

Leapin' Lizards! You Only Have Until Saturday to See 'Annie' at the Paramount - ParentMap

Wednesday, September 23 2015, 10:46 AM

 85.jpg.webp
1.4 KB

Gemma Alexander

September 23, 2015

[ARTS](#) | [OUTINGS + ACTIVITIES](#)

Leapin' Lizards! You Only Have Until Saturday to See 'Annie' at the Paramount

With the Broadway musical's original director at the helm, the dog-and-orphan-girl story shines

 annie-sandy-joan-marcus.jpg.webp
20.2 KB

Issie Swickle as Annie and Sunny as Sandy in "Tomorrow." Photo credit: Joan Marcus

When the Broadway musical, *Annie*, debuted in 1977, America fell in love with the little red-haired girl. Once the movie was released in 1982, Annie became an unparalleled cultural icon, a cherished childhood memory for successive generations. While the film gave audiences unprecedented access to the story, the play continues to draw rapt audiences; it has been revived on Broadway twice, translated into 28 languages and performed in 34 countries. Now the original musical theater production has been revived and is touring the U.S., stopping at **Seattle's Paramount Theatre** through Saturday.

It is heavily dependent on the performances of children — what could go wrong? Amazingly, night after night, the answer is "nothing." **Director Martin Charnin, who also directed the original in 1977, clearly knows how to draw the best from young actors.** Ten-year-old Issie Swickle as Annie is a true professional. She appears in almost every scene with never a missed mark or a wrong note. The adorable Lilly Mae Stewart may play the smallest orphan, Molly, but it is not the smallest role.

And children love to see children on stage. My own two kids were drooping past their bedtime, but perked up every time the orphans' chorus came on stage.

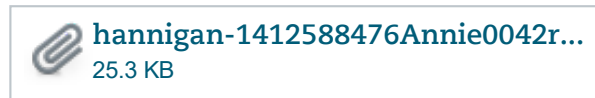
 OA_ARTS_annie_c_JoanMarcus_...
23.0 KB

Photo credit: Joan Marcus

There was a running gag in the movie *Shakespeare in Love* about any play needing "a bit with a dog" in order to be a hit, and it is true that audiences love to see animals on stage. Sunny, a 5-year-old mixed-breed shelter dog, appeared

on stage as Annie's dog Sandy in several scenes, receiving applause and "aahs" each time.

It's easy to fixate on children and animals, but Annie is an ensemble production. The staff of the Warbucks estate and the president's brain trust are each given moments to shine, injecting humor into some of the cheesier scenes. Compared to the wooden Warbucks in the movie *Gilgamesh*, Taggett is full of nuance and emotion. **And the bad guys are pure fun, with Lynn Andrews' Miss Hannigan stealing every scene she walks into.**



Lynn Andrews as Miss Hannigan, singing "Little Girls." Photo credit: Joan Marcus

Parents should know: What to be aware of

Annie is one of the world's best-loved stories for a reason, but it does include elements we tend to leave out of children's stories today. **It is the story of an abandoned child and the adults who would exploit her. Adults abuse alcohol, mistreat children and generally behave badly throughout.** And of course, the main character does discover that her parents are dead. Most kids are so dazzled by the musical numbers that these things go over their heads, but be prepared to talk about any issues your kids pick up on.

Also, the circumstances of the Great Depression are more prominent in the play than in the movie, so kids may need some historical context to fully understand the story.

Finally, if you have only seen the movie, you should also know that the musical is quite different, especially in the second half. There is no kidnapping or helicopter rescue in the play, but there are several songs you've never heard before.

But never fear, all of your favorite songs are part of the show, too. **Be prepared for encore performances of "It's the Hard Knock Life," and "Tomorrow" on the car ride home and at breakfast the next day and during homework and ...**

If you go ...

Where and when: The Paramount Theatre, 911 Pine St., Seattle, WA 98101

Dates: Sept. 23 at 7:30 p.m., Sept. 24 at 7:30 p.m., Sept. 25 at 8 p.m., Sept. 26 at 2 p.m., 8 p.m. ASL and AVIA audio description performance Sept. 26 at 2 p.m.

Tickets: Prices range from \$25–\$115. [Available online](#) or from the box office at 1-877-784-4849.

Parking: The Paramount Theatre does not have a parking lot, but there is a loading zone on Ninth Avenue and Pine for passenger drop off. There are several pay lots in the area as well as garages at the Grand Hyatt, the Washington State Convention Center and Pacific Place Mall. Metered street parking is free after 8 p.m.

Length: Run time is 2 hours and 20 minutes, plus a 20-minute intermission

Age: Recommended for ages 5 and up.

Seat tips: The cheapest seats are in the third floor mezzanine, which is not served by the elevators. There is relatively little rise between rows of seats in the historic Paramount, especially on the main floor, which makes it hard for children to see past people in front of them. A limited number of booster seats are available on the east side of the main floor. They do run out so arrive early to make sure your child gets one.

Prepare: Watch videos on the [production's website](#) and of course, plan to watch the classic 1982 movie (or the less-

familiar 2014 update starring Quvenzhané Wallis as Annie and Jamie Foxx as billionaire Will Stacks) as a followup.