

# Annie

**MEDIA RELEASE – Embargoed until 12.30pm June 27, 2011**

## **ANNIE RETURNS TO AUSTRALIA**

The ever-popular Broadway musical **Annie** will light up Sydney's Lyric Theatre from 29 December 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 Assistant Choreographer 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 Warbuck's secretary Grace Farrell will be two leading ladies of musical theatre, **Chloe Dallimore** (*The Producers*) and **Julie Goodwin** (*West Side Story*) respectively. Making his musical theatre debut in the role of President Roosevelt (FDR) will be radio veteran **Alan Jones**.

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, Chloe Dallimore and Julia Goodwin who are the cream of Australian talent. And I know Alan Jones will surprise everyone in his musical theatre debut. Our production team is top quality as well - director Karen Johnson-Mortimer, choreographer Kelly Akers and musical director Peter Casey. You can bet your bottom dollar *Annie* will be a hit again in 2012!"

NSW Premier Barry O'Farrell said, "Over the coming years, Sydney will play host to a number of musicals, many of which will have their Australian and World Premiere season in Sydney and many of which will be produced by John Frost. Today we add another musical to the list, the Australian premiere season of *Annie* and making his musical theatre debut in the role of Franklin D Roosevelt will be Alan Jones. I'm sure his listeners will be the first in line," Mr O'Farrell said. "In the last month we have announced that Sydney was chosen for the Australian Premiere of *The Addams Family* and the World Premiere of *Strictly Ballroom*. This is in addition to the recent highly successful first run of *Doctor Zhivago*, as well as *Legally Blonde* opening in Australia in June 2012. Today we again demonstrate Sydney's re-emergence as the number one city for first run musicals in Australia," he said.

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: Lyric Theatre, Star City  
Season: From 29 December 2011  
Opening Night: Thursday 5 January 2012  
Performance Times: Wed–Sat 8pm, Matinees Wed 1pm & Sat 2pm, Sun 1pm & 6pm (TO Jan 30)  
Wed–Sat 8pm, Matinees Tues & Wed 1pm, Sat 2pm & Sunday 3pm (FROM Jan 30)  
Price: \$40.00 - \$135.90 (children's prices available all sessions except Fri/Sat 8pm)  
Bookings: 1300 795 267 or [ticketmaster.com.au](http://ticketmaster.com.au)  
Groups of 12 or more (02) 8240 2290

### **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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