

HOPEWELL MEMORIAL JR. HIGH SCHOOL
proudly presents



WELCOME LETTER

(CAST MEMBER INFORMATION PACKET)

Welcome, Students and Parents, to the Hopewell Jr. High Musical!

We are thrilled to have you join us as part of the 2021-2022 production, "Matilda, JR." After having to cancel last year's musical, we are beyond excited to get things going again! We hope to continue growing the program and increasing our level of success from our most recent show, "Mary Poppins, JR." To those who are joining us for the first time, I guarantee your experience with musical theatre will leave you wanting more.

This packet serves to provide you with some basic information about the production and audition procedures for this year's show. If you have any questions at any point during the musical season, please do not hesitate to ask! Our belief is that open lines of communication are essential to a successful production. You can find my contact information below.

Once again, welcome! And thank you for choosing to be a part of this wonderful opportunity!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chad Toporski', is written in a cursive style.

Chad Toporski

Producer & Club Sponsor

toporskic@hopewellarea.org

Sarah Bober
Stage Director

Austin Almendarez
Artistic Director

Sarah Pokita
Choreographer

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STAYING CONNECTED

The key to any successful production is making sure all information is communicated clearly and quickly. While we will occasionally send out paper flyers home to get information home, the absolute BEST way to stay on top of news and changes is to connect digitally. The following methods of communication will be used extensively by the musical directors to post information, reminders, and other announcements:



Music Website (*general information*)

<http://www.hopewelljrmusic.com/musical.html>



Facebook (*parents only*) - **HIGHLY RECOMMENDED**

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/hmjhsmatilda/>



Remind (*students and parents*)

<https://www.remind.com/join/hmjhs-mj>

- OR -

Text **@hmjhs-mj** to **81010** using your mobile phone for text notifications.

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IMPORTANT DATES

***** All activities and events will take place at the High School Auditorium. *****

Auditions Dates:

- **Lead, Supporting, & Feature Role Auditions:** Tuesday, September 7th @ 3:30 PM
- **Dance, Ensemble, & Callback Auditions:** Monday, September 13th @ 3:30 PM
- **Cast List Posted:** Tuesday, September 14th @ 7:45 AM

First Rehearsals:

- **Script Read-Through:** Wednesday, September 15th @ 3:30–5:30 PM
- **Fundamentals of Acting Workshop:** Thursday, September 16th @ 3:30–5:30 PM

Tech Week Rehearsals (MANDATORY):

- Tuesday, November 15th – Thursday, November 18th
5:00 - 8:00 PM

Performances:

- (Elementary Show: Friday, November 19th @ 10:00 AM)
- Friday, November 19th @ 7:00 PM
- Saturday, November 20th @ 2:00 PM
- Saturday, November 20th @ 7:00 PM

Musical Family Banquet:

- Saturday, November 20th @ 4:00 - 6:00 PM (*in between performances*)

Set Strike, Costume Return, and Clean-Up (MANDATORY):

- Sunday, November 21st @ 10:00 AM – 3:00 PM
- Students may stop in at any point to turn in their costume items, pick up their poster, and help clean up.

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Show Summary

The History

Matilda is a book by British writer Roald Dahl. It was published in 1988 by Jonathan Cape in London, with 232 pages and illustrations by Quentin Blake. In 2012, the book was ranked #30 among all-time children's novels in a survey published by *School Library Journal*. It was the first of four books by Dahl among the Top 100, more than any other writer. *Time* included *Matilda* in its list of the 100 Best Young-Adult Books of All Time. Worldwide sales have reached 17 million, and since 2016 sales have spiked to the extent that it outsells Dahl's other works.

Matilda was adapted as an audio reading by actress Kate Winslet, a 1996 feature film directed by Danny DeVito, a two-part BBC Radio 4 program, and a 2010 musical adapted by Dennis Kelly, with music and lyrics by Tim Minchin and directed for the stage by Matthew Warchus. After the roaring success of the full-length production of *Matilda*, opening in London in 2011 and on Broadway in 2013, there was a great demand for a simplified version of the show specifically for kids. *Matilda JR.* was born and features many of the beloved music and characters from the original version. This simplified version allows children not only to perform as the students but take a turn in the adult roles as well.

The Story

Matilda JR. is the story of an extraordinary little girl with extraordinary powers. The daughter of abusive parents, Matilda finds refuge in library books, which she reads quickly and in creating her own stories. Things are no better at school, where Matilda also must face a tyrannical and cruel headmistress, Miss Trunchbull, who believes in Crunchem Hall's motto: "Bambinatum est Magitum," or "Children are Maggots." She finds companionship in her teacher, Miss Honey, who, though well-intentioned, is shy and fragile. Brave little Matilda knows she has to stand up against the adults in her world, and in doing so, discovers her own remarkable powers. Matilda's bravery teaches Miss Honey and her classmates an important lesson -- that even though life can be hard, "nobody but me is gonna change my story" so "sometimes you have to be a little bit naughty."

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CAST SUMMARY

Lead & Supporting Roles:

- **MATILDA WORMWOOD** - *The hero of the show. She's brilliant, resilient, creative, and kind, despite growing up in difficult circumstances. Her parents treat her poorly, but Matilda escapes into a world of books, and she develops a bit of magical power in an effort to defeat Trunchbull.*
- **MISS AGATHA TRUNCHBULL** - *The quintessential terrifying tyrant. As headmistress, she runs her school like a dictator, making up arbitrary rules to suit her every whim and dreaming up creative punishments.*
- **MISS JENNIFER HONEY** - *A teacher at Matilda's school. She is kind, is generous, and really cares about the children despite her own desperate circumstances.*
- **MR. HARRY WORMWOOD** - *Matilda's father. He is egotistical, rude, not very bright, and a liar.*
- **MRS. ZINNIA WORMWOOD** - *Matilda's mother. Like her husband, she dislikes Matilda and does not understand why her daughter loves to read. Mrs. Wormwood is selfish, obsessed with her own appearance, and believes everything she sees on TV.*
- **BRUCE BOGTROTTER** - *One of Matilda's schoolmates. He has the bad luck to get caught after eating Trunchbull's cake.*
- **LAVENDER** - *One of the kids at school with Matilda. She is kind and bright, and she quickly decides that Matilda is her best friend.*

Featured Roles:

- **NIGEL** - *One of the kids at school with Matilda. He is enthusiastic, sweet, and always in a bit of a panic.*
- **MATILDA'S CLASSMATES** - *Eric, Tommy, Amanda, Alice, Hortensia*
- **MICHAEL WORMWOOD** - *Matilda's brother. He is not very bright, though he is the apple of his father's eye.*
- **MRS. PHELPS** - *The kindly librarian who loves hearing Matilda's stories.*
- **THE ESCAPOLOGIST** - *A character of Matilda's creation. Everything this character does is grand and exaggerated – he's performing for the cheap seats!*
- **THE ACROBAT** - *A product of Matilda's imagination.*
- **SERGEI** - *A customer swindled by Mr. Wormwood. Though he shows up looking for payback, Matilda has had quite enough of revenge, and Sergei lets the Wormwoods escape.*
- **RUDOLPHO** - *Mrs. Wormwood's self-obsessed dance teacher.*

Ensemble Groups:

- MUMS & DADS
- BIG KIDS
- RUSSIANS

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AUDITION F.A.Q.

Q. Does my child have to audition to be in the musical?

A. Yes, all students must audition so that we can place them in the best role that fits their skills. If there is a problem attending the audition, please contact Mr. Toporski as soon as possible.

Q. Which audition(s) does my child need to attend?

A. Students trying out for LEAD, UNDERSTUDY, SUPPORTING, or FEATURED roles need to attend both the Lead & Featured Auditions and Dance Auditions. Students trying out for just the ENSEMBLE roles need to attend the Dance & Ensemble Auditions. Callback Auditions are for students who are in the final running for a lead role.

Q. What does my child need to prepare for the audition?

A. Please consult the AUDITION MATERIALS for which song needs to be prepared. Students auditioning for LEAD, UNDERSTUDY, SUPPORTING, or FEATURED roles will also need to select a monologue to prepare. The dance will be taught on site during Dance Auditions and will not need to be prepared ahead of time.

Q. Is anyone able to audition for a lead role?

A. Like previous years, we reserve the LEAD roles for 7th and 8th grade students; however, students in any grade may audition for UNDERSTUDY, SUPPORTING, or FEATURED roles.

Q. Can I sit in on my child's audition?

A. No, we do not allow anyone else into the audition room for privacy reasons.

Q. What if my child doesn't pass the audition process?

A. Auditions are not a "pass" or "fail" process. They simply allow the directors to see what the students' abilities are. No student will be turned away from participating in the show. There is a role for everyone!

Q. Will you provide my child with feedback about their individual audition?

A. Students are always encouraged and welcome to ask for feedback about their audition performance. For confidentiality reasons, only Mr. Toporski will handle these requests.

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UNDERSTUDY ROLES

We will continue to cast students in Understudy roles. Due to past musicals experiencing sudden illnesses and other events outside of our control, we felt it would be in everyone's best interest to make sure we have viable backups in place should an emergency situation arise.

What is an Understudy?

A second person who learns a lead role in order to be able to act as a replacement if needed.

Who can be an Understudy?

Understudy roles will be open to all grade levels (6-8) and are a great opportunity for learning and growth as a performer, as well as a way to show future potential to directors.

How does it work?

Think of being an understudy as an "add on" role. Any student who is an understudy will have to learn two parts - their "normal" role and the lead role. They will be required to attend all rehearsals for all assigned parts, but they will get limited "on stage" rehearsal time for the understudy role. Understudies will perform in the absence of the lead actor.

NOTE: Understudies will get the chance to perform these roles during the **Wednesday rehearsal of Tech Week**. Their parents and immediate families will be invited for the chance to see them perform.

Which roles will get an Understudy?

For "Matilda, Jr.," we will be assigned one understudy for each of the following parts:

MATILDA
MISS HONEY

TRUNCHBULL
BRUCE

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ROALD DAHL'S
Matilda
THE MUSICAL
JR.

AUDITION MATERIALS

Lead, Supporting, and Featured Roles:

- **SONG:** #1 - "Miracle" (start at beginning, end at m. 44)
- **MONOLOGUE:** Select one from the attached pages to prepare.

Ensemble Roles:

- **SONG:** #35 - "When I Grow Up" (start at beginning, end at m. 46)



NOTE: Music files for practice are available on Google Drive using the QR Code above.

Mr. Toporski's Tips for Auditions:

- ★ **Practice, practice, practice.** The more comfortable you are with the audition materials, the better you will be come audition time. Winging it is never a good idea.
- ★ **Memorize to impress.** While you are not required to memorize your audition song or monologue, doing so can show the directors that you are able to handle knowing your lines for the show.
- ★ **Add some character.** Singing the right notes and rhythms is always important, but what really sets great performers apart from the rest is their ability to do so in character. Especially with the monologues, convince the directors that you can pretend to be someone other than yourself.
- ★ **Expect to be nervous.** If you aren't nervous for an audition, then something might be wrong with you! (Just kidding.) Being nervous is completely normal and okay; the trick is to accept it and not let it completely overwhelm you.
- ★ **Don't get discouraged.** There's going to be disappointment when the final cast list comes out, because we can't cast everyone in their favorite role. What the directors love to see are those people who don't let that affect their energy, attitude, and how hard they work for the show. Enjoy every opportunity you get!
- ★ **SMILE!** Approach the audition happy, confident, and ready to shine!