



### **Copthorne Prep: Annie - A Joyous Display of Talent and Commitment**

As an NSTA Representative, I had the absolute pleasure of attending the truly charming and joy-filled performance of *Annie Kids* at Copthorne Prep on Thursday, 3rd July 2025. Directed by the school's Educational Consultant for Performing Arts, Georgia Brymer, this heartwarming showcase of young talent was an absolute delight from beginning to end.

*Annie Kids* is a youth-friendly adaptation of the beloved Broadway musical *Annie*, thoughtfully reimagined for younger performers while maintaining the essence and spirit of the original. The storyline follows Annie, a spirited young orphan who refuses to give up hope of finding her parents, despite the harshness of life in a 1930s New York orphanage. Since its Broadway debut in 1977 - a production that won seven Tony Awards, including Best Musical - *Annie* has continued to capture hearts across generations. The enduring appeal of songs like 'Tomorrow' and 'It's A Hard Knock Life' makes it a perfect choice for a school production, and Copthorne's rendition reignited all the nostalgia I remembered from watching the 1980s film adaptation countless times as a child on VHS.

From the very first notes sung by the orphans in the opening scene, the performance radiated confidence and charm. The ensemble's energy and commitment were infectious, instantly engaging the audience and setting the tone for what would be a wonderfully executed evening of theatre. Georgia Brymer's direction was inclusive, vibrant, and clearly rooted in a deep understanding of both the material and the children she was working with. Her vision translated beautifully on stage, as every cast member - regardless of age or role - contributed with enthusiasm and focus. There was a genuine sense of shared purpose and enjoyment that permeated the production, elevating it far beyond the typical expectations of a school show.

The set design, though minimalistic, was thoughtfully conceived and expertly managed by crew members Franky and Dylan. Seamless transitions between locations - from the bleak orphanage dormitory to the lively streets of New York - allowed the audience to be fully immersed in the narrative. In the dormitory scenes in particular, the ensemble of orphans gave performances full of personality and spirit. Numbers like 'Maybe' and 'It's A Hard Knock Life' were clear standouts, showcasing excellent vocal work, strong ensemble choreography, and a striking sense of cohesion among the young performers.

Throughout the production, it was clear that the characters had been perfectly cast. As Annie, Sophia was commanding on stage, with a lovely mixture of vivacious energy and vulnerability perfect for the role, not to mention a beautiful singing voice for her iconic solo numbers.

Anna engaged the audience with a cool confidence beyond her years as Miss Hannigan. She had excellent command of the comedy within her scenes, creating a memorable and engaging character. The trio of Anna, Benjamin, and Sienna sparkled in the cheeky and cleverly choreographed 'Easy Street'. All three delivered their lines and musical moments with flair and timing that made the



number one of the evening's comedic highlights. Sienna also gave a standout performance as the "Star to Be" in *N.Y.C.*, her stage presence radiating confidence and polish. This number was another highlight of the show, as all cast members dazzled with wonderful energy, especially in the final encore that brilliantly involved every single performer.

Clarissa, as Grace, impressed as the youngest principal actor, displaying remarkable maturity beyond her years. Her vocal performance in "I Think I'm Gonna Like It Here" was particularly strong, and she carried herself with fitting poise and elegance throughout.

Jack brought real brilliance to the role of Mr. Warbucks, tackling the transformation from stern businessman to warm-hearted father figure with confidence and depth. A consistently reliable presence on stage, he held the audience's attention from his very first entrance.

Special mention must go to the delightful comedic touches woven throughout the performance. Jessica's portrayal of Sandy the Dog was an unexpected comic gem; her perfectly timed "ruff ruff" vocals had the audience laughing each time, and she fully committed to the role with charming results. The scene involving Annie's supposed parents was another moment of comic brilliance, with Benjamin and Sienna displaying fantastic timing and chemistry. Finally, a master of comedy emerged in the form of Alexander, who played both Bert Healy and the President. There is certainly a budding comic future on stage for this actor.

By the time the final curtain fell, it was unmistakable how much the experience had meant — not only to the young performers but to the staff and families in attendance. *Annie Kids* at Copthorne Prep was much more than a school show; it was a shining example of what can be achieved when passion, creativity, and commitment come together in a nurturing educational environment. Every student and crew member contributed something meaningful to its success, and the production stood as a testament to the transformative power of the performing arts in schools. It celebrated not only individual talent but the joy of shared achievement.

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