



SPOTLIGHT

401 North 6th Street

July 14, 2022

www.fslt.org

Dates: Opening Night of the musical *Annie* will be Thursday, July 28. Regular performances will be July 29-30, August 3-6 and 11-13. Matinees will be offered on **TWO SUNDAYS**, July 31 and August 7.

Show Times: Evening performances begin at 7:30 p.m. Patrons may be seated after 6:45 p.m. Matinees begin at 2:00 p.m. Patrons may be seated after 1:15 p.m.

Season Flex Pass Seat Selection:

Seat selection begins 7:00 a.m. **Saturday, July 16** for Flex Pass patrons. Select seats online at fslt.org or call the Box Office at 479-783-2966 (extn. 2) to request seats on the phone. Flex Pass patrons may also purchase an additional ticket for every pass they have.

General Public Tickets: General public tickets are available beginning 7:00 a.m. **Thursday, July 21.** Purchase online at fslt.org or call the Box Office at 479-783-2966 (extn. 2) to purchase on the phone. Opening Nights are \$25. All other performances \$20.

Box Office Phone Calls: Be prepared to leave a message with details about your seat/ticket request including a phone number where you can easily be reached. Volunteers will return calls during variable hours. Reminder: To reach the Box Office select extn. 2.

HALF PRICE FOR KIDS!

QUANTITIES LIMITED
MORE INFO ON PAGE 3

ANNIE

Brings Sunshine to FSLT Stage July 28-Aug.13

I don't need sunshine now to turn my skies to blue – I don't need anything but you!
– Annie and Daddy Warbucks, *Annie*

Filled with familiar tunes like “Tomorrow,” “Easy Street,” “You’re Never Fully Dressed Without a Smile,” and “Hard Knock Life”, *Annie* is a family friendly, feel-good musical. The show debuted on Broadway in 1977 with a story based on the *Little Orphan Annie* comic strip by Harold Gray and a book by Thomas Meehan. The upbeat music was written by Charles Strouse with lyrics by Martin Charnin. The FSLT production is directed by Eric Wells, with musical direction by Barry Law.

Annie was popularized by a number of stage productions and film and tv versions. The original Broadway cast featured Andrea McCardle, Reid Shelton and Dorothy Loudon. The 1982 film version featured Albert Finney, Carol Burnett, Anne Reinking, Bernadette Peters and Tim Curry. A Disney remake from 1999 featured Victor Garber, Kathy Bates, Alan Cumming and Kristin Chenowith. A modernized 2011 film starred Jamie Foxx, Rose Byrne and Cameron Diaz.

The story is set in 1933 in New York City, where eleven-year-old Annie (played on alternate nights by January Bailey and Bridget Caruthers) lives in an orphanage run by the nasty Miss Hannigan (Charlotte Scott). Annie dreams of being reunited with the parents who left her at the orphanage as a baby. When billionaire Oliver Warbucks (Brandon Bolin) decides to spend Christmas with an orphan, he dispatches his faithful secretary Grace (Shannon Stoddard) to the orphanage where she selects Annie. When Warbucks offers a reward to help reunite Annie with her parents, Miss Hannigan’s

See *Annie* on page 3



Show Sponsor Applauded



We are pleased to recognize **Baptist Health** as the sponsor of our upcoming summer musical. Baptist Health is an Arkansas-based, locally owned and managed, not-for-profit, and faith-based health care organization. Baptist Health is also Arkansas' most comprehensive health care organization with more than 250 access points and approximately 11,000 employees operating 11 hospitals. By combining their mission of healing and providing faith-based healthcare with various BHealthy initiatives and programs, Baptist Health is serving our friends and neighbors in communities all over our state – both inside and outside the walls of their hospitals. Together, Baptist Health is building a healthier, happier Arkansas.



Director's Letter

On June 12th, 2022, the world witnessed Broadway's Big Night as the Tony Awards celebrated its 75th Annual Award Show, making it a significant event in history, an event that parallels something special in our own community. This special year also marks the 75th Anniversary for The Fort Smith Little Theatre. Over the past 75 years, our stage has stood the test of time, bringing generations of patrons, volunteers, and shows to our stage.

I am honored to have the opportunity to bring *Annie* to our stage for such a celebration. It was 2019 when *Annie* was approved for the 2020 season. At that time, a different director was attached to bringing this production to our stage. Before the next season was announced was when they decided to step down to be able to make a family move to another part of the state. After a long time of thinking, I decided to step into the director's chair for *Annie*. I was beyond excited. It was announced, we were ready to go. BOOM! Covid-19 changed the game.

The pandemic brought a series of questions, the most important being "Will we perform again?" There was uncertainty, but I had faith for *Annie*. Its story being one cherished by all, with its positive message of hope and love, making this a needed show today. I was delighted that we can bring this musical to the stage during an extraordinary year, FSLT's 75th Anniversary.

I am blessed to bring this show to our stage filled with an amazing crew and performers. I especially have enjoyed working with Barry Law and Ashleigh Mathews as part of my team of Music Director and Assistant Director/Choreographer. Barry has gone above and beyond bringing the best singing voices out of our performers. Ashleigh works diligently by my side in helping direct while creating exciting movement for our music numbers for all our cast.

Between the singing, acting, dancing, and all the behind-the-scenes work, *Annie* is sure to bring joy and hope to all within our community.

-Eric Wells, *Director*



Seat Tickets Checked By Ushers

If you selected your seats online, you can bypass the Box Office when you arrive and show your print-at-home ticket or your ticket confirmation on your smart phone to an usher. Alternately, go to the Box Office upon your arrival, pick up your seat ticket, then proceed to an usher at either aisle.

Sip Sip Hooray!

Oh the excitement of Opening Night! Courtesy of **Sodie's Wine and Spirits**, quality wine and champagne is served pre-show. At intermission, a special dessert is served along with brew from **Fort Smith Coffee**. Tickets are \$25. (By calling the Box Office, Flex Pass and Wednesday Night Subscribers can attend Opening Night for a \$5 fee.)

Extra Performances

In anticipation of a large demand for tickets, THREE additional evening performances-August 11, 12, 13- have been added to the regular run for *Annie*. In addition, TWO Sunday matinees (July 31 and August 7) will be performed. We appreciate this awesome cast and crew for performing this demanding, expanded schedule!

Annie opens July 28

ne'er-do-well brother, Rooster (John J. Bishop) and his girlfriend, Lilly St. Regis (Jamie Lambdin-Bolin) attempt to portray Annie's parents and claim the money for themselves. Their sinister plot fails and Annie finds a happy home with Daddy Warbucks, his secretary Grace, and their lovable mutt, Sandy (played by Biscuit).

Other cast members include the ensemble of orphans: Zenie Jo Basham as Molly, Nora Giani as Kate, Ellie Chivington as Tessie, Isabella Ree as Pepper, Rachel Espinoza as July, Allison Jones as Duffy and Montana Berkley and Maribette Holmes, as additional orphans. Additional adult cast members include Jordan Smith as Burt Healy, Jon Gustafson as President Franklin D. Roosevelt, and Ethan Womack as Drake.

The show also features a large ensemble including Nicole Berkley, Porter Black, Lisa Butler, Gary Cameron, Joe Graham, Trent Gregory, Lynne Gustafson, Lily Hall, Wayne Mathews, Sandy McPherson, Rebekah Nickell, Meredith Rice, Coleman Smith, S.K. Thomas, Charles Warren, and Missy Warren.

Crew members include Assistant Director/Choreographer Ashleigh Mathews, Producers Joanne Peterson and Joe Graham, Orphan's Stage Manager Megan Bagley, Costumer Emilee Dale, Props/Stage Crew Logan Davis, Jorgi Anderson, Neal Goodwin, Sharla Cameron, Sadie Bagley, and Randy Pace, Lights T.J. Dudley and Alex Gray, Set Design Reece Whitt and Graphic Design Adam Barnes.

Brandon Bolin is excited to play Daddy Warbucks again after playing the role as a teen with Young Actors Guild. "I wanted a chance to do it again now that I'm older

and can better relate to the character." Bolin jokes that "Having been bald since 2018, it's nice to not worry about shaving my head for the role or wondering how I will look with no hair!"

Shannon Stoddard is another actor returning to the cast of *Annie*. "Nineteen years ago, *Annie* was the first musical I ever participated in, and I fell in love with musical theatre." She adds that she is enjoying taking on a more serious acting role this time as she is usually cast in comedic parts. "I admit the part is quite a challenge. There are so many lines to memorize and so many songs to learn!"

Jamie Lambdin-Bolin is thrilled to be playing Lilly St. Regis: "This is my first villain in a musical even if she is 'just a dumb hotel'!" She adds: "I was planning to help with crew, but decided at last minute to audition. The chance to be on stage in this upbeat classic was just too tempting."

Join us for wonderful music, family-friendly fun, and a happy ending. *Annie* opens July 28 with additional 7:30 pm performances scheduled for July 29-30, August 3-6 and 11-13. Two matinees will be performed at 2 p.m. on Sundays, July 31 and August 7. For Season Flex Pass patrons, seat selection will begin at 7:00 a.m. Saturday, July 16. Tickets will go on sale to the general public beginning at 7:00 a.m. Thursday, July 21. Tickets for the Opening Night performance are \$25; all other performances are \$20. A limited number of Half Price Kids Tickets will be available August 4 and 11. You can buy tickets and select your seats online at fslt.org or by calling 479-783-2966 (extn. 2). Don't miss *Annie*!

HALF PRICE KIDS TICKETS

August 4 & 11. Quantities Limited



Family Fun just became more affordable! Half price tickets will be made available for 200 children to see *Annie* thanks to financial support from FSLT patrons, **Bill Engles** (Engles Financial Services) and **Jeremiah and Stacy Gentry**. Their generosity will help a large number of parents and grandparents to acquaint their special kiddos with this uplifting musical and the joy of live theatre. Check out the details below, and please say "thank you" to Bill, Jeremiah, and Stacy when you see them.

- Half Price Kids Tickets are available only for Thursday performances, Aug. 4 and Aug. 11.
- Orders including Half Price Kids Tickets can only be processed by calling the Box Office at 479-783-2966 (extn. 2). This special offer is **not available online**.
- This promotion is limited to 200 Half Price Tickets. Orders will be processed in the order they are received.
- Half Price Kids Tickets are available to those who have any type of season pass/subscription or those who purchase a full price ticket to *Annie*.
- For each adult ticket you have, up to two Half Price Kids Tickets may be purchased for children (through age 12), while supplies last.
- Those with Opening Night or Weds. Season Subscriptions can contact the Box Office to move their seats to August 4 or 11 if they wish to purchase Half Price Kids Tickets.
- The full price ticket and Half Price Kids Ticket must be for the same performance date and be processed in one transaction.



75th Commemorative Booklet

Our anniversary publication is receiving great reviews! Pick one up in the lobby while quantities last.

75th Diamond Bracelet Raffle

The raffle for a Newton's Jewelers Vahan Diamond Bar Bracelet (valued over \$2,200) is drawing to a close. Tickets are being sold at the first 40 performances this season, and one name is selected nightly to go into the final draw at *Annie* on August 13. The latest lucky entrants (selected during Moon Over Buffalo) were: Ed Ruzicka, Martha Coles, Vanessa Francia, Gene Hester, Alison Feix, Conni Ulmschneider, and Lisa Evans. Tickets will be sold pre-show – so bring your rabbit's foot and join the fun!

Anniversary Apparel

A limited quantity of 75th Anniversary shirts are still available. Purchase in the lobby pre-show or order online at fslt.org.

Worth A Thousand Words

Check out our collaborative Facebook album called "Your FSLT" for fond memories and good laughs. Upload your own pictures at <https://www.yogile.com/yourfslt/upload>.

Walk Down Memory Lane

Collected remembrances from volunteers and patrons are available for your reading enjoyment. Through links at the bottom of our home page (fslt.org) you can read the memories of others and add your own.

Coming Soon!

Watch for two additional online activities: Volunteers Make It Happen (cast and crew photos) and The Rest Is History (the past in print).

Family Friendly Guidelines

While *Annie* is certainly a family friendly show, it is a live performance in a small setting, not a movie theatre. Please keep that in mind when deciding whether your little ones are old enough to remain in their seats and enjoy the show.

Fort Smith Little Theatre
SPOTLIGHT

P.O. Box 3752, Fort Smith, AR 72913

www.fslt.org

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



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From the Top...

Honoring Descendants of FSLT's "Founding Mother" June 9



Thespians are flexible – a trait that came in handy for the Opening Night of *Moon Over Buffalo*. That evening, as part of our 75th Anniversary Celebration, we were to honor the descendants of FSLT's Founding Mother, Florabel Pattee. However, Flo's family reluctantly had to postpone their trip to Fort Smith. Although our honorees couldn't join us as planned, Nancy Blochberger-75th Anniv. Comm. Asst. Chairman (center), Mayor George McGill (right), and I took a moment on stage to recognize

FSLT's major milestone and Flo's legacy.

To the cast and crew of *Moon Over Buffalo* – bravo! They burned lots of calories making us laugh while racing in and out of the set's five doors. Next up in this celebratory season of shows, we are thrilled to present *Annie* as our summer musical. This uplifting story, which has never been performed at FSLT, was originally scheduled for 2020 but cancelled due to the pandemic. After what we've been through the last few years, we know you'll want to come in out of the heat for a good story, fun music, and best of all – a happy ending! Extra performance dates have been scheduled so you can all find a seat for this family favorite.

Annie will also mark the end of our raffle for the beautiful diamond bracelet donated by Newton's Jewelers. Don't forget to buy your \$10 raffle ticket in the lobby before each performance. Somebody's gotta win!

See you at the theatre...

- Sherry Hester, *President*

Kudos to Calvert McBride: As early as 1950, FSLT show programs included notes of thanks to **Calvert McBride Printing**, and through the decades, this locally owned company has continued their support. Now as we celebrate our 75th Anniversary, we are proud to recognize them as Publication Sponsor for our beautiful 75th Commemorative Booklets. We are grateful to have them as our partner in printing!

Auditions – Join The Fun!

Auditions for *The Philadelphia Story*, directed by Tina Dale, will be held **Monday, August 15**. Callbacks will be held on Tuesday, August 16. The cast calls for 9 males between the ages of approximately 25-60+ and 6 females approximately 15-60+. Production dates are September 22-October 1. For more information on this Broadway hit that became a classic movie, visit www.fslt.org or find us on social media.



Season Flex Pass patrons are urged to select seats before July 21.