

HOPEWELL MEMORIAL JR. HIGH SCHOOL

proudly presents

Once Upon A Mattress YOUTH EDITION

Cast Information Packet

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

We are thrilled to have you join us as part of the 2023-2024 production, "Once Upon A Mattress (Youth Edition)." Many of you are returning after being a part of "Seussical, JR." last school year, and we hope to continue our high level of success this year. 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 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,



Chad Toporski

Producer & Club Sponsor

toporskic@hopewellarea.org

PRODUCTION TEAM

Sarah Bober - *Stage Director*

Austin Almendarez - *Artistic Director*

Sarah Nicoletti - *Choreographer*

Lindsay Bosco - *Vocal Director*

Celeste Beley - *Costumer*

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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/hmjhs mattress/>



Remind (*students and parents*)

<https://www.remind.com/join/hmjhsouam>

- OR -

Text @**hmjhsouam** 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.* ***

Audition Dates:

- **Lead, Supporting, & Feature Role Auditions:** Tuesday, September 5th @ 3:30 PM
- **Dance, Ensemble, & Callback Auditions:** Monday, September 11th @ 3:30 PM
- **Cast List Posted:** Tuesday, September 12th @ 7:45 AM

First Rehearsals:

- **Script Read-Through:** Wednesday, September 13th @ 3:30–5:30 PM
- **Fundamentals of Acting Workshop:** Thursday, September 14th @ 3:30–5:30 PM

Tech Week / Dress Rehearsals (MANDATORY):

- Tuesday, November 13th – Thursday, November 16th
5:00 - 8:00 PM

Performances:

- *Elementary Preview Show:* Friday, November 17th @ 9:30 AM
- Friday, November 17th @ 7:00 PM
- Saturday, November 18th @ 2:00 PM
- Saturday, November 18th @ 7:00 PM

Musical Family Banquet:

- Saturday, November 18th @ 4:00 - 6:00 PM (*in between performances*)

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

- Sunday, November 19th @ 10:00 AM – 3:00 PM
- Students may stop in at any point to turn in their costume items, pick up a signed poster, and help clean up.

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Show Summary

Many moons ago, in 1805 to be precise, author Hans Christian Andersen was born in Denmark. At the age of 14, without completing a formal education, he left home for the big city of Copenhagen to pursue a career in the theater. He did not find success and turned to writing, but was told that he lacked the basic skills necessary to be a good writer. Hans returned to grammar school as a 17-year-old, learning alongside students that were at least 5 years younger than him. The schooling paid off as Hans went on to university studies and began to find success as an author. In 1835, he published his first collection of fairytales (*Tales, Told for Children – First Booklet*). This work featured four fairytales, including *The Princess and the Pea*, a simple story of a prince in search of a true princess. Hans Christian Andersen went on to write more than 150 tales including *The Little Mermaid*, *The Emperor's New Clothes*, *The Ugly Duckling*, *Thumbelina*, and *The Snow Queen*.

In 1958, more than 120 years after the publication of *The Princess and the Pea*, the fairytale was adapted into a one-act musical for the Tamiment Playhouse at Camp Tamiment in the Pocono Mountains of Pennsylvania. The show was a success and was seen by Broadway designers and producers who were interested in a full two-act version with their sights set on Broadway. In just six weeks, the creators expanded the script and *Once Upon A Mattress* opened Off-Broadway in May 1959 directed by legendary writer, director, and producer George Abbott. Because of its popularity, the show transferred to Broadway later that year and was nominated for the 1960 Tony Award for Best Musical.

This was the first musical for composer Mary Rodgers, the daughter of composer Richard Rodgers, whose musical *The Sound of Music* won the Best Musical Tony Award that year. This was also the Broadway debut of leading actress Carol Burnett in the title role of Princess Winnifred the Woebegone. Both of these women went on to successful careers in various fields. Rodgers continued composing and also became an author and screenwriter. Her most well-known book for young readers is *Freaky Friday*, which she also adapted into a popular film. Burnett had further success in the theater and in films, but became most beloved for her television variety series, *The Carol Burnett Show*.

Once Upon A Mattress, like its composer and leading lady, also went on to future success. Hundreds of productions are mounted all over the world each year at school, community and professional theaters, including a Broadway revival in 1996 that was nominated for the Tony Award for Best Revival of a Musical. The musical has been filmed for special television broadcasts three different times. The first two telecasts featured Carol Burnett as Princess Winnifred. The most recent television version aired in 2005 and featured Carol Burnett yet again, this time as Queen Aggravain, along with TV and movie star Zooey Deschanel as Lady Larken and Broadway and TV star Matthew Morrison as Sir Harry.

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Lead Roles:

- **PRINCESS WINNIFRED** - Winnifred is the quirky, outspoken, yet charming princess from the swamplands who falls in love with Dauntless.
- **QUEEN AGGRAVAIN** - The Queen is in control of the castle and everyone in it. She tries to manipulate Dauntless by being overly sweet at times, yet she is always looking out for herself first.
- **PRINCE DAUNTLESS** - A simple, slightly immature, good-hearted prince, Dauntless wants nothing more than to get married.
- **THE SILENT KING** - The King is a mostly silent character who was made mute because of a curse.
- **THE MINSTREL & THE JESTER** - Narrators of the story, the Minstrel and the Jester are confidants of the King and will do what it takes to help Dauntless get married.

Supporting Roles:

- **LADY LARKEN** - Lady Larken has been waiting for Dauntless to get married so she can finally marry Sir Harry, her true love.

- **SIR HARRY** - Harry is the brave knight who takes matters into his own hands, searching for a princess for Dauntless so that he can get married himself. He loves Lady Larken with all his heart, even though they sometimes aren't the best communicators.
- **THE WIZARD** - The Wizard is the Queen's henchman and works with her to make sure every princess fails her tests.

Featured Roles:

- **LADY LUCILLE & LADY ROWENA** - Lucille and Rowena are two of the Ladies-In-Waiting who have singing solos and speaking lines.
- **SIR HAROLD & LADY BEATRICE** - Beatrice and Harold lead the Spanish Panic dance.

Ensemble Groups:

- KNIGHTS
- LADIES

Minor Roles:

- PRINCESS #12
- KNIGHT #1, #2, and #3

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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, 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, 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. Only students who attend the Lead & Featured Auditions will be considered for an Understudy Role.

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 "Once Upon A Mattress," we will be considering understudies for each of the following parts:

PRINCESS WINNIFRED
QUEEN AGGRAVAIN
PRINCE DAUNTLESS

THE SILENT KING
THE MINSTREL
THE JESTER

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Audition Materials

Lead, Supporting, and Featured Roles:

- **SONG:** No. 8 “The Swamps of Home” (measures 10–34)
- **MONOLOGUE:** Select one from the attached pages to prepare.

Ensemble Roles:

- **SONG:** No. 2 “Opening for a Princess” (measures 28–51)



NOTE: Music files for practice are available on Google Drive using the QR Code above. Students MUST login with their Hopewell account (i.e., @hopewellarea.org email) to access to these files.

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 the experience!
- ★ **SMILE!** Approach the audition happy, confident, and ready to shine!