



About The Show:

Disney's Newsies JR. is a 60-minute version of the 2012 Broadway musical, based on the 1992 film. Inspired by the rousing true story of newsboys in turn-of-the-century New York City, Newsies JR. features a Tony Award-winning score by Alan Menken and Jack Feldman and a book by Tony Award winner Harvey Fierstein.

When powerful newspaper publishers raise prices at the newsboys' expense, the charismatic Jack Kelly rallies newsies from across the city to strike against the unfair conditions. Together, the newsies learn that they are stronger united and create a movement to fight for what's right.

Including the now-classic songs "Carrying the Banner," "Seize the Day," and "Santa Fe," Newsies JR. is a timeless story full of spirit and heart.

We encourage all of our performers to familiarize themselves with the spirit of this (more or less) true historical story by watching the below video or taking a look at the brief historical summary included in this packet.



Characters:

Jack Kelly

The charismatic leader of the Manhattan newsies, an orphaned dreamer and artist who yearns to get out of the crowded streets of New York and make a better life for himself out West. Fiercely protective of his best friend, Crutchie, and very loyal, Jack isn't afraid to use his voice to attain better conditions for the working kids of New York City.

Katherine Plumber

An ambitious young reporter, works hard to make a name for herself as a legitimate journalist in a time when women aren't taken seriously. Quick, funny, and resourceful.

Crutchie/Casey

Jack's best friend and a dedicated newsie with a "bum leg" from polio that causes pain, but helps sell more papes. Walking with the assistance of a crutch doesn't define the ever-positive newsie. Goofy with a sweet sense of humor and optimistic resilience.

Davey

Les's straight-laced, bright big brother, starts selling newspapers to help his family earn a living but becomes swept up in the fervor of the strike. A leader in his own right, who is learning to use his voice to uplift others.

Les

Davey's cheeky younger sibling, is excited by the newsies' freedom and loves their independent lifestyle. This pint-sized charmer is younger than the other newsies

Medda Larkin

Inspired by the African- American vaudeville performer, Aida Overton-Walker, A bigvoiced singer and star of the Bowery (see the "Dramaturgy" document in Downloadable Resources). A proud supporter of the newsies, she offers her theater as a safe haven for their revolution. An astute entertainer with great comic delivery, while standing firmly behind the newsies in their fight for justice.

Joseph Pulitzer

A pompous businessman through and through, owns the World and is concerned solely with the bottom line. Katherine's no-nonsense father, Pulitzer doesn't sympathize with the strikers, but he does eventually – and grudgingly – respect Jack.

Wiesel

Aka "Weasel". A disgruntled paper-pusher who uses the Delancey brothers as his muscle, runs distribution for the World and has little sympathy for the newsies.

Newsies

The hard-working kids of New York City who go on strike for a livable wage. These include the following roles: Race, Albert, Muriel, Nancy, Specs, Pigtails, Hazel, Buttons, Tommy Boy, Romeo, Jo Jo, Scabs, Brooklyn Newsies, Spot Conlon.

Darcy

A photographer who works with Katherine.

Dorothy

Katherine's upperclass friend whose parents own the *New York Tribune* and help the newsies print the Newsies Banner.

Bill

Katherine's upperclass friend whose parents own the *New York Journal* and help the newsies print the Newsies Banner.

Working Children

Featured in "Once and For All," they represent all of the other child laborers who receive the Newsies Banner and ultimately become a part of the children's crusade.

Seitz

The editor of the World who advises Pulitzer, but ultimately admires the Newsies.

Bunsen

Pulitzer's bookkeeper who helps Pulitzer come up with the idea to raise the newsies' price per paper.

Hannah

Pulitzer's secretary who is a clever advocate for the newsies.

Snyder

The crooked warden of The Refuge. A filthy and horrible juvenile reformatory, is concerned only with catching enough kids to keep their government checks coming.

Governor Teddy Roosevelt

A well-respected lifelong public servant who inspires Jack to stand up to Pulitzer.

Bowery Brigade

Includes the roles of the upbeat and charming Ada, Olive, and Ethel. A group of vaudeville performers in Medda's act.

Police Officers

Includes the role of the Police Chief. They intimidate the newsies and arrest Crutchie.

Pat

An efficient stage manager who introduces Medda's act.

Woman

A newspaper customer.

REHEARSAL SCHEDULE

Wednesdays from 1:30pm-4pm: 1/3 (auditions), 1/10, 1/17, 1/24, 1/31, 2/7, 2/14, 2/21, 2/28, 3/6, 3/13 (extended rehearsal until 5:30pm)

Dress Rehearsal on Friday, 3/15 until 6:00pm.

Final performances will be held on <u>Saturday</u>, <u>March 16th at 1pm and 5pm</u> in the Le Conte auditorium. Students will remain with us from call time (10:30am) through the end of the second performance. We will provide them with pizza between the two performances (*Please note: performance date is subject to change based on auditorium availability. We hope to have this date locked in as soon as possible*).

Please note: All email communications will be coming from <u>ontheaterla@gmail.com</u>. Be sure to check your spam folder to be sure you haven't missed anything!

WHAT TO BRING EACH WEEK

- Water
- Extra snacks
- Closed-toe-shoes
- Your script (once you receive it) & pen/pencil, highlighter

WHAT TO BRING BY JANUARY 17TH

SHOES

Here are the recommendations for shoes for this year's production of Newsies Jr.

Please order ASAP as we would like the cast to bring them for rehearsal days beginning <u>January 17th</u>. It will be incredibly helpful for the students to start rehearsing and practicing the choreography in the shoes. We would like the majority of the cast to wear **black jazz boots**.



Here are links to some options on Amazon just as reference (you do not need to get these exact ones).

EXAMPLE 1

EXAMPLE 2

If you cannot find jazz boots in the correct size....an alternative would be Black jazz shoes like **THESE**.

KNCIKERS

Knickers OR a similar pant style are required for all *Newsies* with the exception of JACK and DAVEY. Example:



Earth-tone colors are best (brown, grey, olive green, dark khaki). Ideally no black. Solid color, plaid or simple striped pants in earth tones (nothing too bright or modern).

Please note that khaki or corduroy pants may also be accepted.

Most knickers that you can buy are pretty voluminous (better for colonial costumes). It's easiest to find pants and cut them below the knee at the desired length and add a quick hem. For girls - possibly finding capri pants and then adding some elastic around the bottom cuff to make them knickers could work too.



SOCKS

Long white, brown, or Argyle socks for all Newsies.

AUDITION MATERIALS

Auditions for all participants will be held on our first program day. Performers will have time on the first day to review and practice the materials before auditioning.

Please prepare (ONE) of the included monologues OR scenes AND (ONE) of the included song excerpts. All materials are included in this packet. Audition songs should be sung acapella (without music). Memorization is *not* required, but encouraged. Being off-book frees up your hands to express yourself, and frees up your face and eyes so we can connect to you emotionally (instead of you looking at a paper). Performers should be prepared to perform their songs and scenes with confidence and personality.

We want this process to be as fun and stress free as possible. Every single role matters. If you know you don't want a big singing part, or aren't quite comfortable being in the spotlight, just let us know! Do what works best for you.

Our first program day will also consist of a cast team-building activity and choreography workshop, both of which will factor into our casting decisions.

Please complete the cast contract and tell us a bit about yourself prior to auditioning at openingnighttheater.com/castcontract.

SONG SELECTIONS

"Carrying The Banner"

"Just a Pretty Face"

"King of New York"

"Letter From The Refuge"

"Santa Fe"

"Seize The Day"

"Watch What Happens"

NEWSIES is a dance-heavy production, so if dance is a strength of yours - tap, ballet, jazz, etc - please let us know!

Did You Know? The full, filmed Broadway production of NEWSIES is available on Disney Plus! Check it out!

CLICK HERE TO ACCESS THE AUDITION MUSIC TRACKS.

THESE TRACKS ARE FOR PRACTICING ONLY. AUDITIONS SHOULD BE SUNG ACAPELLA (WITHOUT MUSIC).

Dramaturgy

here's a lot more to *Newsies JR*. than what you see onstage. This document offers some insight into the world of the show, such as contextual information on New York and the newspaper business in 1899, as well as historical figures that may be unfamiliar to you and your cast. For information on Crutchie's role in the show and the history of disability, check out the other Downloadable Resource titled "Performing Disability." The more your cast and creative team understand their characters and the world of the play, the better their portrayals and designs will be!

Newsies' Strike of 1899

The strike depicted in *Newsies JR*. is one of ten newsies' strikes that took place in New York City between 1886 and 1948. However, the strike that occurred during the summer of 1899 was the most significant in terms of duration and outcome.

The Spanish-American War had sparked a boom in the newspaper business. Circulations exploded as customers snatched up papers as fast as they could, eager for news from the front. Newspapers did everything they could to outdo one another and spent exorbitant amounts of money on eye-catching front pages and eyewitness accounts. To make up some of the money, they raised the wholesale price for the newsies from 50 to 60 cents per hundred. The newsies didn't feel the pinch as much because they were enjoying a rise in their profits from the additional demand. But by the summer of 1899, the war had long ended and circulation declined. Almost all of the papers rolled their wholesale price back to 50 cents, except Joseph Pulitzer's World and William Randolph Hearst's Journal; as the two largest publishers, Hearst and Pulitzer figured that they would be able to maintain their prices and that the newsies would continue to buy from them.

As the newsies sold fewer papers each week, the cost difference became harder to manage, and a strike commenced against these two papers beginning on July 20, 1899 and ending on August 2, 1899. During that time, the kids drew support from newsies all over the Northeast, as well as other young workers. Though the kids banded together, at times things became violent. Scabs (people hired by the publishers to deliver papers despite the strike) were attacked on the streets, their papers ripped from their hands and destroyed to prevent their sale. The publishers did



New York newsies selling their papers. photo by Lewis Wickes Hine (1910)

not take the strike seriously until advertisers started making requests to get their bills adjusted. The newsies eventually came to a compromise with the publishers: They would purchase their papers at the higher price, but the publishers would buy back any papers that the newsies couldn't sell. This was more valuable to the newsies than a lower price would have been, as it allowed them to buy papers without the risk of losing money for any that went unsold.

After the successful resolution of the newsies' strike nearly two weeks after it began, two other children's strikes quickly followed in New York City: The shoe shiners wanted a wage increase, and messengers were opposed to the 50-cent "tax" they were being charged every week for their uniforms. An irreversible revolution of child laborers had begun.

Industrial Revolution

The Industrial Revolution took place in the 18th and 19th centuries in Europe and America. During this period, industrialization changed the landscape of society. Factories and mass production enabled the large-scale development of goods and encouraged urban development. The second half of the 19th century is often referred to as the American Industrial Revolution due to a massive increase in the pace of industrialization in the U.S.; many factors contributed

NEWSIES' STRIKE AGAINST DE PAPES Steadfastly Refuse to Sell Journals They Have Boycotted. STRIKERS VERY ANGRY. Leader Blink Scares a "Bloke"

A headline from the July 24, 1899 evening edition of the Pawtucket Times

Hired by a Pape to Make a Bluff."

to this, such as the expansion of the country in the early-1800s, completion of the first transcontinental railroad, and an influx of immigrant labor.

Before the Industrial Revolution, people often worked for themselves or in small shops, usually

performing agricultural or craft-based work. However, once people began working in factories, conditions were often dangerous, work was repetitive, wages were low, and hours were long. All of these factors led to the rise of labor unions in the mid-1800s. Cities rapidly expanded due to the glut of opportunity, but housing stock was not able to keep pace, causing a rise in urban slums and dangerous living conditions. For more information on the impact of the Industrial Revolution, see "Performing Disability," included with your Downloadable Resources.

Child Labor

In the U.S., the idea that kids should go to school to prepare for their future is relatively new. Throughout most of American history, it was normal for children to work long hours at difficult and dangerous jobs. Child labor in the U.S. is as old as the country itself: In the early 1600s, it was believed that crime and poverty were the results of idleness, not a lack of education. Consequentially, poor children were shipped by the thousands from England to the

Timeline of the Strike

April 25, 1898 – The Spanish-American War begins.

July 19, 1899 – Dissent among the newsies due to a price hike builds to a head and word spreads of a strike commencing the following day.

July 22, 1899 – Newsie leader Kid Blink meets Hearst outside of his office to share the newsies' demands. Hearst invites him, David Simons, and two other boys inside and promises them an answer by Monday, July 24.

July 25, 1899 – Pulitzer and Hearst agree to lower the cost from 60 cents per hundred to 55 cents per hundred. The newsies decline the offer, deciding to hold out.

August 1, 1899 – Pulitzer and Hearst agree to buy back unsold papers from the newsies. Satisfied with this historic compromise, the newsies call off the strike.

August 12, 1898 – The Spanish-American War ends.

 July 20, 1899 – The newsies refuse to sell the World and the Journal. Jersey City, NJ newsies join with their New York brethren in a strike against the papers.

July 24, 1899 – Pulitzer and Hearst do not give in to the newsies' demands. The publishers hire men to sell their papers, paying them as much as \$2 per day to do so.

July 24, 1899 – A mass meeting of newsies is held at New Irving Hall. 2,000 kids are inside the theater and another 3,000 observe from the street.

July 27, 1899 – Kid Blink leaves the newsies' union. Rumors spread that he accepted a bribe from the publishers.

August 2, 1899 – The newsies of New York return to work, carrying the banner.

American colonies to become apprentices. This arrangement helped England manage its most helpless citizens and also provided a cheap solution to the labor shortage in the colonies. Colonists' children were also apprentices or did grueling work on family farms.

During the Industrial Revolution, as the number of factories increased, so did the number of jobs. Factory owners needed more workers and turned to children to help do everything from operating dangerous machinery to mining coal. It was expected that children as young as 10 years old work 12 or more hours per day for 6 days per week. According to the U.S. Census of 1880, 1 in 6 American children were employed, and this number does not account for the number of children under 10 years old working illegally in sweatshops or on the streets. Estimates indicate that those illegal workers include as many as 1 in 6 children between the ages of 5 and 10 who were employed in some sense. In 1881, only seven states had education laws requiring kids to attend school, but even in these states, many people found ways to get around the law.

By the turn of the 20th century, at the time when *Newsies JR*. is set, the child workforce hit its peak with almost two million legal and countless undocumented working children. During this period, reformers began to take action and created child labor laws; fought to end the abuse of kids in the workplace; and worked to make sure that all children had the opportunity to better themselves through education.

It was not until 1938 that the U.S. Congress passed the Fair Labor Standards Act, a law that prohibited the employment of kids younger than 16, and placed limits on the employment of kids between 16 and 18 years old. Many people argued that child labor



Bootblacks (shoe shiners) photo by Alice Austen (1896)

helped children by teaching them a trade. In reality, their jobs kept them from going to school and improving their futures.



New York newsies get their afternoon papers. photo by Lewis Wickes Hine (1910)

Newsies

For young children who needed to work to support themselves or their families, selling newspapers was a lucrative enterprise at the turn of the 20th century. The newsies of New York City were popularly admired as "little merchants," for unlike children working in factories, newsies were free to set their own hours and determine how many papers they would sell each day. However, the newspaper controlled the wholesale price and kids commonly worked up to 14 hours per day to make enough money to survive. It wasn't unusual for newsies to exaggerate the headlines or make up sad stories about themselves to sell more papers. They would often fumble and stall while making change in the hopes that the customer would get impatient and let them keep the difference.

While there were newsgirls as well as newsboys, they were less common. One reason for this is localities that had age limits for labor often required that working girls be older than working boys. In some states, girls had to be 16 to sell newspapers but boys only had to be 10. Newsies were most frequently between 11 and 15 years old, and a large portion of urban children worked as newsies at some point, even if just temporarily. Newsies came from nearly every ethnic group, so it was class that most defined them; the vast majority came from working class families that did not control their own businesses.

Newsies were so commonplace in 19th-century U.S. cities that they became symbols of carefree adventurers for writers such as Horatio Alger and examples of the ills of child labor for reformers like

Lewis Wickes Hine and Jacob Riis. Both Hine and Riis photographed newsies on the streets and in their lodgings to draw public attention to the poor and harsh conditions in which they lived.

The Power of the Press: Newspapers and Journalism at the End of the 19th Century

Newspapers played an important role in public life in the 19th century. Neither broadcast radio nor television had been invented by the end of the century, so newspapers were one of the only means available for the distribution of news. By the mid-1800s, newspapers were somewhat complex operations, utilizing the telegraph to receive news reports from far and wide and prominently featuring the voices of their editors. In fact, newspapers played a major political role through both reporting and editorials. In the 1890s, metropolitan newspapers began including advertisements, creating a strong desire to increase circulation as much as possible.

"Yellow journalism" was coined in the 1890s to describe sensational and often inaccurate reporting designed to increase the circulation of newspapers. Joseph Pulitzer of the *New York World* and William Randolph Hearst of the *New York Journal* notoriously exaggerated and invented headlines to outsell each other's publications. Hearst and Pulitzer's newspapers fueled the U.S. interest in the Spanish-American War – often described as the first "media war" – and business boomed.

Also developed in the 1890s were "muckrakers," journalists who investigated and exposed corruption in the public and private sector. Nellie Bly was a prominent example of a muckraker for her work exposing the brutality and neglect at the Women's Lunatic Asylum on assignment for the World. (For more information on Bly, see p. 8.) Both Hearst and Pulitzer displayed views sympathetic to labor and immigrants in their publications; thus, there was a level of hypocrisy in the World and Journal's refusal to give their newsies the opportunity to earn a living wage.

Life in New York at the End of the 19th Century

Newsies JR. is set in 1899 – the end of the 19th century and a time of great change around the world. Advances in technology, like the invention of

the film camera, the commercial automobile, and successful prototypes of the airplane meant people were more mobile and informed than ever before. Around the world, colonized nations fought to gain their independence and workers went on strike to improve their working conditions. Farmers in South Africa fought for their independence against their British colonizers in battles later known as the Boer Wars. The Spanish colonies of Cuba and the Philippines also wished to govern their own countries and the struggle led to an international conflict.

In New York City, Mayor Robert Van Wyck presided over a newly incorporated metropolis. The boroughs of Manhattan, the Bronx, Brooklyn, Queens, and Richmond (later known as Staten Island) were brought together on January 1, 1898, making New York City the second largest city in the world (after London). The city was speeding forward into the new century with several new improvements. Construction for a public library at 42nd Street and 5th Avenue in Manhattan began in the spring of 1899. The Bronx Zoo also opened in 1899 with 843 animals in 22 exhibits. With the expansion of the boroughs, the city had to make it possible for people to get around town. In addition to the already completed Brooklyn Bridge, the city began laying tracks for a subway that would connect Manhattan and Brooklyn. The subway would open to passengers five years later, in 1904.

At Ellis Island, immigrants from all over the world continued to surge into the city. An estimated 330,000 people came through New York Harbor that year, primarily from Italy and Russia. Many of these new Americans settled on the Lower East Side of Manhattan, making the already dense neighborhoods even tighter.

Tenement Houses

Tenements were cramped and unsafe homes, often occupied by multiple families. In New York, most tenement occupants were poor, immigrant families. At the time, New York was the most densely populated city in the world; the Lower East Side was home to over 800 residents per acre. The public became aware of the deplorable conditions in 1890 when Jacob Riis published *How the Other Half Lives*, which used shocking photographs and vivid descriptions to illustrate life in New York's slums. The book led to the Tenement Act of 1901, which reformed housing standards across the city.



A Jacob Riis photograph of a typical tenement (c. 1910)

Newsies' Lodging Houses

If newsboys did not have families to go home to at night, the Newsboys' Lodging House provided them with a place to stay. The lodging house was located at 9 Duane Street in downtown New York City and provided shelter for up to 600 newsboys per night; female newsies would have slept at the nearby Elizabeth Home for Girls. The Newsboys' Lodging House was operated by the Children's Aid Society of Manhattan and opened in 1874. Each kid paid about 6 cents per night for the accommodations and an additional 6 cents for dinner. If there was a slow news day, the newsies might have to choose between the two. The kids who couldn't afford to stay at the lodging house usually slept in alleys.



An 1867 illustration of a Children's Aid Society lodging house

New York House of Refuge

Inspiring *Newsies JR*.'s The Refuge, the New York House of Refuge opened in 1825 in Manhattan and was the first juvenile reformatory in the nation. It moved to Randall's Island in 1854, where it existed until it closed in 1935. The House of Refuge was

operated by the Society for the Reformation of Juvenile Delinquents in the City of New York, a private philanthropic organization, in close collaboration with the state government. It received approximately 300 boys and girls annually (until 1901, when a separate reformatory for women opened), all under the age of 16 when they were taken in. Most had committed petty crimes. Before the 1880s, inmates performed a significant amount of labor and there was a culture of corporal punishment. However, beginning in the 1880s, the manual labor was replaced with industrial education and the corporal punishment was reduced. Despite these changes, criticism of the House of Refuge continued through the early 1900s, focusing on complaints about vocational training and discipline procedures, as well as the institution's outdated buildings, urban location, and concentrated facilities.



A Harper's Weekly series of illustrations of the New York House of Refuge sketch by W.H. Davenport (1868)

Vaudeville

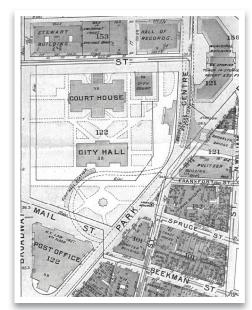
Vaudeville, a type of stage entertainment, achieved popularity in the U.S. from the 1880s through the early 1930s. Shows consisted of a series of short acts from a variety of disciplines: singing, comedy, circus, dance, ventriloquism, and more. It developed from adult-oriented burlesque shows popular in the 1850s and 1860s; in 1881, Tony Pastor staged the first "clean" vaudeville at the Fourteenth Street Theater in New York City, and other managers soon followed suit. Vaudeville performances could last for hours and performers would travel the country performing their signature act. Vaudeville was symbolic of the cultural diversity of America at the time and it democratized entertainment given the ways in which it crossed racial and class boundaries.



An 1899 poster for the Hurly-Burly Extravaganza and Refined Vaudeville

Geography of Manhattan

The action of *Newsies JR*. takes place primarily in Lower Manhattan. Before the 19th century, the bulk of New York City was consolidated into the southernmost tip of Manhattan. However, during the 1800s, the city began to expand both north through Manhattan and into the other boroughs. By 1899, New York City consisted of five boroughs and the street grid extended north throughout Manhattan. However, much of the city's business life still took place downtown.



Map of Lower Manhattan c. 1900

In 1883, the Brooklyn Bridge was completed, and in 1890, Joseph Pulitzer built his 349-foot *World* building at the base of the bridge, which became the tallest building on earth and cast a huge shadow over City Hall Park. That park is the historical equivalent of the fictional Newsie Square, and the

Newsboys' Lodging House stood just one block to the north of the park. The New Irving Hall, site of the July 24, 1899 rally, was located on Broome Street on the Lower East Side, about a mile and a half from City Hall Park.

Notable People

Given that *Newsies JR*. is based on an actual event, many of the characters have ties to historical figures. Some, such as Pulitzer, Roosevelt, and Seitz are fictionalized portrayals of real people. Others are original creations, yet still are inspired by historical figures: Jack Kelly is inspired by Kid Blink and Morris Cohen, Davey by David Simons, Katherine by Nellie Bly, and Medda Larkin by Aida Overton Walker.

Kid Blink (Louis Ballatt), a newsies' union leader, was blind in one eye and named for his signature eye patch. A ragamuffin who led the New York newsies in their fight for justice during the summer of 1899, Kid Blink was an inspiration for the character of Jack Kelly. He was often quoted in newspapers covering the strike, and writers sometimes used the phonetic spelling of his speeches (e.g., "Dat's de feller wot made de fight yistiddy.") in an effort to keep his dialect intact for the entertainment of readers. He and the other newsies allegedly found this style of reporting condescending.

David Simons, one-time president of the newsies' union and an inspiration for the character of Davey, was 21 during the 1899 strike. Born on Ludlow Street, he sold papers from the age of eight, although he also attended school. He hawked papers from City Hall Park, and by the time of the strike, he employed several newsies to help him sell there. He was elected president of the union due to his ability to inspire others, but the newsies grew skeptical of him and Kid Blink. Simons



David Simons (1899)

and Kid Blink were seemingly both bought out by the newspapers, and when the newsies discovered Simons selling papers, they mobbed him and his friends and destroyed 6,000 newspapers. Morris Cohen replaced him as union president. Morris Cohen, a newsies' union leader, sold about 300 copies of the *World* per day in City Hall Park. He was one of the original organizers of the strike and was on the initial executive committee of the newsies' union. He also helped to lead the rally at New Irving Hall. After David Simons was accused of being bribed by the newspapers, Cohen was elected the new union president. In *Newsies JR.*, Jack Kelly is based on both Kid Blink and Morris Cohen.

Joseph Pulitzer

(1847–1911), owner and publisher of the *New York World*, was born in Hungary in 1847. At the age of 17, after the death of his father, Pulitzer immigrated to the U.S. to enlist in the Union Army (previously, he was rejected from the Austrian army due to poor eyesight). At the end of the Civil War, he traveled from New York City to St. Louis to find a job. After three years



Joseph Pulitzer (date unknown)

of working as a fireman, dockworker, waiter, and gravedigger, Pulitzer was offered a job writing for the Westliche Post, a German newspaper. He was so successful that he was named managing editor and eventually purchased the St. Louis Dispatch, one of the major newspapers in the city. Pulitzer purchased the New York World in 1883 and turned the failing paper into one of the most widely read publications in the city. The World's articles about the sinking of the U.S.S. *Maine* battleship largely contributed to the start of the Spanish-American War. Although Pulitzer was not physically present during the newsies' strike in 1899 (due to poor health, he lived in Maine and ran his paper from there), his character in Newsies JR. is an antagonist who represents the excesses of capitalism. Pulitzer married American Kate Davis in 1878, and by the time of the strike, he had become the rather distant father of seven children – the oldest of which, Ralph, took over the World in 1911 upon his father's death at age 64. As part of his legacy, Pulitzer left enough money to Columbia University to start a journalism school. The Pulitzer Prize, an award for excellence in journalism, literature, and music, was named in his honor.

Don Seitz (1862-1935), journalist and author, worked for several publications over the course of his lifetime. After college, he started his career at the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* where he worked from

1889 until 1891, first as the Albany correspondent and then as its city editor. After that, he was an assistant publisher of the New York Recorder before joining the New York World. He held a number of positions, including managing editor of the Brooklyn World and eventually business manager of the New York World, a position he held from 1898 until 1923. Seitz sent Pulitzer daily reports on



Don Seitz (date unknown)

all topics. During the 1899 strike, Seitz was managing the newspaper's relationship with the newsies on the ground, and his letters to Pulitzer convey the newspaper's side of the story.

William Randolph
Hearst (1863–1951),
owner and publisher of
the New York Journal,
was born into a wealthy
family in San Francisco.
After attending Harvard
University, Hearst
became the manager
of a paper his father
owned, the San Francisco
Examiner. At the
Examiner, he published
stories by some of the

best writers of the time,



William Randolph Hearst (1906)

including Mark Twain and Jack London. In 1895, he decided to purchase the *New York Morning Journal*, becoming a fierce competitor for Joseph Pulitzer and the *New York World*. Hearst became so successful in the newspaper business that at the peak of his career, he owned over 20 newspapers across the U.S. Hearst died at the age of 88 in 1951. Although Hearst is not a character in *Newsies JR*., his son makes a cameo appearance.

Theodore Roosevelt (1858–1919), 33rd governor of New York, previously served as a New York State Assembly member, U.S. Civil Service commissioner, president of the New York Board of Police Commissioners, and assistant secretary of the U.S. Navy. As the leader of the "Rough Riders" (the nickname of a small but notable volunteer cavalry regiment that fought in Cuba) during the Spanish-American War in 1898, Roosevelt became a national hero and was elected governor of New York later

that year. As governor, he improved labor laws, outlawed racial segregation in New York public schools, and advanced park and forestry programs. Although Roosevelt and Pulitzer were often on opposite political sides, their interaction over the strike in *Newsies JR*. is fictional. In 1900, Roosevelt became vice president under William McKinley and assumed the presidency



Theodore Roosevelt photo by Harris and Ewing (c. 1901-1908)

after McKinley's assassination in 1901. Roosevelt was reelected as the Republican nominee three years later.

Nellie Bly (1864–1922) was the pen name of journalist Elizabeth Jane Cochrane. In a time when female reporters did not cover much beyond the society pages, Bly made a name for herself as a legitimate journalist. She reported on her recordbreaking trip around the world and even faked a mental illness to report on the experience of a patient in a mental institution. Newsies JR.'s Katherine Plumber was inspired by Bly.



Nellie Bly photo by H.J. Myers (1890)

Aida Overton Walker

(1880–1914), performer, was one of the premiere African-American artists at the turn of the 20th century, known for her original dance routines and refusal to conform to the stereotype of traditional Black female performers. Overton Walker had a successful career as a star of the Bowery and beyond. She married fellow performer George Walker in



Aida Overton Walker (1907)

1898, and the pair became one of the most revered African-American couples on the stage. Before her death in 1914, Overton Walker worked hard to aid young Black women striving to make a name for themselves. She organized benefits in honor of the Industrial Home for Colored Working Girls and played an active role in the development of young Black women as stage performers. The *Newsies JR*. character of Medda Larkin is inspired by Overton Walker.

MONOLOGUE SELECTIONS

Jack Kelly 1:

"It ain't just about us. All across this city there are boys and girls who ought to be out playin' or going to school. Instead they're slavin' to support themselves and their folks. Ain't no crime to bein' poor, and not a one of us complains if the work we do is hard. All we ask is a square deal. Fellas ... for the sake of all the kids in every sweatshop, factory, and slaughter house in this town, I beg you ... throw down your papers and join the strike."

Jack Kelly 2:

"Want to see a place I seen? How about this?" (he displays a large political cartoon he has drawn of the newsies being crushed by Pulitzer in Newsie Square) "Newsie Square, thanks to my big mouth, filled to overflowing with failure. Kids hurt, others arrested - Is that what you're aiming for? Go on and call me a quitter, call me a coward. No way I'm puttin' them kids back in danger."

Katherine Plumber:

"Really, Jack? Really? Only you can have a good idea? Or is it because I'm a girl? This would be a good time to shut up. Being boss doesn't mean you have all the answers. Just the brains to recognize the right one when you hear it. The strike was your idea. The rally was Davey's. And now my plan will take us to the finish line. Think, Jack, if we publish this - my words with one of your drawings - and if every worker under twenty-one read it and stayed home from work ... or better yet, came to Newsie Square - a general city-wide strike! Even my father couldn't ignore that."

Davey:

"They got us this time. I'll grant you that. But we took round one. And with press like this, our fight is far from over. Every newsie who could walk showed up this morning to sell papes like the strike never happened.-- And I was there with them. If I don't sell papes, my folks don't eat. But then -I saw this look on Weasel's face; he was actually nervous. And I realized this isn't over. We got them worried. Really worried. And I walked away. Lots of other kids did, too. And that is what you call a beginning.

Les:

"What's the hold up? I need to let my girl know. We've got a date. Yeah, you heard me. Fame is one intoxicatin' potion. And this here girl, Sally, she's a plum. So can we table the palaver* and get back to business? Will Medda let us have the theater or not?"

Crutchie:

"I wanna beat the other fellas to the street. I don't want anyone should see; I ain't been walkin' so good. Someone gets the idea I can't make it on my own, they'll lock me up in The Refuge for good. Be a pal, Jack. Help me down. Let's get our papers and hit the streets while we still can."

Race:

"You won't be shooin' us off when we get our mugs in the papes! Lemme see. Lookit! Would you lookit? Dat's me! For jumping Jack's sake. Can you stow the seriosity long enough to drink in the moment? I'm famous! Are you stupid or what? You're famous, the world is your erster. Your erster! Your fancy clam with a pearl inside. You don't need money when you're famous. They gives you whatever you want- gratis!"

Pulitzer:

"Mark my words, boy. Defy me, and I will have you and every one of your friends locked up in The Refuge. I know you're Mr. Tough Guy, but it's not right to condemn that little crippled boy to conditions like that. And what about your pal Davey and his baby brother, ripped from their loving family and tossed to the rats? Will they ever be able to thank you enough?"

Medda Larkin:

"Here's everything I owe you for the first backdrop, plus this one, and even a little something extra just account'a because I'm gonna miss you so. Just tell me that you're going somewhere and not running away. When you go somewhere and it turns out not to be the right place, you can always go somewhere else. But if you're running away, nowhere's ever the right place."

SCENE THREE: STREET

(NEWSIES criss-cross the stage selling papers to CUSTOMERS. *JACK* watches *DAVEY*'s pathetic attempt at selling.)

DAVEY

Paper. Paper. Evenin' pape here.

JACK

Sing 'em to sleep, why don'tcha?

(snatches a paper from DAVEY and hawks it)

Extra! Extra! Terrified flight from burnin' inferno. You heard the story right here!

(A CUSTOMER snatches the paper from JACK, hands him a coin, and exits.)

Thanks!

DAVEY

You just made that up.

JACK

Did not. I said he heard it right here, and he did.

DAVEY

My father taught us not to lie.

JACK

And mine taught me not to starve.

(LES comes up empty-handed, along with CRUTCHIE.)

LES

Hey! Just sold my last paper.

CRUTCHIE

Kid's a natural, Jack.

DAVEY

I got one more.

JACK

Sell it or pay for it.

(LES takes the paper, goes to a WOMAN passing by, and makes a *sad face.*)

LES

Buy a pape from a poor orphan?

(LES coughs gently.)

WOMAN

Oh, you dear thing. Of course I'll take a newspaper. Here's a dime.

(*The WOMAN exits with her paper.*)

CRUTCHIE

Born to the breed.

LES

This is so much better than school!

DAVEY

Don't even think it. When Pop goes back to work, we go back to school. (to JACK)

Our father tangled with a delivery truck on the job. Messed his leg up bad, so they fired him. That's how come we had to find work.

JACK

Yeah, sure, that makes sense. Too bad about your dad.

(WARDEN SNYDER and the POLICE OFFICER stealthily approach JACK. #7 – CHASE.)

CRUTCHIE

Jack, it's Snyder! Am-scray!

SNYDER

Jack Kelly!

JACK

Run for it!

(JACK helps CRUTCHIE as they run off with DAVEY and LES.)

SNYDER

Stop! Officer, grab him. Jack Kelly, you come back here! Get him!

(The POLICE OFFICER and SNYDER exit in pursuit.)

JACK

Hey, Crutchie, where you going? Morning bell ain't rung yet. Get back to sleep.

CRUTCHIE

I wanna get there before everybody. Ever since I got the polio, it takes me extra time to warm up my leg.

JACK

That bum pin of yours is a gold mine! You know how many newsies fake a limp for sympathy? That's why they calls you "Crutchie," 'cause they wish they had one too!

CRUTCHIE

Yeah, "pretend" is one thing, but Snyder gets the idea I can't make it on my own for real, they'll lock me up in The Refuge for good.

JACK

Don't worry about nuthin', I got your back. What d'ya think of my latest creation?

(JACK reveals his drawing. CRUTCHIE is impressed.)

CRUTCHIE

Jack, you're a regular Nickelangelo Dervinci! But how come you always drawing pictures of mountains and stuff?

JACK

(rolls up drawing and tucks it away)

These streets sucked the life right outta my old man. Well, they ain't doin' that to me. You can keep your small life in the big city. Give me a big life in a small town way out west where a fella can breathe!

JACK

I ain't gonna see no more of my pals beat up and tossed into jail. No matter how many days we strike, your father ain't givin' up. I don't know what else we can do.

KATHERINE

Ah. But I do.

JACK

No, I'm through. No way.

KATHERINE

Really, Jack? Really? Being boss doesn't mean you have all the answers – just the brains to recognize the right one when you hear it.

(JACK is at a loss for words.)

JACK

Okay, I'm listening.

KATHERINE

The strike was your idea. The rally was Davey's. And now my plan will take us to the finish line.

(KATHERINE takes a piece of paper from her pocket and hands it to him.)

JACK

(reading)

"The Children's Crusade"? Now, there's a headline!

KATHERINE

(snatches it back and reads)

"For the sake of all the kids in every sweatshop, factory, and slaughterhouse in New York, I beg you... join us." With those words, you challenged our whole generation to help each other!

JACK

I can't believe it, I mean people like you would never give me the time of day, and here you are, taking up the banner. Why?

KATHERINE

We all need something to believe in, Jack. I believe in this story. I believe in you. And so do the newsies.

JACK

Miss Medda, I got a little situation out on the street. Mind if I hide out here a while?

MEDDA

Is Snyder the Spider after you again? Make yourself at home.

LES

Hey Jack, did you really escape jail on the back of Teddy Roosevelt's carriage?

CRUTCHIE

He sure did!

DAVEY

What would the Governor be doing at a juvenile jail?

JACK

So happens he was runnin' for office and wanted to show he cared about orphans and such. So while he got his mug in the paper, I got my butt in the back seat and off we rode together.

LES

You really know Governor Roosevelt?

MEDDA

He don't, but I do. Teddy's a regular patron of the arts, been a big fan of mine for years. By the way, Jack, can you paint me some more of these backdrops? Things have been going so well that I can actually pay you soon.

JACK

I couldn't take your money, Miss Medda.

LES

You pictured that?

DAVEY

It's really good!

MEDDA

Your friend is quite an artist.

JACK

Don't get carried away. It's a bunch of trees.

MEDDA

The boy's got natural aptitude.

LES

Geez. I never knew no one with a aptitude!

PAT

Miss Medda, you're on!

MEDDA

Kids, stay as long as you like. You're with Medda now!

PAT

Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome the magnificent Medda Larkin and her Bowery Brigade!

MEDDA

Well, hi-dee-ho, everybody! Welcome to <u>my</u> theater. Yessiree, it's a brand new century with a brand new set of rules for women, and the Brigade and I are gonna tell you all about them. Maestro, if you please!

PULITZER

(looking up from a report)

The World is in trouble. Our circulation is down for the third quarter in a row.

BUNSEN

We could use an exciting headline, Mr. Pulitzer.

PULITZER

What have we got today?

SEITZ

The trolley strike.

PULITZER

That's not exciting? It's epic!

HANNAH

It's boring. Folks just wanna know, "Is the trolley comin' or ain't it?"

SEITZ

Big photos attract readers, sir.

PULITZER

Do you know what big photos cost?

BUNSEN

But without flashy photos or headlines, how are we supposed to sell more papers?

HANNAH

We don't sell papers – <u>newsies</u> sell papers.

BUNSEN

That's ridiculous.

PULITZER

We don't sell papers, newsies sell papers!

BUNSEN

That's brilliant!

HANNAH

Thank you.

Carrying the Banner





Just a Pretty Face

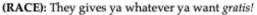


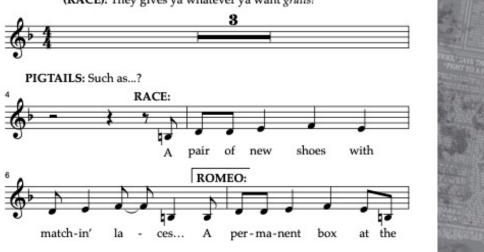




Those reading for Race should sing this whole excerpt, not just the "Race" lines.

KING OF NEW YORK





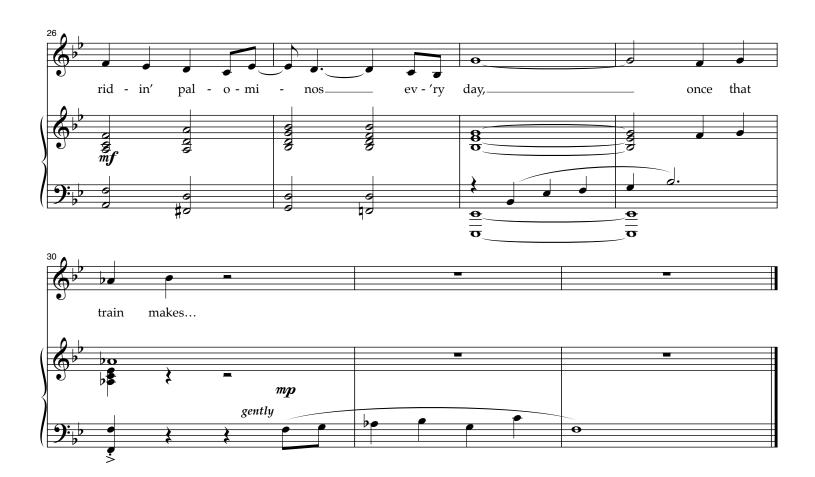




Letter from The Refuge



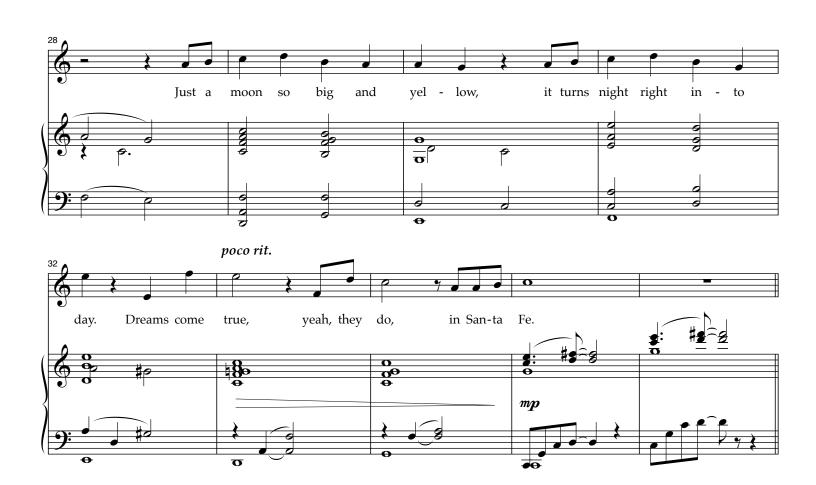




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