

Annie People



A Newsletter for Annie Fans

No. 2, March 1983

Published by Jon Merrill, Box 431, Cedar Knolls, New Jersey 07927

Artwork by Tricia Trozzi

Price: Free

Hello, Annie People! Here is Issue #2. I'm pleased to be finding lots of Annie People out there, including other collectors, who like the idea of a newsletter for Annie fandom. It is also great to hear from those of you who have been part of Annie somewhere along the way, including some of the Orphans from the touring companies. I'm attempting to get copies to as many Annie performers as I can, both from the play and the movie, because without them we wouldn't be Annie People now. I am also interested to hear from devotees of the Harold Gray LOA comic strip--any info about that aspect of Annie fandom that has been sent is a learning experience for me and is much appreciated. I do have most of the reprints available, but with more than forty years of it to gradually absorb, I have a long way to go. Recently I acquired a complete set of Leonard Starr Annie newspaper strips and have been very busily trimming and mounting them so that they can be indexed in Annie People. After several hours at a time with the scissors even I sometimes feel "Annied-out," but fortunately such a feeling regarding my favorite orphan is always short-lived.

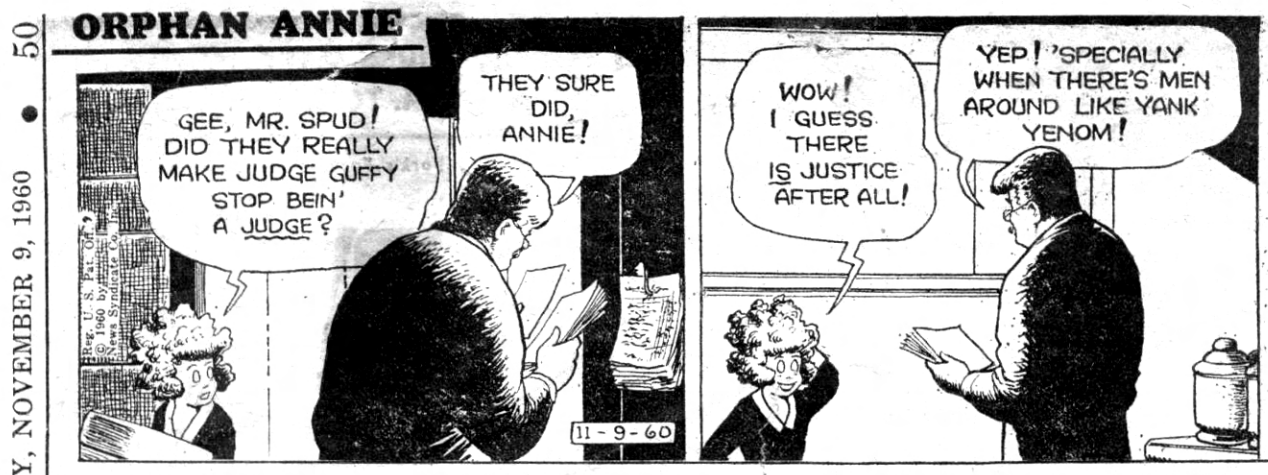
ANNIE TO RETURN TO BROADWAY NEXT CHRISTMAS!

For those of us Broadway Annie fans who have been undergoing withdrawal pains ever since January 2, this news comes as a happy and most welcome surprise. It seems that plans are underway at this moment to bring Annie back to the Broadway stage for a six-week limited engagement for the Christmas holiday season. They say if it is successful, the holiday revival of Annie could become an annual thing, in much the same manner as the Christmas show at Radio City Music Hall every year. Let's keep our fingers crossed!

The cast? They have reportedly picked only one cast member for sure so far, that being faithful old Sandy. I have seen no mention so far of who might be picked to play the title role. If Alyson Kirk, who will be a month short of 14 by then, has outgrown her old role by then, perhaps we will see a brand-new, heretofore unknown Annie, who will become the sixth one to be on Broadway. The big news is that the producers are hoping to have Reid Shelton and Dorothy Loudon return to their roles as "Daddy" Warbucks and Miss Hannigan, having been the ones who originated those roles when Annie opened at the Alvin Theatre on April 21, 1977. The producers also have in mind a new (?) face to play Grace Farrell--guess who?--Andrea McArdle!

ANNIE STARS SINCE ANNIE...

AILEEN QUINN is back home and in the sixth grade, but she continues to travel overseas periodically to make personal appearances in countries where the movie is playing. The spring will take her and her family to Europe and South America. She is due to be in a new movie called Full House, but the starting date for filming is not set yet....ROBIN IGNICO has moved to California from Clearwater, Florida, to continue in an acting career. Last December she was a guest star on Seven Brides for Seven Brothers on CBS. Watch for Robin during summer reruns....Also a TV series guest star was ALLISON SMITH, who appeared on Silver Spoons on NBC with Ricky Schroder. Look for Allison on the reruns too....Square Pegs starring SARAH JESSICA PARKER on CBS continues to do very well in the ratings and gets better all the time. They're beginning to let Sarah Jessica sing a little on it more often. She will be 18 on March 25.... ANDREA McARDLE is currently in her home town of Philadelphia at the City Line Dinner Theatre in a stage production of Grease, in which she is playing Sandy Dombrowski....RAY STARK produced The Toy, starring Jackie Gleason and Richard Pryor. CAROL SOBIESKI wrote the screenplay for it....Broadway's SANDY is enjoying his well-deserved vacation on his farm in New Jersey, but he will be back on the stage in the Christmas revival of Annie on Broadway.



EDITORIAL

How sad that in these cynical times the greatest movie musical in two decades was passed over in the Academy Award nominations for Best Picture. I guess Annie in a red dress isn't quite the same as Tootsie in a red dress. Too bad we aren't back in 1965, at which time a touching story about a little orphan and her dog would have been more properly appreciated. I will admit I haven't seen any of the five nominees except for E.T.; I did enjoy E.T. a lot, but it is certainly no Annie. In addition, I think Albert Finney, Carol Burnett, and most definitely John Huston should have gone up for Oscars this year. And why not Theoni Aldredge for Costuming??? Unfortunately, "Tomorrow" was ineligible for a nomination because it was not an original song from a film in 1982. The only two nominations which Annie did receive were for Best Art Direction/Set Design, and Best Original Song Score/Adaptation. Not exactly the heavies. I better get off this subject before I start swinging Molly's mop.

REVIEW: Annie's Christmas Columbia # CC 38361
The Mystery of The Vanishing Locket Columbia # CC 38363
Feeling Good With Annie Columbia # CC 38362

These three albums were released for the Christmas market last year. They are aimed at the kiddie market for younger children, but they will be part of any serious Annie collector's collection. The only significant and recognizable Annie participant on these albums is Robin "Duffy" Ignico, who plays a very convincing Annie; the other voices are unfamiliar to me. Robin was one of the three finalists out of 8,000 to be the movie Annie, so moving from Duffy in the movie to Annie on these records was a logical step, and she did a fine job.

Annie's Christmas is by far the best of the three, and it was a good seller around the holidays, even cracking the Top 100 on Billboard's Top LP chart. It is a good story, centering around Annie's visit back to the Orphanage on Christmas to bring her old friends some presents. Some mysterious happenings occur, and Annie and the Orphans are trapped in the basement by some ruthless rascallions dressed in Santa Claus outfits. It is Sandy, however, who saves the day and brings about their rescue. Would we expect anything less? There is some nice singing of Christmas songs by the children, with interesting synthesizer backgrounds. A must for seasonal playing, next year and beyond.

The Mystery of the Vanishing Locket resembles the old Little Orphan Annie radio shows of the 1930s and 1940s. Punjab and his magic are featured in this at times exaggerated but interesting and absorbing story. There are whimsical circus calliope-type versions of "It's The Hard-Knock Life" and a couple of other songs in it as background music which help keep the story moving and suspenseful. I kept expecting Joe Corntassel to suddenly appear from nowhere.

Feeling Good With Annie is labored and contrived, and unless you are a fan of exercise albums, which I am not, get the other albums instead. Robin as usual does a good Annie, but I did not find the overall charm in this album that I found in both of the other ones, and it did not hold my interest. And hearing "Maybe" played in disco tempo made me slightly ill.

REVIEW: Annie: Original Children's Soundtrack and Story Col. # CR 38168

This album is a narration of the movie story with actual pieces of songs and talk right from the movie itself in it. You will find it a little silly in places, but for someone without the videocassette of Annie, it is a way of re-living memories of seeing the movie last year by hearing some genuine movie dialogue. Annie purists and experts will cringe at editing and sequence errors compared with the actual movie, but your 5-year-old Annie fan will love this album. The sound effects are right out of Saturday morning cartoondom, and the narrator has a voice like a foghorn. This is an important souvenir of the movie, and I recommend it for all Annie People, both young and old.

AGES OF ANNIE AND THE ORPHANS DURING FILMING OF ANNIE

ROSANNE SORRENTINO	Pepper	13	January 15, 1968
APRIL LERMAN	Kate	12	February 6, 1969
ROBIN IGNICO	Duffy	10-11	August 19, 1970
AILEEN QUINN	Annie	9-10	June 28, 1971
LUCIE STEWART	July	9	December 14, 1971
LARA BERK	Tessie	8	December 12, 1972
TONI ANN GISONDI	Molly	6	January 1, 1975

Aileen wrote me recently and told me, "I'm glad that you enjoy my new album. I had fun making it." That last statement of Aileen's is backed up all the way through her new solo LP on Columbia, released just before Thanksgiving. In fact, it is evident in anything that Aileen has a part in--acting, singing, dancing, even interviews--that she really does indeed love what she is doing. Perhaps it is her ability to show this feeling so thoroughly to her listeners and viewers that makes whatever she comes up with such a joy.

The album Bobby's Girl is a far better vehicle for Aileen's pleasant and true soprano voice than the Annie album, which had all the songs pitched too low for her to properly use her range. The average preteen child cannot be expected to get much tone quality out of an F# below middle C. Aileen really does have a very fine and pleasing vocal style, and Bobby's Girl brings it out.

Her LP contains many fine pieces of soft, easy-type rock, some of which have been hit singles before by others (example: "Keep On Singing," which was a hit for Austin Roberts in 1973 and by Helen Reddy in 1974). Up front in this collection is the title cut, which was a big top three national hit by never-heard-from-again Marcie Blaine in 1962. Aileen takes "Bobby's Girl" right up into the 1980s with a sort of mild Pat Benatar-Joan Jett type background, the song having been co-written by her producer, Gary Klein, more than two decades ago. In reviewing the album, People magazine said that song "is perfect for her, full of bounce and enthusiasm." I couldn't agree more. Why Columbia has not as yet released that cut as a single is beyond me.

The choice of material for her on the album is for the most part excellent; personally I would not have picked Leo Sayer's 1976 #1 hit, "You Make Me Feel Like Dancing," which sounds a little out of place on an album by an 11-year-old girl, although Aileen handles it just fine and the background music is rather catchy. I liked it far better than the original. "Songs" (recorded originally by Crystal Gayle on Sesame Street Country) was a brilliant choice for an opener, and the Paul Williams composition from The Muppet Movie, "I'm Going To Go Back There Someday," fits in beautifully.

The best material on the album is the new material, specifically the songs written by Michael Smotherman. "Nothing Quite Like Love" has some of the most touching lyrics I have ever heard on a soft rock song, and it has a memorable melody full of wide intervals, which Aileen handles expertly with precision, feeling, and ease. The song called "The Great Big Difference" is an absolute gem, with a message that should be heard by every parent and anyone who works with youth in any way. I used to be an elementary classroom music teacher, and that lyric hit home on the first playing.

Because of the lack of proper promotion in the trade magazines, Cash Box and Billboard, record stores that are not familiar with Aileen from Annie have no idea where to file the album, so you may have to do a little looking. Some put her in with Queen and Quarterflash and Suzi Quatro; others have the album just in the "New Releases" for want of any other place to put it. Still others have put it in the kiddie section next to (gag) Smurf albums. This album deserves far better treatment than that. Stores with any sense at all put it right next to the Annie movie soundtrack; the association is still there, although Aileen's picture on the cover hardly resembles Annie at all. As for the cover, I did miss the old Annie smile, but the LP itself does represent a new and changing side of Aileen's talents, and the pose is still unmistakably Aileen of course. Anyone who likes the Annie soundtrack will thoroughly enjoy this extremely well done album. Let's hope it's Aileen's first of many.

Annie Word Search

by Tricia Trozzi

word clues

(1st means first name, 2nd means last)

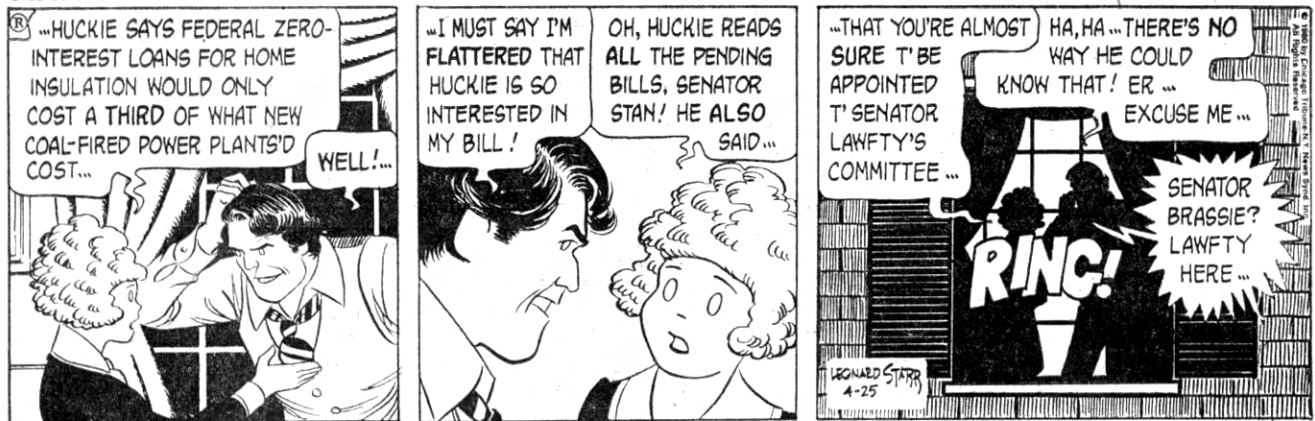
- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Born August 5, 1924 | L I T T L E O R P H A N A N N I E I S Q |
| 2. Creator (1 st + 2 nd) | E A Z H U S T O N A R H R E D J P G T C |
| 3. Faithful dog | A O N E I L L G R N F K C P E P P E R O |
| 4. Dog's saying | P N B A L L I S O N E F O U R H V R O L |
| 5. Richest man in the world (2 nd) | I X K S F D Q G O I J B L N L W J O U U |
| 6. Turbaned giant | N M F P Y R L R S G F U D J U L Y D S M |
| 7. Oriental protector | L E O N A R D S T A R R K A Y M U N E B |
| 8. Man who lives forever | I P E O P L E A E N E N G B T H V I Z I |
| 9. Said once in show,
six times in movie | Z M R A M S J R R H I E O G R A C E Q A
A C K E X H B A I I N T O M O R R O W O |
| 10. Current strip artist (1 st , 2 nd) | R L D F M E E H A N K T D A M O L L Y S |
| 11. Director-lyricist (2 nd) | D W E L I L Y J T W I P S U A L M D Z N |
| 12. Composer (2 nd) | S M I L E L S E T X N Q P C Y D C U A W |
| 13. Wrote the "book" (2 nd) | G E D C T E S S I E G A E H B G M M N A |
| 14. Sang "Tomorrow" on April 21, 1977 (1 st) | A L V I N Y M S N V O L E A E R T B T R |
| 15. Michelle Mercklinghaus (1 st) | N M U D G E F I N N E Y D R B A L D A B |
| 16. Went from July to Annie (1 st) | D U F F Y C E C S Y H S A N D Y O O B U |
| 17. From Waldwick, NJ (1 st) | R P N B W A K A T E F O R I S K Z G X C |
| 18. Sang "Tomorrow" on January 2, 1983 (1 st) | E H U D S O N U Y G O N H N J K N O C K |
| 19. "We love you, Miss ____" | A I L E E N V L O C K E T U A I U R I S |
| 20. Devoted secretary (1 st) | 38. Had the most expensive haircut in history |
| 21. Ralph and Shirley ____ | 39. Ran the cinematic orphanage (2 nd) |
| 22. The ____ Opera House | 40. Actress told "Your teeth are crooked" (2 nd) |
| 23. Number of National Companies | 41. "Oh my goodness!" |
| 24. First Broadway Theater | 42. Alyson before Annie |
| 25. Theater across 52 nd Street | 43. Toni Ann and Danielle |
| 26. Next theater move | 44. Rosanne after 3 rd Nat. Co. |
| 27. The last house | 45. Ignico in movie |
| 28. Agatha's brother (1 st) | 46. Lucie's role |
| 29. "Named from the hotel" (1 st) | 47. Ode to a pup |
| 30. The Hit Song | 48. Color of dress and hair |
| 31. Opening Plea | 49. Wears a broken ____ |
| 32. "It's The Hard-____ Life" | 50. You're reading "Annie ____" |
| 33. "You're Never Fully Dressed Without a ____" | |
| 34. ____ St. Orphanage | |
| 35. Movie studio | |
| 36. Movie director (2 nd) | |
| 37. Beat out 8,000 girls (1 st) | |

1. Little Orphan Annie 16. Sarah Jessica 31. "Maybe"
2. Harold Gray 17. Allison 32. Knock
3. Sandy 18. Alyson 33. Smile
4. Art 19. Hamilton 34. Hudson 46. Jilly
5. Warbucks 20. Grace 35. Columbia 47. "Dond Dog"
6. Puntab 21. Wudge 36. Huston 48. Red
7. The Asp 22. Goodspeed 37. Aileen 49. Pocket
8. Mr. Am 23. Four 38. Finney 50. People
9. Leapin' Lizards 24. Alvin
10. Leonard Starr 25. Anta
11. Cherm 26. Nell 41. Foretinking
12. St. Rose 27. Uris 42. Kate
13. Mehan 28. Rooster 43. Molly (2)
14. Andrea 29. Lily 44. Peppa 45. Dolly
15. Shalley 30. Tomorrow 46. Peppa 47. Dolly

LOA STRIP NOTES

Recently I attended a lecture featuring Leonard Starr at the Museum for Cartoon Art in Port Chester, New York. At first Mr. Starr talked about cartoon drawing in general, specifically the lima-bean shape of the head that just about all artists use. He also explained that the zero-eyed characteristic of Annie is not limited to just her; many other comic strip people and animals have similar eyes. However, most of the time the eyes are colored in, which does make Annie's rather distinctive. Mr. Starr drew illustrations constantly while he was talking, which made for a fast moving and most informative talk. He also took questions from the audience (seven-eighths mine) about the Annie strip itself. He is usually working two months ahead on the strips and does extensive research for each story's subject matter, such as mining and robots in the current story. Mr. Starr's lecture was a real delight, and I hope all Annie People get a chance to hear him and meet him sometime. His work on the Annie strip is obviously a real labor of love, and he is keenly interested in knowing that fans appreciate his work. And I am proud to know that Leonard Starr reads Annie People.

ANNIE



Richard West reports an addition to my list of reprints of Harold Gray Little Orphan Annie strips. The Smithsonian Book of Newspaper Comics contains part of the Shanghai story in 1938, which was begun, but not finished, in Arf! The Life and Hard Times of Little Orphan Annie. For those interested in getting a taste of the original LOA strips by Harold Gray, I recommend the three books currently published by Dover Publications that I mentioned in Annie People #1. If you're like me, you may not be able to stop there, once you start.

* * * * *

Annie People #3 will be out in May (another freebie; aw, shux!) and will have a report on the stage production of Annie which will be at the Westbury Music Fair on Long Island for the month of April. Check it out if you live nearby. I also plan in future months to include a reader letter page in Annie People, so I hope to hear from you about your feelings about the play and the movie, or about your Annie collection, or just why you are an Annie Person. So, until next time, let's hope "Daddy" Warbucks lightens up a little on the miners while Annie and FIDO look for the Lost Manitou Treasure. Right, Sandy? ARF!

"2,377 - THE MEMORY LIVES ON..."