

Annie People



Member



National Association
Of Fan Clubs

The Little Orphan Annie Fan Club Newsletter

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Artwork by Tricia Trozzi, co-editor and columnist

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THINGS TO MENTION...

Thanks to all who submitted photos, articles, reviews and other information for this issue.

CURRENT EVENTS

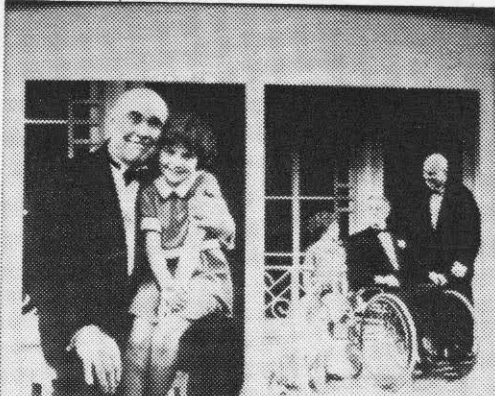
Annie Warbucks in the Media:

- Opening night reviews on the New York TV stations.
- Kathryn Zarembo sang "I Always Knew" on Good Morning America and was interviewed.
- Kathryn and the Orphans were on the Muscular Dystrophy Labor Day telethon. Kathryn sang "I Always Knew" and "Love"; the Orphans sang "The Other Woman." Part of this was on the local telecast for New York area only, but two songs were broadcast on the national level.

Print Media:

- TheaterWeek 8/2 - 12 page cover story, long interviews with Charles Strouse and Donna McKechnie and small sidebar on Kathryn.
- NY Daily News 8/6 - Article on Kathryn and article on Andrea McArdle joining the Broadway cast of Les Miserables.
- Huge Sunday NY Times piece 8/15 - Like a review, and an article almost a full page long.
- NY Daily News and NY Post 8/25 - Ran different photos of Kathryn with Aileen Quinn, who came to see the show and met Kathryn backstage.
- Sunday NY Times 8/29 - long article on Kathryn.
- The Orphans performed at Macy's Herald Square location on 9/16 as part of Back to School special events.
- Broadway flea market on 9/18 - The Annie Warbucks company had a booth. There will be a full report on this in our next issue.
- Tiffany & Company hosted Kathryn's 10th birthday party on 9/24. Guests included children from other Broadway shows, and peanut butter and jelly sandwiches were on the menu. Kathryn received an 18-karat gold locket from the chairman of Tiffany's who had read in the NY Times interview of 8/29 that Kathryn would like to visit the famed jewelry store.
- Alene Robertson was profiled in TheaterWeek 9/27.

RIGHT: Two views of the front doors of the Variety Arts. The photo blowups are taped to the glass doors, so the reflections of the glass made them difficult to photograph.



Harve Presnell Kathryn Zaremba Kathryn Zaremba Harve Presnell
Raymond Thorne
Cindy Lou



Alene Robertson
Missy Goldberg Ashley Peitot
Elisabeth Zaremba Natalia Harris

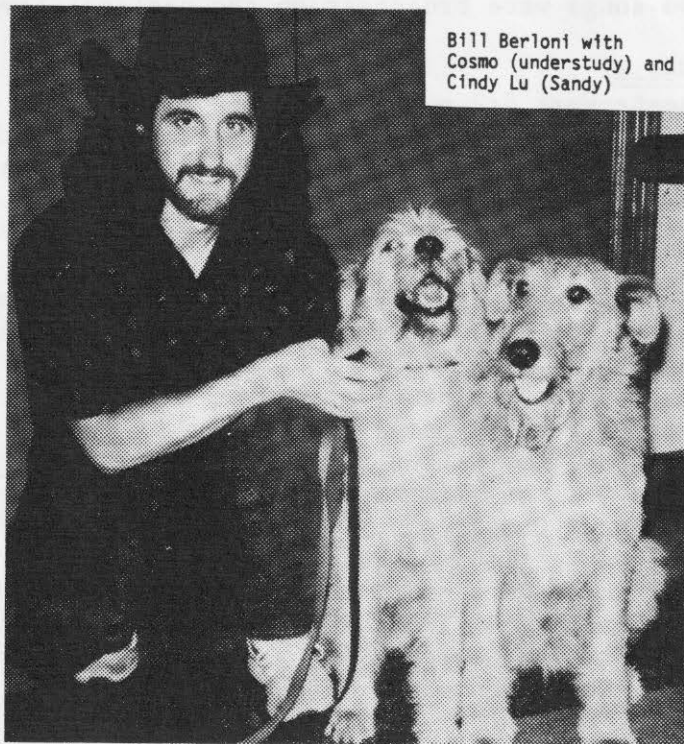
ABOVE AND BELOW: The Martha Swope photographs that are on the stage door.



Marguerite MacIntyre



Donna McKachnie Harve Presnell



Bill Berloni with
Cosmo (understudy) and
Cindy Lu (Sandy)

...AND THE REVIEWS ARE IN!

Annie Warbucks opened in New York City at the Variety Arts Theatre Off-Broadway on August 9th. The well-publicized 3-1/2 year journey the show has taken has been documented in many magazine and newspaper articles and in a book on Broadway failures called *Not Since "Carrie"* by Ken Mandelbaum, as well as right here in the humble pages of the Little Orphan Annie Fan Club Newsletter. With the stigma of *Annie 2: Miss Hannigan's Revenge* and the knowledge that there has never been a successful sequel on Broadway, the show played for the notoriously tough New York critics. And the verdict? Very mixed, sometimes leading one to wonder: Did all of these people see the same show? Something that one critic loved was something that another hated, which just goes to show that what the critics say is just one person's opinion; you should go to the see the show and decide for yourself.

So what we have done is taken fifteen of the reviews of *AW* and pulled out the different, sometimes contradictory, opinions and combined them by subject to create a "mega-review." We especially aimed to include the sometimes bizarre descriptions and colorful adjectives--both positive and negative--that critics use when they are trying to be clever. Some of this careful wording works to the show's advantage when they are assembling "pull-quote" ads--ads which use phrases from various review to try to make the show sound as if all the critics loved it. For example, in the New York magazine review, after saying some negative things about the plot and characters, critic John Simon goes on to say, "Which is not to say that *AW* is not surefire family fun and, if you have the requisite bucks and tots, well worth catching." The underlined phrases were taken out to be used in the *AW* newspaper ads. There were plenty of other positive phrases in other reviews too, so *AW* did not have to "cheat" and take positive comments out of basically negative sentences, as so many other shows do in their advertising.

The following reviews were used in this article, and their opinions do not necessarily reflect the views of the staff of *Annie People*. Each review has been given a code to reference the pull-quotes.

New York Daily News 8/9 (DN)
New York Post 8/10 (NYP)
New York Times 8/10 (NYT)
New York Newsday 8/10 (NSD)
Newark NJ Star-Ledger 8/10 (NSL)
Bergen NJ Record 8/10 (BR)
USA Today 8/10 (USA)
Chicago Tribune 8/10 (CT)

Associated Press (ASP)
Wall Street Journal 8/16 (WSJ)
The New Yorker 8/23 (TNY)
Variety 8/23 (VAR)
Time 8/23 (TIM)
New York 8/23 (NY)
TheaterWeek 8/30 (TW)

TRIVIA: Almost every review used the phrase "family show" or something to that effect. Reviews one could consider to be RAVES were: Daily News, The New Yorker, and TheaterWeek. Reviews one could consider as total PANS were the two New Jersey papers, the Bergen Record and the Star-Ledger, the latter being such a "poison pen" that it even contained factual errors!

"TOMORROW" PUNS: headlines--"Bet your bottom dollar on 'Annie Warbucks' (DN), "Annie's Tomorrow's Here and Warbucks Must Wed" (NSD), last sentence--"And the moral of this story, gang, is that the sun will come out tomorrow, but you better forget the bottom dollar when you're writing a musical about it" (NSL), "But the thrill is gone, and it's not likely to come back out tomorrow" (NSD).

OTHER PUNS: headlines--"Warbucks' Stops Here" (NYP), "They Sing, They Dance, They Bark" (NYT), "Old Redhead Is Back" (TIM). The Associated Press used "leapin' lizards" once and ended with "is a difficult show to take to your heart. Give it a half-hearted 'arf'."

REVIEWS COMPARING KATHRYN ZAREMBA TO ETHEL MERMAN: Associated Press, Wall Street Journal, Time, New York.

REVIEWS RECOUNTING THE ENTIRE SAGA FROM *A2-MHR* TO THE PRESENT: NYP, NSL, BR, VAR, USA (had a timeline sidebar), CT, ASP, TW, WSJ.

GENERAL: "enormously entertaining evening, sensational cast" (DN), "not particularly good, not particularly bad, it is simply not particularly satisfying" (NYP), "Its little-girl star is younger, the slapstick is broader, the jokes hoarier, and the can-do optimism even more intense. Unfortunately, in other ways this *Annie* is less than its prototype....The plot that follows is in many ways a retread....Because *AW* reconstructs so literally the elements of its predecessor, it invites direct comparison, and agreeable though it sometimes is, it always suffers. Still, the show may provide a nostalgic oasis for family audiences who wish to recall a theatrical era in which the comic corn was as high as an elephant's eye and plucky little girls didn't dress like Madonna." (NYT), "is a craftily camouflaged rehash...just cheery and slick enough to plant a clenched smile on your kisser, just bland and mediocre enough to keep that smile from reaching up to your ears" (NSD), "feeling of exhausted desperation...villainesses enjoy the best moments" (NSL), "just isn't much fun...charmless, fizzless musical...pallidly apes the original." (BR), "This sparkling show is written in broad strokes and primary colors with some fun...the comic strip comes to life with honesty and wit rather than the sentimentality kids supposedly like but puts adults into a diabetic coma. However, it often seems the show is too disparate to please" (USA), "sharper, better paced first act and a sometimes sluggish second act...a perfectly pleasant, unabashedly cheery and sometimes very shrewdly maneuvered spinoff from the original *Annie*" (CT), "has arrived with the most uninvolved of stories" (ASP), "beguiling little musical...you won't walk out of the theater mulling any message, but you'll likely walk out with your toes tapping and a smile on your lips. Cynics and curmudgeons beware: this show has heart....499 seat theater gives the show an appealing intimacy" (WSJ), "a beguiling piece of foolishness at a perfect Off-Broadway theater...a show literally for young and old" (TNY), "it has some charm...several good songs...book has the staccato sound of a piece that has been endlessly cut, patched and rewritten (which, of course, it has)...completely predictable ending...this is a show that gives away its entire plot and nearly all its secrets in the song titles" (VAR), "same orphaned kid, same doggy pet tricks, same bald tycoon, but definitely not the same joy....It is pleasant, tuneful, funny, and fit for whole families....By the end there's hardly a wet eye in the house" (TIM), "the final result is a lot more fun than you might have expected...thoroughly professional and satisfying. Let's get it over with and admit that the sequel is not as good as *Annie I...* several of the numbers are direct parallels...for some, *AW* may be too close to *Annie* for comfort, but then sequels often amount to little more than minimally altered recycling jobs. In any case, the new *AW* is sweet, funny, and tuneful" (TW).

MARTIN CHARNIN'S LYRICS AND DIRECTION, THOMAS MEEHAN'S BOOK, CHARLES STROUSE'S SCORE, PETER GENNARO'S CHOREOGRAPHY: "Meehan has filled the plot, which does not bear sustained analysis, with the dry humor he brought to *Annie*. Charnin's lyrics are similarly adroit, Strouse's score is extremely rich" (DN), "Book never gets up real steam, lyrics remain as four-square predictable as ever....Music has an air of second time around...cramped choreography...attempt to scale down a lumbering Broadway musical to Off-Broadway viability" (NYP), "tunes are slimmer...the staging far less opulent...lyrics are as unapologetically clunky as ever" (NYT), "plot-heavy...score has loads of rickety-tick '30s bounce, but it's unremittingly second rate" (NSD), "Rub-a-dub-thud--three men write a dud....Dear old *Annie* had satisfying underlying themes about optimism and determination and courage. The sequel is about nothing other than its creators trying to make even more big bucks off the kid--this is certainly child exploitation, if not abuse" (NSL), "one of the most ho-hum first-act-crises in memory...music OK...flat book...strained lyrics...clumsy staging" (BR), "Charnin and his colleagues have gone as far as they can go in making *AW* seem fresh, rather than formulaic, and, like *Annie* herself, they are forever hopeful" (CT), "thin score and an even thinner plot that only underline how difficult it is to do a successful sequel to a proven commodity...limited choreography...score settles for the obvious...OK lyrics...book has a patchwork quality...awkwardly stitched together" (ASP), "the old team at its absolute best...book is lively and funny...the songs are gems" (TNY), "Charnin and Gennaro deploy their comparatively large company with considerable finesse....The show will never make Charnin, Strouse, and Meehan the millions they earned from *Annie*, but it will finally let them get on with their lives, for which we can all be grateful" (VAR), "book gets off a few genuinely funny lines...lyrics come from all drawers, top to bottom...tunes are as winsome as ever; if there's not a 'Tomorrow' among them...direction and choreography keep perfectly in step" (NY), "well-constructed and reasonably believable libretto...highly proficient lyrics...tunes that are catchy and appealing and invariably skirt run-of-the-mill blandness. They're bound to be underrated....It's too bad, however, that a better place could not be found for the song 'When You Smile', once the show's take-home tune and potential 'Tomorrow', it's now present only vestigially....Gennaro's musical staging is generally smooth, as is Charnin's overall direction" (TW).

SONGS: There is a gorgeous 'aria' for Warbucks, splendidly sung...boffo songs for Annie...an elegant ensemble number ('That's the Kind of Woman'), a rousing country piece ('Love'), a first-rate ballad ('It Would Have Been Wonderful'), and an irresistible dance piece ('All Dolled Up') (DN), "wispy ballad 'A Younger Man'....The songs veer from the exhortatively patriotic...to downright syrupy. Many of them seem to have been written in exact correspondence to the hits that emerged from the first *Annie*—although there is nothing that promises to assume the anthem-like status of "Tomorrow" (NYT), "Odd, though, that the most enjoyable number is one about killing off Daddy Warbucks, Sandy, and little Annie herself ('Leave It to the Girls')....A few moments after you've invested your heart into the tearjerking 'But You Go On', you discover that it's just a phony story cooked up to hook Warbucks. 'The Tenement Lullaby' is equally bogus. 'Somebody's Gotta Do Something' is a fake attempt to reprise Depression horrors. 'The Other Woman' descends into the tasteless spectacle of five [sic] little orphanage girls shaking their booties in a choreographic melt-down of burlesque and kick-boxing moves" (NSL), 'When You Smile', the best song and one that suggests this has a better score than *Annie*, has been unwisely moved from the opening to a throwaway in Act II" (USA), "sweet... 'It Would Have Been Wonderful', 'Changes', 'Love', 'All Dolled Up', and 'A Younger Man', the only number that has survived all of the show's many transformations" (CT), "terrific dance number in 'All Dolled Up', and Grace will have delivered the musical's sole standout number, the torchy 'It Would Have Been Wonderful'" (VAR), "'All Dolled Up' production number is a charmer" (TW).

KATHRYN ZAREMBA AS ANNIE WARBUCKS: "fabulous...none of the coyness of child actors" (DN), "adorable...perkily simpering personality that provokes dopey smiles from all adults within range" (NYP), "No sooner does 9-year-old Kathryn Zarembo sing her first note...than the audience erupts into relieved, gratified chuckles....Her voice is pitched somewhere between a bugle and a gym teacher's whistle, is enormous. Never mind that her diction sometimes suggests that her cheeks have been stuffed with M&Ms...appealing naturalness" (NYT), "the voice...a timbre with the piercing clarity of a Stradivarius kazoo" (NSD), "dumpling cheeks and a piercing voice that drills straight into the middle of your forehead" (NSL), "cute if show-bizzy...voice doesn't always allow lyrics to be deciphered" (BR), "spitfire...sings with a voice like a piccolo trumpet" (USA), "spunky" (CT), "aggressive...short of height, but long on moxie, she's a fighter" (ASP), "Kathryn is no perky ingenue; her hard-boiled Annie has pizzazz" (WSJ), "She never makes a wrong move, and her singing is strong and clear" (TNY), "She's cute and blessed with a sturdy, attractive voice, but she has to fake Annie's charisma, and she's completely unformed as an actress" (VAR), "is loud and clear but never vulnerable or soft" (TIM), "vocally and histrionically, a mini-tornado" (NY), "admirably cute and tiny, has no trouble whatsoever with some tricky musical material, and carries the show with simple, unaffected sensibleness" (TW).

HARVE PRESNELL AS OLIVER WARBUCKS: "admirable" (NYP), "gets solid comic mileage from Warbucks' emotional starchiness...and brings more than is required to his songs" (NYT), "who wears a vague, discomfited expression for much of the evening" (BR), "the real star is Harve Presnell, who gives the show its emotional center, balancing Daddy Warbucks' cantankerousness and radiant affection for Annie" (USA), "has a commanding baritone" (CT), "He's a commanding presence, tall and with a big booming voice that makes you want to stand up and salute. Yet his bewilderment at which woman to choose is touchingly funny" (ASP), "plays with panache...his heart-rending rendition of the show's loveliest song, 'A Younger Man', deserves to become a pop hit" (WSJ), "his bald head gleaming, is Daddy Warbucks come to life" (TNY), "commanding...perhaps a tad too operatic but surely the sonorous answer to an orphan's prayer" (NY), "still underplays beautifully, sings with the same big burnished tone he has always had, and does a lovely job of charting Oliver's progress from gruffness to a man who has finally realized where his priorities should be" (TW).

ALENE ROBERTSON AS COMMISSIONER HARRIET DOYLE: "smashing" (DN), "mugging" (NYP), "sketches an overscaled cartoon of baleful misanthropy, which comes to seem cast in granite" (NYT, "raucous bulldog glower" (NSD), "droll...growls and grumps about" (NSL), "strident" (BR), "portrays the commissioner with infectious bombast" (USA), "heavy-handed comic relief, and there's a desperation to Robertson's mugging that grows tiresome" (ASP), "fine comic turn" (WSJ), "no commissioner was ever gruffer or more menacing" (TNY), "played with shumpy, grumpy relish" (VAR), "is the epitome of color-print evil" (NY), "sings very well, works very hard, and is effective, but she's broader than she needs to be" (TW).

DONNA McKECHNIE AS MRS. SHEILA KELLY: "shows unexpectedly juicy comic skills" (DN), "chirpy" (NYP), "the blithe exuberance of a genie who has been trapped in a bottle for several centuries" (NYT), "purebred glow" (NSD), "vivacious...appealing" (NSL), "ever-watchable" (USA), "brings a bit of dancing pizzazz to the musical" (ASP), "ingratiating" (WSJ), "played to a gleeful comic turn...she's a revelation" (VAR), "is fine, though her makeup outshines her performance" (NY), "looks great in period outfits and hairstyles, acts and sings with the kind of professional gusto one expects of a '60s Broadway baby" (TW).

MARGUERITE MacINTYRE AS GRACE FARRELL: "is in every way perfect as Grace" (DN), "played with furrowed-grow intensity" (BR), "is overshadowed...stuck with playing the lackluster and limp Grace" (ASP), "blonde bombshell...is fetching" (WSJ), "no young woman more romantic" (TNY), "is an enchanting Grace" (NY), "is gorgeous to look at and sings and acts...beguilingly" (TW).

RAYMOND THORNE AS PRESIDENT FRANKLIN DELANO ROOSEVELT: "repeats his patrician performance as FDR" (DN), "amiable" (CT), "gives as much enjoyment as he seems to get out of the role of FDR" (TNY), "remains untouchable in the role of FDR that he played in both *Annie 1* and all versions of the sequel" (TW).

ASHLEY PETTET, MISSY GOLDBERG, ELISABETH ZAREMBA, NATALIA HARRIS AS THE ORPHANS: "sassy orphan chums...little girls who shimmy, a bit distastefully, like Sophie Tucker" (NYT), "The orphans' big moment, 'The Other Woman', tickles us with its spunky humor, but Gennaro forces them to shake their fannies kooch-dancer-style one time too many" (NSD), "adorable" (CT), "splendid" (WSJ), "a credit to their profession. A livelier bunch has rarely existed" (TNY), "Everyone else does nicely too, but particular praise to Ashley Pettet, the littlest orphan with the biggest oomph" (NY).

HARVEY EVANS AND MOLLY SCOTT AS ALVIN AND ELLA PATERSON: "great as a country couple" (DN), "all awfully played" (VAR), "lovable hayseeds" (NY), Harvey--"delightful" (NSD), "breaks the boundaries of musical comedy" (TNY), "sweetly adorable" (TW), Molly--"sensational" (WSJ).

CINDY LU AS SANDY: "strong piece of non-traditional casting. The role of Sandy is assayed by a female named Cindy Lu, who constantly projects just the right note of melancholy" (DN), "rather wooden" (NYT), "indifferent...one amusing moment" (BR), "an unflappable pooch who upstages everyone when she appears dressed in hobo clothes with runaway Annie in the second act" (CT), "laconic mongrel" (ASP), "adorable but needs to learn her lines better, I swear I heard a couple of extraneous arfs" (WSJ). "Poor Cindy Lu, as a bored and miserable-looking Sandy...doesn't bark half so well" (NY)

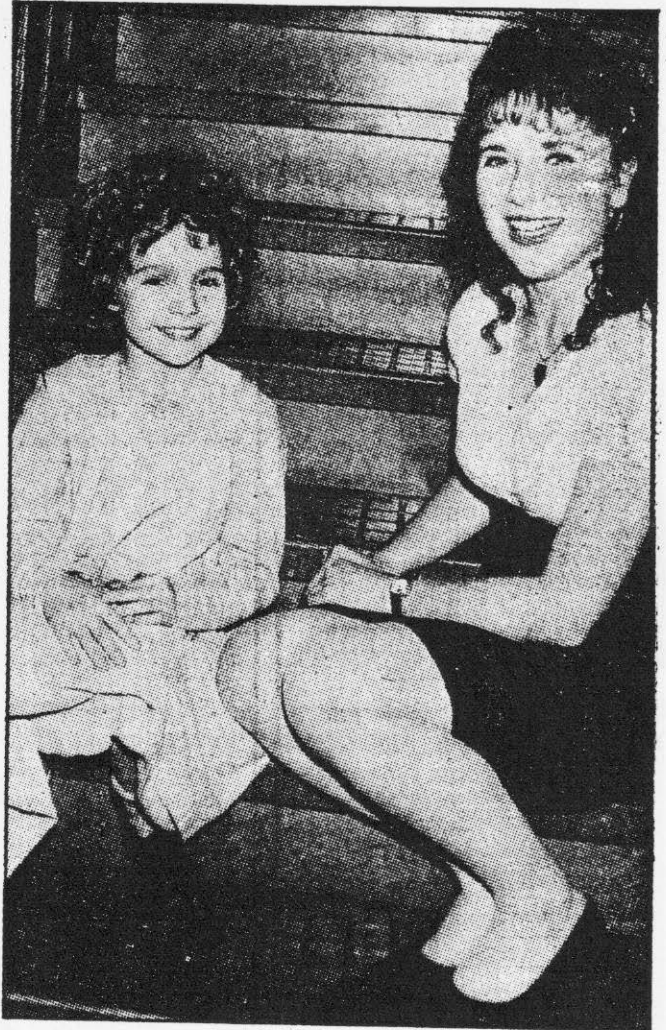
MING CHO LEE'S SETS, THEONI V. ALDREDGE'S COSTUMES, KEN BILLINGTON'S LIGHTING: "scenery a model of smart economy" (NYP), "a Christmas tree that seems made of pasteboard...it evokes the Depression in ways that could not have been intended" (NYT), "clean, art-deco look is appealing" (BR), "handsome settings" (USA), "sets...don't have much room to work...results are unimaginative" (WSJ), "simply beautiful, elegant settings that unfold like origami...thin orchestrations...costumes are characteristically in-period with a sense of humor, and lovely lighting adds greatly to the first-rate look of the settings" (VAR), "postage-stamp stage...use of Broadway-budget costumes just makes the surrounding skimpiness look worse" (TIM), "reducing the scenery to modest proportions without losing the wonder...lighting and costumes sparkle in sprightly unison" (NY), "airy but attractive scenery...nice period clothes" (TW).

AND A MENTION FOR... "When one enters the Variety Arts, one sees, proudly displayed, every *Annie*, from the first Goodspeed production of *Annie 1* to its Broadway and touring heyday, on through *Annie 2* in D.C. and Goodspeed, to *Annie Warbucks* on tour and at last, New York. Whatever the sequel's New York fate, it can now be recorded, then leased to the stock and amateur field, where it is guaranteed to have a long life; companies that have tired of doing *Annie* will be eager to do the sequel...not the least of its charms is that it is as old-fashioned, '50s/'60s-style a musical as you are ever likely to see again, and demonstrates that there is still life left in the form...it's enjoyable and should please its intended audience. *Annie 3*, anyone?" (TW).



Tricia with MARGUERITE MacINTYRE (Grace)

LAST NIGHT IN NEW YORK



Alex Oliveira /DMI

LITTLE OFTEN ANNIES: Kathryn Zaremba (left), star of "Annie Warbucks," meets Aileen Quinn, the lead in the movie "Annie."



Cynthia Moser with ALENE ROBERTSON (Commissioner Doyle)

And we proudly present the group of people without whom there would be no show - the BACKSTAGE CREW OF ANNIE WARBUCKS!



And at the Variety Theater, two Annies proved better than one as Aileen Quinn, who starred in the 1982 movie "Annie," met Kathryn Zaremba, star of the current Broadway hit, "Annie Warbucks."

From the Playbill of Annie Warbucks

- Casting Associate Cheryl Keller
- Production Photographer Carol Rosegg
- Logo Design Karen Gusdorf
- Illustration Tim Raglin
- Signs Advanced Sign Corp.
Michael Hansen, Adam Miller
- Children's tutoring provided by On Location Education
- Children's Guardian Denise Hurd
- Licensing & Merchandising Coordinator Keith B. Miller
- Merchandising More Merchandising, Int'l
- Memorabilia Display Tricia Trozzi
- Insurance .. DeWitt Stern, Guttman & Co., Inc.
Jennifer Brown
- Banking Chemical Bank
Denise G. Thomas
- Legal Counsel Neal I. Gantcher
Bernard G. Schneider
Leavy, Rosensweig & Hyman



By Carol Rosegg, Martha Swope Associates

THE SUN HAS COME OUT: From left, Cindy Lou is pooch Sandy, Kathryn Zaremba is Annie, Harve Presnell is Daddy Warbucks.

"A TERRIFIC FAMILY MUSICAL!"

-Pat Collins, WWOR-TV

"AN ENORMOUSLY ENTERTAINING EVENING!"

Annie Warbucks is so much fun! A sensational cast and an extremely rich score. Kathryn Zaremba is fabulous as Annie!"

-Howard Kissel
DAILY NEWS



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—Joel Siegel, WABC-TV

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"ENORMOUSLY ENTERTAINING! A RICH SCORE & A SENSATIONAL CAST WITH KATHRYN ZAREMBA AS A FABULOUS ANNIE!" —Daily News

ANNIE WARBUCKS

A NEW MUSICAL COMEDY

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Tue-Sat 8; Mats: Wed & Sat 2:30, Sun 3:30
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Little Orphan Annie