

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 2022-2023 production, "Seussical, JR." Many of you are returning after being a part of "Matilda, JR." last school year, and we hope to continue growing the program and increasing our 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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chad Toporski'.

Chad Toporski

Producer & Club Sponsor

toporskic@hopewellarea.org

DIRECTING TEAM

Sarah Bober
Stage Director

Austin Almendarez
Artistic Director

Sarah Pokita
Choreographer

Lindsay Bosco
Vocal Director

HOPEWELL MEMORIAL JR. HIGH SCHOOL

proudly presents



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/hmjhseussical/>



Remind (*students and parents*)

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

- OR -

Text **@hmjhseus** to **81010** using your mobile phone for text notifications.

HOPEWELL MEMORIAL JR. HIGH SCHOOL
proudly presents



IMPORTANT DATES

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

Auditions Dates:

- **Lead, Supporting, & Feature Role Auditions:** Tuesday, September 6th @ 3:30 PM
- **Dance, Ensemble, & Callback Auditions:** Monday, September 12th @ 3:30 PM
- **Cast List Posted:** Tuesday, September 13th @ 7:45 AM

First Rehearsals:

- **Script Read-Through:** Wednesday, September 14th @ 3:30–5:30 PM
- **Fundamentals of Acting Workshop:** Thursday, September 15th @ 3:30–5:30 PM

Tech Week Rehearsals (MANDATORY):

- Tuesday, November 14th – Thursday, November 17th
5:00 - 8:00 PM

Performances:

- (Elementary Show: Friday, November 18th @ 10:00 AM)
- Friday, November 18th @ 7:00 PM
- Saturday, November 19th @ 2:00 PM
- Saturday, November 19th @ 7:00 PM

Musical Family Banquet:

- Saturday, November 19th @ 4:00 - 6:00 PM (*in between performances*)

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

- Sunday, November 20th @ 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.

HOPEWELL MEMORIAL JR. HIGH SCHOOL

proudly presents



SHOW SUMMARY

The History

Seussical is a musical comedy by Lynn Ahrens and Stephen Flaherty, based on the many children's stories of Dr. Seuss, with most of its plot being based on Horton Hears a Who!, Gertrude McFuzz, and Horton Hatches the Egg while incorporating many other stories. The musical's name is a portmanteau of "Seuss" and the word "musical." Following its Broadway debut in 2000, the show was widely panned by critics, and closed in 2001 with huge financial losses.

Following the Broadway production, there were two US national tours. The script for the first tour was reworked extensively after the show's poor showing on Broadway, resulting in the removal or reworking of several songs. Additional dialogue was included, and some songs and their reprises were cut. Since then, it has become one of the most-performed shows in America, especially in schools and community theaters.

The Story

A musical perfect for the whole family, *Seussical JR.* takes us into the world of Dr. Seuss, where we revisit beloved characters including The Cat in the Hat, Horton the Elephant, Gertrude McFuzz, Lazy Mayzie, and JoJo. The Cat in the Hat guides us into The Jungle of Nool where we see Horton, the kind-hearted elephant who discovers a speck of dust containing Whoville. He meets JoJo, a Who child reprimanded for thinking too many "thinks." Horton decides he must protect the speck of dust on a nearby clover, while at the same time protecting an abandoned egg left to his care by the lazy Mayzie la Bird. Horton tries to convince the other animals in The Jungle of the existence of the Whos, but he is ridiculed and put on trial for insanity. Only his loyal neighbor, Gertrude McFuzz, never loses faith in him and eventually, the two fall in love. *Seussical JR* weaves a story of friendship, loyalty, and love. Despite all odds, Horton and Gertrude band together to save the Whos, free Horton, and restore peace and unity to the Jungle of Nool. *Seussical JR* teaches us the power of being unique, and the importance of fighting for your beliefs.

HOPEWELL MEMORIAL JR. HIGH SCHOOL

proudly presents



CAST SUMMARY

Lead Roles:

- **THE CAT IN THE HAT** - *The essence of mischief, fun, and imagination. The Cat stirs things up and causes trouble but always sets things right again. He helps JoJo discover the power of his own imagination.*
- **BOY / JOJO** - *A "Thinker." He's a smart child with a wild imagination. By the end of the show, he learns what it means to be a responsible member of his community, using the power and possibilities of his own "Thinks."*
- **HORTON THE ELEPHANT** - *A gentle giant, Horton believes in the inherent goodness of the world, so it's no surprise that he always looks for the good in others. He goes on quite a journey throughout the show but stays true to himself, even when the going gets tough.*
- **GERTRUDE McFUZZ** - *Very self-conscious about her one-feather tail, Gertrude gains confidence throughout the show, changing from an anxious, nervous, shy bird into someone whose self-worth doesn't rest on her appearance.*

Supporting Roles:

- **MAYZIE LA BIRD** - *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.*

- **SOUR KANGAROO** - *Loud, brassy, and a lot of fun, Sour Kangaroo has a lot of attitude but isn't mean - she's just very confident and unafraid to tell it like it is.*
- **MR. & MRS. MAYOR** - *Mr. Mayor and Mrs. Mayor are parents trying hard to raise a child with a big imagination. These Whos may get aggravated with JoJo, but they love him dearly. They try their best to make the right choices as parents, even if JoJo doesn't always understand them.*

Featured Roles:

- **THE WICKERSHAM BROTHERS** - *The Wickersham Brothers are not bad guys! They're simply a lot like kids who tease, play pranks, and get a kick out of making mischief, although often at others' expense.*
- **BIRD GIRLS** - *The Bird Girls are a fabulous group of birds who know everything there is to know about the goings on in the jungle and support Mayzie throughout the show.*

Ensemble Groups:

- THE WHOS
- JUNGLE CREATURES

Minor Roles:

- YOUNG KANGAROO
- THE GRINCH
- YERTLE THE TURTLE
- VLAD VLADIKOFF

HOPEWELL MEMORIAL JR. HIGH SCHOOL
proudly presents



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.

HOPEWELL MEMORIAL JR. HIGH SCHOOL
proudly presents



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 "Seussical, Jr.," we will be considering understudies for each of the following parts:

CAT IN THE HAT
BOY / JOJO

HORTON THE ELEPHANT
GERTRUDE McFUZZ

HOPEWELL MEMORIAL JR. HIGH SCHOOL
proudly presents



AUDITION MATERIALS

Lead, Supporting, and Featured Roles:

- **SONG:** "It's Possible" (start at beginning, end at measure 30)
- **MONOLOGUE:** Select one from the attached pages to prepare.
(Shorter monologues are available for those auditioning just for featured roles.)



Ensemble Roles:

- **SONG:** "Oh, The Thinks You Can Think!" (measures 5–19)

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!