

Annie People



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The Little Orphan Annie Fan Club Newsletter



National Association
Of Fans of Annie

No. 61, January 1993

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Artwork by Tricia Trozzi, co-editor and columnist

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Annie People is published every other month in January, March, May, July, September, and November. Publication has been continuous since January 1983.

10 Years of AP!

This issue marks the 10th Annie-versary of Annie People. It was at "2,377," the last performance of Annie on Broadway, that Tricia and I met, and soon after that, the wheels of what would become the national Annie fan club were set in motion. Initially, we sent out a 4-page issue to about 20 people (our humble beginnings can be seen here in a reproduction of the front page of our very first issue in January 1983).

Throughout the decade we published 60 issues, saw over 200 performances of Annie between us, met countless new friends--both fans and Annie performers--and seen the growth and evolution of the Annie sequel, now on schedule for its Broadway debut this March.

As we mark our decade milestone, we would like to express our appreciation and thank all those who have given us their support and encouragement over the years and shared our love for our favorite red-haired orphan. May her eternal optimism be with us always!

Leapin' Lizards! ANNIE LIVES!!

Jon and Tricia

Annie People

ANNIE PEOPLE

A Newsletter for Annie Fans

No. 1, January 1983

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

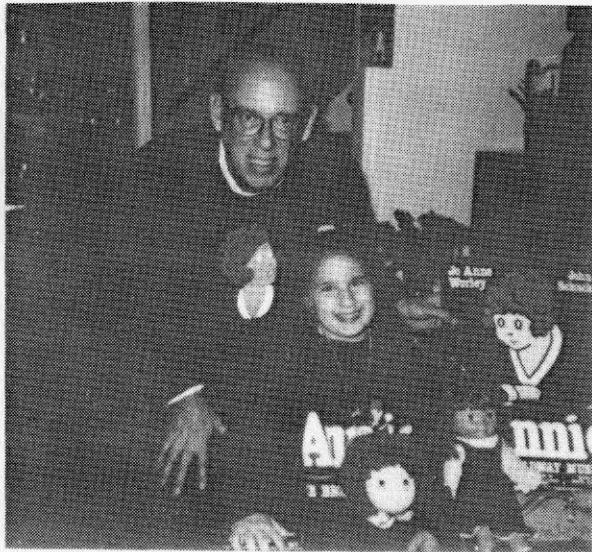
Artwork by Tricia Trozzi

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LEAPIN' LIZARDS! Annie People?? What in the world is Annie People, I hear you ask. Well, it is a newsletter for Annie People. Annie People are simply those who hold a special affection for the little red-haired orphan in the red dress and what goes with her--the movie, the stage musical, the Little Orphan Annie comic strip, and the myriad of Annie collectibles, old and new. This newsletter is meant to be a means for all of us Annie fanatics to get together with other Annie fanatics. I guess that up until a few weeks ago I thought I was the only one. How wrong I was. The first inkling I had was to see the picture in Life magazine in December of Melissa Sowers' wonderful Annie room. Next came the closing of the Broadway show of Annie, at which occasion I happened to meet several other Annie nuts with room-filling collections that closely resemble mine. After that, a newsletter seemed to be in order for as many Annie People as I can locate out there. So, if you're a lover of the movie, a devotee of the Broadway show and its touring company productions, or if you're a full-scale gone-bananas collector with more Aileen than wallpaper on your walls, join us in Annie People. After all, I never thought there were any other Little Lulu comic fans either, until I cast out with a fan magazine last year, which has grown into having a following all across the country.

So, if you're a fan of Annie and loved the stage show, or the movie, or both, how about hearing from you? How about your feelings about why you call yourself an Annie Person? Maybe you are a reader or collector of the comic strips by Harold Gray or Leonard Starr and have a special affection for the Little Orphan Annie of the funny papers. Even if you are just an Ovaltine drinker, that would classify you at least somewhat as an Annie Person. In any event, pass this copy on to a friend who likes Annie and let me know what you think of the idea of an Annie newsletter. Possibly if there are enough of us out there, it could become a regular thing, with letters and thoughts from you Annie People published in future issues of the newsletter. Let's see what happens. Anyway, the next issue will be sent out at the same low price. YIKE!





Jon interviewing Jacqueline at her New Jersey home during a week off from the tour in November

- AP: OK, let's say you're in one city for a week. What happens each day?
- JA: I wake up about 11 o'clock and have breakfast. I have school from 12 to 5 on Wednesdays and Fridays. On the days I don't have school my friends Heather (Annie) and Casey (Duffy) go to the mall. We get to the theater at 6:30 and get ready, and we're done by about 10:30. Sometimes we have sleepovers in each other's rooms. We like to play with Beau and Sparky, but we can't play with Sparky (understudy) too much because he's still being trained.
- AP: What are your school days like?
- JA: All the kids (ages 8-12) are all in one room. I get assignments and stuff from my school at home so I can keep up. I'm in fourth grade at home.
- AP: You've been to three places so far. Which city did you like the best?
- JA: Detroit. The best thing about it was the mall is right in the hotel! We were there for three weeks and we're going back at Christmas for another week. Usually we're at each place for one week.
- AP: Do you fly in between the cities or take the bus?
- JA: Oh, we fly. The only time we'll take the bus is after Christmas when we go from Detroit to Cleveland. The props and stuff always all go by truck. We always travel on a Monday.
- AP: What do you do on your dark day (day off from performing)?
- JA: We don't play on Mondays. Heather and Casey and I go shopping at the mall and eat at Burger King. That's the best place.
- AP: What do you like best about being on the Annie tour?
- JA: I like meeting new friends. I love being on stage too, and it'll seem weird when it's over and I'm not doing it anymore. We have a lot of fun with Jo Anne (Worley). She's so nice to us kids. The cast had a big Halloween party and it was a lot of fun.

AP: How do you like your character of Molly? Do you feel you're at all like her in real life?

JA: Well, I'm small like Molly; I have brown eyes and brown hair and I wear my hair in a ponytail like Molly does on stage. And I'm good friends with Annie too just like in the play. I think Molly is the second most important character in the show--after Annie of course, I mean, the show IS named Annie.

Mom: Jackie loves the independence--being a star, staying out late, eating in restaurants, having her own checking account! (Displays checkbook) See, her name's right on it and she has to sign it herself or it's no good. She feels best when she's busy. On vacation time she says "What do I do now?" She'd rather be busy all the time.

AP: I bet you sign a lot of autographs, Jackie--

JA: Oh, yes, it's fun, but sometimes I get tired. In Detroit a group of real teenage orphans came to the show and I signed autographs for all of them. It was nice to have them come.

Mom: I love seeing the different places. We're going to San Francisco after the new year. Of course, I love seeing my daughter in an important role. I always wanted to be an actress myself. I love it! All the mothers get along real well and the kids too. The only bad part is having our family cut in half for so long, with Jackie's father and sister being back at home. They come to see us once in a while though.

AP: I like that little trunk with your name on it.

JA: I take that on tour and keep stuff in it. The Molly doll you gave me at your house goes everywhere with me.

AP: So where do you go next?

Mom: In two days we fly to Atlanta for a week. Then Iowa (Des Moines) for a week, and then Illinois (Champaign) for half a week and Milwaukee, Wisconsin for half a week. Then we go back to Detroit for Christmas week and then to Cleveland for New Year's.

AP: Tricia and I will see you in Cleveland; we're coming to both shows on the 2nd of January. That's the 10th Annie-versary of when she and I met at the Broadway closing, so it seems a good way to celebrate--seeing Annie.

Mom: Terrific! Come and see us after the second show; we never have any time after the afternoon shows to go out and see people.

AP: Have you met any celebrities who came to the show to see it?

JA: We met Thomas Meehan, who wrote (the book for) Annie.

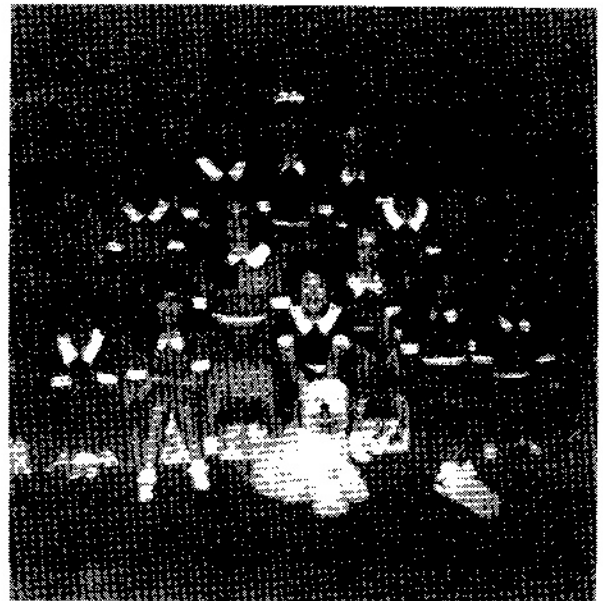
The Annie 1992-93 National Tour opened in Bloomington, Indiana in October and stars John Schuck as "Daddy" Warbucks, Jo Anne Worley as Miss Hannigan, and Heather Soroka as Annie. John played Warbucks on Broadway for a year and a half with Allison Smith, and Jo Anne played Miss Hannigan back in 1989 with Danielle Findley. Marcia Lewis (Broadway, 1982) will take over as Miss Hannigan in March. Heather is 11 years old and played Annie in her native Maryland last year. Edwin Bordo is Drake, the role he originated on Broadway and did for its entire run from 1977 to 1983 (no one can deliver the line "Sir, Mr. and Mrs. Mu-u-u-dge" quite the way Ed can!). Sandy is played by Beau in this tour.

★ Annie Stars Since Annie ... ★

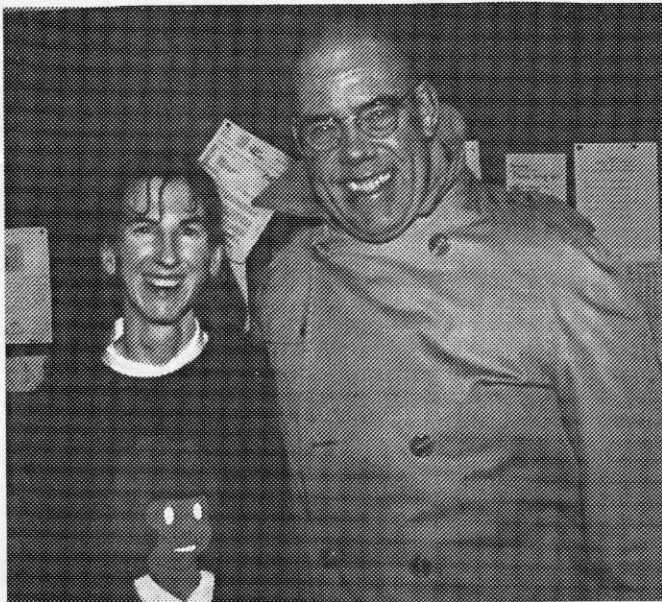
MARCIA LEWIS will replace Jo Anne Worley in the Annie National Tour when the tour starts up again in the spring. Marcia played Miss Hannigan on Broadway in 1982 with ALLISON SMITH....ALYSSA MILANO starred in the CBS-TV movie Casualties Of Love in January. Her movie with Judd Nelson, Conflict Of Interest, will be released soon....RITA RUDNER was on Bob Hope's TV Christmas special and is in the current movie Peter's Friend. She played Lily on Broadway in 1980....MONICA GRADISCHEK is at New York University and just got a commercial for Entenmann's Chocolate Donuts ("You might see me on a cardboard cutout in the stores!")....DEBBIE HAMMOND and LISA HAMMOND performed in "Breakfast, Lunch, and Dinner with Santa" shows at Christmas time in Pittsburgh....The CAROL BURNETT reunion show on CBS-TV showed some of the funniest clips from the variety show's 11-year history....DOROTHY STANLEY writes from England that she was in Liza Minnelli's Radio City Music Hall Steppin' Out concert along with RUTH GOTTSCHALL, ROXANNE DUNDISH, and SHERRY DUNDISH. Dorothy currently is in London doing Kiss Of The Spider Woman, with a possible run in New York this year....TOM HATTEN has been doing a revival of Anything Goes in Los Angeles. Tom has played FDR many times, including in the 2nd National with MARISA MORELL, and remains one of Annie's most enthusiastic fans....CAROL-ANN PLANTE is beginning her third season on Harry And The Hendersons. She will be 19 on March 31st....AILEEN QUINN writes that she has just gotten back from six months in Chile as part of a studying abroad program at college and loved every minute of it....DEBBIE GIBSON has just released her fourth album, Body Mind Soul. The first single off it will be "Losin' Myself." She was on Regis and Kathie Lee on January 21st talking about the album and her plans for this year, which will probably include a tour. She also is eager to get back into theater again, having done Les Miserables for three months last year. Before Debbie became an internationally famous recording star, she did a lot of community theater including Annie in 1983 when she was 13 ("I auditioned several times for Broadway and the tours back then but I was always too tall!" says Debbie).

ANNIE WARBUCKS - The Broadway sequel opening has been delayed until April due to one of the backers pulling out. Previews now begin April 6th, and the official opening is now scheduled for April 21st, the exact 16th Annie-versary of the original opening of Annie in 1977. The theater will be the same too, the Neil Simon (formerly the Alvin). It will star Lauren Gaffney as Annie, Harve Presnell as Warbucks, and Raymond Thorne as FDR; most of the rest of the cast will be new since the tour ended in Los Angeles in November. The casting call in December for the ensemble specifically asked for tall actors and actresses "in order to make the children look smaller."

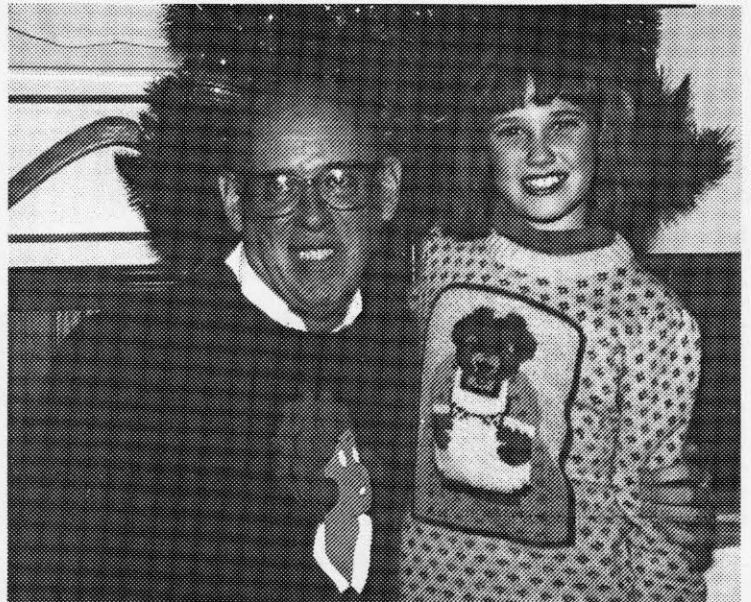
ANNIE TOUR - The tour ended temporarily in mid January and is expected to start up again in March once Annie Warbucks rehearsals begin. It was thought that with both shows going at the same time, the touring original Annie might take attention away from the brand-new Annie Warbucks, so it was decided to put the tour on hiatus for a couple of months.



BETHLEHEM, PA - Top row, Christen Mancini, Emmy Lou Diaz, Katie Gawel, Elizabeth Schwartz, Lisa Puchyr; bottom row, Tonya Bellatore, Megan Roscioli, Stephanie Black, Colleen Clark (Annie), Poppins, Katie Clark, Melanie Cobb, Crysta Macalush



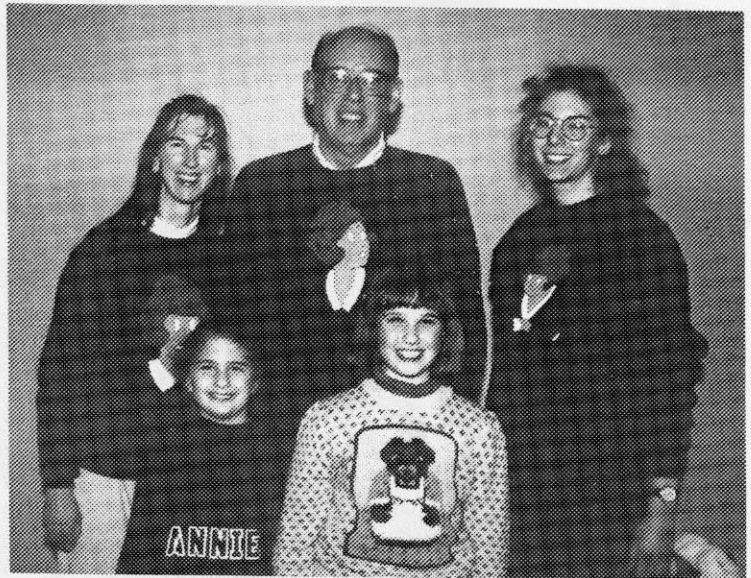
Cynthia Moser with John Schuck (Warbucks)



Jon with Heather Soroka (Annie)



Edwin Bordo (Drake)



Cynthia, Jon, Tricia with Jacqueline Angelescu (Molly) and Heather Soroka (Annie)

All pictures submitted by Cynthia Moser



Top row: Jon, Lindsay Wolf, Vanessa Brown, Faith MacKenzie, Jacqueline Angelescu, Tricia; bottom row, Christina Ginger, Heather Soroka (Annie), Casey McGinty

WESTSIDE VALLEY



RICARDO DEARATANHA / Los Angeles Times

Charles Strouse, right, with lyricist Martin Chamin, says, "Annie Warbucks" makes the "sentiment adult and real."

A New Tomorrow for 'Annie'

'Warbucks' re-emphasizes innocence and sentimentality from a child's point of view after a disastrous first sequel

By T.H. McCULLOH

When the Kaufman-Hart comedy "Once in a Lifetime" opened in Philadelphia in the early '30s, it didn't work. During the run George S. Kaufman decided to delete an \$80,000 nightclub scene. Suddenly the laughs—and the hit play—were there.

When "Annie 2," the first sequel to the smash hit "Annie," opened in Washington, D.C., it didn't work either. Audiences and critics didn't like what they saw. The show's creators had to perform more drastic surgery. The only solution was to jettison the whole thing and start over from Square One.

The result, "Annie Warbucks," a completely new sequel, opens its pre-Broadway Los Angeles run at the Pantages Theatre on Tuesday, after revisions and additions during a national tour culminating in San Diego just prior to this week's opening.

"Annie Warbucks" also provides a lesson in how to turn failure into success and, like the little girl in the red dress, how to keep looking for the silver lining.

The collaborators, author Thomas Meehan, composer Charles Strouse and lyricist-director Martin Charnin, look back with relief that the abortive "Annie 2" and the years of reworking the property are finally in the past. Their efforts are a map of the stormy voyage between inspiration and curtain calls.

After the demise of their first effort at continuing the saga of Annie, Daddy Warbucks and Sandy, the trio of good friends had a number of analogies for their trauma, their favorite being to a voyage on the Titanic.

"We struck an iceberg," says Meehan, "but we didn't sink. We took the Titanic back to England, refitted it, and

we're trying to sail it across the ocean again, with the dream that we'll come into New York Harbor with all flags flying, and horns tooting, and make it."

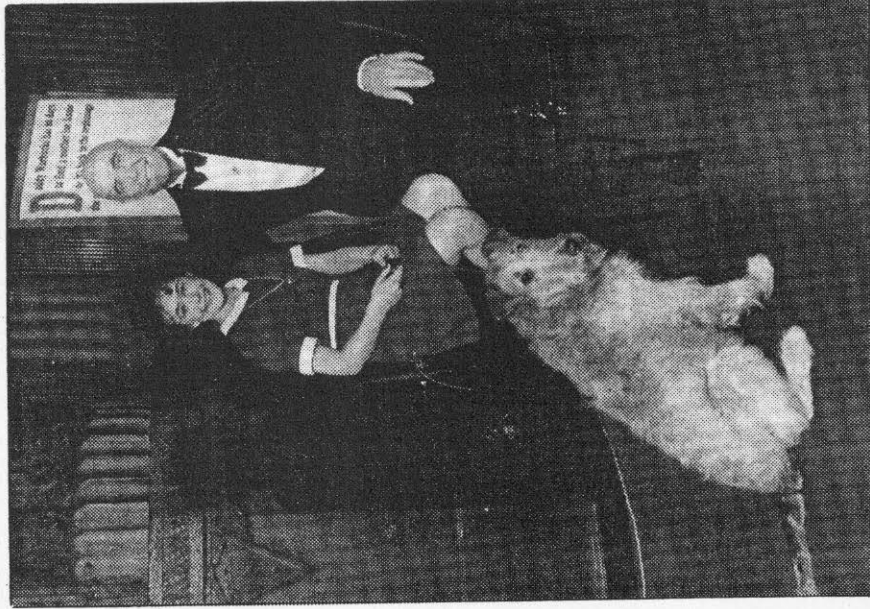
Meehan, who began his career as a New Yorker magazine satirist, has been a five-time Emmy nominee for his work on television, including specials for Bill Cosby and Dick Cavett, co-wrote screenplays for Mel Brooks' "To Be or Not to Be" and "Spaceballs," and wrote the book for Richard Rodgers' last Broadway show, "I Remember Mama." He won a 1977 Tony Award for "Annie."

Meehan and Strouse were not particularly excited about doing a sequel to their original hit, but finally decided to forge ahead. Many ideas ran past the trio, even, Meehan admits, one in which Warbucks goes broke and he and Annie travel around with a carnival. Finally they decided to forget about Annie and focus on Miss Hannigan, the villain of "Annie." It would be different, adult and funny.

"Boy, was that a mistake," Meehan admits. "In Washington we began to see what we'd done wrong. They were not interested in Miss Hannigan. Where was Annie, where were the orphans, where was the whole spirit, the optimism of 'Annie'?"

"The mistake we are correcting," says Charnin, "is that 'Annie 2' was told from Miss Hannigan's point of view. 'Annie Warbucks' is told from the child's point of view. Its innocence and its simplicity are its great strength. We had abandoned what the truth and the reality of this musical are. As cynically as an audience may publicly be, privately it's those things you send your children to sleep with at night."

Charnin was in the original production of "West Side Story." Please see Page 85



"Annie Warbucks" stars Lauren Gaffney, Harve Presnell and Sandy the dog. It will open Tuesday.

Annie

Continued from Page 82

Story" on Broadway, and has been involved as writer or director with shows such as "Zenda," "La Strada," "I Remember Mama" and "The No-Frills Revue." He has received a Tony, two Grammys and a Peabody Award.

Strouse, composer of such Broadway hits as "Bye, Bye Birdie" and "Applause," numbers among his film scores "Bonnie and Clyde" and "The Night They Raided Minsky's."

"We started out in Washington by mocking the sentiment," Strouse says. "We came back to the sentiment, but now, what we're doing is making the sentiment adult and real."

All three were involved in other projects after the original "Annie" and the abortive "Annie 2." Then, four years ago they took what they'd learned and began anew, with a new story line that begins the moment the first musical ends.

Although Annie has found her new father, Warbucks, the 1934 New York laws prohibit a bachelor from adopting a child. Warbucks is given 60 days to marry—and provide a mother for the lovable

Annie. The shows could be played end-to-end and called "The Annie Cycle," or maybe "Annie in America."

The story Meehan has concocted for the new sequel has a slightly harder edge than the first installment. Strouse says it resonates for today. "It's all about being a single parent. It's about women's rights in a funny kind of way. And we touch on racial issues."

The story takes place in the rural South during the Great Depression. That also resonates today, Charnin adds, "because it's a similar depression to an extent to the one we're in."

"It's all about government spending," Strouse says.

The ideas that flavor the new script, and whirl around Annie and her search for happiness, Charnin says, are "now a headline issue every time we pick up a newspaper."

At the suggestion that Annie is sort of female Oliver Twist, another theatrical legend, Charnin smiles. "Oliver," he says, "invented the little boy business as far as theater is concerned, and 'Annie' invented the little girl business."

"When the red dress is on the stage," Meehan says with a chuckle, recalling the lessons of "Annie

2," "the audience becomes interested. When the red dress is on the stage, we're in business." □

"Annie Warbucks" opens Tuesday at the Pantages Theatre, 6233 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood, and plays at 8 p.m. Tuesdays-Fridays, 2 and 8 p.m. Saturdays and 2 and 7 p.m. Sundays through Nov. 22. Tickets: \$20.50-\$40. (213) 480-3232.

T.H. McCulloh writes regularly about theater for The Times.

LOS ANGELES TIMES/CALENDAR



DOG WALKER TO THE STARS

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CompuServe 73677,135
Prodigy GRHD27A

Little Orphan Annie