



Drayton Entertainment casts Little Orphan Annie

12-year-old Riley DeLuca to play Annie in Drayton and Cambridge

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – The sun’ll come out tomorrow for 12-year-old **Riley DeLuca!** After an exhaustive search, Drayton Entertainment has selected the Kilworth, Ontario native to portray the beloved red-headed orphan in its production of the Broadway musical *Annie*, which plays at two venues during the not-for-profit theatre company’s 2019 Season.

Annie will open the season at the **Drayton Festival Theatre** playing for four weeks from **June 5** through **June 30**. The show will then return in the fall running at the **Hamilton Family Theatre Cambridge** from **October 2** through **October 27**.

Earlier this year, Drayton Entertainment began looking for a young actress to portray everyone’s favourite plucky orphan. Young hopefuls from across the province submitted videos of themselves singing “Tomorrow”, and a lucky few were asked to audition in person for Drayton Entertainment Artistic Director **Alex Mustakas** and Director and Choreographer **David Connolly**. DeLuca made the cut doing a series of callbacks where she was required to perform songs and scenes from the show. She was then asked to do a final audition via video call with Connolly, who surprised her with the exciting news that she had won the coveted role.

“Riley has the loveable stage presence and feisty spirit that are essential for the role of Annie,” says **Mustakas**. “This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for a young performer, and we are thrilled to give Riley the chance to spend the next few months working with some of the finest actors and creative professionals in the country.”

DeLuca is a grade six student at Parkview Public School in Komoka. She is an avid performer and previously appeared in the children’s choruses for Drayton Entertainment’s productions of *Joseph and the Technicolor Dreamcoat* and *Cinderella: The Panto*. She has also been on stage in many community theatre productions including *Anne of Green Gables* and *Willy Wonka*, among others.

Annie is Directed and Choreographed by **David Connolly**. Connolly is joined by Music Director **Michael Lerner**, Set Designer **Jean Claude Olivier**, Costume Designer **Rachel Berchtold** and Lighting Designer **Wendy Lundgren**.

DeLuca will be on stage with a stellar professional cast including **Thom Marriott** as billionaire businessman Oliver Warbucks, **Glynis Ranney** as the wicked orphanage matron Miss Hannigan, **Cynthia Smithers** as Mr. Warbucks' secretary Grace Farrell, **Wade Lynch** as Miss Hannigan's conniving brother Rooster, and **Jacquelyn French** as his partner Lily St. Regis. **Jeremy Carver-James, Vanessa Cobham, Eric Da Costa, Kalie Hunter, Jacob James, Dani Jazzar, Susan JohnstonCollins, Sandrine Lessard-Blais, Dan Payne** and **Robin Warwick** round out the professional company.

The orphans will include **Ashley Aarts** as Pepper, **Grace Aarts** as Molly, **Brooke Bauer** as Tessie, and **Rachel McClymont** as Duffy, along with a Children's Chorus at each location.

Annika Archibald, Rilee Cormier, Emma Dennis, Rylee Fascinato, Cassidy Gowing, Julia Green, Clara Hanian, Peyton Hodgson, Lily King, Chloée Legault, Maia Montanaro, Danica Novo, Emery Oudshoorn, Abbey Ringrose, Sophia Rodrigues, Noranda Rose, Abigail Taylor-Peckover, Claire Turner, Lily Villeneuve, and **Sadie Villeneuve** will portray the children's chorus of orphans in the Drayton Festival Theatre production.

Aaliyah Crozier, Bella de Zoeten, Emma Douglas, Rebecca Faerman, Chloé Francis, Kate Gayman, Emma Hawley, Isabelle Hiltz, Amelia Jordan, Tevya Kurczak, Talia Lowell, Elliette Merucci, Mya Oliu, Daniella Perez Vega-Hickey, Emme Roe, Yesol Seo, Kyla Wallbank, Alli Wilkinson, Lilly Wright, and **Molly Wright** will portray the children's chorus of orphans in the Hamilton Family Theatre Cambridge production.

Three-year-old cockapoo **Charlie** will take on the role of Annie's faithful furry sidekick Sandy.

The hit musical is based on Harold Gray's "Little Orphan Annie"® comic strip from the 1920s by permission of Tribune Content Agency, LLC. With music by **Charles Strouse**, lyrics by **Martin Charnin** and a book by **Thomas Meehan**, *Annie* made its debut on Broadway in 1977. It won seven Tony Awards, including Best Musical, Best Book (Thomas Meehan) and Best Score (Charles Strouse), the New York Drama Critics Circle Award for Best Musical, seven Drama Desk Awards including Best Musical, and the Grammy Award for Best Cast Show Album. The original production is one of the longest running shows in Broadway history and is credited with launching the career of several stage and screen stars including Sarah Jessica Parker, who took over the title role in 1979. *Annie* continues to be produced by theatres around the world and is considered to be one of the most successful musicals of all time.

In 1982, *Annie* became a popular movie starring Aileen Quinn, Carol Burnett and Albert Finney. Other film adaptations followed including a Disney Television movie starring Kathy Bates in 1999, and a contemporary reimagining of the story starring Quvenzhané Wallis, Cameron Diaz, and Jamie Foxx in 2014.

Drayton Entertainment's Season Media Sponsor is **CTV**. The Youth Theatre Education Sponsor is **TD Canada Trust**.

The 2019 Season at the Drayton Festival Theatre is proudly sponsored by **Brown Insurance**. The Drayton Festival Theatre production of *Annie* is proudly sponsored by **Edge Mutual Insurance**. Media Sponsors are **96.7 CHYM FM, 570 NEWS, Country 106.7** and **The Waterloo Region Record Community Partnerships Program**. The Design Sponsor is the **Elmira Golf Club**.

The Hamilton Family Theatre Cambridge production of *Annie* is proudly sponsored by **Commercial Print Craft**. Media Sponsors are **Jewel 92** and **The Hamilton Spectator**. Design Sponsors are the **Schiedel Construction** and **Martin Simmons Architects**. The Orchestra Sponsor is **Tri-City Pianos**.

Regular performance tickets are \$48 for adults; \$29 for youth under 20 years of age. Tickets for select Discount Dates and groups of 20 or more are \$39. HST is applicable to all ticket prices.

Annie is on stage at the Drayton Festival Theatre from **June 5 to June 30** and then at the **Hamilton Family Theatre Cambridge** from **October 2** through **October 27**. Tickets may be purchased online at www.draytonentertainment.com, in person at any Drayton Entertainment Box Office, or by calling toll free **1-855-372-9866**.

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