

Colleen's Corner

Tips for Auditions



Have you ever wondered what goes on after you audition for a show? How does the cast get chosen? And what ARE directors looking for? Here's a look behind the scenes so you can prepare for your next audition!

The Casting process:

After all auditions are over, the director, musical director, choreographer, assistant director and stage manager (let's call them the artistic team) sit down (with snacks) to begin a long night putting together an enormous jigsaw puzzle.

A jigsaw puzzle? Yup - because that is exactly what casting is like. We take all the pieces (actors) and figure out how they fit together to make a big picture (the cast). Most directors take notes during auditions so that they can remember what an actor did and their best qualities.

Through conversation and voting, the artistic team puts together a cast that will be the best fit for the play. An actor may have a fantastic audition and not get the exact role they had hoped for. This is not because the actor wasn't great. The artistic team is thinking about the

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Come See ACT's *Into the Woods, Jr.*



7 PM Friday, March 16th
10:30 AM Saturday, March 17th
7 PM Saturday, March 17th
2 PM Sunday, March 18th

Tickets: \$12

For more information,
 go to the ACT website:

<http://ACT.arlington.ma.us/shows>

Tickets are available in person
 at the

Regent Box Office
 and by phone at
 781-646-4TIX (4849)

Regent Theatre
 7 Medford Street
 Arlington, MA



Directed by Colleen Rua
7 PM Friday, May 11
2 PM Saturday, May 12
 at
 the Masonic Temple
 19 Academy St.
 Arlington

Colleen's Corner

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entire play, not individual parts. They also may see something in an actor that they think will really make them shine in another role.

Auditions

So, what is a director looking for and how should you prepare?

1. Do your homework! Before an audition, try to find the play and read it, or listen to the CD.
2. Be prepared! Memorize your audition monologue if you can, and spend time thinking about how the character moves, what they want, and what is getting in the way of what they want. Practice at home or for your family and friends.
3. Don't be afraid to take a risk! Try something new. If you have seen the play you are auditioning for a hundred times, don't "copy" what you saw—make the character your own.
4. Show that you can take direction! If a director asks you to read, sing or dance differently than you were doing, try it. Most of the time, they are just trying to see how well you can make adjustments in a role.
5. Let your personality shine! A major question all directors ask themselves is, "Is this someone I want to work with?" A friendly, positive, hard-working actor is always welcome. If you are auditioning for an ACT show, you probably already know that we are a pretty cuddly, fun bunch. So, don't be nervous, just be you!
6. Be a team player! If you don't get the exact role you want in every play, don't give up! Directors DEFINITELY notice actors in smaller roles that do all they can to make the play the best it can be, and will keep you in mind for next time. Remember—each show is a puzzle and every piece has to fit to make the big picture work.
7. Be professional! When you enter an audition, make sure to say hello to everyone and introduce yourself. When you leave, a thank you is always appreciated.

I hope to see you soon at an upcoming audition!

Colleen

Registration Open for April Vacation Week Drama Camp!

April's Vacation Week Drama Camp will be directed by veteran ACTors Nicole LaPan and Erin McKissick. The directors have the challenge of producing a play in one week with a cast of 7 to 10 year olds. This April, the play is called



Fairy Tale Courtroom, a courtroom comedy in two acts, written by Dana Proulx.

Throughout the trials of Mr. B.B.

Wolf and the Wicked Witch, alias Evil Queen, testimonies are heard from the Three Little Pigs, Little Red Riding Hood, Dorothy, Sleeping Beauty and Snow White (to name a few).

Fairy Tale Courtroom carefully examines and cross-examines the fairy tale characters to determine if the Wolf and Witch received their bad reputations through a series of misunderstandings. The jury (and audience) will decide whether the Big Bad Wolf and the Wicked Witch are innocent or guilty!

For more information, go to the ACT website and click on workshops, or call 781-874-9841.



ACT's Summer Show:



July 29-August 11,
2007

Regent Theatre
Registration opens
in May for
kids 7-17

Rehearsals begin
Saturday, June 9th!

ACT Launches Summer Day Program with *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown*



In response to numerous parent requests over the last five years, ACT is beginning a new summer day program in the summer of 2007 for kids 7 to 10 years old. The program will run for three consecutive weeks in July. You can sign up for one, two or all three weeks because each week will

be different!

Each week, we will rehearse scene and song selections from *You're a Good Man Charlie Brown*, and perform them on Friday evening at 7 PM in the Regent Cabaret with a fantastic set straight out of a Peanuts comic strip.

The Program Director will be Colleen Rua (yay!) who will be ably assisted by a staff of theater professionals which will include Medina Mahfuz and other familiar faces at ACT.

The program for each day will run from from 9 AM to 4 PM, with rehearsals, classes in movement, voice, acting and theater games. Extended Day Care is available from 8:30 A.M. to 9 AM, and 4 PM to 5 PM.

We are also now accepting applications from kids 14 and up to be Junior Counselors, and from kids 11 to 13 to be CIT's (counselors in training).

For more information, go to the ACT website, <http://ACT.arlington.ma.us>, or call 781-874-9841.



Voices of ACT

The Community That I Know

by Josh Bell

Describing ACT and all of its works in one word may seem to be a difficult task, but for me it is not. Love is the first word that comes to mind.

Although sometimes the budget is tight, and the space confines are tighter, ACT has always seemed to struggle through. We may not be a Broadway Production Company, but by several standards we seem to do just fine.

In all of our shows, there is a sense of community that runs strong throughout all of the members involved. The happy children that appear on opening nights are only matched by the enthralled family members and loved ones that come to see their children be stars for the evening.

With wonderful casts, crews, parents and amateurs alike, ACT sets the stage for a strong community. On and off stage, beautiful relationships are created. More important than just the work onstage is the work created off stage. Friendships that I have made through my joyous years working with ACT have been more binding and true than many others I have made in my life.

ACT not only builds skills for the stage, and a sense of community, but is also lays the foundations for love.

*Josh is a junior at Arlington High School and a longtime ACTor. He is currently appearing in **Into the Woods** as the Narrator. Last fall, he worked as Assistant Director with Kate Wisnioski on **The Twits**.*



Josh, at last summer's ACT Alumni Dinner with friends.

Voices of ACT

ACT is the Place to Be

by Graham Techler

I'm pretty sure that when I entered the Regent Theatre to audition for *Bye Bye Birdie* in 2005, I could have fried a hole in the smoky black flooring of the Regent stage with my nervous mind gearing into overdrive. As I walked on to the stage to sing the abridged version of *Put on a Happy Face*, I couldn't help but think *Geez, this place is HUGE!*

Finally, I was called to attention by the voices issuing from the shadowy canyon of an orchestra pit in front of me. "Are you ready?"

I said yes, but it might have sounded like, "Yeblisk..."

I started to sing in my regular area of range, but without warning, my voice cracked, and I uncomfortably shifted into a shrill soprano, which I assure you I had not planned on doing.

When I was done, the song could have been *Put on a Happy Cardigan*, and I still wouldn't have noticed. I was so disappointed in myself, that I repeated my monologue in a quiet monotone, and when I left the stage so the next set of actors could enter, I forgot to thank the shadowy voices from the orchestra pit.

But when I emerged back into the light of the registration room, I noticed that the people enthusiastically being greeted by board members and other adults were not only older ACTors who had obviously acted here before, but shy-looking seven year olds who were holding their mother's hands while talking to these friendly strangers. I was even more surprised when Steve Smith (although at the time he was just the slightly scary guy who looked like he knew what he was doing) spoke to me.

"Hiya! You must be new," Steve said enthusiastically. "I can tell you'll fit in well here."

I was still scared out of my wits, but at least I now knew someone.

That summer, I played the part of Maude in *Bye Bye Birdie* and was in the teen chorus. I had a few lines and made some great friends, both with kids and adults. I learned to dance

from Lisa Morse and also that the voices from the shadowy canyon had smiling, supportive faces.

Last summer, when I got the role of Joe Hardy in *Damn Yankees*, I was nervous, unsure of myself and I thought that perhaps Colleen had made a mistake. However, I was not at all surprised to find that when a kid who had a main role in the show needed help, they got it. Colleen, Matt, Lisa and Chris all worked with me, developing my skills and confidence, and I learned that I could do it. The quality of that help, however, was the same quality as the help the kid with just a few lines got the summer before.

From my first encounter with Steve Smith to my experience last summer as Joe Hardy, I have learned that the people in ACT are what make ACT so great. Kids who act here can all feel completely supported, independent from how long you've been around, or what part you got in the last show. Everyone is treated as an equal. The only kind of treatment you get at ACT is the good kind. While I'm still trying not to sound like a salesman, I cannot stress how much a kid who is interested in theater deserves to belong in ACT. If you want your kid to be in an incredible and fair atmosphere, while developing great theater skills, ACT is the place to be.

*Graham Techler is in the seventh grade in Newton. He has appeared in ACT's **Bye Bye Birdie** and **Damn Yankees**. This spring, he will be acting in **Much Ado About Nothing**.*



Graham, in last summer's *Damn Yankees*, with Siobhan Fogarty as Lola.

Thoroughly Modern Millie

A Primer

Each summer for the last four years, ACT has relied on the expertise and knowledge of our own Colleen Rua to introduce us to a play she thinks would be great for our community. Of the last four summer shows she's directed, three have been "big" names, well-known to many theater-goers as Broadway standards: *Oliver!*, *Bye Bye Birdie*, and *Damn Yankees*. The lone exception was 2004's *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, a delightful musical, overlooked by many but enjoyed by everyone here at ACT.

This summer, we once again have a chance to explore a show that is relatively unknown beyond the bright lights of Broadway: *Thoroughly Modern Millie* (although many ACTors and even a few board members have been seen and heard singing the songs and tapping out the numbers...). Others may not be as familiar with the music or the story of *Millie*, despite the fact that it exploded on to the Broadway stage in 2002, winning six Tony awards, including Best Musical.

The book (or story) of *Thoroughly Modern Millie* was written by Richard Henry Morris. Originally a 1967 film starring Julie Andrews, it was rewritten in 2002 with new music by Jeanine Tesori, and lyrics by Dick Scanlan. *Millie* boasts a large cast, split equitably according to gender, and it offers several comic roles, including a delectable villainess akin to Cruella DeVil.

The plot of the show is simple: It's 1922 and Millie Dillmount, a small-town girl with big dreams arrives in the Big Apple. She checks into the Hotel Priscilla, a rooming house for actresses, determined to make her mark on the city. But Mrs. Meers, the woman who runs the hotel, is secretly a criminal who has adopted the disguise of a friendly Chinese matron to mask her real profession—kidnapping young girls and selling them into slavery. Millie interviews for a job with the handsome (and single) Trevor Graydon, much to the chagrin of Graydon's assistant Miss Flannery, who doesn't like "moderns" like Millie.

Colleen Rua, ACT's Artistic Director and the director of *Millie*, explains that, "The music is easy to learn—it's contagious. I had the chance to meet Jeanine Tesori recently and I am so excited to be doing this show with ACT."

The show explores issues such as feminism,

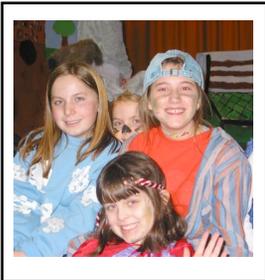
racism, being true to oneself, independence, and love, in the safe confines of musical comedy. One of the most important issues *Millie* parodies is the culture of fear around immigrants, prevalent in the 1920's (reminiscent of many current fears in post-9/11 America). Colleen is intent on bringing these issues to the surface with the cast, and says that, "The mistreatment of Chin Ho and Bun Foo at the hands of the cartoonish Mrs. Meers is a lesson that such atrocities can happen to any subjugated group. We are not supposed to like Mrs. Meers because she *pretends* to be what she is not. She is a ridiculous exaggeration of a stereotype that we know does not exist." Cast members will have the opportunity to learn Mandarin (more intensively for those actors playing Bun Foo, Ching Ho, and Mrs. Meers) and some aspects of Chinese culture from a Taiwanese friend of Colleen's who will be spending some time with the cast this summer.

Another one of the most important elements to *Millie* will be the strength of the ensemble. Colleen says, "There's so much to do and learn on stage, including ample opportunities for dance (especially tap). And the great thing about the group numbers in *Millie* is that they are fun and festive, and allow for all sorts of movement, not just formal dance steps."

Colleen notes that there are many roles in *Millie*, but not all of them will be speaking roles. "There may be ACTors who have non-speaking parts, or non-singing parts or non-dancing parts. While I understand the disappointment of not getting a coveted role, I think one of my strengths as a director is giving kids with smaller roles more to do, or a moment to shine. The strength of an ACT show is that kids value the experience of a summer with their friends working on a show that belongs to everyone, not just those with many lines. It is not lip service to call every role an important one—it is absolute truth, else the playwright would not include these characters."

All the sights and sounds of the Roaring 20's will be on call for our production: flappers, speakeasies, Dorothy Parker, jazz, plus love and love potions, foiled plots, and tap-dancing, all amid the excitement of New York City in its golden age.

BECOME A MEMBER OF



"ACT is such a great community of kids and parent volunteers. I feel privileged to work with them . . ."

Membership

We invite you to join the Arlington Children's Theater! Keep current on our programs and support an important cultural resource! Our members include families and friends from Arlington and throughout Greater Boston.

ACT Goes to the Theater

ACT has tickets for two shows in the next several months, North Shore Music Theater's *High School Musical* and Broadway in Boston's *Wicked* (details below). Tickets are first-paid, first-served and are offered to the ACT community.

Contact Kathy Perkins, eak.perkins@comcast.net or 781-396-2558 if you want to purchase tickets or would like more information.



at
North Shore
Musical Theater
Saturday, July 14,
2pm
\$50 per ticket



at
The Opera
House
late September
Sunday evening
(date/price TBA)



P.O.Box 1076
Arlington, MA 02474

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We need your help! Become a Member of ACT today!