

# Annie People



## The Little Orphan Annie Fan Club Newsletter

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Tricia Trozzi, Editor and Publisher

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### Nationwide Talent Search Planned for an All-New Musical Production of "Annie" Coming Next Season to ABC and "The Wonderful World of Disney"

#### Award-Winning Producers of "Rodgers & Hammerstein's Cinderella" Team Up Again to Create Another Musical Spectacular

**BURBANK, Calif.—(ENTERTAINMENT WIRE PRESS RELEASE)—Jan. 11, 1999:** Walt Disney Television, the preeminent producer of family television, will produce an all-new adaptation of the acclaimed musical "Annie," for the 1999-2000 season of "The Wonderful World of Disney" and ABC, it was announced by Charles Hirschhorn, president, Walt Disney Television, and Jamie Tarses, president, ABC Entertainment. "After the success of 'Rodgers & Hammerstein's Cinderella,' we've been looking for another opportunity to produce a wonderful family musical. I think we've found it with 'Annie,'" Hirschhorn said.

Following on the heels of their astounding success with "Rodgers & Hammerstein's Cinderella," the enchanting musical seen by 60 million viewers and honored with seven Emmy nominations, Craig Zadan and Neil Meron of Storyline Entertainment and Chris Montan of Chris Montan Productions team up as executive producers to once again bring Disney's magic to Annie's world where "the sun'll come out tomorrow." Mary Kay Powell of Rastar Productions will also serve as an executive producer and Brad Krevoy is a co-producer.

"We love the musical genre," said Zadan, "and we're looking forward to reinventing 'Annie' for the screen much the way we did last season with the splendor and excitement that our team brought to 'Cinderella.'"

"We are so thankful that there is a place like 'The Wonderful World of Disney' that has found a home for the television musical and provides an environment where we can bring fantasies like 'Cinderella' and 'Annie' into America's homes on an annual basis," added Meron.

Prolific writer Irene Mecchi, who was part of the writing teams responsible for Disney's animated hits "Hercules," "The Hunchback of Notre Dame" and "The Lion King," and served as a co-writer of the book for the Tony Award-winning Broadway adaptation of "The Lion King," is adapting the stage musical of "Annie" for this television production. Renowned "Annie" composer Charles Strouse and lyricist Martin Charnin have agreed to write some new songs to be added to the already existing classic score. Two-time Emmy nominee Rob Marshall, who choreographed "Rodgers & Hammerstein's Cinderella" and Angela Lansbury's "Mrs. Santa Claus," makes his film directorial debut with "Annie," also choreographing the musical numbers. Marshall received two Tony nominations this past season as co-director and choreographer for his ground-breaking work on Broadway's "Cabaret," and directed and choreographed this season's hit musical "Little Me" starring Martin Short.

With the key creative team firmly in place, the producers are set to embark on casting the film. While a mix of seasoned actors and fresh faces will make up the eventual cast of the film, a nationwide talent search is planned for the spring to help cast the roles of Annie and her fellow orphans. Further details will be announced soon.

Craig Zadan and Neil Meron's Storyline Entertainment received 25 Emmy nominations in the last few television seasons. In addition to executive producing "Rodgers & Hammerstein's Cinderella," they executive produced Bette Midler's critically acclaimed "Gypsy" and Glenn Close's landmark film "Serving in Silence: The Margarethe Cammermeyer Story," which garnered three Emmys and the coveted Peabody Award. Their new musical film "Double Platinum" stars Diana Ross and Brandy and will air on ABC for May Sweeps.

Montan, a long-time Disney music executive, guided the studio to an unprecedented four Best Song Oscars® ("Under the Sea" from "The Little Mermaid," "Beauty and the Beast," "A Whole New World" from "Aladdin," and "Can You Feel the Love Tonight," from "The Lion King") over a five-year period and was the producer for "Rodgers & Hammerstein's Cinderella."

The original "Annie" musical, written by Charles Strouse, Martin Charnin and Thomas Meehan, opened on April 22, 1977, and ran on Broadway for over five years. It was nominated for ten Tony Awards and won seven, including Best Musical. A feature film adaptation, produced by Ray Stark for Rastar Productions and Columbia Pictures, was made in 1982. "Annie" is a Storyline Entertainment and Chris Montan Production in association with Walt Disney Television for "The Wonderful World of Disney."

## **"Annie" Will Be Disney's Next "Wonderful World" TV Musical, Nov. 1999**

February 9, 1999 — By Kenneth Jones from Playbill On-Line

Broadway's Rob Marshall will direct and choreograph a TV movie of "Annie" that is expected to restore story elements and songs lost or muted when the Broadway musical was Hollywoodized in 1982. Executive producer Chris Montan (of Walt Disney) and executive producers Neil Meron and Craig Zadan (of Storyline Entertainment) are re-teaming following their 1997 success with the ABC "Wonderful World of Disney" broadcast of "Rodgers and Hammerstein's Cinderella."

Zadan told Playbill On-Line Feb. 9 that in the new \$10 million TV movie — expected to be shot in June in Los Angeles and aired in November 1999, "Tomorrow" (sung over the title credits in the John Huston-directed film) will indeed be a major part of the plot again. The show's cheerful anthem in Act One (reprised in Act Two) became an instant hit in 1977 and shot actress Andrea McArdle to national fame. The Broadway song, "NYC," not in the film, will also be part of the new TV movie, Zadan said. That number, a tour of 1930s New York City that helped bond Daddy Warbucks and Annie, was replaced in the 1982 film by "Let's Go to the Movies," a new number by composer Charles Strouse and lyricist Martin Charnin. The film also included new tunes "Sign," "We Got Annie" and "Dumb Dog" and didn't use Broadway's "Annie," "New Deal for Christmas," "Something Was Missing," "We'd Like to Thank You" and "You Won't Be an Orphan For Long."

The new "Annie" teleplay is by Irene Mecchi, one of the contributing screenwriters of Disney's animated "The Lion King," "Hercules" and "The Hunchback of Notre Dame." No cast has been announced, but Zadan expects it to be "all-star" except for the title role of the orphan (and her pals from the orphanage). The actress to play Little Orphan Annie, the red-haired mopplet from the famous newspaper comic strips, will be found on a national casting search in the spring.

Why re-do "Annie" after Hollywood created a picture already? "The movie was a huge disappointment, even to the writers," Zadan said. "I felt the same way about the film version of "Gypsy" with Rosalind Russell." Zadan is one of the producers responsible for reinvigorating interest in the TV musical form with his TV movie of "Gypsy" starring Bette Midler in 1993. "We're not contemporizing Annie," Zadan cautioned, adding that Annie will still be a fiercely optimistic red-headed orphan in Depression era Manhattan.

Mecchi and Marshall (Broadway's "Cabaret" and "Little Me") will work closely with the producers and songwriters, and Strouse and Charnin may write a few new numbers, Zadan said. When writing a TV movie, the script is cut into seven acts — to accommodate commercial breaks — rather than two, said Zadan. "Most if not all of the original (Broadway) score" will be used, the producer suggested.

Annie won Tony Awards for Actress (Dorothy Loudon, beating McArdle), Book, Choreographer, Scenic Designer, Costume Designer, Musical and Score in 1977 and became a worldwide smash. A 20th anniversary production, less lavish than the original, opened on Broadway in March 1997 starring Nell Carter as Annie's nemesis, Miss Hannigan, the orphanage matron. A new song was written for Carter. A national tour continues into 1999 starring Sally Struthers.

"Annie," the TV movie musical, is expected to air November 1999 on "The Wonderful World of Disney" in the same 7-9 PM Sunday period that was golden for "Cinderella" (in 1997). And the future of the TV movie musical? "What I would like to do is a number of these classics and then after we've got (the audience), really take the next step and start commissioning original musicals. The way to do it is to first get an audience, get the audience used to tuning in each year."

Musical theatre buffs treasure Zadan's authorized show-by-show document of the works of Stephen Sondheim, "Sondheim & Co.," which, Zadan said, will have a new edition in the future.

# Calling All Orphans! Disney Announces Open Call for Potential "Annie" TV Movie Moppets

February 17, 1999 — By Kenneth Jones from Playbill On-Line

Los Angeles, New York, Chicago and Orlando, FL, are the cities where thousands of "little girls" will flock to see if they have a bright tomorrow" playing Little Orphan Annie or her pals in the upcoming Walt Disney TV musical based on the Broadway hit. Open calls for the role of Annie have drawn countless would-be starlets in the past (for the 1982 film version as well and the recent Broadway revival), generating lots of hope, tears and media attention. Storyline Entertainment and Walt Disney Company have promised the TV musical for a spot next season on ABC's "Wonderful World of Disney." Filming will be this summer in Los Angeles. Ironically, it was ABC News' "Turning Point" that documented the road to Broadway for a 12-year-old actress named Joanna Pacitti in 1997. She was cast as the red-curl'd Annie in the 20th anniversary Broadway revival production and, following months on the road, was replaced by her understudy at the last minute, causing parental outrage and mixed feelings among theatregoers and industry people. The upcoming open call — "for talented young ladies ranging in age from 8-12 years old and who are between 3-feet and 4-feet-10-inches tall," according to the announcement — is expected to be all about hope and sunshine, of course.

The auditions will take place per the following schedule:

Los Angeles - Saturday, February 27, 1999 9 AM-3 PM. Walt Disney Studios, 500 S. Buena Vista Street, Burbank. Enter through the Buena Vista Street gate; candidates will be seen as follows based on the first letter of their last name:

A-H - 9 AM-11 AM, I-Q - 11 AM-1 PM, R-Z - 1 PM-3 PM

Chicago - Sunday, February 28, 1999 9 AM-3 PM. Westin Hotel, 909 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago. Enter through the Delaware Street entrance; candidates will be seen as follows based on the first letter of their last name:

A-H - 9 AM-11 AM, I-Q - 11 AM-1 PM, R-Z - 1 PM-3 PM

New York - Saturday, March 6, 1999 8 AM-2 PM. New York Sheraton, 811 7th Ave., New York. Enter through the 53rd Street entrance; candidates will be seen as follows based on the first letter of their last name:

A-H - 8 AM-10 AM, I-Q - 10 AM-12 noon, R-Z - Noon-2 PM

Orlando - Sunday, March 7, 1999 9 AM-3 PM. Disney-MGM Studios at Walt Disney World. Report to the registration booth at the main entrance; candidates will be seen as follows based on the first letter of their last name:

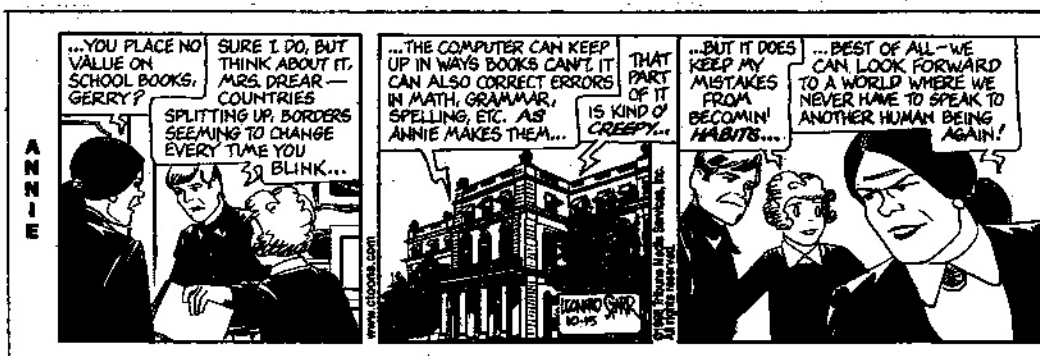
A-H - 9 AM-11 AM, I-Q - 11 AM-1 PM, R-Z - 1 PM-3 PM

Girls should come to the audition with a Polaroid snapshot and be prepared to sing 12 bars of the Annie classic, "Tomorrow" (piano accompanist will be provided). The producers will see everyone meeting the age and height requirements who comes to the audition at the proper time. All minors must be accompanied by their parent or legal guardian, no exceptions, according to the casting notice. Recorded information regarding the auditions in all the cities is available at (818) 238-2554.

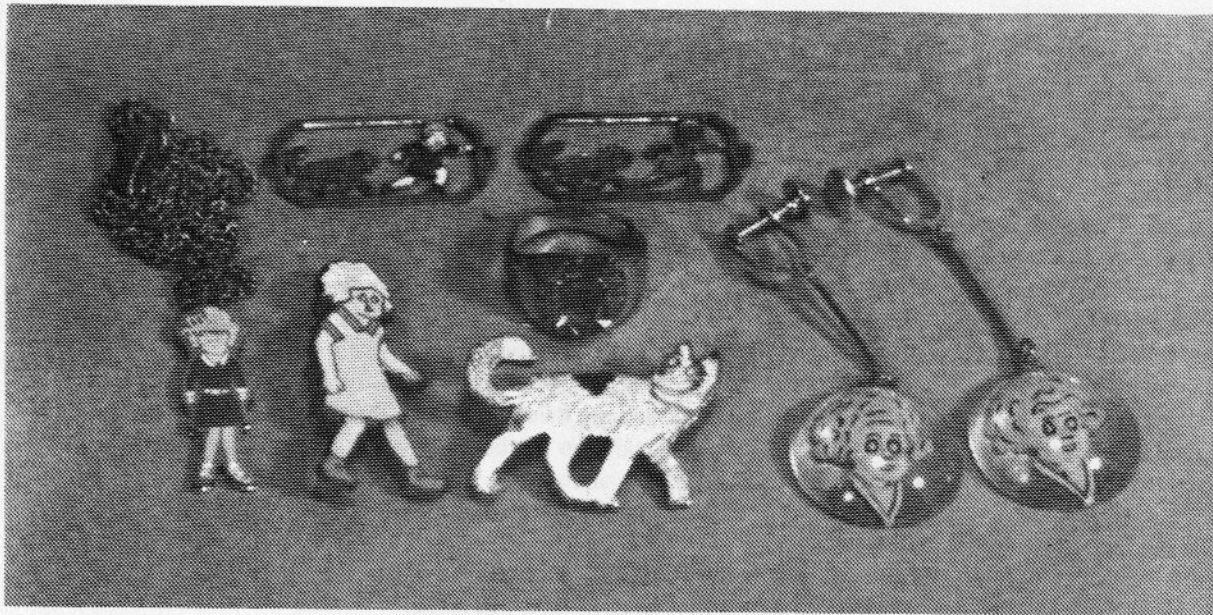
The actress to play Little Orphan Annie, the red-haired moppet from the famous newspaper comic strips, will be found in the casting search. Previous Annies Andrea McArdle (of the original Broadway show) and Aileen Quinn (of the film) are still working on stage: McArdle starred in "State Fair" on Broadway and will step into the role of Disney's "Beauty and the Beast" on Broadway, and Quinn was seen in national tours of "Fiddler on the Roof" and the Cathy Rigby version of "Peter Pan."

*Editor's Note:* we have reprinted these press releases as they appeared, including the already-past audition dates and the inaccuracies and occasional less-than-flattering comments as made by these participants. This project sound very exciting; we are going to hear some new songs in our favorite show, and see a different cinematic treatment than the 1982 film which we all have memorized by now. We hope to be bringing you updates in the next two issues. Thanks to Paul Goldie for supplying information for this issue.

*In other news,* the 20th Anniversary Tour ended its run in late March 1999 in Detroit, Michigan, cancelling the last few stops which had been already scheduled. We thank everyone involved with the entire 20th Anniversary production, since the beginning in the fall of 1996, through the seven months on Broadway, and ending with another trip around the country, for all of the memories of their performances, and we wish them all well until we see them again.



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**Left:** Various jewelry pieces. The necklace is from the early 1970s, while the cloisonné pins of Annie and Sandy from the '30s are missing the chair "leash" which held them together. The brass ring and two bracelet links are from the 1930s. The clip-on earrings are believed to be from the time of the Broadway show, and have been seen in different designs and sizes.

**Right:** The snowglobe of Annie and Punjab and a group of pine trees has also been seen without the pine trees. It came out in 1982. The trading card is from a 1930s series of all comic characters. A tiny soft-bodied doll was available as a Christmas ornament in 1982. The three rubber stamps, of Punjab, Warbucks, and Annie with Sandy, are from the 1930s printing kit.



**Left:** This 1930s 6" celluloid doll is one of the rarest Annie dolls ever. Celluloid is an extremely fragile and flammable material, so most of these dolls did not survive long; becoming either crushed or melted in the sun, which is why toys today are not made using celluloid! This example even has her paper belt with "Little Orphan Annie" printed on it. Many other comic characters were made as jointed wooden dolls in the '30s. There are two sizes of Annies and two sizes of Sandys. This Sandy has his coloring correct: black left ear and white tip of tail; many examples of these toys do not have this little detail correct.

As many of you have no doubt noticed, the familiar *Annie* Original Cast album in the stores has something new added. After the conclusion of the 1977 Original Cast portion, there are several cuts from the backers' auditions that Martin Charnin and Charles Strouse created very early on during the creative process of *Annie*.

Backers' auditions are the way creators present the beginnings of a brand-new musical to those who might be prospective investors in the project. In this case, Charnin and Strouse prepared a tape after they had laid out the plot of *Annie* and written several songs. A historic portion of this tape has now been made available on the album.

Charnin states the date as being "around 1972." That would mean an awful lot was done in that first year, inasmuch as it was only in December 1971 when he first got the idea to do a musical about Little Orphan Annie. We all know the story: He bought a compilation of Harold Gray *Little Orphan Annie* comic strips from the 1930s and 1940s for a friend for Christmas, but since he was in a hurry, he would not let the store clerk wrap it. At home, before he had a chance to wrap it himself, he read it all the way through and got the idea to create the musical. If the clerk had wrapped the present, there would be no *Annie* today.

These pieces of the backers' audition tape serve as several more pieces in the early history of *Annie*, that is, what songs were in the show originally, what order were they in, and what songs and scenes were cut and revised during the course of the Goodspeed Opera House run starting in August 1976 before the show got to Broadway.

As Charnin explains, there was originally a Prologue, which depicted the Bennetts leaving an infant Annie off on the steps of the Orphanage in February 1920 and Miss Hannigan taking the baby inside. By the time Goodspeed opened, the Prologue was listed in the Playbill, except now it was January 1, 1921. During the Goodspeed run, probably early on, the Prologue scene was cut, if indeed it ever saw the light of day on stage at all.

The "Apples" song was originally the opening song, capturing the feeling and atmosphere of the musical. The song is listed in the 1976 Goodspeed Playbill, but Charnin told *Annie People* in our interview with him in 1986 that "Apples" lasted only up through the dress rehearsal and was cut by opening night.

For most of Goodspeed—again, according to AP's Charnin interview—"It's The Hard-Knock Life" was the opening song in the show. "Maybe" was second, and then there was a reprise of "HKL." After a couple of months at Goodspeed, "Maybe" and "HKL" were reversed, the Prologue and "Apples" were gone, and the musical now opened with "Maybe." In Charnin's words about the change, "It was very risky to start the show with a lullaby, and that quiet kind of moment, but the audience was enraptured from the minute that it started, and it doubled the effect of 'Maybe,' and it tripled the effect of 'Hard-Knock Life,' by reversing it."

At Goodspeed, at least for a while, the "HKL" reprise—with a slightly different melody—was extended through several verses and was still being sung on stage as the Beanery scene opened. Originally, Miss Hannigan sent Annie out to work in the Bixbys' Beanery, and Annie eventually ran away and was caught and brought back by the police officer, as in the current version. The Beanery customers loved Annie's spirit and sang "We Got Annie" to her. The song was cut during Goodspeed, but it resurfaced later in the 1982 movie. The Bixbys also resurfaced as characters very briefly in the *Annie 2* workshop in 1990 in a song called "The Perfect Kid."

"Tomorrow" is sung by Charnin for the backers and is billed on the album as being the first public performance of the song ever. The scene remained pretty much the same until 1997, when the Hooverville sequence was cut from the Broadway revival and portions of that were incorporated into the "Tomorrow" scene.

"Just Wait" on the backers' tape was sung by Miss Hannigan to Annie after Annie's return to the Orphanage. By the middle of Goodspeed, it was gone, but sometime later at Goodspeed or at the Kennedy Center in March 1977 before Broadway, the same melody came back with new lyrics, now being what we know as "Little Girls."

"I Think I'm Gonna Like It Here" is basically the same, except at the Kennedy Center there was a short reprise by Annie and the Orphans in the Orphanage. This was cut in Washington before Broadway opened in April 1977.

The locket scene was pretty much the same, except that at Goodspeed "Something Was Missing" was sung by Oliver Warbucks here. By the Kennedy Center, it had been moved to the second act, where it now is.

Early at Goodspeed, Miss Hannigan, Rooster, and Lily sang a song called "That's The Way It Goes," which is on the new album. It was after "Fully Dressed." However, "Easy Street" replaced it midway through Goodspeed, and the song was moved to its familiar location in the first act.

After the Cabinet scene, at Goodspeed Grace had her famous "cheese" solo (that's where the famous mysterious cheese reference came from—a long story) called "He Doesn't Know." It was a great song but was eventually cut at Goodspeed. Of course, those of us who saw the first week or two of *Annie 2: Miss Hannigan's Revenge* in 1989-90 know that the song resurfaced very briefly by Grace and the N.Y. Yankees (!). Alas, then too it was cut.

On the backers' auditions tape is a song called "That's Our Annie" which incorporated a much longer scene at the Mansion about all the parents trying to claim Annie. By the middle of Goodspeed, though, it was gone.

There was a song sung by Annie while packing in her room preparing to leave with the Mudgetts called "I've Never Been So Happy," which is on the new album, but it was cut as well during the Goodspeed run.

The backers' audition is very interesting. Now, if they would just release *the entire* backers' audition tape!!

# ★ Annie Stars Since Annie ★

ANDREA McARDLE has landed the role of Belle in *Beauty And The Beast* on Broadway. Recently there was an interesting interview in *InTheater* magazine, in which she talked about *Annie*, among other things. Following are excerpts from that interview. (Thanks to Paul Goldie of Goldie Theatrical Dogs for submission of this piece.)

IT: What's the worst obvious Andrea McArdle question:

AM: Well, when they ask me if it's okay to talk about the "A" show or the "T" song.

IT: Someone actually called it the "T" song?

AM: Yeah. And the "A" show. T and A! No...nothing bothers me. Though I sort of hate when they ask if I feel I lost my childhood. I would never allow my daughter near the business if I'd had a bad time.

IT: Did you ever want Alexis to get into that Annie wig? Everyone else seems to. When she was born, reporters wrote, "Maybe we have a new Annie."

AM: First of all, we don't own a CD of the *Annie* cast album.

IT: You don't? I grew up on that album!

AM: Yeah, but I *did* it! I can listen to it and enjoy it now, but when I was 14 to 21, it was, "Please don't play that!" I was struggling for my own identity. Alexis hated everything to do with *Annie*. She only went to audition for the revival because she wanted to meet the dog. Afterwards, Martin Charnin said to me, "Is your kid the only kid who doesn't know the lyrics to 'Tomorrow'?" I was like, "How refreshing, right?" But she was way too developed to play *Annie*. Especially the way they cast it. I mean, they had kids running around in diapers. Mistake, I think.

IT: You were in the papers when that whole *Annie* drama happened, with the girl getting fired—

AM: Yeah, it hurt me. I didn't see either of the kids perform. I had no allegiance to anybody. I just have a problem with treating actors like that. If you hold a contest and hire someone in a way that's not professional, these things happen. I ended up not going at all.

IT: To the revival?

AM: Right. I couldn't. I have really good memories of Dorothy Loudon. I have a problem with anyone doing that role while she's alive. How could you get any better?

IT: Do you ever talk to the other *Annie* kids?

AM: Yeah, we still get together from time to time. Sarah Jessica Parker will host little gatherings sometimes. We all really get along. Know what's weird? All the ushers at the Palace (where *BatB* is now) were the original *Annie* ushers—and they look exactly the same. When I came to check out the show, they said, "We hope you're coming to do Belle!" And I said, "I'm terrible at auditions. It's not gonna happen."

IT: Do you find that some people feel they have some connection to you because they've watched you grow up?

AM: Yeah, they think I'm accessible. And I am, but they automatically say something like, "Wow! When did you start having babies?" And I'm like, "You know what? I'm 35!" I'm still *Annie* to them, which is so funny to me. I'll never be able to lie about my age. When it's printed in *Theater World*, there's no chance of lying!



Annie (Boston, MA, Nov. 8, 1998)—AP reader Dan Tice and Brittney Kissinger bundled up against the cold

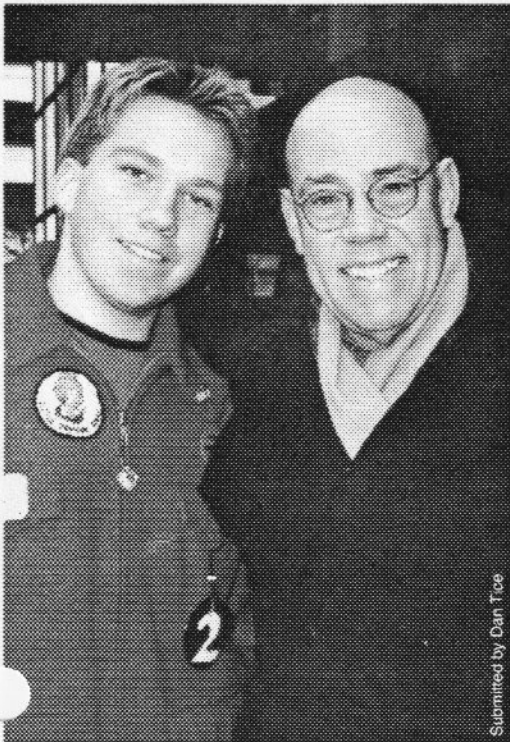


Annie (Boston, MA, Nov. 8, 1998)—AP reader Dan Tice and Dance Captain Jennifer L. Neuland

Submitted by Dan Tice.

Submitted by Dan Tice.

# Annie



Annie (Boston, MA, Nov. 8, 1998)—AP reader Dan Tice and Conrad John Schuck

Submitted by Dan Tice

# Disney's BEAUTY AND THE BEAST

*welcomes the  
absolutely adora-Belle  
Andrea McArdle.*



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Photo: Joan Marcus

THE SINGING OSBORN SISTERS ARE ON THE CHARTS AS SHeDAISY!

For several years in *Annie People* we have featured news of the Osborn Sisters in their quest to become a sister country recording act, ever since Kelsi Osborn played the title role in *Annie* at the Sundance Theatre near Salt Lake City, Utah in 1987. She and her sisters Kristyn and Kassidy released a single in Nashville called "Only On The Radio" in 1990.

Ever since then, the singing sisters have been looking around for a record deal that would lead to an album release. Now they are all in their 20s, and this year it has finally happened. Their group, now called SHeDAISY, currently has a song in the Top 30 on the *Billboard* country chart called "Little Good-byes." Their album, *The Whole SHeBANG*, released on Disney's Lyric Street label, is just out and is getting a lot of critical acclaim around the country. All the songs were written by eldest Osborn sister Kristyn.

SHeDAISY is a Native American term meaning "my sister."

Congratulations, Kristyn, Kelsi, and Kassidy; and lots of luck with your album. We wish you lots of great, well-deserved success in the months and years to come.

(More on SHeDAISY is at Jon's Web site at <http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/jamerrill>)

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**AILEEN QUINN** has left *Peter Pan* on Broadway. In February, during the show's vacation, she took a trip to Los Angeles and decided to stay there to pursue TV and film. On Broadway she played Tootles and was understudy to Wendy in the highly-acclaimed Cathy Rigby revival. Aileen's role was taken over by HALLY McGEHEAN, who played Pepper on Broadway with Allison Smith in 1980 when she was 8. Hally is also known in *Annie* circles for being the artist on the very rare and collectible 1980 record "Let Me Be Annie For Christmas."

**DEBORAH GIBSON** will play the Narrator in the Paper Mill Playhouse production of *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* in Millburn, New Jersey in June and July.

Late News: 11-year-old **ALICIA MORTON** has landed the title role in the upcoming Disney TV movie of *Annie*, to be aired in November. Alicia had been a finalist at Macy's in 1996 for the Broadway revival, but she was not shown on television in the *Turning Point* show along with the other finalists because of Actors' Equity rules.

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Little Orphan  
**Annie**