

NEW YORK CITY CENTER EDUCATION



MAY 2023

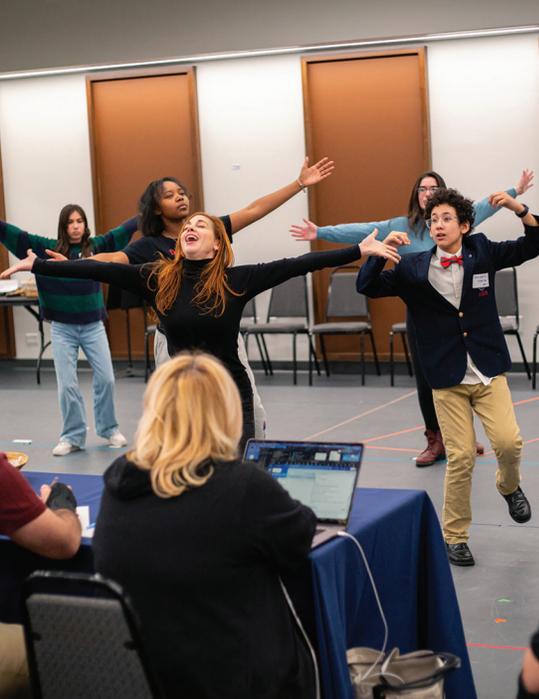
BEHIND THE CURTAIN: ENCORES! LIONEL BART'S OLIVER!

Your personal guide to the production.



Show Art by Ben Wiseman





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MEET THE CREATORS



LIONEL BART
(Composer,
Lyricist, Playwright)



**MARY-MITCHELL
CAMPBELL**
(Music Director)



**LORIN
LATARRO**
(Choreographer)



**LEAR
DEBESSONET**
(Director)

MEET THE CHARACTERS



**OLIVER TWIST
(BENJAMIN PAJAK)**

An innocent and good-hearted workhouse boy with a strong spirit



**THE ARTFUL DODGER
(JULIAN LERNER)**

Energetic, intelligent, savvy, and one of Fagin's cleverest pickpockets



FAGIN (RAÚL ESPARZA)

A conniving career criminal and conman. He takes in homeless children and teaches them to pick pockets for him



NANCY (LILLI COOPER)

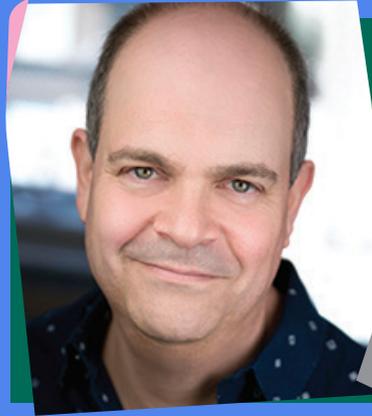
A graduate of Fagin's "school of thieves" and tragically involved in an abusive relationship with Bill Sikes

MEET THE ACTORS playing these characters and read their bios [here!](#)



BILL SIKES (TAM MUTU)

Perhaps the most infamous graduate from Fagin's group of pickpockets



**MR. BUMBLE
(BRAD OSCAR)**

A domineering Beadle (a minor official who carries out various civil, educational or ceremonial duties) who runs the workhouse



**WIDOW CORNEY
(MARY TESTA)**

The sharp-tongued, domineering matron of the workhouse



**BET
(ANGELICA BELIARD)**

One of Fagin's former pickpockets and Nancy's sister

A close-up portrait of Cameron Mackintosh, a middle-aged man with short, graying hair, wearing a blue polo shirt. He is smiling slightly and looking directly at the camera. The background is slightly out of focus, showing a potted plant with white flowers and a stone wall.

INTERVIEW WITH PRODUCER, CAMERON MACKINTOSH

BY SETH LAIDLAW

Cameron Mackintosh has been producing shows since 1967 and remains the world's most prolific producer of musicals, with four shows currently running in London's West End. *The New York Times* says he is "the most successful, influential, and powerful theatrical producer in the world." We spoke to Mr. Mackintosh about his entry into producing and his extensive history with and affinity for the musical, *Oliver!*

Photo by Stephanie Berger

What first drew you to working in the theater, and when did that interest turn towards producing?

Well, I decided to become a producer in theater on my eighth birthday when I'd been taken to see a musical which was causing a sensation in London; it was called *Salad Days*, about a magic piano that made everyone sing and dance. I saw it once in August (1954), and then my birthday was in October and I wanted to see it for a second time. At that point I decided to walk down the aisles to see a man I had discovered was the composer, playing the piano in the pit and miming the magic piano on stage. He was very nice to me, and he asked if I would like to go backstage to see how the scenery all worked. I decided then and there that this was what I was going to do. Within a few weeks, I found out that I wanted to be a producer. I never changed my mind from that moment until today.

How did you first learn about *Oliver!* and how did you get involved with the musical?

My aunt loved to go to the theater, and she was very influential in helping me falling in love with the [art form]. I remember when I was 14, *Oliver!* just opened in 1960, [and] it was a sensation. We queued for gallery seats in the top balcony. It's ironic, but I now own that theater; it is now called the Noël Coward. I not only have lived through *Oliver!*, I've ended up owning the rights as well as owning the theater. It's the most bizarre journey you could every possibly imagine.

I went to a drama school [in 1964] where I was for a year. It was a two-year course and I got bored reading about Euripides and Greek tragedies when I wanted to do *Hello Dolly*. They got

rid of me, so I had to get a job as a stagehand, which I did at Drury Lane on the original production of *Camelot*. I was there for about four months. I was a cleaner during the day to make ends meet, and I did all the jobs backstage.

Then I heard there was a tour of *Oliver!* going out. So I went up to the General Manager and said, "Please, I want to have this job." She invited me for an interview and after three hours she said "Alright, I'll send you a contract." I think she was exhausted by me. I was 18 at the time.

I had a plan that by the time I was 25 I would be a producer. I'd been a stagehand; I'd been an Assistant Stage Manager; I wanted to be a DSM (Deputy Stage Manager)—which is what I did after *Oliver!* on *110 in the Shade*. During the run of that, I got to meet two producers. They asked if I would come work in their office and put on some regional shows in Henley-on-Thames. I was doing so much work, and I kept complaining and asking why my name wasn't on the poster. To shut me up they put my name on the poster. So the very first time it said "Cameron Mackintosh presents" was ironically on a poster for a show called *The Reluctant Debutante*. You couldn't imagine anyone less reluctant than me making their debut at the age of 20. That was in June 1967. I have been producing ever since.

What do you hope audiences can take away from this production?

Lionel Barts' version of *Oliver!* is inspired by him seeing the great David Lean film, which starred Alex Guinness; it's an adaptation of his film really. The amazing music and lyrics that Lionel wrote for it also mirror his wonderful sense of

joie de vivre. Lionel had a great sense of life and life carrying on. He's a wonderful Jewish writer and very proud of his Jewish roots. I think the sense of optimism despite all things in the story is very much part of why people fall in love with the show. It's a very clever adaptation of the novel. He finds light in darkness, and yet it still grapples with all the things that Dickens dealt with.

The songs actually explain the characters. I often say to people, "Don't treat them as songs, treat them as scenes," because they completely show the characters, song after song after song. There is something spontaneous about the way Lionel writes. I remember when I was doing the first production revival in 1977, I was on a train and spending some real time with Lionel. He said to me "Cam, I want to tell you something: The magic of my music lies between the notes, not on the notes." I thought that was a very good remark of his.

The spontaneity of the characters, that's what makes his music so alive and so accessible to so many people and why it's been one of the most performed shows by professional and also amateur companies. There's something sing-along about it. It doesn't require a kind of high gloss verve that a lot of musicals require. You feel as an audience that you can join in. I think many of the people that come see *Oliver!* have been in it before in their life. But I think it's why it becomes more than a normal musical—because there's something in it where you see yourself in it and want to be part of it. That has never changed.

For an audience, *Oliver Twist* is just a fantastic story, and has a sense of hope and joy among all the gloom and horrible things of the times

that people lived in. It's finding the human spirit within it. I think that's what Lionel's great gift was. He never lost his spirit; he just got on with it. I think that great embrace lies within the show. And those songs are still absolutely as extraordinary today as the day he wrote them.

What advice would you give to a young person interested in producing?

The two bits of advice I always give are the same I followed when I got into the theater. I didn't have any money and I didn't know anyone in the theater; I just got a job as a stagehand. Whatever you do in the theater, whether it's making a cup of coffee or sweeping the stage, do it well. Make yourself indispensable. And then people will go "Oh, you can trust him or her to do that." And you get offered another job. That's one thing.

The other thing is as a producer, you've got to do things you believe in, and do them as well as you can. Then hopefully an audience will come because they like what you've done. I never think of the audience at the beginning, I only ever think of the material. I've always been drawn to material that has been drawn from the classics. I have to love the story. I have to love the characters. And I have to think that the music is actually going to help tell the tale in a tuneful way. If I don't love the story and I don't love the characters, I'm not interested in producing it. I want to take the audience on a great journey, so that after two or three hours they come out of the theater feeling like they've experienced something unlike anything else you can do in life.

CRIME & PUNISHMENT

THE WORLD OF CHARLES DICKENS' *OLIVER TWIST*

BY JESSICA GOLDSCHMIDT



You've probably heard of Charles Dickens as the author of books like *Great Expectations*, *Bleak House*, and of course, *Oliver Twist*, the novel that the musical *Oliver!* is based on. But what you might not know is that Charles Dickens was also a journalist in Victorian England, and before that—at just 12 years old—he worked in a boot-blackening factory. These experiences deeply influenced Dickens, and helped form his commitment to social reform. Many of the themes in *Oliver Twist* center around the injustices of poverty, the cruelty of child labor, and the many factors that can lead to a life of crime: all horrors that Dickens witnessed personally, first as a worker himself and then as a journalist.

Child labor was common practice in England during the Industrial Revolution. In fact, the first laws passed to regulate it (in 1833, just a few years before *Oliver Twist* was published) only specified that no child under nine could legally work; children couldn't work at night; and a child's work day was limited to 12 hours! You can already tell why a story about a little boy who thinks he deserves love, safety, or just another bowl of gruel could be considered groundbreaking in that kind of environment.

Oliver Twist was indeed groundbreaking in a lot of ways. Not only was it the first novel to feature a child as its main character, but it also attempted to portray London's lowest classes

with less sensationalism and more empathy than many other authors of the time. Around the time Dickens was developing the character of *Oliver Twist*, a series of British laws were passed concerning the care and treatment of impoverished people. They were referred to as “Poor Laws,” and many of them (particularly the one passed in 1834) stated that poor people who were able to work could no longer collect government assistance directly, but had to move to workhouses, where they performed manual labor in exchange for room and board—often amid difficult living conditions.

Dickens decided to portray the evils of this system, which separated families and married couples, then provided them with scarce food and resources. He describes *Oliver Twist* as “the orphan of a workhouse – the humble half-starved drudge ... despised by all, and pitied by none.” Dickens uses the character of Oliver—forced onto the streets by cruelty, then brought into a life of crime in order to survive—as a commentary on England’s treatment of its poor. As one Dickens scholar puts it, “Oliver’s experiences are designed to demonstrate how the law ... on one hand, and hunger, need and social exclusion on the other, conspire to create criminals.”

The other characters in *Oliver Twist* are also lower-class Londoners, and their difficult lives and (in some cases) tragic ends help Dickens make his case. He used his journalistic experiences in the courts and streets of London to flesh out these characters with realistic motives, tactics, even street slang, and he always emphasizes the brutality of the legal system in dealing with Victorian Era criminals. Even small property crimes like pickpocketing (which the characters Fagin and the Artful Dodger commit regularly) could lead to a death sentence under the so-

called “Bloody Code” of capital punishment. In fact, death by hanging was common enough in Victorian London that street slang of the time had a huge number of terms for “hanging;” one of them was even “twist,” like Oliver’s last name!

This is no accident. By naming his character “Twist,” Dickens is showing his readers the almost pre-determined fate for a poor boy with no family in 1800s London. It’s the same fate Dickens himself managed to escape; as he later recalled, “I might easily have been, for any care that was taken of me, a little robber or a little vagabond.” This kind of empathy for Oliver, and even for his other more villainous-seeming characters, is part of what sets Dickens’ novel apart, and possibly even what made it so successful.

A portrait of Mary-Mitchell Campbell, a woman with blonde hair, wearing a black top and large hoop earrings, with her arms crossed. The background is a blurred, warm-toned setting.

**INTERVIEW
WITH
OLIVER!
MUSIC
DIRECTOR,
MARY-
MITCHELL
CAMPBELL**

Mary-Mitchell Campbell is a conductor, music director, orchestrator, composer, and arranger who joins New York City Center as the Music Director of Encores! this season. She is also the Founder and President of Arts Ignite which develops agency in young people through the arts. In this interview, learn about Mary-Mitchell's career path to music directing, her excitement for *Oliver!* and passion for arts education.

How did you become a music director?

I started taking piano lessons when I was 7 and I sang in the school choir. I loved music and in middle school I picked up the clarinet. In high school, I saw my first musicals and I loved the idea of telling stories through music. I realized I would love being a music director for shows, so I started to learn more about it. When I was 16, I attended North Carolina School of the Arts to finish high school. It was a boarding school where I was serious about classical piano, but I also spent time hanging around the theater kids. I took lessons in conducting, and started working on every musical I could in any capacity. After college I moved to New York City to pursue musical theater and worked with wonderful mentors who taught me about what it takes to be a music director. It's a combination of specific musical skills, leadership skills, and project management.

What is your favorite part of your job?

I love working with other artists and collaborating. I love that musical theater is a team sport and it doesn't work without everyone doing their part. We build a community, and we rely on each other to create something together every time we step on stage. I love the rehearsal process, when we are just starting and don't know each other as well and are discovering things together. I enjoy trying different ways of performing material and seeing what feels the most authentic for the vision of the show and the performers in the room.

What do you enjoy about the music of *Oliver*?

I love this score; there are so many great songs! The songs really stick in your head, and "Consider Yourself" is a song I have taught many kids around the world. Because it has a message of inviting new people in your life to come in and get comfortable, it has been a great song to learn as I have traveled the world with Arts Ignite [my arts education nonprofit] working with new communities. It's a show people love and I especially enjoy that it tells the story of a young person navigat-

ing many challenges in the world. I think it is important we tell stories involving young people dealing with big issues.

What excites you about working on musical revivals?

I have spent much of my career doing new shows that are being written while we work on them, but I love coming back to shows that already had a life and bringing out something new in them. Revivals are also exciting, especially when you have a big orchestra supporting the storytelling! In current Broadway shows it is not common to get so many musicians in the orchestra, which makes this production feel really special.

If there is one thing you could share with our student audience, what would you want them to know?

Oliver! is based on the novel *Oliver Twist* by Charles Dickens. This show deals with intense issues in the lives of the young people in the story, and these kinds of challenges are still very common today. It's about social class and the divide that exists between the rich and the poor. It's set in Victorian England and shines a light on the harsh realities of poverty in the nineteenth century.

Where does your passion for arts education come from?

When I was kid, music was the biggest thing that changed my life. It made me care about school, it helped me make friends, and it set me on adventures I could never have had without it. I also learned how to imagine a life much bigger than the one I was born into, and how to dream big. In 2006, I started Arts Ignite to bring arts to communities of kids that would not typically have access. I believe the arts has the power to change lives and is especially important for young people to stretch and grow. I will continue to push for more access to the arts for students everywhere! I'm so thrilled we have some local students joining this production to perform with us.

BUILDING A CHARACTER

One of the most creative parts of being an actor in a play or a musical is building a character. *Oliver!* takes place in London, England in the 1800s, which was different in many ways from how we live today. This means the characters we meet may be very different than the actors who are playing them.

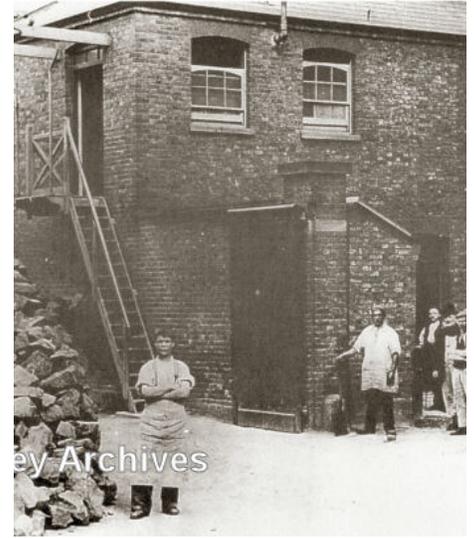
For this activity, we are going to step into the shoes of an [ensemble \(or chorus\)](#) cast member. Let's take a look at some of the things you might do during the [rehearsal](#) process that would help you with building a new character.

Ensemble/Chorus: on-stage performers other than the featured cast. Ensemble members typically do not play named characters and have few or no spoken lines or solo parts.

Rehearsal: a private performance or practice session to prepare for a public appearance.

PART 1 Visual Inspiration

On the first day of *Oliver!* rehearsal, you will meet the director. The director is in charge of the creative team (the group of people who make all of the major creative decisions about the show) and all of the actors in the show. When you look around the rehearsal room, you notice these pictures taped up on the wall.



Sometimes directors will use pictures or videos to help actors get a better understanding of a show's [setting](#). Using the three pictures above, answer the following questions and begin building your ensemble character.

- Take a close look at each photo. What do you notice? What words come to mind? Can you tell if the weather is warm or cold? Do you see any people in the pictures? Can you tell what they are doing?

Use the space below to write down any words or ideas you think of as you examine the photos.

Setting: the time and place in which a story is told

- Choose 1 picture and write a 3-sentence story about what you see.

Example: (for picture #1)

The streets are gloomy as the sun comes up. Birds sit on the rooftops and smoke rises from the chimneys. No one wants to be awake, not even the dog across the street.

- Looking back at your word list and at your 3-sentence story, think about how your character could fit into the scene in the picture. What would they wear? How would they walk? Where do they live? Do they have a job? Do they have a family? What is their name?

Use the space below to either write a description of your character OR sketch what your character might look like. You can include ideas for costumes and [props](#) as well! Make sure to decide on your character's name and write that somewhere in the space.

Prop: short for 'property'; any object used in a performance that isn't part of the set or worn by an actor. Props can be anything, from small to large items – a notebook to a fountain.

PART 2 Experiment with Dialect

Now that you've had some time to experiment with your new character during rehearsal, it's time to meet your dialect coach. A dialect coach is a person who helps actors learn how to speak with [accents](#) that are different from their own.

Since *Oliver!* takes place in London, you'll need to learn how to speak with a Cockney accent.

Cockney is an accent from East London, and can be a lot of fun to learn. Below are some simple tips for speaking with a Cockney accent. Try them out!

Tip #1: Drop the letters "t" and "k" from the middle of words.

The word "Scottish" becomes "Sco'ish."

The word "Blackboard" becomes "bla'board."

Tip #2: Drop the "h" from the beginning of words.

"horse" becomes "orse"

"hopefully" becomes "opefully"

Tip #3: Drop the "r" at the end of words.

"mother" becomes "mo-thah,"

"car" becomes "cah."

Tip #4: Pronounce the short "a" as "ah."

The short "a" sound = more like the "a" in "father,"

Try it with the words "bath" and "can't."

Now it's time to test your new accent on some lyrics from the *Oliver!* script. Say the lines below using the tips you experimented with in the section above. As you experiment, think about how this new layer will affect your ensemble character.

Consider yourself at home

Consider yourself one of the family

There isn't a lot to spare

Who cares? Whatever we've got, we share

If it should chance to be

We should see some harder days

Always a chance we'll meet somebody to foot the bill

Then the drinks are on the house

[Check out this video](#) from Dialect Coach Ben Furey as he demonstrates the Cockney accent on the lyrics to "Consider Yourself".

Accent: a particular way of pronouncing a language.

PART 3 Scene Work

It's time to put it all together. Thinking about all the details you used to build your ensemble character AND the Cockney accent tips you practiced, let's try out a scene!

Grab a scene partner and read through the scene below. After reading, decide who will be Character A and who will be Character B, then perform the scene together. Experiment with how your character would move, how low or high their voice might be when they speak.

You can even experiment with swapping roles with your partner. [Break a leg!](#)

SCENE (2 people)

CHARACTER A

You've just had quite a turn! Sit down and have a nice cup of tea.
(CHARACTER A pours tea.)

CHARACTER B

It's nice to be appreciated. These here pauper orphans in this here workhouse don't appreciate me. Them paupers are not contented.

CHARACTER A

Of course they're not. When would they be?
Would you like some sugar?

CHARACTER B

Yes, indeed! (CHARACTER B drinks the tea and sees a cat basket.)
You have a cat, I see?

CHARACTER A

I'm so fond of them you can't imagine!
And they're fond of their home, too.

CHARACTER B

I must say that any cat that could live with you and not be fond of its home, must be an idiot, m'am, and don't deserve to live in it.

CHARACTER A

Oh, don't say that!

CHARACTER B

It's no use hiding facts. An idiot!

Break a leg: theatrical slang that means 'good luck'

SCENE WORK BONUS: Add a costume piece or prop.

Take a look around your space and find something you could use as a costume piece or a prop for your character. Now try using your costume or prop in the scene with your partner. How does it change your performance?

GRUEL

a food consisting of some type of cereal—such as ground oats, wheat, rye, or rice—heated or boiled in water or milk. It is a thinner version of porridge that may be more often drunk rather than eaten.

The boys walk dejectedly back to their seats as the gruel is pushed on by the Paupers Assistant

LADLEFUL

A sufficient quantity to fill a ladle. A ladle is a deep-bowled spoon with a long, usually curved, handle

They are served with one ladleful each, and they return to their benches

LAH-DI-DAH

a person who thinks he is better than other people and tries to speak as if he is from a high social class

*NOBODY TRIES TO BE LAH-DI-DAH AND UPPITY,
THERE'S CUPPA TEA FOR ALL*

LARDER

a room or large cupboard for storing food

*IF IT SHOULD CHANCE TO BE WE SHOULD SEE SOME HARDER DAYS,
EMPTY-LARDER DAYS. WHY GROUSE?*

PAROCHIAL

relating to or supported by or located in a parish
*These paupers in this parish they don't appreciate me.
Anti-parochial they are, ma'am, anti-parochial*

PAUPER

a very poor person
*We have given away, Mrs. Corney, a matter of twenty loaves and cheese-and-a-half
this very afternoon, and still them paupers is not contented.*

UNDERTAKER

a person whose business is preparing dead bodies for burial or cremation and making arrangements for funerals.
Beadle of the workhouse where this boy was cared for - from where he was apprenticed to an undertaker - where he ran away from . . .

WORKHOUSE

a building where those unable to support themselves in Britain used to work, in the past, in exchange for food and shelter
They're a waste of time, these workhouse boys

Career Page:

STAGE MANAGER



MAIN RESPONSIBILITIES

- | Taking blocking in rehearsal
- | Tracking props and costumes
- | Working with the crews to run the show
- | Documenting the show
- | Communicating with all departments, management included
- | Calling the show
- | Scheduling during rehearsal and around performances
- | Understudy and Swing Rehearsals
- | Maintaining a safe, healthy and fun work environment

Anita Shastri is a New York-based stage manager with previous experience on shows including *Hamilton*, *MJ The Musical*, *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child*, *A Christmas Carol* and *Waitress*. She is currently on the stage management team for *Parade*. Read our conversation with Anita to learn more about a career in stage management.

What does a stage manager do? How do they contribute to a production?

The stage managers of a show are sort of like “mission control” when it comes to a production. They are the information keepers and disseminators. The job changes not only based on what position you have on the stage management team, but also where you are in the production process.

During rehearsals and technical rehearsals, the job is geared towards collaborating with the cast and creative teams to facilitate their artistic visions becoming a reality. During performances, one part of the job is working backstage with the cast and crew to run the show. This means making sure everything and everyone is in the right place, at the right time, in the right clothes with the right props, the right scenery, and in the right light. When it comes to my current show *Parade*, it takes three stage managers to do this job! We also maintain the show throughout the run until it closes. This means anything from rehearsing our swings and understudies to documenting the show to making sure that if we wanted to do this exact production again, we have the tools to be able to do that.

Believe it or not, this is just one small part of what we do as stage managers. But it is the part of the job that I love the most and have spent the most time doing.

What is the best part of your job as a stage manager? What is the most challenging?

For me, the best parts of the job are some of what (I think) are the most challenging parts!

As a stage manager I get to work with everyone involved in the production. And I don’t mean just the cast, the crew, the creative team,

the designers and the musicians, but also the producers and general managers, company managers, and press teams! If someone is involved in the show, there is a really good chance that they have interacted with at least one of the stage managers. But that means lots and lots of communication! It can sometimes be really tricky to make sure that everyone gets all of the information they need.

The other thing I love about my job is that a lot of times it feels like we are working on a giant puzzle. Because we get to work with all of the departments—props, scenery, costumes, lighting, sound, projections, musicians, cast, creatives—it means we are able to help make sure all the pieces fit and flow together, and we problem solve when they don't! This part of stage managing is almost all collaboration and can be some of the most creative and exciting parts of the job.

In what ways is an Encores! production process different from other productions you've worked on? How are they similar?

I think part of what makes Encores! productions so different is how fast it all happens. Encores! does such a great job of taking musicals that people know and love and stripping them down to the basics without losing the grandeur that people love about experiencing live theater. It's a huge endeavor and is so rewarding to see it all finally come together.

What advice do you have for aspiring stage managers?

My advice would be to get comfortable and excited by simply saying yes! The best training ground for stage managing is simply doing it and anything that will help you learn about the departments you will be working with. It sounds broad and sweeping to say that every experience is a useful experience, but it is the one thing that I have come back to time and time again. Being in college and working in the costume shop taught me a little more about working with a wardrobe crew. Taking a conflict resolution class in college helped me learn how to effectively communicate through difficult situations. One of my first jobs in New York City was as a substitute child guardian/animal wrangler for a Broadway show and I met the stage manager that I am working with right now on that show. You never know how an experience from the past will shape your future experiences.

RELEVANT SKILLS & INTERESTS

- | Interest in teamwork
- | Organized and detail oriented
- | Loves puzzles and problem solving
- | Patient and approachable and flexible
- | Has a desire to work in a creative environment but in a "controlled" way
- | Loves theatre and the arts!

CAREER PATHWAYS

- | Apply to be a Production Assistant
- | Networking with other stage managers, shadowing
- | Reach out to theaters looking for interns
- | Go see theater! You would be surprised by how much you learn about what kind of theater you want to do by watching it

Behind the Curtain provide audiences with a deeper understanding of the creative process and the world of the production.

REFLECTION JOURNAL

While *Oliver!* is a very well-known and celebrated musical, there are story points and themes in the show that can be difficult to think about. Many characters experience poverty, which is the state of being extremely poor. Charles Dickens, who wrote the book that inspired this musical (*Oliver Twist*), uses the characters in the story to give us a thoughtful picture of what poverty looked like at the time, and what some people are forced to do when their basic needs aren't being met.

Grab a piece of paper and something to write with and answer the questions below:

- Can you think of the people in our society today who are most like Oliver? Most like Nancy? Most like Fagin and his team of young pickpockets?
 - What systems in our society exist to help these people? Do these systems work? What is good and bad about them? What could be done to make them better?
 - What can you do to help?
-

From the beginning of the musical, we know that Oliver is searching for love and belonging. As he moves through the story, we see him start to find and build community with some of the people he meets when he gets to London.

Community can be described as a social group whose members have something in common, like a certain culture or where they live. Being a member of a community is a very important part of our lives, and sometimes we can find it in the least likely of places.

- When you hear the word community, what does it make you think of?
- What communities does Oliver belong to over the course of the show?
- Can you name some communities you belong to? Are there some that feel more important to you than others?
- Do you believe that being a member of a community is important? Why or why not?

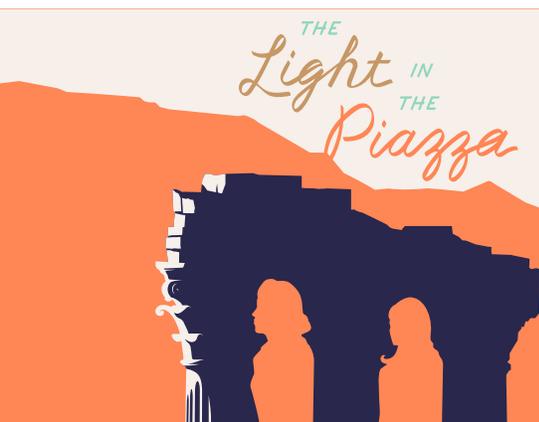
COMMUNITY NIGHTS FREE FRIDAY PRE-SHOW GATHERINGS

Building common bonds around the power of performance, these free pre-show events invite City Center audiences and New York City community members to meet and mingle with artists, guest speakers, and each other. Events range from panel discussions to interactive learning experiences, and take place in City Center spaces immediately preceding our mainstage performances.



ENCORES! LIONEL BART'S OLIVER!

FRI MAY 5 AT 6PM
GRAND TIER



ENCORES! LIGHT IN THE PIAZZA

FRI JUNE 23 AT 6PM
GRAND TIER

Gather with the City Center community of artists and audiences—musical theater lovers all!—for a pre-show event that highlights the collaborative power of performance, featuring special guest speakers. Light refreshments will be served.



NEW YORK CITY CENTER EDUCATION

VISION STATEMENT

The mission of New York City Center Education is to ignite an appreciation of the performing arts, cultivate the creative mind, and create a culture of inquiry and exploration. Committed to drawing inspiration from works on the mainstage, New York City Center Education strives to provide innovative, accessible arts education to schools and communities across New York City.

ABOUT NEW YORK CITY CENTER EDUCATION

Each year City Center reaches over 11,000 students from NYC public and private schools, kindergarten to grade 12, through dance and musical theater performances and in-school workshops. In-depth residencies engage young people in building technical and expressive skills, personal voice, and collaborative spirit. Innovative workshops are crafted for families, seniors, and other special groups that express an interest in collaborating with City Center.

