if Debbie had a good shot at three #1 records during 1989.

Those who were present at Debbie's concerts last summer will recognize some of the "sneak previews" she performed for us back then, such as "Love In Disguise," "Should've Been The One," and "We Could Be Together." If you have the compact disc, pay close attention to the interesting alternate mix of that last song, which is a bonus cut on the CD only.

Debbie's technical abilities continue to grow also; she herself produced half the songs on the album and co-arranged and co-mixed just about all of them. "Music will always be my first priority," states Debbie, "I love performing live. I have other goals, though--I'd like to produce other artists, win a Grammy, record a duet with Billy Joel, act in films, and finish the screenplay I've been writing." Meanwhile, check out Electric Youth. It is everything Out Of The Blue was, and more. We Annie lovers are proud that Debbie Gibson has a production of Annie (1983) as part of her early show business background.

FAN CLUBS

ANDREA McARDLE Fan Club - Chris White, 1010 Elm Street, St. Charles, IL 60174

ALLISON SMITH Fan Club - Polly Mortensen, 3600 W. Park Rd., Hollywood, FL 33021

The D.G.I.F. (DEBBIE GIBSON International Fan) Club, Box 489, Merrick, NY 11566

Sun., Jan. 22, 1989

Asbury Park Press

**STEVE
GIEGERICH**



'Annie' fan gets another hard knock

This might be the last edition of The Asbury Park Press that Jon Merrill ever reads.

Merrill is the president of Annie People, a national "Little Orphan Annie" fan club. Two weeks ago, he called here and asked about The Press' plans for his favorite comic strip.

"The only day I get the paper is on Sunday," said Merrill, "and I only get it for 'Little Orphan Annie.'" (So much for hours spent on marketing surveys, news meetings and graphic design.) The Press was the only Sunday newspaper he could find that still ran "Little Orphan Annie" in its original half-page format. Then, a couple of weeks ago, the newspaper added some new comic strips and reduced the size of "Little Orphan Annie."

Not only that, Merrill pointed out, the Sunday logo no longer depicted the distinctive "Little Orphan Annie" trademark. Instead, the strip is now called "Annie" and its first two panels have been removed.

If "Little Orphan Annie" goes then so too, he continued, goes his subscription. Merrill was not boisterous, as many readers calling here often are. But he was about as mad as a man who has an Annie Room in his house can get.

Merrill means business. A few years ago, he canceled his subscription to The New York Daily News for the same reason. Merrill needs the Annie strip; he has been clipping them daily for nearly seven years, mounting them and neatly cataloging the cartoons in albums that now take up three feet of space on a bookshelf.

Jon Merrill, to be honest, does not look like the kind of man who would have an Annie Room. He is 43 and balding with a hint of stomach extending over the belt. His Annie Room has more than 600 pieces of Annie memorabilia, including dolls, posters and books. "This is what happens when a hobby gets out of hand," Merrill said.

Merrill is not a lifelong devotee to the 65-year-old strip.

In fact, it wasn't until a 1981 visit to London, while serving in the Army, that Merrill's interest in everything Annie began. That was when he saw the West End's version of the Broadway musical.

"The minute I saw the 'It's The Hard Knock Life' scene, I was gone," said Merrill, who has since seen the musical 81 times in 12 different states. He's seen the movie 55 times. "It's The Hard Knock Life" is a song in the musical. It is Merrill's favorite tune. In a recent survey by the Annie People newsletter — which Merrill co-edits — "It's The Hard Knock Life" finished third in popularity among Annie fans with 61 points.

"Tomorrow" finished first with 97 points. There was a single write-in vote for the overture. It wound up 16th, and last.

This is the kind of trivia one can find in the bi-monthly Annie People newsletter and the kind of information Merrill has memorized. He writes a regular column titled "Annie Stars Since Annie."

The Annie People newsletter (Box 431, Cedar Knolls 07927) is free and very upbeat. The lone exception is the March 1984 issue, which tells the story of a Massachusetts lad who sat in front of his television set and watched 60 straight hours of the movie "Annie" and sent verification of his feat for inclusion in the Guinness Book of World Records. The verification got lost in the mail. "Now that's the hard-knock life," Merrill wrote.

Fipping through a photo album, Merrill — a former grammar school music teacher now employed as a computer programmer for AT&T in Morristown — can recite the names of Annies and supporting casts around the country. Merrill has met all of the Broadway Annies; he has a picture of a bridge in Hudson County's East Newark where a scene in the movie was shot. And he visited Wilson Hall on the campus of Monmouth College to talk to the secretaries about what it was like when the film was on location there.

Merrill is especially fond of Debbie Gibson, the pop star who once appeared for three weeks in a Long Island production of "Annie." Miss Gibson, he said, is the first "Annie" veteran to have a hit record. Readers of the Annie People newsletter found out in '87 about her single first. It was a scoop, Merrill said proudly.

When Merrill criss-crosses the country for "Annie" performances, he is accorded celebrity status by the casts. In Utah, his visit was so heralded that Merrill was interviewed on a local television station. Several newspaper articles have been written about him. All manage to work in "leapin' lizards" — one of the little orphan's favorite sayings — and at least one pun incorporating the word "tomorrow."

Merrill says he is now in the market for another Sunday publication to patronize, one with an original-size Annie.

He'd like to continue receiving The Asbury Park Press, he said, but only if it finds a way to print the Sunday strip complete with the lost panels and the Little Orphan Annie logo.

No complete comic strip and no Little Orphan Annie logo means that as far as a continuing working relationship between Jon Merrill and The Press, there's no (sorry about this) tomorrow.

□ Steve Giegerich is an Asbury Park Press staff writer. His column appears Sunday, Wednesday and Friday.

CLASSIFIED AD

FOR SALE: Beautiful ANNIE logo hats. Custom made with cartoon ANNIE and logo from the show. Hats are white with red trim with a baseball-style brim and are fully adjustable.

Orders for hats are being taken by AP Fan Club member LOWELL KAMMER at 8625 BOLLIER AVE., NIAGARA FALLS, NEW YORK 14304.

Proceeds from the sales are being donated to the family of Michelle Walaszek. Michelle is a delightful 8-year-old girl who has been in Buffalo Children's Hospital since December. She is a member of Girl Scout Brownie Troop #123 which I have the pleasure of working with on their music and projects.

Cost of the ANNIE hats is \$7.00 each, including postage. Your contribution will reward you with a great hat for an ANNIE fan to wear or add to your ANNIE collection, and the money will be greatly appreciated by Michelle's family as well as Troop #123 and myself.

NOTE: Theater groups and bulk orders will receive a discount. Buy 12 or more ANNIE hats for only \$5.00 per hat. They make nice gifts for ANNIE cast members!

Please help show your support for our favorite musical and a very special little girl!

Thank you,

Lowell R. Kammer
8625 Bollier Avenue
Niagara Falls, NY 14304

Girl Scout Brownie Troop #123

Jon Merrill
Annie People
Box 431
Cedar Knolls, NJ 07927

