



**MEDIA RELEASE – For immediate release September 2011**

## **LEAPIN' LIZARDS! ANNIE TO OPEN IN MELBOURNE IN 2012**

The ever-popular Broadway musical **Annie** will light up Melbourne's Regent Theatre from May 24<sup>th</sup> 2012 in an exciting new production produced **John Frost**. Returning to the role of New York 'zillionaire' Daddy Warbucks will be one of Australia's greatest theatrical talents, **Anthony Warlow**, fresh from his success in the title role of the World Premiere of *Doctor Zhivago*. Show business legend **Nancye Hayes** will play the tyrannical Miss Hannigan who runs the orphanage where Annie begins her journey. This is the third Australian production of *Annie* that Nancye has been involved with, having played Lily St Regis in the original production and been Resident Director for the second.

Joining Nancye as her scurrilous brother Rooster Hannigan is television and stage favourite **Todd McKenney** (*The Boy From Oz*, *Dancing With the Stars*). Playing Rooster's "lady friend" Lily St Regis and Warbucks' secretary Grace Farrell will be two leading ladies of musical theatre, **Chloë Dallimore** (*The Producers*) and **Julie Goodwin** (*West Side Story*) respectively.

Announcing his all-star cast, Producer John Frost said, *"I'm often asked when Annie will return to the stage, and I'm thrilled that for this new production we have the A-list of Australian musical theatre talent – Anthony Warlow reprising one of his favourite roles, Nancye Hayes putting her mark on the role of the mean Miss Hannigan, and Todd McKenney, Chloë Dallimore and Julia Goodwin who are the cream of Australian talent. Our production team is top quality as well - director Karen Johnson-Mortimer, choreographer Kelly Aykers and musical director Peter Casey.*

*2012 marks the 35 years since Annie opened on Broadway and the show continues to be one of the most popular musicals for audiences that now span generations. With its timeless and optimistic message, you can bet your bottom dollar Annie will be a hit again in 2012!"*

Based on the popular Harold Gray comic strip "Little Orphan Annie", the musical Annie burst into popularity in 1977 when it opened on Broadway. After running there for nearly six years, it has played in over 22 countries worldwide including the UK, Argentina, Japan, Germany, Sweden, Spain and Australia. Annie became a smash-hit movie musical in 1982 starring Aileen Quinn, Albert Finney and Carol Burnett that is adored worldwide and a fixture of popular culture references.

*Annie* first toured Australia from 1978 with a cast that included Jill Perryman, Hayes Gordon, Kevin Johnson, Nancye Hayes and Anne Grigg. *Annie* returned to the Australia stage in 2000 produced by John Frost starring Anthony Warlow, Amanda Muggleton, Jane Scali, Philip Gould and Angela Kelly. For this production, *Annie's* lyricist and original Broadway director Martin Charnin wrote a new song for Anthony Warlow to sing in the show, an unprecedented honour for Warlow.

*Annie* is full of toe-tapping hits such as It's the Hard Knock Life, Easy Street, You're Never Fully Dressed Without A Smile, NYC, Maybe and everyone's favourite song - Tomorrow. These wonderful songs have become staples of musical theatre repertoires worldwide and now, 34 years on, it remains one of the most loved and universally appealing musicals of all time.

#### **BOOKING DETAILS**

Venue: The Regent Theatre, Collins St., Melbourne  
Season: From Thursday, May 24 2012  
Opening Night: Sunday, May 27 2012  
Performance Times: Wed-Sat 8pm, Matinees Tues & Wed 1pm, Sat 2pm & Sunday 3pm  
Price: \$50.90 - \$110.90  
Bookings: 1300 111 011 or [ticketmaster.com.au](http://ticketmaster.com.au)  
Groups of 12 or more 1300 788 227

**TICKETS ON SALE MONDAY 26 SEPTEMBER**

#### **HISTORY**

When *Annie* first wowed audiences at Connecticut's Goodspeed Opera House more than 34 years ago, no one could have imagined the reach that one little girl would have. 50 million people of all ages have been delighted by two Broadway runs, two Australian tours, two West End stints, five national US companies, two hit movies and dozens of international productions, and the show is still going strong.

Based on the "Little Orphan Annie" comic strip which debuted in 1924 and ran for over 80 years, *Annie* is set in Depression Era New York City at a time when the economy looked bleak, government seemed ineffective and the average citizen was desperate and frustrated. Sound familiar? With its hopeful message and unwavering belief in a better tomorrow, *Annie* became one of the biggest Broadway musical hits of the 1970s, running for almost six years and playing 2,377 performances. The musical won seven Tony Awards, including Best Musical, Best Book (Thomas Meehan) and Best Score (Charles Strouse, Martin Charnin), the New York Drama Critics Circle Award for Best Musical, seven Drama Desk Awards including Best Musical, and the Grammy for Best Cast Show Album.

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