

Annie People

The Little Orphan Annie Fan Club Newsletter

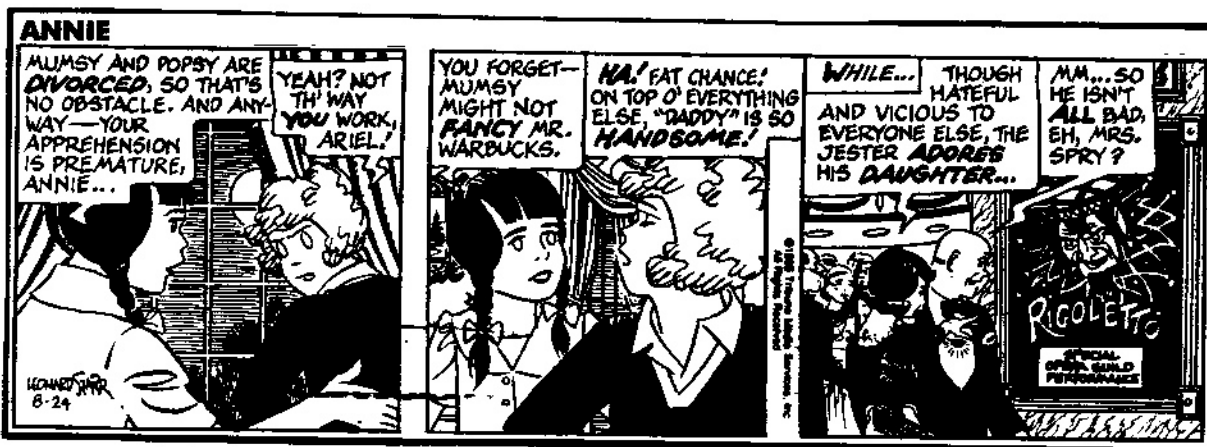
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- Watch for *Annie Warbucks* on the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade televised from New York on November 25th.
- The original cast compact disk and cassette for *Annie Warbucks* is at your local record store. Or, you can order it direct from the theater (see page 8).
- Movie news: Variety magazine says that filming of the new adventure movie *Annie and the Castle of Terror* will begin soon, with Patrick Stewart playing "Daddy" Warbucks.



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Coincidence: In *Annie Warbucks*, "Daddy" reluctantly dates a woman who likes opera ("I HATE opera! All that screeching!"). In the Little Orphan Annie comic strip this summer, similarly, "Daddy" takes Ariel Spry's mother on a date to the opera.

FOR SALE: *Arf! The Life and Times of Little Orphan Annie*, 1970, with dust jacket, \$75 postpaid. Write to Jon Merrill c/o *Annie People* address above or call (215) 740-0823.

Will They Love Her Tomorrow?

Theater: At long last, the 'Annie' sequel opens

WHEN DIRECTOR-LYRICIST Martin Charnin went leapin' like a lizard onto the stage at the 2,377th and final performance of "Annie" on Jan. 2, 1983, he had every reason to be giddy. "Annie" had grossed more than \$200 million in five-plus years on Broadway, spawned 27 foreign-language productions and made him a god to millions of prepubescent girls and at least one boy, who showed up at a New York audition and argued, unsuccessfully, that all the orphans didn't have to be female. So it was no surprise when the audience cheered Charnin's onstage announcement that "Annie" would be back—as a sequel. "It will be much more of an adventure story," he said. But it turned into more of an adventure than he imagined.

It's been a hard-knock decade for "Annie." When it finally takes the stage in an off-Broadway theater next week, the sequel—now called "Annie Warbucks"—will have survived a disastrous tryout; more rewriting than most Hollywood screenplays; two failed \$5.5 million attempts to bring the show to Broadway, and a handful of displaced Annies grown too buxom waiting to make it to New York. "A cast of thousands! Centuries in the making! It's unbelievable," says Charles Strouse, composer of "Annie" and all her mutated offspring. "I thought this wasn't ever going to happen."

The sequel idea was simple: find Annie a mother. "I always felt there was a second half of the story to tell," Charnin says. "The first one was about a search for a father. The second one is about the search for a family." But somewhere it took a serious dogleg. Instead of remembering mama, the original "Annie 2" centered on Miss Hannigan, Annie's nemesis. When the snide show opened its pre-Broadway tryout in Washington in late 1989, there wasn't an orphan in sight and Annie herself didn't appear until Scene



JOHN ABBOTT



CAROL ROSEGG—MARTHA SWOPE

3. "You'll want to take a paddle to 'Annie 2,'" hissed *The Washington Post*. Even Johnny Carson knocked it. The show closed within weeks, taking movie and record deals, \$5.5 million and some Tony-size egos with it.

If it had ended there, "Annie 2" would have been simply the Dan Quayle of musicals, a misguided stranger who came to town for an annoying visit only to leave accompanied by a chorus of snickers. But it had the team that created "Tomorrow," perhaps the most blindly optimistic song not written by Neil Sedaka. "'Annie 2' was like the Titanic, but we didn't want to let it sink," says Tom Meehan, who wrote the "Annie" librettos. First they sailed to Connecticut's

Goodspeed Opera House, where Mike Nichols discovered the original show in 1976 before taking it to Broadway. With new songs, more orphans and no Hannigan, the show—now renamed "Annie Warbucks," to distance it from what Meehan

calls the "stigma"—hit the road in early 1992. They loved it in Chicago, Seattle and Los Angeles, and a Broadway date was set for February 1993.

If at first you don't succeed:

Charnin, Strouse and Meehan (top), Zaremba, in red, with fellow orphans

Winning over investors proved more difficult. "The common refrain was, 'Can anyone turn a failure into a hit? Can anyone make a sequel work?' There was a lot of skepticism," says Karen Goodwin, the only producer to hang with the show all the way. Goodwin says she had raised all but \$750,000 by last December, but soon afterward a \$500,000 backer dropped out. That pushed the February opening to April. Then other investors got nervous as news articles hinted the show would never go on. On Feb. 19, Goodwin announced that "Annie Warbucks" would not open on Broadway that year. "I thought that was the end," Meehan says.

But this kid does not go down without a fight. The day after he heard about the Broadway collapse, off-Broadway producer Ber Sprecher called and offered his 499-seat downtown theater. Charnin, Strouse and Meehan debated—"It's like playing in a walk-in closet," Meehan says—but decided a small show was better than none. The theater has advantages: the production cost only \$1 million, and tiny 9-year-old Kathryn Zaremba, who plays Annie, isn't lost, as she might be on a larger stage. But there were adjustments, too. The Warbucks mansion looks like it's been looted. The orchestra has shrunk from 19 to six pieces and the cast from 31 to 23. Donna McKechnie, who plays Daddy W's love interest, warms up in the men's room, the only place with space. But other than salaries, there are no complaints about slipping off Broadway. "We always wanted to play in New York and show them we weren't crazy chasing around the country like an obsessed Captain Ahab," Meehan says. Maybe this Annie will, at last, escape the harpoon.

MARC PEYSER

Tomorrow Isn't Just Another Day

Orphan 'Annie Warbucks' Opens at a New Home Off Broadway

THE STORY SO FAR: "ANNIE" IS ONE OF THE MOST successful musicals in Broadway history. It opened in 1977 and earns a profit of between \$20 million and \$30 million before closing in 1983. The first attempt at a sequel, "Annie 2: Miss Hannigan's Revenge," costs \$7 million and closes in 1990 after a tryout in Washington and negative reviews. Abandoned by its producers, "Annie 2" evolves into "Annie Warbucks." The show is produced by Karen Walter Goodwin, who tours it around the country in 1992. With a budget of \$5.5 million, it is scheduled to open on Broadway in April of this year. But then something happens...

Feb. 19, 1993: The Dream Dies

Karen Walter Goodwin announces that "Annie Warbucks" will not make it to Broadway in 1993 for lack of money.

March 9: Hold It! The Dream Lives

Ben Sprecher, the co-owner of the 499-seat Variety Arts Theater Off Broadway, calls Martin Charmin, the director of "Annie Warbucks," and offers to produce the musical at his theater. Mr. Sprecher had made an offer once before, but Mr. Charmin, his heart set on Broadway, was unresponsive. This time, he reacts differently. Mr. Sprecher: "He looked at me. I looked at him. His head went back, and his forehead read 'Tilt!'"

March 11: They Think They're Gonna Like It Here

The "Annie Warbucks" creative team -- Mr. Charmin, the show's lyricist, the composer Charles Sprosse and the book writer, Thomas Meehan -- inspect the Variety Arts, a theater on Third Avenue near 14th Street that Mr. Sprecher and William P. Miller bought in 1980 and renovated. It opened in the fall of 1981 with "Returns to the Forbidden Planet," a science-fiction musical that closed in April 1992. In November the play "Program for Murder" lasted less than a month, and the Variety Arts has been dark ever since. But the former porn theater apparently looks right for the red head. The team agrees on the spot that the show will go on.

May 8: Money, They Shrunk the Kids

A news conference is called to announce that "Annie Warbucks" is alive. In a parody of the Lorenz Hart song "Where or When," Mr. Charmin croons to the assembled journalists, "It seems we stood and talked like this before... The smart you are smirking you were smirking then." A downsized version of "Annie Warbucks" will go into rehearsal at the Variety Arts, produced by Mr. Sprecher, Mr. Miller and Dennis J. Grimaldi. The \$5.5 million musical will come in at \$1 million, with all actors except Harve Presnell (reprising his role of Daddy Warbucks) working for Off Broadway scale. Just how small is it? Mr. Sprecher: "It's as if you took the Broadway show, threw it in the washing machine in hot water, and it came out about three-quarters the original size."

May 10: Attack of the Little People

Many small girls converge on the theater in response to an open call for the orphans.

May 26: Dog Day Afternoon

Cindy Lou, a mixed-breed terrier who plays Sandy, gets a second understudy. If Cosmo can't go on, Buby (pronounced Bubbe) will.

June 10: Miss Annie

First rehearsal. The cast has shed, along with the second chorus, Lauren Gaffney, the stalwart Annie of "Annie Warbucks." Now 13, she is too old and too large. Her replacement is the very small, very young, very loud Kathryn Zarembo, a 9-year-old from Broken Arrow, Okla. "One of her most endearing qualities, from my point of view, is she isn't even 4 feet tall yet," says Mr. Charmin.

July 8: A New Deal for Daddy?

First preview of the show, in which the evil child welfare commissioner, Harriet Doyle (replacing the evil Miss Hannigan), tells Warbucks he has 60 days to find a wife or Annie goes back to the orphanage. Donna McKechnie has signed on as Mrs. Kelly, a possible love interest for Daddy.

Aug. 9: Tomorrow, Tomorrow

"Annie Warbucks" is scheduled to open exactly 17 years after the original "Annie" opened at the Goodspeed Opera House in East Haddam, Conn. Mr. Charmin: "The main thing is, it's going to happen, and I don't have to sit on a stool with hand puppets, which was the plan of last resort."

WILLIAM GRIMES



Harve Presnell as Daddy Warbucks serenades his Annie (Kathryn Zarembo) as a chorus of orphans (from top, Missy Goldberg, Natalia Harris, Elisabeth Zarembo and Ashley Peiter) accompanies him in the musical "Annie Warbucks" at the Variety Arts Theater.

SUNDAY VIEW/David Richards

This Orphan Steals Hearts and the Show

**In Kathryn Zaremba,
'Annie Warbucks'
has a heroine with
nonstop verve and
full (make that
fullest) voice.**

CONSIDERING WHAT PASSES for sequels in Hollywood these days, "Annie Warbucks," the follow-up musical to good old lovable "Annie," has no apologies to make.

Granted, it's been a long time coming and there have been more than a few false starts and sudden halts over the years. No Broadway show ever had the rug pulled out from under it so repeatedly and lived to tell a tale.

"Annie Warbucks" can't even call itself a Broadway show, having recently set up shop at the Variety Arts Theater Off Broadway. But those eternal optimists who have concocted further adventures for the world's most popular redhead, moppet division, have got a lot of things right at last.

None is righter than the new Annie, 9-year-old Kathryn Zaremba, who is not much taller than a fire hydrant but is already a giant in the talent department. Ethel Merman at this age could scarcely have possessed a bigger voice, unless Miss Zaremba is really a reincarnation of Merman, something we won't know for certain until she grows up and develops bangs. Even now, she can deliver a punch line and tug a heartstring with the best of them. Her face is that of the littlest angel; her resilience that of a dead-end kid. If no one else in the cast of "Annie Warbucks" lifted a finger, Miss Zaremba would still carry the show over the finish line on her tiny shoulders of steel.

Happily, the evidence of busy fingers is everywhere. Charles Strouse's score — full of peppy melodies and bright banjo rhythms — is one of the composer's best and earns him instant absolution in my book for the charmless noise he lavished awhile back upon "Nick and Nora." There are plenty of laughs in the book by Thomas Meehan and the lyrics by Martin Charnin, who also functions as the remarkably clear-eyed director. Nor should you underestimate the contribution of Harve Presnell, who, as Daddy Warbucks, may be looking more and more like an elderly snapping turtle in a tuxedo, but is probably the best man around when it comes to portraying bald, right-wing, tongue-tied billionaires and not appearing foolish.

A WHOLE NEW CHORUS OF ORPHANS has been drafted to spout wisecracks, vamp the front row and alert the heroine, in one of the musical's funniest numbers, to "Watch out for the other woman, or she's gonna get your man." "Annie" discovered the secret to their appeal — keep them raggedy, awkward and scrappy — and "Annie Warbucks" isn't about to betray it. They're the flip side of all those child stars who ever wore ribbons in their curls and, obeying mommy, smiled adorably at a casting director. One is even named Peaches and does a credible bump and grind.

But then, the orphans were sure to be sure-fire. The knotty problem was what to do with Annie, once she'd eluded Miss Hannigan's clutches and landed in the lap of luxury. Since pluck, her most endearing quality, was no longer crucial to her survival, she ran the risk of becoming just another spoiled little rich girl. "Annie 2," the first stab at a sequel, tried to put her in jeopardy all over again by inventing a web of machinations spun by the evil Miss Hannigan and entailing disguises, a kidnapping, a twin Annie, and I can't remember what else. It was preposterous.

"Annie Warbucks" demands a measure of tolerance for the looseness of Thomas Meehan's plotting and the reversals that he has built into the story just so there can be a surprise in each act. Annie's spirit hasn't been tinkered with, however. She's eminently huggable and doesn't know it. While she may jut



From left, Jennifer L. Neuland, J. B. Adams, Kathryn Zaremba and Harve Presnell, Cindy Lou as Sandy and Marguerite MacIntyre in "Annie Warbucks." Carol Rosepp/Mirsha Swapp Associates/Annie Warbucks.

out a lower lip now and then, she wants no one's charity and asks for no one's love. She'd rather go it alone first, head west and pass herself off as Ruby Keeler. But that's jumping ahead of the story.

As it is, she's barely had time to adjust to her status as Daddy Warbucks's adopted daughter and dive into the Christmas presents under the tree — the conclusion, you'll remember, of "Annie" — when Harriet Doyle (Alene Robertson), commissioner of child welfare, comes slouching through the door. Daddy Warbucks, the dour woman announces in a voice that topples statuary, has 60 days to find a wife for himself and a mother for Annie. Otherwise, by the inviolable laws of New York, the child goes back to the orphanage.

Ms. Robertson, a cross between Kaye Ballard and a bloodhound, is the new Miss Hannigan figure, a sourpuss who proposes to help Warbucks locate a mate, then promptly scratches the most obvious candidate, his platinum-blond secretary (Marguerite MacIntyre), from the list. I won't divulge the extent of her schemes, other than to point out that they have a slightly better chance of succeeding than Miss Hannigan's did, and that they involve a gallant Irish widow from Hell's Kitchen (Donna McKechnie), who's known only tribulation all her life.

To some, the poor widow's plump, rosy cheeks might suggest a different past. Bravely blinking back tears, Ms. McKechnie explains that life deals you a lousy hand, "But You Go On," and proceeds to build the first-act torch song to a blaze. Later, in another telltale departure from the state of noble widowhood, she hikes up her skirt and sashays vigorously through "Leave It to the Girls," with Ms. Robertson trailing miserably in her wake. Ms. McKechnie is in great form. If someone told Ms. Robertson that she wasn't performing in Radio City Music Hall — and she cut back by, say, 50 percent — she'd be pretty grand, too.

Most of the elements that made "Annie" a smash have been worked into "Annie Warbucks" — from Peter Gennaro's marvelously herky-jerky

choreography for the villains, to those stalwart Hooverville hobos metamorphosed here into a family of Tennessee sharecroppers, not to mention a wistful mutt that responds to "Sandy." The country remains mired in a Depression (no surprise there, so are we), which prompts another spirit-lifting anthem, "Somebody's Gotta Do Somethin'," standing in for "Tomorrow." Annie makes her way a second time to the White House, where she once inspired the New Deal, and now manages to get the Tennessee Valley Authority rolling. President Franklin D. Roosevelt is as chipper as ever, quite possibly because Raymond Thorne is portraying him again, and Mr. Thorne mastered the clipped vowels and the rakish tilt of the chin years ago.

There's never a doubt that the creators of "Annie Warbucks" are trying to duplicate a winning formula. That is both the purpose and the curse of most sequels. The thing is, they've been at it for so long and with such doggedness that you can't really accuse them of ripping off their earlier success. At this late date — a decade after Mr. Charmin floated the idea that "Annie" might have a Part Two — it's more like they're trying to get a monkey off their back. The pileup of mishaps and miscalculations seems to have increased their willingness to settle for what they know. Cynics will call that playing safe, but you can also see it as an act of self-preservation.

That hasn't prevented a team of first-rate designers — Ming Cho Lee, Ken Billington and Theoni V. Aldredge — from wanting to give "Annie Warbucks" the smart sets, bright lights and snappy costumes that "Annie" had. They've done wonders, despite the constraints of space and budget. "Annie Warbucks" is one of the largest Off Broadway shows ever. Still, you can't help wishing Broadway had been receptive to the project.

Daddy Warbucks (1933 income: \$86 million; 1933 income taxes: \$4,313) rates more than a two-dimensional desk. The fashionable couples tracing pink and mauve circles on the top deck of the Staten Island ferry in "All Dolled Up" shouldn't have to fear for their shins as they kick past one another. And when Annie hops a freight train, wouldn't it be nice if it weren't just a cutout? There's an irony here. Just when the ragamuffin herself is coming into serious money, the musical about her good fortune has to grapple with reduced circumstances.

"Annie," of course, will always be the better, fresher show. It caught us unawares, which "Annie Warbucks" can never do. On the other hand, "Annie Warbucks" provides enough of the familiar fun to qualify as more than a postscript. The predisposed shouldn't be disappointed, while the wary may well be won over.

They will, if Miss Zarembo has anything to do with it.

ORIGINAL SCENES AND MUSICAL NUMBERS for *Annie Warbucks*

MUSICAL SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

ACT I

- SCENE 1: The Living room of the Warbucks mansion —
 Christmas morning, 1933.
 "A New Deal for Christmas" All
 "Annie Ain't Just Annie Anymore" Annie, Warbucks,
 Grace, Drake, The Staff
- SCENE 2: Warbucks' study. A moment later.
 "Above the Law" Commissioner Doyle
- SCENE 3: The balcony outside Warbucks' study. Immediately after.
 "Changes" Warbucks, Annie
- SCENE 4: The Orphanage playground in downtown Manhattan.
 Two weeks later.
 "The Other Woman" The Orphans
 "The Other Woman" (reprise) The Orphans
- SCENE 5: The Breakfast room of the Warbucks' mansion.
 A month later.
- SCENE 6: The kitchen of the Warbucks' mansion. Moments later.
 "That's the Kind of Woman" Drake, Annie,
 Warbucks, Servants
 "A Younger Man" Warbucks
- SCENE 7: Commissioner Doyle's office, the NYC Department of Child Welfare.
 The following Thursday morning.
 "But You Go On" Mrs. Kelly
 "Above the Law" (reprise) Commissioner Doyle, Mrs. Kelly
- SCENE 8: The front hallway of the Warbucks' mansion. An hour later.
 "I Got Me" Annie, The Orphans
- SCENE 9: The Pennsylvania Railroad Yards. Later that night.
 "I Got Me" (reprise) Annie

ACT II

- SCENE 1: A sharecropper's cabin in rural Tennessee.
 Six weeks later. April 1934.
 "Love" Ella
 "Love" (reprise) Annie, C.G.
- SCENE 2: The White House Communications Office, Washington, D.C.
 Late afternoon of the following day.
 "Somebody's Gotta Do Somethin'" Annie, The Patersons,
 Roosevelt, Grace, The White House Staff
 "Leave It to the Girls" Commissioner Doyle, Mrs. Kelly
- SCENE 3: The topdeck of the Staten Island Ferry.
 The following Saturday night.
 "All Dolled Up" The Orphans, Annie, Warbucks, Grace,
 Roosevelt, The Patersons, Drake, The Staff
 "The Tenement Lullaby" Mrs. Kelly
 "It Would Have Been Wonderful" Grace
- SCENE 4: An art deco suite in the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel.
 The following Wednesday evening, shortly before 9 p.m.
 "When You Smile" Warbucks
- SCENE 5: A Ballroom in the Waldorf-Astoria.
 An instant later.
 "Wedding, Wedding" Company
 "I Always Knew" Annie

Orchestra

Musical Director/Synthesizer, Keith Levenson; Asst. Musical Director/Synthesizer,
 Andrew Wilder; Trombone/Tuba, David Bargeron; Woodwinds, Donald Haviland;
 Drums/Percussion, Jeff Potter; Trumpet/Flugelhorn, Burt Collins.

ORIGINAL CAST LIST for *Annie Warbucks*

(in order of appearance)

Annie Warbucks	KATHRYN ZAREMBA
Sandy	CINDY LOU
Oliver Warbucks	HARVE PRESNELL
Grace Farrell	MARGUERITE MacINTYRE
Drake	ALAN KASS
Mrs. Pugh	BROOKS ALMY
Warbucks' Staff	J.B. ADAMS, COLLEEN FITZPATRICK, MICHAEL E. GOLD, JENNIFER L. NEULAND, STEVE STEINER
Simon Whitehead	JOEL HATCH
Warbucks' Accountant	MICHAEL E. GOLD
Warbucks' Accountant	STEVE STEINER
Commissioner Harriet Doyle	ALENE ROBERTSON
Miss Clark	COLLEEN FITZPATRICK
The Orphans	
Molly	ASHLEY PETTET
Pepper	MISSY GOLDBERG
Tessie	ELISABETH ZAREMBA
Peaches	NATALIA HARRIS
Dr. Margaret Whittleby	BROOKS ALMY
Fletcher	MICHAEL E. GOLD
Mrs. Sheila Kelly	DONNA McKECHNIE
Harry	STEVE STEINER
Trainman	J.B. ADAMS
Hoboes	JENNIFER L. NEULAND, STEVE STEINER
Alvin T. Paterson	HARVEY EVANS
C.G. Paterson	JACKIE ANGELESCU
Ray Billy	STEVE STEINER
Ella Paterson	MOLLY SCOTT
Mr. Stanley	MICHAEL E. GOLD
Gladys	COLLEEN FITZPATRICK
David Lillianthal	MICHAEL E. GOLD
Senator Arthur I. Vandenberg	STEVE STEINER
White House Aides	J.B. ADAMS, BROOKS ALMY, JENNIFER L. NEULAND
President Franklin Delano Roosevelt	RAYMOND THORNE
Wedding Guests	J.B. ADAMS, COLLEEN FITZPATRICK, JENNIFER L. NEULAND, STEVE STEINER

© Playbill, July 1993

ATTENTION COLLECTORS!

We hope all of our *Annie People* readers will visit New York City to see *Annie Warbucks*. But if you can't make the trip, you can still get the official show souvenirs directly from the theater's concession stand. This is a great chance to add some NEW Broadway-type memorabilia to your Annie collection. Here is a list of what we hear will be available: T-shirt, sweatshirt, hat, wristwatch, small button, 6" button, mug, original cast album on CD and cassette, showcards, and a souvenir program.

If you would like to order, write or call:

Michael McGinnity
 Variety Express, Inc.
 110 Third Avenue
 New York, NY 10003
 (212) 505-7108

...And make sure you tell him the Annie People Fan Club sent you!

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